

**Taking a Ride on a Bumpy Road to Imagined Community – How Sub-Provincial Political Parties in
Canada Became Vehicles to Pursue, Perform and Participate in Region-Making, 1967-1988**

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Abstract

This dissertation explores an aspect of Canadian sub-provincial regionalism – the creation of new political parties that either acted as primary vehicles for its expression or made pointed appeals to this form of regionalism to draw popular support for their larger programme – to illuminate a captivating site in the study of *projects of regionalism*. The New Labrador Party (NLP), the Northern Ontario Heritage Party (NOHP), and the Cape Breton Labor Party (CBLP) all engaged in activities that, in whole or in part, promoted specific ideas of the nature of region – and a region’s interests. Using a combination of interviews, archival research, and reviews of published material from the years these parties were active, the dissertation provides case studies of each party through the use of historical narratives and a comparative analysis of the three parties through a framing concept. The dissertation asks why these kinds of parties appeared in parts of Canada in the latter half of the 20th century, what their supporters hoped to accomplish, how they promoted their ideas and arguments, how opponents refuted these arguments or undermined a party and its members, and how their relative successes and failures should be measured. Regionalists framed their project using three major arguments to diagnose the problem: exploitation; alienation and neglect; and diversity from other communities. Rhetoric and symbolic imagery used within these arguments employed the idea of internal colonialism, and discourses of citizenship, fairness, equality, and distinct lived experience. Opponents used counter frames to dispute the value of these parties or to promote alternatives. The dissertation concludes that these parties should be understood metaphorically as vehicles with which to drive the project and process of region. As vehicles, they were primarily functional creations, their design dictated by the needs of their creators and supporters and shaped by prevailing trends within a given historical context. Focussing on a type of vehicle as a lens through which to examine region is therefore an immensely fruitful exercise when historicizing this concept – and the comparative method provides an additional degree of depth and confirmation of observations made.

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Introduction

In early January 2010, Marcus Schwabe, host of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Morning North* program based in Sudbury, Ontario, received a letter from a listener warning of an "impending etymological disaster."¹ A small change to the Canadian Press (CP) *Caps and Spelling* style guidebook had symbolically downgraded Northern Ontario's regional status. Patti Tasko, a supervising editor for CP who was responsible for updating the news service's style guidelines, had dropped the capital N from Northern Ontario in a recent edition of the guidebook. In an interview with Schwabe, Tasko explained:

You should only be doing capitalization when it's significant and when it has an effect on the mean[ing] of what you're writing. And we had for many years [capitalized the N]; I found it in the first *Canadian Press Caps and Spelling* book in 1965. There it appeared: Northern Ontario, uppercase. No other part of any other province in the country of Canada was capitalized. So, it was lower case northern Saskatchewan, lower case northern Quebec... lower case southern Ontario, lower case eastern Ontario. This was the one exception and people struggled with this.²

Hoping to reduce the number of stylistic errors in CP's wire service, Tasko made the change in the 1999 edition of the guidebook. Other than some practicing journalists, for about 10 years very few people appeared to notice the change. Many Northern Ontario newspapers utilized their own in-house style guides in which the capital N in Northern Ontario remained firmly entrenched³ and wire copy from CP mentioning "northern Ontario" was simply changed before it appeared in newspapers in Northern Ontario. Only newspapers in other parts of the country that adhered more closely to CP style would have made the change to lower case; and, presumably, their readers had either not taken offense to the change or, more likely, had not noticed at all.

¹ Tom Mills, "What happened to N? (in Northern Ontario)," *Sudbury Star*. January 20, 2010, <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2010/01/20/what-happened-to-n-in-northern-ontario-column-add-your-comment>

² *As It Happens*, CBC Radio 1, January 7, 2010.

³ Mills, "What Happened to N?"

When some CBC listeners in Northern Ontario were alerted to the change, however, they became apoplectic. Reaction to the story on *Morning North's* "talkback" segment continued for days. CBC's venerable primetime current events program *As It Happens*, always a fan of quirky news items, carried a story on the controversy. With tongue firmly planted in cheek, host Barbara Budd reminded listeners that when she pronounced Northern Ontario on air it was inflected with a capital N. In a brief interview on the program, veteran northern newspaper reporter John Hunt said bluntly: "Just because a couple of grammarians sitting at a desk in Toronto don't like it is of no concern to me. If you asked most of these experts any intelligent question about Northern Ontario they wouldn't be able to answer anyway. They think it all begins in Barrie."⁴

Having written for the *North Bay Nugget* for almost 60 years, Hunt offered comments that spoke to an underlying and long-standing current of regionalism (and regional alienation) in Northern Ontario – an area usually defined as lying north of the French and Mattawa rivers, but sometimes including the district of Parry Sound. The outrage over a change in the capitalization of the designation of a region in a press style guide may appear to be a tempest in a teapot to the casual observer; but for some people in Northern Ontario who consider this region to be an integral part of their identity and/or who have derived a sense of political power as "Northerners," the rationale for the CP guidebook change was ominous.

In a newspaper column on the controversy, Tom Mills explained: "CP says regions merit capitalization if they are 'geographic and widely recognized descriptive regions' rather than 'points of the compass, mere direction and location, and descriptive regions not widely recognized as such.' Among its examples are Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Lower Manhattan, Upstate New York,

⁴ *As It Happens*, January 7, 2010.

London's West End, Central Canada and Southern California.”⁵ Thus, for Northern Ontario economist David Robinson, Tasko’s decision to remove Northern Ontario from this list of exceptional places meant that “Northern Ontario [now] only exist[ed] from the point of view of the south.... Northern Ontario is not a place with a name – it is a general area defined by being north of Toronto.”⁶ Robinson noted that in making this decision, “she abolished the memory of a region with a distinct history. She made the notion of Northern self-government disappear for every Canadian Press (CP) reporter. She told us that Southern Ontario has gone a long way toward completely forgetting Northern Ontario.”⁷

The palpable anger in these commentaries speaks to the enduring power of identities based on what Benedict Anderson has famously described as imagined communities.⁸ Audiences in the rest of Canada might understandably see some comedic value in these types of emotional outbursts: how could so many people take such offence to something as inconsequential as capitalization in an optional style guideline?⁹ But Robinson’s forceful defense of Northern Ontario, which linked discourse to tangible

⁵ Mills, “What Happened to N?”

⁶ David Robinson, “The Capital N and the Great Eraser.” *Northern Ontario Business*, Feb. 24, 2010, <https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/columns/robinson/the-capital-n-and-the-great-eraser-366594>

⁷ Robinson, “The Capital N”.

⁸ See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006). Anderson’s inventive term has been adopted as a way to describe disparate communities whose members nonetheless adhere to an idea that they are connected to each other though they may never meet. His original work was set in a particular historical context which sought to define and explain nation, nationality and nationalism. In a key passage from his original work, he writes: “My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that words multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind.” (4). Yet, Anderson also notes that his definition of a nation as an imagined community has wider application: “In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.” (6).

⁹ Yet upon closer reflection, Canadians could likely begin to identify the uncanny parallels between this recent manifestation of Northern Ontario regionalism and the more familiar brand of popular nationalism they, or at least many of their fellow citizens, frequently exhibit. For example, Molson Breweries’ “I Am Canadian” advertising campaign is one relatively recent example of a popular expression of nationalism in which appeals to a Canadian identity figure heavily. See: Robert M. Seiler, “Selling Patriotism/Selling Beer: The case of the ‘I AM CANADIAN!’ Commercial,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 45-66. Seiler’s linguistic semiotic analysis shows the oppositional structure of the ad. He notes “the code from which the connoted message is taken is that of a distinctly English-Canadian nationalism: that is, Canadians have a long-standing tendency to define themselves as non-Americans and a long-standing sense of grievance vis-à-vis Americans due to the tendency of the latter to ignore them.” (Seiler, 56). Seiler notes the popularity of the ad prompted some imitations along some of Canada’s regional communities. Although it was not solely a response to the “I Am Canadian” advertisement, a

consequences, is a powerful reminder that region(alism) is a highly political and continually contested act. As Philippe De Lombaerde and others have argued, “regions are constructed and reconstructed through social practices and in discourse. Calling a certain geographical area a region needs therefore to be seen as a discursive tool that is used to obtain certain goals.”¹⁰ When it comes to understanding imagined identities, words matter; spelling and stylistic choices matter; symbolism, however it is constructed, matters; and, social practices and the ways in which they have been communicated and remembered, matter.

The type of sentiment evident in the impassioned responses to the great capitalization debate of 2010 provides a fitting introduction to a historical study in which the concept of region(alism) and its associated imagined identities figure so heavily. The discursive strategies and narrative devices employed in reaction to this reporting reflect a deep sense of angst, alienation and exceptionalism present within minority identity communities that are objectively and/or perceptively marginalized. Although these feelings can wax and wane within these communities over time, they are an integral part of certain regional identities.

While often amorphous and latent, occasionally this sentiment can achieve singular focus and even embodiment – usually when a specific incident triggers a perceptible response from a population that shares (or finds reason to share) the cloak of region.¹¹ Generally, these incidents tend to follow a

now defunct group called “When I go to my CAMP I take my PACKSACK,” on Facebook, a popular social networking site, adopted a similar oppositional technique. Group members would post about words, expressions or cultural activities which they considered to be uniquely Northern Ontarian. Usually, differences from southern Ontario were used to identify Northerners. This group has since been deleted from the social network, but at its zenith it had hundreds, if not thousands, of members.

¹⁰ Philippe De Lombaerde et al., “The problem of comparison in comparative regionalism,” *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series* 9 no. 7 (April 2009), 1-22.

¹¹ A. Paul Pross’s introductory chapter in *Group Politics and Public Policy* provides a superb explanation of how latent interests can become mobilized through solidary groups in what he calls a “funnel of mobilization.” He writes: “Individuals and corporations with latent interests in common have no sense of solidarity with one another. They may energetically protect their individual interests, but do not feel the need to recognize their mutual interest and promote it collectively. In the centre of the funnel are solidary groups, whose heightened awareness

familiar pattern: some entity occupying a position of power from outside the imagined regional community engages in symbolic or material action that is perceived to be a threat to a regional community's broadly defined interests. Some people who identify as members of this imagined regional community may attempt to frame the issue in the context of a larger socio-cultural, socio-economic or political malaise that is often the result of perceived historical injustices. These social actors then adopt or revive rhetoric and discursive arguments that reinforce the regional community's distinctness from outsider interests and position it as being in subordination. Intimating that the outsider can never fully understand or appreciate the region, there may be calls among these social actors for an internal response or collective action reaffirming the region's identity or seeking a form of political power to protect its interests. At this point, the social actors who are actively engaged in achieving specific (or general) aims based on their regional community identity may be properly considered to be members of a regional interest group.¹²

Parallels to other regionalisms or nationalisms, which are the product of similar projects to create imagined identities, quickly become apparent. For example, scholars of Canadian history may well recognize elements of this pattern of regional grievance in such phenomena as the 1920s Maritime Rights Movement, Western Canadian alienation and the Quebec sovereignty movement.¹³ Despite similarities to these provincial or regional movements,¹⁴ forms of sub-provincial regionalism evident in

of their common interests has moved them to support one another informally. Their sense of political power has not yet inspired them to establish formal associations to take political action. This occurs in the last stage, when interest groups are formed and carry out campaigns designed to promote the common interest." A. Paul Pross, *Group Politics and Public Policy, Second Edition*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6-7.

¹² Pross explains that interest groups (or pressure groups – a term he deems to be more precise despite its more narrow focus on an aspect of interest group behaviour) differ from "the mob and the movement" based on the quality of their organization. A chief characteristic of a pressure group is to persuade, he writes, and "persuasion depends on organization," Pross, 3.

¹³ Although in the case of Quebec sovereignty, regionalism is also expressed as nationalism, which is not present in the other phenomena mentioned.

¹⁴ Pross notes that while movements exist over time, they have "too many distinct elements to be described as a coherent unit such as in a pressure group." As a result, most writers in the field treat national movements as distinct from pressure groups, but pressure groups may take part in them. Pross, 4.

Northern Ontario, Cape Breton and Labrador – the latter two areas being the other sites of investigation in this study – exhibit some notably different characteristics that substantially influenced how regional interest groups have expressed themselves over time.

The most obvious difference is the legal status of these regions. The Maritimes and Western Canada encompass more than one provincial unit and Quebec stands alone as a province of Canada. Regionalism emerging from these areas has the capability to wield certain legal, constitutional political power that sub-provincial regional community manifestations do not. In expressing regional grievances situated within the Canadian state, regional interest groups within these jurisdictions can, if organized and supported by the majority of enfranchised inhabitants, democratically gain control over formal political levers and benefit from power found within the provincial state apparatus. Whether co-opting an existing political party¹⁵ or supporting a new political party¹⁶ these regional interest groups were/are able to persuade governments with distinct constitutional jurisdictions within Confederation to effect desired change. While this power may be used in practice to protect or foster social, cultural or economic distinctiveness within the country, proponents of this form of regionalism can also attempt to legally withdraw a provincial unit or units from Confederation.¹⁷ Here, using the instrument of provincial

¹⁵ See, for example, the Maritimes Rights movement. As Forbes notes, during the first phase of the campaign for Maritime Rights, when either the Liberal or Conservative parties overlooked their demands, claims, rhetoric or rationalizations, the movement turned to the other for redress. When the claims came into conflict with larger regions in Canada, however, they were passed over by both parties. Ernest Forbes, *The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927: A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 73.

¹⁶ See, for example, Graham Fraser and Owen Ivon, *René Lévesque & the Parti Québécois in Power*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2001).

¹⁷ See: Reference re Secession of Quebec (Case number 25506), Supreme Court Judgments, 2 SCR 217, (1998). URL: <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1643/index.do> The court's decision denied a unilateral right to secession under the Constitution, but noted: "A clear majority vote in Quebec on a clear question in favour of secession would confer democratic legitimacy on the secession initiative which all of the other participants in Confederation would have to recognize." This reference was used when the federal government crafted the "Clarity Act," formally known as: An Act to give effect to the requirement for clarity as set out in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Quebec Secession Reference (S.C. 2000, c. 26), Assented to 2000-06-29. URL: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-31.8/page-1.html>

governance, regionalism can therefore take part in what Richard Simeon has termed “the art of federal-provincial diplomacy” – formal political action through recognized state actors.¹⁸

Sub-provincial regionalism, on the other hand, occupies a space in Canada where, in terms of population, it is usually a numeric impossibility to support a party with the ability to form a majority provincial government in which the “regional” interest is a paramount concern. In the absence of this potentiality, social actors who seek to use formal political power to achieve regional interests can only claim a fraction of the power granted to provincial governments and the provincial state.¹⁹ At best, this type of regionalism can be channeled into electing some members of a governing or opposition party to act as spokespersons for its interests within a parliament. If the regional sentiment is channeled into support for a dedicated regional political party, such a party could also potentially exercise some influence in a legislature with a minority government. Yet, even in these situations, sub-provincial regionalism functions within a restrictive minority mentality. The full benefits of formal, conventional legislative power are thus unattainable through democratic means unless the majority within a province deigns to grant the region special status and concomitant rights to some meaningful form of autonomy.²⁰

¹⁸ See Richard Simeon, *Federal-Provincial Diplomacy: The Making of Recent Policy in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

¹⁹ Within this regional unit the movement could gain control of municipal governments, but these are creatures of the province – completely dependent for their continued statutory existence and almost wholly dependent on the province for financial sustainability.

²⁰ Miriam Smith has argued that the need for this type of access to achieve certain political aims was beginning to diminish during this time. Political institutions were in flux during the move from the Keynesian welfare state era to neoliberal globalization era. Smith cites the oil shock in 1973 as marking the beginning of this transformation and notes that it led to a restructuring of patterns of political action by collective actors (groups and movements). She writes: “The restructuring of Canadian political institutions has closed down traditional avenues of access and influence and opened up others. Litigation as a political strategy and courts as a site of policy change are more important than ever before for collective actors. Legislatures and political parties are less important...” Miriam Catherine Smith, *A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2005) 14.

The limits of a democratic system alone, however, are not enough alone to squelch other popular expressions of sub-provincial regionalism. Cultural statements have the power to reinforce a sense of identity that binds a disparate group of people together into extra-political action.²¹ The use of a distinct vocabulary or regional accent, artistic creations that speak to a regional consciousness, and regionally-based sports teams and other civic organizations can be potent markers of an imagined community.²² Humorously ironic articulations of the limits of democratic politics also permit the sense of alienation that is often a prominent feature of these forms of regionalism to be channeled into a creative response.²³ And yet, despite the restrictions sub-provincial regionalists face within Canada's parliamentary and constitutional systems of governance, the promise of formal political engagement was difficult for some members of regional interest groups to ignore. Why?

In focusing on one aspect of Canadian sub-provincial regionalism – the creation of new political parties that either acted as primary vehicles for its expression or made pointed appeals to this form of regionalism to draw popular support for their larger programmes – this research project will illuminate a

²¹ See, for example: Eric Storm, "Regionalism in History, 1890-1945: The Cultural Approach," *European History Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (April 2003): 251-265; Maria Elizabeth Lucasa, "Gaucho musical regionalism," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 9, no. 1 (2000): 41-60; Stefan Patrick Fiol, "Constructing regionalism: Discourses of spirituality and cultural poverty in the popular music of Uttarakhand, North India" (PhD diss, University of Illinois: Urbana-Champaign, 2008).

²² For regional variation in accents, and a discussion of how the Canadian English accent is sometimes exaggerated by users for political purposes, see: J.K. Chambers, "Canada," in *English Around The World: Socio-Linguistic Perspectives*, ed. Jenny Cheshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 89-107; for arts and crafts, see: Ian MacKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); for a discussion of how a revival of fiddling music in Cape Breton tied into regional identity, see: Marie Thompson, "The Myth of the Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler: The Role of a CBC Film in the Cape Breton Fiddle Revival," *Acadiensis* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 5-26; for a discussion on sport, see: Carol Hughes, "Hurry Hard Northerners! Keep Northern Ontario at Brier," [CarolHughes.ndp.ca](http://carolhughes.ndp.ca), March 4, 2011, Accessed May 3, 2018. <http://carolhughes.ndp.ca/post/hurry-hard-northerners-keep-northern-ontario-at-brier>.

²³ See, for instance: Northern Ontario Liberation Army ("The NOLA is our attempt to capture whatever we feel in the culture of these two Boreal peoples living under two different occupations in Northern Ontario, who are so alienated, conscious, and proud." Defunct Facebook page previously accessed at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Ontario-Liberation-Army/135417036492987#!/pages/Northern-Ontario-Liberation-Army/135417036492987?sk=info>); Cape Breton Liberation Army (General John Cabot Trail of the Cape Breton Liberation Army is the creation of writer-comedian Dave Harley. Accessed May 3, 2018. <http://cbla.tripod.com/cbla.htm>).

captivating site in the study of *projects of regionalism*. The New Labrador Party (NLP), the Northern Ontario Heritage Party (NOHP), and the Cape Breton Labor Party (CBLP) all engaged in activities that, in whole or in part, promoted specific ideas of the nature of region – and a region’s interests. When interrogating the agendas of and interactions between supporters of these sub-provincial regions, the state(s) and its/their agents, the innately political nature of what Björn Hettne has called “the pursuit of regionness,”²⁴ becomes apparent.²⁵ Before further introducing these parties, outlining the scope of this project, and summarizing its aims, however, it is necessary to examine some of the existing historiography, establish where my approach fits within the varied scholarship from which I draw, and present working definitions of some of the key terms and concepts I will employ.

Regional History and Historiography

Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King once famously told the House of Commons “if some countries have too much history, we have too much geography.”²⁶ While any self-respecting historian would blanch at the notion of there ever being such a thing as “too much history,” a survey of contemporary Canadian historiography suggests some scholars may agree with King’s geographic exasperation. As recently as 1980, in a review of the concept of region – perhaps the central concept in geography – historian William Westfall could write confidently that “the region seems

²⁴ Bjorn Hettne, “Communication and Non-communication in a Regional System: The Pathological Cleavage Pattern of South Asia,” Paper for the SASNET Workshop on Global Networking in South Asian Studies, Lund, August 27-28, 2001, 3. <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/pdf/hettne.pdf>. Hettne’s concept bears a striking resemblance to Anderson’s “nation-ness”.

²⁵ “This concept of regionness - ranging from regional space, regional complex, regional society, regional community to region-state - is outlined and suggested as a comparative analytical tool for understanding the construction and consolidation of regions and the formation of relevant actors in a historical and multidimensional perspective.” Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum. “Theorising the Rise of Regionness,” *New Political Economy* 5, no. 3 (2000): 457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713687778>.

²⁶ Canada. House of Commons Debates, 18 June, 1936, (William Lyon Mackenzie King, LPC), 18th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 4: 3868. http://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC1801_04/742?r=0&s=2

destined to rival, if not replace, the nation state as the central construction of Canadian studies.”²⁷ Yet in a presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association in 2005 Gerald Friesen noted that although recent historical scholarship has spent considerable time exploring race, class and gender as categories of analysis “and handled them with subtlety, it has not dealt as successfully with the once prominent category of region.”²⁸ Friesen confirmed what Ian McKay had observed as an “evaporation” of the category in the writing of much recent Canadian social and cultural history in his influential article “A Note on ‘Region’ in Writing the History of Atlantic Canada.”²⁹

What has led to the diminishment of region as a category of analysis in Canadian historical writing during the past 30 years and what, if anything, can or should be done to restore its utility and its stature among historians? These questions loom large when considering a project where the notion of region figures so centrally. Although academic literature on this specific topic is quite sparse, larger studies of the regional character of Canada have explored political parties based on regional identities or collective social action emerging from particular regions. Political party/collective social action development theory offers some useful guidance when approaching this subject matter; yet I want to highlight some recent writing within political science arguing in favour of the value and utility of historically sensitive case studies. This scholarship, which laments a tendency among social sciences to awkwardly emulate natural sciences by stressing quantitative research, suggests the pendulum has swung too far and needs some rebalancing. Thus, there is a longing for a type of political history I endeavour to undertake in this dissertation – one which, on one hand, respects scholarly histories employing social science theory, approaches and methodologies to enrich our discipline, but which, on

²⁷ William Westfall, “On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature,” *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 3.

²⁸ Gerald Friesen, “2005 Presidential Address of the CHA: Space and Region in Canadian History,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 16, no. 1 (2005): 20.

²⁹ Ian McKay, “A Note on ‘Region’ in Writing the History of Atlantic Canada,” *Acadiensis* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 92.

the other hand, firmly celebrates the thoughtful art of qualitative, analytical narrative writing and considers its contributions to be critical and integral to historical scholarship.

Region in Canadian Historical Writing

In the context of larger Canadian historiographic debates, McKay notes that the myth-symbol complex of the Toronto School of nationalist history has propagated the false notion that regionalists first emerged in the aftermath of J.M.S. Careless's call in the 1960s to consider limited identities within Canadian history. McKay suggests this school of thought was generally dismissive, if not outright hostile, to exploring how such a concept figured into Canada's past. For the Toronto School, regionalism and parochialism were phenomena that Canada battled and overcame during its remarkable march to maturity.³⁰ McKay, on the other hand, traces the rise of regional histories to the 1920s and contends scholars were often situating them within national or international frameworks. Following the emergence of limited identities discourse, however, regionalists found common ground with social historians and utility in regional frameworks for analyses of group-based histories.³¹

At the time of McKay's writing, the history wars of the 1990s were still fresh and the place of regionalists within the discipline seemed tenuous. The deconstruction of Canada, or national history, as a category of analysis risked sweeping away many considerations, that were top of mind for regionalists, yet a return to a synthesis national history, which marginalized regional histories or made regional sentiment an implicit enemy of the state, was not something for which they clamoured either.³² McKay

³⁰ Even nationalist historians such as Ramsay Cook who took a more nuanced view of past historical scholarship still tended to be dismissive of region as a concept in Canadian history. In a 1983 review of L.D. McCann's edited collection, *A Geography of Canada: Heartland and Hinterland*, Ramsay Cook declared that "as a tool of analysis, 'regionalism' is a concept whose time has gone," (p. 141) and argued that it simply masked the political ambitions of individual provinces. Cook did suggest historical geographers could find continued use in the term, however. Ramsay Cook, "Regionalism Unmasked. Review: *A Geography of Canada*, ed. L.D. McCann," *Acadiensis* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1983): 137-142.

³¹ McKay, "A Note on Region," 91.

³² McKay, "A Note on Region," 92.

concludes that regionalists, like himself, were caught in the middle of the contemporary historiographical tug-of-war. His response was to propose regionalist literature “undergo the rigorous analysis of concepts, the de-ontologization of its categories and the sharpening of its sense that determinist metaphors can force both analysis and politics into an impasse.”³³ Although Westfall’s 30-year old observation about region becoming a predominant building block for future historical studies of Canada may not have been quite prescient at the time, his fulminations on the subject provide a clear indication of the problematic nature of region that McKay, Friesen and others have since called into question and a suitable point of departure for this study.

“The term ‘region’ can be frustratingly imprecise,” Westfall wrote, “and for the most part disciplines tend to back away from analyzing the assumptions, which they invest in the concept, preferring to take the regional structure of Canada as a given.”³⁴ Indeed, voluminous are the tomes purporting Canada has five, six, or seven regions; they are variously reported as being some combination of Atlantic Canada, the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, central Canada, the Prairies, Western Canada, British Columbia and/or the North.³⁵ While some of these ‘regions’ coincide with constitutionally-defined political units, others refer to areas that share a similar physical geography. According to R. Douglas Francis,³⁶ these “formal regions” are viewed as being bound by “a common feature, most often

³³ McKay, “A Note on Regions,” 99. Although he began this process by identifying some of the frameworks currently in use and writing at length about terms such as “Atlantic Canada” being top-down impositions which do not adequately express the lived – and imagined – experience of the people living in such a space, McKay also lapsed into some of the same essentializing and stereotyping he urged other scholars to avoid. Nevertheless, his overall argument and call to action is long overdue.

³⁴ Westfall, “On The Concept of Region,” 6. Janine Brodie notes that social scientists in the latter half of the 20th century often began their studies with predefined geographic units within which they would measure and compare difference – be it attitudes or behaviour. She cites Mildred Schwartz and Elkins and Simeon as part of this school of thought. Janine Brodie, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 6.

³⁵ See for example: Robert M Bone, *The Regional Geography of Canada*, 3rd Edition. (Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9. Bone suggests there are six regions in Canada.

³⁶ R. Douglas Francis, “Regionalism, W. L. Morton, and the Writing of Western Canadian History, 1870-1885,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 569-570. Francis sketches out the four main perspectives of region in Canadian historiography.

a common physical environment (although some analysts have looked to other distinguishing features besides topography, such as climate, ethnicity, or voting behaviour as means to differentiate one formal region from another). This is the traditional and the most pervasive view of region, one which is particularly popular with the Prairie region where there has been a long association and identification with the landscape."³⁷

Any decisive statement about the number of regions in the country is quite preposterous; for every proponent of a regional concept such as Western Canada there are opponents who might expound on the exceptionalism of a particular province such as Alberta or the cohesiveness of "the Prairies," among any number of other variations of territorially-defined spaces.³⁸ Canada itself, as scholars such as McKay have noted, should not be taken as a given either,³⁹ and ideas of regions crossing state boundaries between countries such as Canada and the United States such as Cascadia, the Plains, the Great Lakes, or Atlantica abound.

Part of this propensity for a pre-determination of regional character must fall at the feet of the adherents of a particular environmental approach based on physical geographic considerations. J. Wreford Watson has cautioned scholars of region to beware of "the specious geographical argument that a common environment gives rise to a uniform reaction and produces its corresponding geographical region. It does not."⁴⁰ This is not to say that regional identities based around a similar

³⁷ Francis, 570.

³⁸ See: Roger Gibbins, *Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980).

³⁹ See: Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review*, 81, no. 4 (December 2000): 616-645.

⁴⁰ Cited (7) in Westfall, "On The Concept of Region." At a 2012 Canadian Historical Association roundtable, where panelists noted that grand theses based along environmental deterministic lines have greatly fallen out of favour, a geographer in the audience noted that her discipline has moved far beyond this sort of determinism and found it remarkable that some historians continued to equate environmental geography with determinism. The growth of environmental histories will likely lead to more interdisciplinary understanding, but regional historians also have an important role in bringing up-to-date geographical perspectives into historical debates. "Macro-Theories of Canadian History: A Round Table on the Staples, Metropolitan and Laurentian Theses," *CHA Programme*, May 28, 2012.

territorial space cannot become very real to members of such an imagined community,⁴¹ nor that material elements do not influence choices in human geography (and economy).⁴² Nevertheless, suggestions that arbitrary physical considerations alone, such as proximity to the Atlantic seaboard or Prairie grasslands, inevitably lead to the creation of a region or regionalism should be resisted.⁴³

As physical geographers have noted, even presumed natural regions are not hermetically sealed units. Using the core/periphery (or heartland/hinterland) model, Robert M. Bone suggests that “towards the margins of a region, its core characteristics become less distinct and merge with those characteristics of a neighbouring region. In that sense, boundaries separating regions are best considered transition zones rather than finite limits.”⁴⁴ The core/periphery model, while partially spatial in character, is generally used as a developmental theory to describe the second type of region Francis identifies in Canadian historical writing: functional regions. He notes that this conception of region envisions them as “dynamic entities that have changed over time according to the interaction of the people within the region politically, economically, socially and/or culturally with people in other regions,

⁴¹ See, for example, Anssi Paasi “Bounded spaces in the mobile world: deconstructing ‘regional identity’” *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 93, no. 2 (2002): 137-148. Paasi contends “Discourses on regions and regional identity, in which actors invest their interests and presuppositions in things, may actually create the ‘reality’ that they are describing or suggesting.” 139.

⁴² Janine Brodie, in her well-cited work *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, agrees that factors such as “resource endowments, climate or other physical features do influence the kind and level of economic development in a particular geographic space,” but contends that they are secondary to capitalist accumulation structured by national development strategies when seeking to understand how territory (and region) become a cleavage in Canadian politics and, as such, a significant element of Canadian (political) identity. Janine Brodie, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 4.

⁴³ Francis notes the limitations of “formal regions”: they become static entities, fixed in geological time with no provision for development, there is an absence of social/humanistic elements which would contribute to a regional character, and it tends to give a skewed view of region. For example, he notes that “in terms of boundaries, as John Herd Thompson notes in his introduction to *Forging the Prairie West*, only one side of the huge quadrilateral that encloses the prairie provinces is ‘natural,’ the Rocky Mountains. The other sides are ‘political’ not geographical.” Moreover, the physical geography is not consistent throughout, which raises the question of what defines the region. Francis, “Regionalism, W.L. Morton,” 571.

⁴⁴ Bone, *Regional Geography*, 9.

or the nation, or internationally.”⁴⁵ Functionally, Francis suggests all Canadian regions have either been dominant heartlands or subservient hinterlands – though these terms are relational depending on the frame of reference, and a hinterland’s heartland can change over time while still remaining in a subordinate position. Although some scholars have moved beyond an economic interpretation⁴⁶ of the core/periphery or heartland/hinterland relationship, Francis contends that a weakness of this perspective is its overwhelming tendency to conceive of region as a predominantly economic entity.⁴⁷ For example, in subdividing the periphery, Bone suggests there are upward transitional regions (economy and population are growing/diversifying), downward transition regions (the economy is declining, unemployment is increasing and out-migration is occurring), and resource frontiers (spatially furthest removed from the core, little development has occurred).⁴⁸ The focus on the economy,⁴⁹ while diminishing the socio-cultural facets of region, still has some merit for projects such as this study – I will examine it in the context of developmental theories and Canadian political economy later in this introduction. Each of the regions under review in this study – Labrador, Northern Ontario and Cape Breton – can be described as transition zones experiencing acute economic or demographic changes that produce instability and anxiety. Without slipping into strict materialist-reductionist reasoning, the

⁴⁵ Francis, “Regionalism, W.L. Morton,” 571. Bone employs a similar definition: “a synthesis of physical and human characteristics that, combined with its distinctiveness from surrounding regions, produce a regional character and a sense of place.” Bone, *Regional Geography*, 9.

⁴⁶ Brodie helpfully categorizes heartland-hinterland as a theory of regional imbalance which is relational as opposed to theories of regional self-balance which compare pre-determined geographic areas for causes of uneven spatial development. Brodie, *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, 21.

⁴⁷ Another weakness of the core/periphery model’s relational nature also results in a situation where one region only exists when compared to another and where a region must be either dominant or dominated.

⁴⁸ Bone, *Regional Geography*, 22.

⁴⁹ Region and regional development have also been a topic of growing interest within the Economics discipline. For a review of theoretical trends within the field, and moves towards interdisciplinary studies and modelling, see: Roberta Capello and Peter Nijkamp. “Regional Growth and Development Theories Revisited.” 1-19. URL: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0875/db893b8fb463a979941138169554c9da2da7.pdf> The authors note a trend towards endogenous approaches to determinants of growth deriving from spatial proximity, relational proximity and institutional proximity. Moreover, a move towards dynamic approaches where time is encapsulated in spatial analyses is pronounced, 8.

existence of proto-secessionist protest movements in these transition zones is, at the very least, noteworthy.

A third perspective of region Francis identifies in Canadian historical writing is the “mythic region” – an imagined landscape of the mind or mindscape created by artists, writers and other cultural producers.⁵⁰ The region as a “state of mind,” or a figment of the imagination, does not exist until it is brought into being by human consciousness and presumably only exists as long as it maintains cultural capital. Possessing the spirit, if not the precise context, of Benedict Anderson’s celebrated term “imagined communities,” mythic regions are a form of territorial-based identity network, which achieve meaning through human communication and negotiation. Robert Irwin, in his creative, yet frustrating, article “Breaking the shackles of the metropolitan thesis: Prairie history, the environment and layered identities,” employs such a concept. In imploring Canadian regional historians to reconsider the metropole-hinterland thesis and the well-worn track of “limited identities,” Irwin seeks nothing less than a paradigmatic shift from perspectives that situate region with a national context.⁵¹ He suggests that regions such as the Prairie West must be considered as an autonomous layer of consciousness and calls for a tempered return to environmental determinism. Irwin contends that regionalist historians operating within a nation-region relationship give hierarchal privilege to a political unit (the nation) that has been largely analyzed based on European theorizing. As opposed to applying an alien theory to a domestic identity, Irwin has called for the creation of distinct theories to explain the particulars of regions such as the Prairie West. Although Francis notes this conception of region helpfully looks within an area to find identity instead of looking at it through its relation to another, it is “vague and imprecise” and seeks to find and impose unity of thought rather than celebrate diversity.⁵²

⁵⁰ Francis, “Regionalism, W.L. Morton,” 572.

⁵¹ Robert Irwin, “Breaking the shackles of the metropolitan thesis: Prairie history, the environment and layered identities,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 98.

⁵² Francis, “Regionalism, W.L. Morton,” 572.

Francis's fourth identified conceptual approach to region is a postmodern perspective. In reaction to the mythic region, the postmodernist argues that there is no solitary imagined region, but a multiplicity of imaginings engaged in competition. Unlike the mythic approach to region, which, like some nationalist projects, seeks to build one true identity through a unity of experience and purpose, the postmodern approach demands a "recognition of the 'Other' in the regional experience, and to construct out of that recognition a multiplicity of myths and images, or ... 'many mindscapes.'"⁵³ The strength of this approach – its ability to envision multiple regional projects in competition with each other and often overlapping – is also its chief weakness. If everything is a region, then nothing is a region, and Francis notes the very meaning of the concept is in peril.⁵⁴ This type of critique has been made of post-modernism generally; nevertheless, for the purpose of this investigation there is value in recognizing that while the myth(s), which create mindscapes, are undeniably slippery, contested and do bleed into one another, the imaginary is still an important consideration when studying the lived experience as it informs how material elements and dynamics are perceived and engaged. It shapes how people define a region and provides a frame of reference.

A fifth potential approach to region not mentioned by Francis as being evident in Canadian historical writing at the time of his review – though one that has been employed within Canadian political economy – comes from radical regional theorists who argue that the concept of region should be "unbound" to territory and the concept of space prioritized over place. Geographer Ash Amin has provocatively suggested a move towards seeing regions as relational networks: nodes, without territorial integrity, which "gather flow and juxtapose diversity," are porous and are continuously

⁵³ Francis, "Regionalism, W.L. Morton," 574.

⁵⁴ Francis, "Regionalism, W.L. Morton," 574. Francis's article notes that famed Western Canadian historian W. L. Morton used all four of these approaches in his studies of the West at different points in his career, and generally in a chronological fashion.

changing in composition, character, and reach.⁵⁵ He argues that if the concept becomes a territorially disembodied spatial formation, it can be “summoned up as temporary placement of ever moving material and immanent geographies, as ‘hauntings’ of things that have moved on but left their mark as situated moments in distanced networks, as contoured products of networks that cross a given place.” Amin envisions regions (and cities) as “hydra-like” and “without prescribed or proscribed boundaries.”⁵⁶

As a radical geographer, Amin pushes non-territoriality to its extreme, and wonders if there is anything distinctive about *place politics* at all or if questions about political choice and democracy in cities and regions could be found anywhere – from the household, to the nation or the Internet.⁵⁷ Although this may seem to be an over-simplification or reductionist, he frames this question in way to suggest that certain political debates should not solely be the purview or priority of one type of network over another,⁵⁸ arguing that there is nothing to be gained by fetishizing cities and regions as particular kinds of community. As a proposition for contemporary and future imaginings of region, such a philosophical argument has merit and is worthy of debate. But it is problematic from a historical perspective. Amin’s conceptualization provides a valuable analytical tool for scholars examining both material and non-material network dynamics in a past setting; this is something of which none of the aforementioned approaches in Francis’ survey appear capable. Nevertheless, region is not a depoliticized category of analysis. Regionalists – promoters of regional projects – *have* fetishized the

⁵⁵ Ash Amin, “Regions unbound: towards a new politics of place,” *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 86, no. 1 (2004): 34.

⁵⁶ Amin, “Regions Unbound,” 34.

⁵⁷ Amin, “Regions Unbound,” 42 (italics in original). Westfall’s review suggests such ideas in radical geography are not new. Citing Viv Nelles’ and Abraham Rotstein’s *Nationalism or Local Control: Responses to George Woodcock*, he wrote: “In one case this type of anti-nationalistic analysis has prompted one critic to plead for the radical regionalization of Canada, with political power devolving down to the level of the neighbourhood and the city block.” Westfall, “On The Concept of Region,” 7.

⁵⁸ For example, foreign affairs and security.

concept historically⁵⁹ and members of the body politic have understood and positioned themselves, at least in part, through a lens of territory and place, which can be much more stationary and resistant to fluctuations than Amin envisions. Contrary to his plea for future agnostic engagement with region, individuals or groups adopting the cloak of region have engaged in certain kinds of political action to achieve specific aims and created a discourse through which other observers experienced and understood this action.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, by dispensing with essentialized notions of region locked into definable land and, rather, recognizing them as historically situated moments passing over particular places, scholars of region can critically illuminate ahistorical imaginings of regions, which have often pervaded popular discourse. The notion of “hauntings” of place also lends itself very well to recent historical scholarship on memory.⁶¹ Amin rightly notes that one “obvious implication [of his conceptualization] is that there is no pre-given place for a politics of regionalism. Any such outcome can only be the result of a deliberate campaign to fashion a community of local sentiment (over other political projects).”⁶² Region, then, must be understood dually as an observable, empirical concept (and category of analysis), and as the result of explicitly political projects. The presence of the former in a given area does not necessarily presage the emergence of the latter (the subject constructed through the politics of regionalism), for the latter is a deliberate imagining while the former is a more arbitrary and unplanned, yet observable,

⁵⁹ Amin does express this sentiment in his piece; however, his article is not primarily geared towards a historical analysis.

⁶⁰ See: Sean Cadigan. “Regional Politics are Class Politics: A Newfoundland and Labrador Perspective on Regions,” *Acadiensis* 35, no. 2 (Spring/Printemps 2006): 163-168. Cadigan argues region and regionalism were used to obscure the real class interests at stake, while he follows McKay’s reasoning and use of dependency theory.

⁶¹ See: David Lowenthal, “History and Memory,” *Public Historian* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 30-39; David Lowenthal, “Fabricating Heritage,” *History and Memory* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 5-24; James E. Young, “Between History and Memory: The Uncanny Voices of Historian and Survivor,” *History and Memory* 9, no. 1/2, (Fall 1997): 47-58; Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, eds., *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press, 2003.

⁶² Amin, “Regions Unbound,” 38.

nexus of flows (environmental, material, human, etc).⁶³ However, as with all social constructs, even the empirical region can never be fully depoliticized, for the very process of observing and describing its attributes itself contributes to a regional project of sorts.

Friesen, who draws heavily on geographers' work on region for his own historiography, appears to have come to the same conclusion but with two key differences. First, he opts for three 'types' of regions instead of two – denoted (empirical), instituted, and imagined – and second, unlike Amin, he continues to prioritize place over space.⁶⁴ I find the separate categorization of an 'institutional' region to be somewhat problematic. I would argue that while the characteristics of denoted regions and imagined regions can be delineated and made distinct, the instituted region is simply an imagined region that has a particular form of what Michel Foucault calls governmental power⁶⁵ – in this case formal legal power. Foucault and his adherents have argued that there are a variety of different kinds of power and sites of power. While an 'instituted' region might be a useful sub-categorization of imagined regions – indeed Bjorn Hettne's staircase of regionness (an approach to comparative global studies) includes it as a possible outcome of a process of regionalism – I would argue it is not so distinctive as to warrant inclusion as a third type of region.

⁶³ This is a clear example of the ontological issue MacKay identified. The multiple definitions of region lead to genuine confusion.

⁶⁴ Part of the prioritization of place over space may simply be a result of the very limited section in which he was able to expand upon his examples of denoted spaces. However, in speaking about gun culture he notes a division between metropolis and hinterland, and when addressing artistic cultural production and television consumption he identifies Quebec and the 'rest of Canada' as distinct regions. Although he suggests these types of regions are far more fluid than essentialist regions, they are still 'place identities' that he argues are both "clearly discernible and definable" (Friesen, "Space and Region," 10). I would question whether these 'place identities' are discernible and definable in a quantifiable way. At best these proposed regions are nodes of flow conceived through imagined place identities. Without the 'place' as a linguistic anchor (whether metropolis, hinterland or province) it becomes exceedingly difficult to understand 'region' in a conventional manner.

⁶⁵ See: Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality – With Two Lectures By and an Interview With Michel Foucault*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102-103.

In short, distinctions must be clearly drawn between region as an empirical analytical concept and region(alism) as a political project (and action) that imagines, employs and distorts this concept for its own purposes. The key to unlocking its potential is remembering that while the former can be an abstract, dynamic and territorially unstable category of analysis, which can provide insight into historical flows, the latter is an imagined entity that, in the minds of at least some adherents, can be territorially specific, exclusive in terms of membership and achieve a greater sense of ahistorical permanence. Scholars should thus be cognizant that any quantifiable region, however it is defined, may have little resonance among the people(s) living within it – yet still be of great utility for understanding aspects of their lived experience. Similarly, the hauntings of the past, which people ascribe to a particular place as an aspect of their identity and the manner in which they imagine their contemporary sense of place and space, are inherently difficult, if not entirely impossible, to quantify. Yet, if certain imagined regions achieve success as political projects, regionalists can gain access to levers of power, which may influence flows over such places. Region is an inextricably Janus-faced concept – at once oppositional and integrated.

This study focuses its analysis on three ‘imagined regions’ and specific examples of the types of political projects that attempted to utilize existing regional identities and/or fashion such identities for various purposes. Consequently, region as an empirical analytical concept is used somewhat sparingly. The political actors in this study drew upon an extensive number of economic and socio-cultural themes – both contemporary and historical – from which to build the case for the distinctive nature of their proposed region. A comprehensive study of any one of these themes could produce a dissertation in the fields of economics, development studies, sociology, mass communications or linguistics, among others. Rather than interrogating whether these actors could justifiably claim functional regional integrity and consistency with any or all of these themes, this investigation instead probes questions about why they

sought to employ these themes and how well they resonated with the populations they sought to represent.

I employ an historical approach and method for this study. In reviewing primary sources relating to these parties, I explore their organization, activities, ideas and discourse through a lens that attempts to understand them within a temporal context. In the span of less than two decades, multiple sub-provincial regional parties appeared in Canada, including the NLP, the NOHP and the CBLP. These parties, while achieving varying levels of success, all maintained a notable presence within the political scene for several years; as such, they were certainly something more than a flash in the pan, while definitely not comparable to more durable partisan groupings. The absence of similar partisan groupings before these decades would, presumably, suggest factors helping to explain their emergence were either absent or social actors consciously declined to express regional sentiment and identity in this form. As such, placing them within the context of an evolving party system will further illuminate why some regionalists opted to take on the character of this type of interest group. In order to interrogate my source material and present my historical narrative and qualitative analysis, I therefore draw on other disciplinary approaches, techniques and understandings where appropriate.

As previously noted, this study will not exhaustively explain how the regions (and societies) these parties endeavoured to represent developed. Rather, it narrows its focus to exploring the creation of the parties themselves and how partisans (and other competing social actors) *used* region and appeals to a regional identity to promote their own interests and to advocate for what they believed to be in the interests of the region and its people. Additionally, it demonstrates how these parties can best be seen both as vehicles to achieve specific material goals while also serving as an avenue to socially and discursively construct, reconstruct and maintain regional identity. To facilitate this aim, I provide historically sensitive narrative case studies that touch upon a region's economic and social

development⁶⁶ while concentrating on the party leaders' actions and statements as the most fruitful site for analysis based on available source material and the characteristics of the party system in which they operated.

However, since arguments about the nature of (uneven) economic growth and development were major topics of discussion for regionalist promoters, it is beneficial to briefly investigate how other disciplines have theorized and/or approached the topic.

Geography, Political Culture, Political Economy and Regional Development Theories

From an historiographical perspective, navigating through interdisciplinary literature on region can be intensely frustrating; scholars often appear to be speaking over each other rather than to each other and without a common language. The absence of an agreed-upon vernacular, which MacKay mentioned in his critique on region, seems to be a result of multiple disciplines adopting the concept of region for their own purposes. Alicia Szajnowska-Wysocka's abridged review of concepts and theories of regional and local development provides a clear example of this difficulty. While submitting a concise overview of major theoretical schools in the field, including classical theories predominantly focusing on material economy⁶⁷ and newer multi-faceted endogenous development theories dealing with human capital and technology,⁶⁸ ontological clarity between theories becomes quite problematic. 'Regional' and 'local' are at times discussed quite distinctly (in terms of spatial scale) and also used

⁶⁶ The minimal references to regional culture within these narratives should not be read as a dismissal of its significance within regional identities. Rather, it reflects the parties' tendency to focus on the economies of these regions within their platforms and rhetorical appeals.

⁶⁷ See: the concept of economic base, the new theory of trade, the basic product theory, the concept of growth poles, the core peripheries model, regional innovation networks, the theory of production cycle, the theory of flexible production, regional (local) innovation networks and the theory of industry clusters. Alicia Szajnowska-Wysocka, "Theories of Regional and Local Development – Abridged Review," *Bulletin of Geography, Socio-Economic Series*, no. 12 (2009), 75-83.

⁶⁸ See: the concept of abstract and concrete space as seen through duality model of cultural pluralism and globalization, the concept of locality, the theory of actors in the net, the concept of self-organizing space, and the concept of path dependence. Szajnowska-Wysocka. "Theories," 83-88.

interchangeably, while other terms such as global and national are also thrown into the mix while never fully problematized.⁶⁹ The relational nature of these terms creates difficulty when examining more than one theory at a time. For example, when commenting on the core-periphery model,⁷⁰ she notes that “what appears as a periphery on the national scale, may be seen as the centre in the local or regional scale, and vice versa: a national centre may be the periphery of world economy. Modern economy is a system of complementary structural components such as: core – world centre, semi-peripheries and peripheries.”⁷¹

Despite slippage within terminology, these types of models and concepts are useful for a general understanding of some of the dynamics evident in a study of the regions examined in this dissertation. To illustrate, in Canada, on a national level, there is no shortage of sentiment that ‘central Canada’ and often ‘Ontario’ in particular were viewed as the political and economic centre/core during the 20th century while regions such as ‘Atlantic Canada’ were conceived as part of the periphery.⁷² If the frame of reference were reduced to the constituent parts of this core-periphery relationship, new cores and peripheries emerge. Northern Ontario, if employed as a separate regional unit, could also be viewed as peripheral to some of the core economic and political levers of the larger province of Ontario or ‘central Canada’ as a whole. Likewise, Labrador and Cape Breton, both homogenized as part of the ‘Atlantic Canadian’ periphery could be viewed as secondary to core areas within their respective

⁶⁹ Definitional difficulty is something Szajnowska-Wysocka discusses, (85).

⁷⁰ The core/periphery model has found historical expression in work by Innis (and his staples thesis) and in J.M.S. Carless’s series of Donald G. Creighton lectures collected in the book *Frontier and Metropolis* – though both focus on periods before the latter half of the 20th century.

⁷¹ Szajnowska-Wysocka. “Theories,” 79.

⁷² See, for example: Michael J. Troughton, Rural Canada and Canadian Rural Geography,” *Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 39, no.4 (December 1995), 290-305. As a geographer, Troughton is careful in his terminology and offers a contoured assessment, yet his article traces economic development and decline among a variety of regional groupings within Canada; see also: Maurice Yeates. “The core/periphery model and urban development in central Canada,” *Urban Geography* 6, no. 2 (1985), 101-121. Yeates divides core-periphery development over the course of the 20th century, noting that “Central Canadian” core, with poles in Toronto and Montreal developed mid-century, but transformed from incipient to mature development by about 1971.

provinces or the 'Atlantic Canada' region as a whole. Thought of in spatial terms, this model has some great potential to explain power dynamics if conceived as a solar system. The strongest gravitational pull emerges from the centre, but individual planets in the system have their own gravitational pull, which can affect other objects in their own orbit, distinct from the whole though still part of the larger system. To extend this rather imperfect metaphor, polarity may change over time and new satellites may come into orbit, yet the phenomena of relational pulls remain.

Where models such as these fail – or the very least where their limits become apparent – is in their inability to explain multiple aspects of regional character. If accepted as relational terms, not all cores and peripheries are operating under the same constraints and with the same levers of power – economic, political, social or cultural. This very much affects the nature of each relationship. The classical theories of development Szajnowska-Wysocka outlines tend to be particularly reductionist, culturally absolutist and too blunt for thoughtful historical analysis.⁷³ Endogenous theories, which emerged as a response to the failings of classical theories of development, are multidimensional and flexible, yet most appear to be presentist or predictive of future development and are not easy to apply in a retrospective fashion. Some theories that do employ an historical element do not appear to be extremely useful either. For example, the path dependence model is used to explain development processes that do not conform to other theoretical rules. This theory, which employs an evolutionary modeling, contends some regions formed in the early industrialization period may be “stuck on the

⁷³ For example, she cites Martin and Schumann's "20:80 society" formula where one-fifth of the society develops world integration while the remaining four-fifths are redundant, a theory by the Tofflers which divides the world into dynamic and static cultures where certain regions will remain in "civilization regress." Szajnowska-Wysocka, "Theories," 83. These value-judgment infused theories seem to argue that certain regions will become or remain cultural backwaters based on their capacity to adapt to economic changes. Similar arguments in the Canadian regionalist historical literature have been strenuously challenged. For example, see: E.R. Forbes, "In Search of a Post-Confederation Maritime Historiography, 1900-1967," *Acadiensis* 8, no. 2 (Autumn, 1978), 3-21; and Philip Buckner, "CHR Dialogue: The Maritimes and Confederation: A Reassessment," *Canadian Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (1990), 1-45. Both challenge a stereotypical view of the Maritimes where a cultural conservatism and "intellectual lethargy" are used to explain developments (or lack of developments) in the area both before and after Confederation.

path... where the lack of complete restructuring hinders regional development.”⁷⁴ Once again, the focus is on the present and the utility is presumably predictive, but the past is employed to explain the context of the region’s development. From an historical perspective, this evolutionary logic of the historical ‘subject’ becomes problematic because it denies the possibility of rupture or change based on social actors’ agency.

Although these theories, applied writ-large, are not suitable for an historically-informed approach, they do offer a window into the world of the social sciences and, particularly, attempts to quantify region for empirical comparison. The types of indicators that these theories utilize (such as industrial economic base, access to foreign markets, communication, transport, technological innovation, education, public administration, institutions, social capital, entrepreneurial culture, political engagement, living conditions, territorial identity and social ties) reveal particular areas a comprehensive investigation into region must explore.

For example, in their widely cited article “Regional Political Cultures in Canada,” political scientists Richard Simeon and David J. Elkins employed voter data from Canadian post-election surveys to explore differences in political orientation among the populations of the Canadian provinces.⁷⁵ The study found marked differences in political efficacy and political trust among voters in Canadian provinces and among citizens belonging to different language groups and some contradictory results in terms of political involvement that were independent of certain variables. The authors noted that the existence of provincial variations did not mean provinces should be seen as homogenous, nor that

⁷⁴ Szajnowska-Wysocka. “Theories,” 86.

⁷⁵Richard Simeon and David J. Elkins, “Regional Political Cultures in Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1974), 397-437. In this article they contend: “there are substantial regional divergences in some of the basic attitudes [namely efficacy, trust, and involvement] towards politics and political activity displayed by mass publics which cannot be accounted for by any plausible control variables,” 398. Simeon and Elkins followed a path first broken by Mildred Schwartz’s book *Politics and Territory*.

groups were homogenous irrespective of region. Rather, they pointed to a “complex pattern of interaction between regional and other factors,” that helped to explain the attitudes of individual voters and how they expressed these attitudes through their political behaviour.⁷⁶

Simeon and Elkins effectively used quantitative measures to identify region(alism) as an important and independent factor to understand political attitudes and behaviour (part of a regional political culture), while still noting the limits of such methods and the importance of interrogating other factors. Moreover, by introducing control variables, they created a space to observe the simultaneous effects of regional and socioeconomic variables in order to “ask whether variations *within* provinces follow similar patterns...”⁷⁷ Nevertheless, by employing region “as a descriptive statement about the way provinces or other areas differ” their study deems regions to be containers; and, as such, they choose provinces as their organization unit of study.⁷⁸

Janine Brodie eloquently critiques this approach in *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*. First, she notes that at the time of Simeon and Elkin’s study, few Canadians equated the term “region” with province. Second, she notes that public opinion surveys are “notoriously difficult to interpret and [are] often unstable over time.”⁷⁹ To illustrate, she cites public opinion poll data suggesting a decline in identification with provincial governments between 1974 and 1984 in all but two provinces, compared to the increase recorded by Simeon and Elkins in the preceding decade. Moreover, she questions whether feeling that one level of government is more important than another tells us more about regionalism and loyalty to space as opposed to an assessment of Canada’s institutional regime.

⁷⁶ Simeon and Elkins, 432.

⁷⁷ Simeon and Elkins, 416. (Italics in original)

⁷⁸ Simeon and Elkins, 399. Ailsa Henderson notes that Simeon and Elkins updated and expanded their work in subsequent publications. Moreover, in a more recent test of their regional cluster findings, Henderson’s own work supported their model’s conclusions. See: Ailsa Henderson, “Regional Political Cultures,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 37:3 (2004), 595-615.

⁷⁹ Janine Brodie, 8.

Brodie concludes that objective and subjective measures indicate that geographic space is an important element to consider in the Canadian political economy; however,

the spatial dimension of Canadian politics involves more than sterile analytic distinctions, drawing lines on a map and searching for empirical irregularities in the location of things, attitudes and events. Regions in Canada have concrete political and social dimensions that are deeply embedded in our collective historical experience. They are much more than arbitrary intellectual constructs.⁸⁰

In short, when social scientists use regions as containers to explore difference empirically – whether political attitudes and behaviour or some other element – their method requires them to pre-determine the container. Using formal regions – however they are defined – to conduct these tests both obscures the dynamism of regional politics and perhaps contributes a bias, which (unintentionally) supports the continued existence and importance of these formal regions. This critique, which can apply to quantitative studies more widely, has been noted (and addressed) by some practitioners of Canadian political behaviour.⁸¹

The formal approach to region – employed by political scientists like Simeon and Elkins to study political attitudes and behaviour and used by regional developmental theorists to explain the development (or underdevelopment) of a given area – requires concrete boundaries and distinction between regions. An alternative – the relational approach – conceives of regions as:

part of an interconnected whole in which one regional configuration is largely a function or expression of another. Regions, following this account, are not arbitrary constructs but *effects or consequences of historical relationships*... Regions are shaped and *reshaped* by dynamic political, social and economic linkages that connect geographic space in relationships and interdependencies.⁸²

⁸⁰ Janine Brodie, 12.

⁸¹ See, for example, Joanna Everitt and Brenda O’Neil, eds. *Citizen Politics: Research and Theory in Canadian Political Behaviour*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002. The field emerged as a reaction to political studies focused on institutions that neglected political actors and processes. While the authors note the criticism lodged against the positivist foundations of behavioural research in political science, they contend modern practitioners have dispensed with the notion that complete objectivity is possible, refined and varied their methodologies, and employed multivariate analysis to provide greater context and nuance, 440-447.

⁸² Brodie, 17. (Emphasis in original).

Brodie calls this approach explicitly political, notes that it is often associated with the work of political economists and radical geographers and highlights its emergence from deep roots within Canadian economic history and political sociology. To better understand how a relational approach, which is also referred to as “the new regional geography,”⁸³ may be used in practice, it’s necessary to explore how a discipline like political economy employs it as a part of a comprehensive contextual study where region is the focal element.

“Simultaneously a ‘tradition,’ a field of study and a paradigm,”⁸⁴ political economy has been described as a “holistic approach to understanding society from a materialist perspective.”⁸⁵ Well-known practitioner Wallace Clement contends this multidisciplinary⁸⁶ approach strives to build from “a totality which includes the political, economic, social and cultural, where the whole is greater than its parts” because “to understand each of the political, economic, social and cultural requires contextualization of

⁸³ See, for example, Munroe Eagles explanation in his chapter in the edited collection *Regionalism and Party Politics in Canada*: “Region is interpreted or defined largely as a product of human action and interaction. Regions are not conceptualized as containers to be statistically defined by spatial analysis and regional scientists in terms of their homogeneity on some measure. Rather, regions are thought of as evolving projects, the creation of human actors working with other residents and using the elements available in their geographically, historically, and institutionally defined environment.” In this approach, context is key. Eagles quotes Kevin Cox’s insightful distillation of the approach: “Social life, including the economic, the cultural, and the political, always is situated, and the strategies people and organizations engage in, and the new structures of social relations they form and which serve to encapsulate their activities in the future, can be understood only in terms of the particular resources and rules, respectively available and operative, in particular contexts. These contexts can, of course, exist at a variety of geographic scales and are in a constant state of formation, transformation, and dissolution.” Munroe Eagles, “Political Geography and the Study of Regionalism.” In Lisa Young and Keith Archer, eds. *Regionalism and Party Politics in Canada*, Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2002, 11-12.

⁸⁴ Daniel Drache and Wallace Clement, eds. *The New Practical Guide to Canadian Political Economy*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), ix. They cite the liberal writings of Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, W.A. Mackintosh and Vernon Fowke and theoretical and historical work of Marxists C.B. Macpherson, H. Clare Pentland and Stanley Ryerson as its two intellectual streams; they point to how it incorporates multidisciplinary contributions into its own distinct theoretical tradition of materialism; and they view political economy perspective a paradigm through which we can “understand dynamic relationship between people within a specific society by identifying how that society has unfolded historically and, in particular, how its economic system is organically linked to the social/cultural/ideological/political order,” ix-x.

⁸⁵ Wallace Clement, ed. *Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Economy*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1997), 3.

⁸⁶ He notes that numerous fields, including history, geography communications and Canadian studies, include political economy streams, and the new Canadian political economy itself has been influenced by these associations. Clement, 6-7.

each with the other.”⁸⁷ Noting the economy itself has both structure and agency, Clement – perhaps with some contradiction considering the previous quotation – also writes:

For political economy, the economic provides the context, but the political, ideological and culture write the text of history and specify the particulars for each nation and the possibilities for the future. The script is one in which human actors have significant freedom of action within the limits and structures that political economy seeks to identify.⁸⁸

By adopting a materialist perspective, political economy views the way a society reproduces itself as fundamentally shaping relations between people. This understanding includes not only how a society fulfills basic economic needs, but also the social and political ways production, distribution and consumption are organized.⁸⁹ Within the Canadian context, political economy practitioners have interrogated numerous theories to explain development and its effect on socio-political relations, including staples-based dependency theory, Marxist and neo-Marxist critiques of the Innisian paradigm, dependent/dominant development and the Keynesian Growth model; more recent work within the field has incorporated feminist research methodology and practice and critical theory to open up new sites of investigation that both illuminate and complicate the question of economic, social, political and cultural development.⁹⁰

In her classic work, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, Janine Brodie provides a thoughtful explanation of many of these theories in the context of regional development,⁹¹ regional self-balance and regional imbalance. She draws on these theories to develop her own interpretation of Canadian regionalism that links government policies – and especially national development strategies – to patterns of uneven development; these patterns have led territory to become an important cleavage

⁸⁷ Clement, 3.

⁸⁸ Clement, 5.

⁸⁹ Clement, 3.

⁹⁰ Daniel Drache and Wallace Clement, eds. *The New Practical Guide to Canadian Political Economy*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), x-xxii, and Clement, 6-16.

⁹¹ See Janine Brodie, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), Chapter 2 (Theories of Regional Self-Balance), 21-36, and Chapter 3 (Theories of Regional Imbalance), 37-60.

in Canadian politics. While not denying the role climate, resource endowments and other physical features have played in this development, she contends that they are “of secondary importance to the process of capitalist accumulation that is structured by national development strategies.”⁹²

Brodie’s work is a significant touchstone for this dissertation for two reasons. First, her interpretation of Canadian regional development stresses the importance of the state as an historical actor⁹³ and highlights how political decisions both shape and limit present and future courses of economic development. In her words, “Uneven development... is largely a political creation whereby the state, through its expression of underlying class forces and its crucial role in facilitating economic development, shapes the contours of a national economy and national politics.”⁹⁴ While her interpretation may be challenged by other scholars within the discipline, the central role of the state and politics in facilitating (uneven) economic development is a perspective largely appearing to be shared by the regionalists who are the focus of my own study.⁹⁵ They see the state as the prime site for

⁹² Janine Brodie, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 4.

⁹³ Michael Bradfield offers another thought-provoking example of how the state’s decisions and actions can shape a region. In *Regional Economics: Analysis and Policies in Canada*, he suggests that when the Canadian government was trying to define the regions of northern Canada, there were a number of possibilities for which characteristics and factors to consider as organizing components. “If the purpose of defining northern regions is to expedite the exploration for and exploitation of the natural resources of the North, the regions could be defined on the basis of known resource deposits or geological formations. If the purpose is to determine land ownership rights and some priority for settling land claims of native groups, then regions could be defined on the basis of treaty areas. If the need for regional classification comes from a desire to assist the people of the North to achieve more of their goals and aspirations (i.e., to be more developed) then perhaps the logical criterion would be the capability to be self-supporting at a sufficiently high level of income that the people themselves do not feel an immediate need for government assistance.” Michael Bradfield, *Regional Economics: Analysis and Policies in Canada*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1988, 9. He notes that in most cases, there is no single criterion for defining regions and since data are usually published based on formal political jurisdictions, “we are left with no choice to have, for instance, an Ontario and Quebec region, even when for research purposes it would make sense to have a Toronto, a Montreal, and an eastern Ontario-western Quebec region,” 10. In essence, how a government decides to define a region (and for what purpose) greatly effects its actions there and effects on local populations. And, moreover, logical regions may not be the regions on which government policy is based. This mismatch may partly explain why government action (or inaction) can result in regional grievance.

⁹⁴ Brodie, 4.

⁹⁵ Brodie focuses on the federal state and national economic development strategies. However, the provincial state has also played a key role in political decisions which shape the accumulation and distribution of capital within regions.

action and view regionally-based partisan organization and representation as a way to direct action. Moreover, Brodie's readiness to adopt the relational analytical procedure for defining region, as opposed to the formal method, opens space for challenges to institutional definitions and the pre-determinations of region. As explained above, this is a welcome and necessary divergence from the way some social scientists employ the concept uncritically for empirical studies of regional behaviour and attitudes. From an historical perspective, the relational approach to region is appealing because it accepts the inherent fluidity of relationships, accounts for tensions that continually shape a relationship of interdependence and acknowledges the role of agency as people's actions work to maintain a relationship or alter it.

Although the 'how' and 'why' questions of regional development, which are central to political economy studies, are not a focus of this dissertation, the regionalists' general understanding of this concept did shape their political expression and response to the material circumstances in which they found themselves. My frame analysis largely examines the discourse employed by regionalists to explain their material conditions and, as such, the political economy paradigm is present within the historical narrative and analysis.

A Note on Political Party/Movement Development Theories

Much as geographers and political economy practitioners have attempted to develop models to explain regional development, political scientists have their own theories to explain how and why partisan groups or socio-political movements form. Generally speaking, approaches to political party studies begin by categorizing them according to their type of appeal and/or the manner in which they are organized; then, the party is examined within the context of an evolving party system to provide insight into what it reveals about individual interests, class formation, institutions or a combination of these.

In his essay “Ideological and Historical Perspectives,”⁹⁶ Joseph Wearing provides an example of the former approach. Wearing traces the ideological foundations and currents of a variety of Canadian parties by linking them to 10 types or ideological groupings, which appear common to most Western political parties. The growth of parties representing one or more of these ideological strains within a party system can thus be used to explain its character. For example, Wearing, writing in 1988, commented on how similar Canada’s major political parties had become – in essence representing different strains of liberalism. They had tended to become “catch all” or “brokerage parties.” Where minor parties had emerged, their existence tended to be noteworthy for pointing to elements of a society not adequately represented within these larger groupings.

The other approach investigates party organization, often in the context of a shifting party system. Here, typologies tend to include broadly-based “mass parties” with highly decentralized structures promoting membership involvement; cadre parties with centralized organization linked to the leader run by political elites; and devotee or personal parties completely organized around a charismatic leader. In “Three Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Politics,” R. K. Carty traces Canada’s party system through three historical periods based along the dominant type of party organization. He details shifts from an early period 1867-1921 with elite patronage-providing cadre parties tightly controlled by leaders and run out of constituencies, to a period where a changing society produced a shift to more decentralized party structure (1921-1957) where regional operations and concerns were key, to a more centralized system (1963-1993) where party leadership, electronic media and the emergence of a permanent national headquarters were defining elements.⁹⁷ In “The Evolution

⁹⁶ Joseph Wearing “Ideological and Historical Perspectives,” in Azoulay, Dan, ed. *Canadian Political Parties: Historical Readings*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1999, 5-26.

⁹⁷R.K. Carty, “Three Canadian Party Systems: An Interpretation of the Development of National Politics,” in Hugh G. Thorburn and Alan Whitehorn, eds. *Party Politics in Canada, 8th Edition*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001, 16-32. A fourth party system, characterized by a greater number of competitive parties, greater regionalization, fragmented and individualized messaging, declining deference to political elites and increases in direct participation, and

of Party Organization, 1900-1984” Dan Azoulay provides an historiographic overview of works adopting this approach – or works at least speaking to some aspects of organization within larger studies on parties.⁹⁸

While speaking to ideas of power and group politics more broadly, Miriam Smith’s introductory chapter in *A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life*, provides a distillation of major theoretical perspectives on group politics.⁹⁹ The pluralist approach focuses on an individual’s multiple and sometimes competing interests as opposed to exploring groups or structures. The government and state play a passive role in this theoretical approach. Responding to critiques from the other theoretical schools of thought discussed below, neo-pluralists refined the initial approach by acknowledging forms of systemic bias, which could prevent some individuals from organizing, and recognizing governments could also be active participants in forming policy. Marxist, neo-Marxist and Canadian political economy approaches focus on structure. They assume power relations are the result of “socially patterned behaviour, collective action and institutional and organizational configurations”¹⁰⁰ where social forces are organized into classes, and the (capitalist) state plays a key role in maintaining such a system.¹⁰¹

greater diversity based along social, ideological and organizational lines, 33-34. See, also: R. Kenneth Carty, William Cross and Lisa Young, eds. *Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.

⁹⁸ Dan Azoulay, “The Evolution of Party Organization in Canada, 1900-1984,” in Dan Azoulay, ed. *Canadian Political Parties: Historical Readings*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1999, 27-49.

⁹⁹ Miriam Smith, *A Civil Society: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. Briefly, she profiles the pluralist and neo-pluralist approach (a focus on individual interests as opposed to exploring groups or structures, the government and state play a passive role) (9-13, 21-22); the Marxist, neo-Marxist and Canadian political economy approach (power relations are the result of “socially patterned behaviour, collective action and institutional and organizational configurations,” where social forces are organized into classes, and the (capitalist) state plays a key role in maintaining such a system) (14-18); historical institutionalism (a state-centred approach that uses Weberian thought to demonstrate the state as independent and internally differentiated) (18-21); and social movement theory (a sociological approach focusing on grievances influencing collective behaviour or resource mobilization) (23-29). Smith states that she tends to refer to the latter three approaches to inform her own work. (30)

¹⁰⁰ Smith, 14.

¹⁰¹ Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson argue that class is key to understanding Canada’s federal party system. Even when it’s not evident in voting behaviour, it is present; rather, brokerage parties have fairly successfully suppressed its visibility. Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson, *Crisis, Challenge and Change: Party and Class in Canada Revisited*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991, 3.

Neo-Marxists expanded the Marxist concern with the economy by engaging with Gramsci's work on institutions that work to assert a dominant ideological hegemony. Practitioners of the new Canadian political economy adopted aspects of these approaches, particularly neo-Marxism, to demonstrate how structures limit the actions of political actors.

Historical institutionalism, a state-centred approach pioneered by Theda Skocpol, uses Weberian thought to demonstrate the state as independent, autonomous, internally differentiated. Additionally, this approach introduces the notion that "the values and preferences of collective actors are shaped by contingent policy processes (policy legacies) as much as by macrosocial forces (the capitalist economic system)."¹⁰² Finally, social movement theories propose a sociological approach to group politics that stresses the post-materialist identity politics. Smith explains: "There is no agreement among political scientists specifically or social scientists in general about the best way to study group and social movement politics," and each theoretical approach illuminates different aspects of collective action.¹⁰³

A. Brian Tanguay notes, regardless of their chosen approach, Canadian political scientists, focused their attention on "homegrown" parties until the 1980s.¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, the study of minor parties came first in Canada "and theories of third-party emergence are possibly the best-known and most influential contribution to the literature of comparative politics by Canadian social scientists."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Smith, 21.

¹⁰³ Miriam Smith, *A Civil Society: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018, p. 7. Smith states that she draws mostly from Canadian political economy, historical institutionalism and social movement theory to inform her work. (30)

¹⁰⁴ A. Brian Tanguay, "What's So Bad about Cultivating Our Own Theoretical Gardens? The Study of Political Parties in Canada," in Linda White, Richard Simeon, Robert Vipond, and Jennifer Wallner, eds. *The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science*, (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2008), 183. "Canadian researchers tended to cultivate their own theoretical gardens in the parties subfield, and it can be argued that the resulting blooms have sometimes been aesthetically pleasing, even if they have appealed mostly to a domestic, rather than international, audience." He suggests this focus was due, in part, to the idiosyncratic nature of the party system and the non-ideological make-up of both major national parties, (181).

¹⁰⁵ Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 185.

Path-breaking works by C.B. Macpherson (Alberta's Social Credit Party), Seymour Lipset (Saskatchewan's Commonwealth Co-operative Federation), and Maurice Pinard (Quebec's Social Credit Party) are routinely hailed for their contribution to this discussion. These scholars, among many others, were intrigued by Canada's apparent exceptionalism to "Duverger's Law," a principle stating single-member plurality electoral systems tend to produce two-party competition. The frequency of third-party emergence in Canada, both nationally and provincially, was thought (quite rightly) to be a rich site for investigation.

C.B. Macpherson's study was part of a landmark book series on Alberta's Social Credit Party, which Tanguay describes as non-rigid in its disciplinary boundaries, "often combining historical, institutional, and political economy analyses into an eclectic but fruitful theoretical framework."¹⁰⁶ Macpherson suggested the failure of Alberta to adopt a two-party system evident in other parts of Canada was largely due a "near-colonial relationship with eastern Canada," its perception of the Liberal and Conservative parties being "instruments of metropolitan power and pawns of the eastern financiers and industrialists," and finally the product of the province's generally homogeneous class structure that made a two-party system unnecessary.¹⁰⁷ Critics questioned MacPherson's class analysis; for instance, despite its similar demographics and historical development, Lipset noted that Saskatchewan was not fertile ground for Social Credit. He posited that while class was one important aspect of partisan cleavage, a one-product economy was more of an explanation for the rise of the CCF in the neighbouring province. Moreover, Lipset suggests the tendency for people in Saskatchewan to form organizations was a significant factor in advance of third-party development there.¹⁰⁸ Finally, Lipset examined party

¹⁰⁶ Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 183.

¹⁰⁷ Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 187.

¹⁰⁸ Alain Gagnon, "Third Parties: A Theoretical Framework Submitted, Two Case Studies Examined," Department of Political Science, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON: Occasional Papers, no. 6 (April 1980), 22. Gagnon also cites Larry Pratt and John Richards who argue there are rival metropolitan centres, different industries, and the source of capital that are recurring.

discipline inherited from the British parliamentary tradition and an electoral system that favours regional or local parties as other contributing factors. Although this institutional approach was enlightening, Lipset's own critics noted receptiveness to third-parties across Canada differed significantly despite similar parliamentary systems.¹⁰⁹ In short, reaction to MacPherson's study, particularly Lipset's institutional/ideological approach, further expanded domestic debate about minor party formation.¹¹⁰

Maurice Pinard's theories on the Social Credit breakthrough in Quebec have become similarly influential – although they were not widely employed by scholars at the time. Building on Neil Smelser's theory of collective behaviour, in *The Rise of A Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics*, Pinard offered a general theory on minor-party formation based on structural factors. The two key variables he identified were: First, the presence of specific grievances against the government among a section of the population (economic, political, ethnic, linguistic, class, regional, etc) that result from "gaps created between a group's expectations and its actual conditions"; and, second, one-party dominance where a traditionally weak opposition party is not considered to be the best or only vehicle for opposition.¹¹¹ Although other political scientists who tested the theory found numerous special cases and exceptions,¹¹² Pinard revised the one-party dominance variable to "a more general condition of structural conduciveness, that of political nonrepresentation of social groups through the party system,"

¹⁰⁹ Eric Belanger, "Third Party Success in Canada," in Alain G. Gagnon, Brian Tanguay, eds. *Canadian Parties in Transition*, Third Edition, (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 93-94.

¹¹⁰ Tanguay. "What's So Bad," 187-188.

¹¹¹ Belanger, "Third Party Success in Canada," 94-95.

¹¹² Testing the one-party dominance variable through aggregate data, Lemieux and Blais found the theory failed to replicate and proposed "weakness of traditional party attachments" or "unstable partisan identification" as alternatives. White also contended that minor "class parties" tended to develop during periods of "intense dissatisfaction within specific social classes toward the party system." Belanger, "Third Party Success in Canada," 94-95.

and distinguished between the types of minor parties¹¹³ more likely to arise in one-party dominant systems;¹¹⁴ moreover, recent studies have supported his focus on the aspect of grievances.¹¹⁵

Despite specific criticisms of their more general theories and conclusions, Tanguay explains that “[w]hat MacPherson and Pinard bring to the analysis of third parties is sensitivity to the importance of history and an appreciation of the need to combine different modes of analysis – notably the political with the economic – when trying to explain the phenomenon of minor party growth.”¹¹⁶

In a 1980 paper for Carleton University titled, “Third Parties: A Theoretical Framework Submitted, Two Case Studies Examined,” Alain Gagnon sought to expand upon these foundations further. While exploring why Canadian third parties have been durable and important factors in the political landscape as opposed to their American counterparts, Gagnon’s review of the existing published literature found three sets of factors had demonstrated analytical utility – institutional (i.e. the electoral system), conjunctural (i.e. a sudden change such as an economic crisis leading to a radical rupture) and structural (i.e. the permanent social classes).¹¹⁷ Gagnon’s research suggested cultural and psychological factors were also important, however.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ John McMenemy’s work on the typologies of these minor parties is particularly instructive.

¹¹⁴ Belanger, “Third Party Success in Canada,” 94. See: Maurice Pinard. *The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics*, Enlarged Edition, (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1975).

¹¹⁵ Belanger, “Third Party Success in Canada,” 95. See also: Éric Belanger, “The Rise of Third Parties in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37:3 (2004), 581-594. Perrella (2005) confirmed that grievances play an important role in electoral breakthroughs and found that “long-term economic grievances is related to voting for ‘non-mainstream’ parties in federal elections, providing support to Pinard’s argument about long-term economic grievances fueling support for third-parties.” Also, some studies of the success of the Confederation of Regions party in New Brunswick also support “pinardian factors”: the weakness of the provincial Progressive Conservatives and grievances among Anglophones with respect to bilingualism policies associated with the government.

¹¹⁶ Tanguay, “What’s So Bad,” 192.

¹¹⁷ He draws a distinction between conjunctural and structural factors: 1. conjunctural factors effect whole populations (though differently based on class) whereas structural factors are based on social class difference; 2. Conjunctural factors involve change (usually adverse) whereas structural factors are permanent. Gagnon, *Third Parties*, 22.

¹¹⁸ Gagnon, *Third Parties*, 1.

In motivating the importance of a cultural analysis, Gagnon looks to critics of Pinard's theoretical framework and his arguments in favour of structural conduciveness being essential to third-party formation. Gagnon notes that Lemieux, Gilbert and Blais find, for example, no structural conduciveness in Quebec prior to the rise of the Parti Québécois; there was, however, a more active and intense political participation since the start of the Quiet Revolution.¹¹⁹ In other words, the political culture in Quebec had changed and offered newly fertile ground for third parties. But, applying a cultural lens to analysis is fraught with difficulty, however. As Nelson Wiseman states, when writing about the role of political culture in fostering regional/national tensions, "The case for the salience of regional political cultures is as necessary to make as it is difficult to sustain. Regional grievances are undisputed features of the national political terrain, [but] the notion that regional political cultures drive them has not been well developed."¹²⁰ Belanger flags the potential for the perpetuation of stereotypes.¹²¹

Gagnon's suggestion of exploring psychological factors, which he noted were not yet much used by political scientists at the time of his writing, presaged one of the latest trends in the literature. In a 2011 review of motivational dimensions in social movements and contentious collective action, Pinard notes that social-psychological approaches (in addition to cultural perspectives), emerged in the late 1970s/early 1980s to complement and add critical depth to structuralist-centred approaches. The New Social Movements Approach – scholarship emerging from Western Europe in response to 1960s movements – was part of a turn exploring "why" collective action developed rather than the "how"

¹¹⁹ Gagnon, *Third Parties*, 22.

¹²⁰ Nelson Wiseman, *In Search of Canadian Political Culture*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 114.

¹²¹ Belanger, "Third Party Success in Canada," 96. For example, studies which posit a failure of minor third parties to develop in Atlantic Canada due to the population's perceived traditionalism and political inefficiency, appear outdated. Alternatively, some theorists argue changing societal values may be responsible for the birth of new parties; however, the editors/writers note that new political movements have not had to create new political parties to influence politics, nor would changing values necessarily explain sudden breakthroughs of these parties or why an existing party would not try to appeal to the movement.

questions asked by American researchers. Of particular note here is the framing perspective, in which grievances (a significant focus in Pinard's approach) are central determinants.

Employing a Framing Analysis

Framing is conceptualized in social movement scholarship as signifying work or meaning construction. It is, as Robert Benford and David Snow write,

an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction. It is active in the sense that something is being done, and processual in the sense of a dynamic, evolving process. It entails agency in the sense that what is evolving is the work of social movement organizations or movement activists. And it is contentious in the sense that it involves the generation of interpretative frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them. The resultant products of this framing activity are referred to as 'collective action frames.'¹²²

Benford and Snow's path-breaking work on framing processes inspired collective action scholars such as William Gamson and Bert Klandermans. As Pinard writes, Gamson noted the injustice frame was especially significant for collective action movements:

Drawing on Benford and Snow, 'he further distinguished three components of framing, that is, injustice, involving moral indignation against those responsible for it; agency, as a consciousness of political efficacy; and identity, the definition of a 'we' and adversarial 'they.' His empirical investigation led him to the conclusion that the injustice component was facilitating the adoption of the other two elements and was indeed the 'key to integrating all three elements of collective action frames.'¹²³

Klandermans' oft-cited *The Social Psychology of Protest*, further delineated three kinds of grievances that are components of a felt injustice – "the perception of illegitimate inequality, suddenly imposed grievances, and moral indignation about the violations of moral principles."¹²⁴ Of course,

¹²² Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, (August 2000), 614.

¹²³ Maurice Pinard. *Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 26.

¹²⁴ Pinard. *Motivational Dimensions*, 28.

grievances in and of themselves, are insufficient to support a movement. Channeling discontentment into participation and mobilization requires “reaching adherents and overcoming the dilemma of participating in the pursuit of a collective good by the appropriate play of collective and selective incentives, benefits and costs of participation.”¹²⁵

“If you have ever had a picture framed,” communications studies scholar Jim A. Kuypers writes, “you know that the frame you chose emphasized some elements of the picture at the expense of others. Similarly, if you were to reframe the picture you would notice that the very elements previously emphasized – colors, patterns, composition – would subsequently be de-emphasized by the new frame. Instead, a different combination of elements would be highlighted.”¹²⁶ Social scientists and rhetoricians employ the term from this analogy to describe how people can highlight certain aspects of ideas and events to encourage a particular impression of the facts. “Framing in this sense can be understood as taking some aspects of our reality and making them more accessible than other aspects,” he adds.¹²⁷

For a political movement, the way their activities, ideas and *raison d’être* are framed can make the difference between success and failure.¹²⁸ Yet the stakeholders’ power to choose these frames is constrained by a number of factors. “Politicians cannot simply construct the best-fitting frame from the cultural repertoire based on some kind of rational calculation,” Beata Huszka writes in *Secessionist Movements and Ethnic Conflict: Debate-Framing and Rhetoric in Independence Campaigns*:

¹²⁵ Pinard. *Motivational Dimensions*, 28.

¹²⁶ Jim A. Kuypers, *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2009), 181.

¹²⁷ Jim A. Kuypers, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 181. Offering a powerful contemporary example of the effects of framing political action, Kuypers frequently cites a study on media coverage of a Ku Klux Klan rally to illustrate how different rhetorical frames can influence an audience. Researchers presented study participants with one of two stories on a local KKK rally – one stressed issues relating to freedom of speech (generally a positive frame) in its coverage while the other highlighted the disruption to public order (generally a negative frame). Participants who saw the story framed through a lens of freedom of speech showed a statistically significant increase in tolerance for the Klan’s event compared to the pool who saw the rally portrayed through a public disruption lens.

¹²⁸ Beata Huszka, *Secessionist Movements and Ethnic Conflict: Debate-Framing and Rhetoric in Independence Campaigns*, Routledge Studies in Nationalism and Ethnicity, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.

This does not mean movement entrepreneurs cannot act strategically during the mobilization process. Yet essentially the frames that finally emerge are outcomes of ‘meaning contests’ that come about as a result of a dynamic interaction, in the ‘course of discussion of and debate about contested issues and events... which... encompass not only cultural materials (e.g. beliefs, values ideologies, myths and narratives, primary frameworks) of potential relevance, but also various sets of actors’ who have a stake in the issues.¹²⁹

David Snow and Robert Benford outline three core framing tasks activists undertake as they contribute to the ultimate meaning contest: “diagnostic framing,” “prognostic framing and “motivational framing.”¹³⁰ Diagnostic framing identifies a problem and attributes it to a particular agent. Among movements advocating political or economic change, like the regional protest movements under review in this dissertation, Snow and Benford note that an “injustice frame,” is fairly ubiquitous.¹³¹ For an injustice frame to resonate, interest groups must identify “victims” of an injustice and amplify their victimization. As Snow and Benford explain: “Since social movements seek to remedy or alter some problematic situation or issue, it follows that directed action is contingent on identification of the source(s) of causality, blame, and/or culpable agents. This attributional component of diagnostic framing attends to this function by focusing blame or responsibility. However, consensus regarding the source of the problem does not follow automatically from agreement regarding the nature of the problem.”¹³²

¹²⁹ Beata Huszka, *Secessionist Movements and Ethnic Conflict*, 1. For instance, Huszka, whose work focuses on ethnicity and minority groups within mostly European secessionist campaigns, has demonstrated how these movements sometimes employ economic frames or reformist pro-democracy frames in tandem with appeals to nationalism or as a way to build support for an inclusive movement which can draw support from minority groups. (1-2). Robert Benford and David Snow note that “a crucial feature that distinguishes collective action frames from schema and other cognitive constructs is that ‘[c]ollective action frames are not merely aggregations of individual attitudes and perceptions but also the outcome of negotiating shared meaning.’” See: Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, no. 1 (August 2000), 614.

¹³⁰ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” 615.

¹³¹ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” 615-616. The “injustice frame” is one of several frames which Benford and Snow identify as having sufficient scope, inclusivity, flexibility and cultural resonance to be considered “master frames” within collective action movement scholarship. Of the “master frames” they identify in their survey of sociological literature on the subject, I have encountered the following within my research on the three parties studied here: “rights frames,” “injustice frames,” “culturally pluralist frames,” “oppositional frames,” and a “return to Democracy frame.”

¹³² Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” 615-616.

Of the three major discursive arguments advanced by the parties I have identified, two appear to primarily employ a diagnostic “injustice frame.” First, the *exploitation argument*: a defined region’s natural and human resources had been and/or are being exploited for the benefit of another group (government, government-sanctioned industry and/or a different region) within an existing political unit; there is systemic inequality and unfairness between the region and the other group. A second discursive argument, which emerged when analyzing these parties, is what I term the *neglect and alienation argument*: a region and its population had found itself and/or its interests routinely ignored by another group (government, government-sanctioned industry and/or a different region); as a result, this region’s population feels estranged from the group and/or unable to effect change through existing channels. Although the “injustice frame,” is also present here, other “master frames,” were often linked to this argument, including the “rights frame” and the “return to democracy frame.” A final major diagnostic argument is *the diversity argument*: a region and its populations have certain special needs and/or values that are not fully understood or adequately addressed within the larger political unit as it is currently structured. Here, a “culturally pluralist frame” was most commonly employed. It should be noted that in attempting to delineate the parties’ discursive arguments into these types of categories I have found there is much discursive slippage and/or overlap. Activists within these parties and other commentators from the time were trying to make sense of complex circumstances, which touched upon many aspects of their life and experiences, and none of these arguments were self-contained.

Moreover, the nascent parties were not alone in advancing these arguments. Other regionalists called attention to these types of problems, including members of the population at-large, members of other parties and independent media commentators; where these political actors usually diverged was in the prognostic framing task. Here, the regionalist parties offered a primary prognostic frame – the *party argument* – supported by several other arguments in the form of their platform. The party argument put forward the idea that existing political representation was either unable or unwilling to

effect positive change for the region and its population. A regionally-based party would inherently *understand* the region and regional population's values, needs and problems, *empathize* with its sense of exploitation, neglect, and alienation and could be an effective *advocate* for the region's interests over other competing interests. Specifically, a regional party could potentially hold the balance of power in a legislature and work as a bloc to get concessions from a minority government.

As Benford and Snow explain, since prognostic framing, like other framing activities, takes place within a multi-organizational field, a social movement organization's "prognostic framing activity typically includes refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents as well as a rationale for its own remedies."¹³³ An opponent's "counter framing," of the movement's activities and prognosis can put the movement on the defensive and/or force it "to develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might be the case."¹³⁴ In the case of these movements' opponents – particularly partisan opponents, but also skeptical non-partisan elements such as some parts of the news media – common counter framing included labelling these parties as "separatist" and destabilizing agents, doomed to being a perpetual opposition that would remove regional voices from parties capable of forming government, and defining their leadership as political opportunists or gadflies who were unsuitable as representatives for the regional population. In the case of the three parties in this study, these counter frames negatively affected their framing strategies and ultimately their ability to succeed to varying degrees, particularly as frames undermining the credibility of these parties (in terms of consistency, empirical evidence or the believability of their leadership) could affect frame resonance.¹³⁵

¹³³ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 617.

¹³⁴ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 617.

¹³⁵ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 619. The authors note (622) a study by Heitlinger is methodologically instructive for movement framing researchers because it explores failed framing attempts. See: A. Heitlinger. "Framing feminism in post-communist Czech Republic," *Communist/Post-Communist Studies* 29, (1996), 77-93.

Finally, the “motivational” framing task provides the “agency” component of collective action frames that “provides a ‘call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.”¹³⁶ In his study of more than a dozen groups advocating for nuclear disarmament, Benford identified four motivational frames employed to promote collective action: frames about the “severity,” “urgency,” “likelihood of change,” and the “necessity and propriety of taking action.”¹³⁷ Using these frames as a starting point for analysis of the three parties in this study, I find that members of parties tended to rely on appeals to the severity of the problem and the urgency of the problem when discussing the state of the regional economy or infrastructure and development as a part of the exploitation argument, appeals to the likelihood of change when using the alienation and neglect and party arguments, and appeals to the necessity and propriety of taking action when employing the diversity argument. As this study explains, the relative success of these motivational frames to promote mobilization varied, due in large part to their resonance.

Successful collective action frames tend to have a greater degree of resonance derived from interacting factors relating to credibility and salience. In their indispensable article “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” Benford and Snow note that the degree to which a frame is credible is a function of its consistency,¹³⁸ empirical underpinnings (believability), and the credibility of the people making claims. Salience is derived from a frame’s centrality (in the hierarchy of beliefs and values), experiential commensurability (personal relatability versus abstract concepts), and

¹³⁶ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” 617.

¹³⁷ Robert D. Benford. “‘You Could Be the Hundredth Monkey’: Collective Action Frames and Vocabularies of Motive within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement,” *Sociological Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (May 1993), 201.

¹³⁸ For example, two leaders of the regional movement parties analyzed in this study defected or may have been perceived to have defected to other parties (Burgess (NLP) to the Liberals, Deibel (NOHP) attempted to become nominated as a Progressive Conservative candidate). These actions undermined the party argument. The parties also had some difficulty contemplating how to handle the question of secession/provincehood and the NOHP explicitly changed its position over time. These actions strengthened the credibility of counter frames against these movement entrepreneurs and weakened their own prognostic framing attempts.

narrative fidelity (cultural resonance through myths and ideology). Regionalist activists making these claims pointed to examples of material conditions that revealed disparity their audience could either readily see, feel or believe to be true. Drawing on Gramscian notions, framing initiatives combined consent and coercive techniques to build a coalition of commonsense regionalists could exploit. Examining the framing processes used by the parties in this study, the types of counter-frames used against them, and adjudicating their resonance among audiences provides an excellent comparative framework to evaluate their conceptions of region and relative successes and failures as elements of political movements.

In two subsequent analytical chapters, using both published and unpublished sources,¹³⁹ I outline and explore the major arguments – exploitation, alienation/neglect, diversity – used by both party and non-party regionalists to diagnostically frame circumstances facing people within a defined¹⁴⁰ area of a province. Exploitation was primarily conceived in financial terms as regionalists saw resources being taken from the area without adequate compensation in terms of sustainable development or access to financial rewards being delivered. The counterpoint to active exploitation was passive neglect from the centre and the resulting sense of alienation experienced by the periphery. Here there tended to be expressions of estrangement. Finally, the diversity argument employed examples of concrete differences between centre and periphery communities to suggest these distinct groups required a general understanding and acceptance of the need for policy or procedural differences – for instance, separate regional ministries to co-ordinate government programming, application of laws, and attention to differences in a defined area. In exploring how movement entrepreneurs constructed these arguments and used certain examples to illustrate them, certain recurring themes become evident.

¹³⁹ Although framing is accomplished through mediated messaging, exploring private communications helps to illuminate how arguments were constructed and provides an indication of how mediated messages were received.

¹⁴⁰ This definition could be and often was contested.

I then explore how regionalists differed in terms of their prognostic framing of these issues and their suggestions for collective action. Members or supporters of these parties put forward particular arguments about why a new partisan organization was necessary. Their critics – even some people who otherwise sympathized with their diagnosis – combatted these arguments with counter-frames that characterized these parties as counterproductive destabilizing agents, hopeless mechanisms to affect change, or cynical attempts by political actors to further their own careers. Alongside my analysis of diagnostic, prognostic, and counter frames, I also note how regional movement entrepreneurs and/or their opponents mobilized these frames.

This approach, which combines historically centred case studies with a more empirically focused framing analysis, partly responds to calls for balance within the social sciences. In making his case for cultivating Canada's own theoretical gardens, Tanguay cites a fairly recent insurgency with political science where David Laitin and Brent Flyvbjerg have rallied against "the hegemony of formal modelling and statistical techniques" in the discipline.¹⁴¹ Flyvbjerg, particularly, has decried that "social science emulation of natural science – physics envy – is a cul-de-sac," and supports more good case studies to supplement statistics and modelling.¹⁴² On the basis of his literature review of third parties in Canada, Tanguay concludes "historically sensitive case studies of anti-parties such as Reform ought to supplement the sophisticated statistical methodologies employed by Elizabeth Gidengil and colleagues."¹⁴³

Calls from political scientists for more "historically sensitive case studies" are ones that political historians should be uniquely poised to answer. But are there any left to pick up the baton? As

¹⁴¹ Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 181.

¹⁴² Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 181.

¹⁴³ Tanguay, "What's So Bad," 192. He also says social class needs to be brought back into analysis. He concludes by noting both home-grown theory and comparative work is necessary to build better political science. Canada is not unaffected by trends in political organization or larger trends elsewhere.

mentioned earlier in this introduction when referencing the Canadian history wars of the 1990s, political historians belonging to the older “nationalist” grand narrative camp have been somewhat marginalized in the larger field; it’s also doubtful serious consideration of third parties with a regional character would interest them aside from being a foil the nation overcame. And, since the generation of historians that followed tended to be drawn to producing social or cultural histories, which de-emphasized formal politics, focusing their analysis on political parties would likely be seen to hew too closely to the kind of historical writing they rejected and sought to replace.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, Tanguay may think he is only speaking to political scientists when challenging them to bring an historical lens to their case studies because, as John English noted in “The Second Time Around: Political Scientists Writing History,”¹⁴⁵ the paradigm shift brought on by the advance of social and cultural history permitted other disciplines to supplant the role of political historians almost entirely. Historians who have headed off to the greener pastures of social studies, specialization and private history have left the gates wide open, he argues, and political scientists and political economists have been producing the best work on this subject as of late.

This work of this dissertation, in part, will answer Tanguay’s call on behalf of a generation of new political historians who are determined to fill this void. Moreover, it presents an argument for the value of historically centred case studies – something quite distinct from case studies that are “sensitive” to the history involved. If, as I have argued above, the duality of region is inextricably linked to both time and space (geographic and otherwise), an historical approach is integral to understanding both the project and product of region and, as a result, political parties engaged in building regional projects. As I explain below, this approach will examine the broader historical context surrounding the emergence of these parties, employ rich narratives to reveal their emergence, and then employ

¹⁴⁴ Miriam Smith’s fulminations about group politics note the more recent decline in interest in engaging political parties and parliament as opposed to using judicial action to support an agenda for change.

¹⁴⁵ John English, “The Second Time Around: Political Scientists Writing History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 67(1), (March 1986) 1-16.

concepts, lenses and categories of analysis to bring meaning to their activities. In short, the work political historians do is valued by other disciplines, and if this work is informed by and deferential to the kinds of questions and insights social and cultural historians have brought to the fore in our own discipline, the generation of historians eager to write new political history will return from the margins.

Context, Character and Circumstance: Approaching the Subject Matter

The three parties investigated in this study – the NLP (1967-1975), the NOHP (1975-1985), and the CBLP (1982-1988) – all emerged during a tumultuous 15 years that, in the Canadian context, were roughly bookended by Expo '67 and the 1982 repatriation of the constitution. Yet evidence of direct connections or interactions between these parties is almost definitively non-existent and members of the later two parties to develop had either no knowledge of their predecessor(s) or only the most cursory information. Unlike some nationalist movements that existed within Canada during the period,¹⁴⁶ there was no sharing of experiences or putative solidarity of purpose. On the surface, then, these three sub-regional parties appear to be islands unto themselves. A subaqueous examination reveals something quite different, however. Much like a chain of volcanic islands created by seismic shifts and subterranean fault lines, the global and national context from which these parties emerged shaped some common features, permeated and connected the kinds of discourses they employed individually, and also linked some of the strategies their opponents used against them.

¹⁴⁶ A fourth party, the Parti Acadien, is similar in some respects to the three parties on which I have chosen to focus this study. I opted not to include the Parti Acadien for several reasons. Unlike the three parties examined in this dissertation, the Parti Acadien has been the subject of recent doctoral-level research. Some of this research was being conducted simultaneously to my own study. Bearing in mind the already immense logistical challenges of engaging in a comparative analysis of multiple parties and space constraints that would make delving into the question of minority language issues and rhetoric especially challenging, I opted to exclude the Parti Acadien from this examination in hopes that the work done by Michael Poplyansky and others might be used as a basis for a stand alone future comparative study. See: Michael Poplyansky, "Devenir majoritaires : Les destins divergents des néo-nationalismes québécois et acadien 1960-1985," (PhD diss., York University 2013).

During this period Quebec's Quiet Revolution and the growth of the sovereignty movement dominated the Canadian narrative, as did federal responses such as the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and constitutional talks. The emergence of the Parti Québécois (PQ) proved to be both an inspiration and a millstone for some members of these new identity-based parties. The PQ's dramatic success and the federal government's response to this surge of Québécois nationalism suggested such protest could be a potent political elixir; nevertheless, the anxiety brought about by open discussion of separatism from Canada was transferable to the broader provincial level and Quebec sovereignty was often mentioned in the same breath as the NLP, the NOHP and the CBLP – causing a blurring of these parties' identities and aims.

The economic situation was similarly in flux. The post-war economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s began to give way to the stagflation of the 1970s and the recession of the early 1980s. Pearson-era Finance Minister Walter Gordon's budgets also suggested that economic nationalism was on the ascendency throughout part of this period. Regional economic development programs and agencies were also being created by the federal government to respond to some of the geography-based inequities evident within the country. All three parties in this study advanced economic policies or rhetoric that bear some marks of these larger forces. Local and regional economic development or sharing the wealth generated from existing industries were primary concerns for each party. The federal system of equalization payments, which first emerged in the 1950s and expanded during the 1960s, served as an example of how a heterogeneous state could make allowances for free-market inequities that privileged certain areas over others.

A unique demographic event also contributed to shaping the current of popular thought. The emerging baby boom generation¹⁴⁷ came of age at a time when Canadian politicians promoted participatory democracy while youth culture explored utopian idealism before turning increasingly towards cynicism. Globally, decolonization movements and youth-oriented protests flourished. Although the parties under review in this study likely did not take direct intellectual inspiration from these movements or cultivate links, some of their younger supporters acknowledged they were influenced by this dynamic period when deciding to join or participate. Moreover, the parties also employed anti-colonial rhetoric¹⁴⁸ to frame their position as subordinate and unjust. Without drawing obvious allusions to specific international decolonization movements, these parties' supporters arguably found currency in the language and appropriated it to further their own agendas.

The advent of these parties during this period further suggests that the contemporary national and global context factored into their emergence. Regional tensions within provinces had existed during Confederation's first century and were even apparent in colonial times.¹⁴⁹ Culturally and economically, the colonies that would become Canada and their provincial successors were not monolithic and united. Though local jealousies and municipal boosters sometimes masked larger regional differences, tensions

¹⁴⁷Doug O'ram's *Born At The Right Time* provides a superb overview of this generational grouping. While arguing this cohort had a cohesiveness to it, his study focuses on mainstream aspects of boomer culture and identity in the context of white, middle-class, urban Canadians of European heritage. O'ram does contend that generational cohesiveness should not overlook differences based on race, class, ethnicity, gender, language or region, although the scope of his work limits his ability to delve into these differences. See: Douglas O'ram. *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁸ Sean Mills' fascinating book *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* traces the intellectual history of numerous groups with radical politics within Montreal and how they understood and employed anti-colonial rhetoric. Although the depth of this intellectual engagement and discussion is not as apparent among the parties studied in this dissertation – at least based on the source material available – its cultural currency permeated the consciousness of at least some of the active partisans. See: Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁹ See: Aritha van Herk, "Imagine One Big Province," *Canadian Geographic* 125, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2005): 40, 42-47. The author notes internal rivalries between urban centres, and external interest from other provinces, resulted in numerous proposals for how to divide the Northwest Territories into one or more provinces in 1905.

between metropolis and hinterland were recurrent across the area that would become Canada. The histories of Labrador, Northern Ontario and Cape Breton are all replete with instances where regional identities or distinctiveness come into focus – usually in opposition to another region. Yet the creation of formal political parties as vehicles to express this form of regionalism only appears to begin in the 1960s with the NLP. Prior to this event, any sense of cohesive and organized sub-provincial regionalism either did not engage in the formal political process or found itself subsumed within larger political parties. The coalescence of the NLP to give a specific voice to one incidence of sub-provincial regionalism at this time could be considered anomalous if not for the other similar parties that followed.

At a macro-level, then, both nationally and globally, the temporal context in which this sub-provincial regionalism existed may partially explain why formal political parties emerged as vehicles to express alienation and grievance. As Björn Hettne has argued, however, regionalism must be recognized as a product of both exogenous and endogenous dimensions¹⁵⁰ – internal dynamics thus also contributed to this development. Moreover, in an essay in the *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, Peter Toohey warns that while historical periodization affords scholars an heuristic device to make sense of an historical narrative, it can be “seductive,” “romantic,” and ultimately “deceptive.”¹⁵¹ Attempts at historicizing, therefore, must not fall under the lure of periodization as a simple explanation for behaviours or the appearance of certain phenomena. In other words, it arguable that the co-existence of national or global movements and events, which some scholars have post-facto organized into a

¹⁵⁰ De Lombaerde et al., “The Problem of Comparison,” 6. See: Björn Hettne, “The Europeanization of Europe: Endogenous and Exogenous Dimensions,” *Journal of European Integration* 24, no. 4 (2002): 325-40. He’s talking about regionalization here – a process which creates “region.” In another book, Hettne and others argue that while globalization is a response to economic and cultural homogenization, regionalization is a political and social reaction. See: Björn Hettne, András Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1999.

¹⁵¹ Peter Toohey, “The Cultural Logic of Historical Periodization,” in *The Handbook of Historical Sociology*, eds. Gerard Delanty and Engin Fahri Isin. (London: Sage, 2003), 209.

period or era, contributed to the particular expression of sub-provincial regionalisms around this time, they were not sufficient in and of themselves to shape what occurred.

Local stimuli and events occurring within these micro-regions were integral to the genesis of the NLP, the NOHP and the CBLP and their subsequent development. Furthermore, the absence of these types of parties within Canada's other long-established or emerging sub-provincial imagined regional communities also supports the argument that endogenous factors are crucial to understanding this phenomenon. The longstanding regional tensions between Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia, for example, did not produce a similar partisan movement during this period nor, to date, afterwards. A comparative study of the parties that did emerge therefore must identify the other common factors that conspired to give birth to these entities.

A micro-analysis of these parties and their membership finds that individual personalities loom large; without the presence of certain figures, the existence of these types of political parties was arguably far from inevitable. As such, while his larger body of work has fallen somewhat out of fashion in contemporary Canadian historiography, Donald Creighton's assertion that "history is the record of an encounter between character and circumstance,"¹⁵² remains apt in this study. Although the varying fortunes each party enjoyed depended greatly on its ability to attract and retain an engaged membership and dedicated volunteers, the existence of sub-provincial regionalism alone was not enough to create a spontaneous popular movement that coalesced into a partisan programme. In each case, one or two individual regionalist promoters provided the initial impetus for the political organization; a study of the character of these figures greatly illuminates why they sought this path. None of these men – and they were all men – appeared to have had long-term designs on leading such a party. Individually their situations were quite different – one (Ed Deibel of the NOHP) initially had little

¹⁵² Donald Creighton, *Toward the Discovery of Canada*, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), 19.

interest in partisan politics, one was recruited into a political party after demonstrating talent as a union organizer (Tom Burgess of the NLP), and one had been a long-time organizer for another party (Paul MacEwan of the CBLP) – and there is scant evidence to suggest that these men could have envisioned a future in which they would find themselves as leaders of budding protest parties. Yet, in each case, certain events created circumstances wherein each man saw an opportunity to build new partisan machinery for his own purposes. Furthermore, in all cases an incident or crisis acted as a spark to the kindling of long-simmering regional alienation. By exploiting the opportunity these crises provided, each found either a *raison d'être* for creating a new political party or a much-needed accelerant to promote the growth of a fledgling partisan entity.

That the study of 'great men' – or in this case, perhaps more accurately, men with great ambition – has become terribly passé in Canadian historiography is a concern. Narrative history and political biography, however masterfully written, have increasingly given way to thematic and analytic histories partly informed by the Annales School and post-modern theory. John English suggests by exploring limited identities, historians have been able to avoid the political element of history.¹⁵³

Structure and Source Material

The approach used in this study sits, perhaps either uncomfortably or resiliently, at a crossroads of this historiographic *mêlée*. Nationalist historians would likely question the subject matter, however conventionally political it appears – a thorough examination of minor political parties in remote and sparsely populated parts of the country would likely appear inconsequential and counter to the interests

¹⁵³ Critics would respond that English is perhaps using a very narrow definition of the term political and is actually describing histories of formal democratic parties, their leaders and their impact on legislative, social and economic developments. But English contends there are also ideological forces at work and cries out for liberal arguments in favour of some type of return to the narrative form. He cites conservative historians such as Bliss and Himmelfarb as being the only voices raised to challenge the analytic and thematic approach. See: John English, "The Second Time Around: Political Scientists Writing History," *Canadian Historical Review* 67(1), (March 1986), 1-16.

of national history. Furthermore, this study's thematic inquiry employs, where source material permits, lenses relating to race, gender and class, and especially semiotics; these concepts are often undervalued, ignored or dismissed in older models of political history.

Nevertheless, the trend towards employing social science techniques in the discipline has too often come at the expense of the art of the narrative form – something this work will challenge. A strictly thematic analysis of these political parties without deference to their distinct narratives, even if set at some common stages of their development and decline, would not only be needlessly complicated, it would make this history impersonal. In their survey on recent literature in comparative studies of region, Philippe De Lombaerde and others have called for a middle ground – an eclectic centre of comparative studies, which combines “context and case/area studies on the one hand, and ‘hard’ social science as reflected in the use of ‘laborative’ comparisons on the other.” By adhering to this conceptual centre, they argue that the dual problems of exaggerated contextualization and over-generalised and irrelevant theory can be deftly avoided: “Achieving this perspective on the eclectic centre of comparative studies will be inclusive rather than exclusive —even if it will be too ‘social sciency’ for some and too much of ‘storytelling’ for others.”¹⁵⁴ Though leaning more heavily on qualitative analysis than the quantitative measurements used in certain social science studies, the structure of this dissertation will accordingly combine elements of the narrative with thematic analysis. The resulting hybrid will allow readers to engage with the subject matter from a variety of standpoints and seeks to offer a richer examination of its parts. Merging two approaches is fraught with difficulty and attempting such an endeavour within a comparative project compounds this complication. Rather

¹⁵⁴ De Lombaerde et al., “The Problem of Comparison,” 18. Although referring specifically to European Union Studies, this sentiment can well apply to microregional comparative studies as well.

than trying to completely infuse narrative histories of these parties with comparative thematic analysis, this study will opt for a multifaceted approach.

This introduction was designed to help equip readers as they critically navigate three subsequent narrative case study chapters and two comparative analytical chapters where various notions of region (and regionalism) are expressed by regional interest groups or regionally-based political parties. The scholarly approaches to region I reviewed developed contiguously with these nascent political projects and sometimes informed how historical participants perceived the very concept they were employing – even if most were largely unaware of the academic literature. Regionalist promoters within each of the parties examined *-used-* “region” in manifest ways during their campaigns, and their audiences understood region to have a variety of different meanings; the very complexity and dynamism that frustrate academics seeking common terms and a stable focus made the concept a valuable and versatile political tool for members of regional interest groups. Chapters Two, Three, and Four provide succinct narrative histories of each party in the order they emerged: the NLP, the NOHP and the CBLP. I outline some of the historical development of the area in which they operated, the circumstances leading to their creation, significant events during their existence, and their respective declines and legacies. As each narrative unfolds, the reader’s attention will be drawn to certain elements and events through either in-text discussion or footnotes; these notations will indicate sections within subsequent comparative chapters that explore these issues in greater detail and through additional thematic and conceptual analysis. Thus, while gaining an appreciation for the distinct histories of each party, readers will also be prepared for Chapters Five and Six where I engage in a focused comparative critical analysis that explores the socio-economic milieu in which each party functioned, their rhetoric and symbolism, their partisan organization and philosophy, and the reception they received from news media, political opponents and the public. These analytical chapters employ a frame analysis, which is also partly employed as an organizing paradigm through which I draw out additional

insights into party structure, to reveal how these partisans defined the problem(s) of the region, advocated for a solution – namely their political party – and attempted to motivate or persuade potential supporters. I also explore how partisan opponents (or members of a regional interest group who disagreed with the party solution) advanced their own cases and/or sought to undermine these parties. A concluding chapter evaluates their relative impact on politics and culture within their respective provinces and within Canada and offer commentary on what the emergence of these parties says about the “pursuit of regionness” and larger political dynamics in the country.

The structure of this dissertation is also partially dictated by the source material available. A strict thematic analysis of the three parties would likely result in a substantially uneven investigation as not all themes identified as notable for one party find the same importance in the study of another. More significantly, however, there is not always necessarily enough primary source material available to make a reasonable comparison in all cases. The brief existence of these parties negated any sort of standardized institutional practices that more established political parties tend to follow, and therefore, original source documents and archival collections vary greatly. For instance, the NLP’s meeting minute book for a span of about three years and its constitution are both still preserved in separate archives. The minute book includes not only details about executive and membership meetings, but general information on finances and party memberships. The CBLP did not leave behind a similar minute book, but party leader Paul MacEwan’s political fonds contain some scattered meeting minutes, along with much more detailed correspondence, membership numbers, a constitution, candidate handbook and other ephemera. The NOHP, by comparison, offers a substantial challenge for researchers. Party leader Edward Deibel, who retained virtually all the party’s internal documents, lost almost all of them in a damaging flood. If any meeting minutes or party constitutions still exist, which is doubtful, they have not been identified in any existing archives or through outreach attempts to former members of the party.

The relative dearth of formally archived material poses some significant research problems and precludes anything even approaching a hermetic study of these parties' operations; nevertheless, these barriers are not completely insurmountable. Some records of encounters with the state, the media and the public exist outside of archival collections. For example, although the NLP existed during a time when election expenses were not required to be filed with the province's returning officer, both the NOHP and the CBLP filed documents that detailed elements of their finances. The NLP and NOHP made submissions to various provincial royal commissions revealing aspects of their policies and political philosophy. The NLP and CBLP's ability to elect members to their respective legislatures ensured that Hansard has records of some of their statements and speeches. Although no member of the NOHP was ever elected to office, some speeches Diebel gave to Northern Ontario chambers of commerce and to university students have survived in various forms. The parties' interactions with their opponents also sometimes left in the form of correspondence in personal or party collections.

Popularly published documentation is much easier to uncover and more plentiful. Various newspapers, both local and provincial/national, covered these parties throughout their histories, and many – particularly local news sources – provided editorial space in terms of either letters to the editor or opinion columns where members of these parties could speak in a relatively unmediated fashion. While these sources provide some narrative content, they also serve as invaluable spaces to observe a party's regionalist rhetoric and to analyze how their particular brand of regionalism was received both locally and nationally. Additionally, although audio visual archival material is scant, particularly at the local level, some television and radio news recordings also exist; these records provide other avenues in which to catch a glimpse of these parties at the time of their operations.

Analyzing archived documentation and published material alone still leaves the puzzle of these parties with many pieces missing, but historians of the recent past can also benefit from the untapped

resource of oral histories through personal interviews. In speaking to some past party members, their opponents, and other knowledgeable members of the communities in which they operated, some gaps in the existing source material can be filled while other observations and analyses can be tested and confirmed, modified or rejected. These interviews – more than a dozen were conducted and, in some cases, multiple interviews were conducted with a party leader – can, however, prove to be a double-edged sword: the nature of memory sometimes proves difficult to manage.

The sum total of these sources proffers an imperfect but still substantive base from which to draw conclusions, even if some are tentative and may require reformulation if additional information is uncovered. Ultimately, I believe this research will elucidate a persistent and powerful undercurrent of Canadian politics, thereby opening up a better understanding of the dynamics of alienation, autonomy, and agency in a congenitally fragmented yet cohesive polity like Canada and contributing to a clear gap in the literature on the emergence of sub-regional parties in Canada.

The New Labrador Party: A Peaceful Rebellion Builds A Lasting Identity

The atmosphere was electric in Wabush and Labrador City on the night of October 28, 1971. As the returns for Newfoundland and Labrador's 36th general election poured in two things were becoming abundantly clear: the self-proclaimed last Father of Confederation's iron grip over the provincial government was slipping away precipitously and a local man suddenly found himself in the unlikely position of a power-broker who was being sought out by everyone from would-be premiers to millionaire industrialists. A cavalcade of cars soon commenced a celebratory tour through the streets of the two neighbouring communities. They were cheering both the apparent demise of Premier Joey Smallwood's 23-year-old Liberal government and the re-election of Tom Burgess, a former Liberal who now carried the banner of an upstart regional protest group called the New Labrador Party (NLP), and a man who would appear to hold the balance of power when the House of Assembly reconvened.

NLP president Mac Moss joined Burgess in a car that was leading the procession as they celebrated his victory in the riding of Labrador West. But the mood in the car was anything but joyous. Herb Brett and Mike Martin, the party's other candidates in Labrador North and Labrador South, respectively, had both narrowly lost their races. "Tom was pounding on the dashboard in the car," recalls Moss. "'Another four effing years by myself.' He was really bitterly disappointed that the other two guys hadn't been elected."¹⁵⁵ Burgess had hoped to carry all three Labrador ridings in order to provide a united voice for the region in the House of Assembly and gain some company in a legislature where he had been the sole member of a third party. Instead, he would return alone – but with a much more prominent role than before.

Smallwood's Liberals had been the dominant party in the province since Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949, winning resounding majorities in every election since. In the 1966 general election, for example, the Liberals had taken 39 of the House of Assembly's 42 seats. But unease with

¹⁵⁵ Mac Moss, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, August 31, 2011.

the premier's increasingly dictatorial leadership style had led to internal dissension and a series of defections – including Burgess – and pundits had characterized the Progressive Conservatives' sweep of all but one seat in the province during the 1968 federal election as evidence of an anti-Smallwood protest vote. Once all polls were reporting on the night of October 28, Smallwood's Liberals had 20 seats, Frank Moores' Progressive Conservatives had taken 21 seats and the NLP retained Burgess's. If Moores attempted to form a government and a Progressive Conservative was elected Speaker of the House, he would require support from Burgess to win votes of confidence. If Smallwood could persuade the NLP to support the Liberals, he could either somehow try to stay in government or call a snap election at any time. The machinations to cobble together a working majority began immediately.

Burgess and Moss made the rounds to each of the five victory parties being held simultaneously in the two communities. "We had just gotten to the Royal Canadian Legion in Labrador City and the place was packed," Moss remembers. "We were going around shaking hands with people when a taxi driver came in, and he said to me, 'Mr. Doyle is outside in the car and he'd like to speak to you and Tom.' And I had no clue who Mr. Doyle was. So I said Mr. Doyle can come in and join the party. And he said, 'No, this is John C. Doyle.'" ¹⁵⁶

A wealthy industrialist who owned large mining and paper interests in Labrador, John C. Doyle had developed a very close working relationship with Premier Joey Smallwood since first beginning to do business in Newfoundland in the 1960s. Doyle's holding company, Canadian Javelin Limited, had developed the iron ore mines in Wabush and Labrador City in the 1950s and the company became involved in building a linerboard mill in Stephenville in the 1960s that used wood shipped from Labrador. In both cases the Newfoundland government provided tens of millions of dollars in financial assistance, including bonds for a railway from Wabush to Quebec's North Shore that were never repaid. In spite of a long history of financial controversies, Smallwood continued to whole-heartedly support

¹⁵⁶ Moss, interview.

Doyle's ventures, as his mega-projects were massive job creators and he was a large donor to the Liberal party.¹⁵⁷

Doyle saw the potential defeat of the Liberals as a disaster for his interests and called Burgess and Moss into a meeting at the Wabush Hotel to see what it would take for the NLP to throw its support behind Smallwood. "We were offered the moon," Moss states. "Smallwood never spoke to us, but there was an open telephone in the room. We said, 'well we've got to negotiate with the two parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals,' and that did not please Mr. Doyle very much."¹⁵⁸

In the aftermath of the historic election the lives of Joseph Smallwood and Thomas Burgess became closely intertwined as the former tried desperately, and ultimately unsuccessfully, to retain control of the province he had led for 23 years, while the latter basked in the glow of leading an upstart regional protest party to a crucial victory. Flush with the power to decide the government's fate, Burgess began making frequent statements to the press about his and his party's demands – a seemingly growing list—much to the chagrin of some of his own party colleagues and supporters.

In a front page editorial a week after the election, J.S. Robinson, publisher of the (Wabush) *Carol Link*, spoke directly to Burgess with prescient words of warning: "Tom, even though you may hold the upper hand, remember that the cards are likely to be dealt again shortly, and if you are bidding too high this hand, maybe the other players shall outsmart you in the next deal... Congratulations on your victory. You and your party fought well and won. But please do not let it go to your head. Play it cool."¹⁵⁹

The warning went unheeded. In the weeks and months that followed, Burgess made and reneged on numerous deals with both Moores and Smallwood before crumbling under the tremendous pressure of leveraging his newfound power for the benefit of his community and himself. The public,

¹⁵⁷ Melanie Martin, "John C. Doyle." *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Website*, 2006, accessed August 27, 2012, <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/doyle.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Moss, interview.

¹⁵⁹ J.S. Robinson, "Editorial," *The Carol Link*, Nov. 4, 1971, 1.

fascinated and frustrated, watched a political drama – with more twists and turns than a mystery novel – play out in front of them. In his unpublished Masters thesis, *Flurry: A Case Study of The New Labrador Party*, Adam Sparkes notes that during the 1971 and 1972 provincial general elections the NLP was first “a source of the nation’s intrigue and later its amusement....”¹⁶⁰ In the end, both Smallwood and Burgess would be out of elected office, the former entering a period of semi-retirement and the latter leaving the province.¹⁶¹

Casual observers of Newfoundland’s tumultuous political scene may remember Burgess and the NLP mostly for their role in the stalemate 1971 election and perhaps associate them with partisan politics at its most raw and ugly. But this is only one chapter in the larger story of a party that profoundly reshaped Labrador politics and helped to create a pan-regional identity that united disparate and often antagonistic groups and communities. The NLP must be understood as the political expression of a larger social and civil rights movement that took its inspiration from international protest and decolonizing movements. Emerging from the interplay between nascent political culture and the area’s political economy, particularly in the Labrador City-Wabush industrial communities, this third-party force would exist only briefly, yet leave a lasting legacy in the area.

Labrador Before Confederation: The Spoils of the Land

Labrador’s central role in deciding the government of Newfoundland in 1971 was an ironic change from the area’s political past. Prior to the emergence of the NLP and its political mobilization campaign, throughout most of its recorded history the area that became known as Labrador was at times governed locally by Innu and Coastal Inuit groups, governed as a colonial possession, or completely removed from the development of responsible and representative government.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Adam Todd Sparkes, “Flurry: A Case Study of The New Labrador Party,” (M.A. Thesis, Acadia University, April 1994), 1.

¹⁶¹ He also went through a period of deep depression.

¹⁶² For a detailed historiographical review of Labrador: Melvin Baker and Robert H. Cuff’s “Down North: An Historiographical Overview of Newfoundland and Labrador,” in Ken Coates and William Morrison, eds. *The*

Labrador historian William Rompkey, whose work, *The Story of Labrador*, offers a thoughtful yet succinct interpretation of the area's history, writes that the relationship between the inland Innu and coastal Inuit was "hostile," but suggests that "they may on the whole have practiced avoidance rather than warfare."¹⁶³ Similarly, relations between the Inuit and the earliest European migrants, initially strengthened through trade, deteriorated to one "characterized by hostility and treachery"¹⁶⁴ through cultural misunderstanding and competition over resources.¹⁶⁵ These three groups, the Innu, the Inuit and the Europeans were thus uneasy neighbours who viewed each other with suspicion – it was a sentiment that would continue over the course of subsequent centuries.¹⁶⁶

Following the disappearance of the Vikings, the Basques, the Dutch and the Portuguese all travelled along the Labrador Coast as a part of fishing and exploratory expeditions and engaged in trade with Indigenous populations with varying degrees of success;¹⁶⁷ but the French and British were the Europeans who most profoundly influenced the area's development during the Post-Contact period. French fishers had visited the Labrador coast since the early 1500s and by the 1700s French traders had established a network of forts and posts that gave them control of the area – at least by European standards. But events in Europe, notably the Seven Years War, led to the transfer of Labrador from

Historiography of the Provincial Norths, (Thunder Bay: Occasional Papers Series #18, Centre for Northern Studies, Lakehead University, 1996), 1-32. I choose to draw mostly from Rompkey's *The Story of Labrador* in this section as his book presents a well-written and researched synthesis of much of the work referenced by Baker and Cuff.

¹⁶³ William Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 14. See also rivalry during French occupation in the mid-1760s, 25.

¹⁶⁴ Rompkey, 16.

¹⁶⁵ For example, Rompkey cites Viking sagas which indicate a meeting between Vikings led by Thorvald Ericsson which resulted in the death of all but one of a group of nine Indigenous persons. A revenge attack killed several Vikings, including Ericsson. Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 18.

¹⁶⁶ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 8-16. The information in this paragraph is a very brief summary of the major historical developments Rompkey traces in his chapter, "The Originals."

¹⁶⁷ For example, Rompkey notes that the Basque trading relationship with the Innu was strong while the Inuit sometimes launched attacks against the Europeans. But he cautions that early Europeans often confused the groups or conflated them, (19).

French to British Control with the 1763 Treaty of Paris.¹⁶⁸ Although the French retained a presence in the fishery following their ceding of the territory, the British hoped to limit their access and save the prime fishing grounds for British ships. The *Treaty* also transferred Labrador to the British colony of Newfoundland, the large island south-east of the coast. Conscious of the struggles between shore-based fishers and the fleets from Europe, the British government instructed Newfoundland Governor Sir Hugh Palliser to prevent permanent settlement in Labrador. But resistance from the Inuit and existing settlers ensured there would continue to be a year-round presence along the coast. Control of Labrador passed to the colony of Quebec in 1774, but the various fishing fleets that used the territory created a virtual anarchy of illegal trade. With pleas from Newfoundland Governor John Holloway to allow his colony to re-annex the area granted, in 1809 the Privy Council once again transferred jurisdiction to Newfoundland.¹⁶⁹

Increasing settlement in the Straits area on the south coast of Labrador in the mid to late-1800s and competition over fishery resources led to some conflict. A proposal by the British to sign a fishing convention with the French in 1857 was fiercely opposed by interests in Newfoundland and subsequently scuttled. Rompkey suggests that in examining this incident: “It was clear that the Newfoundland legislature was powerful and that fisheries policy could not be created without its consent. It was also clear that this power was used on behalf of the fishermen and fishing interests from the Island and not necessarily on behalf of the settlers in the Straits, who had profited by both selling to the French and buying from the French. The interests of the merchants on the Island and the people in the Straits were not the same.”¹⁷⁰ He further contends that disagreements over access of fishing berths

¹⁶⁸ The British Royal Proclamation of the same year, which recognized Indigenous title, would also have significant long-term implications for the Innu and Inuit – though the Labrador Innu consider the Proclamation immaterial to their rights. Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 26-27.

¹⁶⁹ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 26-28.

¹⁷⁰ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 30.

along with other issues “helped form the attitude of resentment of some Labradorians (who had settled) towards Newfoundlanders (who were just visitors).”¹⁷¹

The titular control Newfoundland and Britain held over Labrador did not encompass any real attempts to govern on behalf of the people living in the territory, as they considered the settlers and inhabitants more of a nuisance than full members of the body politic. Outside of some existing governing structures within local Inuit and Innu communities, larger attempts at organizing life in Labrador was left to what Rompkey calls a series of “substitute governors,”¹⁷² – primarily the Moravian Church,¹⁷³ the Hudson’s Bay Company¹⁷⁴ and the Grenfell Mission,¹⁷⁵ along with other Christian churches. Each of these groups brought new governing structures to the people of Labrador. The Moravian mission among the Inuit replaced that group’s existing form of governance and introduced a form of dual village council – one appointed with equal representation of men and women and one elected by secret ballot every three years – which provided guidance to the missionaries in terms of a village’s interests, albeit in a paternalistic context.¹⁷⁶ The Hudson’s Bay Company’s expansion into the territory made it an economic and trading super-power that had a significant bearing on the lives of many inhabitants in the area, particularly the Innu. In the absence of representative government – which was already present on the island of Newfoundland by this time – it became the highest authority.¹⁷⁷ Sir Wilfred Grenfell’s humanitarian mission to Labrador at the end of the 19th century,

¹⁷¹ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 30.

¹⁷² Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 36.

¹⁷³ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 37-48.

¹⁷⁴ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 48-55.

¹⁷⁵ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 56-70.

¹⁷⁶ Rompkey states that the members of the elected council were almost certainly the first people to be elected in Labrador (40). He states the Moravian missions have been described as “well-meaning but misguided paternalism” which treated Inuit as children. For more on the missionary work of this group, see: Arn Keeling and John Sandlos, *Mining and Communities in Northern Canada: History, Politics, and Memory*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2015); J. Garth Taylor, “Moravian Mission Influence on Labrador Inuit Subsistence: 1776-1830,” in D.A. Muise, ed., *Approaches to Native History: Papers of a Conference Held at the National Museum of Man*, (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada 1977).

¹⁷⁷ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 48-49.

which provided the Coast's first medical services, education system and co-operative, made him in Rompkey's words "a social activist, an agent of change, and an [unelected] politician."¹⁷⁸ Grenfell and his supporters, from Newfoundland and abroad, served as advocates for a people who still fell outside of the colony's representative democracy. For more than a century after Newfoundland gained jurisdiction over Labrador, each of these substitute governors provided some level of assistance and authority to an area that was otherwise in "virtual anarchy."¹⁷⁹

The Newfoundland colonial government's absence of interest in governing the territory did not equate to a lack of interest in Labrador's resources. Rompkey notes that when the colony of Newfoundland gained representative government in 1832, its collection of customs duties and revenues from Labrador, without extending the franchise, amounted to taxation without representation.¹⁸⁰ In rejecting suggestions from Britain's colonial office to provide representation for the territory in 1863, Newfoundland Prime Minister Hugh Hoyles made it clear that Labrador was to be a place for the colony to extract resources, not a place for fostering societal development. The absence of formal governing structures or support made the land susceptible to incursion by other governments, including former custodial guardian Quebec, which had been a founding member of the Canadian Confederation in 1867.

The Government of Newfoundland's interest in retaining Labrador was not born out of a deep connection to its inhabitants from whom it might charitably be referred to as estranged; rather, the colonial government saw the land as a resource asset that could easily be sold for the right price. Before the British Privy Council made its 1926 ruling on the boundary of Labrador, Newfoundland Prime

¹⁷⁸ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 61.

¹⁷⁹ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 77. Statistics Canada indicated the population of the federal electoral district of Grand Falls – White Bay – Labrador was 99,113 in 1966. But this riding includes the northern portion of the island of Newfoundland. The population of Labrador was likely around 30,000 by the end of the decade. See: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Historical Statistics of Newfoundland and Labrador, Section A: Population and Vital Statistics, July 1981*, accessed May 3, 2018 <http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/publications/Historical/PDF/SectionA.pdf> (13).

¹⁸⁰ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 77-78.

Minister Walter S. Monroe proposed its sale to Quebec for \$15 million. Quebec Premier Louis A. Tashereau declined the offer.¹⁸¹ Subsequent sales pitches to the Government of Canada in 1931, to a British syndicate in 1932 and to the Government of Canada again in 1945 suggested, as William Fowler writes, that Labrador's only worth was "money in the bank to be drawn upon for the benefit of the island of Newfoundland."¹⁸² Labradorians finally received a vote in the 1948 referenda on the future of Newfoundland's government where the choice was between retaining a Commission government, opting for responsible government or joining Confederation with Canada.¹⁸³ Of the 3,447 votes cast in Labrador during the second round of the referenda on July 22, 2,681 voted to join Confederation while 766 voted for responsible government.¹⁸⁴ Harold Horwood would become the first member of the House of Assembly elected in Labrador. In a foreshadowing of the NLP's rise under Tom Burgess,

¹⁸¹ William A. Fowler, "The Growth of Political Conscience in Labrador," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (1976), 39.

¹⁸² Fowler, "The Growth," 39.

¹⁸³ The debate within Newfoundland over whether to join Confederation was bitterly divisive and during the course of the discussions amongst the representatives of the 1946 National Convention the fate of Labrador suddenly became a topic of great interest. Labrador's representative, a North West River United Church minister and long-time resident named Lester Burry, ridiculed this newfound concern. He told the members of the convention about the overwhelming sense of alienation Labradorians felt towards the island. Rompkey offers a revealing quote from Bill Keough, the National Convention representative from St. Georges, who reflected on the existing relationship between Newfoundland and Labrador: "It seems to me that until now the people of Labrador have fared none too well at our hand. We haven't gone out of our way to provide them with even minimum public and social services. In the days when we did have responsible government, we never even thought it worth our while to extend to the people of Labrador a ballot. Indeed, we didn't get around to giving a second thought to Labrador until it seemed as if we might get something out of it. It would be interesting to know the thoughts of Labradorians when they hear some of our political pundits raising the roof over the raw deal Newfoundland's gotten from somebody or other." Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 100.

¹⁸⁴ See: Doris Saunders et al, "Confederation: Labrador gets the vote," *Them Days* 10, no. 2 (1984), 38-47. The overwhelming vote to join Canada may be a further indication of estrangement from Newfoundland. Remarking on the novelty of voting in a 1984 oral history remembrance published in *Them Days*, Leo O'Brien of L'Anse au Loup noted that he was asked to be a deputy returning officer for the first election after Confederation but initially refused citing his perceived lack of education (43). Sam Broomfield of Mud Lake explained that prior to this vote "they'd have elections in Newfoundland but as far as I know they never ever come to Labrador" (42). "In those days it didn't seem like the people in Labrador had any say at all," remembered Thorwald Perrault. "If we wanted something, someone had a problem, it would be 'go to this one or go to that one.' It seems as though as long as they came across the Straits, across the water to Labrador, anybody, such as a school teacher or a minister, you go and ask them. That was the only thing. It didn't seem as though we had the rights to go and talk for ourselves" (38).

Horwood was first elected as a Liberal but left the government benches over disagreements with Smallwood. He became a fierce critic of the premier in the pages of *St. John's Evening Telegram*.¹⁸⁵

The Age of Inadequate Services and Agitation: Labrador to the 1960s

Although the post-Confederation introduction of numerous social services, including family allowances and pensions, improved living conditions for some Labrador residents, the encroachment of government also introduced some problems into the area. For example, there were disagreements between the provincial and federal government regarding jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples – neither side wanted to accept responsibility.¹⁸⁶ Although the federal government did not accept legal obligations for Indigenous peoples living in Labrador, Rompkey suggests it accepted some moral responsibility and provided funds that would be administered by a newly created provincial Division of Northern Labrador Affairs. This agency's operational border at Cape Harrison created or exacerbated internal regional disparities (and disparities among Indigenous groups) in funding for services that would not be corrected until the creation of the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion in 1969.¹⁸⁷ Rompkey suggests the introduction of the social safety net and government concern over health and education had unintentional consequences for the Innu. Elected Indigenous representation on local community councils was abandoned in favour of government agencies led by a white leadership from other areas. Moreover, poorly conceived provincial plans to resettle some communities in the far north tore apart the social fabric of communities such as Hebron and Nutak.¹⁸⁸ These changes led to fragmentation in

¹⁸⁵ Peter Neary, "Party Politics in Newfoundland: 1949-1971." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 6, no. 4 (November 1971), 12.

¹⁸⁶ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 102.

¹⁸⁷ See: Government of Canada, *Regional Development in Canada*, by Guy Beaumier (Ottawa: Economics Division, October 27, 1998). <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR/8813-e.htm>

¹⁸⁸ See Rompkey's discussions on moving the communities of Nutak and Hebron to combat tuberculosis (104-106) and education (107), the elimination of Indigenous control of local councils (107-108) and the consequences on Innu society (108-112). See also: Frederick W. Rowe, *The Smallwood Era*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1985), 153-155 on the government plans to move communities.

Innu society, contributed to the alarming growth of substance abuse problems and suicide rates, and deepened the bitterness and mistrust in the communities towards white residents and settlers.

In other parts of Labrador, the new Canadian connection and increased interest from provincial authorities were also creating novel dynamics. Along the southern coast of Labrador there was upheaval as the small fishing villages that dotted the coasts depopulated. At first, population movement to larger centres operated independently from government policy; new industries drew residents from these villages while others moved to gain access to better resources. However, an official provincial resettlement plan dramatically reshaped communities in the area. A.A. Edwards, who served as the Newfoundland government's Commissioner for Labrador in the early 1960s, submitted an undated report to Premier Smallwood on a centralization plan for many southern coastal communities. In his report Edwards noted that like the Northern Labrador centralization plan, moving small, inadequately equipped communities into larger areas would allow for the government to provide better services for these groups.¹⁸⁹ Although he stressed that any planned movement should be voluntary, government incentives and plans to introduce electrification and other services in only the main areas of resettlement clearly suggested that these families would not receive comparable help if they chose to stay. Rompkey notes that between 1967 and 1970, fully one-quarter of people living in southeastern Labrador were resettled. This dramatic population change both stressed infrastructure and resources in the centralized communities and created new social divisions.¹⁹⁰

In central Labrador, as a result of the Second World War, a peculiar situation arose that dramatically influenced settlement, development and services. An air base established near the Goose River and Lake Melville to provide easy access for allied trips to Europe quickly became the second busiest airport in the world during WWII and the early years of the Cold War. In his work entitled *The*

¹⁸⁹ A.A. Edwards, "Report on Proposed Centralization Plan: Labrador South," Undated, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 3.24.036, Memorial University Archives.

¹⁹⁰ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 115.

Smallwood Era, Frederick Rowe, who represented that area as a Liberal Member of the House of Assembly (MHA), noted that the bustling military installations required a continuous flow of labourers, not all of whom were able to secure accommodation on the base. Soon, squatters began constructing what Rowe would call “one of the largest slum areas in the province.”¹⁹¹ These residents had no title to the land they occupied, no right to own or operate vehicles on the base, and no right to create commercial establishments. The structures built to house the squatters were not equipped with water or sewage facilities and were usually extremely poorly designed since they could be torn down at any moment. Rowe found the commanders at the base unsympathetic to the plight of this burgeoning population, but following discussions with Premier Smallwood and the Minister of National Defense, Brooke Claxton, he convinced both governments to transfer part of the land on the base back to the provincial government’s jurisdiction so that a more stable community could develop.¹⁹²

Perhaps no area in Labrador underwent such rapid transformation after Confederation than Labrador West. In 1937 an Innu guide named Mathieu André led a group of prospectors to a large iron-ore deposit near the Labrador-Quebec border about 80 kilometres northwest of Churchill Falls. Following the construction of a railroad from the mine site to Sept-Îles, the newly created Iron Ore Company began production. The successful mine grew rapidly and required more permanent lodgings for its workers. Beginning in 1958, plans were outlined for the creation of a sophisticated, planned community to be called Labrador City. Unlike other long-settled communities in the area, Labrador City’s mining operations drew labourers from across the province and the country. The community also benefitted from sophisticated and modern conveniences that would have been the envy of some larger communities across the country, let alone those in Newfoundland and especially the rest of Labrador.

¹⁹¹ Rowe, *The Smallwood Era*, 148.

¹⁹² Rowe, *The Smallwood Era*, 150. Although his partisan connections to the governing Liberals might call into question the objectivity of his analysis, Rowe argues vigorously that the neglect and injustice suffered in areas like Happy Valley-Goose Bay which were identified by the 1974 Royal Commission on Labrador as going back generations, were dealt with as soon as the government was made aware of the problems (157-158).

Yet unlike the government's encroachment in other parts of the area, Premier Smallwood's closely monitored control of the new settlement would not be coupled with virtually any government services. Labrador City, and its neighbor Wabush,¹⁹³ were very much company towns.¹⁹⁴

Alienation from the provincial government could be felt in communities throughout Labrador during the 1960s, but it was in Labrador West where it would first foment into a political movement for change. Unlike the Inuit communities in the north or the southern coastal settler communities, the Labrador City/Wabush population¹⁹⁵ was well-educated, fairly wealthy and also well-connected to the rest of the country. These features, combined with widespread feelings that the population was being ignored by the province while generating great wealth for it, provided the basis for the rise of the NLP.

Mr. Burgess Goes to St. John's

In "Party Politics in Newfoundland: 1949-1971," Peter Neary states that "unquestionably, the most significant party political development in the first years of Newfoundland's Canadian history was the growth of Smallwood's personal political power."¹⁹⁶ Smallwood, who had played a significant role in bringing the province into Confederation, became premier and was quickly selected as leader of the newly formed Liberal association in a unanimous vote. Following a successful first election in 1949 when the Liberals won 65.5 per cent of the popular vote and 22 of 28 seats in the House of Assembly,

¹⁹³ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 124.

¹⁹⁴ Rompkey, *The Story of Labrador*, 120-123. In fact, the Iron Ore Company owned the houses in Labrador City until 1974 (p. 126) and there was no provincial building in Labrador City until 1970 (129).

¹⁹⁵ The two communities had a total population of about 11,000 according to the 1971 Census. Labrador as a whole counted 28,166 persons. ----- 1971 Census of Canada: Population: Census Divisions and Subdivisions (Atlantic Provinces), (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, September 1972), Catalogue 92-704 Vol. 1 – Part 1 (Bulletin 1.1-4), 5-6, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS92-704-1971.pdf. By contrast, 10 years earlier Labrador's population was 13,564 persons and Labrador City and Wabush were not listed as separate communities; rather they were part of the "unorganized" portions of the census division that totaled 9,427 (and skewed male by a ratio of about 1.5 to 1). See: ----- 1961 Census of Canada: Population: Counties and Subdivisions (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick), (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1962), Catalogue 92-531 Vol. 1 – Part 1 (Series 1.1), 5-6, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS92-531-1961.pdf.

¹⁹⁶ Neary, "Party Politics in Newfoundland: 1949-1971," 6.

Smallwood quickly consolidated his power and led the provincial wing of the Liberal party through a series of successive and overwhelming victories.

Labrador's strong endorsement of Confederation predisposed the area, like most of the island outposts outside of St. John's, to support Liberal candidates; however, these Liberal candidates were parachuted in from other parts of the province. Labrador West was the first part of the territory to rebel and elect an independent (Charles Devine) when Smallwood attempted to fill the newly created riding with another parachute candidate in 1962. When the premier looked to win the seat back in the 1966 general election he opted to search for a local candidate and eventually settled on a mining union president named Tom Burgess.

Born in Ireland, Burgess had travelled to Australia and Africa before settling in Labrador in 1958. Originally a carpenter's mate, he would eventually become an international organizer with the United Steelworkers of America.¹⁹⁷ The nature of the industry in Labrador West and its rapid population growth heavily skewed demographics in the area, but Burgess had the fortune to meet, court and marry one of the few single women who came to town. Rhyna MacLean, a Scottish-Inuit woman¹⁹⁸ originally from North West River, moved to Labrador West in 1961 to work as a nurse. She became only the 13th unmarried woman in an area with a population of 3,000 men. "I remember walking into the cafeteria for meals and as a new girl came into town, as soon as they walked into the cafeteria everyone put down their utensils and just looked, and watched all the way up the line," MacLean recalls.¹⁹⁹ Initially unimpressed with Burgess, the two soon became a couple and married in 1963.

¹⁹⁷ Sparkes, "Flurry," 11-12.

¹⁹⁸ MacLean's background provided a notable bridge for the NLP between the settler communities and the Indigenous groups who were historically suspicious of each other. For an example of how inter-cultural marriages have had significant influence in Canadian history see: Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth-Century Imperial World*, (Critical Perspectives on Empire.) New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

¹⁹⁹ Rhyna MacLean, Interview by Will Stos, In-Person Interview, Labrador City, Newfoundland and Labrador, June 29, 2011.

MacLean, who was not involved in politics when she first met Burgess, witnessed her husband's passion for helping the workers in the community. People were very dissatisfied at the time with the lack of government services and, as union president, he acted as a spokesperson. "He spoke for everybody," she says. "Tom was not self-interested. He was always helping people."²⁰⁰ His prominent role in the community and the goodwill he generated from union members whom he helped with housing and employment did not go unnoticed by political operatives and Burgess was approached by all three established parties to run against Devine in 1966.²⁰¹ A combination of factors probably influenced his decision to stand for the Liberals. Although Labrador West voters had spurned the party in the last election, the Liberals had historic strength in Labrador. Burgess, who was concerned about the area's neglect, likely believed he could do more for the community in a party widely expected to form the next government as opposed to being a member of an opposition party.²⁰² Finally, a personal call from Premier Smallwood, who offered to supplement his \$6,500 income as an MHA – which was less than half of his union organizer salary – and implied that a cabinet position might be in the offing, likely sealed the deal. Adam Sparkes suggests that the premier, who was grooming a variety of up-and-coming politicians to be his eventual successor, flattered Burgess by suggesting the he was the future of the Liberal Party and likely played to his inexperience.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ McLean, interview.

²⁰¹ Sparkes, "Flurry," 12.

²⁰² Burgess had been approached to run for the NDP but declined the offer, stating that even if he was elected he would be "only a small voice crying in the wilderness." Len Walsh, "Tom Burgess 'conned' into public life," *St. John's Daily News*, February 23, 1970, (File: "NLP clippings," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²⁰³ Sparkes, "Flurry," 13. Indeed, reflecting on his entrance into politics, Burgess told *St. John's Daily News* reporter Len Walsh that Premier Smallwood had been wooing him to join the Liberals for three months prior to the 1966 general election and had "performed one beautiful 'con' job" on him. "He made me feel that I was the salvation, the saviour of the Liberal Party," he stated. When Smallwood told him "I've done a lot of checking around, and everyone I spoke to tells me you are an honest man, and what the Liberal party needs is an honest man – you are that type – we need you," Burgess said it clinched his decision. See: Walsh, "Tom Burgess 'conned' into public life." Ironically, Burgess would seemingly be conned again in 1972 when Smallwood enticed him to rejoin the Liberal Party and run for its leadership.

Burgess was nominated as Labrador West Liberal candidate on August 24, 1966 and was elected in the huge Liberal tide on September 8.²⁰⁴ MacLean remembers that initially Burgess worked well with Smallwood and his team, but he soon became disillusioned because the government was still taking a hands-off approach to Labrador West and leaving the International Ore Company to provide for the day-to-day needs of the population.²⁰⁵ Sparkes speculates that Smallwood was likely dismissing Burgess's plans to help Labrador because the small, scattered population was loyal to the Liberals; moreover, the large expense required to improve government services in the area would not lead to commensurate political capital.²⁰⁶ There were other, more personal irritants as well. Smallwood reneged on his promise to provide an income supplement for Burgess. As the only MHA living off the island, the Member for Labrador West had far greater travel expenses than his colleagues. Although Andrew Crosbie eventually gave him a pass for Eastern Provincial Airways flights and Smallwood appointed him to the Power Commission with a \$5,000 stipend, it was still less than the remuneration originally promised.²⁰⁷ Burgess was just one of several Liberal MHAs who were chafing under Smallwood's control of the party.

"A Peaceful Rebellion": The Birth of the NLP

The internal troubles within the Liberal caucus soon spilled out into very public divisions. On August 26, 1968, John Crosbie, Clyde Wells and Burgess issued simultaneous press releases announcing the creation of the "Liberal democratic movement"²⁰⁸ that was designed to make the party more "free

²⁰⁴ The party won 61.8 per cent of the popular vote and all but three of the province's 42 constituencies.

²⁰⁵ MacLean, interview.

²⁰⁶ Sparkes, "Flurry," 17. A particular issue of concern which was cited as his primary reason for eventually breaking with the Liberals was Smallwood's refusal to construct an east-west road link from Labrador to Quebec. (See: Bren Walsh, "The colorful needler whose barbs hit home," *Globe and Mail*, May 17, 1969, 8.) Burgess also told Len Walsh that Smallwood had admitted prior to the election that a road link between Labrador and Quebec City had to be built. Trusting the premier's word, Burgess put the promise in his platform only to witness Smallwood tell the House of Assembly that he would rather lose Labrador than spend one cent building a road from it to Quebec. Len Walsh, "Burgess – why he crossed the House," *The St. John's Daily News*, February 24, 1970. (File: "NLP clippings," The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²⁰⁷ Sparkes, "Flurry," 15-16.

²⁰⁸ Claire Hoy, *Clyde Wells: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Stoddart: 1992), 72.

and open.”²⁰⁹ Unlike Crosbie and Wells, who had crossed the floor to sit as independent Liberals in May, Burgess remained inside the Smallwood Liberal party tent while still nominally supporting the movement. However, on December 2, 1968 Burgess announced he would also sit as an independent,²¹⁰ as plans were already afoot to create a new party. “They were meeting and talking about another party for a long time before he made the switch,” MacLean recalls. “There was a group of them from the union and from running with him for the Liberals.”²¹¹ Mac Moss, who would eventually be elected president of the NLP, notes that if Burgess was to remain a representative for the area, he would require support. “Smallwood had a way of breaking independent people and opposition people because he controlled when the House of Assembly sat,” he says. “And unless the House actually sat in session, the members never got paid. So, he could break somebody financially.”²¹² In advance of any formal structure or platform, at this stage the party was essentially a shell group designed to fundraise for Burgess’s well-being. “When it came to how he would be supported there was talk about getting a separate party on the go, and to join that party was \$5,” Moss states. “I remember going to his house with a friend to give a donation.”²¹³

Support for Burgess was strong in Labrador West and his musings about creating a party for the whole of Labrador were generally well-received by people who felt a sense of alienation towards island politicians and anger over the lack of government services in the constituency. However, the nature of the physical geography of Labrador, the historic divisions among the groups living there, and the lack of territory-wide media meant that creating a pan-Labrador party would be a potentially difficult

²⁰⁹ “Forced to quit caucus, seat moved, Crosbie says,” *Toronto Star*, August 30, 1968, 3.

²¹⁰ Sparkes, “Flurry,” 18-19.

²¹¹ MacLean, interview. See also: “New Labrador Party: Surging Force in Labrador politics.” *St. John’s Evening Telegram*, Friday, May 1, 1970, 17. (File: Labrador Party News Clipping Files, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives). Future NLP leader Mike Martin suggests this initial organization, a Labrador Rights Party, “was just a protest group. They had no ambition to get into politics *per se*. They wanted to make their voice heard.” It is not clear whether this comment refers to the group’s initial strategy or if there was more than one group operating with porous membership. Mike Martin, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, August 22, 2012.

²¹² Moss, interview.

²¹³ Moss, interview.

undertaking. Labrador West, home to two of the most modern communities in Canada, was a world away from the poverty and underdevelopment in the communities on the north and south coasts. Each of these areas shared a sense of alienation, yet their populations, industries, and specific issues of concern were distinct. Moreover, although there appeared to be a general discontent with the government, Liberal sympathies in Labrador's other areas ran deep and no single issue had galvanized opposition – until a very unwelcome announcement by the premier on Christmas Day, 1968.

A long-promised plan by a subsidiary of John C. Doyle's Canadian Javelin to build a chip mill near Happy Valley had been scuttled. To add insult to injury, Smallwood announced the mill would be constructed in the island community of Stephenville instead. Although the premier attempted to soften the blow by noting the company would increase the amount of wood it cut in Labrador from 500,000 to 800,000 cords per year, thereby providing greater employment opportunities for the area, the residents of Happy Valley were enraged.²¹⁴ Reporting on the fallout in the *Globe and Mail*, Bren Walsh noted that “for the people of Southern Labrador the chip mill, which would have employed comparatively few people, was more than a small industry – it was a symbol, because it would have been the first new industry in the area since Newfoundland joined Confederation.”²¹⁵ Other voices called the announcement symbolic of something else – an imperial government based in St. John's further draining the resources of a colonial possession²¹⁶ without much concern over its long-term development. In a

²¹⁴ The front page of the *Northern Reporter* included a collage of past news clippings that detailed the advancement of the project. In the article, editor-in-chief Herb Brett (a future NLP candidate) wrote that “On Christmas Day – a day of giving by tradition – a hope for a future was snatched away from the people of Labrador. Hope was taken but much more was lost. The people lost faith in their government.” Herb Brett, “Years of promises broken. A town's security shattered,” *Northern Reporter*, January 9, 1969, 1.

²¹⁵ Bren Walsh, “A fence-mending job in an unhappy valley,” *Globe and Mail*, Jan. 11, 1969, 8.

²¹⁶ In Chapter Five I explore the empire-colony rhetoric so evident in this and other sub-provincial regional movements in this study. This same article notes that at this time Labrador was administered through a Department of Labrador Affairs “as if the whole area were – as a St. John's newspaper put it editorially – ‘a remote part of the Newfoundland empire.’” In the Jan. 30 edition of the *Northern Reporter*, letter-writer Calvin Ollerhead labelled the provincial government “a parasite that has been preying on her [Labrador] for years.” Calvin Ollerhead, “Letter: Stuff it down his throat,” *Northern Reporter*, January 30, 1969, 2. In his unpublished M.A. thesis, Sparkes also cites the chip mill decision as the most symbolic example of Labrador's neglect. He writes “Burgess could point to favouritism to the island once again.” Sparkes, “Flurry,” 28. In remarks to the House of Assembly,

letter to the editor of the Happy Valley *Northern Reporter*, Happy Valley Deputy Mayor Patrick W.

Vickers explained that as a 16-year resident of Labrador he was convinced “the premier’s intention is to drain the wealthy land of Labrador for the remainder of the province.”²¹⁷

Almost 1,000 people, approximately one-fifth of the entire community, crowded into the Roman Catholic Parish Hall on December 30, 1968 to discuss a response. Although the possibility of secession was raised, Walsh reported that “few thinking people consider such an eventuality likely to occur.”²¹⁸ Nevertheless, the meeting resulted in the formation of a new Labrador Development Committee that was tasked with, among other things,²¹⁹ investigating the possibility of Labrador becoming a territory or Canada’s 11th province. And Vickers, in his letter to the editor, noted the continuing dispute over Labrador’s boundary and encouraged readers to think and ask themselves: “‘Could the Quebec government treat us as bad as the Newfoundland government?’ Maybe it would be an idea to ask some Quebec Government officials to visit our areas.”²²⁰

Amidst rampant speculation about how the area might express its dissatisfaction, on January 6, 1969, at a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Happy Valley, Burgess seized the opportunity to confirm the birth of a new partisan organization in front of a crowd still devastated by the recent actions of the

Burgess noted that “the cost of construction and the subsequent jobs that would have resulted and the psychological gain, as I say, the symbol that the mill was there.” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Debates, March 24, 1969 (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 155, 3 (new page number 170).

²¹⁷ Patrick W. Vickers, “Letter: No timber should leave Labrador,” *Northern Reporter*, Jan. 9, 1969, 2. Vickers urged “every Labrador resident to hop back on their feet and let the Premier and his colleagues know that no timber is going to leave Labrador soil. Don’t let your rights cross the Gulf like it has since they took over power.” Vickers, it should be noted, was President of the Goose Bay Progressive Conservative Association. He later resigned from his position when he became involved in the Labrador Development Committee, figuring the committee’s chances of accomplishing its goals would be lessened if he remained in his position. See: ----- “Two resign from PC Assoc,” *Northern Reporter*, January 23, 1969, 19.

²¹⁸ Walsh, “A fence-mending job,” 8.

²¹⁹ The committee was also given a mandate to “arrange meetings with provincial government representatives and Melville Pulp & Paper Co. to obtain the true facts of the proposed industry; investigate the possibility of Labrador becoming a separate Federal riding; [and] to keep the public informed of their progress in any and all of these fields.” ----- “Mass public meeting elects Labrador Development Committee.” *Northern Reporter*. January 9, 1969, 6.

²²⁰ Vickers, “Letter: No timber,” 2.

provincial government. “The Labrador Unity Party” or “The Labrador Rights Party” would contest the three ridings in Labrador, and Burgess speculated that the party would also run candidates on the island of Newfoundland – something that was later nixed after discussion with members of the party executive.²²¹ The 34 year-old Burgess argued that a party representing Labrador interests could speak with one common voice and not be bound to promote policies the other parties held that ran counter to the area’s needs.²²² “An important first step in the formation of this party is to give Labrador an identity of its own,” he said, once again confirming that the interplay of political culture and political economy were key ingredients to creating a viable third party. He added that he hoped this group would “shock” the provincial government into action.²²³ But Burgess would be in for a shock of his own as he began a tour of Labrador.

Learning about Labrador: Burgess’s Early Tours and Party Organizing

As the putative political leader of this growing “peaceful rebellion,”²²⁴ Burgess began a campaign to familiarize himself with the vast territory, its disparate communities and its diverse populations. He readily admitted that he had barely any knowledge of Labrador North or Labrador South and found it virtually impossible to learn about these areas. Based on the reports he had heard from his former colleagues on the Liberal benches who had represented these constituencies, Burgess told the press

²²¹ ----- “Newfoundland maverick plans own political party,” *Toronto Star*, January 7, 1969, 1. The article notes that Premier Smallwood felt this development did not deserve any comment.

²²² ----- “Burgess advocates Labrador Rights Party,” *Northern Reporter*, January 9, 7. Burgess gave the example of the Liberal policy against a highway to Quebec as one policy which locally elected Liberal members would be duty-bound to support even though community members overwhelmingly stressed a need for one.

²²³ ----- “Secessionist sentiment: Smallwood’s political problems shift to Labrador,” *Globe and Mail*, January 8, 1969, 23.

²²⁴ ----- “Burgess explains reasons for forming new political party,” No recorded newspaper, February 25, 1969, (File: “NLP Clippings General,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

that he had “visualized a Shangri-la of the North.”²²⁵ Instead, his visits left him “shocked and distressed.”²²⁶

A five-day visit to the communities of Rigolet, Cartwright, Black Tickle, Square Islands, Fox Harbour, Mary’s Harbour and Port Hope Simpson with two recently elected members of the NLP’s Labrador North executive found residents complaining of unemployment, poor representation from their elected members, loss of telegraph services, botched centralization efforts, poor roads and seemingly general indifference from the provincial government to their plight. Although meetings with these small communities were generally organized on only an hour’s notice, they drew dozens of people – often because there was no other work to be done instead.²²⁷ The NLP executive members listened incredulously as residents gave examples of government inaction. In Fox Harbour, for example, Burgess’s meeting with community members occurred one evening in a schoolhouse in lantern-light. The town of 250 had no electricity. A generator had been delivered to provide power for the entire town seven years earlier but still remained in its original crate – no one having any idea how to operate it. Bundled in a parka, Burgess listened as members of the community reported that two months of school were lost the previous winter when the three space heaters it had weren’t enough to warm the students and teachers in attendance.²²⁸

Despite the terrible conditions, Burgess said he was astonished at the determination to survive and in the will to work. As the tour shifted to the northern communities of Nain, Davis Inlet and Hopedale, he noted that similar deprivation was evident to him but not necessarily to everyone in these

²²⁵ Walsh, “Burgess – why he crossed”

²²⁶ W. Evan Golder, “Tour leaves Burgess ‘shocked, distressed’: South coast of Labrador residents complain about unemployment, centralization, roads,” *St. John’s Telegram*, September 26, 1969, (File: “NLP Clippings General,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²²⁷ Burgess estimated that 50-60 per cent of the workforce in Labrador North and South was unemployed. Len Walsh, “Labrador unemployment rate heartbreaking says Burgess,” *St. John’s Daily News*, September 29, 1969. (File: “NLP Clippings General,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²²⁸ Golder, “Tour leaves Burgess ‘shocked, distressed.’”

communities. “I think they are not quite as well off as they have been led to believe,” he told a reporter.²²⁹ Nevertheless, complaints were forthcoming. Inuit men in Nain noted there was wage discrimination along the coast as Labradorians were being paid less for doing the same work as other Newfoundlanders. Communications were poor. There was no television and many communities had an easier time listening to the BBC service and other European radio stations than to the CBC.²³⁰ Expressing amazement that a politician would visit them and spend time listening to them, one Inuit woman stated that the area’s current representative, Earl Winsor, only gave the Inuit five minutes of his time on his visits, spending the vast majority talking with white residents instead.²³¹

These autumn tours marked the NLP’s first significant and publicized organizational efforts following a period of relative quiet since it first launched. In a speech to the House of Assembly on March 24, 1969, Burgess reiterated that his primary objective in forming the new party was “the establishment of a specific identity for Labrador, and thereby to bring about or to shake out of its apathetic state, the provincial and federal governments with regard to their attitude toward Labrador.”²³² There were no other specific policy positions – with the exception of pushing for a new federal constituency exclusively devoted to Labrador – but in speeches to both the House and public gatherings in Labrador (and occasionally on the island of Newfoundland), Burgess listed particular areas of concern – primarily regional disparity in terms of roads, communications, medical facilities, hydro-electric power, and other government services,²³³ but also Labrador’s lack of recognition from the provincial government and its members’ lack of awareness of its existence.

²²⁹ W. Evan Golder, “People of the north still deprived... but some don’t realize it says Burgess,” *St. John’s Telegram*, October 24, 1969, (File: “NLP Clippings General,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²³⁰ W. Evan Golder, “New Labrador Party not separatist says Burgess,” *St. John’s Telegram*, October 28, 1969, (“NLP Clippings General,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²³¹ Golder, “People of the north still deprived.”

²³² Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, March 24, 1969, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 155, 4 (new page number 171).

²³³ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, March 24, 1969, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 2 (new page number 165). News articles from this period also mention Burgess protesting the removal of air

The party's first official membership meeting was held on November 10, 1969 in the Wabush recreation centre. Minutes from the recording secretary's ledger suggest that much of the meeting was devoted to electing five executive officers who would subsequently appoint six additional committee members.²³⁴ A flurry of executive and general membership meetings that followed began the more formal work of developing a constitution (Burgess stated he would obtain one from another party to copy, though a draft version was not submitted to the general membership for nearly a year),²³⁵ drafting a householder letter to explain the reasons the NLP was formed and what it hoped to accomplish, purchasing newspaper advertising, and obtaining office space.²³⁶ Minutes from general and executive meetings during this period suggest there was also discussion over particular areas of concern including TV and communication in the region, social and economic development, provincial parks, roads for hunters and fishers, pollution, airport conditions, an employment centre, telephone communications and the high cost of living.²³⁷ News reports claimed the party had a membership of 1,500 and growing as of November 1969; however, executive minutes from January, 1970 put the membership at only 439 paid up members.²³⁸

Following a few busy months in late 1969, the frequency of party meetings (at least in Labrador West) appeared to slow throughout most of 1970. However, by late summer, when a provincial election

subsidies, which he called "another form of discrimination against the residents of Labrador." ----- "Protest removal of air fare subsidy," *Aurora*, April 10, 1969, 1.

²³⁴ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "General Membership Meeting," November 10, 1969, 1, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²³⁵ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "General Membership Meeting," September 14, 1970, 19, Memorial University Collection, (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²³⁶ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," November 12, 1969, 4; "Executive Meeting," November 15, 1969, 5; "Executive Meeting," December 6, 1969, 8, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²³⁷ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," December 1, 1969, 8, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²³⁸ See: ----- "Will the New Labrador Party be another burden for Joey?" *Aurora*, November 5, 1969, 9; and New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," January 17, 1970, 10, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives. The discrepancy could be a result of annual memberships sold during the last months of 1968 expiring, or the difference between total membership and the membership in only Labrador West.

appeared imminent, the party once again geared up for the expected campaign with a publicity blitz – including executive meetings, a flyer distributed by newspapers, a general membership meeting, inquiring about addressing a local union meeting and acquiring new media facilities.²³⁹ There would also be new tours along the Labrador coast to continue the organizational effort. By this time Burgess reported a membership of 500 in Labrador West and 800 in Labrador North, the two constituencies with functioning NLP executives.²⁴⁰ Although there is no mention in any identified party sources about the number of party members in Labrador South, organizational efforts were clearly underway along this coast as well, with one man in particular leading the way.

A fourth-generation Labradorian, born and raised on the southern coast, Mike Martin decided to leave the area once he began looking for work, due in part to the poor job prospects in the community. Joining the army, he trained as a radio operator with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and spent nine years in service. Upon his return to Newfoundland in the mid-1960s, Martin and his wife Patricia settled in her hometown of St. John's to look for work; he soon decided to visit family and friends in Labrador. "We went home on a holiday and I discovered how really rotten the situation was in Labrador,"²⁴¹ he recalls, stating that the province's plan to depopulate the area to save money on services had left it in a state of suspended animation since the time of Confederation. Concerned and frustrated by the poor state of affairs in Labrador South, Martin wrote a letter to Premier Smallwood's office urging action. Fortuitously for him, around this time the provincial government was in the process of setting up a new department of rural development. The premier's deputy offered Martin a job as a rural development officer for the coast of Labrador.

²³⁹ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," August 28, 1970, 14-15, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²⁴⁰ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "General Membership Meeting," September 14, 1970, 19, Memorial University Collection.

²⁴¹ Mike Martin, August 22, 2012.

“Theoretically I was to travel the coast, meet with community leaders, develop broad stroke community plans, see how it fit in with their lifestyles and economic situation and bring back a plan at the annual conference,” he explains. After spending a winter in Labrador, meeting with community leaders, and developing a thesis on what they should be planning, Martin returned to St. John’s for a conference with other development officers. “They went around the table, everyone gave their report and they issued a budget for every district,” he remembers:

The meeting ended and there was nothing for Labrador, so I confronted him and asked why I was the only one without a budget. [The premier’s deputy] said ‘Oh, there’s nothing for Labrador. Mr. Smallwood has drawn a line through the straits of Belle Isle and said not one red cent is to be spent above that line,’ – whereupon I tendered my resignation on the spot. This really, really pissed me off.²⁴²

Quitting in disgust, Martin worked as a reporter for the St. John’s *Daily News* and as a communications co-ordinator of the Newfoundland Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers Union while monitoring the rise of a protest group in Labrador West from afar. “As it grew and became known on the Coast people started clamouring for it, and they realized they were on to something,” he adds, noting that the NLP’s leader’s tremendous talents as a public speaker helped assuage any concerns people may have had.²⁴³ “Tom Burgess had a flair for oratory. He was one of the great speakers and he was mesmerizing, like an evangelist.... He could go into a hostile hall – Labrador South was Liberal to the backbone and they resented anyone coming in and running against the Liberal Party – and when he came out he would have people forcing money on him.”²⁴⁴ Although Martin did not want to be involved

²⁴² Mike Martin, August 22, 2012.

²⁴³ As R. Kenneth Carty, Lynda Erickson and Donald E. Blake note in the preface to their book *Leaders and Parties in Canadian Politics: Experiences of the Provinces*, the strength of a political leader is significantly tied to the success of a party. “...in Canada, leaders play a larger role in parties than do those in other parliamentary democracies. Their policies define party policy, their appeal attracts (or repels) support, their capacities mould organization. Party success mirrors leader’s success.” See: R. Kenneth Carty, Lynda Erickson and Donald E. Blake. *Leaders and Parties in Canadian Politics: Experiences of the Provinces*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1992), v. Although speaking primarily about major parties, I would suggest this centrality would be further magnified among nascent minor parties without pre-existing institutional structures or generational or familial party loyalties.

²⁴⁴ Mike Martin, August 22, 2012.

in politics, especially in light of his job as a journalist, he says he felt guilty about not being involved with the social movement that was bound up in the party's campaign.

For eight months in advance of the expected election he offered his services in research and planning, but that was as far as it went because he didn't want to jeopardize his career in journalism. He developed contacts in communities, supplied the party leaders with names and community histories and held meetings. Within two weeks of an expected election call, and as the NLP were getting their candidates ready, Martin met with Burgess in a hotel in Newfoundland to ask how things were going. Burgess said that although the party had strong candidates in Labrador West (himself) and Labrador North (Happy Valley Mayor Herb Brett, who also owned a mini-mall and published the town's newspaper), they had not been able to find a good candidate for Labrador South; instead they had worked out a deal with the Progressive Conservatives where the Tories agreed not to field a candidate in the North while the NLP would not nominate a candidate in the South. "I said, 'Bloody hell! After all the work I've put in there you're going to abandon these people?'" Martin recalls. "He said, 'Well, what else can we do.' I said, 'Last thing, I'll run myself.' 'You're on, he said.' I realized I got sucked in."²⁴⁵

The 1971 Provincial Election Campaign

With three strong candidates nominated and an estimated \$30,000²⁴⁶ war chest, the NLP was well-prepared to vigorously contest the provincial election when the writ was dropped on October 6. Although Burgess was confident that the party could sweep the three Labrador seats and possibly hold the balance of power, Martin viewed the election campaign as more of a means to publicize a growing social movement. "In my mind at the time, the only thing we could hope to achieve was to use the

²⁴⁵ Mike Martin, August 22, 2012.

²⁴⁶ ----- "NDP hoping for balance of power," *Daily News* (St. John's), October 28, 1971, 1. The NLP's minute books do not contain figures anywhere close to this number. It is unclear whether Burgess had personal donations separate from the party or whether this figure included money being held by other candidates/riding associations, although the latter scenario is unlikely as Mike Martin suggests that most of his election expenses were covered by Burgess and his supporters in Labrador West.

election campaign as a platform, a soapbox, to stand on and wave our complaints and get some media coverage,” he explained. “The media could not ignore a legitimate candidate in an election campaign.”²⁴⁷ Martin would be pleased, as during the three-week long campaign, the NLP was reasonably successful at generating media coverage in newspapers, and on radio and television stations based in St. John’s and elsewhere in Canada, alerting people to the state of Labrador.²⁴⁸

These reports generally distilled the most salient points behind the party’s emergence and the motivation of its potential voters. For example, Burgess’s appearance in front of 150 students at Memorial University’s Little Theatre on the day of the election call prompted two separate articles in the October 7 edition of the St. John’s *Evening Telegram*. Reporter Pat Doyle noted that despite appearing before an island audience, Burgess’s speech drew loud applause throughout. Burgess told students that if he lived on the island of Newfoundland he would align with the provincial New Democratic Party.²⁴⁹ He also noted that although geographically Labrador is about 600 miles away from the seat of power, psychologically it’s a about billion miles away. He explained to the students that his prime objective was to bring Labrador into “the mainstream of the provincial way of life and to put her on a co-equal basis

²⁴⁷ Mike Martin, August 22, 2012.

²⁴⁸ The precise amount of coverage the party received during the campaign is difficult to ascertain. Although a complete review of the St. John’s *Daily News*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* was completed during research for this dissertation, the other major St. John’s daily newspaper –*Evening Telegram*, was not available on microfilm for the campaign period; clippings of NLP activity from the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly which included *Evening Telegram* articles library were consulted in their place. The completeness of this collection is not known, nor the exact keywords used in obtaining the material. CBC radio and television clips from the period which included segments on the NLP were reproduced for the public broadcaster’s online archives, but access to full coverage or any coverage on private broadcasters’ archives proved to be cost-prohibitive.

²⁴⁹ Suggestions that the NLP might amalgamate with the NDP were dismissed by St. John’s East Extern NDP candidate Walter Noel, who speculated that Burgess was trying to prevent an NDP victory in his own riding. Calling the NDP a national movement of great stature, Noel said “The people of the New Labrador Party are more than welcome to join and support the NDP, but the road between the two parties is one way. The NDP can be joined, but it can’t be amalgamated.” ---- “Election Notes,” The St. John’s *Daily News*, October 1, 1971, 3. It is noteworthy that each of the three parties profiled in this dissertation either emerged out of the NDP (the CBLP), felt some affinity towards the NDP’s platform (the NLP) or specifically targeted the NDP’s command of what might be termed “the protest vote” (the NOHP) that rejected Canada’s two historic brokerage parties. It is arguable that these newer parties find either more common cause with members of ‘the New Party’ or believed some of its supporters would be easier to lure away than those aligned with the Liberals or (Progressive) Conservatives.

with the rest of the province.”²⁵⁰ Although he suggested that perhaps holding the balance of power might be too much to hope for, NLP MHAs would be “a loud voice for Labrador” in the legislature that would change the psychological attitude toward Labrador.²⁵¹

W. Evan Golder, a freelance reporter in Newfoundland who produced a very sympathetic story for the *Toronto Star* mid-way through the campaign, told readers that political recognition was the paramount goal for the party. He quoted Burgess heavily as he explained both the rationale for the party and the types of grievances Labradorians held. “We’ve got to establish the fact that we’re around, because geographically we’re so far removed from the seat of power that they just don’t give a damn,” the NLP leader stated. “The main aim of the party is to establish an identity for Labrador.”²⁵² In addition to gaining a united voice in the provincial legislature with three NLP representatives, Golder noted the party’s plan to push for one federal Member of Parliament to represent a riding solely devoted to Labrador and not any part of the island of Newfoundland. Beyond political recognition, the article suggested the party’s main objectives – better telephone, telegraph, radio and television service, more participation in provincial government, more local control over local matters, industrial development that benefitted the people in the area and better educational opportunities and social development – were attempts to “thwart the twin evils of isolation: poor communication and even worse transportation.”²⁵³

Having briefly described the history of Labrador, Golder noted that the area had recently seen intense interest from speculators and developers “all bent on getting something out of Labrador with little or no consideration for the people there.”²⁵⁴ The report cited the examples of the Churchill Falls

²⁵⁰ Pat Doyle, “Loud voice for Labrador NLP’s aim in election,” *Evening Telegram*, October 7, 1971, 4. (“NLP Clippings General,” Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²⁵¹ Pat Doyle, “Loud voice for Labrador.”

²⁵² W. Evan Golder, “A new political party in Labrador tries to throw off the Newfie yoke,” *Toronto Star*, October 16, 1971, 20.

²⁵³ W. Evan Golder, “A new political party in Labrador.”

²⁵⁴ W. Evan Golder, “A new political party in Labrador.”

development (where Labrador homes and industries would see little of the 225,000 kilowatts of power worth almost \$1 billion produced each year) as well as forest, off-shore oil and mineral concessions granted by the provincial government that drew in industries but exported taxes, royalties and profits. Noting the trailblazing spirit of the immigrants in the area, Golder wrote that “they want to ensure that the new industrialization will not create one more chapter in an old story – the colonization of Labrador by Newfoundland.”²⁵⁵ The characterization of the relationships between Newfoundland and Labrador as one of long-term colonialism perfectly mirrored the NLP’s rhetorical strategy.²⁵⁶

Less than a week before the vote, a CBC Radio newsmagazine program discussing the provincial election also noted the party’s rise in fortune. Characterizing the party’s campaign as a well-organized protest vote “which is beginning to be taken seriously,” reporter Ken Cathcart stated that Labrador’s rapid resource development had left people feeling “neglected and exploited.”²⁵⁷ The report included a series of sound bytes from Labradorians who expressed the belief that “aggressive” development in the territory had been almost exclusively for Newfoundland’s benefit while residents of the mainland had poor communications systems and paid “ridiculous” electricity rates compared to their island counterparts.²⁵⁸

The party’s more immediate and practical concern of winning over local voters and organizing a successful political machine also appeared to be resounding success – at least according to the party’s own promotional efforts. In a press release to the local Labrador City newspaper the *Carol Link* published on October 14, Burgess noted that “all organization has been done and the campaign is in full

²⁵⁵ W. Evan Golder, “A new political party in Labrador.”

²⁵⁶ See Chapter Five for a discussion of rhetorical strategies of each party.

²⁵⁷ Ken Cathcart, *Sunday Magazine*, CBC Radio, October 24, 1971, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/provincial-territorial-politics/newfoundland-and-labrador-elections/tom-burgess-and-the-new-labrador-party.html> (Last accessed May 29, 2013)

²⁵⁸ Ken Cathcart, *Sunday Magazine*, October 24, 1971.

swing. The NLP has been effectively campaigning since its formation over two years ago.”²⁵⁹ A press release the following week, though hardly unbiased, noted that “support for the party appears overwhelming” by citing a motorcade that drew 440 automobiles and a rally that drew 750 supporters as proof that the party was on the verge of victory in Labrador West.²⁶⁰ Burgess also drew a crowd of well over 1,000 people to the Wabash recreational centre for the largest political rally in the history of Labrador on October 25.²⁶¹

Nevertheless, there were difficulties in terms of organization and campaigning that needed to be overcome – particularly in areas outside of Labrador West. In his article, Golder noted that isolation and the independent spirit of the people did not lend itself well to building a collective movement or party. The 1,000 Eskimos [Inuit], 600 Montagnais and Naskapi Indians and 12,000 whites [possibly including Metis] “are especially difficult to organize, not because of apathy or disinterest, but because of their independence and resourcefulness. These qualities, valuable in coping with the world of natural elements, become liabilities in the political world where individuals must work together to effect change.”²⁶² While this perspective is worth noting as a contemporary opinion on the party’s prospects,

²⁵⁹ ----- “The time has come...” *Carol Link*, October 14, 1971, 1. The following week the publisher took the unusual step of noting that with the election one week away, “...even though the four candidates are supposedly very busy and trying to get their views across to the public, the only party this paper is able to get any news from is the New Labrador Party.” J.S. Robinson, “Untitled,” *Carol Link*, October 21, 1971, 1. Robinson noted he had visited each of the candidates or their representatives, “but not one of the parties would come out and state their policy or would they put in print any positive views on any subject.” He asked, “Are the parties afraid to state their views to all the public, or do they just wish their followers to hear them at their rallies?” Robinson repeated his insistence that the paper wanted to try to cover all sides of the story.

²⁶⁰ ----- “New Labrador Party,” *Carol Link*, October 21, 1971, 9. Mac Moss confirms that there was a groundswell of public support during the campaign: “To give an example, they planned a motorcade rally and expected 40 or 50 cars, but ended up getting 150 or 200. They kept having to print more literature and posters because people wanted them in their windows. Those days were hectic.” Moss also notes that much of the party’s promotional efforts had to be achieved through word of mouth. With no local radio news service and occasional periods without an operational local newspaper, the party relied on Burgess’ superb oratorical performance at large rallies in the Wabash recreational centre to drive home the party’s message: “Tom could really fire people up at these rallies. There was screaming and whistling.” Moss, Interview.

²⁶¹ ----- “Election Notes,” *Daily News*, October 27, 1971, 13.

²⁶² W. Evan Golder, “A new political party in Labrador.” Golder related the fascinating anecdote of problematic team sports in the area: “I once watched a schoolyard volleyball game in which each player invariably tried to hit the ball over the net rather than set up his teammates. Hockey coaches report a similar problem, even when boys have been playing hockey since the age of five.”

the essentializing, racist nature of this quote neglects the area's long history of inter-group distrust, colonization and avoidance among Indigenous populations and settler societies.

Martin identified other characteristics of part of the Labrador electorate that hindered the ease with which the party's message – or any partisan message – could be received:

There had never been a campaign on the Labrador Coast. Parachutes were opened and candidates were dropped in – well, that's not entirely true, their names were dropped in. They hardly ever went campaigning.... We had to start off explaining what a candidate is, what is the House of Assembly, what do politicians do, what does the member do, how does he relate. It was Politics 101. It was incredibly basic what we had to do. Because there was no sense in trying to promise anything or give opinions unless you had a foundation to base it on. Otherwise the arguments just went straight over their heads. They couldn't understand why we were suggesting this and why we couldn't just go out and do it. They didn't understand the operation of government. They didn't understand the operation of political parties. And there was a tremendous loyalty. Joey had rescued them. Joey had given them cash that they didn't have before. And there was a tremendous loyalty not so much to the Liberals but to Joey. If Joey had been a communist there would have been tremendous loyalty to the communist party. There was no ideology associated with it at all. And we didn't use ideology. People asked me, where do you stand on the spectrum? Are you left, right, centre? Are you closer to the NDP? I said, well it depends on the issue. We're just here to get some basic political rights, human rights. We want fair play. When we went campaigning on issues it was merely pointing out what they had on the island that we didn't have [...], why they didn't have it and also how we would have to go about trying to get it. The message there was that there's power in unity and if we don't stick together we're not going to get anything. That message more or less got across, but from day one I would get objections: 'Yes, Mr. Martin, but we're only poor Labrador fishermen.' There was a fatalism there because of who we are and where we are. 'That's the way the world is.' That was the most frustrating thing to deal with.²⁶³

There is much to unpack in this assessment. While describing the population as being politically naïve – at least in terms of Newfoundland and Labrador's parliamentary democracy – there were questions about the new party's ideology. In eschewing an ideological label, Martin and the NLP could appeal to more potential voters who might otherwise disagree with some party policy objectives. Moreover, the residents' general affinity for Smallwood and his overwhelming association with the

²⁶³ Mike Martin, August 31, 2011. NLP member Ernie Davis, who lived in Labrador West during the 1971 but was born and raised in a coastal community, confirms the general sense of fatalism present in a large portion of the community. "We didn't really exercise our democratic rights because we figured that's the way things were," he remembers of politics during his youth. Ernie Davis, Interview by Will Stos, In-Person Interview, Ottawa, Ontario, October 25, 2012.

Liberal party's brand in the province once again underscores the importance of individual leadership to voters – even among portions of the electorate who may have been disengaged from politics. Burgess's amiable personality (and Martin as a trusted local candidate and future party leader) were likely important considerations for voters in the 'absence' of party ideology. Finally, the fatalism Martin identifies was a significant obstacle for any new party. If a population considers itself powerless and change is seen as an impossibility, there is a deterrent to even trying something new for fear of making things worse.

The governing Liberals, newly concerned that more than one Labrador seat might be in play, attempted to boost the historic loyalty many residents had to Premier Smallwood with a flood of pre-election spending announcements. Burgess told reporters that following an NLP tour of the southern coastal communities where he outlined the needs of the various areas, the area Liberal candidate toured the same communities accompanied by members of the department of social and community development who delivered grants ranging from \$15,000-\$20,000. "[It's] the old shenanigan of trying to buy people's votes with their own money," Burgess lamented. "They walk into Cartwright and say, 'Here's a grant for \$10,000.' For what? For a provincial park. Believe it or not, a provincial park in Cartwright, Labrador... when they've been treating the whole of Labrador as a provincial park for 22 years."²⁶⁴ In spite of his expressed incredulity at the crass political actions, there was a worried appreciation of the way in which sudden attention from the government could calm the winds of resentment that a protest party like the NLP needed in its sails. Nevertheless, on the eve of the vote, Burgess was optimistic that he would win re-election in Labrador West and have one or two new seatmates in the House of Assembly from the NLP ranks.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Pat Doyle, "Loud voice for Labrador."

²⁶⁵ Some pundits did not share his optimism and questioned whether the party would be shut out, with Liberal Roy Legge defeating Burgess. ---- "NDP hoping for balance of power."

Election Results and Aftermath

The 1971 provincial election boasted the highest turnout across the province since the Confederation referendum, and as the results trickled in on October 28, 1971, it became apparent that Joey Smallwood's vaunted Liberal machine had sputtered. The Progressive Conservatives had taken over 50 per cent of the popular vote and were elected in 21 of the legislature's 42 seats – all on the island of Newfoundland. Gerrymandering, which vastly underrepresented urban voters in favour of small outport communities where there were still many Smallwood loyalists, allowed the Liberals to remain competitive with 20 seats (18 of which were on the island) despite winning far fewer votes.²⁶⁶

Labrador's results told a slightly different story. The NLP received about 45 per cent of the vote in the region compared to 33.7 per cent for the Liberals, 20.5 per cent for the PCs and 0.8 per cent for the NDP.²⁶⁷ The insurgent NLP had, as Sparkes observes in his thesis, "created an infrastructure and following in the region that caught both of the mainstream parties off their guard."²⁶⁸ The party had finished first across Labrador in terms of total votes cast. Burgess cruised to an overwhelming victory in Labrador West, Martin almost overtook the Liberals in Labrador South and Brett showed considerable strength in Labrador North. Voters on the mainland had sent the Liberals a message; yet unlike their island counterparts they had not turned to the province's establishment opposition party to express their dissatisfaction.²⁶⁹ "The hardline party people were astounded by the fact they had children voting for the New Labrador Party, because [traditionally] if you're a Liberal you're a Liberal, if you're a PC you're a PC," NLP member Ernie Davis remembers. "When we got going, we blew them out of the water."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ ----- "Editorial: End to the beginning," *Daily News*, October 29, 1971, 1.

²⁶⁷ Sparkes, "Flurry," 41.

²⁶⁸ Sparkes, "Flurry," 2.

²⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that the NDP, another upstart party without deep roots in the province, had fared very poorly in the election. No NDP candidate achieved enough votes to retain their campaign deposit.

²⁷⁰ Ernie Davis, October 25, 2012.

Although vote tallies in several seats suggested imminent recounts, the NLP's re-election in Labrador West looked set to prevent either party from forming a workable majority; the province would soon be plunged into another election. In the interim, Burgess's vote in the House of Assembly appeared to be an essential part of the calculations each major party made as they struggled to keep or take power. Doyle's unexpected visit to Wabash as votes were still being counted, and the unsubstantiated promises²⁷¹ he made in hopes of keeping the Smallwood government in office, suggested the stakes in this political drama were high. Burgess, while disappointed he would be returning to the House of Assembly as his party's sole representative, hoped he could win several important commitments to Labrador in exchange for his support.

Flying to St. John's on October 30, Burgess and NLP President Mac Moss took up residence in a Holiday Inn to prepare for meetings with Moores and Smallwood the following day. Moss recalls being swamped by the media and political operatives. "We were accosted daily by the Smallwood people, by his contractors, ... offered everything under the sun," he remembers. "And we were being as pure as we could be. We finally had to get out of the hotel and go into hiding because we were just being overwhelmed by this effort by Smallwood to get us to sign on quickly."²⁷² Moss contends that the two NLP members "were still dealing in issues of philosophy at the time. These are the issues of Labrador, these are the issues that need to be resolved, we need commitments on these things or as many as possible during your term of government."²⁷³ In addition to being amenable to a list of demands, including tax exemption on gasoline in Labrador, electoral redistribution giving the mainland more seats

²⁷¹ In addition to Moss' recollections, Burgess reported to an executive meeting of the NLP on Nov. 5, 1971 that J.C. Doyle had made several offers to Burgess and Moss personally such as "Javelin shares, \$35,000 for campaign expenses, and (unknown word) and medical concessions for Labrador if the NLP agreed to support the Liberals." New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," November 5, 1969, 41, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives.

²⁷² Mac Moss, August 31, 2011.

²⁷³ Mac Moss, August 31, 2011.

in the House, and school bus services and water and sewage facilities for certain communities, each party leader reportedly offered Burgess a cabinet position.²⁷⁴

Although no decisions on which party to support would be made until after the NLP leader met with his party's other two candidates, Burgess's list of demands had already grown when he called a news conference the following day.²⁷⁵ While accepting that recounts could still change circumstances, Burgess boldly stated that as of that moment "I'm the guy who's auctioning the whole thing off... I'm the guy who calls the shots... I'm the one who asks for specific things and I haven't seen a refusal from the party yet."²⁷⁶ According to Moss, one of the party's biggest problems during this time "was keeping Tom away from the media, because when you put a microphone in front of him he was a loose cannon."²⁷⁷ The NLP leader's conditions for support did not sit well with all members of the other two parties, however. Liberal cabinet minister Steve Neary told reporters he would prefer to sit in opposition than be blackmailed by "an Irish soldier of fortune."²⁷⁸ Privately, John C. Crosbie was also adamant that Moores not negotiate with him:

The problem with Burgess was that his support could never be bought. At best, he could be rented, and perhaps only by the hour. I opposed making any concessions whatsoever to him, believing him to be unstable and untrustworthy. His demands kept increasing. He wanted to be Minister of Mines, Agriculture and Resources. He wanted to control everything the government

²⁷⁴ See: ----- "Holds balance of power: PCs, Liberals make their pitch to Burgess," *Daily News*, November 1, 1971, 1; and ----- "Moores' lack of party control led Burgess to withdraw support," *Telegram*, January 27, 1972. (File: "NLP clippings," The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²⁷⁵ Burgess insisted upon a cabinet position while still retaining leadership of the NLP (a coalition government), a commitment from the party he supported not to run candidates against the NLP in the next election, a doubling of the number of MHAs from Labrador (from three to six), a trans-Labrador highway, abolition of the gas tax, free school bus services for all those attending school, and a water and sewage system for coastal Labrador. ----- "Burgess outlines cost of his support," *Daily News*, November 2, 1971, 1.

²⁷⁶ ----- "Burgess outlines cost of his support." Interestingly, Burgess revealed that he had been encouraged to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party and he had "no doubt [he'd] win it."

²⁷⁷ Mac Moss, August 31, 2011.

²⁷⁸ ----- "Burgess blackmailing Liberals says Neary: 'Irish soldier of fortune,'" *The Daily News*, November 5, 1971, 1. Some letter writers were also unimpressed with Burgess' position. Len Walsh suggested Burgess was "flamboyantly and even arrogantly" playing kingmaker with the two major parties. He wrote: "I suggest that Tom Burgess should become more politically mature – more of a statesman and less of a flamboyant king-maker – more of a Province-lover than a Labrador-lover – "and the heck with the rest of Newfoundland." Len Walsh, "Letter: Newfoundland's ludicrous political situation," *Daily News*, November 8, 1971, 8.

did in Labrador. He wanted a Trans-Labrador Highway. It was all ego stuff. In the next few weeks, he overplayed his hand until his cards became valueless.²⁷⁹

Following a series of discussions with his party's executive and another personal meeting with Moores in Montreal, Burgess returned to St. John's to announce that he had secured agreeable terms to support a Progressive Conservative government.²⁸⁰ Speaking to the press, Burgess disputed characterizations that he was "holding this province up to ransom," arguing instead that he was negotiating on behalf the people of Labrador to obtain services such as roads and medical services that were recognized as normal on the island but practically unknown on the mainland.²⁸¹ He also rejected the contention that he and his party were seeking special status for Labrador, arguing that he only wanted the area to be drawn into the mainstream of the province's political life. While denying any special deals for Labrador to the public, he suggested that he believed the new government would take a careful look at the needs of the area and approach its residents with a new attitude.

A new government was still not a foregone conclusion, however. Recounts in several ridings were still pending. In one riding, St. Barbe's South, the Progressive Conservatives narrowly led. But an inexplicable error by Deputy Returning Officer Olive Payne – she had burned 106 ballots from her poll after the election night count – prompted Supreme Court judge Harold Puddester to halt the recount on November 23 and saw the Liberals petition to overturn the result and hold a by-election. Throughout this period of uncertainty Smallwood's government remained entrenched in St. John's. The wily premier had vowed to step down as Liberal leader following the election regardless of the recount results,²⁸² but

²⁷⁹ John C. Crosbie with Geoffrey Stevens, *No holds barred: My life in politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997), 102.

²⁸⁰ According to the party's minutes, in exchange for support Moores had promised a cabinet position for Burgess (possibly mines and resources), a pro-rated gasoline tax exemption, one additional seat for Labrador in the House of Assembly through redistribution and immediate action on medical and school bus issues. New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," November 9, 1969, 42, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives. These details were not revealed publicly by Moores, however, and when Burgess announced his support, he told the press he had received "no special deals." ----- "Burgess throws support to PCs," *Daily News*, November 15, 1971, 3.

²⁸¹ ----- "Burgess throws support to PCs."

²⁸² Harold Horwood, *Joey: The Life and Political Times of Joey Smallwood*, Toronto: Stoddart, 1989, 298.

he clearly desired to leave office on his own terms and not through an ignominious defeat at the hands of voters. As such, he and his advisors continued to plot a number ways to keep Moores from taking office.²⁸³ And although Burgess had announced his intention to side with Progressive Conservatives regardless of the outcome of the St. Barbe's decision, Smallwood and his operatives were still hopeful he might be brought onsite.

In late November Burgess drew some embarrassing headlines in The *Daily News* when it reported that he had ordered newspaper subscriptions addressed to "the Hon. T. Burgess, Minister of Mines and Resources" that had already been received at the ministry's office. Moores, who had not yet named a cabinet, nor been sworn in as premier, publicly denied that any cabinet offer had been made, though privately Burgess believed he had been promised the post. Perhaps concerned that Moores might renege on his promise or that a star Liberal candidate in a St. Barbe by-election could alter the configuration of the House before it reconvened, at some point during this period Burgess began to reconsider his options. By the end of the calendar year he had once again held meetings with Smallwood to discuss aligning with the Liberals.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ In his first public interview following the election Smallwood told journalist Geoff Stirling that he would not contemplate resignation until the recounts were completed and even then he was not constitutionally required to resign until he was defeated in the legislature – an institution that would not need to meet until the following March to vote on supply motions which permitted the government to continue to spend public funds (Horwood, 299). For a thorough account of the election aftermath see: Peter Neary, "Changing Government: the 1971-1972 Newfoundland Example," *Dalhousie Law Journal*, 5, no. 3, (1979), 631-658.

²⁸⁴ These meetings took place in Florida where Smallwood was vacationing. Accounts differ as to whether Burgess was summoned to speak to Smallwood or arranged the meeting himself. According to Smallwood's memoirs, the premier expressed shock that Burgess came to the meeting asking about returning to the Liberal Party, running for its leadership and wanting Smallwood's endorsement if he did. Smallwood agreed that he could return to the Liberals, run for the leadership but declined to endorse any candidate in the race. He also stipulated that Burgess would have to make this decision and publicly renounce the Progressive Conservatives before the Supreme Court ruled or it would look like naked ambition. (See Joseph Roberts Smallwood, *I Chose Canada: The Memoirs of the Honourable Joseph R. "Joey" Smallwood*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1973, 517-519). Interviews with NLP supporters suggest Burgess was forced to stay in St. John's for a significant period of time due to an air strike and was convinced of this plan by people in the Liberal Party. Rhyna Mclean suggests Tom was offered a ride back to Labrador on a plane Smallwood had commissioned but declined the offer: "Tom wouldn't even get on it unless Joey's people got on it because he was afraid they were going to try to get rid of him. With Joey anything was possible." Mclean, interview.

Burgess emerged from his meetings with Smallwood convinced that his best course of action would be to disown his agreement with Moores, step down as a member of the NLP, rejoin the Liberals and then, somewhat improbably, run for and win that party's leadership to replace the departing premier. The unpredictable politician returned to Labrador during the second week of January to meet with the executives of the various riding associations to explain his reasoning.²⁸⁵ Mike Martin recalls being dumbfounded when Burgess came to see him at a friend's house in Conception Bay to reveal his plans. Frantically, they plied Burgess with alcohol and kept him drunk for three days in hopes of delaying his announcement. "Tom would wake up and we'd give him some more rum," he laughs. "They kept him under wraps for two days and finally we couldn't do it any longer and he went."²⁸⁶

Following a meeting with the coastal executives in Goose Bay, Burgess met with his Labrador West executive to explain his decision to return to the Liberal fold and run for the party's leadership.²⁸⁷ Although the executive voted in favour of Burgess' plan, it was not a unanimous vote. Party president Mac Moss spoke passionately against the idea. "We wanted no part of this," he says. "We thought it was a sellout. We knew Smallwood well enough that once Tom committed to that, he was a dead duck. That our hopes went down the drain."²⁸⁸ Rhyna Mclean, who also opposed the defection to the Liberals, explains that she only learned of Burgess's plans when he returned to meet with his executive: "He didn't tell me on the phone. And I was disappointed. And he knew I was disappointed because I'm a Labradorian and I wanted the New Labrador Party. That's probably why he didn't tell me."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ In the interim, the Supreme Court had validated the Progressive Conservative victory in St. Barbe South, somewhat complicating plans.

²⁸⁶ Martin, interview.

²⁸⁷ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "Executive Meeting," January 1, 1972, 41, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives. Burgess reported that he had been given \$100,000 to seek the leadership by Liberals in St. John's.

²⁸⁸ Moss, interview.

²⁸⁹ Mclean, interview.

The tense political situation continued when Moores, who had been tipped off to Burgess's plans, pre-empted the Labrador West MHA by announcing news of his pending defection only hours before reversing course and stating that Burgess had reaffirmed his loyalty to him.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Moores once again publicly poured cold water on the NLP leader's cabinet aspirations by telling reporters it was "highly unlikely" he would join Moores' inner circle.²⁹¹ This statement, made within an hour of Smallwood's official resignation as premier, prompted Burgess to remove his declared support for the in-coming Progressive Conservative government, once again adding to confusion. Moreover, Burgess did not announce his defection to the Liberals and instead stated his intention to "continue to sit in the legislature as a New Labrador Party representative and vote on each piece of legislation as [his] conscience dictates."²⁹² Just over two weeks later, however, Burgess and Hugh Shea, a St. John's PC MHA who had been passed over for cabinet, both defected to the Liberals giving the former government numerical superiority in the House.²⁹³ Burgess then followed through with his plan to contest the Liberal leadership days later and placed a very poor second in a four-person race.²⁹⁴ The denouement of the months-long political drama-cum-farce came on March 3 when, following only a few hours of sitting in the legislature, Moores called for another general election to be held on March 24.

The 1972 Election(s)

The new election, which would resolve an unstable and untenable situation in the House of Assembly, finally brought an end to what some observers described as one big joke.²⁹⁵ Few supporters of the NLP were laughing, however. Despite receiving the mixed blessing of the party executive to make

²⁹⁰ ----- "Difference patched up says Moores: Burgess will stay with PCs," *Daily News*, January 13, 1972, 1.

²⁹¹ Burgess noted that Moores told him that he was unable to convince members of his party to accept the NLP member into cabinet. See: ----- "Moores' lack of party control led Burgess to withdraw support," *Telegram*, January 27, 1972. (File: "NLP clippings," The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

²⁹² ----- "Burgess believed Moores could deliver cabinet post," *The Daily News*, January 17, 1972, 1.

²⁹³ ----- "Burgess Shea switch to Liberals; House will decide fate of government," *Daily News*, February 1, 1972, 1.

²⁹⁴ ----- "Roberts' victory overwhelming: Liberal leadership decided on first ballot," *Daily News*, February 7, 1972, 1. Burgess received 82 votes compared to Roberts' 564.

²⁹⁵ ----- "One big Newfie joke," *Daily News*, February 2, 1972, 1.

a move to the Liberals, many people within the party were bitterly disappointed by Burgess's actions. "I felt let down," Davis remembers. "I was wearing two coats. I'm from the coast, but I'm also a New Labradorian working in the west as well. To me it was a big disappointment."²⁹⁶ The question of the party's very existence was raised at a general membership meeting a few weeks after the Burgess defection.²⁹⁷ Minutes noted that "...members stressed the identity that the NLP had given Labrador, but due to events had now lost it,"²⁹⁸ while a motion urging the party to preserve was passed by a vote of only 21-12. Press reports from the period made the division within the party very public.²⁹⁹

In addition to losing its founder, leader and sole elected representative, the disheartened party also faced a new vote in dire financial straits. "Part of the [initial] deal with the Conservatives would be that they would pay the Labrador Party's election expenses," explained Moss. "The party had enormous debts for air travel, mostly, and they agreed to cover that up to a certain amount. And that money would be transferred to the party's bank account in Labrador City. But it didn't get transferred to the party, it got transferred to Tom Burgess. He had so many personal debts that it swallowed the whole thing. So, we're left with nothing. It was very frustrating."³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ Davis, interview.

²⁹⁷ Mike Martin remembers that in some of the party's riding associations some members thought it would be pointless to continue and discussed the idea of joining the Progressive Conservatives: "I think the split was in whether or not we stay as a party or whether we join the Tories. And there may have been some who wanted to go Liberal, but I doubt that very much. I never heard it expressed." Martin, interview.

²⁹⁸ New Labrador Party minutes ledger, "General Membership meeting held at Wabush Rec Centre," February 17, 1972, 46, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives. Adam Sparkes has argued that the NLP was fundamental in providing Labradorians with a sense of regional identity where one did not really exist before. Prior to the NLP, there were distinct and competing groups in the area who tended to have a common dislike or suspicion of Newfoundlanders, but no other sense of community with each other. The political networking the NLP did brought the first real connections and building of a pan-Labrador identity. Sparks, "Flurry."

²⁹⁹ On the eve of the NLP membership meeting the *Daily News* reported that two factions within the party had appeared in Labrador West. One group headed by Moss and Olaf Larsen had launched a petition to oust Burgess as a Liberal member while another headed by Leonard Leyte started a reactionary group to fight the "slander" that the petitioners were apparently engaged in. Leyte told reporters that the anti-Burgess group had been handing out posters depicting the former leader as a "the betraying Judas." Leyte argued that Burgess had received the blessing of the executive to leave for the Liberals. ---- "Split to spell NLP finis in Labrador West?" *Daily News*, February 16, 1972, 3. Burgess later called the petitioners "a bunch of loudmouths that didn't support me anyway," prompting letter writer Bernard Kennedy to remind him and *Daily News* readers that he, like many others who were opposed to Burgess's actions, had given one day's pay to the fledging party when he had asked for it.

³⁰⁰ Moss, interview.

Since his defection Burgess had also repeatedly stated that the NLP was intended to be “a one-shot deal”³⁰¹ that would bring Labrador and its problems to the attention of the rest of the province. During the 1972 campaign, supporters of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties reiterated this language, recognizing the party’s success but dismissing its chances as a lasting entity.³⁰²

Two of the NLP’s three candidates from the previous year’s election ran again carrying the NLP banner. Gerald Neary joined Herbert Brett (Labrador North) and Mike Martin (Labrador South) in a bid to win Labrador West back from the now-Liberal Tom Burgess. The brother of former Liberal cabinet minister Steve Neary, the new candidate was in the words of Moss “a miserable flop.” A poor public speaker and easily distracted, Neary was “just not what [the party] needed at the time.”³⁰³ Ernie Davis, who was still active with the party in Labrador West, suggests the candidate was only partly to blame for the party’s poor third-place showing in the riding on election day – “Labrador West was done in by Burgess’ defection.”³⁰⁴ Disillusionment with the NLP in the western riding was a by-product of widespread personal animus towards the man who had been synonymous with it.

Rhyna McLean was witness to much of the ill will directed at her husband, who had admitted to students at Memorial University that he did not come out of the months-long drama “lily white.”³⁰⁵ She explains that the 1972 campaign “was pretty miserable for me, and I think it was pretty miserable for him because a lot of people he thought were friends turned on him. They betrayed him. And I know he

³⁰¹ See for example: Robert Mercer, “Letters to the Editor: New Labrador Party,” *Aurora*, March 22, 1972, 27.

³⁰² For example, E.J. Kearley of Churchill Falls wrote to the *Aurora* and *Daily News (St. John’s)* in advance of the expected election asking voters in the region who were frustrated with the former Liberal government’s disinterest to cast their opposition vote for the Progressive Conservatives. Noting that although the New Labrador movement “grew out of a genuine desire by the people of Labrador for more satisfactory political expression than they had in the past,” the Burgess defection made it tempting to “speculate that the New Labrador Party might have been set up as a giant hoax, to split the vote which would have gone to the Progressive Conservative Party, and thus ensure the re-election of three Liberals here.” Kearley cited the region’s miniscule population as a hindrance to allowing the NLP to hold the balance of power in future elections; the large area and expense of campaigning in its three chosen districts, and the reliance on individual donations to sustain itself made conditions difficult for it to continue. E.J. Kearley, “Letter to the Editor: Whither Now, NLP?” *Aurora*, February 23, 1972, 4.

³⁰³ Moss, interview.

³⁰⁴ Davis, interview.

³⁰⁵ “Moores’ lack of party control,” January 27, 1972

shouldn't have expected a lot of them to go back with him to the Liberals after fighting for the New Labrador Party, but the meanness and the threats... you know, it was really hard."³⁰⁶ Despite negative reaction from some former supporters and friends, Mclean remembers Burgess honestly believed that he would be re-elected. "Why? I don't know. But he did. Believe me, Tom was a dreamer. He was a real dreamer."³⁰⁷ Burgess placed a poor second³⁰⁸ to Progressive Conservative candidate Joe Rousseau while Neary was a very distant third. Gracious in defeat and pledging to support Rousseau, Burgess said he would take some time to decide his future, noting "it's not easy for a washed-up politician to find a job."³⁰⁹ He subsequently left Labrador.³¹⁰

The collapse of the NLP vote in Labrador West was not mirrored in the other two ridings. In Labrador North, Herb Brett's share of the popular vote decreased marginally due to a strong showing by the third-place Progressive Conservative candidate, but he narrowed the gap in votes cast between himself and the re-elected Liberal MHA in another strong second-place finish. Mike Martin's showing in Labrador South was even more spectacular. The young journalist-turned politician was only three votes behind the victorious Liberal candidate. Putting the best face on a crushing loss, Martin noted that "as

³⁰⁶ Mclean, interview.

³⁰⁷ Mclean, interview.

³⁰⁸ In remarks to the press following his defeat Burgess conceded that his defection contributed heavily to his defeat and speculated that if he had remained with the NLP he believed he would have been re-elected. ----- "Burgess admits switch hurt him," *Daily News*, March 25, 1972, 2.

³⁰⁹ "Burgess admits switch hurt him," March 25, 1972.

³¹⁰ Mclean, interview. Rhyna recalls: "In hindsight, Tom was quite depressed. And I think he was thoroughly sorry he ever accepted that Liberal nomination. I think he was in a depression because Shayna [our daughter] was five and I was working in the hospital and one day I came home, and he was gone. And I didn't know where he was for a month. And finally, I found out he had gone home to Ireland to visit his mother and father. And then his mother died a few days after he got over there and that depressed him further. And things were never the same after that. They were never the same in our marriage. Politics is murderous. You're alright if you're on top, but if you come down a bit, you know who your friends are." Rhyna went to Ireland and spent almost a year there trying to mend their problems while Tom became involved in politics over there, but just working for a party. Later they thought about emigrating to Australia, but things weren't working out, so she decided to come back. "When I came back, people who I thought were friends of Tom's, tried to seduce me... almost as if they were doing it to Tom. I couldn't believe it. So that's how bad politics could get. It took a few years for people to start treating me as me again. And, in fact, I went back to my maiden name so that people would not associate me with the party because I was so tired of it."

far as Labrador is concerned, there are no major problems, just a multitude of minor ones. And if the NLP can correct these, with or without having elected representatives, it is doing its job.”³¹¹ But when a recount reduced the margin to a single vote,³¹² the interim leader of the NLP argued that irregularities in proxy voting should nullify the election. The Supreme Court of Newfoundland ruled in his favour and Martin soon found himself contesting his third election in less than a year;³¹³ on August 31, Martin enjoyed a 158-vote victory and the NLP once again had a presence in Newfoundland’s House of Assembly.

The Martin Era

Martin’s victory gave Labrador the unique distinction of electing representatives from all three parties in the provincial House of Assembly. Conceding that the blow dealt to the NLP by the defection of its former leader “left the party [in Labrador West] at a loss and tore its credibility to shreds,” the party’s executive noted that the story of Martin’s long road to the legislature was one of “pure courage and determination.” These same characteristics would keep the party alive as it reorganized, they said, once again tying the party’s trajectory directly to its leader.³¹⁴

The heady days of holding the balance of power may have been gone, but the publicity generated by the NLP’s campaigns appeared to have made the mainland portion of the province a priority of the new government. Premier Frank Moores formed a Royal Commission on Labrador to

³¹¹ ----- “Tory support hurt NLP – Martin,” *Telegram*, undated (circa April 1972), (File: “NLP clippings,” The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection); in a post-election advertisement in the *Labrador Press*, Martin asked Labradorians not to think of these results as a discouragement: “We have progressed much further and faster than anyone would have expected of a regional party with such limited experience and resources. In the process we have brought about the beginnings of an end to the indifference with which we in Labrador have been treated for centuries.” Martin urged Labradorians not to become complacent or accept lip service in the meantime, but he concluded they should “keep the faith, there will be another time to try again.” Advertisement, “New Labrador Party,” *Labrador Press*, May 1, 1972, 12.

³¹² ----- “Recount confirms Harvey’s victory,” *Daily News*, April 24, 1972, 1.

³¹³ Martin was said to have been conducting a quiet, yet vigorous campaign. He toured the riding by longliner. ----- “It’s a 3-way fight,” *Labrador Press*, September 1972, 1.

³¹⁴ Executive Committee, New Labrador Party, “Letter to the Editor: An Open Letter From The New Labrador Party,” *Aurora*, October 18, 1972, 4.

explore and seek resolution to the issues that were causing such grievance on the mainland. The NLP was initially skeptical; members were concerned it would be a waste of time and money;³¹⁵ they were particularly appalled that the people elected to work on the commission were non-Labradorians.³¹⁶

Skepticism aside, the party did still embrace the opportunity to share its message with a government that appeared at least willing to entertain the idea of bringing in some changes.³¹⁷ In addition to a session with Martin in St. John's, when the commission moved to Labrador West the party's district association submitted a detailed brief. Considered worthy of serialization by the *Aurora* over four issues in May, 1973, amidst some of the usual partisan rhetoric about the area being a "milch cow" for the province, the association delivered its most comprehensive statement yet about the mainland's, and particularly Labrador City and Wabush's, many problems.³¹⁸ Highlighting the "insensitivity" of the former government and its "gunshot planning and spending [that] extends very few miles beyond the Avalon Peninsula," the association contended that "many government programs, both federal and provincial, [were] conceived for massive southern populations with no thought given to their application in Northern Canada."³¹⁹ The brief requested more local government services, expanded

³¹⁵ Some members of the press were similarly skeptical. Charles Devine, publisher of the *Aurora*, wrote as the commission was about to hold hearings in Labrador West that "we have never agreed that such a study was necessary and contend it is, in its final report, going to repeat what we already know. ----- "Editorially Speaking," *The Aurora*, January 31, 1973, 4.

³¹⁶ Evelyn Jubber et al, "Letters to the Editor," *Aurora*, October 11, 1972, 4. A total of 26 Labradorians, most, if not all, members of the NLP, signed a letter to the editor noting that they all had at least completed high school, and some had finished university or technical school, had intimate knowledge of the region, and had the capability to participate in the Commission. "Why is it that the people who have long experienced the neglect in Labrador are not asked to work on such a commission?" they inquired. In a concluding passage to an open letter complaining about the lack of representation on the commission, members of the NLP, including Martin, noted "it is not hard to understand why many of the younger Labradorians vote for the New Labrador Party or why many of us have separatist inclinations. Would territorial status be any worse than the disinterest, mismanagement and neglect we have experienced from the past and present Newfoundland government?" Evelyn Jubber et al, "Letters to the Editor," October 11, 1972.

³¹⁷ ----- "Snowden Commission only a slight towards residents: Martin," *Labrador Press*, October, 1972, 1. Despite being critical of those who were chosen as commissioners, Martin explained that the commission had assured him that "all areas of Labrador and all groups will be given the opportunity to make themselves heard," and the NLP would "co-operate with the commission in any way possible."

³¹⁸ Labrador West District Association, The New Labrador Party, "NLP brief to Royal Commission," *The Aurora*, May 2, 1973, 16.

³¹⁹ Labrador West District Association, The New Labrador Party, "NLP brief to Royal Commission," May 2, 1973, 16.

sports and recreation options, controls on pollution from the mining industry, acknowledgement of the isolation felt in the area and the resulting transient population, public control of some natural resource production such as wood, protection of natural tourist attractions, expansion of transportation options and changes to schedules and rates, and better radio and television service (with some local programming or at least programming emanating from within the province).

As the Commission toured Labrador, Martin was finally able to take his seat in the legislature. Addressing his colleagues for the first time in his reply to the Speech from the Throne, his inaugural speech provided Members with a history lesson and underscored Labradorians' widespread belief that they were an exploited and oft demoralized people. Speaking to a mostly islander audience, Martin called Labrador "a colony within a colony;" where its residents simultaneously have suffered from neglect from their Newfoundlander brethren and sympathized as they suffered "in their own way the indignities of a system over which they have no control – a control for which they hunger and desire as much as we do."³²⁰ Taking aim at paternalism, which had denied Labradorians the education to manage their own affairs, Martin's speech touched upon much larger themes of social justice, cynicism towards political leaders, and the hunger among his generation for what was promised, but not delivered, in Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's "just society." These were goals Martin found to be frustratingly unattainable based on the entrenched interests in the current system.

Despite the party activity in terms of briefs to the Royal Commission, local re-organizing³²¹ and Martin's performance in the legislature, questions once again began to be raised by party members and the press about the future of the movement. A year after finally making it to the legislature, Martin was already becoming disillusioned with politics and contemplating his future elsewhere. In an interview with Southam News' Bruce Little, Martin explained that he was unhappy with the lack of action by civil

³²⁰ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, February 19, 1973, (Mike Martin, NLP), p. 595.

³²¹ In addition to re-organizing in Labrador West following the Burgess defection, a Ladies' Auxiliary was formed in Happy Valley.

servants who did not act as if there had been a change in government since the Smallwood era and stated that he had no intention of running in the next election.³²² Its leadership uncertain, a split developed within the party between members who felt it had served its purpose and generated provincial attention to Labrador issues and others who believed it could expand onto the island to become a full-fledged third party in the province.³²³

The Decline and Dissolution of the NLP

Approaching his third year in the legislature, NLP leader Mike Martin's initial skepticism about the political system had become fully realized. As he stood in the House of Assembly on May 5, 1975, to deliver his final address before tendering his resignation, the words that spilled from his mouth were laced with disappointment and despair:

I have not come here today to berate the government. What is the use? Who cares, after all, how much we berate the government? It is lost on the public. It is lost on the media. But, after all, what is an Opposition for if not to berate the government? In this House, Sir, one gets the feeling that we are all tarred with the same brush no matter what we say. As far as the public is concerned, we are all grasping and self-seeking political parasites with one purpose in life, to make a continuous appeal to the lowest common denominator of the gullible public so that we may get voted back into office again and again. It matters not what we say, whether it be garbage, half-truths, sly insinuation, statements of glowing fact or shameful exposés, whatever the member intends, whatever his motives, it is all interpreted the same way. To the media it is fodder. To the public it is the gospel according to his own individual interpretation. Fact, fancy, fabrication, everything emanating from the same honey bucket has got to smell the same. So, what is the point in getting up and saying it all over again and again and again.³²⁴

³²² Bruce Little, "The New Labrador Party didn't disappear; next question: where does it go from here?" *Southam News Services*, Undated clipping, circa summer/autumn 1973 (File: "New Labrador Party – Background," The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection). Martin drew the ire of the Liberal opposition on February 7, 1974, when he noted "certain persons in the hierarchy of the civil service, who were placed in their jobs by the former administration for one reason or another, still do not consider themselves to be under the jurisdiction of the minister in whose department they are employed and are, in the absence of any direct orders from their ministers, continuing to take orders from people who were their former ministers." Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, February 7, 1974, (Mike Martin, NLP), 319.

³²³ Martin noted that most of the pressure to expand was coming from people on the island of Newfoundland, "people who have become disenchanted with the way the administrations of both parties have been working out and the way things don't change." He also noted these islanders had enough wealth to support this expansion. Bruce Little, "The New Labrador Party didn't disappear."

³²⁴ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, May 5, 1975, (Mike Martin, NLP), 6067.

Never at ease with politics and clearly disgusted with what he had witnessed during his short career as a politician, Martin nonetheless expressed sadness that he could not keep his promise to serve his full term. But personal financial difficulties brought about by the pressures of representing a distant constituency had brought him close to bankruptcy.³²⁵ As he prepared to depart, Martin suggested that during his time as an MHA many critics could rightly say that not much had changed in Labrador South materially; however, he took pride in a number of the party's accomplishments. While acknowledging that the NLP could not take full credit for the Royal Commission on Labrador, Martin suggested that without it applying the necessary pressure the Commission would have never been established. The NLP leader also noted his movement's success at breaking down communication barriers between communities, creating a better understanding between the government and these communities, and "tearing down that psychological block that said it was impossible to do anything with government funds in Labrador."³²⁶ Above all, Martin expressed satisfaction in knowing that the party had brought the people of Labrador into "the mainstream of politics," and that the formerly standard practice of parachute candidates from the island was extinct.

Martin's exit effectively ended the party in the legislature; there was also a growing sense of finality in Labrador communities. Party President Lee Michelin told reporters that despite the resignation, the party was not dead. He said the circumstances that forced Martin to quit demonstrated that Labradorians are still "poor cousins," and although no one had expressed interest in taking over the helm yet, the party was a grassroots movement.³²⁷ However, a party meeting in Labrador West shortly

³²⁵ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, May 5, 1975, (Mike Martin, NLP), 6068. He explained that out of a sessional pay of \$8,000 and \$4,000 in a tax-free expense account, to represent his riding cost him \$5,200 annually. Left with choosing between taking \$1,200 out of his sessional pay to do constituency work or going into debt, he opted for debt as his salary (after a year of no income while campaigning in three elections) was not enough to feed, clothe and shelter his family. (6069). "I must say that I have made a sincere effort to stay until the calling of the election. But when this last sessional pay failed to cover even my bank draft, the decision was no longer mine. It was left with my bank manager." (6070).

³²⁶ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, May 5, 1975, (Mike Martin, NLP), 6073.

³²⁷ ----- "NLP still flourishing," *Daily News*, May 15, 1975, 11. Statements from executive members in Labrador North and West attempted to use the financial reasons for Martin's resignation as a rallying cry. An unsigned

before the leader's announcement drew only two people. The grassroots were no longer clamoring for action. Adam Sparkes cites the Burgess defection as a possibility for the decline but argues that Martin's leadership may have proved to be the bigger problem. Seeing himself more as a representative for his riding than a leader and playing the role of a thoughtful spokesperson rather than a fiery and charismatic political preacher, the movement fizzled.³²⁸

Martin, for one, did not see the decline as a negative;³²⁹ in his last speech to the legislature he stated that he viewed it as a sign of progress:

We are not a political party in the sense of traditional political parties. We were born out of a sense of frustration. We were born out of a pressure group, in fact. And shortly after my election I was asked by one of the news reporters, what is going to happen to the party and what do you expect to get out of government? And I stated at that time if the government really wanted to kill the New Labrador Party there was one sure-fire way of doing it, and that was to give us all of the things that we were complaining about, and at that point we would have no more need to exist. And this is precisely what has happened in Labrador West. I talked with some of our executive people... They are satisfied to the point where they do not think it is necessary to continue protest politics, and I wish to God I could declare to the world today that

statement by the Labrador North District Executive suggested "The political climate in our province is degenerating to the point where only the idle or idle rich can afford to represent a district such as Labrador South in the House of Assembly....We must now continue on. We must apply as much pressure as possible on the government to act in the best interests of Labrador insofar as the resources of Labrador are concerned. The New Labrador Party must not let all Mike Martin's hard work go down the drain. For, if we die because of the political assassination of our leader, Labrador will surely fall back into the political, social and economic despair from which Mike Martin was just beginning to raise her." See: "Statement on the resignation of Mike Martin by the NLP, Labrador North District Executive," March 22, 1975. (File: "NLP Clippings - General," The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection). Cynthia Davis of the NLP Labrador West District Association noted "A man whose pockets are not filled by his party, party sympathizers, or who, himself, is not financially independent, cannot conceivably do justice to a district such as Labrador South. We can only point the accusing finger, again, at the government, whose policies for Labrador have been, and continue to be, purely extractive.... The government can rest assured that this temporary setback will only serve to strengthen our emotions, and we will not put down the banner for Labrador until we have gained our rightful place in the eyes of the Nation and the World." Cynthia Davis, New Labrador Party District Association of Labrador West memo, March 21, 1975, (File: "NLP Clippings - General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

³²⁸ Sparkes, "Flurry," 63-64.

³²⁹ Martin appeared less triumphant several months earlier. In an article titled "Martin disillusioned with politics," the NLP leader was quoted as saying "I sometimes ask myself, am I a general who has gone to war all by himself? I've been left in the embarrassing position of thumping desks and bluffing without knowing whether I have backing from the people I represent. Perhaps people are still committed to the party, but that in itself is not enough. An X on a piece of paper is cheap." Moreover, he conceded that the Burgess defection was almost a mortal blow to the movement. "But we began to realize that if the loss of one member meant so much, we were not much of a party." Vic Parsons, "Martin disillusioned with politics," *Evening Telegram*, October 5, 1974, 17.

the New Labrador Party was dead in all three districts because it would mean that finally we have arrived at par with the Island part of the province.³³⁰

The party opted not to nominate candidates for the next provincial election on September 16, 1975. Michelin told reporters that the party could not afford to supplement the income of any elected members and forcing them to live on the salary given to MHAs would lead to another situation like Martin's where effective representation would not be possible without individual financial ruin. An offer by former Premier Joey Smallwood's new Liberal Reform Party, which would have completely bankrolled the NLP campaign in exchange for a promise to support Smallwood as premier, was also turned down in a bid to remain completely independent. Instead, members of the party executive encouraged its remaining supporters to spoil their ballots as a statement of protest.³³¹ Despite their inability and unwillingness to contest an election, newspaper reports suggested "the consensus of opinion among the most active NLP members now seems to be that the party is down but not out. Party spokesmen in western, southern and central Labrador are unanimous in affirming that despite their relative inaction in this election the party will rebuild and reactivate itself."³³² But this vow became more of a lingering threat than a promise likely to be kept in the near future.

Conclusion

Although Martin's farewell speech to the legislature attempted to explain away the party's looming disappearance as the ultimate sign of its success, he had appeared less triumphant several months earlier. In a 1974 article titled "Martin disillusioned with politics," the NLP leader was quoted as saying "I sometimes ask myself, am I a general who has gone to war all by himself? I've been left in the

³³⁰ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 5 May 1975, (Mike Martin, NLP), 6074-75; ----- "Labrador to Calgary move set," *Calgary Herald*, March 22, 1975, ("NLP Clippings General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection). Martin planning to resign and move to Calgary to take a job in construction. Says politics is "a rich man's game." Can't live on \$12,000 per year (\$8,000 sessional pay and \$4,000 in expense allowances). He had acted as a full-time representative.

³³¹ ----- "New Labrador Party rejects assistance offer," Unknown newspaper clipping, Sept. 4, 1975, ("NLP Clippings General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

³³² ----- "NLP advice: Spoil your ballots," *Daily News*, September 4, 1975. ("NLP Clippings General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

embarrassing position of thumping desks and bluffing without knowing whether I have backing from the people I represent. Perhaps people are still committed to the party, but that in itself is not enough. An X on a piece of paper is cheap.” Conceding that the Burgess defection had also been more serious than party members were willing to admit at the time, he explained that “we began to realize that if the loss of one member meant so much, we were not much of a party.”³³³

This statement is strikingly prescient. The loss of one man, Burgess, seemed to mortally wound the party and the loss of another, Martin, proved to be the fatal blow. Despite its extensive organizing, campaigning and ultimate electoral success, the NLP did not manage to create the kind of entrenched partisan organization that benefitted the Liberals or Progressive Conservatives. Rather, the NLP was a means to an end for a larger New Labrador movement. This movement, founded in large part by restive youth in the booming community of Labrador West, was able to use the organizational capacity of contemporary political parties to break down barriers in other parts of the mainland and foster the growth of what many agree was a much needed civil rights and social equality movement. Although some of the constraints of the party system – including long-term financial capacity and strategic leadership renewal planning – ultimately contributed to the party’s demise, Martin was correct that the grassroots movement had succeeded on a number of fronts.

First, the New Labrador movement had drawn the island’s attention to the troubling conditions in many parts of the mainland. The Royal Commission on Labrador would investigate and report on the problems members of the party had identified and although it would take time to address many of these issues, subsequent reports on the implementation of the Commission’s proposals were promising. Second, the party’s campaign engaged and educated Labradorians in the partisan political process as never before. As Sparkes notes, “[Prior to] the emergence of the party, Labradorians were viewed by the provincial government and, more importantly, by themselves as non-participants in the political process.

³³³ Vic Parsons, “Martin disillusioned with politics.”

Government was something imposed on the people of Labrador, not something in which they played an active role.”³³⁴ The NLP shook the Liberal Party’s paternalistic control over Labrador and demonstrated to Labradorians that they could organize themselves to effect positive change. Writing 20 years after the party’s 1971 breakthrough, Sparkes stated that “provincial governments have come to view Labradorians not as colonial subjects, but rather as active participants in the political process who demand fair representation and consultation on matters concerning Labrador and the province as a whole.”³³⁵ Finally, the party greatly succeeded in fostering, if not entirely establishing, a pan-Labrador identity. In a land where long-standing racial and cultural divisions had isolated populations and taught them to be mutually suspicious of one another, the NLP and movement brought Labradorians from all corners of the mainland together to find a common purpose. This identity has only grown over time as subsequent generations build on these foundations.

Although it functioned for only half a dozen years as an active partisan organization, the NLP’s flame burned brightly; its brief existence resulted in a lasting legacy that profoundly shapes the region’s contemporary politics.

³³⁴ Sparkes, “Flurry,” 79.

³³⁵ Sparkes, “Flurry,” 82.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Party: Regional Voices Find A Megaphone³³⁶

It was April 18, 1973 and the atmosphere in North Bay's famed Golden Dragon Restaurant³³⁷ was unusually tense. Frequently hosting happy occasions such as wedding receptions and sports banquets, the 250-seat restaurant was overflowing with a very angry crowd.³³⁸ Few people present were as upset as the man who had organized the meeting in response to measures recently introduced in the Ontario Progressive Conservative government's budget bill – a two per cent increase to the provincial sales tax and a new seven per cent tax on energy and heating. Deeming heating and electricity essential for families, local motel owner Ed Diebel vowed he would sooner go to jail than pay the tax.³³⁹

Before the night was over, a 12-person committee struck to circulate an anti-tax petition had obtained its first 500 signatures.³⁴⁰ A week later, when the government announced it would be withdrawing the energy tax, the North Bay petition had reached 5,000 names; Diebel had helped to launch similar petitions in Moosonee, Cochrane and Deep River.³⁴¹ Not satisfied with the partial victory, Diebel's group pushed ahead for another five weeks, collecting a total of approximately 24,000 names

³³⁶ The vast majority of the NOHP's records were under the provenance of founder and long-time leader Ed Diebel. Destroyed in a flood, along with many of his other belongings, their absence has greatly hindered the process of piecing together the party's narrative beyond previously published accounts (newspaper clippings and Gordon Brock's book *The Province of Northern Ontario*. See: Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, (Cobalt: Highway Book Shop, 1978). The party's stunted organization (no constituency associations were formed) and oral interviews with Mr. Diebel, while a rich source for anecdotes and tremendously helpful for understanding his actions and motives, established a sometimes-uncertain timeline. The timing of the interviews, when he was actively involved with plans to re-launch the party, also resulted in conditions where conversation often alternated between past and present. Other oral interviews conducted with other party members tended only to illuminate brief periods in the party's existence. When possible, party documents found in other archival collections have been included to support newly acquired oral history; however, additional interviews or as-yet-unknown records may alter some of this narrative.

³³⁷ "North Bay, Ontario: Canadian History in Vintage Postcards." URL: <http://www.vintagepostcards.org/north-bay-ontario.htm>

³³⁸ ----- "North Bay protest draws overflow crowd," *Globe and Mail*, April 19, 1973, 2.

³³⁹ ----- "Northerner presses sales tax protest," *Globe and Mail*, April 26, 1973, 2.

³⁴⁰ ----- "North Bay protest draws overflow crowd."

³⁴¹ ----- "Northerner presses sales tax protest."

for the petition in the North Bay area – a sizable portion of the total population³⁴² in a community known as the “gateway to the North.”

In 1973, budget petitions and protests were not confined to North Bay and its environs; residents and ratepayers across the province were upset about the new taxes and even some Progressive Conservative backbenchers voiced their concerns and opposition. But the indignation in parts of Northern Ontario,³⁴³ an area often defined as lying north and west of the French and Mattawa Rivers was particularly notable for how it manifested. The budget’s initiatives, particularly the heating tax, were viewed as punitive and discriminatory towards people living in a colder climate – to “Northerners.”³⁴⁴

Leo Bernier, a Progressive Conservative Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) from Kenora and prominent cabinet minister,³⁴⁵ received dozens of letters from disgruntled constituents and other Northern Ontario residents objecting to the budget from this distinct subject position. By rejecting

³⁴² According to the 1971 Canadian Census, the city of North Bay had a population of just under 50,000 (49,187) while the population for the Nipissing area totalled 78,867. See: ----- 1971 Census of Canada: Population: Census Divisions and Subdivisions (Ontario), (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, September 1972), Catalogue 92-706 Vol. 1 – Part 1 (Bulletin 1.1-6), 8. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS92-706-1971.pdf

³⁴³ As a journalist trained under the old *Canadian Press Style Guide* rules and as someone who grew up in a northern Ontario community, I have grown accustomed to using the capital N when writing. I have attempted to be fair and analyze “Northern Ontario” as a disinterested observer; however, I must also admit and address my own bias and note that I find a measure of my own self-identity within the region and regionalism of Northern Ontario.

³⁴⁴ In her discussion on community formation, Kerry Abel highlights threats to a shared sense of economic well-being as one driving force behind identity creation and manifestation: “Certainly, space, language, performance, and leadership (both individual and collective) could have had little impact if people had not had at least some basic values or goals in common,” she writes. Superficially this included the shared pull factor of the region for all but First Nations inhabitants (to make money). “Not surprisingly, then, people rallied when anything occurred that threatened their income-earning capacity (layoffs, wage reductions, workplace hazards, lack of support infrastructure for industry or agriculture.”) See: Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2006), 410-411.

³⁴⁵ He served as Minister of Mines and Northern Affairs from March 1, 1971 – April 7, 1972, Minister of Lands and Forests from February 2, 1972 – April 7, 1972, Minister of Natural Resources from April 7, 1972 – February 3, 1977, and Minister of Northern Affairs from February 3, 1977 – June 26, 1985. See: Members: Leo Edward Bernier, Legislative Assembly of Ontario. URL: <https://www.ola.org/en/members/all/leo-edward-bernier> (Last Accessed August 12, 2019).

government policy as “Northerners,”³⁴⁶ and only very rarely as Ontario citizens, residents or taxpayers, these letter-writers were exhibiting and employing a regional consciousness.³⁴⁷ Although the letters Bernier received varied greatly in tone, they were uniformly against the new tax policy. John Goodwillie, reeve for the Township of Red Lake, politely assumed that while likely not the government’s intent, “it would seem and does seem to many of our people that we are being penalized for living in the North. Northern Ontario residents, by virtue of the climate, use more oil and electricity than our Southern Ontario neighbours, and generally pay more for these utilities.”³⁴⁸ R.F. Munford, owner of the Pine Grove Motel & Camp in Vermillion Bay, agreed that a tax on energy “unduly burdens those people who live in a northern climate where energy consumption is as much as three times that of their fellow citizens in South Ontario. It seems unjust to have a tax which, because of lower temperatures, causes such a disparity in taxes paid.”³⁴⁹ H.R. Churchill of Kenora suggested that a graduated system of taxation based on temperatures in different areas might be investigated as an alternative in order to take into account the special needs of the North.³⁵⁰

Other letters dispensed with niceties and constructive criticism and launched into attacks on the government’s motives and competency. “This letter is a protest, a protest against the regressive sales tax and the imbecility of the 7% tax on energy,” began Jerome Pringle of Red Lake before advocating a

³⁴⁶ MPP Jim Foulds notes that Bernier enthusiastically labelled himself as a “Northerner” and so it is likely that these letter-writers were consciously framing their appeals to him based around this identity. See: Jim Foulds, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, March 8, 2013. See also: Morris Zaslow, “Does Northern Ontario Possess a Regional Identity?” *Laurentian University Review/Revue de l’Université Laurentienne* 5, no. 4 (1973), 9-20.

³⁴⁷ In some cases, they spoke as “residents of Northern Ontario” or “citizens of Northern Ontario.” Although these terms need to be problematized, a regional identity and subject position was clearly established. None of the letters was framed in terms of class in spite of the nature of these taxes, suggesting perhaps that being a “Northerner” inherently carried certain class connotations.

³⁴⁸ John Goodwillie, “Letter from Reeve for the Corporation of the Township of Red Lake to John White, Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs,” April 19, 1973, Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 “T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters,” Archives of Ontario.

³⁴⁹ R.F. Munford, “Letter from owner of the Pine Grove Motel and Camp, Vermillion Bay,” to Bernier, April 21, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 “T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters,” Archives of Ontario.

³⁵⁰ H.R. Churchill, “Letter from H.R. Churchill, Kenora to Bernier,” April 16, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 “T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters,” Archives of Ontario.

mass protest against the government's reactionary policies.³⁵¹ Pringle, like letter writers Mrs. Art Savage³⁵² and Mrs. T Reynard³⁵³ of Kenora and Percy Green³⁵⁴ of Balmerton, offered Ed Schreyer's Manitoba New Democratic Party (NDP) government as exemplary in introducing fairer tax policies. Although these letters might be tinged with partisan sympathies for the NDP, which had become increasingly popular in Northern Ontario in recent years, their western orientation was apparently a concern for Bernier. References to "Manitoba," along with "7% tax," "energy" and "sales tax" were repeatedly highlighted by Bernier's office; the minister's keyword monitoring may be evidence of some apprehension over whether the government's tax policy could revive calls for provincial status for Northern Ontario or annexation to Manitoba, two proposals raised periodically over the past 70 years.

In his letter outlining the reasons for his opposition to the energy and sales tax, Gordon Shearn of Red Lake noted: "Our costs of food, clothing etc. are higher than the S. E. [Southeast] portion of the Province and although murmur [sic] of secession of N.W.Ont. [Northwestern Ontario] into a new and separate province is only talk so far, one can sense it becoming stronger from time to time, fanned of course by those who are not friendly disposed towards us."³⁵⁵ This murmur echoed across other parts of Northern Ontario as well. In a letter to Premier William Davis copied to all cabinet ministers, the Tri Town and Area Planning Board reproduced a motion calling for all interested municipal governments and elected and appointed official bodies to approve a study conducted by a Northern Ontario university on the economic feasibility of the establishment of separate provincial status for the region.

³⁵¹ Jerome Pringle, "Letter from Jerome Pringle, Red Lake to Bernier," Undated. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 "T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters," Archives of Ontario.

³⁵² Mrs. Art Savage, "Letter From Mrs. Art Savage, Kenora to Bernier," April 19, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 "T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters," Archives of Ontario.

³⁵³ Mrs. T. Reynard, "Letter from Mrs. T. Reynard, Kenora to Bernier, April 15, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 "T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters," Archives of Ontario.

³⁵⁴ Leo Bernier, "Letter to Percy Green of Balmerton," May 4, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 "T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters," Archives of Ontario.

³⁵⁵ Gordon Shearn, "Letter from Gordon Shearn, Red Lake, to Bernier," April 17, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 "T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters," Archives of Ontario.

Planning Board Chair W.S. Lavery noted that individuals on the board were “incensed” by a provincial budget that confirmed “a total lack of concern” for Northern Ontario:

Anything having to do with mining, farming or lumbering is vitally important to us and to our continued prosperity and ability to pay those Queen’s Park assessments while the so-called Golden Horseshoe is only concerned with the revenue raised, at great effort by the residents of the Hinterland, which has provided much of the wealth which is now the basis for development of Southern Ontario. You are rapidly killing the goose that lays the golden eggs and may wind up losing the goose as well. From the Ottawa Valley to Thunder Bay and north to James Bay the citizens are openly expressing views and suggesting courses of action that we joked about in the past but you would do well to heed them.³⁵⁶

As he spoke to people while gathering signatures for his petition, Deibel also heard a growing chorus of voices contemplating Northern Ontario secession. He recalled signatories falling into three camps: those who wanted sales tax reduced; those wanted heat and energy tax removed; and those who told him “If that’s the kind of treatment we’re getting from the legislature – when they don’t even realize this taxation is unfair to the people of Northern Ontario because of our different climate, and that we will pay more taxes because our costs are higher – then, it’s about time we looked at the question of forming a new province.”³⁵⁷

Although he had never contemplated secession before, in very short order Deibel became a convert to the cause who preached its virtues passionately. The latest in a long line of Northern Ontario secessionist proponents, Deibel began to tell anyone and everyone who would listen that the area would thrive and secure sustainable future prosperity if it became a new province. With seemingly boundless energy devoted to pursuing his cause, he also had a knack for generating publicity. Deibel gained some fame – or notoriety – from participating in some widely-reported stunts such as camping out on the front lawn of Queen’s Park to demand a meeting with the premier. When Davis rebuffed his

³⁵⁶ W.S. Lavery, “Letter W.S. Lavery, chairman of the Tri-Town and Area Planning Board to William Davis and all Cabinet Ministers,” April 21, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.15 “T.E.I.G.A Energy and Sales Tax Letters,” Archives of Ontario.

³⁵⁷ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, (Cobalt, ON: Highway Book Shop, 1978), 36-37.

request for a plebiscite on whether Northern Ontario should become its own province, Deibel began a quest to form a new political party to represent the region's interests in the provincial legislature. Despite his enthusiasm and effort, among the three parties in this comparative study, the Northern Ontario Heritage Party (NOHP) was the least advanced organizationally and would be the least successful electorally, failing to run candidates, let alone elect, an MPP. Nevertheless, at the time of its demise, the party left a legacy of agitation that arguably contributed to several important government initiatives designed to quell alienation in the northern part of the province.

The Coming of New Ontario: Prehistory to the Manitoba Boundary Dispute

Historian Matt Bray writes that "geography, geology and climate have been crucial in moulding the history of Northern Ontario. They have influenced what countries have claimed it, what peoples have inhabited it, where they have settled, and how they have lived."³⁵⁸ Human inhabitation likely began about 9,000 years ago by ancestors of contemporary Indigenous populations. Following periods of big-game hunting (9,000 to 7,000 years ago), hunting, fishing and gathering (7,000 to 3,000 years), settlement and pottery culture (3,000 to 1,000 years ago), in the immediate pre-European contact period³⁵⁹ a seasonal woodland lifestyle based on hunting and trading had emerged.³⁶⁰ This pre-existing trading culture would be exploited by European cultures beginning in 1670 when England's King Charles II granted the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) an exclusive trading charter to the entire Hudson Bay drainage basin; French expeditions in 1671 and 1672 lodged counter claims that led to a century of

³⁵⁸ Matt Bray and Ernie Epp, *A Vast and Magnificent Land: An Illustrated History of Northern Ontario*, (Thunder Bay and Sudbury: Lakehead University and Laurentian University Publishers, 1984), 8.

³⁵⁹ In his historiography of Northern Ontario, A. Ernest Epp notes that the earliest documented contact between Europeans and Indigenous people (the Anishinabek) at the southern boundary of Northern Ontario occurred in 1615 during Samuel de Champlain's journey up the Ottawa River to Lake Nipissing and Georgian Bay. See A. Ernest Epp, "Northern Ontario: History and Historiography" in Ken Coates and William Morrison, eds., *The Historiography of the Provincial Norths*, (Thunder Bay, ON: Occasional Paper Series #18, Centre for Northern Studies, Lakehead University, 1996), p. 84-85.

³⁶⁰ Matt Bray and Ernie Epp, *A Vast and Magnificent Land*, 8.

rivalry.³⁶¹ Although the British asserted full imperial control of the area in 1763, the area's pre-existing fur-trading patterns remained mostly intact as New France's former Indigenous allies transferred their business to the Montreal-based Northwest Company from the late 1770s until its merger with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. Following the demise of the fur trade in the southern Great Lakes at this time, the area that would become Northern Ontario became rather isolated for a few decades.³⁶² Despite holding judicial responsibility for the area, Upper Canada had limited interest in it, aside from supporting missionary work directed towards the Indigenous population, until the 1840s logging boom and the first mineral wealth discoveries.³⁶³ In the two decades that followed, "a substantial Canadian presence in Northern Ontario became viable" when new canals³⁶⁴ and railways³⁶⁵ made larger scale immigration and settlement possible;³⁶⁶ the extractive relationship between area and external interests resumed.

Although Confederation had no major immediate consequences for the area, as historian A. Ernest Epps notes, it was a project premised on the economic exploitation of hinterlands like Northern Ontario, for the benefit of Central Canada. Citing W.L. Morton's analysis and critique of the Laurentian thesis, he writes:

Although Morton spoke primarily for the Prairie West, Northern Ontarians could echo his assertion that "Confederation was brought about to increase the wealth of Central Canada, and

³⁶¹ Matt Bray and Ernie Epp, *A Vast and Magnificent Land*, 8. Bray notes that although fur resources were gradually depleted by the commercial and imperial rivalry, neither European nation "occupied" much of the land in the conventional sense.

³⁶² As Coates and Morrison write: "The standard historiographical pattern is that the northern regions of the provinces are discussed well, if not exhaustively, in relation to exploration and the expansion of the fur trade. Thereafter, northern affairs fade into historiographical obscurity, as agricultural, industrial, and urban developments in the south accelerate." "Introduction" in Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Historiography of the Provincial Norths*. Occasional Paper Series #18, Centre for Northern Studies, (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, 1996).

³⁶³ See: A. Ernest Epp. "Northern Ontario: History and Historiography," in Ken Coates and William Morrison, eds., *The Historiography of the Provincial Norths*. (Thunder Bay: Occasional Papers Series #18, Centre for Northern Studies, (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, 1996), 111. See also: Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: The Story of the Geological Survey of Canada 1842-1972*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1975.

³⁶⁴ The U.S. canal at Sault Ste. Marie opened in 1855.

³⁶⁵ The Toronto-Collingwood Northern Railway was completed in 1854.

³⁶⁶ Nevertheless, shortly after Confederation, the census counted only about 15,000 people in the area.

until that original purpose is altered, and the concentration of wealth and population by national policy in Central Canada ceases, Confederation must remain an instrument of injustice.” To be exploited by both national policy and provincial metropolitanism left Northern Ontarians even more deeply affected by “that dichotomy which characterizes all hinterland Canadians, a nationalism cut athwart by a sense of sectional injustice.”³⁶⁷

The federal government’s plan to annex the HBC lands in 1870 brought provincial and federal boundaries into dispute. The Ontario government, under Liberal Premier Oliver Mowat, used its Speech from the Throne in 1869 to signal intent to set its boundaries – the northerly and westerly limits had never been defined.³⁶⁸ Politically and economically, the stakes of this cartographic endeavour were high. Unlike Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, Section 92 of the *British North America Act, 1867*,³⁶⁹ gave Ontario full control over its crown lands and natural resources.³⁷⁰ This control would significantly influence the province’s development policies in the North.³⁷¹ Canadian Prime Minister John A. Macdonald stubbornly refused to accede to Ontario’s request because it would give Mowat, his despised opponent, a source from which to provide more patronage. While Manitoba’s boosters were interested in the territory because they believed the “Postage Stamp Province” had been geographically

³⁶⁷ A. Ernest Epp. “Northern Ontario: History and Historiography,” in Ken Coates and William Morrison, eds., *The Historiography of the Provincial Norths*. (Thunder Bay, ON: Occasional Papers Series #18, Centre for Northern Studies, Lakehead University, 1996), 97.

³⁶⁸ Gordon Brock, *The Province Of Northern Ontario*, 9.

³⁶⁹ *The British North America Act, 1867*, SS 1867, c 3, s 92.

³⁷⁰ Jim Mochoruk, *Formidable Heritage: Manitoba’s North and the Cost of Development, 1870 To 1930*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2004), 26.

³⁷¹ Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock and A Hard Place: The Politics of Regional Development Initiatives in Northern Ontario,” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 2012), 7. As Kerry Abel explains, “the history of the Ontario government’s interest in its north begins as almost a direct parallel to the history of the Dominion government’s interest in the West,” and Ontario’s resulting “national policy” eventually included all the major elements of the Dominion policy: treaties, tariffs, railways, homesteads promotion and publicity. Plans for great agricultural settlement and production in a Northern Ontario clay belt to rival Prairie settlement plans went unrealized, but a “manufacturing condition” was imposed on logs to promote processing within the province and a license fee was imposed on ore that would be refundable if it was processed in the country. Kerry Abel, “History and the Provincial Norths: An Ontario Example,” in Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, eds., *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 128-129. For a further examination of (Northern) Ontario’s early economic history, see also: Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971); Morris Zaslow, *The Northward Expansion of Canada, 1914-1967* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988); H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973); L. Di Matteo, “Fiscal Imbalance and Economic Development in Canadian History: Evidence from the Economic History of Ontario,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 29(2), 1999: 287-327.

stunted by the *Manitoba Act, 1870*,³⁷² they would not have been able to realize the full benefit of its natural resource potential at the time.³⁷³

A provisional boundary was established in 1874, at a time when Alexander Mackenzie's Liberals had assumed power federally, and a three-person commission was established to adjudicate the final boundary. In 1878, when the commission awarded the full claim to Ontario without explanation, the province began to take steps to assert its authority only to encounter a newly re-elected Macdonald government that refused to acknowledge the decision.³⁷⁴ Three years later, the federal government supported Manitoban legislation expanding its territory to the western limit of the Ontario border, set at the meridian of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. As Manitoba began appointing Justices of the Peace in communities that already had Ontario officials, confusion abounded.³⁷⁵ Both provinces agreed to send the case to the British Empire's highest tribunal, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, that ruled in Ontario's favour in 1884. Despite several years of stalling implementation of the ruling in hopes modifying it, Macdonald's government confirmed the new border in the *Canada (Ontario Boundary) Act, 1889*.³⁷⁶

³⁷² *An Act to amend and continue the Act 32-33 Victoria chapter 3; and to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba, 1870*, 33 Vict., c. 3 (Can.)

³⁷³ Jim Mochoruk, *Formidable Heritage*, 24.

³⁷⁴ Brock writes that the ruling in favour of Ontario likely prompted Northern Ontario's sole member of provincial parliament, Simon James Dawson of Algoma, to run as an Independent federally. He argued in favour of a new province in the House of Commons, contending that Ontario had no means to quickly develop these territories. Brock notes support for this proposal was especially high in the Lakehead area, where the *Thunder Bay Sentinel* wrote in favour of a new territory that would be granted provincial status when population dictated. Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 72.

³⁷⁵ See Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 11-14. Elections were held simultaneously on September 28, 1883 by both provincial governments in Rat Portage (present day Kenora). Although no violence resulted, when each jurisdiction issued its own liquor licences, there were retaliatory arrests.

³⁷⁶ *Canada (Ontario Boundary) Act, 1889*, 52-53 Vict., c. 28 (U.K.) The province's boundaries were extended again in 1912 when it acquired the District of Patricia from the federal government. See Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 14. Bray notes that by the time of the 1889 Act, Northern Ontario "had acquired most of the human characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of the province." Bray and Epp, *A Vast and Magnificent Land*, 12.

A Time to Part Ways: A Brief History of Northern Secessionist Movements in Ontario to 1970

Although the border question appeared to be settled in the 1880s, the vast distance³⁷⁷ between the seat of government and the small, isolated northern communities led to alienation and disenchantment that would periodically prompt residents either to consider the possibility of annexation by Manitoba and/or the formation of a completely new province.³⁷⁸ The creation of new Western provinces in the early 1900s, for example, spurred a number of meetings and campaigns³⁷⁹ to discuss the possibility of creating a new province out of what was being called New Ontario.³⁸⁰ The largest of these early rumblings was the 1907-1908 Huronia movement. A non-partisan movement with support from members of both major parties (including Sault Ste. Marie lawyer and Liberal politician John McKay, and Cobalt Conservative engineer Major J.R. Gordon), supporters found there was a consensus that New Ontario should not elect “party men” but rather “New Ontario men who would

³⁷⁷ For a superb discussion of the concept of distance in northern history, see: Bill Waiser, “A Very Long Journey: Distance and Northern History,” in Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, eds. *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), 37-44. Waiser notes that distance is both a physical reality and a mental construct. The latter concept was particularly important for the framing work in which political parties such as the NOHP engaged. Waiser quotes W.H. New in describing the northern landscape as becoming “verbal territory,” (39).

³⁷⁸ For example, a movement, promoted by Liberal politician John McKay of Sault Ste. Marie arose in the Sudbury area in 1891 out of a protest against Premier Oliver Mowat’s imposition of royalties on all properties. It fizzled when people decided the defeat of the Liberal government would lead to better treatment of the North. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 73.

³⁷⁹ Brock notes that in 1905, miners in the Cobalt-Haileybury regions protested the South’s agriculturally-dominant politicians. In 1906, public meetings in Kenora, Rainy River and Sault Ste. Marie endorsed a new province and a petition to create a new province to be given to Laurier was circulated. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 73.

³⁸⁰ Kerry Abel explains that the name “New Ontario” was a conscious attempt by the Ontario provincial government to downplay the northern character of these lands, yet “the residents generally developed their own sense of identity that was much more dependent on social and personal characteristics associated with cultural myths of northernness.” Kerry Abel, “History and the Provincial Norths: An Ontario Example,” in Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, eds., *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 128. For a monograph length exploration of such a process, see Abel’s well-reviewed *Changing Places: History, Community and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006). Abel’s book explores community formation and its associated identities in a region of northeastern Ontario bounded by the towns of Timmins-South Porcupine, Iroquois Falls, and Matheson.

stick together and the Government would then be compelled to talk business.”³⁸¹ Huronia’s proponents cited mining laws, the Premier’s statements opposing settlement in the North due to infrastructure costs, and problems with the administration of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway (TNO)³⁸² as particular irritants. The prominence of the men leading the movement and anecdotal evidence of popular support was enough to arouse interest from Toronto-based newspapers to explore its potential for growth.

In an interview with the *Globe*, J. A. Osborne, editor of the *Fort Francis Times*, noted the movement for a new province was gaining strength in the North as meetings were being held across the area and, “irrespective of political leaning, the public is crying out for reform.”³⁸³ Francis suggested that supporters of the movement were particularly concerned about the lack of promotion of immigration to the area and the slow rate of infrastructure spending on roads, jails and court houses. “The people of New Ontario³⁸⁴... are growing more and more dissatisfied at the way their claims are being overlooked by the Provincial Government,” he stated. “At present they were getting the benefit of only about three percent of the revenue which the Province derived from them.”³⁸⁵ While suggesting that older sections of the province needed to take a greater interest in the north, several MPPs from ridings in ‘New Ontario’ doubted the movement would assume serious proportions.³⁸⁶ As 1908 dawned, a series of well-

³⁸¹ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 77. A similar strategy was adopted in the 1920s Maritimes Rights movement. As Ernest Forbes explains: “The primary criterion by which Maritimers judged political parties in the 1920s was their effectiveness in representing the region’s interests.” Ernest R. Forbes, *The Maritime Rights Movement: A Study in Canadian Regionalism*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1979), 124.

³⁸² Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 76.

³⁸³ ----- “Northern Ontario is determined: Interview with a Fort Francis Editor at Ottawa – Better Terms Wanted,” *Globe*, May 16, 1907, 2.

³⁸⁴ By this period “New Ontario” was beginning to be populated by many new immigrants. The 1911 census recorded almost 25 per cent of the population as being neither British, nor French, nor “Indian.” The “other” ethnic group consisted predominantly of Ukrainians and Finns, but also included Italians, Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, Dutch, Belgians, Swiss, Greeks, Chinese and Japanese. See: Matt Bray and Ernest Epp, *A Vast and Magnificent Land*, 12.

³⁸⁵ “Northern Ontario is determined,” May 16, 1907, 2. Leaders of the movement said they intended to have a convention to choose delegates to place the question before Premier Whitney. If there were no concessions, they would speak to the Secretary of State in Ottawa.

³⁸⁶ ----- “Separate from Ontario: Opinions of Legislators regarding the movement,” *Globe*, April 6, 1907, 13.

attended meetings demonstrated the movement's growing strength,³⁸⁷ yet election of a Conservative provincial government in June, and that party's sweep of Northern seats, appeared to coincide with the movement's dissipation.

Nevertheless, discussion about secession or annexation continued over the next decade,³⁸⁸ as prominent local residents and politicians, boards of trade and returning veterans of the Great War all debated the merits of removing the area from the reach of a government based in southern Ontario that was, according to H.V. Nelles, increasingly acting as a client to private business interests from elsewhere.³⁸⁹ Yet other alternatives, which acknowledged the real or perceived problems in the area, were also considered. In the early 1920s, about 50 to 100 delegates at a United Farmers' of Ontario convention held a meeting that attempted to form new party to represent Northern Ontario interests.³⁹⁰ With a motto of "New Ontario Before Party," they vowed not to oppose any other party's candidates pledging to support its platform; "the objective of the new party [was] securing of better terms for the North – not secession."³⁹¹ Even if a nascent movement raised secession as possibility, it was often seen as simply a convenient vehicle with which to attempt to address regional grievances, unlikely ever to reach its final destination. During the Great Depression, a time when Northern Ontario was weathering the economic crisis better than other areas of the country, the Liberal Association of Michipicoten, north

³⁸⁷ In February 1908, a Cobalt meeting chaired by Mayor H.H. Lang found 500 people in favour of secession, one opposed. In March in Sturgeon Falls, 600 people unanimously endorsed secession. In April in Sudbury, secession is favoured by two-to-one, though not by the mayor J. McLeod. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 77-78.

³⁸⁸ See: ----- "Kenora wants to break away: resolution in favour of amalgamation with Manitoba," *Globe*, December 20, 1911, 1; ----- "Public Men at Soo Opposed to Secession," *Globe*, November 25, 1919, 4; ----- "Bitter Attack upon method of O.T.A. work," *Globe*, February 11, 1921, 1; ----- "Veterans are for secession: Want new province made out of Northern Ontario; Say it is 'Milked'," *Globe*, June 23, 1921, 6; ----- "Declares Kenora might 'Go West' : Peter Heenan Says Northern Ontario Is Serious About Secession," *Globe*, October 26, 1922, 14; ----- "Gives His Reasons for New Province in North Ontario: Port Arthur Lawyer Claims his Country is Woefully Neglected; Views of F.H. Keefer," *Globe*, March 27, 1923, 11.

³⁸⁹ Nelles, 489.

³⁹⁰ ----- "Form New Party to Guard Welfare of North Country: Delegates to U.F.O. Convention Looking to Future of Northern Ontario; Secession Not In Mind," *The Globe*, December 12, 1922, 13.

³⁹¹ "Form New Party to Guard Welfare of North Country," December 12, 1922, 13.

of Sault Ste. Marie, proposed a plebiscite on the question of forming a new province. Although the *Globe* noted it was “an ambitious scheme, and it undoubtedly indicates dissatisfaction with the rate at which the North country is being developed,” it was doubtful that the talk of secession would result in anything other than “drawing attention to the fact that Northern people are dissatisfied.”³⁹² Noting the youth, energy and ambition among the Canadians living in this area, the *Globe* acknowledged that they saw vast potential in the area “beyond the imagining of the greatest optimist of three decades ago.” Although New Ontario’s immense mineral wealth had flowed to more established part of the province and beyond during the Great Depression, the newspaper lectured that “it should not be forgotten that the wealth of older Ontario and beyond made possible the mining development that has taken place in the North.”³⁹³ During better times, further development of the North by the older parts of Ontario and Canada would be possible and “the keen, far-seeing people of Northern Ontario are well aware of this[;] ... it is a reasonable surmise that talk of secession merely is a method of drawing attention to the undoubted needs of a young country.”³⁹⁴

Identifying ways to lure the eyes of the South northward was likely seen as a worthwhile project among New Ontario (now more commonly Northern Ontario) residents.³⁹⁵ A 1953 *Globe* article noted how frequently “new province talk” appeared in northern communities.³⁹⁶ Journalist Bruce West cited recent articles in the *North Bay Nugget* and the *Sudbury Daily Star* mentioning secession, but the most active secessionist activity of the time came out of the Lakehead area. In 1950, Hubert Limbrick, who served for 18 years as an alderperson on the Fort William council, wrote a letter to the community’s *Daily Times-Journal* arguing that the absence of a road link between northwestern Ontario and

³⁹² ----- “The impatient North,” *Globe and Mail*, September 2, 1936, 4.

³⁹³ ----- “The impatient North.”

³⁹⁴ ----- “The impatient North.”

³⁹⁵ The *BNA Act, 1867* provided for different voter qualifications in northern Ontario to allow for more people to vote than other parts of the province. See s. 41, M. District of Algoma.

³⁹⁶ See: Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 79-85.

northeastern Ontario indicated the provincial government's lack of interest in the area. He suggested that the badly-needed infrastructure would be a priority if the Northwest formed its own provincial government. A subsequent public meeting in Fort William town hall drawing 300-400 people, including the area's leading politicians, resulted in extensive coverage in daily newspapers and even *Time* magazine. A "New Province League" was formed to promote the creation of "Aurora" out of Ontario land west of Sault Ste. Marie. In a harbinger of Deibel's future NOHP policies, the Aurora movement wanted to eliminate mining royalties as a way to increase employment opportunities. They would be replaced with an export tax system that charged high amounts for exports of raw materials and lower or no taxes for semi-finished or fully manufactured products. And, in a change for the principle of representation by population, provincial electoral districts would be based on area as opposed to the number of electors. The movement lost momentum shortly before the 1951 provincial election when a wealthy sawmill industrialist who backed the plans was promised increased timber limits by Ontario's premier if he withdrew his support. After the premier was re-elected, he reneged on his promise, but Aurora supporters were not interested in reviving their plans. Limbrick did continue to periodically raise the idea, along with proposals for a union with Manitoba.

Returning to West's *Globe and Mail* report, he perceptively wrote:

To the average Torontonians, the area north of North Bay is some kind of vague wilderness inhabited by lonely prospectors and hungry bears. They are inclined to forget that while the southern part of the province carries on smugly with its own affairs there is a vast new empire growing in the north inhabited by lusty pioneers who are quick to seize upon new things and new ideas... [and who] are naturally growing a little tired of having their southern brethren look upon them as some kind of swamp natives not quite accustomed to wearing shoes.³⁹⁷

This distance between the residents in the northern and southern parts of the province, which manifested as an ignorance and stereotyping of the other, was only one reason why the populations may have felt estranged. High levels of immigration, particularly from eastern European countries,

³⁹⁷ Bruce West, "No Wilderness: New World Even Newer in North," *Globe and Mail*, September 24, 1953, 15.

meant that one-third of the area's population was of neither British nor French descent by mid-century. The old Loyalist myth that was so imperative to provincial identity formation in southern Ontario was much less potent in the northern areas.³⁹⁸ As West explained, "the further one goes north the newer it becomes."³⁹⁹

Internal provincial dynamics were likely only part of what spurred these occasional "new province" musings, however. News reports revealed a flurry of secessionist activities around the time of Canada's centennial celebrations⁴⁰⁰ – a time that also saw a rising tide of Quebec nationalism and an intellectual discussion around the concept of limited identities within Canada. In an analysis piece titled "Do we need 20 provinces?" the *Globe and Mail* reported on a proposal by Réal Caouette to create an eleventh province in Northern Quebec⁴⁰¹ and noted that the leader of the Ralliement des Creditistes could have just as easily been speaking about Northern Ontario.⁴⁰² The newspaper, which raised the possibility that equalization payments could help the area buttress its resource revenues enough to become a viable province, suggested the vast area within Ontario's existing borders had created multi-faceted problems. "The provincial Government itself has accepted the impossibility of handling the

³⁹⁸ See, for instance, Abel's "Ethnicity and Immigration," chapter in *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*.

³⁹⁹ Bruce West, "No Wilderness." See also Nelles, 52.

⁴⁰⁰ The *Globe and Mail* reported on two new movements late in the summer of 1966. Lamenting "as if one separatism movement wasn't enough," the newspaper reported that Espanola Mayor Leo Foucault was sounding out mayors in the North about the possibility of a new province. "Of course," the *Globe* noted, "this is not true separatism as we know it; more like an experiment in uncooperative provincialism. Mayor Foucault says it's about time Northern Ontario objected to being treated like poor cousins by the rest of the province..." (See: ----- "Separatism – Ontario brand," *Globe and Mail*, August 24, 1966, 6). The media outlet also carried a report on a new Progressive Party of Canada formed in Sudbury. Twenty-six people attended the foundational meeting of a party that planned to contest federal and provincial elections. President J.A. Shapelle, 26, of Sudbury (an office worker with the International Nickel Co. Of Canada) detailed a platform which included controls through legislation to curb the rising cost of living, greater equalization in distribution of tax revenue, formation of a Northern Ontario Province for "reasons of social-economic conditions," free education at all levels, and provision of greater distribution of wealth to help lower income living standards. (See: ----- "Political party formed in north," *The Globe and Mail*, September 19, 1966, 3).

⁴⁰¹ ----- "Do we need 20 provinces?" *Globe and Mail*, August 19, 1967, 6. Caouette argued "that the area has been treated worse by the province than Quebec has been treated by Ottawa."

⁴⁰² Around the same time letter writer R.J. Bradshaw of Timmins, Ontario also drew comparisons between Northern Ontario secessionist sentiment and Caouette's Quebec proposals. See: R.J. Bradshaw, "Letter: Separatism," *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 1967, 6.

multiplicity of problems which such diversity presents under the existing provincial-municipal system of government,” the piece explained. “It has done this by pushing regionalization. The school system is well on the way to be regionalized, police forces are under pressure to accept it, hospitals will follow. Yet Queen’s Park is always careful to ensure that these regions are not politically viable enough to offer it rivalry.”⁴⁰³

In the minds of the *Globe and Mail*’s editorialists, unlike Canada’s national borders, provincial boundaries were not and should not be sacrosanct. “As often as not they were the expression of a surveyor who liked straight lines and paid no attention to geography or people,” the newspaper explained. “And the people on both sides are Canadians.”⁴⁰⁴ Advising that large provinces like Ontario could be subdivided while small provinces in the Maritimes might be united, the editorial suggested “optimum government” should be the goal, with “equalization payments to temper hollows and hills.”⁴⁰⁵ And, even if such secessionist discussion did not result in changes to physical boundaries, the *Globe and Mail* echoed the logic of previous writers when it figured it might “awaken provincial governments to the complaints of the forgotten.”⁴⁰⁶

Whether the Ontario provincial government was consciously ignoring the complaints from Northern Ontario or simply unwilling or unable to provide workable and acceptable solutions to all parties is debatable.⁴⁰⁷ In her exploration of regional development initiatives in Northern Ontario during

⁴⁰³ ----- “Do we need 20 provinces?” It should be noted that this characterization of the state assumes a degree of unanimity and direction that may be overstating what the state is capable of managing. Leslie Pal has argued that we must not see the state as rational or organized to the point where there is no fragmentation, 39. He suggests the state may be best conceptualized as both an actor and a target of action. (See: Chapter Eleven: The State and Collective Mobilization in Leslie Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism, and Feminism in Canada*, (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993).

⁴⁰⁴ ---- “Do we need 20 provinces?” The writers also asked, rhetorically, “...Is there anything wrong with provincial secession so long as the national whole remains?”

⁴⁰⁵ ----- “Do we need 20 provinces?”

⁴⁰⁶ ----- “Do we need 20 provinces?”

⁴⁰⁷ For an excellent discussion on provincial regional development policies during this period, see “Chapter 5: Provincial Regional Development Initiatives in Northern Ontario 1960s-1985,” (152-195) in Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock and A Hard Place: The Politics of Regional Development Initiatives in Northern Ontario,”

this period, geographer Heather Mary Hall contrasted federal programs, which were designed to “alleviat[e] disparities between regions” partly through redistribution schemes, with the provincial Design For Development program that encouraged “each region to achieve its social and economic potential within the overall framework of the province.”⁴⁰⁸ Program evaluations within the final reports of the two regional development councils for Northern Ontario (Northeastern Ontario and Northwestern Ontario), revealed a growing discontent in the area directed at Queen’s Park. In response, the provincial government held three regional development conferences in 1969 that were promoted as “‘no-holds-barred sessions’ with cabinet ministers, MPPs, senior civil servants and advisors,”⁴⁰⁹ the creation of a Northern Affairs Branch within the provincial Department of Mines and the renaming of the associated cabinet portfolio to include “Northern Affairs,” and an incentive-loan program to promote industrial development in the North in 1970.⁴¹⁰ The Northern Affairs Branch, which superficially gave the impression the government was recognizing and responding to localized regional development concerns, only provided a new mechanism for administering and co-ordinating existing programs in Northern Ontario. As Hall contends: “The Northern Affairs Branch thus represented a highly visible political strategy to temper regional concerns without creating a fundamentally new approach to regional economic development in Northern Ontario.”⁴¹¹ Moreover, Premier John Robarts, like the two opposition leaders at the time, rejected proposals to create a separate Minister of Northern Affairs or Northern Development to advocate on the area’s behalf, “saying it would tend to foster an undesirable

(PhD diss., Queen’s University, 2012).

https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/handle/1974/7391/Hall_Heather_M_201208_PhD%20.pdf?sequence=3

⁴⁰⁸ Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock And A Hard Place,” 153.

⁴⁰⁹ Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock And A Hard Place,” 160.

⁴¹⁰ Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock And A Hard Place,” 161.

⁴¹¹ Heather Mary Hall, “Stuck Between A Rock And A Hard Place,” 161.

regionalism.”⁴¹² Nevertheless, as evidenced by the reaction to his 1973 budget proposals, that sense of regionalism was already robust.

Ed Deibel: Accidental or Enterprising Politician?

Born on June 18, 1932 in Gosfield South Township, the fifth of nine children in a German-speaking immigrant family,⁴¹³ Ed Deibel’s parents moved his family to a farm just outside of North Bay when he was nine.⁴¹⁴ Always having something of a mischievous streak, Deibel recalled how he hitched a ride in a car passing through the Callander Hills near North Bay that brought him all the way to Indiana when he was 16 years old. While having lunch there one day, a few other young men approached him and invited him to come with them to sign up for the draft. Having two older brothers who lived in the United States, both of whom had served in the American military, Deibel agreed without hesitation and without thinking through the potential consequences of his actions. Two years later, now back home in North Bay and working in a local store, Deibel received a letter instructing him to report for duty. After inquiring with the draft board about how he might fix this youthful folly, he was told to report to the United States to explain his situation in person. Within an hour of arriving and pleading his case, Deibel remembered that his head was shaved, he was put into uniform, and he was lined up with the other new recruits. Despite repeating his story frequently in hopes of getting discharged, Deibel stated that he spent nine months in the third army tank division in Fort Polk, Louisiana. Finally, when an officer took pity on him and convinced him to sneak home during a two-week leave, Deibel left the country. Years later he received a dishonourable discharge, but not before some members of the American army

⁴¹² Terrence Wills, “Must the North secede to find a place to stand on the tundra,” *Globe and Mail*, September 21, 1968, 7. New Democratic Party Leader Donald MacDonald would appoint a minister without Portfolio from the North to act as an ombudsman for the region to make sure other departments weren’t neglecting the North. Liberal leader Robert Nixon wanted government departments that deal almost exclusively with Northern Ontario moved there. Both leaders wanted bigger grants for industries moving there. Robarts suggested this would likely be his government’s response.

⁴¹³ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 32.

⁴¹⁴ Ed Deibel, Interview by Will Stos, In-Person Interview, North Bay, Ontario, June 27, 2010.

reportedly ransacked his brother's house in Detroit looking for him and the RCMP visited his home to make some additional inquiries.⁴¹⁵ This highly irregular episode provides some insight into a man whose political career was characterized by a tendency to seize opportunities without always fully considering the potential consequences of his actions.

After marrying Phyllis Jean Armitage, Deibel spent time working as a plumber, a construction worker, a janitor, and as a Bell Telephone technician.⁴¹⁶ Deibel also spent years as a community organizer in North Bay. Working first with the Citizen's Rights Association, he later served three years as chair of the North Bay Winter Fur Carnival at a time when it was the second biggest festival of its kind in the country.⁴¹⁷ Well-regarded in the community – Deibel was one of 50 people to receive an Honoured Citizen Award from the city's 50th Anniversary Committee⁴¹⁸ – partisan politics did not appear to be on Deibel's radar much⁴¹⁹ before his role in the 1973 tax revolt. Neither did a sense of a Northern Ontario identity; prior to beginning a tour of Northern Ontario, he admitted to having very little knowledge of the area outside his immediate environs.⁴²⁰ For example, Deibel revealed that he had no idea that there had been past Northern Ontario secessionist movements until he launched his petition drive. Nevertheless, as the voices of people signing the petition, the telephone calls he fielded at home and the letters he received built into a deafening roar, Deibel not only vowed to educate himself on Northern Ontario issues, but also ultimately stepped forward to join this new cause and became its self-appointed leader.

⁴¹⁵ Ed Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴¹⁶ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 33-34. He said he was fired for attempting to organize a union, although Brock reported that the Bell Telephone Company disputed Deibel's explanation for his termination.

⁴¹⁷ See also: Advertisement, "Elect Ed Deibel - Advertisement for North Bay City Council," *North Bay Nugget*, December 3, 1976, 8.

⁴¹⁸ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 34.

⁴¹⁹ Deibel had been a member of the provincial Progressive Conservative Party previously but did not appear to have partisan political aspirations. Brock, p. 36.

⁴²⁰ Deibel interview, June 27, 2010.

During his research, Deibel found one book on the United States logging industry that provided him with a 'eureka' moment in terms of his thinking about Northern Ontario. It provided a clear example of how natural resource extraction, so prevalent in Northern Ontario, undermined some communities to the benefit of others. He recalled:

What they were doing was cutting the logs and taking them to a sawmill. You added wealth when taking them to a sawmill. They'd take these logs and ship them by rail to a sawmill. So the added value went somewhere else. The author said it wasn't development to that county; it was a detriment to that county. Now the logs went somewhere else – created jobs, a tax base, whatever. Well, I related that to Northern Ontario. Once I was aware of the facts, to me it wasn't rocket science to say 'this is not right!' And then once I read that book – that confirmed it. That's what had happened in other regions. And if you don't do something to stop this from happening in your region, you're going to lose that. I agreed with these people that provincial status was the only way to go. But I had all this information to back it up; then, I was a Northerner.⁴²¹

Initially, Deibel's efforts to promote the idea of a new province took two paths. First, he attempted to leverage his high profile locally to win municipal office in North Bay. Running as a mayoral candidate in 1973 on a "new province" platform, Deibel won only 513 votes, well behind the top three candidates who tallied 8,276, 7,908, and 2,183 votes, respectively. He also lost a race for alderperson on North Bay city council the following year.

While his quest for elected office was unsuccessful, the second and concurrent part of Deibel's campaign, an information tour around Northern Ontario and new petition drive, proved more fruitful. Percy Bishop and Murray Watts,⁴²² a Toronto-based investor and prospector, respectively, donated \$5,000 towards his printing and promotional expenses in a bid to gauge what kind of support might be present for a new province.⁴²³ They argued the area's rich natural resources were not being exploited to their full potential and a new province, complete with a new stock exchange, was needed to develop the

⁴²¹ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴²² Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012.

⁴²³ In a published article, Deibel quoted a figure of \$2,000 as a donation from "friends of the committee" and stated he was using \$500 of his own money to finance the trip. See: ---- "Kenora group will promote new province," *The Kenora Calendar*, September 19, 1973, 2.

North. Another local business owner in North Bay gave Deibel his credit card and asked him to use it to cover his room and board when needed.⁴²⁴ Following a news conference, where he announced he had rented headquarters in North Bay⁴²⁵ and pledged to tour the North in an optimistic bid to get 25,000 signatures in support of a new province, another supporter, whom Deibel never met, volunteered to arrange his travel schedule to 55 communities.⁴²⁶

With petition paper and a bunch of \$2 “New Province Committee” membership cards in hand, Deibel and his wife started a 20,000-mile tour in their 1972 green Ford station wagon – complete with slogan-filled placards and a mineral display of Northern Ontario’s wealth⁴²⁷ – to measure support for secession.⁴²⁸ In one memorable meeting at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, after Deibel told the assembled crowd that he was looking for support for provincial status, over 50 people came forward to purchase membership cards for his New Province Committee.⁴²⁹ “My wife couldn’t handle them all,”⁴³⁰

⁴²⁴ Deibel told Brock he received a good deal of “northern hospitality” on this trip with free meals, discounts on hotel rooms and between \$10,000 and \$12,000 in donations. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 40-41.

⁴²⁵ Deibel had hoped donations would help pay for the office space, but they were not forthcoming in high enough quantities to cover more than three months’ tenancy.

⁴²⁶ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010. He notes that during this tour, as with others, he would often benefit from invitations to stay in supporters’ homes or would receive anonymous help by way of having his accommodation paid for by people who had attended a meeting.

⁴²⁷ Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012.

⁴²⁸ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North,” *Toronto Star*, October 5, 1974, B6.

⁴²⁹ Thunder Bay had been home to a popular Northern Ontario secessionist movement about 30 years earlier. Fort William alderman Hubert Limbrick had written a letter to the editor of the Fort William Daily Times-Journal suggesting that since southern Ontario did not care enough about northwestern Ontario to build a road connecting it to northeastern Ontario and southern Ontario, the region should form its own province. The idea proved so popular that Fort William city hall was swamped by 300-400 people hoping to discuss the idea. See: Dan Baughman, “Northern secession idea traced in new book,” *Chronicle-Journal*, August 13, 1979, 15.

⁴³⁰ According to Deibel: “At first my wife Phyllis was a little sceptical that the support was there, but after that first trip in the fall of 1973, she saw that there was a grassroots feeling and from then I had my family behind me all the way.” Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 41. Phyllis Deibel had suffered a stroke prior to my in-person interviews and was unable to participate in interviews for this project. Ed Deibel has noted her labour and support (and contributions from his children) were essential in helping him pursue his political organizing and campaigns. The relative absence of women’s voices and experiences within this chapter (and, to a lesser degree in other chapters) is not intentional, but rather a result of missing pieces within the source material I’ve been able to gather that has frustrated my attempts to be more mindful of these voices. As Nancy M. Forestell notes in her chapter, “Women, Gender and the Provincial North,” in Kerry Abel and Ken Coates’ edited collection, *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, at the time of her writing, feminist historians had only very recently turned to researching northern areas of the province. She suggests there has been an “historiographical

he recalled. “She had to have help. And they were from all groups: students, the middle class, senior citizens...”⁴³¹ The following day, as he was sight-seeing around the city, he heard a radio station mention that he was in town and accepted their over-the-air offer to be interviewed. When asked why a new province was needed, Deibel started listing the reasons:

We don’t control our natural resources. We don’t have manufacturing. We have every conceivable natural resource... to build an industrial complex. We want more say. We were being treated like a colony. There were four words we used: mismanagement, exploitation, neglect, and being ignored. These were the comments from the meeting the night before, so the next day I just put them on the air. This was important, because it was not so much what I say but how I listen to what people are saying.⁴³²

Deibel was not so much a leader dictating to followers; rather, he was a medium for a certain message – a megaphone that amplified the oft-spoken grievances among certain people within Northern communities.

The aspiring politician’s summation of Northern Ontario’s dilemma is one heavily tied to the political economy of area. In his contribution to the recent collection *Divided Province: Ontario Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism*, David Leadbeater suggests that it was abundantly clear during the post-war period that Northern Ontario’s economy had become a form of subordinate capitalism. Key elements of the area economy included: predominantly private corporate ownership of production and a capitalist labour market; primary production coupled with transportation systems designed to remove resource commodities that is an example of a classic colonial-hinterland region; continuing cyclical vulnerability

obsession” with the urban south, although her review of feminist histories that explore the province does highlight some important exceptions. Forestell’s survey centres mostly on pre-WWII histories (where male-dominated resource extraction industries were the focus of many historical studies), and as more recent decades are studied and as more historians examine gender as category in their analysis, there is likely to be a shift in historiography. However, my inability to locate some of the women involved in these political parties or find many willing participants among those whom I could locate, does shape my narrative and analysis in ways I had hoped to avoid at the outset of my research.

⁴³¹ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴³² Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

and (at the time of Diebel's tour, the beginning of) long-term employment decline; limited resources to ensure sustainable future development.⁴³³

Leadbeater's scholarly analysis echoes Diebel's view from the ground, while also noting a racialized dynamic almost wholly absent in the burgeoning politician's talking points:

Northern Ontario reflects the crises, impoverishment, and social disparities of capitalist development generally, but its conditions are aggravated by an additional layer of problems associated with the fact that its economic base, resource extraction, is largely owned and controlled externally and is the sharp edge of the global environmental and imperial crisis – and that its population has lacked the political and democratic levers to reorient this. One can speak of this situation, imposed through internal colonization, as “colonial” – and for Indigenous Peoples and a large part of the land area, it *is* indeed colonial, whether indicated by the reserve system, the *Indian Act*, thwarted land rights, or unfulfilled sovereignty. For the non-Indigenous population, the situation could perhaps be described as semi-colonial or neo-colonial, in the sense that there is external economic control but certain forms of political representation, as limited as they are, in Parliament, the provincial legislature, and municipalities.⁴³⁴

With the “problem” identified, and generally understood and/or accepted among the area's residents, Diebel made it his mission to persuade people that his idea – provincehood – offered a viable solution.

Much of Deibel's first Northern Ontario tour followed this pattern: a general information meeting to identify potential supporters at night, interviews with local media the following morning, some time on downtown streets⁴³⁵ canvassing for petition signees and then the long drive to the next community during the day. But not all stops on his tour were as affirming as his visit to Thunder Bay. He faced a hostile crowd in Sault Ste. Marie where he was heckled,⁴³⁶ a poorly attended meeting in Kenora

⁴³³ David Leadbeater, “Development and Democracy in Northern Ontario,” in Greg Albo and Bryan M. Evans, eds., *Divided Province: Ontario Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 140-147.

⁴³⁴ David Leadbeater, “Development and Democracy in Northern Ontario,” in Greg Albo and Bryan M. Evans, eds., *Divided Province: Ontario Politics in the Age of Neoliberalism*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 139. In a subsequent chapter I explore ideas of internal colonialism discourse in greater detail, including additional critical analysis of the virtual absence of Indigenous Peoples in the NOHP platform.

⁴³⁵ He remembers post offices being especially good locations to find foot traffic.

⁴³⁶ Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 42.

resulted in mocking coverage in the local newspaper,⁴³⁷ and *Toronto Star* reporter Charlotte Montgomery noted that in Kapuskasing, no one showed up at all.⁴³⁸ In response, Deibel conceded attendance at these meetings often left a lot to be desired, but offered that these types of sessions were a relic from a past era and he was having much more success canvassing with his petition. Yet even this support was often qualified. In Geraldton – a community Deibel considered to be a candidate for a future provincial capital as it was equidistant from the western and eastern parts of the region – erstwhile supporter Mayor Harry Assad questioned why a petition was even necessary. “[Deibel] has got it into the minds of everyone that they should be allowed to have a vote,” the mayor told Montgomery. “Even I think that way. I can’t see why the 25,000 (signatures) are needed. If there’s a request for it, why not have a vote? The people might vote it down, but at least they would answer the question.”⁴³⁹ North Bay Mayor Merle Dickerson, the first person to sign Deibel’s New Province petition, stated that he wanted a vote on the question not because he supported secession, but rather because he felt the question should be decided once and for all.⁴⁴⁰ Other Northern Ontario municipal politicians quoted in Montgomery’s article suspected Deibel’s idea would find little traction in their communities, though Timmins alderman Dan Collins said the New Province Committee chair’s timing was opportune in the wake of the anger over the 1973 budget.⁴⁴¹

Upon returning to his home in North Bay, with 2,000 signatures in hand, Deibel was convinced there was enough grassroots support for a plebiscite on provincial status in Northern Ontario to push

⁴³⁷ In a front page article in the *Kenora Calendar*, writer Stephen Riley’s opening paragraph, set in an imagined five years into the future where Deibel watches a unanimous vote by MPPs in favour of creating an eleventh province on television from his home in North Bay while thinking he is a shoo-in as the first premier, was juxtaposed with another which returns readers to the present, where a New Province Committee meeting could only muster 13 people in the community and attendees struggled to pronounce his name. Stephen Riley, “New Ontario: The myth and the reality,” *Kenora Calendar*, September 19, 1973, 1.

⁴³⁸ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North.”

⁴³⁹ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North.”

⁴⁴⁰ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North.”

⁴⁴¹ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North.” Montgomery notes that Sault Ste. Marie Mayor Ron Irwin has compiled a Northern Ontario “book of beefs” which lists 100 resolutions collected across the North in August, 1974.

ahead and head south to Toronto, to present his proposal to the premier. His hopes for a large cavalcade of cars from every major Northern Ontario community to join him were dashed when only 20 people answered his call. Unbowed, Deibel arrived in the provincial capital in late October 1974, and camped out on the grounds of Queen's Park in a bid to meet the premier. Northern Ontario's MPPs were dismissive of the stunt,⁴⁴² but the national press corps took an interest in the protest. Nevertheless, he remembers one CBC Radio reporter warning him not to expect Premier Davis to come out to greet him. The following day, however, Deibel's son Melvin spotted the premier standing on the steps to the building looking out at the tents that had sprouted up; 30 minutes later a messenger came to invite the protest leader into the premier's office.

Deibel posed a series of questions to Davis during their 20-minute meeting, including whether he would respect Northern Ontarians' democratic rights to plebiscite on the question of a new province. The Premier rejected the notion of a vote on secession out of hand, suggesting it would not be legal, and contending that the people vote every four or five years at general elections at which time you can choose to express your opinions through a candidate. Although respected constitutional expert Eugene Forsey rejected Davis's belief that a plebiscite would be illegal,⁴⁴³ the petition drive for a plebiscite died shortly thereafter.⁴⁴⁴ Frustrated but determined, Deibel told the press that his next step would be to create a Northern Ontario political party focussed exclusively on northern issues, including the formation of a new province.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² ----- "Northerners Camp At Queen's Park," *Globe and Mail*, October 29, 1974, 4. Deibel notes that inside the House, Nipissing Liberal MPP Dick Smith asked the premier what he planned to do about the people camped out on the lawn. Ed Deibel interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴⁴³ Eugene Forsey, "Letter to Edward Deibel, Chairman, New Province Committee for Northern Ontario," October 30, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 06.3 "Northern Secession," Archives of Ontario.

⁴⁴⁴ There is some uncertainty in the historical record about when the petition drive officially ended. Although Deibel mentioned he was contemplating starting a Northern Ontario Party in time for the next general election after his 1974 meeting with the premier, author Gordon Brock notes that Deibel's campaign to collect 25,000 signatures supporting a plebiscite in time for the next election had brought in only 6,000 signatures and 600 paid-up New Province Committee members by that time, suggesting Deibel continued petition drive for a while longer. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 37.

⁴⁴⁵ ----- "Separatist from North Bay says he'll form new party," *Toronto Star*, October 31, 1974, C14.

From Petition to Party: Developing the NOHP⁴⁴⁶

Some months prior to the next Ontario election on September 18, 1975, Deibel wrote to the premier offering to abandon his New Province Committee if seven demands were met. First, he wanted the province to establish a Northern Ontario Development Commission composed of citizens from Northern Ontario. Second, he demanded a provincial government-backed 10-year municipal tax forgiveness plan for all new manufacturing plants that complete at least 80 per cent of a finished form product. Third, Deibel argued that all non-renewable resources should have a depletion tax deposited in a trust fund designed for that area when the project is finished.⁴⁴⁷ Fourth, he contended at least 50 per cent of natural resources should be processed and manufactured in Northern Ontario. Fifth, he asked for a billion-dollar program of grants to provide serviced land for housing, industrial parks and accompanying social needs. Sixth, Deibel wanted a provincial cabinet minister with full responsibility for mining. Finally, he sought a continuing program of research and development for Northern Ontario's two universities, Lakehead and Laurentian, that would assure a better quality of life in Northern Ontario.⁴⁴⁸

In his detailed response to Deibel, Premier Davis contended that "Northern Ontario, although extremely wealthy in resources, does not operate independently of North America or world economic factors. The resolution of many of the problems you describe are complex, interrelated and must be taken in a world context operating within a system of free markets."⁴⁴⁹ Citing the national, continental and global economies that put constraints on resource-based development,⁴⁵⁰ the premier concluded

⁴⁴⁶ The name was suggested by a student during one of his tours. Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012.

⁴⁴⁷ The NDP proposed something similar with its "tomorrow fund". See: ----- "NDP member takes swipe at new ministry," *North Bay Nugget*, May 2, 1977, 16.

⁴⁴⁸ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 37-38.

⁴⁴⁹ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 38.

⁴⁵⁰ Interestingly, in *The Politics of Development*, H.V. Nelles suggests it was not inevitable that the provincial state become a client to private business interests, Nelles, H. V. *The Politics of Development*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, xxvii.

that Northern Ontario, “is strengthened by being an integral part of a very broadly based provincial economy.”⁴⁵¹ Unimpressed, Deibel called for the premier to resign if he wasn’t able to provide the same government for Northern and southern Ontario. Davis did not resign; his governing Progressive Conservatives were returned to office – albeit with only a minority in the legislature – after the election. Deibel now began laying the groundwork for a new political party to battle against him in earnest the next time around.

With about 800 paid-up New Province Committee members,⁴⁵² Deibel was certain he had the makings of a political base strong enough to support and sustain a new party. But Ontario’s electoral laws provided some significant hurdles. Any new political party required either 10,000 eligible voters across the province to sign a registration form or at least 50 party candidates contesting a general election. With only 16 ridings in Northern Ontario, the latter option was moot. Yet acquiring thousands of signatures for a new party, a daunting task for any new organization, would prove especially challenging for a party designed to represent the interests of a vast and sparsely populated portion of the province. Nevertheless, Deibel’s past experience canvassing for petitions would keep him in good stead; and, in a bid to devote all the time he needed to his cause, he opted to sell his motel business and to use part of the proceeds to fund his political organizing.⁴⁵³ Over the next few years, Deibel estimates he personally collected about 7,500 of the more than 10,000 signatures the group would eventually amass during five or six trips around Northern Ontario.⁴⁵⁴ In addition to signatures collected by some other New Province Committee members, Deibel also found supporters among workers on the Ontario

⁴⁵¹ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 38.

⁴⁵² Deibel says these members tended to be disproportionately young or old. The older members remembered the grievances of the past. The younger people were concerned about the lack of education and job opportunities. Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012.

⁴⁵³ William Dampier, “The eleventh province,” *Globe and Mail*, January 27, 1977, A1.

⁴⁵⁴ At least 100 signatures were collected in downtown Toronto in a southern sojourn likely designed to catch the attention of national news media. See: ----- “Champion of the North tries to start new party,” *Toronto Star*, September 30, 1976, A9.

Northland Railroad (ONR) line who volunteered to carry petition sheets up to remote communities. Reaction to Deibel's efforts continued to be mixed, however. For example, a meeting in Sudbury set up to plan a new constituency association drew only four attendees.⁴⁵⁵ And even among the people signing his petition, he recalled finding "utter disrespect" for politicians of all stripes, and scepticism that he would be any different.⁴⁵⁶

Despite these types of setbacks and difficulties and the qualified support he sometimes received, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities took Deibel's campaign seriously enough to invite him to become the first non-politician to speak at a meeting. On May 1, 1976, Deibel delivered a "tough-worded" address to a meeting of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities that the *North Bay Nugget* deemed his "most hard-hitting speech ever."⁴⁵⁷ Although the gathering of municipal officials expected Deibel to be a controversial speaker, most were taken aback by his vehemence, "razor-edged criticism" and choice of "intemperate language." Having waited years for the opportunity to speak to such a gathering, Deibel stated bluntly that he had "no love or respect for Bill Davis as a person, as a politician or as the Premier of Southern Ontario." Until he agreed to a vote on the question of a new province, the fiery orator said he considered him "Premier Dictator Davis of Southern Ontario."⁴⁵⁸ As the faces of some northern mayors in the room reddened, Deibel pulled no punches in accusing his audience of being submissive:

Are the northern leaders so stupid as to let the wealth of our northland benefit Southern Ontario as it has for 75 years? ... Let's make our message to the government loud and clear. We don't want our mayors and reeves to be professional beggars any longer. We don't want any

⁴⁵⁵ ----- "Rights group meeting draws crowd of four," *Toronto Star*, February 4, 1977, D17. Ever the optimist, Deibel put a positive spin on the poor turnout by noting "it was valuable in that now we know we've got a big job to do. And three of them were stalwarts of the old Mine Mill Union, so they know how to organize."

⁴⁵⁶ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 46. Deibel explained to the media and potential signatories that "The citizen who signs the party registration form is not becoming a member of the new party but attesting the desire to have a new choice at election time." See: ----- "Names sought for new party." *North Bay Nugget*, May 17, 1976, 2.

⁴⁵⁷ Kurt Johnson, "Deibel jolts municipal leaders," *North Bay Nugget*, May 3, 1976, 1.

⁴⁵⁸ Kurt Johnson, "Deibel jolts municipal leaders." Deibel's campaign language once again was framed as an appeal to a population's democratic rights, though he appeared to view direct democracy as more legitimate than a representative democracy.

more handouts. We don't want any more promises. We don't want to be treated like a colony of Southern Ontario. We don't want any more half-truths.⁴⁵⁹

Some mayors in the audience bristled and Blind River Mayor Red Venturi proposed a resolution to disassociate the organization from the speaker's remarks.⁴⁶⁰ As tempers cooled, however, other mayors spoke up in support of Deibel's arguments, if not his intemperate delivery. Nickel Centre Mayor Mike Solski reminded attendees that he and Timmins Mayor Leo Del Villano, who was also in attendance, had made the same arguments 20 years earlier and concluded that Northern municipalities were "still begging." Sudbury Mayor Jim Gordon⁴⁶¹ went further in his words: "Since I was a young man [I have listened to civic politicians talking about] the rape of the North. And it's still going on. I don't particularly like Mr. Deibel's approach personally to us. But if we were to reject his views out of hand, we are saying we don't believe there is a problem. And there is a problem."⁴⁶² An editorial in the *North Bay Nugget* a few days later largely agreed with Gordon's assessment, calling Deibel undiplomatic-but-courageous: "The people of the North may never fully agree with Mr. Deibel, but he's a burr under the saddles of both municipal and provincial governments, and as such he keeps the sometimes lethargic beasts moving, hopefully in the right direction."⁴⁶³

The *North Bay Nugget*, like the *Sudbury Star*, other newspapers and Northern Ontarians elsewhere, appeared to agree that Deibel was probably not the type of politician who was a future Premier of Northern Ontario in waiting. Yet, some of the grievances he spoke of were real and the feelings he was tapping into had the potential to become explosive if not addressed in a meaningful way. For instance, in a January 1977 article for the *Globe and Mail* on the possibility of an eleventh

⁴⁵⁹ Kurt Johnson, "Deibel jolts municipal leaders." Excerpts of his remarks here: ----- "Deibel speaks about an independent Northland," *North Bay Nugget*, May 11, 1976, 5.

⁴⁶⁰ Deibel recalls one politician did not want to even let him finish the speech. See: Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴⁶¹ Deibel recalls Gordon, a well-known Progressive Conservative, as telling the audience: "We've all said northern Ontario should be its own province at sometime or another – maybe for different reasons, but we said it." Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010. Gordon later won election as a Progressive Conservative MPP for Sudbury.

⁴⁶² Kurt Johnson, "Deibel jolts municipal leaders."

⁴⁶³ ----- "Editorial: Diplomacy lacking, but Mr. Deibel's courage evident," *The North Bay Nugget*, May 8, 1976, 4.

province, writer William Dampier conceded that Deibel's chances for electoral success in the next election, expected in mere months, were slim; however, he cautioned that this man was "no crackpot," and the fact that he has put serious effort into providing a political voice for the North underlines some serious grievances. "...If the proposition seems far-fetched now, it is worth remembering that [with a group of 6,500 enthusiasts to date] other political parties – the Parti Quebecois, for example – started with less and came to power."⁴⁶⁴

Taking the Wind Out of Secessionist Sails: The Creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs and the 1977 Provincial Election

In addition to Deibel's own persistence, the continued grumbling among some Northern Ontario communities and pressure from the region's Progressive Conservative MPPs, and the surprising success of the Parti Quebecois in Quebec's 1976 general election, likely contributed to a major announcement on March 4, 1977 that appeared designed to soothe this agitation and alienation. In what Northern Ontario cabinet minister Leo Bernier described as "the greatest thing for Northern Ontario since Confederation," the Ontario government created a separate Ministry of Northern Affairs, the third such attempt at building a cabinet portfolio and department specifically for Northern Ontario. The most recent previous version of the ministry (as part of the Ministry of Natural Resources) had been disbanded by the Davis government five years earlier under a restructuring initiative. "When we restructured (in 1972), we felt the interests of the north would be accommodated by the Ministry of Natural Resources, but it has become evident that the people in the north want more direct representation," Davis said at the time of the announcement.⁴⁶⁵ Named as the first minister, Bernier

⁴⁶⁴ William Dampier, "The eleventh province."

⁴⁶⁵ ----- "Leo Bernier in New Portfolio as Minister of Northern Affairs," *Temiskaming Speaker*, February 9, 1977. Nelles' Chapter "Responsible Government Revisited," in *The Politics of Development* offers insightful commentary on the role of ministerial responsibility of natural resources and the tensions between balancing the interests of citizens and residents with private business interests. Not only were these not necessarily the same or similar, but rather they could quite possibly be diametrically opposed. See: Nelles, 383. He also notes: "Industrial obligations

vowed to “bring new clout for the North at Queen’s Park,”⁴⁶⁶ and noted that his staff in Toronto would also be largely composed of Northerners – including his first Deputy Minister Tom Campbell.⁴⁶⁷

Reaction to the news was overwhelmingly positive in Northern Ontario, though there was also some suspicion, both from opposition members and the press, that with a provincial election only months away, the creation of the ministry was a bit of crass political opportunism on the part of a governing party seeking to win new seats in the region. Even if new seats failed to materialize for the Progressive Conservatives, the new Ministry had a fairly immediate detrimental effect on the NOHP’s organizational efforts while also revealing the fault lines in Northern Ontario pan-regionalism more generally.

Deibel had lobbied vigorously for the idea of a separate ministry in the media, particularly in the months leading up to the announcement.⁴⁶⁸ While he took pride in his part in getting such a result⁴⁶⁹ for the people of Northern Ontario, the government’s actions undercut his arguments that Northern Ontario was being ignored by cabinet.⁴⁷⁰ In calling the news “an important and positive step that could be fundamental to the fulfillment of meeting the needs of the people of Northern Ontario,” Deibel may have unintentionally called into question the need for the NOHP to continue.⁴⁷¹ NOHP President Guy Matte, who had been involved with the party for about eight months at the time of the announcement,

helped hasten the rise of cabinet government; responsibility for an industry tended to diminish responsibility to the Legislature,” (399).

⁴⁶⁶ ----- “Our Own Minister,” Editorial, *Temiskaming Speaker*, February 9, 1977.

⁴⁶⁷ Leo Bernier, “Leo Bernier Reports from Queen’s Park,” March 15, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.22 “Newsletter,” Archives of Ontario. The idea for a separate northern ministry was passed as a resolution by about 60 delegates at the annual meeting of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Association’s Northern Ontario policy session on May 14, 1976. See: ----- “Says cabinet interested in N. Ontario problems.” *North Bay Nugget*, May 15, 1976.

⁴⁶⁸ ----- “Ministry of north development mooted.” *Kenora Miner and News*, August 16, 1976, 1.

⁴⁶⁹ Deibel was the first member of the public informed about the new ministry when Minister of Northern Affairs Leo Bernier telephoned him after learning of the news. Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴⁷⁰ At a conference on Northern Ontario development held shortly after the cabinet announcement, attendees told Deibel during that the new Ministry of Northern Affairs will likely make Deibel’s life a bit more difficult in terms of proceeding as quickly with the party as he’d like. Ed Deibel, “Why A New Political Party Today And A New Province Tomorrow?” *Boreal: Journal of Northern Ontario Studies* 8, 98.

⁴⁷¹ ----- “New portfolio important step, Deibel believes,” *North Bay Nugget*, February 7, 1977, 2.

cited the creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs as the moment when his efforts declined. "I was maybe involved with it for about eight months," Matte notes. "I think what happened was the government of Ontario came up with a Ministry of Northern Affairs to try to address these problems. I don't know if it was a sneaky move on their part. It was very well timed. I think people lost interest in [the party after it was created]. I think that's where I pulled away."⁴⁷² Deibel candidly admitted that the announcement "stole our thunder."⁴⁷³

Pan-regional solidarity was also undercut by squabbles among communities vying for Northern Affairs' offices. The Kenora and District Chamber of Commerce, with assistance from the *Kenora Miner and News* and local municipal councils, launched a major, weeks-long campaign titled "Kenora is the Northern Affair" in a bid to host the northwestern regional office of the ministry.⁴⁷⁴ Its success, along with the northeastern regional office site in Sault Ste. Marie, provided each community with dozens of new jobs⁴⁷⁵ and envy from communities that were passed over.⁴⁷⁶ This internal regionalism⁴⁷⁷ indicated

⁴⁷² Guy Matte, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, May 11, 2011.

⁴⁷³ ----- "North Neglected, Deibel Tells Students," *Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal*, February 11, 1977, 13. Later in the year, while still supporting the need for a Northern Affairs ministry, Deibel criticized the department for failing the region and attacked the Northern Affairs ministry for acting as a "co-ordinator and bandage for other ministries." See: ----- "New Ministry Is Attacked," *Daily Press*, October 20, 1977, 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Kenora Mayor Udo Romstedt noted that the campaign was the first he could recall when "the entire Tri-Municipal Area, including the councils, the chamber, and the public at large got behind a 'great campaign.'" Ken Nelson. "Kenora chosen for regional NA office." *Kenora Miner and News*, April 15, 1977, 1.

⁴⁷⁵ Of the 150 staff in the Ministry at the time of its creation, 30-35 were stationed at Queen's Park, five were assigned to each of the district offices (Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Cochrane) while the remainder would be split between the two regional offices. Ken Nelson, "Kenora chosen for regional NA office," *The Kenora Miner and News*, April 15, 1977, 1.

⁴⁷⁶ See: ----- "Timmins wants N.A. moved from Sault," *Kenora Miner and News*, April 18, 1977, 2; ----- "Sault attacks Sudbury proposals," *Kenora Miner and News*, May 16, 1977, 12, where the Sault Ste. Marie chamber of Commerce derided its counterpart in Sudbury for being parochial in its demand to move the regional office; and ----- "Editorial: It's A Poor Start," *Temiskaming Speaker*, April 20, 1977, 2, which called the selection of the regional office sites – in ridings represented by cabinet ministers – "purely political." Additional satellite offices were opened in a number of other communities to provide local links. See: ----- "Six additional NA offices to open," *Kenora Miner and News*, June 3, 1977, 1.

⁴⁷⁷ See, for example: John R. Hunt, "Viewpoint: Northland – grabbing anything we can," *The North Bay Nugget*, February 7, 1977, 4. The competition for these offices (and other regional development resources) could be aggravated by what has been viewed as "considerable parochialism" in parts of Northern Ontario. See: Hall, 156.

that while Northern Ontario may have been united in its desire for more attention and funding from Queen's Park, there was a tendency for rivalry if that funding was forthcoming but limited.⁴⁷⁸

An earlier-than-anticipated election called for June 9 further undermined the NOHP's momentum. Although Deibel's group was tantalizingly close to achieving its goal, it had not collected the necessary 10,000 signatures before the campaign period began, thus preventing official registration of the party from occurring for several more months due to electoral laws. Although he had previously suggested the party might run some candidates as independents before receiving official party status, Deibel candidly told reporters "we don't have any good, strong candidates at the moment,"⁴⁷⁹ and his group would instead continue signing up supporters and waiting for its next chance at the polls. "What's most important at this time is to have the party certified. The momentum is building up," he reported, optimistically, "We may have those [remaining] 890 signatures by the end of this week."⁴⁸⁰ Although Ontario's minority government was closing in on its two-year anniversary and was not expected to last much longer, Deibel speculates that Davis may have called the election early to avoid facing the new party at the polls.⁴⁸¹

The provincial election did result in one silver lining for the NOHP leader, however. The election of North Bay alderperson Mike Bolan as Nipissing's new Liberal MPP opened a vacancy on City Council that was traditionally filled by the candidate who polled the next most votes in the previous election.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ Bernier received letters, telegrams and phone calls from practically every community in the North in attempt to win the offices for their areas. ----- "Northern Affairs Office Locations Not Decided," *Temiskaming Speaker*, April 6, 1977, 3.

⁴⁷⁹ ----- "Heritage Party shuns this election campaign," *Globe and Mail*, May 16, 1977, 4.

⁴⁸⁰ ----- "No candidates up for Heritage Party," *North Bay Nugget*, May 16, 1977. Deibel noted that party certification could not take place until after an election, anyway, and vowed to be fully prepared for the next campaign, likely in four years. Deibel reached the 10,000-signature mark on May 26, 1976. See: Guy Gallardi, "Deibel tops 10,000 mark," *North Bay Nugget*, May 27, 1976, 13.

⁴⁸¹ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010. Although Matte cited the creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs as the moment when the party faltered, years later when Deibel resigned as leader he lamented that the time between gaining signatures, the election and the official registration of the party in October killed its momentum. "We had a lot of catching up to do." D.W. Robertson, "Deibel drops reins of faltering party he built," *North Bay Nugget*, May 16, 1980, 2.

⁴⁸² ----- "Deibel named to vacant seat on North Bay Council," *North Bay Nugget*, June 21, 1977, 1.

Deibel, who trailed the candidate who had won the final council seat by only 14 votes, became a public office holder after a unanimous vote by council. He now had another platform to express his views and promote his party⁴⁸³ – although the party’s purpose appeared to have evolved by this period. When announcing to local reporters that the NOHP had collected its 10,000th signature supporting official registration, Deibel downplayed talk of secession. “Our energy is not directed towards creating a new province,” he stated. “However, if the party is unable to accomplish a better deal for Northern Ontario within the next four years then it will have to seriously look at the new province idea. It will be the attitudes and policies of Queen’s Park that will force the separation question, not the people of the North.”⁴⁸⁴

Registration, Recognition and Policy Development

In early October, after waiting the requisite amount of time following a general election required by law before a new party can be registered, Deibel travelled to Toronto with a four-inch thick binder containing 10,750 signatures from people living in 143 Ontario communities.⁴⁸⁵ “Persons who signed the petition are students, housewives, working people, doctors, right up to the executive level,” Deibel enthused. “I can say we have signatures from every walk of life.”⁴⁸⁶ On October 19, as he was driving to a speaking engagement at a high school in Timmins,⁴⁸⁷ Deibel heard news over the radio for

⁴⁸³ ----- “No candidates up for Heritage Party,” *North Bay Nugget*, May 16, 1977.

⁴⁸⁴ Guy Gallardi, “Deibel tops 10,000 mark,” *North Bay Nugget*, May 27, 1976, 13.

⁴⁸⁵ D.W. Robertson, “Deibel seeks party registration,” *North Bay Nugget*, October 7, 1977, 1. In addition to obtaining signatures from 126 communities in northern Ontario, signatories included people in 17 southern Ontario communities.

⁴⁸⁶ D.W. Robertson, “Deibel seeks party registration.” In a recent interview Deibel conceded that there were many more of the former than the latter. Students and young working people were generally more supportive, though support did cut across class to a certain extent. See: Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁴⁸⁷ Deibel had been invited by students to speak about his campaign. “I told them why we should have a new province,” he recalls. “We’d have control over our resources to create jobs, so all of you wouldn’t have to move away to get good-paying jobs. One of the teachers pulled me over and said, why don’t you ask them how many of them would vote for a new province? I put the question to them. There was some news media in the room that I didn’t know about. Practically every student raised their hand. And the news guy came to me and said, ‘You’ve got nerve!’ I said, well it’s a good question because that’s what’s going to go in front of the people eventually.” Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010. Brock notes that 40-45 per cent of signatories were from North Bay, Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 46.

which he had long waited: A.A. Wishart, chair of the Ontario Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses, had given official recognition to the NOHP after confirming the signatures were in good order.⁴⁸⁸ Telling reporters he was “relieved, delighted, happy and tired and everything,” he argued the party’s success and prosperity would rest “upon the shoulders and hearts of Northerners.”⁴⁸⁹

Promising to hold a leadership convention within 18 months, Deibel stated that steps were being taken to launch a full-scale membership drive⁴⁹⁰ and fundraising initiative. Then, he predicted the party would begin to establish constituency associations and start nominating candidates in all 16 Northern Ontario ridings as quickly as possible in order for them to begin campaigning well in advance of the next election.⁴⁹¹ The party leader, who hoped to find a deputy leader for northwestern Ontario (likely in the Thunder Bay area),⁴⁹² stated that he was looking for candidates between the ages of 21 and 35, though there was no age limit. “As long as they have a strong feeling of concern for Northern Ontario, they will make an excellent candidate... It should be someone who knows the North and understands the economics, science and politics of Northern Ontario.”⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁸ D.W. Robertson, “Ed Deibel legally-recognized leader: North Heritage Party now official in Ont.,” *North Bay Nugget*, October 20, 1977, 1.

⁴⁸⁹ D.W. Robertson, “Ed Deibel legally-recognized leader.” Deibel cites the party’s registration as the moment when momentum and interest in the party among potential members declined suddenly. Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012.

⁴⁹⁰ Party memberships would cost \$10. ----- “Heritage Party wants better deal for the North, officially recognized,” *Globe and Mail*, October 20, 1977, 10.

⁴⁹¹ Using Timmins, the largest community in Cochrane South, as an example, Deibel said he hoped to sign up between 50 to 60 members to form the basis of a constituency association. After electing an executive, a candidate would be nominated quickly in order to give him or her “a chance to become entrenched.” Jim Connelly, “Northern Ontario Has Its Own Party,” *Timmins Daily Press*, October 20, 1977, 1.

⁴⁹² Jim Connelly, “Northern Ontario Has Its Own Party.” Although Deibel was almost exclusively the only quoted source for these and other news articles, he did have a group that served as a quasi-executive which supported him at this time. It is not clear how formalized roles were nor the full extent of involvement due to the dearth of surviving party records and my inability to track down most of these members for interviews. Others who were contacted were not interested in participating in this research.

⁴⁹³ D.W. Robertson, “Ed Deibel legally-recognized leader.” Deibel also rejected the idea of parachuting candidates into riding, preferring local candidates. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 44.

News reports from the time mentioned that the party's main focus would be to seek "a better deal for Northern Ontario"⁴⁹⁴ by generating secondary industry in order to create good-paying jobs and stop youth out-migration.⁴⁹⁵ Although the party did not adopt any official policies – nor would it since plans for a party convention failed to materialize – in a series of interviews with journalist and author Gordon Brock, Deibel sketched out his own ideas and proposals. Ideologically, they proved to be a somewhat curious mix.⁴⁹⁶ Economic policies were a central concern. Although the NOHP should be a "free enterprise" party, Deibel suggested that if it adopted his economic philosophy it would put it "just a shade away from socialism."⁴⁹⁷ While he did not support nationalization schemes or legislation restricting foreign ownership, he suggested that major industries should be at least 75 per cent Canadian-owned. This could be achieved by way of giving foreign-owned companies a 25-year period to sell their stock to Canadians and establishing legislation to require any non-Canadian buying industrial property in Northern Ontario to become a Canadian citizen within five years.⁴⁹⁸ Like the provincial NDP, Deibel also argued that Ontario's *Mining Act*⁴⁹⁹ should be enforced to ensure minerals are fully processed in Canada, if not Northern Ontario itself.⁵⁰⁰

Describing the NOHP as a "people's party," his proposals for social policies were generally more conceptual than concrete. Curiously, these ideas mixed a desire for cultural assimilation, or at least integration, with some respect for diversity. While pointing out that many communities in the North

⁴⁹⁴ ----- "Better Deal for North Is Aim Of New Party," *Timmins Daily Press*, October 20, 1977, 3.

⁴⁹⁵ ----- "Heritage Party wants better deal for the North, officially recognized," *Globe and Mail*, October 20, 1977, 10.

⁴⁹⁶ See: Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 48-54.

⁴⁹⁷ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 48. Deibel said: "We don't believe in socialism and nationalization. We don't want more public ownership, but the wealth of the nation has to be filtered down to the worker." Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 57.

⁴⁹⁸ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 48. Deibel suggested most of Canada's problems were related to foreign ownership, but it is unclear how these policies would function alongside the federal Foreign Investment Review Agency or in an age of multi-national corporations.

⁴⁹⁹ *Mining Act*, RSO 1990, c M.14,

⁵⁰⁰ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 49. The party planned to seek an injunction to stop the export of raw materials to other countries, even though the Ministry of Natural Resources explained that technology and prohibitive markets make full enforcement untenable.

were under-serviced in terms of hospitals, dentists, pharmacies and advanced education opportunities, he had few specific proposals for rectifying these situations aside from acknowledging that secondary industrial development would lead to more infrastructure and services to support expanding populations.⁵⁰¹ Deibel contended that all status Indians in the province should receive free university education so that they could enter “mainstream society [and] cut the strings, take a job of [their] choice, and make it in the white man’s world.”⁵⁰² Although he supported a multilingual and multicultural country, Deibel opposed any special language rights for francophones⁵⁰³ and supported a single, non-denominational, multilingual school system where English was the mandatory language of instruction.⁵⁰⁴ Although Indigenous people and franco-Ontarians made up a substantial portion of the population in certain Northern communities, he recalls that few status Indians signed his petition or registration papers and language policy did not appear to be top-of-mind among the francophones who supported his campaigns.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰¹ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 52. Deibel did support preventative healthcare and contended that no one should be denied health care because they can’t afford it.

⁵⁰² Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 52. He supported a recent Treaty Nine Grand Council declaration which asserted they were “a free and sovereign nation” because it did not mean a separate government competing with the province, but rather a “sovereign right to protect their culture.” Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 52-53.

⁵⁰³ Deibel was a member of the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada. ----- “Merle Dickerson makes it official: The ‘last hurrah’ for a mayor,” *Globe and Mail*, November 2, 1978, 9. He also drew headlines when he confronted Jean-Luc Pepin, co-chair of the National Task Force on Unity, at a meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in Toronto. Deibel stated “there is too much emphasis on the French language and we are getting sick of it.” Pepin dismissed him as an eccentric. ----- “Pepin says the press stresses the bizarre,” *Toronto Star*, September 14, 1977, A3.

⁵⁰⁴ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 55.

⁵⁰⁵ As I note in a subsequent chapter, the NOHP’s policies relating to Indigenous people seemed to be based on Deibel’s own opinions formed by news media consumption or through non-representative conversations with Indigenous individuals who potentially had little or no connection to larger Indigenous political organizations. Conversely, although a francophone named Guy Matte was a member of the NOHP’s quasi-executive body around 1976-1978, he reported having little to no discussion with Deibel in relation to policies relating to francophone language rights or franco-Ontarian culture. Although Matte himself was not particularly involved or interested in these issues, it is curious that Deibel, and/or the NOHP quasi-executive, would not seek out his opinions. Although entirely debatable, it could be that Deibel and the NOHP executive viewed Indigenous peoples as a homogenized group of ‘others’ who could speak on behalf of a community in way they would not presume an individual francophone could/should.

Despite emerging out of the New Province Committee, the press tended not to focus on the question of secession as an immediate policy. The NOHP now vowed to “change the political structure to bring forth social justice and economic justice to the North” within Ontario. Only if these efforts failed would it move ahead with a campaign for a new province. How it would achieve that change within the existing political structure remained a point of debate – even in Deibel’s own mind. Shortly after his party was officially registered the NOHP leader revealed that he believed the region did not need any new legislation to improve Northern Ontario’s economy and living conditions, just “a government with the intestinal fortitude to enforce the current laws.”⁵⁰⁶ Yet, in speaking to Brock, Deibel appeared to suggest that new legislation was, in fact needed: “We have said in the past that if the government prepared legislation for justice in the North we would abandon our party; however, we need legislation not promises.”⁵⁰⁷ In the absence of a policy convention, Deibel debated policy publicly. These ruminations occasionally resulted in contradictory statements and inconsistent messaging; but his varying talking points generated consistent interest in his campaigns. The inconsistency also indicates Deibel was continuing to listen to debates around him and to input from members as he tried to discover how the NOHP could best represent Northern Ontario interests.

Candidacy, Courts, and Cabinet Defections: NOHP 1978-1981

While attempting to build up a membership for the party, Deibel’s municipal council work began to occupy more of his time – particularly as he now appeared to have grand ambitions to replace North Bay Mayor Merle Dickerson, a flamboyant politician first elected in 1953.⁵⁰⁸ Although the incumbent mayor was expected to be returned to office, there was speculation that Deibel, who planned to spend

⁵⁰⁶ ----- “Better Deal for North Is Aim Of New Party,” *Timmins Daily Press*, October 20, 1977, 3.

⁵⁰⁷ Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 59.

⁵⁰⁸ When asked why such a politician was so successful, veteran alderman Richard Donnelly explained: “North Bay is a different city. A man like Merle Dickerson would simply not get elected in Southern Ontario or in Toronto. Things are done differently here.... He might get elected in Owen Sound. They’re kind of crazy there, too.” ----- “Merle Dickerson makes it official.”

\$5,000 on his mayoral campaign, might siphon off enough votes to allow a third candidate to win. Dickerson admitted he tried to convince Deibel not to run, reportedly pulling him into his office on a dozen occasions. The mayor said Deibel “would make a very good alderman, but he has no expertise in running a \$30-million corporation.” Although the NOHP leader finished a distant third in the mayoral race, in 1980 he would play a role in a trial that resulted in Dickerson’s political demise; the mayor had been accused of using bribery and other corrupt means to win office.⁵⁰⁹

No longer a member of North Bay’s council, Deibel continued his party’s organizational efforts with middling success. In August 1979, Deibel announced that 25-year old student accountant Daniel Bowers of Dryden would be the party’s candidate in Leo Bernier’s Kenora riding. “I am pleased at attracting a young man who lives in the Kenora riding and understands the problems of the North,” he said at the time. Bowers, who was born in Stuttgart, Germany, and had served in the United States Navy and attended the University of Calgary and Mount Royal College,⁵¹⁰ pledged to begin a membership drive in the riding.⁵¹¹ There is no known record to indicate whether this membership drive ever occurred and attempts to contact Bowers were unsuccessful.

The NOHP leader generated more headlines when he revealed to the press that no less than a sitting cabinet minister was considering defecting to the party’s ranks. Deibel had recently been a featured guest on an open-line radio talk show with Alan Pope, minister without portfolio. Following their appearance, Deibel called the minister to remind him of a discussion the two men had had two years earlier when the NOHP leader was involved in a membership drive. Reportedly, Pope told Deibel he “hadn’t forgotten about the offer to join the party made some time ago but wanted to see if he could bring about changes to help Northern Ontario from inside the cabinet. If not, he would ‘let us know

⁵⁰⁹ See: Julia Turner, “Didn’t use bribes, corruption, North Bay mayor says,” *Globe and Mail*, April 17, 1980, 3.

⁵¹⁰ Kurt Johnson, “Dryden man says he’s prepared to carry Heritage Party banner,” *North Bay Nugget*, August 14, 1979, 15.

⁵¹¹ “Heritage Party to run candidate in riding.” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, August 14, 1979, 1.

within a couple of months.” Deibel took this to mean that the minister “liked the policies of the Heritage Party and was considering an offer to cross the floor of the Legislature and represent it.” An incredulous Pope denied this interpretation of events, stating: “No, I never told him that. Do you know any Cabinet minister who has been able to change policy in three or four months? Good God, I’ve never set any time limit.” Although he lauded the party’s goal of bringing more secondary industry to Northern Ontario, he said he didn’t know “how any politician in his right mind could disagree with that.” Pope noted he was happy “to have a say where it counts” – in cabinet.⁵¹²

Alerting the press to a potential floor-crossing before it occurred was a questionable political strategy, but excellent for publicity – something for which Deibel continued to build a reputation for being particularly adept at generating.⁵¹³ During the Dickerson trial, for instance, the mayor’s lawyer Frank Falconi tried to dismiss Deibel as “a publicity hound” who was “only seeking publicity for the Northern Heritage Party, a provincial party he founded.”⁵¹⁴ Much like Tom Burgess’ oratorical skill described in the previous chapter, and the immensely quotable Paul MacEwan’s knack for drawing headlines in the local press, Deibel’s ability to draw attention to himself was a critical factor in building media interest in the party. Yet, while generating regular publicity was necessary to highlight the NOHP’s existence – and served to prime⁵¹⁵ public awareness of Northern Ontario issues – it could only

⁵¹² Rudy Patel, “Ontario minister denies report he’s considering crossing the floor,” *Globe and Mail*, October 6, 1979, 11.

⁵¹³ Former Thunder Bay area MPP Jim Foulds notes Deibel “always made a big splash in the press.” Jim Foulds interview, March 8, 2013. Sudbury-area MPP Floyd Laughren agrees: “He was good at [generating media attention], and I don’t say that resentfully. He had some success at that. Given the resources he had, which I gather were minimal, and the fact that he had not a lot going for him, he was very successful at getting media attention.” Floyd Laughren, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, June 11, 2011.

⁵¹⁴ ----- “Mayor’s lawyer scorns witnesses in corruption trial,” *Globe and Mail*, April 18, 1980, 8. Dickerson was eventually found guilty of corruption, but not bribery. While the judge in the case was satisfied that Dickerson had induced a 17-year old girl and several non-residents to vote, he said evidence of Diebel’s suggestion he attempted to bribe him was “too vague and tenuous.” See: Julia Turner, “North Bay’s Mayor guilty of corruption, ordered from office,” *Globe and Mail*, July 8, 1980, 4.

⁵¹⁵ See, for example: David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, Beverly Roskos-Ewoldsen and Francesca R. Dillman Carpentier, “Media Priming: A Synthesis,” in Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann, eds., *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2002, 97-120.

mask the party's anemic membership and ongoing organizational troubles for so long. The groundswell of support the party required to sustain itself never materialized; while there was interest, poor communication networks, vast distances and mediocre fundraising prevented much serious development.

A One-Man Organization? The Decline of the NOHP

On May 16, 1980, seven years to the day he formed his New Province Committee (and coincidentally only days before Quebec's first unsuccessful referendum on sovereignty), Edward Deibel announced he was stepping down as leader of the NOHP. "I liked the job, but it's not fair to ask my family to keep making sacrifices," he told D.W. Robertson of the *North Bay Nugget*. "I haven't had a paycheque in a year and a half."⁵¹⁶ Even with some continued support from public donations, Deibel had been relying on his own savings to finance his campaigns and promotional work; these funding sources not been sufficient or sustainable. "I'm proud of what I did and I don't regret it," he recalls, "but I had enough sense to know when I couldn't carry it anymore."⁵¹⁷

At the time of his resignation,⁵¹⁸ the party had yet to hold its first convention, had no constitution, and Deibel had not even been formally elected party leader.⁵¹⁹ Although the party had about 200 paid-up members at one point, party membership had fallen dramatically since then. Acknowledging the NOHP had been characterized and criticized as a one-man organization inextricably tied to its leader, Deibel suggested his resignation would open the doors for other party members to step forward and become more involved in its day to day operations.⁵²⁰ "If the Heritage Party dies now, then it was a one-man deal. And so it should die," he remarked. "It's not the way to promote Northern

⁵¹⁶ D.W. Robertson, "Deibel drops reins."

⁵¹⁷ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁵¹⁸ Deibel pledged to continue his membership in the party. D.W. Robertson, "Deibel drops reins."

⁵¹⁹ D.W. Robertson, "Deibel drops reins."

⁵²⁰ Reflecting on his resignation, Deibel suggests he was pushed out by some members who were upset that he had never been formally elected leader. Deibel, interview, June 12, 2011.

Ontario with any kind of organization.”⁵²¹ Yet even if the party faded away, Deibel said it could take credit for making people more aware of the problems of the North generally, as well as pressuring the government to enact certain policies such as \$10 vehicle registration for Northern Ontarians and the creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs.

With Deibel moving to a research and policy role within the party, NOHP vice-president Garry Lewis was named leader. A travelling salesperson based in Callander, Ontario, the 39-year-old’s business interests made him much less accessible to both party members and media. Indeed, as the 1981 provincial election campaign was set to begin, *North Bay Nugget* reporter Mike Weaver suggested “the strong voice of the North [had become] only a whisper;”⁵²² *Globe and Mail* reporter Rudy Platiel described the party as being in disarray as it struggled to find candidates. Even Lewis expressed some doubt that he would run, explaining that he still hadn’t secured the financial support he needed to launch a credible campaign.⁵²³ The new NOHP leader also laid blame for the party’s troubles squarely on the shoulders of its founder, blaming its reputation as a separatist vehicle and Deibel’s ill-fated attempt to win the federal Progressive Conservative nomination in Nipissing for turning off potential members. “We had a lot of people that dropped out because of a few problems that we ran into because of Ed Deibel,” he lamented. “Now I’m trying to get them back.”⁵²⁴

Although the New Province Committee had morphed into the NOHP and Deibel maintained that a vote on secession would be held only if NOHP members were not able to effect a change on policy after serving a four-year term in Ontario’s Assembly, Lewis said he was “dead set against separation.”⁵²⁵ Rather, he suggested the party’s goals were to achieve a better transportation system and freight rates for the North in order to attract more secondary industry. As much as the separatist label was a

⁵²¹ D.W. Robertson, “Deibel drops reins.”

⁵²² Mike Weaver, “Heritage Party struggles to speak for the North,” *North Bay Nugget*, February 6, 1981, 13.

⁵²³ Rudy Platiel, “Northern heritage party tries to forget it’s past,” *Globe and Mail*, February 5, 1981, 5.

⁵²⁴ Rudy Platiel, “Northern heritage party tries to forget it’s past.”

⁵²⁵ Rudy Platiel, “Northern heritage party tries to forget it’s past.”

hindrance to finding new members, Lewis contended Deibel's defection to the federal Tories was a particular blow to its current supporters. "After that everybody just said, 'That's it,' so I've had to start from scratch," the new leader explained. "I guess he realized afterward what he'd done. It was *the* mistake. How he ever got talked into running, I don't know."⁵²⁶ For his part, Deibel did not discount the possibility that he had been approached to run for the Tories as part of a plan to destroy NOHP's credibility. "Politics is strange," he said. "In a lot of people's eyes it did discredit me. If that was their motive, they achieved it."⁵²⁷ There would be no NOHP candidates in the 1981 provincial election.

After about two years of relative inactivity, 36-year-old prospector and long-time party member Ronald Gilson became leader, vowing to use the party to push for separate province status. Gilson, who had been involved with the party since 1977 and was elected vice-president in the fall of 1982 after complaining about the party's stasis, was joined by a new three-member executive⁵²⁸ all of whom supported a renewed emphasis on achieving provincial status. Blaming "big business" for stripping the region of its resources in raw form, Gilson cited the Ministry of Northern Affairs and the special \$10 Northern Ontario license fee as evidence "we've already been separated on paper." Moreover, he criticized Natural Resources Minister Alan Pope for signing a fishing agreement giving status Indians exclusive rights over some waters. "I feel I have the same rights as everybody else, and the Indians the same rights as I do."⁵²⁹ Despite the bluster about a party revival, the NOHP next made headlines in 1985

⁵²⁶ Original emphasis. Rudy Platiel, "Northern heritage party tries to forget it's past."

⁵²⁷ Rudy Platiel, "Northern heritage party tries to forget it's past." In a later interview, Deibel explained that he had been approached to run as a candidate by a group within the Conservative Party who were also known to be supportive of a new province. But this was only five days before the riding association vote was due to take place, so there was no time to run an organized campaign. Deibel instead delivered a speech that had all the hallmarks of his NOHP talking points. See: Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁵²⁸ The previous 10-member executive was completely removed. It is unclear how many, if any of these members were still actively involved in the party at this time. ----- "Separatists in Northern Ontario revive goal of an 11th province," *Globe and Mail*, May 5, 1983, 12.

⁵²⁹ "Separatists in Northern Ontario revive goal of an 11th province." *Globe and Mail*, May 5, 1983, 12. It is notable that all three of the NOHP's leaders made statements to the press which personalized party policy and suggested the leaders, as opposed to a mass membership, decided the main planks of the party's expected platform during an election.

when the Ontario Elections Office deregistered the party for failing to file a 1984 return to the Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses. At the time of its official demise, the party had just 90 cents in assets, \$250 in debt, and only four card-carrying members⁵³⁰ – likely the entirety of the executive and the leader. Don Joynt, the executive director of Ontario’s Elections Office, also noted that the party had never developed any constituency associations nor run any candidates. Gilson’s wife Shirley, who acted as chief financial officer, told reporters “the party hadn’t been very active at all and it just wasn’t kept up,” noting that it was a case of “just not having the time to get out and do things for the party.”⁵³¹

Conclusion

Deeming the NOHP a “one-man organization” would not be fair to other members and supporters who were engaged in party activities during its existence. Reliance on published news media – which generally focused on party leadership – and the absence of surviving internal party documents and the lack of participation of many other party members by way of personal interviews, contributes to a narrative that is very much centred on and around the party’s founder and long-time leader. Yet, even acknowledging these primary source limitations, it is undeniable that Deibel was the NOHP’s identifiable public face and prime force during its most successful⁵³² period. No other party member was as closely associated with its brand than Deibel, either by design or by happenstance. In his numerous tours of the

⁵³⁰ No longer active in the party, Deibel heard about the demise of the party when someone approached him on the street in North Bay to ask him what had happened.

⁵³¹ ----- “Northern Ontario separatists lose party,” *Globe and Mail*, August 20, 1985, 4. The Gilsons were later charged with attempting to defraud the public and fraudulently affecting the public market by allegedly issuing misleading statements about a Kirkland Lake, Ont., exploration property. See: ----- “Gilsons charged with fraud over Silber Bar statements,” *Northern Miner* 74, no. 42, December 26, 1988-January 1, 1989. URL: <http://www.northernminer.com/news/gilsons-charged-with-fraud-over-silver-bar-statements/1000125017/?&er=NA>

⁵³² Success being a relative term. Compared to the other parties in this study which built more sophisticated partisan structures and elected party members to provincial legislative assemblies, the NOHP could be described as a failure. Nevertheless, given the unique barriers to becoming a recognized party in Ontario during this period, the NOHP’s achievement is notable, as was its ability to generate press which took its pursuits (and leader) seriously.

region, Deibel had encountered many people who were interested in his idea⁵³³ for a new province (and later a regionally-oriented party), but a critical mass of active partisans required to overcome the challenges posed by vast distances between population centres, poor communications and lack of financing never materialized.⁵³⁴ While Deibel's own lack of political experience also likely hindered the party's ability to flourish at times, unexpected election calls and the announcement of new programs, policies and even a dedicated ministry by the Ontario government sapped the organization's best opportunity for success at the polls.

When he launched his New Province Committee in 1973, Deibel was the latest of a long line of Northern Ontario secessionists. Like a stubborn brush fire that refuses to be snuffed out, secessionist sentiment in the region would flare up after periods of apparent dormancy; but it would never burn strongly enough to build into a widespread movement. Nevertheless, Deibel's passion and pluck made the NOHP one of the most viable attempts to harness this sentiment into sustained political action. Although electoral success was elusive and it was the least developed of all the parties under review in this study, the NOHP, at least in part, arguably contributed to a series of policy changes instituted by the provincial government to address Northern Ontario concerns. Deibel's grassroots campaigning and knack for generating media interest, and the spectre of growing separatist sentiment in a neighbouring province during the same period, likely helped to prompt the reversal of an unpopular budget, the creation of Northern Affairs ministry, and other minor practical or symbolic changes directed specifically at residents living in the northern portion of the province. If nothing else, Deibel's ability to generate news media attention – whether positive or negative – kept the question of northern secession flourishing within public discourse during the period, drew attention to the real and perceived problems

⁵³³ Deibel was well-known as an "idea man," according to the *North Bay Nugget*. See: ----- "Ald. Deibel's latest - Downtown office tower proposed," *North Bay Nugget*, October 8, 1977, 1.

⁵³⁴ Deibel cites difficulties establishing communication networks and the vast distances between communities as the major reasons the party failed. Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

in the area, and reinforced the notion that Northern Ontario was a distinct region with its own regionalism.

The Cape Breton Labor Party: A Bitter Schism Sours Social Democracy in Nova Scotia

On a Sunday afternoon in July 1980, Paul MacEwan⁵³⁵ and a few dozen of his political supporters joined together in front of a Truro, Nova Scotia motel to sing a rousing version of the well-known protest song “We Shall Overcome.”⁵³⁶ As one of the first two New Democratic Party (NDP) MLAs ever elected in Nova Scotia in 1970, MacEwan had devoted much of his life to building popular support for the social democratic party. But, on this day, his future in the party, and in politics generally, appeared to be in serious doubt. By a vote of 56-12, the NDP provincial council upheld the party executive’s decision to expel him; a subsequent vote that would have allowed him to appeal the decision at the party’s next convention failed.⁵³⁷

The controversial 10-hour-long Truro meeting was the culmination of a tumultuous period for the provincial NDP. Party leader Jeremy Akerman, who had helped build the party’s presence in the legislature from nothing to four MLAs in the past decade, had recently announced he would step down. A cadre of opponents determined to gain control within the party had purportedly worn down the leader’s resolve to stay to fight. MacEwan, who drew support from the same general constituency of working-class families in industrial Cape Breton as the out-going leader, was certain the charges presented at expulsion hearing were a pretext to prevent him from running to replace Akerman as

⁵³⁵ This chapter provides a focused narrative of the creation of the Cape Breton Labor Party that was one period of Paul MacEwan’s four-decade long political career. Ian Stewart is in the process of working on a manuscript-length study of his political life that should provide a more complete examination of his time in politics (I am grateful that he allowed me to read and cite his draft chapter on the Cape Breton Labor Party). MacEwan has also written extensively about his years in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, first in a published book (See: Paul MacEwan, *The Akerman Years: Jeremy Akerman and the Nova Scotia NDP 1965-1980*, (Antigonish: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1980)), and also in unpublished manuscripts on The Cape Breton Labor Party (See: Paul MacEwan, *The History of The Cape Breton Labor Party, 1982-1988*, Unpublished manuscript, Undated, 60. (Author’s Personal Collection)), and a complete three-volume political memoirs. Although I draw on interviews and correspondence with MacEwan and on some of his published and unpublished sources, additional interviews and primary document research I refer to occasionally conflicts with his account and memories and is noted where relevant. MacEwan’s own perspective on the events from this period is best found in his unpublished manuscript, *The History of The Cape Breton Labor Party, 1982-1988*. I quote from and refer to this source extensively; however, the copy I have in my possession is a draft and may have been subject to subsequent revision by Mr. MacEwan.

⁵³⁶ ----- “MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion From New Democratic Party in N.S,” *Cape Breton Post*, July 7, 1980, 1.

⁵³⁷ ----- “MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion.”

leader of the NDP. The same group of party members, largely based in Halifax, had long viewed both men with a mixture of concern and contempt.

The party executive gave a number of reasons to justify expelling Paul MacEwan, including harassment of others in the party, breaching party principles with relation to a municipal election, and committing financial irregularities when fundraising.⁵³⁸ But one charge both summed up the history of tensions that had led the party to this hearing and ultimately resulted in a devastating schism with significant consequences for its future: MacEwan was accused of being a Cape Breton separatist and/or supporting factionalism between the Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia wings of the party.⁵³⁹ Although the factions within the party cannot be reduced to regional difference alone,⁵⁴⁰ there was an overwhelming acceptance from his supporters that his expulsion was not only an assault on an individual, but also an insult to a region within Nova Scotia that had provided the NDP's greatest electoral and organizational strength to date. It was a rebuke that echoed far beyond party politics and spoke to a greater climate of alienation and resentment that many people on the island felt towards mainland Nova Scotia and its elite leadership.

When the vote to affirm the expulsion was completed, the *Canadian Press* reported that Carol MacEwan “strode to the front of the packed hall, grabbed [her husband] by the arm and said, ‘Come on Paul, let’s go home. We’ve got Cape Breton. To hell with Nova Scotia.’”⁵⁴¹ As some of his supporters from the island ripped up their membership cards, Carol MacEwan told reporters that party funds from

⁵³⁸ ----- “MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion.” The party executive and council noted that the charge of financial irregularities did not mean he had taken money from the party, but rather, as MacEwan explains in his unpublished manuscript on the Cape Breton Labor Party, that they disagreed with his decision to approach small businesses for campaign donations.

⁵³⁹ Paul MacEwan, *The History of The Cape Breton Labor Party*.

⁵⁴⁰ See: MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, xiii.

⁵⁴¹ ----- “MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion.” Unfortunately, the full extent of Carol MacEwan’s contributions to her husband’s political career and her own activism remain obscured as she is not mentioned much in published or unpublished sources and attempts to interview her for this project were unsuccessful.

Cape Breton to the mainland would be cut-off.⁵⁴² Much of the Cape Breton contingent present stormed out of the hall and the NDP was shaken to its very core. Although the party would subsequently make electoral gains in mainland Nova Scotia, its parliamentary representation from Cape Breton Island would be completely wiped out during the next general election in 1981. Three years later it would continue to bleed votes on the island⁵⁴³ as a new entity led by MacEwan, the Cape Breton Labor Party (CBLP), would supplant it as the third most popular provincial political party in the region. It would take fully 20 years for the New Democrats to recover to the point where the party would once again elect members of the legislative assembly on the island.

At face value, the story of the emergence of the CBLP could easily be read as an internal partisan struggle that, while stunting the growth of the New Democratic Party, had more to do with personality conflicts than regional angst.⁵⁴⁴ This interpretation of the Cape Breton Labour Party's story would be, however, a grave underestimation of its place within a larger context of the history of the island and its unique sub-provincial regional identity. The existence, organization and moderate success of this protest entity must be understood to be, at least partly contingent upon the power of such an identity. The political expression of this regional identity through a dedicated partisan vehicle was one way it permeated into the public discourse during this period.

A Rocky Relationship and 'Forced Marriage': Cape Breton and Nova Scotia to the 1900s

To understand the fissures in the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party that broke open during the very public removal of MacEwan in 1980, it is necessary to briefly chart the rise of the party and its

⁵⁴² ----- "MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion." This likely refers to the Eastern Nova Scotia entity MacEwan had helped to set up.

⁵⁴³ See Table 13.2 in the chapter "The Challenge of Social Democracy," in Ian Stewart and David K. Stewart, *Conventional Choices: Maritime Leadership Politics, 1971–2003*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 177.

⁵⁴⁴ Reflecting on problems within the party during the tenure of leader Jeremy Akerman (who was closely allied to Paul MacEwan), Ian and David Stewart also found: "The customary tensions between the Cape Breton and mainland wings of the party (rooted principally in differences of region and of class) were magnified by personality conflicts and by disagreements over the appropriate locus of party authority." Ian Stewart and David K. Stewart, *Conventional Choices: Maritime Leadership Politics, 1971–2003*, 177.

forerunners by reviewing Cape Breton's development from first contact to the industrial age.⁵⁴⁵ In his essential two-volume history of Cape Breton Island, Robert J. Morgan explains that the island is "close enough to the mainland to be influenced by what goes on there, but far enough away to have developed in its own ways."⁵⁴⁶ He suggests the people of the island, while diverse and fiercely attached to individual identities based along ethnic, religious, political and county lines, share a sense of island identity that developed, in part, from its political and economic struggles with the mainland.

Initially inhabited by the Mi'kmaq people, waves of epidemics in the 16th and 17th centuries brought about by early European contact greatly disrupted the society and decimated the population just as the newcomers were attempting to establish permanent fishing and fur trading operations. Disputes over European claims to the island between Britain and France characterized the early years of contact.⁵⁴⁷ Numerous irritants, including neglect,⁵⁴⁸ lawlessness,⁵⁴⁹ and a sense of dependency, frustrated islanders to a point where secession was discussed with some regularity. Following an influx of Loyalists to British North America (and the arrival of many Scots in the later part of the 18th century), the idea of establishing and populating a separate Cape Breton colony gained traction. The island became a separate entity on February 21, 1785.

⁵⁴⁵ See: J. Murray Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume 2: Murray-Buchanan, 1896-1988* (Tantallon: Four East Publications, 1985). This work remains the essential survey of politics in the province during this period. See especially Chapter 3: Murray: The Later Years, and Chapter 4: Armstrong and the Liberal Debacle.

⁵⁴⁶ Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island: Book One* (Wreck Cove: Breton Books, 2008), 2.

⁵⁴⁷ These disagreements came to a particular boiling point when the warring powers signed the *Treaty of Utrecht*. France relinquished control of significant North American territories, including mainland Nova Scotia, but kept control of Cape Breton (the Colony of Ilse Royale). When the French lost the Fortress of Louisbourg during the War of Austrian Succession, they negotiated its return as a part of peace talks; the British established the port of Halifax on the mainland as a competing base. However, the 1763 *Treaty of Paris* transferred control of the island to the British and Cape Breton became part of Nova Scotia. French rule would not return.

⁵⁴⁸ Morgan writes that initially the area's elected representatives were denied entry in Nova Scotia's House of Assembly because freehold property ownership was not present in Cape Breton, Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! Book One*, 57.

⁵⁴⁹ Inhabitants refused to pay a tax (without representation) levied to support a garrison, leading to its withdrawal and making the area ripe for smuggling, Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! Book One*, 58-59.

The decision to delay establishing an assembly until the population increased caused political arguments to erupt frequently within other public spaces. The resulting “strife played into the hands of Halifax officials who were looking for an excuse to re-annex Cape Breton to Nova Scotia.”⁵⁵⁰ An unresolved colonial tax collection dispute ultimately led the British Colonial Office to approve the annexation of Cape Breton to Nova Scotia in 1819-1820 despite strenuous protestations from local residents – particularly as property values plummeted in Sydney when many government jobs were moved to Halifax.⁵⁵¹ In the years that followed, the formal separatist movement waned. Nevertheless, “from now on islanders’ unhappiness with their political and economic situation would invariably be linked to the issues of separation which, in turn, were fed by a growing sense of being ‘Cape Bretonians’ – in their hearts a people apart.”⁵⁵²

Prior to Confederation, Cape Breton’s economy was predominantly rural and subsistence-based. Any excess fish caught or produce grown was sent to the mainland or the island of Newfoundland; mining industries were not well developed. Although the political and economic union did not immediately change the island’s economy, access to central Canadian markets, for example, steadily grew coal sales from 83,710 tons in 1878 to 2,381,582 tons in 1914,⁵⁵³ and the infrastructure and labour required to mine the product substantially influenced settlement patterns and spin-off economies. Industrial Cape Breton, centred around Sydney and Glace Bay (and Inverness on the West coast of the

⁵⁵⁰ Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! Book One*, 73-74.

⁵⁵¹ Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! Book One*, 93.

⁵⁵² Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! Book One*, 99. Morgan’s excellent two-volume work further details the growth of the Cape Bretonian identity and culture in his chapters “The Cape Bretonian Emerges: The 19th Century Roots of Cape Breton Culture,” pp. 165-193.

⁵⁵³ Robert J. Morgan, *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island: From 1900 to Today, Book 2*, (Wreck Cove: Breton Books, 2009), 12-13.

island) thrived, drawing in rural Cape Bretoners from other parts of the island, ethnically diverse foreigners who sought greater opportunity and other outside speculators.⁵⁵⁴

Farmer-Labor, the CCF, and the NDP: 1920-1961

Cape Breton's history as a centre for coalmining and steel-working predisposed its electorate to be among the first to consider a labour-focused alternative⁵⁵⁵ to the Liberal and Conservative parties in the early part of 20th Century. A coalition between the United Farmers of Nova Scotia and Independent Labor and Farmer-Labor MLAs⁵⁵⁶ following the 1920 provincial election permitted the loosely affiliated⁵⁵⁷ group to form the official opposition to the governing Liberals. All but one of the Independent Labor or Farmer-Labor MLAs represented a constituency in Cape Breton.⁵⁵⁸

Following the demise of the United Farmers and the Independent Labor Party,⁵⁵⁹ a new progressive party was established in midst of the Great Depression. Formed largely out of the remnants

⁵⁵⁴ As George Rawlyk has noted in "The Farmer-Labour Movement and the Failure of Socialism in Nova Scotia," while Nova Scotia's political culture likely congealed in the 1840s-1850s and was largely unaffected by the post-1896 immigration boom, industrial Cape Breton stood in contrast and changed greatly after this period. George Rawlyk, "The Farmer-Labour Movement and the Failure of Socialism in Nova Scotia," *Essays on the Left – Essays in Honour of T.C. Douglas*, Laurier Lapierre et. al, eds. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971, 40, as cited in Peter S. MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord: Turmoil in the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party 1968-80," (unpublished Masters Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1982), 52-53.

⁵⁵⁵ As James Naylor notes, an earlier generation of Canadian labour historians privileged the West (British Columbia mining towns and the Winnipeg General Strike) when examining class battles in the pivotal post-war year of 1919. However, he argues the social crisis of 1919 was national and international in scope and evidence of significant labour agitation was evident in other places, including southern Ontario, and industrial Nova Scotia. He notes the conflict present had a different character depending on the setting and its unique history. James Naylor, *The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario, 1914-1925*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 4-5. See also: Craig Heron, ed. *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

⁵⁵⁶ The United Farmers elected 6 MLAs, the Independent Labor Party elected 4 MLAs, and 1 MLA jointly nominated by the Farmers and Labor was also elected.

⁵⁵⁷ Ian McKay explains that there was no pan-Canadian labour party at this point in time and "even many of the seemingly impressive local parties were ambiguously positioned vis-à-vis the Liberals and often, because of intense factionalism, short-lived." Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920*, (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2008), 128.

⁵⁵⁸ The other Independent Labor MLA represented Cumberland.

⁵⁵⁹ The meteoric success of this group – neither group elected any members in the previous election, and the United Farmers of Nova Scotia was formed only months before the election – was short-lived. A series of scandals and defections plagued the group and it was unable to elect a single member in the next provincial election in 1925. A single Independent Labor MLA was elected in the 1928 provincial election in the Cumberland constituency.

of the Ginger Group – a group of Independent MPs who had left the Progressives because they found the party structure restricted their ability to represent their constituents’ interests – and appealing to farmers, labourers, and socialists – the national Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) enjoyed its greatest success in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Nova Scotia was the sole province east of Ontario that elected a CCF member to federal parliament during the party’s existence from 1932 to 1961.⁵⁶⁰ Provincially, the CCF also found electoral success in Nova Scotia that eluded it in the rest of Eastern Canada. Although it failed to elect any members in the 1933 and 1937 Nova Scotia elections – failing even to nominate candidates in latter – a 1939 by-election victory by Douglas MacDonald in Cape Breton Centre heralded the party’s arrival as a third-party.⁵⁶¹ The Nova Scotia CCF retained a presence on Cape Breton in every subsequent election it contested. The federal and provincial ridings that encompassed industrial Cape Breton would be the party’s political base⁵⁶² during this period as it failed to elect any candidates on the mainland or in the rural parts of the Cape. As Ian Stewart and David K. Stewart note in *Conventional Choices: Maritime Leadership Politics, 1971–2003*: “That the Nova Scotia CCF-NDP was, at the outset, a creature of Cape Breton is indisputable.”⁵⁶³

In the late 1950s, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the national CCF formed a working group to develop the structure, policies, and constitution of a new political party that could formally incorporate unions.⁵⁶⁴ Numerous “New Party Clubs” sprung up across the country to encourage other

⁵⁶⁰ New Brunswick elected one Progressive MP in 1920. Although the Progressives are considered to be a precursor to the CCF, the party was less ideologically cohesive than the CCF. See: Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

⁵⁶¹ Under leader Russell Cunningham, the CCF actually formed the Official Opposition in 1945 as the Conservative Party was completely wiped out in the legislature in spite of having more than doubled the CCF’s popular vote.

⁵⁶² Stewart and Stewart, 174. The authors suggest the beginning of the CCF in Nova Scotia actually marked a shift to the right on the political spectrum for progressives in the province as the CCF MLAs were, for the most part, not radicals and represented labour interests in a straightforward manor. Despite these moderate platforms, their political opponents still attempted to tie the party to extremists. (174)

⁵⁶³ Stewart and Stewart, 173. The authors suggest the Cape Breton-centric nature of the party only metamorphosized in 1980, although at the executive level there was a significant degree of control at times prior to this greater shift among the membership and electorate.

⁵⁶⁴ There is a significant secondary literature on the formation of the NDP. A key shift in the CCF occurred during the early Cold War period as socialism became increasingly linked with communism in the public’s mind. As the

progressive-minded citizens to participate in the process and eventually encourage other liberal professionals to join what became the national NDP.⁵⁶⁵ For the Nova Scotia NDP, this process would not come without certain growing pains; broadening the social and economic class make-up of its predecessor party would aggravate underlying tensions based on geography – more of the liberal middle-class professionals were based in Halifax and other mainland communities.

The “Halifax” NDP: 1961-1968

When the Nova Scotia NDP was formed in 1961, the party had a solitary member sitting in the provincial legislature. Since the CCF had enjoyed its high watermark in 1945, when it collected 13.6 percent of the popular vote and served as the Official Opposition, the party had been in a slow decline.⁵⁶⁶ The Nova Scotia NDP’s first electoral test in 1963 was an abject failure. Former CCF party leader Michael James MacDonald lost his seat and the party won just over four percent of the popular vote, becoming virtually a non-entity in the province. In a subsequent election in 1967, the party fared no better; once again it returned no MLAs on slightly more than five percent of the vote.

In a scathing assessment, Paul MacEwan wrote:

The Nova Scotia New Democratic Party of those times did not place particular emphasis on practical work. The ivory-tower professors, with their financial backers, seemed to prefer contemplating the problems of the world, poverty in Thailand, repression in South Africa, and such, rather than the immediate needs of Nova Scotians. A gathering of the provincial N.D.P. executive was liable to witness a smallish cluster of people poring laboriously over stacks of textbooks and reports, puffing furiously on pipes, and instructing the secretary to “draft ideal legislation” on subjects such as the twinning of the city government of Halifax with some

CCF suffered a decline in the 1950s, it began working with large trade unions (affiliated with vehemently anti-communist American trade unions) to remove Communists from union leadership positions where possible, or remove entire unions from the ranks of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) and the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC). The CCF’s principles, initially outlined in the Regina Manifesto, also underwent a shift to downplay or remove references to eradicating capitalism and instead to promoting a vision of a peaceful and just social democracy. See, for example: Norman Penner, *From Protest to Power: Social Democracy in Canada 1900-Present*, (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1992), 87-103.

⁵⁶⁵ See: Ivan Avakumovic, *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).

⁵⁶⁶ Stewart and Stewart, 176. The authors suggest that “mainland New Democrats had been convinced in 1962 that electoral growth could not be achieved without breaking Cape Breton’s seemingly dynastic control of the party leadership.”

municipal government in India so that the two could share and exchange common experiences, which was called the “mundialization of Halifax.”⁵⁶⁷

Michael Blair Matheson, a long-time NDP party member from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, and future member of the CBLP largely agreed with MacEwan’s assessment of “the Halifax faction”:

...I think all they were was a debating society. All they liked to do was debate. As soon as it looked like they might get power, oops, they’d back away like someone burned them with a hot iron. You don’t start a race on a racehorse and go to the quarter 26th and get to the half first and pull the horse up. Well, that’s what they were doing.⁵⁶⁸

With the locus of leadership shifting away from the working class towards the middle class,⁵⁶⁹ labour organizers who sought more immediate solutions and improvements to social conditions – and focused less on engineering larger structural change – found themselves at odds with an educated set that tended to engage in more philosophic debates and to examine local politics through the lens of global socio-economic systems. Whereas both elements were arguably necessary to build a mature, broad-based social democratic party, personal animosity fostered division between a supposedly inward-looking parochial base and an out-of-touch intellectual elite; falling roughly along deeply entrenched regional lines, the divide only served to reinforce the emerging two solitudes.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 32.

⁵⁶⁸ Blair Matheson, Interview by Will Stos, In-Person Interview, Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, March 8, 2011.

⁵⁶⁹ Historian Desmond Morton offers a slightly different perspective on the differences between the two groups; he describes the 1960s Nova Scotia NDP membership as consisting of a “small but valiant outpost of supporters in Halifax and a slightly larger but ageing group on Cape Breton Island, reproducing in miniature most of the strains and jealousies which traditionally divide the island and the mainland.” Desmond Morton, *The New Democrats, 1961-1986: The Politics of Change*, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1986), 111. While lauding James Aitchison as a “respected and selfless worker for the party, with little prospect or expectation of leading it to a position of power,” Morton suggested that Akerman and MacEwan, “two abrasive young men,” overcame general skepticism and meagre financial resources from the federal party to organize for victory in Cape Breton.

⁵⁷⁰ There were other irritants for people whose politics were steeped in working-class experience as opposed to the liberal “New Party” members. MacEwan remembered that during this period one idea to emerge from the middle-class professionals and business elite who had gravitated towards the party was to create two classes of NDP memberships. Standard members would pay \$3 per year and receive a traditional membership card. “Sustaining members” who contributed \$100 would be given “a parchment or diploma with seals affixed, to be hung on the wall.” To MacEwan and others who fought vigorously against this proposal, the class-based membership cards would be another way for the wealthier members in the Halifax area to further marginalize Cape Breton members. MacEwan, *The Cape Breton Labor Party*, iv.

MacEwan's derisive description of this "pitiful debating circle" being full of "absent-minded professors" – a jab partly directed at the party's leader, Dalhousie University political science professor James Aitchison – was one shared by Jeremy Akerman. A recent transplant from Alvechurch, England, he had taken an interest in labour politics, gravitated towards the NDP and became party organizer and candidate in Cape Breton. Although he suffered an abysmal loss in the 1967 provincial election, the following year he contested the federal riding of Cape Breton-East Richmond and found a surprising level of support in the town of Glace Bay. Matheson remembers: "Paul brought him here with the arse out of his pants and shoes you couldn't even walk on. And he got his start here. He knew there was some well organizing [*sic*] going here. And he knew there were committed people."⁵⁷¹ Winning three of six wards in the town, Akerman's supporters believed he had a base from which he could potentially win the provincial riding of Cape Breton East in the next election.

On its face, the choice of Akerman as a candidate to rally the working-class social democrats in Cape Breton was odd; his appearance, style and background would not have been out of place amongst the Halifax leadership. Akerman's supporters, however, steeped him in the political culture of the area and taught him how to speak to groups of miners, steelworkers and fishers in manner and in substance that appealed to them. Even as a foreign transplant, Akerman benefitted from closer ties to the island than incumbent leader could ever hope to – in the minds of locals, he was not linked to Halifax.⁵⁷² Akerman's supporters also set about to make their chosen candidate leader of the party.

Building a coalition of Cape Breton riding representatives, union delegates (particularly miners and steel workers from the Sydney area), and the New Democratic Youth,⁵⁷³ Akerman stunned the

⁵⁷¹ Matheson, interview.

⁵⁷² See: MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 34-35. See also: Stewart and Stewart, 174. Stewart and Stewart quote David Lewis's political memoirs in which he noted his surprise at the animosity of party members in Cape Breton when presented with the idea of a having a party spokesperson based on the mainland: David Lewis, *The Good Fight: Political Memoirs, 1909-58* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 160.

⁵⁷³ MacEwan derisively referred to the youth group as "some very wild and radical young people, bare-armed and bearded, American draft dodgers, Trotskyites, and more." MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 45. Although they would

establishment. He became the leader of the party by triumphing over Keith Jobson by a vote of 80 to 76. However, almost all members of Akerman's executive slate were defeated.

The Early Akerman Years: 1968-1970

As Peter MacIntosh notes in his Masters thesis, "The Politics of Discord: Turmoil in the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party, 1968-80," although virtually all political parties have experienced internal discord at some point during their existence, social democratic parties seem "especially prone to this malfunction." Citing the Nova Scotia NDP during the Akerman years as an "extreme case,"⁵⁷⁴ he speculates that the social democratic tenet calling for extensive membership input into party operations likely explains why these parties' internal squabbles can be so common and often spill out into the public.⁵⁷⁵ At the time, however, the internal discord within the NDP remained hidden from the electorate.

With Akerman returning to Ottawa to finish his term of employment with the CBC, MacEwan was charged with re-organizing the Cape Breton East constituency and fundraising to permit the leader to draw a salary beginning in 1969. The provincial executive and the former leader of the party were not making matters easy for his team, however. NDP Provincial Secretary Peggy Prowse said the party required \$3,500 to be in place in a Halifax bank account under their control before Akerman could begin drawing a salary. Even then, it would be a six-month contract and a maximum of only \$50 per month would be budgeted for all expenses. Not trusting the executive to ever disperse money he had

not appear to be a natural constituency for someone considered to be part of the party's pragmatic wing, Akerman had promised them a degree of freedom if elected. Not all observers agree with the prevailing belief that Akerman was far out of step with the progressive wing of the party during his tenure as leader, however. For example, Stewart and Stewart examined the 1974 party platform and found that it went beyond standard social democratic fare, but Akerman's campaign rhetoric revealed him to be a zealous promoter of these policies and fierce critic of business "parasites" and corporate "leeches" among others. Stewart and Stewart, 176-177.

⁵⁷⁴ MacIntosh contends that four cleavages – tensions between the party's parliamentary and extra-parliamentary wings, geographic divisions between contingents in Cape Breton and Halifax, ideological divisions, and personality clashes – worked in concert within the Akerman-led NDP that to create tension that festered within the party until it broke out into a very well-publicized conflict after his resignation. See: MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord," 1-4.

⁵⁷⁵ MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord," p. 1.

fundraised for the leader, MacEwan kept it in Cape Breton for the time being. From his perch as a columnist for the Sydney weekly, *The Cape Breton Highlander*, Aitchison also made life difficult for his successor, using a poison pen to publicize that he was privy to an explosive letter from Akerman and questioning his employment by the CBC.⁵⁷⁶ Liberal MP John Reid tabled written questions to the House of Commons regarding Akerman's employment by the crown corporation that MacEwan suggests were lifted from one of Aitchison's columns and were posed at the behest of some Halifax members of the NDP.⁵⁷⁷ Federal NDP Leader David Lewis was reportedly furious with these actions and informed Akerman through his assistant Douglas Rowland that he would be "laying down the law to try to stop their treason."⁵⁷⁸

Upon reflection, MacEwan saw there was some benefit to these attacks as "they served as a rallying point for our troops, dispirited after the loss of the party executive posts, and a visible sign of how anti-democratic the Halifax element was in spirit."⁵⁷⁹ Following a particularly contentious provincial council meeting on April 12, 1969⁵⁸⁰ MacEwan reported that frustration among many members of the Cape Breton contingent was so intense that there was talk of a physical split in the party. Of particular annoyance to the islanders was the sense that there was no mainland financial support for the leadership fundraising, yet an expectation that a Halifax-dominated executive could continue to direct Akerman as they saw fit.⁵⁸¹ Perhaps foreshadowing the schism in the NDP and the creation of the CBLP

⁵⁷⁶ MacIntosh suggests his review of Aitchison's personal papers support MacEwan's argument that members of the party from the Halifax area were seeking to deny him a salary, though he contends that MacEwan's speculation of a larger conspiracy to undermine the new leader was unfounded at this time. See: MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord," 33-34.

⁵⁷⁷ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 50-55.

⁵⁷⁸ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 55.

⁵⁷⁹ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 51.

⁵⁸⁰ For a full description of this meeting where regional divisions between voting members were once again on display, please see MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 59-64.

⁵⁸¹ MacEwan notes that while he and some supporters managed to raise \$550 for the leadership fund in 5 days following Akerman's election in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Whitney Pier, by the end of 1968 only \$40 had been collected on the mainland and receipts from the New Year were no more encouraging, MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 54, 56, and 64. MacIntosh found that some mainland members were supportive of MacEwan's

following his expulsion in 1980, MacEwan sought to manoeuvre around an uncooperative and mildly obstructionist party structure by forming an entity – a “party within a party” – to serve the interests of his and Akerman’s supporters.

The Nova Scotia provincial NDP constitution allowed for the creation of party councils to represent “distinct geographical areas” within the province. MacEwan and Akerman had led such a council in 1966 as they sought to organize Cape Breton County. “We proposed to utilize this clause to establish what, in effect, would be our own political organization for Cape Breton Island,”⁵⁸² MacEwan writes in his retrospective of the Akerman years. Although the initial plan was to use Cape Breton as the foundation for this “distinct geographic area,” MacEwan later proposed to include the three federal ridings that covered the island, including one stretching onto the mainland and encompassing all of the municipality of Guysborough and the county of Antigonish. These areas were known to be generally supportive of Akerman and not within Halifax’s sphere of influence. The “Eastern Nova Scotia Area Council of the New Democratic Party” would also partly rectify the perceived imbalance of a party structure that gave some riding associations a disproportionately large number of delegates to conventions relative to their overall membership. The party’s constitution gave each constituency a minimum of five delegates, and an additional delegate for every 25 members if they had over 50 members in a riding.

Calculating provincial membership at the time, MacEwan notes that the counties and areas that would be a part of the new regional entity would have a total of 713 members in contrast to 259 in the rest of the province. Despite representing 73 percent of the total NDP membership, this region was home to only 10 MLAs compared to 36 in the rest of the province. Moreover, even if additional delegates were apportioned out to ridings like Cape Breton East, which had 269 members at the time,

efforts to raise money for the leader, but had no actual interest in assisting him as the previous leader had to pay out of pocket for many expenses. See: MacIntosh, “The Politics of Discord,” 34-35.

⁵⁸² MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 64.

the riding's 16 delegates would have about equal voting power to a region such as Pictou County. With three provincial ridings spread among 100 members, Pictou West, Pictou Centre and Pictou East could collectively send 15 delegates. In places like Halifax County and its environs, delegates representing 94 members spread over about a dozen or more ridings could potentially outvote delegates representing Cape Breton County's entire 700 NDP members. While ostensibly designed to make the New Democratic Party responsive to the needs of all parts of Nova Scotia, the regional imbalance in memberships was so lop-sided that MacEwan pitched his council as a way to "restore democracy."⁵⁸³

On May 10, 1969, more than 100 delegates met to formally propose a constitution for the Eastern Nova Scotia Area Council of the New Democratic Party that, while parallel to the provincial body, would "correct, or at least respond to, the problems [they] had seen in that party."⁵⁸⁴ At the group's regional conferences every card-carrying NDP member from the area would be considered a delegate and having equal voting power, bringing about a form of direct democracy that had been absent in the larger NDP. A regional council would also be constituted in a manner that would be directly proportional to membership in each riding. A riding would be given a seat on council for every 50 members or substantial fraction thereof.

In his book on the Akerman years, MacEwan also notes that much of the rhetoric used in the area council's constitution was designed to "thumb our noses" at the provincial element in Halifax.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 65.

⁵⁸⁴ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 66.

⁵⁸⁵ He notes the leftist clauses were designed to underscore that the provincial executive tended to fall in line with the federal party establishment, which at the time was unhappy with the more radical New Democratic Youth movements and the Waffle. One clause, which said the council's executive should serve at the pleasure of their members and resign if they chose not to implement a policy favoured by the general membership that they were personally opposed to, was an example of a pointed attack on the executive. MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 66-67. In his Masters thesis, MacIntosh explains how geographical cleavages between the mainland and island elements of the party were also reinforced by ideological differences that often – but not always – appeared to coincide with place of residence. See: MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord," 63. To better understand these disputes within the larger context of the Waffle Movement and the provincial NDP, see, for example: Patrick Webber, "'For a Socialist New Brunswick': The New Brunswick Waffle, 1967-1972," *Acadiensis* 38.1 (Winter/Spring 2009), 75-103; and John Bullen, "The Ontario Waffle and the Struggle for an Independent Socialist Canada: Conflict within the NDP," *Canadian Historical Review* 64.2, (June 1983), 188-215.

One declaration of the constitution, for example, stated that “the officers of the Council shall generally reflect the occupational base of the party, i.e., the working classes, except in such cases where, by outstanding example, persons have demonstrated beyond question their wholehearted solidarity and sympathy with the common working people.”⁵⁸⁶ While not manual labourers like the steelworkers, coal miners and fishermen they represented, this statement further implied that Akerman and MacEwan were acceptable leaders of this regional group because unlike the Halifax executive, they were familiar with their members’ material working conditions. A member of the provincial executive who studied this constitution pronounced this clause to be an affront to freedom of speech and association because it seemed to imply that the party was “...no longer open in the full sense to persons regardless of creed or occupation, race, or colour...”⁵⁸⁷

With the area council now paying the leader’s salary – or as much of the salary as it could, based on the flow of donations and fundraising raffles – Akerman continued to organize and campaign in advance of the next expected general election. Plans were made to nominate as many candidates as possible in time for the next election, even in hopeless ridings, to demonstrate that the party was a truly provincial entity and to build for future campaigns.⁵⁸⁸ However, the primary goal in the next election, that would come in 1970, was to elect at least Akerman to the legislature to secure his leadership and gain a presence in the House of Assembly.⁵⁸⁹ In the October 17 general election Akerman was victorious in Cape Breton East, as the party had expected but no news media had predicted, and Paul MacEwan eked out a win in Cape Breton Nova against a popular incumbent. More surprising still was news that

⁵⁸⁶ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 67.

⁵⁸⁷ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 68.

⁵⁸⁸ Stewart and Stewart, *Conventional Choices*, 176.

⁵⁸⁹ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 85.

Gerald Regan's resurgent Liberal Party had narrowly defeated the Conservative government and that the two NDP MLAs would hold the balance of power.⁵⁹⁰

The Later Akerman Years: 1970-1980

While having two New Democratic voices from Cape Breton in the House of Assembly was considered a breakthrough, the party was determined to grow and become competitive in the rest of the province. MacEwan's book on the NDP during this period suggests he, Akerman, and their supporters were interested in a policy of 'forced growth':

In doing this, we had to build from what was available. The new recruits came from the ranks of those disillusioned with the two established parties, and the reasons for their feeling fed up to the point of joining a new, third party varied as greatly as the number of individuals involved. Yarmouth was a perfect point in case. I recall one man who joined the N.D.P. because he was upset with the prices offered him by the government for his property on an expropriation; another who joined because he felt the French influence in Canada was 'going too far'; and another who joined at the same time saying that we seemed to be the only ones prepared to give the Acadian French a fair break.⁵⁹¹

MacEwan notes that virtually anyone alienated by the provincial Conservatives or Liberals "was welcomed into our camp with open arms, and frequently promoted to high office before they were ready."⁵⁹² Both NDP MLAs undertook efforts to educate this motley crew about the principles of social democracy; but, building and maintaining an electoral machine was the first order of business. When MacEwan set about organizing the CBLP years later, this same policy would once again be utilized to build an entity that, while generally centred on social democratic and labor principles, was open to virtually anyone who felt disenfranchised from the establishment.

Although this strategy would lead to further electoral gains for the NDP over the next decade, it would also aggravate divisions between the Cape Breton pragmatists and what MacEwan has referred to as "the Halifax purity circle." He contended there was particular consternation over "corporate

⁵⁹⁰ The Liberals won 23 seats, the Conservatives 21 seats, and the NDP 2 seats. If a Liberal was named Speaker of the House the party would be in a minority position. However, in practice not all opposition MLAs attended votes.

⁵⁹¹ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 99-100.

⁵⁹² MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 100.

contributions” from small businesses to Cape Breton campaigns and the Halifax establishment sought to outlaw them under party law.⁵⁹³ The attempt to curtail donations from businesses was scuttled by the 1974 election. The party’s campaign of forced growth and electoral organizing appeared to bear fruit when three NDP MLAs were returned to the Assembly and the popular support for the party’s candidates more than doubled over the 1970 result.

Despite the promising results, MacEwan asserted that opponents of Akerman renewed their attempts to wear out his resolve to continue to lead the party.⁵⁹⁴ Shortly after the next election in 1978 brought a fourth NDP MLA to the House of Assembly – a high watermark for the party, but below the leader’s pre-writ expectations – Akerman became increasingly disillusioned with the direction of the party.⁵⁹⁵ Musing about the future of the provincial party after he stepped down and ceased to attend provincial executive and council meetings, MacEwan observed that the leader was “rapidly moving past the point of caring at all.”⁵⁹⁶ Future party leader Alexa McDonough suggested that following the 1978 election, Akerman “ceased to lead” and that the party officers were dismayed by his inactivity.⁵⁹⁷ Haligonian Party secretary Serena Renner, who recalled the Akerman of old spending a solid weekend in his office helping a woman on welfare from losing her home, said plainly: “That’s not the Jeremy of today. So don’t say it’s me that’s changed.”⁵⁹⁸ Following a series of disappointing by-election losses that prompted the press – and his opponents in the provincial executive – to speculate about his future, on

⁵⁹³ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 126.

⁵⁹⁴ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 141. See especially Chapter Four “Going For Government” and Chapter Five “Disillusionment” for MacEwan’s anecdotes on the way Akerman’s opponents undermined him: for instance, changes to party financing rules (142-146) and an executive that was increasingly operating independently of the leader’s wishes (188-195).

⁵⁹⁵ Beck, *The Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume Two*, 353. Beck notes that critics of Akerman accused him of using “manipulative politics” rather than relying on “even mildly left-wing principles” in his drive for electoral success. Akerman’s own constituents apparently felt betrayed when he left office and these feelings were amplified when he was appointed to a prominent position by the Buchanan government.

⁵⁹⁶ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 214.

⁵⁹⁷ MacIntosh, “The Politics of Discord,” 21.

⁵⁹⁸ MacIntosh, “The Politics of Discord,” 74.

May 16, 1980 Akerman announced he would be stepping down as leader of the provincial New Democratic Party.

The Expulsion of Paul MacEwan, 1980

Akerman declined to speak about the circumstances surrounding his departure beyond saying the party was in a place where it could best develop without him.⁵⁹⁹ Attempting to fill this void, reporters sought out Akerman's long-time friend and associate Paul MacEwan to offer insight into the departure. The outspoken MLA told the *Canadian Press* that there was a "deep rift" within the party, partly caused by a minority in the NDP that subscribed to Trotskyism,⁶⁰⁰ a form of communism that discounts constitutional democracy, promotes permanent revolution, and considers the working class proletariat paramount for achieving socialism.⁶⁰¹ Party President Bob Levy responded by suggesting the only rift in the NDP was between MacEwan and the rest of the party, calling the maverick MLA's comments "irresponsible" and "crazy."⁶⁰² Although MacEwan withdrew the allegations a week later, Len Arsenault, a colleague in the NDP caucus, publicly called for the MLA from Cape Breton Nova to be cast out of the party to prevent further damage to it.⁶⁰³ Within days the party's executive council announced plans to look into disciplinary action against him at its next meeting in Truro.

⁵⁹⁹ ----- "Only Rift Is Between MacEwan And Rest of Party': Provincial NDP Officers Deny Charges of Deep Rift," *Cape Breton Post*, Saturday, May 17, 1980, 1.

⁶⁰⁰ Paul Mac Ewan, "Email Correspondence with Author," February 4, 2011. MacEwan's expulsion was based partially on the charge that he had called Dennis Theman a Trotskyite during this raft of public statements. However, MacEwan maintained that he never made a direct accusation and simply raised the possibility that an advocacy of Trotskyism coming from within the party may have prompted Akerman to quit. Theman has speculated that the apparent grudge MacEwan held towards him dated from a 1979 provincial executive election where the two had faced off. See: MacIntosh, "The Politics of Discord," 85.

⁶⁰¹ ----- "Only Rift Is Between MacEwan And Rest of Party.'"

⁶⁰² ----- "Only Rift Is Between MacEwan And Rest of Party.'"

⁶⁰³ ----- "Trotskyism Allegations Withdrawn By MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, May 23, 1980, 3.

MacEwan says he believes the over-reaction to his comments was simply more evidence⁶⁰⁴ that certain elements in the party⁶⁰⁵ would not rest until he was either removed from their ranks or neutralized as a potential replacement for Akerman as leader.⁶⁰⁶ In advance of the disciplinary hearing, the Cape Breton Nova MLA framed his accusers as opponents of freedom of speech and dissent within the party. Speaking to the *Cape Breton Post*, MacEwan called upon the memory of the island's late CCF MLA Clarie Gillis as another local politician who represented his constituents independently, who did not adhere to any dogma, and whose main interests lay in advancing the interests of industrial Cape Breton.⁶⁰⁷ "Freedom of speech is a basic right in a democratic society and I will not be muzzled by the ayatollahs of Truro," MacEwan said.⁶⁰⁸ The *Post*, which had clashed with MacEwan in the past and would

⁶⁰⁴ A provincial executive meeting on November 10, 1979 considered expelling him on the basis that his continued presence in the NDP was detrimental to the party. Part of the reasons given for the proposed expulsion was an accusation that he wrote a letter advocating firing partisan Liberals from the county government in Cape Breton if the New Democrat-backed candidates were victorious in local elections.

⁶⁰⁵ He refers to the senior conspirators hoping to remove him as the "Gang of Four" (Party president Bob Levy, Executive vice-president Dennis Theman, Secretary Serena Renner, and Treasurer Lloyd Shaw).

⁶⁰⁶ Here I quote extensively from my correspondence with MacEwan: Paul Mac Ewan, "Email Correspondence with Author," September 6, 2010. "Now the real reason why Halifax was so desperate here had nothing to do with Lev Davidovich Bronstein, which was the real name of Leon Trotsky. Rather, it was because in the years from 1970 to 1980, I had done my fair share of missionary work around the province. I had run the campaign in the Guysborough by-election in 1973. I had visited every home in the town of Westville and done extensive further door-to-dooring in the Pictou Centre by-election of 1977. I had taken a particular interest in Yarmouth and at one point had the Yarmouth NDP membership the highest anywhere in the province. I had worked in Lunenburg, Shelburne, Queens, Clare, Digby, all three Kings County seats, Colchester, Hants, Cumberland, Antigonish - in short, in every county of mainland Nova Scotia, as well as plenty of work in Halifax county, and the Halifaxers saw me as the one person who DID have an extensive round-the-province level of support, although much of this was in isolated and out-of-the-way places. But for an NDP leadership convention, yes, these people could be rounded up and transported in to vote, make no doubt of it. And their votes would count equally in the ballot box alongside those of Halifax professors and plutocrats."

⁶⁰⁷ For a succinct discussion of Clarence Gillis's independence within the CCF, his use of local and regional issues and arguments that differed from the national CCF policy, and how he used regional rhetoric (primarily focussed on Atlantic Canada and/or the Maritimes) to advance local interests, see: Corey Slumkoski, "The Rhetoric of Region: Clarence Gillis, the CCF, and the Protection of Atlantic Canada," in Roberta Lexier, Stephanie Bangarth, and Jon Weier, eds. *Party of Conscience: The CCF, the NDP, and Social Democracy in Canada*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2018), 37-48.

⁶⁰⁸ ----- "MacEwan Claims Party Refuses Freedom Of Speech," *Cape Breton Post*, May 29, 1980, 4. In the same news article he noted that his continued association with the NDP would be contingent on its support for freedom of speech and, somewhat counter-intuitively, the suppression of elements in the party advocating Trotskyism or other far-left theories.

again in the future, endorsed his campaign for freedom of speech and suggested that “mavericks” such as MacEwan could and should be accommodated in the Canadian party system.⁶⁰⁹

On June 15, 1980, the executive committee of the Nova Scotia NDP unanimously voted to expel Paul MacEwan from the party.⁶¹⁰ MacEwan determinedly prepared to present his side of events to a party council that might be more amenable to listening to his defense and rallied his own supporters to his cause. A crowd of about 250 people gathered at the Sydney United Steelworkers Hall on June 26⁶¹¹ to listen to “an impassioned, arm-waving speech” that prompted numerous standing ovations, foot-stomping and hand-clapping.⁶¹² At the rally the embattled politician warned that his expulsion could lead to “civil war” within the NDP that could “blow the party to hell”⁶¹³ or lead to the rise of a second New Democratic Party in the province. It was the first time a separate Cape Breton-based political party was raised as a distinct possibility by MacEwan, but it was not an unprecedented scenario.⁶¹⁴ Having won votes of confidence from his riding association, former provincial CCF leader Russell Cunningham,

⁶⁰⁹ ----- “Weakening the NDP,” *The Cape Breton Post*, June 4, 1980, 6. In a subsequent letter to the editor, MacEwan thanked the newspaper, provided the mailing address of one of his chief opponents, party president Robert Levy, and encouraged readers to tell him “that the voters of Cape Breton Nova elected me in a lawful election and that efforts on the part of him or any small committee he controls will not be acceptable to the people of Cape Breton if the effect of them is to attempt to undo my lawful election as an N.D.P. M.L.A.” ----- “Letters to the Editor: Welcome,” *Cape Breton Post*, June 6, 1980, 6.

⁶¹⁰ The affair proved to be fodder for two of Nova Scotia’s Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament in Ottawa. Halifax West MP Howard Crosby and Annapolis Valley-Hants MP Pat Nowlan tabled a motion in the House of Commons condemning the expulsion of a “duly-elected representative of the people, without the benefit of a fair trial, for exercising his freedom of speech.” ----- “MPs Make Light Of NDP Strife,” *The Chronicle-Herald*, June 18, 1980, 2. Canada. House of Commons Debates, 16 June, 1980, (Howard Crosby, PC), 32nd Parliament, 1st Session, 18th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 4: 2117-2118; The federal Progressive Conservative leader also used the incident to needle his NDP counterpart Ed Broadbent during House of Commons debates. Canada. *House of Commons Debates*, June 16, 1980, (Joe Clark, PC), 32nd Parliament, 1st Session, 18th Parliament, 1st Session, Vol. 3: 2370. http://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC3201_03/66?r=0&s=1

⁶¹¹ The event was advertised with a 1/8th page advertisement sponsored by the Cape Breton Nova NDP Association that asked “Did Paul MacEwan Ever Help You? Did Paul MacEwan Ever Help Cape Breton? If So... Paul MacEwan Needs YOUR Help Now,” See: Advertisement, “Did Paul Mac Ewan,” *Cape Breton Post*, June 20, 1980, 7.

⁶¹² ----- “Paul MacEwan Threatens To Form Second NDP If Appeal Dismissed,” *Cape Breton Post*, June 27, 1980, 4.

⁶¹³ Jim Vibert, “NDP ‘Civil War’ Seen If Conciliation Rejected,” *Chronicle Herald*, June 3, 1980, 1.

⁶¹⁴ As MacEwan noted, “Indira Gandhi, when Prime Minister of India, was faced with a similar situation, and did just what I did, by setting up a new party, the Congress Party of Indira, and continuing to govern her country without a hitch.” Paul Mac Ewan, “Email Correspondence with Author,” September 6, 2010.

and many local steel and coal mine unions,⁶¹⁵ the threat of a deep schism in the party over the expulsion was certainly not an idle one. Nonetheless, despite a vigorous defense⁶¹⁶ and vocal support from the Cape Breton contingent, the council upheld the executive order to expel him.⁶¹⁷

Clearly, MacEwan's expulsion was the climactic event that precipitated the eventual rise of the CBLP; however, tracing this stormy period of the New Democratic Party reveals the conditions that were arguably necessary for such a schismatic party to develop along regional lines. The Islanders' strong cultural identity, industrial Cape Breton's distinct socio-economic matrix, and the population's general sense of alienation, disaffection and suspicion towards mainland Nova Scotia (focally Halifax) provides context for this internal party power struggle. These historic and contemporary tensions exploded during the MacEwan expulsion hearings. The impetus for the CBLP may have been partially due to

⁶¹⁵ See: ----- "MLA Wins Support; Mass Rally June 26," *Cape Breton Post*, June 20, 1980, 4, Angus MacDonald, "Paul MacEwan Threatens To Form Second NDP If Appeal Dismissed," *Cape Breton Post*, June 27, 1980, 4, and ----- "MacIntyre Backs MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, June 27, 1980, 4.

⁶¹⁶ The executive's list of grievances against the wayward MLA was lengthy and presented to the NDP council meeting over the course of five hours. He was charged with advocating a split between Cape Breton and the mainland, demonstrating intolerance towards opposing viewpoints, repeatedly proving himself untrustworthy, engaging in a vicious vendetta against his opponents, issuing statements that were damaging to the party, signing his name to a memo seeking partisan firings of municipal officials in Cape Breton, and financial irregularities. Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 58-59. MacEwan refutes each of these accusations in his manuscript.

⁶¹⁷ ----- "MacEwan Loses Appeal Of Expulsion From New Democratic Party In N.S.," *Cape Breton Post*, July 7, 1980, 1. MacEwan did, rather bizarrely, remain within the NDP legislative caucus for several months, however. Both Akerman and McEachern voted to allow him to stay in caucus despite not being a card-carrying member of the party while Arsenault dissented. When McEachern was named interim party leader he even appointed MacEwan as the party whip in the provincial legislative assembly. ----- "Yetman Sees 'Exciting Times' With Election Of McDonough," *The Cape Breton Post*, November 18, 1980, 4. MacEwan's battle with Arsenault during this time was especially heated. MacEwan stated in an affidavit that Arsenault had threatened to shoot him with a double-barrelled shot gun during a meeting on May 22, 1980 if he ever sent him a letter or cartoon similar to one he had sent to party member Dennis Theman. (----- "MLA said he's shoot me – colleague," *The Toronto Star*, April 1, 1981, A26.) This was not MacEwan's first fiery exchange with a fellow MLA. In the 1970s MacEwan found himself involved in fisticuffs with Conservative MLA Mike Laffin on the floor of the legislature that cost MacEwan several of his teeth. Incidentally, Laffin operated a dentistry practice. (Beck, *The Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume Two*, 330.) At the NDP's autumn convention a motion passed that said only members in good standing could be a part of the parliamentary caucus; MacEwan's last ties to the New Democratic Party were essentially severed. ----- "NDP Gives McDonough Win On First Ballot," *The Cape Breton Post*, November 17, 1980, 1. This article mentions that after this motion passed "a delegation of Cape Breton miners and steelworkers stalked out of the meeting temporarily... followed by [Buddy] McEachern and Reeves Matheson [the NDP candidate in a by-election in Cape Breton East to replace Akerman]."

personality conflicts; but, its eventual direction and expression would be shaped, at least in part, by broader historical trends and a distinct regional identity.

The Independent MacEwan and the NDP's Cape Breton Wipeout, 1980-1982

In the subsequent leadership vote, Alexa McDonough,⁶¹⁸ a 36-year-old researcher at Dalhousie University, and the daughter of prominent party financier Lloyd Shaw, prevailed by winning by 337 votes to Len Arsenault's 42 and Buddy McEachern's 41.⁶¹⁹ From MacEwan's perspective, neither of his parliamentary colleagues stood a chance: "What Buddy and Len had both done wrong here was that they were Cape Bretoners. It didn't matter if Len Arsenault held a B.A. degree, or if Buddy McEachern had been elected to the Legislature not once but twice; they were both from the wrong side of the tracks and should stand aside, if they knew what was good for them."⁶²⁰ The rhetoric of "party unity" and "compromise" on the convention floor was hollow, according to the ousted MLA. Rather, the party's deep-seated regional divisions were once again on display as the mainland's preferred candidate was chosen over the island's elected representatives.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁸ Stewart and Stewart, *Conventional Choices*, 225-226. McDonough came from a section of the party Stewart and Stewart describe as largely consisting of "middle-class Haligonians who wished the party to be more clearly animated by socialist principles." (225). Unlike the Cape Bretoners who tended to focus on the interests of organized labour, this section of the party did not privilege pragmatism over principle. As they write: "In one particularly revealing remark, she noted: 'We will hold our members to our principles and policies, and unlike the other major parties we are prepared to commit near electoral suicide to enforce those policies.' McDonough made few concessions to pragmatic politics, although she did emphasize that the NDP would be advantaged by having a leader from the mainland. Her convention speech attacked the traditional parties and 'reactionary governments' who refused to use the state to redistribute society's resources 'based on human needs, human rights, and human dignity.' New Democrats, she emphasized, 'believe in using public policy to enforce co-operative obligations' and, if elected, would achieve 'a level of economic and social democracy not previously attained in this country.'" (226).

⁶¹⁹ ----- "NDP Gives McDonough Win On First Ballot."

⁶²⁰ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 74. McEachern appeared to agree with MacEwan's assessment. In an article published a month before the convention titled "McEachern Sees Himself As Underdog Because Of Anti-Cape Breton Feeling," he commented that there was a pervasive anti-Cape Breton sentiment in mainland Nova Scotia: "People are buying the line that Cape Breton is receiving too much, that too much money is being spent on the island. You hear it in the streets in Halifax and you're often asked 'just want do you Cape Bretoners want.'" McEachern added that Halifax was heavily subsidized and Cape Breton is not receiving one-tenth of the government money the capital area is receiving. ----- "McEachern Sees Himself As Underdog Because Of Anti-Cape Breton Feeling," *Cape Breton Post*, October 14, 1980, 4, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9.30 C), File: 23 "Buddy McEachern, 1976-1987," Beaton Institute.

⁶²¹ While acknowledging there has always been a tension "between Cape Breton, especially industrial Cape Breton, and the mainland that goes throughout Nova Scotia history," Alexa McDonough says she believes it has become

The first test for the McDonough-led NDP was a by-election in Cape Breton East to fill the seat vacated by Jeremy Akerman. The former party leader had held the riding with comfortable pluralities since 1970, winning by nearly 2,000 votes in the most recent election in 1978.⁶²² In 1980, NDP candidate Reeves Matheson was down by more than 2,000 votes from the previous election and came within 100 votes of finishing third, behind the Liberal. *Chronicle-Herald* reporter Clayton Campbell related that people in the riding had anecdotally commented that they wanted to elect a member of the government and the winning Progressive Conservative candidate fit the bill.⁶²³ Nevertheless, the NDP's weakness in areas of previously traditional strength was a harbinger of things to come.

Days after the party's defeat, MacEwan withdrew his bid for reinstatement in the party and announced plans to form a Cape Breton-based Labor party. MacEwan told reporters that the NDP had been "seized by people who are trying to destroy everything the people of Cape Breton built up, and I would express the personal view that unless we in Cape Breton set up our own party, there will be nothing left but Liberals and Conservatives in the Nova Scotia Legislature after the next provincial election."⁶²⁴ However, as the next provincial campaign would likely come sooner rather than later, MacEwan concentrated on his own re-election in Cape Breton Nova and delayed work on setting up a new party.

Once the writ for the general election was dropped, the provincial New Democratic Party opted to put its MacEwan-friendly Cape Breton Nova riding association under trusteeship, dismiss its executive, and appoint an interim executive to facilitate the nomination of an official candidate. Anger

caricatured. In an interview, she stated: "It takes on the sort of caricature of Cape Breton being highly unionized, industrial workers – the miners and steelworkers – who had just a hell of an existence eking out a living that was very hazardous and causing a lot of industrial diseases, and the caricature of the mainlander, the Halifax elite, the business centre, the commercial centre. In the NDP, there was a sort of a mirroring of that, but perhaps more of an exaggerated mirror." Alexa McDonough, in-person interview, Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 23, 2012.

⁶²² Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, *Returns of the General Election For The House of Assembly, Twenty-Ninth General Election, 1978*, (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1978), 33. Akerman won with 5,135 votes, compared to 3,182 for the Progressive Conservative, and 3,109 for the Liberal.

⁶²³ Clayton Campbell, "Macleod sweeps Cape Breton East by-election." *Chronicle-Herald*, December 3, 1980, 1.

⁶²⁴ ----- "MacEwan Considering Forming Labor Party," *Cape Breton Post*, December 10, 1980, 1.

at these machinations boiled over at a nomination meeting held on September 19, 1981.⁶²⁵ Although absent from the proceedings, MacEwan's presence loomed large over the meeting. One attendee jumped to her feet and called out Paul MacEwan's name when the floor was opened to nominations. "Mr. MacEwan is the only true candidate," she said. "He has done more for this constituency than anyone else will ever do." Another person present wondered loudly who called the meeting and under what authority. Still another lamented: "This is another example of Halifax dictating to us."⁶²⁶ The regional alienation and anger that had combusted at MacEwan's expulsion showed no signs of abating.

With the exception of MacEwan,⁶²⁷ the electoral map in Cape Breton was awash with Tory blue and Liberal red following the 1981 election. The two remaining NDP MLAs seeking re-election, Buddy McEachern and Len Arsenault, went down to defeat, and McEachern was the sole NDP candidate who managed to eke out a second place showing on the island that had previously given the party its base of popular support.⁶²⁸ The dismal showing in Cape Breton cast a pall over what otherwise proved to be a

⁶²⁵ Clayton Campbell, "Atmosphere Tense As Gale Gets NDP Nod in Nova," *Chronicle-Herald*, September 21, 1981, 26. Describing the "hostile atmosphere," Campbell reported that the chair of the meeting, party president Ed Murphy, had difficulty maintaining order as jeers, catcalls, and shouts of disapproval filled the Holy Redeemer Parish Centre.

⁶²⁶ Clayton Campbell, "Atmosphere Tense."

⁶²⁷ Former Sydney alderman Tony Gale was eventually nominated to stand for the NDP in the riding, and quickly acclaimed. For all the trouble the New Democratic Party had gone through to nominate an official candidate in Cape Breton Nova, they rather curiously seemed to abandon Tony Gale to his own devices shortly thereafter. In the 1981 general election, Gale recorded only token expenses compared to his opponents. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election For The House of Assembly, Thirtieth General Election, 1981* (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1981), 11. Gale submitted \$486.26 in expenses (listed as being for goods and supplies and advertising) compared to \$8,120.26 for MacEwan, \$10,877.44 for Conservative Russell Brake and \$10,916.31 for Liberal Earle Tubrett. Even without party support, MacEwan was able to secure a loan from the Whitney Pier Credit Union and his Committee of 3,000 raised funds from people all over his riding, the province and the country. In addition to NDP supporters across the province who made donations to a candidate they believed the party had treated unfairly, MacEwan took in a \$100 donation from Richard Hatfield, New Brunswick's Conservative premier on his way to winning re-election. See: Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 91, and Isabel M. Caverhill, "Letter from Isabel M. Caverhill, Personal Secretary to Premier Richard Hatfield, to Paul MacEwan," October 5, 1981, Paul MacEwan Fonds (MG 9.30 A) File: "Correspondence 1981," Beaton Institute. Upon receiving the NDP nomination Tony Gale had noted that there were reports that the Conservatives were secretly supporting MacEwan with the expectation that he would cross the floor if re-elected. See: Clayton Campbell, "Atmosphere Tense." MacEwan later confirmed that crossing the floor to the Conservatives was one possibility he considered. Paul MacEwan, Interview by Will Stos, In-Person Interview, Sydney, Nova Scotia, March 10, 2011.

⁶²⁸ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, *Returns of the General Election...1981*, 25-26.

watershed election for the NDP. Posting 18.1 percent across the province – a record for the party – and 24.9 per cent in Halifax County, the NDP had become a political force in mainland Nova Scotia for the first time ever. However, this growing popular support did not translate into victories in individual constituencies. Alexa McDonough would be the only NDP MLA in the legislative assembly;⁶²⁹ she would now have to face not only the governing Conservatives and Official Opposition Liberals, but also the independent MacEwan (soon to be named leader of the CBLP). He would not make life in the legislature easy for her.⁶³⁰

The Rise of the CBLP

Rising in the legislature on February 25, 1982 to give the first major speech of his new term in office, Paul MacEwan told his colleagues that he took particular pleasure from his most recent victory in Cape Breton Nova because “the people spoke without fear or favour against the vested interests, against those who wanted to destroy democracy and in favour of what I knew and what they knew to be right.”⁶³¹ MacEwan appeared to take special delight in welcoming the new MLAs who had defeated his former NDP caucus colleagues in Cape Breton and used the speech as an opportunity to launch not only what would be one of many assaults on what he termed “the New Plutocratic Party,” but also to remind

⁶²⁹ McDonough’s victory in Halifax Chebucto marked the first time the NDP had elected an MLA in mainland Nova Scotia. Beck, 356.

⁶³⁰ This is, undisputedly, an understatement. Desmond Morton reports that MacEwan used his “remarkable talent for vitriol and invective on McDonough and her father” to engage in three years of “vicious assaults” in the legislature that was part of a “bitter, intensely personal campaign to destroy her.” Morton, *The New Democrats*, 202-204. McDonough was so repulsed by MacEwan’s actions during this time that, even decades, later she noted that she chose her words carefully in interviews about this period to avoid poking the proverbial bear. “I’m trying to be as brutally honest as I can without drawing this out to be something I have to deal with in my old age while I’m dealing with cancer,” she stated candidly. “Imagine how great it was for the media to have this man never stop attacking this exaggerated version of a daughter of the elite? A scary feminist bullshit peace-lover, probably a commie.... I mean, get a life! I don’t think people took it very seriously at all and long-since the people who were his followers have come back to the front and centre of the (New Democratic) Party.” She further explained that other people who could give an accounting of it probably wouldn’t want to because they consider it such an embarrassing waste of time. Alexa McDonough, interview.

⁶³¹ Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia Legislature Debates*, 25 February, 1982, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP), 244.

the press gallery that a new Labor Party would soon be realized.⁶³² In fairly broad strokes, MacEwan outlined Labor's platform and policies, emphasizing political freedoms and governance that would be fairer to the working-classes and people in depressed areas.

In addition to juggling work in the legislature⁶³³ and his constituency, MacEwan threw another ball in the air when he set about organizing the Labor Party. He soon found himself receiving some free advice from an unlikely source. The would-be Labor leader's relations with Lloyd Shaw, a prominent financial backer of the New Democratic Party and father of new leader Alexa McDonough, were strained, but still cordial enough that they could meet on an occasional basis to talk about politics.⁶³⁴ On one such occasion, following the 1981 election, Shaw invited MacEwan to his Halifax office to discuss the roadblocks standing in the way of creating a CBLP.⁶³⁵

Shaw argued a CBLP would be virtually impossible under the *Nova Scotia Elections Act*.⁶³⁶ According to provincial law, a recognized political party must run candidates in at least one-quarter of Nova Scotia's ridings – 13 at the time. With only 11 constituencies, Cape Breton was too small to accommodate its own official party; at least a few candidates would need to be recruited on the

⁶³² Nova Scotia, *Nova Scotia Legislature Debates*, 25 February, 1982, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP), 247. MacEwan noted that his election signs had said "vote Labor, re-elect MacEwan," and said offices had now been rented in his Whitney Pier neighbourhood to house the party headquarters. He also drew links between his Labor Party and the Labor Party of the 1880s that operated in Nova Scotia.

⁶³³ The seasoned politician's performance in the legislature, even as an independent Labor MLA, revealed his ability to punch above his weight. Following the strategy the NDP had used during the Akerman years – and one McDonough would continue to use in the legislature – MacEwan proposed dozens upon dozens of motions during every session and submitted written questions to ministers about all manner of subjects. Without the benefit of being a member of government or the Official Opposition, MacEwan, like the NDP, had to generate his own headlines and demonstrate to his constituents and prospective Labor Party voters that individual MLAs could be effective representatives for communities.

⁶³⁴ Relations between the two would deteriorate as MacEwan repeatedly attacked Shaw when speaking in the legislature. McDonough notes: "It probably cost my father his health. It was so devastating for him to be defamed and pilloried in the legislature with no choice but to ignore it or give him more attention. My father, who was in a multi-generational firm, chose not to drag the business into this ridiculous and bizarre scenario. Some of the members of cabinet were just revolting in the way they kept stoking it and rewarding it. But others were so revolted by what was happening that they came to me and said as much or stood up in cabinet and said, 'this is making our government look really bad.' It's all such a tiny blip in what was otherwise a fascinating and rewarding experience in politics." Alexa McDonough, interview.

⁶³⁵ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 100.

⁶³⁶ *Elections Act*, SNS 2011, c 5.

mainland. Shaw found this to be a strange proposition for a party that would likely be campaigning for provincial status for Cape Breton or separation from Canada, something that MacEwan has recently strenuously denied.⁶³⁷ Shaw also contended the party could not possibly bankroll an election campaign. Presenting MacEwan with a mock balance sheet, Shaw estimated the party would have \$0 in revenue and up to \$50,000 in expenses during an election year.⁶³⁸ Although MacEwan conceded that he faced long odds in forming a functioning party, he credited Shaw as something of a founder of Labor – “like the father of a child born out of wedlock”⁶³⁹ – for providing a line by line itemization of what a new party required.

Despite Shaw’s dire warning of impending personal bankruptcy and financial doom,⁶⁴⁰ MacEwan was more optimistic about his chances: “Shaw’s whole analysis was based on projected dollars and cents. It made no provision for *momentum*, which in my view is the decisive element in politics. As far persuing [sic] a dream goes, my whole political career had been based on dreams I suppose.”⁶⁴¹ Thus, MacEwan believed the Labor Party could tap into the existing reservoir of Cape Breton alienation and anger against Halifax elites and ride a wave into office. Much as he credited Shaw for outlining the new

⁶³⁷ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 101. MacEwan notes that Shaw had been making such characterizations about the prospective party for at least a year and while he had continually denied them, MacEwan says he finally let Shaw and others say what they wanted about the party. Although MacEwan said in later letters to the editor (see: Morgan, *Rise Again! Book 2*, 219), his manuscript, and correspondence that the Labor Party was not separatist nor meant to remain an island-only party (the ultimate goal would be to replace the NDP), newspaper reports from the party’s early period do quote MacEwan as being supportive of separate provincial status. See, for example, ----“Labor Party Continues Push For New Members,” *Cape Breton Post*, October 1, 1982, 4. It is possible that his supportive statements could have been designed to facilitate the same forced growth strategy used by the NDP in the late 1960s and to induce people who were sympathetic to Cape Breton provincehood to join. MacEwan has mentioned that among Labor’s supporters were two Cape Breton separatists who eventually fell out with the party over fundraising initiatives. Paul MacEwan, “Email Correspondence with Author,” September 6, 2010.

⁶³⁸ Shaw’s budget estimated \$30,000 for individual campaigns in three ridings the Labor Party could reasonably win (Cape Breton Nova, Cape Breton Centre, and Cape Breton East), \$10,000 for all other campaigns of token candidates, and \$10,000 for advertising and central organization. (MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 101.)

⁶³⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 105.

⁶⁴⁰ Something, as we have seen, other leaders (Mike Martin, NLP – personal bankruptcy and Ed Deibel, NOHP – years without a paying job) of these upstart parties encountered.

⁶⁴¹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 105. (Emphasis in original.)

party's financial needs, MacEwan credited McDonough, Bob Levy and other NDP supporters for generating some of the initial momentum the party sought.

During MacEwan's expulsion hearings in 1980 Levy had accused the MLA of promoting an island-mainland split and having designs to set up a "Cape Breton Labor Party" to accomplish such a goal.⁶⁴² Although the Nova Scotia NDP had previously discussed the concept of a Maritimes Union, MacEwan contends that the idea for a separate Cape Breton province had never been discussed by that party, and the suggestion "that the Cape Breton Labor Party was the result of such discussion, which had first rejected provincehood for Cape Breton, is unadulterated poppy-cock."⁶⁴³ Nevertheless, once Levy had given a name to the supposed party, MacEwan offers that McDonough kept the name in the news during and after the 1981 election in statements to the press. He remembers:

The name of the party was repeatedly stated as being the Cape Breton Labor Party, [with me] as the purported leader of it. It would be Nova Scotia's equivalent of the Parti Quebecois, or of the Scottish Nationalist Party, or the two of them combined, and then some. In a sense, I would say McDonough's ceaseless efforts almost ensured that the new party she was so strongly denouncing, would in fact take place.⁶⁴⁴

Repeating a name was not enough to bring a political party into being, however. Michael Matheson of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia was credited for launching the would-be party's first real organizational effort. Matheson had run as an independent Labor candidate in Cape Breton East in 1981. Designing and photocopying his own posters and affixing them on telephone poles, he finished a distant fourth. However, with 716 votes, he still made a respectable showing – garnering the second most votes cast for an independent candidate behind MacEwan.⁶⁴⁵ Matheson said he enjoyed the experience of

⁶⁴² MacEwan vehemently denied any intent to follow such a political program. When the subject of Cape Breton separatism became a major news story after municipal politicians circulated a resolution for consideration in late 1973, MacEwan publicly rebuked the idea. He called the proposal for discussion "some of the most dangerous nonsense to be heard in some time," and speculated that this "ill-thought out" idea might be "some sort of cynical political manoeuvre." See: ---- "Separatist Advocates Blasted By MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, December 20, 1973, "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

⁶⁴³ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 127.

⁶⁴⁴ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 127.

⁶⁴⁵ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, *Returns of the General Election 1981*, 19-20.

running for office and, not content to passively listen to idle talk about a CBLP, decided to see if there was grassroots support for the idea.⁶⁴⁶ “I got going with the guys in the community that I knew and I went up to the Legion to have a beer. And I said, what do you think... if I get in touch with Paul MacEwan and I make some membership cards up and sell them for a dollar,” Matheson recalled. “And I had over three hundred and seventy some. And I said, ‘that’s not too bad. Three hundred and seventy people are interested enough to take out a membership card.’” Visiting the putative party leader in Sydney, Matheson told MacEwan “there’s something going on. I’ve got 350 [sic] people signed up for Labor. What are the chances we can get our own party?”⁶⁴⁷

Not having come up with the CBLP name or doing the original exploratory groundwork himself, Paul MacEwan nonetheless found himself sliding into the helm of this new political entity.⁶⁴⁸ According to MacEwan: “all this was the result of the public backlash against what McDonough, her father, Theman, Levy and their followers had forced on the New Democratic Party. It was fueled by a sense of rejection, more than anything else I would say, that the high mucky-mucks of Halifax did not give a fig for Cape Breton or its people.”⁶⁴⁹ What MacEwan and Matheson offered was a political vehicle through which some people could choose to channel their frustration and constructively express their regional identity and grievances.

⁶⁴⁶ Blair Matheson, interview.

⁶⁴⁷ Blair Matheson, interview.

⁶⁴⁸ Almost at once people who would come to have major roles in the party’s future gravitated towards it. Matheson introduced MacEwan to Wladyslaw “Laddy” Golemiac, and Linda Martin – who would eventually stand as Labor candidates – and Dr. Phyllis Golemiac, who would serve as Matheson’s official agent in the 1984 election. Dan “Diddles” MacKinnon, a long-time town councilor and deputy mayor in New Waterford and former president of the Cape Breton Centre Progressive Conservative Association, approached MacEwan and volunteered to help organize the party; MacKinnon would also stand as a candidate in the next election. Gervaise Fortune, a long-time friend of MacEwan’s, also volunteered to sell memberships in New Waterford; he would later become party president. Fortune, who had lost a leg in a workplace accident and was living on Workman’s compensation, went door-to-door in the town to sell memberships and would call MacEwan almost daily with lists of new members and people who needed assistance in filling government forms – it was, as MacEwan notes in his manuscript, the same approach the MLA had used to such great effect when organizing in Cape Breton Nova. MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 129.

⁶⁴⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 129.

Throughout the summer of 1982, momentum was building. By the time of its October 2 founding convention in Glace Bay the party claimed more than 1,100 members and had about \$2,000 in its coffers.⁶⁵⁰ The convention passed 10 resolutions, including a vow to carry forward policies advocated in the past by the CCF and earlier incarnations of Labor⁶⁵¹ as well as a pledge to hold a referendum to determine if the people wanted to create a provincial government for Cape Breton. Russell Cunningham, who had held the riding of Cape Breton East from 1945 to 1956 for the CCF in the legislature and acted as Leader of the Official Opposition for a time, attended the meeting as a special guest and was made honorary president of the party. He spoke both to the new party's place in the tradition of labor politics on the island and the idea of a separate province. Cunningham intimated that he would likely favour Cape Breton becoming a separate province and said the idea must be studied before others dismissed the possibility out of hand.⁶⁵² MacEwan announced that the party would hold a policy convention within four months; however, the CBLP would face its first electoral test in the interim.

“Free the Cape” – The 1983 Cape Breton The Lakes By-Election

Liberal MLA Ossie Fraser's death in late 1982 had left a vacancy in a Cape Breton constituency at the very moment the Labor Party was taking its first tentative steps. The Liberals or the Conservatives, both of whom were running strong candidates,⁶⁵³ were odds-on favourites to win the riding. The NDP, which did not have historic strength in the Cape Breton The Lakes constituency, planned to run Gerald

⁶⁵⁰ ----- “Labor Party Takes Step Closer Toward Reality,” *The Cape Breton Post*, October 4, 1982, 14.

⁶⁵¹ Although MacEwan and the CBLP made numerous efforts to link itself to the region's political history and labour tradition, McDonough contends that there was a serious disconnect between the CBLP and social democratic politics. She states: “The biggest problem of all was that [MacEwan] had absolutely no respect for or respect from the broad social democratic family – not locally, not provincially, not nationally. And internationally he probably thought they were communists.” She explains that broader grassroots progressive groups had all been in a solid partnership with the NDP – women's rights, environmentalists, gay rights. “There were never any ties between MacEwan and them because it wasn't anything he wanted to have anything to do with. I don't think he had a vision of building a party that had any future with the social democratic movement or democratic socialist movement in the world.” Alexa McDonough, interview.

⁶⁵² ----- “Labor Party Takes Step Closer Toward Reality.”

⁶⁵³ John Newell, a former Cape Breton County Councillor, once again represented the Tories with hopes of turning his narrow loss in 1981 into a victory. John Coady, a current County Councillor and future mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality endeavored to keep the riding for the Liberals.

Yetman, the long-time head of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labor, likely in a bid to stave off the upstart CBLP. As MacEwan explains:

[He] was the ideal person to be found [by the NDP], to keep Labor out of contention in Cape Breton-the Lakes [*sic*]. This was our first test at the polls. It was not in a constituency where there was much natural proclivity to the NDP to begin with, and whatever personal support Yetman could attract would be a combination of this small base plus whatever personal support he could gain through his well-established reputation as a labor spokesperson.⁶⁵⁴

The CBLP's first ever nominated candidate was 23-year old Gary Mosher, an unemployed broadcaster from the Sydney suburb of Westmount. Although not as well-established as the other candidates, Mosher did have some previous experience campaigning for former MLA Fraser, the father of one of his friends.⁶⁵⁵ Moreover, as a resident of the largest town in the riding and having a large circle of friends and extended family, he brought a base of potential voters. The up-coming by-election would thus offer the tantalizing, if very remote, possibility of electing a second Labor MLA and giving the party official status in the legislature, ahead of the NDP; more importantly, the party could begin to gauge its potential support, test its electoral message and build its profile.

Success in this by-election, however it was defined by the candidate or party involved, was crucial enough to draw significant investment from all quarters. The NDP, for instance, spent almost four times as much on this campaign than they had when contesting the general election only two years earlier.⁶⁵⁶ Although Cape Breton The Lakes was one of the targeted ridings where the Labor Party would

⁶⁵⁴ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 142.

⁶⁵⁵ Gary Mosher, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, May 20, 2011.

⁶⁵⁶ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, *Returns of the General Election 1981*, 11. In the 1981 general election the NDP candidate had put in \$5,954.83 to win the riding compared to \$14,525.06 spent by the Liberal candidate and \$17,795.62 expensed by the Progressive Conservative candidate. In 1983 every party spent significantly more. The Liberals led the way with \$25,071.00, followed by the Tories with \$24,600.34, and the NDP with \$22,877.34 – almost four times as much as the party spent only two years earlier. Running its first campaign, the Labor Party's candidate would expense \$8,766.09 – significantly less than any other party, but certainly not the token campaign Lloyd Shaw had projected the party would run outside of three potential winnable ridings. (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, *Returns of By-Elections for the House of Assembly, 1983*, Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1984, 7) The NDP also spent \$2,395.75 from its central fund for additional expenses. The Liberals spent \$2,613.42 and the Progressive Conservatives spent \$2,706.47. The Labor Party, which did not yet have a central election fund, spent nothing. By way of comparison, in three 1980 by-elections candidates spent substantially less. In Halifax Needham, where all three parties spent the most, Liberal Dan Clarke spent \$15,071.43, Progressive

likely run a fully-funded campaign in a general election, the party still devoted considerable resources to its candidate. "...That we were able to raise close to nine thousand dollars to participate in this contest reflects a very genuine effort," MacEwan writes.⁶⁵⁷

Much of this spending was earmarked for promotional materials.⁶⁵⁸ The party's platform was distilled in campaign literature demanding "Political, economic, and social justice for Cape Breton... [and being] prepared to favorably examine the re-establishment of Cape Breton as a province of Canada."⁶⁵⁹

The lack of a policy convention preceding this campaign made it difficult for the young candidate to speak about the party's program in detail, but Mosher gamely promoted its rallying cry and rhetoric in lieu of specific policies:

Other than a very limited number of comments, our main policy was: 'Everything is going to mainland Nova Scotia. Cape Breton isn't getting anything. All the money is being spent in the Halifax area, the Dartmouth region and all through mainland Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton was an entity unto itself with a very strong identity and a very strong culture.'⁶⁶⁰

Campaign advertisements presented a list of the area's problems⁶⁶¹ and asked voters to send a message to "Halifax" by casting their ballots for Mosher and the Labor Party. Bumper stickers with the

Conservative Edmund Morris spent \$17,714.89, and the NDP's Burnley "Rocky" Jones spent just \$3,047.16. In the two other ridings, both in rural Cape Breton, only one candidate spent over \$9,000. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, *Returns of By-Elections for the House of Assembly, 1980*, 12). A series of two by-elections held in 1984 show the trend to higher election spending, yet only the Progressive Conservative candidates spent more than they had in the 1983 by-election in each contest. (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, *Returns of By-Elections for the House of Assembly, 1984*, Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1985, 6, 16).

⁶⁵⁷ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 143. As Ian Stewart notes, some of these funds were in the form of personal loans from MacEwan and aide-de-camp Ron Philpott. When Mosher failed to achieve the threshold for reimbursement, the party found itself in financial difficulty. See: Stewart, "Chapter 12. The Cape Breton Labor Party," manuscript-in-progress, 7

⁶⁵⁸ Both Mosher and MacEwan suggest the other is responsible for the content in the campaign. (See: Mosher interview, and Paul MacEwan, "Email Correspondence with Author," September 6, 2010). MacEwan clarified this further in correspondence on September 9, 2010: "As to how newspaper ads were put together, the main concern as I recall it was that the money was somehow found to pay for them. The writer of such ads was generally the candidate, whose name was on the ballot, and as I recall it, Mosher wrote his own ads. He was familiar with the techniques of advertising having worked in a radio station. The idea that I was a central censor who read and approved every ad before it was submitted to the newspaper is false."

⁶⁵⁹ "Vote Gary Mosher," Election Pamphlet, 1983. (Author's Personal Collection).

⁶⁶⁰ Mosher, interview.

⁶⁶¹ For instance, in a January 20, 1983 advertisement under a banner that read "Vote Cape Breton, Vote Mosher" the party asked "Which Will It Be? 40% unemployment; Sydney Area Lowest Wages in Canada; Sysco Shutdowns; 6

slogan 'Free the Cape' were distributed to potential voters to drum up interest and provide free advertising as they drove about the area. The candidate's pamphlets asked voters to consider the alternatives – the 'Halifax' parties – before ultimately choosing "our own Cape Breton Party, of, for, and by the people of Cape Breton."⁶⁶² "Now, whether or not Cape Breton was being treated unfairly, I have no idea," Mosher admitted candidly in an interview much later. "At the time I had no clue. It was just the CBLP rallying cry. So that was fine. If that's what the rallying cry was, I would certainly use that as a part of my platform."⁶⁶³

When the final numbers were tallied, the Conservatives eked out a slim win over the Liberals with a tally of 3,190 to 3,078 votes. The New Democratic Party had finished in third place with 1,436 votes and Mosher had placed a distant fourth with only 630 votes.⁶⁶⁴ These votes could have tipped the election considering the margin between the first and second place. Prior to the campaign, MacEwan had told the press that he was looking for "a big enough bite of the vote so I can feel that the people have given it a favourable response... where it's reasonable to interpret that the party has caught on and that people are interested."⁶⁶⁵ Considering that Mosher suspected that a large portion of his vote came from friends and family in his hometown community,⁶⁶⁶ the results of the by-election were not a

and 5 Wage Controls; 35% Power Rate Increases; Halifax Getting The Cream – Cape Breton Less Than Skim Milk." The advertisement, which explained that only a vote for Mosher and the Cape Breton Labor Party "will register an effective protest," ended by imploring voters: "Let's Tell Halifax." Advertisement, "Vote Cape Breton, Vote Mosher" January 20, 1983. (Author's Personal Collection).

⁶⁶² "Vote Gary Mosher," Election Pamphlet, 1983. (Author's Personal Collection). All three other parties were referred to as the Halifax Progressive Conservative Party, the Halifax Liberals, and the Halifax NDP. Text included in the pamphlet included the provocative statement that "None of these Halifax Parties are for Cape Breton. All of them are controlled by Halifax and Mainland Nova Scotia and are the means by which Cape Breton is being shafted every day."

⁶⁶³ Mosher, interview.

⁶⁶⁴ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia, *Returns of By-Elections for the House of Assembly, 1983*, (Halifax: Queen's Printer), 1984, 6.

⁶⁶⁵ Barbara Carver, "Cape Breton Labor Party Nominates Gary Mosher In Cape Breton The Lakes," *Cape Breton Post*, January 10, 1983, 4. MacEwan added that "the real goal of the campaign is to win the seat," however, he did not appear to expect a victory.

⁶⁶⁶ Mosher, interview. Mosher says most of these votes were formerly Liberal voters. He suspects that he may have played spoiler for Liberal John Coady because he likely took enough otherwise Liberal votes to ensure victory for John Newell of the Progressive Conservatives.

particularly favourable result for the Labor Party as a whole.⁶⁶⁷ Still, MacEwan viewed the result as a respectable showing for a new party in a riding that did not include a significant portion of its strongest base.⁶⁶⁸

Finding a Team and Filling the Slate – Preparing for the 1984 General Election

Following a disappointing finish in the by-election, MacEwan devoted significant time to organizing for the party in advance of the next election. Lacking strong and experienced organizers in ridings outside the three (Cape Breton Nova, Cape Breton Centre and Cape Breton East) where it expected to produce its strongest showings,⁶⁶⁹ it was in these ridings in industrial Cape Breton where the Labor Party planned to devote the majority of its efforts.⁶⁷⁰ Re-electing Paul MacEwan and electing either Dan “Diddles” MacKinnon in Cape Breton Centre or Michael Blair Matheson in Cape Breton East, or both, would give the party official status in the legislature, and possibly allow it to overtake the NDP.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷ In a candidate handbook that the Labor Party produced for candidates prior to the 1984 general election, presumably written at least in part by MacEwan, the party noted that Mosher was expected to win at least 15% of the vote and qualify for an election rebate of some expenses. When Mosher failed to meet the threshold, no rebate was payable. Although the handbook notes that no bank loans were taken to fund Mosher’s campaign, “it took about a year to pay off the election bills and the people who loaned money went unpaid.” The handbook suggested this was a significant setback for the party. ----- “Cape Breton Party Election Handbook,” Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 3, Beaton Institute.

⁶⁶⁸ Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 147. In a Cape Breton Post article following the results MacEwan is quoted as saying the response to the party wasn’t particularly pleasing, but considering the party is only five months old he found the results encouraging. Barbara Carver, “Tory John Newell Nips Liberal Coady To Win Cape Breton The Lakes Seat.” *Cape Breton Post*, February 23, 1983, 1.

⁶⁶⁹ See: ----- “Paul MacEwan Re-Elected Leader At Labor’s Annual Convention” *Cape Breton Post*, November 28, 1983, (File: Politics – CB. Labour Party “Clippings,” Beaton Institute), and MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 149.

⁶⁷⁰ A letter addressed to MacEwan from the province’s Chief Electoral Officer, D. William MacDonald, dated June 8, 1984, suggests the Labor Party leader considered there were seven ridings where the party could conceivably garner enough support (at least 15 per cent of total valid votes cast) to receive partial reimbursements of election expenses. Outside of the big three, MacEwan asked about reimbursement rates and election spending limits for Cape Breton North, Cape Breton West, Cape Breton South, and Cape Breton The Lakes. The letter was reproduced in a campaign manual for candidates. D. William MacDonald, “Letter from D. William MacDonald, Nova Scotia Chief Electoral Officer, to MacEwan,” June 8, 1984, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 3, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute.

⁶⁷¹ Nominated on November 26, 1983, February 26, 1984, and November 6, 1983, respectively. The relatively early nomination dates – the next general election was expected to be held in 1985 – gave these three candidates the opportunity to develop a higher profile in their constituencies in advance of the campaign.

Each candidate thus made regular appearances in the pages of the *Cape Breton Post*,⁶⁷² on radio phone-in programs,⁶⁷³ and on the island's local cable access channels⁶⁷⁴ to speak about issues that were important to them or to update readers on the growth of the party's membership. The party also arranged for Labor supporters in the steel plant and mines to continually distribute printed propaganda on bulletin boards and in common areas like the mine wash-houses.⁶⁷⁵ Moreover, borrowing strategies effectively employed by MacEwan and Akerman, MacKinnon and Matheson each spent at least one day a week door-knocking and held regular hours in the party's New Waterford office.⁶⁷⁶ MacEwan writes that "...a steady stream came in to present WCB, CPP, EI, and other such cases, all of which added to the list of potential voters and sign locations we were putting together."⁶⁷⁷

Organizing outside of these three targeted constituencies was much more difficult. The leader used the connections and friendships he had made during his years in politics to search for potential candidates and to identify likely supporters; but many candidates were not in place by the time the writ of election had been dropped. In order to fill a moderately-sized Labor Party slate, MacEwan resorted to appointing the majority of the candidates who ran on the Labor party ticket. In Cape Breton's rural ridings, party supporters from the island's industrial areas volunteered to run. None of these candidates had any illusions of winning, but they were aware that their token campaigns would not only allow the

⁶⁷² See for example some sample activity during March, 1984: ----- "Party Membership At Three Thousand," *Cape Breton Post*, March 1, 1984, 15; ----- "Labor Candidate's Campaign Underway," *Cape Breton Post*, March 15, 1984, 9 (MacKinnon reported to have visited the legislature to 'get acquainted,' met with citizen groups, and started daily campaigning); ----- "News Capsule: Response Pleases Party President," *Cape Breton Post*, March 17, 1984, 20, ----- "Labor Party Wants Bigger Membership," *Cape Breton Post*, March 21, 1984, 18 (Reporting on meeting of Cape Breton East, including fundraising discussion and Matheson speaking about funding for MLAs).

⁶⁷³ Matheson, interview.

⁶⁷⁴ MacEwan had done, and continued to do, monthly half-hour cable telecasts on Seaside and Cape Breton cablevision. Each programme was broadcast three times and his appearances were advertised in the *Cape Breton Post*, occasionally with specific mention of a topic or one of the other Labor candidates as a special guest. See, for example: Advertisement, "On TV Tonight, See And Hear Paul MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, October 22, 1984, 19; see also MacEwan, *The Cape Breton Labor Party*, p. 156.

⁶⁷⁵ Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 156.

⁶⁷⁶ Advertisement, "Business As Usual: Dan 'Diddles' MacKinnon will hold regular weekly office hours every Thursday 2-4 P.M.," *Cape Breton Post*, October 12, 1984, 17.

⁶⁷⁷ Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 155.

Labor Party to run as an officially recognized party, but also, as Inverness North candidate Nancy Thomas told the press, to help “build the Labor Party for the next four years.”⁶⁷⁸

Indeed, the ‘Labor Party’ as it was known colloquially, was growing beyond the island itself. In late 1983 it was renamed the Labor Party of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia after party members opted to welcome in new members from the mainland.⁶⁷⁹ Despite often railing against Halifax and mainland Nova Scotia, MacEwan had earned much goodwill from people in the provincial capital who came to him for assistance filling out government forms for worker’s compensation and pension benefits.

“I wish I had equal access to Yarmouth or Guysborough,” MacEwan states, “but I did not. The trick is to take advantage of whatever resources you have to work with, and the Halifax area was the only place in Nova Scotia, other than in industrial Cape Breton, to which I had regular access. Hence, it became priority number two, for the Labor party, to do what it could in the Halifax area, while there was still time available.”⁶⁸⁰ The leader recruited Ron Bugbee, the president of the Nova Scotia Union of Disabled Workers, to be the party’s first mainland candidate in Dartmouth North. Bugbee, a person with a long-standing grievance with the Nova Scotia Workers Compensation Board,⁶⁸¹ was delighted with the help MacEwan provided and offered to do whatever he could for the party. Although he had grand plans to find candidates for all the Halifax-Dartmouth area seats, ultimately he could only enlist his daughter

⁶⁷⁸ ----- “Spray issue motivates Inverness N. labor hopeful,” *Port Hawkesbury Scotia Sun*, October 24, 1984, 3.

⁶⁷⁹ Michael Matheson noted in a *Cape Breton Post* news article from 1984 that “As recently as our last Party Convention we began to delete the words ‘Cape Breton’ from some of our constitutional sections as an effort to clear the way for expansion westward by the Cape Breton Labor Party due to the fact that we had received some new members who were located on the mainland.” ----- “Matheson Denies Deal With Provincial NDP.” The *Cape Breton Post*, April 2, 1984, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9.30), File: Cape Breton Labor Party File 1, Beaton Institute. See also: Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 134. It is not known whether this name change was officially registered with the province’s chief electoral officer.

⁶⁸⁰ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 150. See also MacEwan’s correspondence with the province’s chief electoral officer: D. William MacDonald, “Letter from D. William MacDonald, Nova Scotia Chief Electoral Officer, to MacEwan,” December 8, 1983, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 3, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute.

⁶⁸¹ ----- “Cape Breton Labor Party Nominates 11th Candidate,” *Chronicle-Herald*, October 4, 1984, 31.

Beatrice Kaizer⁶⁸² to stand in Halifax-Needham in time for the general election. MacEwan has suggested that Bugbee's lack of time, "and perhaps also the lack of appreciation of how much leg-work would be required to do all this,"⁶⁸³ contributed to holding back his party's growth in the region. Nevertheless, MacEwan suggests that in running these candidates in the Halifax region the party was trying "to raise a new banner, towards establishing Labor as a genuinely provincial party, prepared to offer good government to all Nova Scotians."⁶⁸⁴

The expansion of Labor across the Canso causeway presents an interesting quirk in the story of a party that had, up to this point, been largely connected to issues of regional identity and grievance. If Labor became a genuinely provincial party, could it even be considered a sub-provincial regional protest party? The failure of the party to sustain itself long enough to evolve into such an entity precludes a decisive answer; however, the retention of Cape Breton within the party's official name would seem to indicate it continued to view the island not only as the geographic centre of its political base, but also as a historically distinct region of the province of Nova Scotia that should maintain its special identity. And, as the party's platform revealed, it sought a decentralized approach where such a region could assume control over its own affairs.

Campaign '84

Although it is customary for a majority government to serve about four years of the constitutionally mandated five-year term, Nova Scotia's recent Progressive Conservative premiers, including incumbent John Buchannan, had a history of seeking early votes.⁶⁸⁵ For MacEwan and the

⁶⁸² Kaizer reportedly wanted to run against Social Services Minister Edmund Morris "to protest the reactionary policies of that minister and his department." Paul MacEwan, "Report on the 1984 Provincial Election," January 9, 1985, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 3, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute.

⁶⁸³ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 151.

⁶⁸⁴ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 153-154. Ian Stewart notes that MacEwan's private correspondence to federal NDP officials revealed he entertained fantasies of having the CBLP recognized as a provincial affiliate of the NDP if it won more seats than the McDonough-led NDP. National Party Secretary Robin Sears dismissed the idea as lunacy (in addition to using other choice words). See: Stewart, "Chapter 12. The Cape Breton Labor Party," manuscript-in-progress, 9-10.

⁶⁸⁵ Alan Story, "Election Fever heats up in Nova Scotia" *The Toronto Star*, September 21, 1984, A13.

Labor Party an early election call would be enormously disadvantageous. Only three to five ridings in Cape Breton had anything beyond preliminary partisan organization by the autumn of 1984,⁶⁸⁶ two years after the party's birth; finding people to stand in other areas as even token candidates was also proving difficult.⁶⁸⁷ In MacEwan's estimation, if Buchanan had held off calling the next provincial election until late 1985, the party could have probably fielded a "solid, respectable, province-wide team"⁶⁸⁸ that would have undermined its opponents' assertions that "Labor was only interested in pulling out of Nova Scotia/Canada."⁶⁸⁹ Buchanan, however, had other plans in mind. With the afterglow of the federal Progressive Conservatives' landslide victory still radiating, the premier asked for writ of election to be dropped on September 28, 1984 for a November 6 election.⁶⁹⁰

Despite the early election call, MacEwan still expressed confidence about his party's chances publicly, particularly about the campaigns in the targeted Cape Breton County ridings of Nova, Centre and East.⁶⁹¹ Stating that the party hoped "to demonstrate that we are the clear alternative and best vehicle by which to deliver a sharp rebuke to John Buchanan," MacEwan predicted his party would appeal to disenchanted voters by the end of the campaign.⁶⁹² Although the party would focus on many

⁶⁸⁶ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 160.

⁶⁸⁷ One candidate, Mildred Julien, told Ian Stewart that she was "petrified about reading her speech on community TV ("until I realized almost nobody watched Channel 10"), while in Cape Breton West, the nominee did not understand her talking points and would never canvass without a minder. 'She was nervous,' acknowledged her campaign manager, 'and she wasn't even interested in politics.'" Stewart quotes some executive members as calling their candidate "low" quality and lamenting the "good people who didn't have the balls to throw their hats in the ring," while noting that MacEwan was more philosophical: "You take what you can get." See: Stewart, "Chapter 12: The Cape Breton Labor Party," manuscript-in-progress, p. 17.

⁶⁸⁸ See MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 160; and Paul MacEwan, "Email Correspondence with Author," September 4, 2010: "...I know I could have produced at least ten more mainland candidates if I had had another year to work with, and done some more field-work."

⁶⁸⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 154.

⁶⁹⁰ ----- "Nova Scotians Will Vote Nov. 6; Need new mandate says Premier," *Cape Breton Post*, September 29, 1984, 1.

⁶⁹¹ ----- "Election '84: MacEwan Enters Nov. 6 Vote With Confidence," *Cape Breton Post*, October 2, 1984, 4.

⁶⁹² ----- "Election '84: MacEwan Enters Nov. 6 Vote With Confidence.".

of the same types of issues⁶⁹³ it had during Gary Mosher's ill-fated by-election campaign, its presentation and delivery would differ substantially. Perhaps acknowledging its growth and hopes to become a political force that spanned the Canso Causeway, the Labor party began to downplay rhetoric that focused on Cape Breton's second-class status to the mainland. Although this language did not disappear from the campaign on a local⁶⁹⁴ or regional⁶⁹⁵ level, the party's first foray into a province-wide contest – even on a small scale – necessitated a change in strategy.

The party's platform, released on October 9, provides an interesting entry point into the CBLP's evolution from an island-based party to one that could represent people on the mainland. Newspaper reports from the period suggest two different platforms were released to the media. The *Cape Breton Post* carried a story on a 13-point platform, while the Halifax-based *Chronicle Herald's* story spoke of a 10-point platform.⁶⁹⁶ Although the *Chronicle-Herald's* report does not itemize which 10 elements of the platform it received, it's reasonable to surmise that it was simply an edited version of the party's complete 13-point release that omitted mention of the points specific to Cape Breton.⁶⁹⁷ Other platform

⁶⁹³ MacEwan told reporters his party would focus on uneven distribution of government spending, breaches of government promises, and the automatic assumption pension program for coal miners. -----“Election '84: MacEwan Enters Nov. 6 Vote With Confidence.”

⁶⁹⁴ For example, Matheson argued the money for a third election campaign in the space of six years would be better spent to ease the burden on electricity consumers in Cape Breton. He also continued to refer to the opposition parties, including the “Halifax based NDP” as incapable of speaking for the people of Glace Bay. See: ---- - “No Need For Election Says Labor Candidate,” *Cape Breton Post*, October 2, 1984, 18.

⁶⁹⁵ For example, the party's full 13-point platform released to media on Cape Breton island used the same “Everything for Halifax – nothing for Cape Breton” rallying cry that was employed during Mosher's campaign. -----“Election Manifesto of the Cape Breton Labor Party,” c1984, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute.

⁶⁹⁶ See: ----- “MacEwan releases Manifesto: Social justice stressed in 13-point election list,” *The Cape Breton Post*, October 10, 1984, 4; ----- “Labor Party unveils 10-point platform,” *The Chronicle-Herald*, October 10, 1984, 1. It is interesting to note the mainland paper gave this story front-page, below the fold prominence compared to a story in the interior of the island's major newspaper.

⁶⁹⁷ Likely candidates for omission were Point 2 “We demand of any provincial government a very major increase in the share of the public purse spent on Cape Breton Island”; Point 3 “We demand a fully modernized Sydney Steel Plant using two blast furnaces, an up-to-date steelmaking shop, and full coking facilities aimed at providing 2,500 stable jobs and providing a diversified range of finished products”; and Point 4 “We demand a Cape Breton Regional Hospital.” See: ----- “Election Manifesto of the Cape Breton Labor Party,” c1984, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute.

planks, such as demands for protection of the environment that referred specifically to the island in the full platform, were likely altered to speak to broader provincial environmental concerns.

In his manuscript on the history of the CBLP, MacEwan refers only to the 13-point platform:

What is wrong with this platform in my view to-day is that it seems almost exclusively concerned with Cape Breton. It is issued under the heading of the "Cape Breton Labor Party." It doesn't give Ron Bubgee [*sic*], Beatrice Kaizer, or Alfred Neiforth [*sic*], or the people of who [*sic*] voted for them, much of anything at all. It was written from the perspective that all that mattered was the economic salvation of Cape Breton, and that this was the sole purpose of the Labor Party. Just as the Halifax NDP wrote election proposals from a Halifax perspective, as if Nova Scotia ended at Armdale Rotary, so that no benefits at all would be given to Cape Breton Island. I would say that the Halifax NDP prejudice against Cape Breton ran much deeper than anything found in Cape Breton, where the attitude was more one of, "Hey, we're part of this province too – we deserve, and demand, equal treatment. How about it?"⁶⁹⁸

MacEwan suggests in his manuscript that, in hindsight, he would have released the 13-point platform for Cape Breton Island and consulted with candidates on the mainland to develop a platform that met their needs. "I see no inconsistency with any party having regional platforms designed to meet local needs," he writes. "Obviously these should not contradict one another, but there is no harm in telling people at Digby Neck that you are for improved ferry service there while saying nothing at all about Sydney Steel."⁶⁹⁹ MacEwan contends that this decentralized approach was a key distinction between Labor and the NDP. Although personal conflicts played a large role in the schism that gave rise to Labor, this desire for input into policy, regional awareness and regional consideration gave its supporters a uniting philosophy.

Outside of reportage on this platform release and some coverage of local races in Cape Breton, the Labor party's presence in the provincial media during the campaign was mostly limited to the controversy that erupted over Paul MacEwan's exclusion from a leader's debate on the ATV channel. The leaders of the three "major" parties agreed to take part in a 90-minute special election broadcast on

⁶⁹⁸ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 173.

⁶⁹⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 173.

November 3, 1984, three days before the election.⁷⁰⁰ Televised debates, which had only recently started to become commonplace in Canadian elections, provided an excellent opportunity for opposition leaders to engage with the incumbent in a setting that gave them equal prominence and to speak directly to voters; it was a medium where journalistic gate-keepers exercised less control over their message.⁷⁰¹

For MacEwan, ATV's decision proved to be a mixed blessing. Although he was denied an opportunity to debate the other party leaders and be treated as an equal, the news stories generated by his exclusion provided publicity and coverage his party may not have received otherwise.⁷⁰² MacEwan, who started referring to himself as "the man ATV and the three old-line parties wanted to keep off the air" in his cable broadcast advertisements,⁷⁰³ notes that he and the party began to receive support from unexpected sources. The negotiator for the New Democrats in ATV's debate discussions expressed that his party had no objections to MacEwan's inclusion; however, they said they would abide by ATV's decision. Fred Dixon, the chair of the Progressive Conservatives' campaign, told the press that "speaking as a Nova Scotian and not as a campaign manager I feel he has as much entitlement to participate as anyone."⁷⁰⁴ Liberal leader Sandy Cameron wrote personally to MacEwan to express his support for the Labor leader's inclusion.⁷⁰⁵ In a *Globe and Mail* article, MacEwan was quoted as saying "ATV is a Halifax-oriented news network which subconsciously believes Halifax is Nova Scotia, just as the *Globe and Mail* perceives that Toronto is Canada."⁷⁰⁶ ATV had, unintentionally, provided the Labor Party with the gift of

⁷⁰⁰ ----- "Leaders agree to TV show," *Cape Breton Post*, October 2, 1984, 1.

⁷⁰¹ For a discussion of how television news coverage was changing the dynamics of political campaigns in the 1980s, see: William Peter Stos, "Small screen, big impact: a historical examination of the effects of television on the 1988 federal election campaign," (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2006).

⁷⁰² MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 164. MacEwan notes this decision gave "publicity to our party greatly beyond what including me in the leadership debate might have done, although I think my bombastic style of oratory might have made all the other three leaders look weak and vacillating."

⁷⁰³ Advertisement, "On Television Hear and See Paul MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, October 30, 1984, 30.

⁷⁰⁴ ----- "Party leader accept TV debate format, MacEwan Out," *Cape Breton Post*, October 17, 1984, 4.

⁷⁰⁵ Sandy Cameron, "Letter to MacEwan," October 12, 1984. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: "Paul MacEwan in Correspondence, 1984, File 2," Beaton Institute.

⁷⁰⁶ Parker Bass Donham, "Labor Party miffed over TV debate," *Globe and Mail*, October 27, 1984, 8.

a story that fit into its favoured narrative – Cape Breton getting a raw deal from the mainland, and particularly Halifax.

The Results

Very few of Labor's 14 candidates were expected to win or even come close to the eventual victor's vote total. The party's three enterprising Halifax-area candidates polled a total of 202 votes between them and each finished a very distant fourth in their respective races.⁷⁰⁷ The results in the rural island ridings were slightly better proportionately than the contests on the mainland, but still all distant fourth place finishes.⁷⁰⁸ Of all these candidates, only Ron Bugbee recorded any election-related expenses, totaling \$1,868.16, to the province's chief electoral officer; other candidates in these ridings often spent thousands of dollars on their campaigns.⁷⁰⁹ Still, their token candidacies allowed the Labor party to be officially recognized and give it a profile, limited as it may have been, beyond its base in industrial Cape Breton.

The Cape Breton county ridings would be where the party needed to make strong showings if it had any hope of demonstrating that it could replace the New Democratic Party as the third party in provincial politics. Here, the results were decidedly mixed. Less than two years earlier, for example, Gary Mosher had collected 630 votes in Cape Breton The Lakes. In 1984 candidate Mary Strickland polled only 156 in the riding.⁷¹⁰ In an election post-mortem, MacEwan observed that although the drop in votes was

⁷⁰⁷ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 26. Nieforth took 82 votes in Bedford-Musquodoboit Valley, Bugbee took 76 in Dartmouth North, and Kaizer won 44 votes in Halifax Needham.

⁷⁰⁸ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 26. Thomas collected 29 votes in Inverness North, Golemiac won 33 in Inverness South, Covey took 31 in Richmond and McLean scored 76 in Victoria.

⁷⁰⁹ Bugbee reported \$275.26 for personal expenses, \$302.14 for services, \$651.55 in travel expenses, \$153.11 in goods supplied, and \$486.10 in advertising. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 15.

⁷¹⁰ It should be noted that the party spent only \$1,495.84 in the riding during the general election – a far cry from the \$8,766.09 spent during the by-election. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 13. However, as Stewart

disappointing, the New Democratic candidate also polled substantially fewer votes than the by-election contest in that riding.⁷¹¹ Elsewhere, the leader also expressed dissatisfaction with the voter support shown to “the unsinkable Molly Julian”⁷¹² in Cape Breton North relative to her spirited and organized campaign. Once again, lack of money likely contributed to the loss. Julian’s NDP opponent Tom Rose outspent her by a ratio of about 8 to 1 (\$2,759.15 to \$410.07).⁷¹³ For MacEwan, Julian’s loss proved to be the hardest to take. In contesting a riding where the New Democrats had been victorious in 1978, he was sure that if his candidate had equal access to funds that her New Democratic opponent did she could have overcome his vote total and “thus shown that Labor had genuinely replaced the NDP as the people’s political choice in *all* [emphasis in original] of the constituencies the NDP had held before 1981.”⁷¹⁴

The Labor Party’s results in its three target ridings were much more promising. Dan “Diddles” MacKinnon took 1,202 votes in Cape Breton Centre. It was a solid third place finish and only 262 votes behind the second-place Liberal.⁷¹⁵ Michael Matheson increased his vote total in Cape Breton East from 1981 by more than 1,000, finishing in third place with 1,724 votes. Although Matheson was well behind the second-place finisher, like MacKinnon, he had pulled ahead of the New Democratic candidate and taken enough of the vote to qualify for a partial refund of election expenses.⁷¹⁶ Labor Party leader Paul MacEwan once again coasted to an easy victory in Cape Breton Nova, winning more than 50 per cent of

notes, the riding apparently had 189 paid-up members, meaning at least some had failed to vote. Stewart, “Chapter 12: The Cape Breton Labor Party,” manuscript-in-progress, 25.

⁷¹¹ The NDP declined from 1,436 votes in 1983 to 813 votes in 1984. MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 193.

⁷¹² Paul MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 158.

⁷¹³ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election*, 1984, 13. Stewart reports the total spend as \$432 and notes that MacEwan had covered \$300 for a deposit, taxi fare and phone charges, in addition to securing free office space above a liquor store. Stewart, “Chapter 12: The Cape Breton Labour Party,” manuscript-in-progress, 19.

⁷¹⁴ MacEwan, *The Cape Breton Labor Party*, 159.

⁷¹⁵ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election*, 1984, 21.

⁷¹⁶ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election*, 1984, 21.

all votes cast.⁷¹⁷ In each of these races the Labor candidates were out-spent only by the candidates nominated by the governing Tories, suggesting that with proper funding and strong candidates, the CBLP was capable of running to win on parts of the island.

Overall, Labor could take heart in the vote in Cape Breton. Although its candidates finished behind the New Democrats in eight of the island's eleven ridings, the party attracted more support from island voters than the New Democratic Party.⁷¹⁸ To make matters worse for the NDP, the party's showing on Cape Breton indicated it had lost the vast majority of the support it had attained during its high watermark showing in 1978. Within six short years the party, which had once elected four MLAs, went from winning 25,586 votes on the island (25.3 per cent of total valid votes cast in the election)⁷¹⁹ to only 7,083 (7.2 per cent).⁷²⁰ Once again the party was completely shut out on the island, and now it found itself competing with Labor to be Cape Bretoners' choice as an alternative to the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals.

The 1984 election returns did not leave the New Democrats in complete despair, however. Prior to 1981, no mainland constituency had ever sent an NDP MLA to the legislature. Early in the 1984 campaign it looked as though the party might not elect any of its candidates, as replicating its past Cape Breton results looked doubtful, and party leader Alexa McDonough's own seat appeared vulnerable according to political pundits.⁷²¹ MacEwan had speculated that even if only he was returned on the

⁷¹⁷ Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 21.

⁷¹⁸ In his manuscript MacEwan notes that Labor received 8,120 votes to the NDP's 7,085. If the rural county ridings are included the tallies stand at 7,951 to 4,709.

⁷¹⁹ Total valid votes cast on Cape Breton were 101,260. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1978*, 20-21.

⁷²⁰ Total valid votes cast on Cape Breton were 98,604. Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Nova Scotia. *Returns of the General Election for the House of Assembly, Thirty-First General Election, 1984*, 21-22.

⁷²¹ McDonough noted that she had been the target of an overwhelming campaign to unseat her and felt definite pressure. She told a reporter: "[Premier] Buchannan has me running scared, you know. Every time I turn around, there's either a Tory Cabinet minister from Ottawa or Nova Scotia in the riding, and I guess I see it as important for me to have as much contact with the voters as possible." Michael Harris, "NDP's leader knows the score in N.S. election," *Globe and Mail*, November 5, 1984, 5.

Labor ticket, it might still be enough for the nascent party to replace the NDP as the province's third party in the legislature. These predictions did not come to pass. Not only was McDonough re-elected comfortably in Halifax Chebucto, but two new NDP MLAs would join her in the House of Assembly. John Holm and MacEwan's old foe Bob Levy were elected in Sackville and Kings South, respectively. The McDonough-led NDP had scored a clear victory despite the poor showing on Cape Breton Island, and the Labor Party's days were now numbered.

The Decline and Demise of the CBLP

For a small, cash-strapped party created only two years earlier, the Labor Party's electoral performance had been fairly impressive. Not only had the party re-elected its sole MLA, but candidates had made respectable showings in the two other ridings into which it had poured resources. The success of the New Democrats in expanding their beachhead on the mainland put a damper on self-congratulatory celebrations, however. "Had either Matheson or MacKinnon been elected on our side, that would doubtless have given us a big boost, even if it would have meant that in the new Legislature, we would have only two seats, and would have to play second fiddle to the NDP, now swollen to three," MacEwan writes. "But the combination of them getting three, while all we had to go back with was one seat we already had, in my view knocked the stuffings out of the Labor Party."⁷²² The party's failure to push the NDP to fourth place in the majority of Cape Breton's ridings also put its continued success in doubt.

Putting on a brave face for the party membership, MacEwan publicly vowed to continue the fight, though privately he had conceded that the party was likely a spent force.⁷²³ In his report to the party on the 1984 results, MacEwan told supporters that "it should always be borne in mind that our party is not 'just another party' and that its political goals differ substantially from those of the Liberal,

⁷²² MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 195.

⁷²³ MacEwan, interview.

Conservative, and N.D.P. parties.⁷²⁴ Rather, MacEwan spoke of Labor as a “movement” that had a higher mission than the establishment parties - to use politics to change the power structure:

The goal of the Labor Party is not to form a government so much as to attempt to influence the course of governing. If a platoon of fighting men and women were elected to the legislature, so large that no party could govern without first granting justice to the people, then the Labor Party would have done far more than by becoming one more government, and being buried alongside a dozen other governments that did nothing.⁷²⁵

Writing to Acadia University political scientist Agar Adamson in April 1985, MacEwan stated that the party’s immediate aim was improve party organization and finances with the hope of electing additional MLAs at the next election.⁷²⁶ Once again, Cape Breton Centre and Cape Breton East appeared to be the most likely places to achieve a breakthrough – especially if established Labor Party leaders like Dan McKinnon and Michael Matheson continued to campaign in the interim. He also speculated that the diversity of the membership of the Labor Party – three candidates had been former Conservative supporters – “mitigate[d] strongly against any likelihood of the Labor Party being quietly folded up for an exodus into the N.D.P. camp.”⁷²⁷ Events that took place during the year would throw this belief into doubt.

In a special two-part report beginning on March 21, 1985, *Chronicle-Herald* reporter Peter Moreira outlined the collapse of the NDP vote in Cape Breton and the party’s plans for reviving its flagging fortunes.⁷²⁸ The party’s new organizer for the island, Duncan MacIntyre, stressed that the NDP needed to build an organization and find high-profile candidates. In a letter to members of the Labor

⁷²⁴ Paul MacEwan, “Report on the 1984 Provincial Election,” January 9, 1985, 8. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 1, Beaton Institute.

⁷²⁵ MacEwan, “Report on the 1984 Provincial Election.”

⁷²⁶ Paul MacEwan, “Letter to Agar Adamson,” April 26, 1985, 9. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 1, Beaton Institute. Although MacEwan added that even if other MLAs were not elected, he believed he had a sufficient base in his own riding to carry on this work.

⁷²⁷ Paul MacEwan, “Letter to Agar Adamson,” April 26, 1985, 9. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 1, Beaton Institute.

⁷²⁸ See: Peter Moreira, “Support has slowly slipped away,” *Chronicle-Herald*, March 21, 1985. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute; and Peter Moreira, “Rebuilding party support NDP aim in Cape Breton,” *Chronicle-Herald*, March 22, 1985. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

Party's executive, MacEwan tore into MacIntyre, noting that he was familiar with him and always found him to be intolerant, a snob and someone who put on upper-class airs. "I'm not afraid of him," he wrote. "He is another academic asshole. Still we must keep our eyes peeled for his mischief."⁷²⁹ What was more concerning for MacEwan was the strategy the NDP had adopted to organize and reach out to potential supporters – his own; this included monthly cable appearances. He concluded by suggesting that this series of articles indicated to him that the Labor Party was on the right track and that imitation was a sincere form of flattery. "But where they haven't got it is in the area of leadership and local people," he contended, "although we must watch out for them and keep active ourselves, as the only way we'll maintain our following is by the continued appearance of being active on a day-to-day basis."⁷³⁰

The New Democrats made great strides towards rebuilding their position later that autumn when Michael Matheson, former CBLP candidate and current party president, announced he was defecting to rejoin his former party shortly before Labor was scheduled to hold its annual convention.⁷³¹ Matheson told reporters that he had left the party because "MacEwan wanted to be chief cook and bottle-washer himself. He didn't seem to like having anyone else with any intellectual ability around him. As a leader he wasn't paying proper respect to his workers."⁷³² MacEwan initially put a brave face on the loss,⁷³³ telling reporters that it was better to have defections earlier rather than weeks before the

⁷²⁹ Paul MacEwan, "Letter to Labor Party executive," March 22, 1985. Paul MacEwan Fonds, Cape Breton Labor Party File 1, (MG 9, 30 A), Beaton Institute.

⁷³⁰ MacEwan, "Letter to Labor Party executive," March 22, 1985.

⁷³¹ Another party worker, Shirley Hillier, also announced plans to join the NDP at the same time, and Phyllis Golemiac quit to take up a post as policy chairperson on the NDP Cape Breton East riding association around this time.

⁷³² Iain McLeod, "Matheson defection a coup for NDP," *Halifax Daily News*, Nov. 21, 1985. Paul MacEwan Fonds, Cape Breton Labor Party File 1, (MG 9, 30 A), Beaton Institute. Matheson has never gone into detail publicly about exactly what prompted his falling out with MacEwan and the Labor Party and declined to explain his reasons in a recent interview. The bitterness that came from the split appears to have abated, however, as he has commended MacEwan's performance as an MLA and maintains contact with the former party leader. Matheson, interview.

⁷³³ Rather remarkably, another CBLP defector, Phyllis Golemiac told Ian Stewart that she had actually arranged for Matheson, herself and MacEwan to return to the NDP with party leader Alexa McDonough's blessing, but Matheson had jumped the gun and MacEwan demurred when he went public and lambasted his former leader. See: Stewart, "Chapter 12: The Cape Breton Labour Party," manuscript-in-progress, 32.

next election, and arguing that Matheson might have damaged his credibility in defecting after his election loss.⁷³⁴ But reaction turned venomous as the scope of the defections and the coverage they were receiving in the press became apparent.⁷³⁵ Colin Donovan, the party's youth wing leader, wrote to newspapers suggesting that Matheson "jumped ship before he was thrown out by angry party members upset with his dismal record as president."⁷³⁶ He also revealed that some potential Labor supporters had declined to join the party so long as Matheson was involved. MacEwan, in a letter to the *Halifax Daily News*, suggested that Matheson's sizable campaign war chest and poor results ("he placed a distant third, polling only 17 per cent of the vote and nearly losing his deposit") indicated that he was "never a figure of much political clout," and dismissed his frequent radio call-in appearances as being full of "wild statements and ill-considered opinions."⁷³⁷ Still, in spite of all his protestations, the Matheson defection likely signaled a hastening end to the party. In his book, *The Akerman Years*, which he dedicated in part to Matheson patriarch Murdock and his family, MacEwan quoted a personal letter the former NDP leader sent to him in 1968, which read, in part: "Paul, my old comrade, when our wives and sons and daughters have deserted us, the Mathesons will still be loyal."⁷³⁸

With the defections and other controversies⁷³⁹ still in the air, the party limped towards its annual convention. On November 30, 1985, about 50 people gathered at the League of the Cross Hall in

⁷³⁴ ----- "Defection better now than later: MacEwan," *Cape Breton Post*, November 14, 1985, 3.

⁷³⁵ *Cape Breton Post* columnist John Hanratty compared MacEwan's suggestion that these defections would actually strengthen his party as "the same as if the captain of the Titanic claimed to be glad he hits the iceberg because it would add so much to the voyage." He also suggested that "the fact that MacEwan tries to stretch things so far as to pretend that a disaster is actually a triumph is one of the reasons why his credibility is so low generally. He'd be a lot better off admitting the obvious once in a while, but don't hold your breath waiting for it. Even when he's patching the bullet holes, he'll continue to claim that he's never been in better shape." John Hanratty, "Second Thoughts: Paul MacEwan's façade," *Cape Breton Post*, November 15, 1985, 4.

⁷³⁶ Colin F. Donovan, "Letter to the Editor: Happy to see Matheson go." Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷³⁷ Paul MacEwan, "Letter to the Editor: MacEwan says of Matheson, 'who?'" *Daily News* (Halifax), December 9, 1985. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷³⁸ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 52.

⁷³⁹ MacEwan drew negative publicity when he apparently wrote a press release under former candidate Mary Strickland's name. Strickland contacted the *Cape Breton Post* to deny that she had made some of the quotes attributed to her in a Labor Party press release that accused the NDP of seeking a "mass defection" of the Labor

Dominion. Competing with the annual Santa Claus Parade, hunting season, and the work day, MacEwan noted the small turnout was somewhat expected, but argued that a small, committed group of supporters is better than a packed house full of Liberals and Tories only there for whatever patronage they can get out of it.⁷⁴⁰ Speaking to the attendees, he gave a standard stump speech to rally the faithful, contending that only Labor MLAs can protect against “Halifax interests” and using a multitude of newspaper articles to demonstrate that conditions were getting worse in Cape Breton. Patrick Jamieson, who attended the meeting and used it as a setting from which to write a critical essay⁷⁴¹ on MacEwan for the left-leaning independent monthly, the *New Maritimes*, commented on the political theatre that was at play during the meeting. Prior to voting for a new executive, MacEwan, who was leading the meeting, opened the ballot box to demonstrate it was empty and not stuffed with prefabricated votes. “It is the nature of his rapport with his followers that nothing is to be assumed in politics,” Jamieson wrote.⁷⁴² The reporter, who commented on the “family-like familiarity” of the meeting, suggests:

Perhaps not many political leaders would come away from such a convention without some discouragement, but MacEwan’s record indicates that he is able to gain his own consolations and satisfactions from such events. This is the realpolitik of the region, and in his own terms and expectations, the meeting probably went well. In many ways the event resembled a grassroots meeting put together by an organizer on a local issue, and that in effect is what it was, with MacEwan serving as organizer, animator and part-time chairman. On the evidence of this meeting alone, MacEwan is not likely to impress the media as having a bright future, but they now know enough not to count him out.⁷⁴³

Party’s former candidates and executive officers. “I never said that,” stated the former candidate and current party vice-president. “I agree with some of it but not the way he wrote it.” (Chris Hayes, “Says MacEwan wrote press release: Former party candidate denies statement on NDP,” *Cape Breton Post*, November 20, 1985, 28.) Although Strickland said she continued to support the party, the article seemed to confirm Matheson’s criticisms and proved embarrassing to the party.

⁷⁴⁰ Patrick Jamieson, “The Only Honest Politician: Paul MacEwan and the Strange World of Fourth Party Politics in Cape Breton,” *New Maritimes*, October, 1986, 4.

⁷⁴¹ MacEwan has taken issue with the accuracy of this report, pointing out that several factual errors were made. See: Paul MacEwan, “Email Correspondence with Author,” December 17, 2010; and Paul MacEwan, “Letter to the Editor: MacEwan on Jamieson: ‘Full of Errors,’” *New Maritimes*, November 1986, 3.

⁷⁴² Jamieson, “The Only Honest Politician,” 5.

⁷⁴³ Jamieson, “The Only Honest Politician,” 8.

Reflecting back on the meeting and the way it was perceived by his critics, MacEwan writes that it was “in effect, the final waving of the flag, but, by then, there was also a significant reduction of horizons as compared with the past, which [the writers of the] *New Maritimes* would appreciate only if they had also covered previous Labor Party conventions, which they had not done.”⁷⁴⁴

The media also noticed other signs that all was not well in the organization. Following a flurry of activity after the party’s general meeting, news of the Labor Party’s exploits diminished during the latter half of 1986. MacEwan’s foe on the opinion/editorial pages of the *Cape Breton Post*, John Hanratty, called the CBLP “imaginary” in a series of editorials about the state of party-politics on the island. Deeming it a splinter group or regional party at best and a one-man band at worst, Hanratty said the party would simply disappear without MacEwan at the helm. “The ‘party’ is simply a pretense so he won’t have to call himself an independent MLA, but that’s what he is,” the editorialist wrote. “Some of these realities are registering... Supporters will eventually see the futility of such a way-out protest vote.”⁷⁴⁵

In autumn 1986 there were further indications the Labor Party had become a shell of its former self. In advance of an expected by-election in Inverness South, MacEwan wrote to the province’s chief electoral officer to inquire whether the absence of a Labor Party candidate would change the party’s status and official registration would be affected if it didn’t field a candidate. “As you know in the last general election the Cape Breton Labor Party ran a man from Glace Bay there who received 33 votes,” he wrote. “It does not seem to me that there would be any benefit to the Cape Breton Labor Party entering a candidate in the by-election because we do not have any identified followers in that area.”⁷⁴⁶ According to the party’s most recent membership rolls, from just before the 1984 election, out of over

⁷⁴⁴ MacEwan, “Email Correspondence with Author,” December 17, 2010.

⁷⁴⁵ Jamieson, “The Only Honest Politician,” 9.

⁷⁴⁶ Paul MacEwan, “Letter to D. William MacDonald, Chief Electoral Officer of Nova Scotia,” October 14, 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

3,400 party members, only 10 came from Inverness County, which was split between two ridings.⁷⁴⁷

With a low vote total recorded in 1984 and few if any members, Inverness was very unlikely to elect a Labor Party MLA; however, according to the party's draft organizational plan for 1985-1986, Labor's two immediate goals were to "add additional seats in the next provincial election[,] to win any by-elections held in the meantime [and] to make the Labor Party a strong political force in all Cape Breton ridings in the next provincial election, so that whether individual seats are won or not, the party will be strong and respected everywhere."⁷⁴⁸ The party's failure to even attempt to contest the by-election revealed its inability to expand after the election, and the anemic state of its overall organization.

By December 1986, MacEwan confirmed that his personal future with the Labor Party was in doubt. In a press release he said he was seriously considering stepping down as leader of the party and severing his ties with the organization. He wrote that the political situation had changed substantially from 1981-1982 when the party was founded, and that its continued existence would only serve to split the anti-Conservative vote:

At that time [1982], the Tories were supreme and the attempt was not so much to try to defeat them as a government, as to dramatize the raw deal that Cape Breton was receiving from that government[.] In a very real sense the Labor Party was set up to replace the NDP as a political force in industrial Cape Breton but that is no longer a concern as the NDP has destroyed itself as a credible force here anyway. In my view the more important thing to-day is to see that no avoidable obstacle is placed in the way of those who are in a position to defeat the Buchanan government, which the Cape Breton Labor Party is very obviously in no position to do.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷ ----- "Hand-written membership counts by riding/county," last dated September 13, 1984. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute. In his in-progress manuscript, Ian Stewart notes that organizing within Inverness County proved exceedingly difficult. He writes: "One Inverness South organizer garnered the five signatures necessary to fill out a candidate's nomination papers by tapping into the sullen discontent at a Port Hawkesbury trailer park. A return visit a fortnight later, however, proved disappointing. Most of the new "recruits" declined even to answer the door; in the interval, the local MLA had seen the list of names and arrived bearing offers of (at least short-term) employment." Stewart, "Chapter 12. The Cape Breton Labor Party," manuscript-in-progress, p.16.

⁷⁴⁸ ----- "Cape Breton Labor Party: Draft Organizational Plan – 1985-1986," Undated (c. late 1984, early 1985). Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷⁴⁹ ----- "Press Release," December 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

MacEwan also admitted candidly that since its formation, the party had not been able to attract the type of support it needed to become a viable political vehicle. “Organized Labor has ignored it, and I feel the votes I received in Cape Breton Nova, running on the Labor ticket, were in most cases personal votes,” he stated.⁷⁵⁰ Although he noted he had not made any final decisions, as he surveyed the mood of Cape Bretoners he noted that he detected a “growing sentiment in favor of [Liberal leader] Vince MacLean and the belief that he can beat John Buchanan and bring about a government that would be an improvement over the very poor show we have now.”⁷⁵¹ The veteran MLA’s statements suggested to reporters that MacEwan was now letting it be known that he was ready to jump to the Liberal Party. That party, however, did not appear to welcome him with open arms. MacLean said the maverick MLA’s chances at joining the party were “not likely,” and the president of the Cape Breton Nova Liberal Association stated that the constituency’s “executive is unanimously against Mr. MacEwan.”⁷⁵²

Privately, MacEwan said he felt that the financial burden of the party was also a major factor in his decision to withdraw from the party. He noted:

I had to close down the Labor party, because I could no longer afford to keep it out of my own pocket. I did not have the resources Lloyd Shaw did to run a private political party. I only had my own MLA salary, and as much as MLAs are held up to public ridicule for being overpaid and underworked, there was a limit to what I could do every time someone made a trip to Sydney to attend a meeting and wanted twenty dollars out of me for gasoline to get home.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵⁰ ----- “Press Release,” December 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷⁵¹ ----- “Press Release,” December 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷⁵² ----- “MacEwan may abandon Labor Party.” Unknown Newspaper, December, 6, 1986, 2. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷⁵³ Paul MacEwan, “Email Correspondence with Author,” September 4, 2010. Ian Stewart notes that even in the party’s most active years, fundraising was difficult. He writes: “In 1982, the party collected only \$2076 from 33 donors (including \$600 from an Adrian MacDougall). The following year, the total declined to \$1861 despite another \$600 donation from the still generous Adrian MacDougall and \$500 from Harry Steele, President of Eastern Provincial Airways, before slightly rebounding in 1984 to \$2057 from 15 contributors. Things might have been different had not a cautious bank manager dissuaded a potential benefactor from donating thousands of dollars; as it was, the Cape Breton Labor Party was doomed to a threadbare existence.” Stewart, “Chapter 12: The Cape Breton Labor Party,” manuscript-in-progress, 16. Stewart also notes that MacEwan personally gave \$12,000 to other CBLP candidates for the 1984 campaign, 19.

Despite his uncertain partisan future, less than two weeks after his press release appeared, MacEwan notified the province's chief electoral officer that he, party president Charles Starzyczny, vice-president Ronald Dingwall, and honorary president Dan "Diddles" MacKinnon, were requesting the CBLP's official registration to lapse at the end of the calendar year.⁷⁵⁴ MacEwan later withdrew the request in order to keep the party alive in name only so that it could appoint returning officers for the next election. However, for all intents and purposes, the CBLP had come to the end of its life as a political entity in Nova Scotia.

MacEwan notes that at the time of Matheson's defection the party only had three functioning riding associations, Cape Breton East, Centre, and Nova. With Matheson and supporters like Phyllis Golemiac gone, the Cape Breton East riding association collapsed and Cape Breton Centre was mostly inactive. "No formal motion was ever passed to disband the party, because people voted on this issue as Matheson did, with their feet rather than in a ballot box," he writes. "But it was clear to all concerned once the 1984 election was over, that the experiment had failed."⁷⁵⁵

Conclusion

When writing a history of the Nova Scotia New Democrats, Paul MacEwan and his experiment with the Cape Breton Labour Party will likely figure prominently in any scholar's work. Not only did the veteran MLA help to build the party in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, but he also set about trying to destroy it in the 1980s – or at least its leadership. Yet, the history of the Labor Party should not be viewed as simply one chapter in the story of the trials and tribulations of a Canadian social democratic party. The CBLP was not solely a schismatic party that was the ultimate result of one man's internal disputes and personal conflicts with the NDP. Rather, it is also emblematic of a particular regional identity.

⁷⁵⁴ Paul MacEwan et al, "Letter to D. William MacDonald," December 15, 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute.

⁷⁵⁵ Paul MacEwan, "Email Correspondence with Author," September 12, 2010.

As a central figure in the short life of the CBLP, MacEwan's presence looms large over its narrative. Undoubtedly his political savvy, organizational experience and personal popularity were integral to the entity's growth. However, Cape Breton's distinct socio-cultural identity and history, its economically depressed state, and its alienation from the provincial government and mainland Nova Scotia, as embodied in "Halifax" greatly informed the Labor Party's political perspective and direction. The party's active and aggrieved base in industrial Cape Breton, its clarion calls for an end to regional economic disparity and its strong rhetorical identification with an islander identity were all considerable factors in its growth. Constricted by time, money, and the partisan ties that still held considerable sway over voters, the party's short-term failure should not necessarily be viewed as a rejection of the politicization of such a Cape Breton identity. Rather, the CBLP was but one form of such a political collectivity.

The party's ultimate demise, then, speaks more broadly to impediments within the conventional party system for such political action over the long-term and not to any lack of potency in the regional identity in itself. Labor's immediate political statement, not its longevity, should be rightly held up as its legacy. "People can only give so much," MacEwan writes in his manuscript. "Having done what we did, there was a general consensus that we had made our point, and had shown Halifax that they could not toy with the people of Cape Breton, throw democracy and free speech out the window, and get away with it."⁷⁵⁶ Matheson agrees, stating that he believes Labor Party was "a shock treatment for the established parties" and that the political lesson it offers is "Don't underestimate people that you take for granted. You take them for granted and they'll come back and bite you."⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 202.

⁷⁵⁷ Matheson, interview.

Part 2: Context and Comparison: Employing a Frame Analysis to Understand The Importance of Process for Regional Projects

Identifying the Problem(s): Diagnostic Framing by Regionalist Interest Groups

In the spring of 1976, Sudbury teacher Ted Pritchard assigned his Grade 8 students a project for Education Week that asked them to imagine their community in 2001 and to create essays and poster boards explaining their vision. Pritchard was shocked and horrified by what they produced. “Many of the posters and essays painted a gloomy picture of economic devastation.... One poster featured a skull and crossbones proclaiming, ‘Sudbury is Dead.’ Another showed a balloon with the inscription, ‘Sudbury,’ and a pin poised to burst it [and] the winning essay by John Loukidelis depicted Sudbury as a ghost town and mourned INCO’s bankruptcy.”⁷⁵⁸ Perhaps more distressing was the sense of hopeless and powerlessness the students expressed when asked if they thought they could prevent Sudbury from becoming a ghost town. Out of a class of 30, only 10 expected they would find jobs in the city when they were adults while the others fully expected having to move elsewhere even if they wanted to stay.⁷⁵⁹

Sudbury was not unique in Northern Ontario – a place where single-industry communities, and the ghost towns of single-industry communities of the past, were common – nor was the students’ despair uncommon among the larger population.⁷⁶⁰ Indeed, within Labrador, Northern Ontario and Cape Breton, during the periods under examination in this dissertation, there existed a common fear that out-migration brought about by the decline of resource extraction industries would disrupt families and communities as a whole. A Sudburian needed only to look toward Sydney, Nova Scotia to see an

⁷⁵⁸ ----- “Pessimism grips youth,” *Northern Life*, June 6, 1976, p. 2. Loukidelis’ essay titled ‘The City,’ describes deserted streets and boarded-over windows and doors swinging in the wind. He imagines himself the mayor of the city, now reduced to population of 4,200 from 97,000 after mining giant INCO went bankrupt. He concludes that at least “the pay is good and it’s not hard being mayor of a ghost town.” John Loukidelis, “The City,” *Northern Life*, June 6, 1976, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁹ ----- “Pessimism grips youth.” Two years later a historic and bitter strike by employees at INCO, the community major industrial employer, devastated the community and made the students’ words and images appear prophetic.

⁷⁶⁰ See, for example: Kerry M. Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006, 361-398.

industrial city in a more advanced state of decline,⁷⁶¹ while people in the booming communities of Wabush and Labrador City that were struggling to keep up with a population influx might have wondered what would happen if and when the mines were exhausted.⁷⁶²

When assessing the state of their community and its future prospects in the face of phenomena such as out-migration, a common understanding emerged among these populations: they were living in various stages of the usual life-span of an exploited hinterland.⁷⁶³ As Geoffrey Weller notes in his exploration of hinterland politics in northwestern Ontario, a hinterland⁷⁶⁴ region has “material, people and money extracted from it to serve the interests of the metropolis.”⁷⁶⁵ Sharing a sense or knowledge of the tenuousness of their hinterland’s position, members of these communities identified two key means of preventing or reversing their decline: diversification of the economy and the development or

⁷⁶¹ For a background of the 1967 decline in coal and its initial impact of Sydney, see: CP Special, “March through Sydney: 20,000 protest DOSCO closing,” *The Toronto Daily Star*, November 20, 1967, 5. Another example can be found in the neighbouring community of Broughton, a ghost town that had been initially constructed when the mines were more active and profitable; see: K. MacLeod, “Book tells story of Cape Breton’s ghost town,” *The Cape Breton Post*, December 12, 2012, URL: <http://www.capebretonpost.com/community/book-tells-story-of-cape-bretons-ghost-town-22620/>

⁷⁶² See: ----- “Carol Consumers,” *Carol Link*, June 4, 1970, p. 8. “The time for talking is past and we need action NOW, not when we are left with a ghost town. There are families leaving the area for various reasons, but one reason they all have in common is the high cost of living.”

⁷⁶³ Tom Miller, “Cabin Fever: The Province of Ontario and its Norths,” in Donald C. MacDonald and Don Scott, eds. *Government and Politics of Ontario*, 2nd Edition. (Toronto: Van Nostrand Rheinhold, 1980), 227-228. “Among the people of northern Ontario the feeling of belonging to an exploited hinterland is almost universal,” Miller states. Hinterland regional infrastructure – be it transportation or communication systems – and key segments of the hinterland economy are structured around a capitalist metropolitan desire to facilitate extraction as opposed to the hinterland region’s own current or future interests or needs. See, for example: Henry Veltmeyer, “The Political Economy of Natural Resource Extraction: A New Model or Extractive Imperialism?,” *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue canadienne d’études du développement* 34, no.1, 2013, 79-95; Michael Pretes, “Underdevelopment in Two Norths: The Brazilian Amazon and the Canadian Arctic,” *Arctic* 41, no.2 (June, 1988), 109-116.

⁷⁶⁴ Weller, channeling Maurice Cranston, notes that using metropolis-hinterland terminology brings along emotional connotations as the very words carry implied status assumptions: “hinterland is a ‘boo’ word and metropolis a ‘hurrah’ word in common discourse.” (See: G. R. Weller. “Hinterland Politics: The Case of Northwestern Ontario.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, 10, no. 4 (December 1977), 732.

⁷⁶⁵ Weller, “Hinterland Politics: The Case of Northwestern Ontario,” 734.

redevelopment of appropriate infrastructure systems to sustain it.⁷⁶⁶ And although there was some debate among community boosters within these regions about the best possible ways to achieve such sustainability, during the period under study there was broad agreement that some form of government intervention (or more generally a political intervention) was ultimately necessary to moderate the negative effects of a free market on these economically fragile places. As Tom Miller writes in his contribution on Ontario's provincial north(s) in the edited collection *Government and Politics of Ontario*, in resource-based economies, "[t]he dirge of the folk singer, 'Oh! The gold rush is over,/ Now the bum's rush is on,'..."⁷⁶⁷ was a tune that was all too familiar and the government was seen to be in the best position to write a new score.

Heather M. Mall explains that strong national growth in Canada during the 1960s brought about explicit redistribution initiatives that suggested Keynesian insights were dominating policy-making and thinking; these initiatives included the first modest efforts by the federal government to create programmes designed to combat regional disparities – mostly by providing incentives for industry to locate in slow growing areas and through infrastructure investments. Not long after his election in 1968, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau expanded regional development initiatives as a national unity strategy with the creation of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE).⁷⁶⁸ Following an extensive policy review in 1972, these efforts became more multidimensional and expanded through co-operation with provincial governments.⁷⁶⁹ The state responsibility paradigm was also still widely present within

⁷⁶⁶ Mel Watkins, "The Staple Theory Revisited," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 12 no. 5, (Winter 1977), 83-95. See a more recent discussion of this concept in: Paul Kellogg, *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy after Left Nationalism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

⁷⁶⁷ Miller, "Cabin Fever," 243.

⁷⁶⁸ Critics of DREE's initial strategy of locational grants designed to support "growth poles" noted this concept was ultimately less concerned with the location of industry than about the potential of certain types of industry. Without much thought into the type of industry transplanted into the periphery, these strategies failed to provide sustainable and propulsive development. See Janine Brodie, *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism*, 174-175.

⁷⁶⁹ See: Heather M. Hall, "For all regions, regional development agencies: the history and next generation of RDAs in Canada," in Nicola Bellini, Mike Danson, and Henrik Halkier, eds., *Regional Development Agencies: The Next*

other types of welfare initiatives until the existing Keynesian welfare state orthodoxy was undermined by economic, political and ideological developments in the mid-1970s to the early 1980s.⁷⁷⁰

Nevertheless, even as cracks appeared to be forming in the general consensus for the need for a strong welfare state, many people within these regions looked to government – particularly provincial governments that were constitutionally responsible for many social services – as their best hope to protect and foster their vulnerable communities.⁷⁷¹ It should not be surprising, then, that when this type of diversification and sustainable planning was found to be wanting or not present at all, government was singled out for particularly harsh criticism and resentment. This disappointment derived from an exploitative relationship tending to be compounded by notions of a great lost opportunity: the promise a region once held to develop its own metropolitan centre(s) had been wasted, delayed or stymied to a

Generation?: Networking, Knowledge and Regional Policies (Regional Studies Association). New York, NY: Routledge, 2012, 157.

⁷⁷⁰ Jeanette Brejning, *Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare State: The Historical and Contemporary Role of CSR in the Mixed Economy of Welfare* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 2. As Brejning writes: “The ‘welfare state crisis’ of those decades dampened welfare state expansion in many countries and challenged the generally taken-for-granted value of state responsibility for welfare. The notion of responsibility was central to the political debate as arguments were put forward about the economic, political and sometimes moral advantages of shifting welfare responsibilities to non-state providers such as the commercial sector, the non-profit sector and the informal sector,” 2.

⁷⁷¹ Long-term planning could ensure that a portion of the taxes and royalties accrued by the government during the exploitative process would conceivably be reinvested in the area to prepare it for this eventuality. Moreover, beyond possessing the levers of power necessary to assist in sustainable community building, some people in these areas suggested that government had a moral obligation to be a partner and should have the best interests of its citizens – all of its citizens – in mind when exercising this power. For an example of the morality argument, see: Harold J. Mercer, Wabush, “Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” May 22, 1969, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.012, Memorial University Archives. “Where’s their moral obligation to the Province, and to their employees. Maybe they think like our Government, ‘forget the people here in Labrador West, it’s the trend, even their Government on the Island thinks so.” (It is important to note this source is from Newfoundland and Labrador and may be historically contingent. Newfoundland was a recent addition to the federation and this type of language may be reflecting a distinct political culture.) When a resource was exhausted or no longer cost effective to extract, or when an economic base supporting other businesses disappeared, private interests could be expected to leave an area; a government would still have jurisdiction over what remained and presumably an interest in an area’s future. A renewed trend towards shared responsibility and sustainability has emerged in recent decades. See: Gavin Hilson, “Sustainable Development Policies in Canada’s Mining Sector: An Overview of Government and Industry Efforts,” *Environmental Science & Policy* 3, no. 4, (August 2000), 201-211.

point where it was unlikely to ever materialize.⁷⁷² Realization that dreams of a prosperous and vibrant community were either deferred or destroyed prompted the perceived *victims* of this *injustice* to direct their anger and bitterness towards the *perpetrator* (and/or accomplice).

Who perpetrated this exploitation? While negative sentiment was directed to the metropolis (or metropolises) as a whole, three constituent components were often named: capitalist private business interests (predominantly corporate entities capable of undertaking capital-intensive production) from outside the hinterland, governments operating from the seat of the metropolis; and people living within the metropolitan area(s) who were seen to enjoy the benefits of the hinterland exploitation or who were otherwise treated more favourably by the first two components. In the three Canadian hinterland examples under examination, corporate interests were – in the past or present – responsible for much of the actual extraction process in the respective primary industries, while government-owned enterprises played an important but secondary role.⁷⁷³ Yet in reading media commentary and communications from the period there appears to be a strong degree of resignation or acceptance with respect to the actions of these private corporate interests. Exploitation by these agents, while at times frustrating and damaging to local interests, was nevertheless almost expected and understood as a consequence of the nature of the economic system and the limited influence of ideas of corporate social responsibility and good corporate citizenship.⁷⁷⁴ Attitudes towards government and individuals profiting

⁷⁷² See: G. R. Weller, "Hinterland Politics," 734: "Just as much of the politics of northwestern Ontario in the early years after Confederation was moulded by a feeling and a desire that the region should become a major metropolitan centre, much of today's politics in northwestern Ontario is moulded by the realization on the part of many that this vision has not been, and is never likely to be, realized. This has led to a great deal of alienation and frustration in the population which considers metropolitanization as the only means to eliminate disparities with southern Ontario and to provide a range of employment opportunities that will enable their native-born to live and work in the region."

⁷⁷³ Although the state initiative, DEVCO, took over coal mining operations in 1967 – plans for economic diversification were side-swiped by the emerging energy crisis.

⁷⁷⁴ It is important to note that in industrial parts of these regions, union membership was high and provided an outlet to agitate for better conditions and a share of prosperity for at least some members of the community.

from this exploitative system – particularly if they were members of the provincial community⁷⁷⁵ – were much less forgiving. In the context of the 1960s, intellectual arguments from the likes of George Grant,⁷⁷⁶ and the burgeoning field of Canadian political economy immersed in dependency theory, supported and amplified these ideas. As the continentalization of the economy advanced, debates over what was and was not possible within the national economy grew pronounced.⁷⁷⁷ On a local, or regional level, debates over economic nationalism took on particular contours depending on the perceived trajectory of development and/or resource exhaustion.

Resentment because of unmitigated or poorly mitigated exploitation⁷⁷⁸ was thus reflected in a broad feeling of alienation from government and compounded by a perception that government was neglecting hinterland communities in favour of people within metropolitan areas. By virtue of their proximity to a metropolitan-based government, the concentration and size of their population and representation in government, and the maturity and stability of their communities, the people within these areas were thought to have a very different lived experience. Consideration of how to manage

⁷⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that while the federal and provincial governments had distinct and shared constitutional responsibilities over these regions, more anger tended to be directed towards the provincial government and provincial metropolises.

⁷⁷⁶ Grant argued in *Lament For A Nation* that Canada had ceased to be a sovereign country. Building on Harold Innis's suggestion that the country had gone from colony to nation and back to colony, Grant meditated on how Canada was being economically and culturally drawn into the American sphere of influence. Writing in the aftermath of John Diefenbaker's defeat and the Pearson government's attempts to soothe relations with the American government, Grant decries the death of "One Canada" at the hands of a ruling class of liberal elites. He criticized Liberal Party policies that promoted greater economic integration with the United States and the growth of a branch plant economy. Interestingly, Grant lays the blame for Canada's sorry state at the feet of modernity itself as opposed to capitalist self-interest or other factors. As Andrew Potter writes in a preface to the 40th anniversary edition, the book's tone "is one of lamentation, not provocation. George Grant did not intend *Lament For A Nation* as a wake-up call to Canadian nationalists, although that is the effect it had." Potter notes the book inspired a generation of leftist nationalists. See: George Grant, *Lament For A Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism, 40th Anniversary Edition*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, xxvii-xxviii.

⁷⁷⁷ See Kellogg, *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy after Left Nationalism*, 57.

⁷⁷⁸ In this respect, it's worth remembering Donald Creighton's argument in *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, later augmented by the Laurentian Thesis running through his two-volume Macdonald biography, that Canada's history was driven more by power, leadership and economic development than by significant political (read: constitutional) ideas. See Christopher Moore's introduction in: Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence: A Study in Commerce and Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, xiv.

these differences in a way that could broaden and strengthen a diverse provincial community was judged to be greatly ineffective or completely missing. As such, these hinterland sentiments suggested that attachment to an imagined provincial community was weakened in certain respects. Whether through perception or based on firm material evidence, exploitation, alienation/neglect, and poor management of differences between people within these regions and their counterparts elsewhere led to anger, hostility and estrangement; in turn, expressions of these feelings were often directed towards provincial governments as the ultimate managers of the resource extraction project (or as proxy for other project participants such as fellow residents from other regions or private corporate interests). Nevertheless, while passive disaffection and feelings of hopelessness were common, some people within these communities chose varying avenues to take action – including forming regional protest parties – and developed arguments to support their decisions.

How and why did this interpretation of circumstances – the exploited, alienated, neglected and distinct hinterland battling a dominating, greedy, ignorant, and indifferent metropolis – emerge and sustain itself to a point where it was accepted as common sense⁷⁷⁹ and the basis for a sense of regional identity? And why did some people within these hinterland communities opt to take certain actions – such as forming new regional political parties – to express their displeasure and attempt to bring about change? Answers to the first questions can be found using a process called framing to analyze the historical and contemporary rhetoric used to create a narrative and to rally popular opinion. It is slightly more challenging to provide an answer to the latter question, however, as it necessitates a critical understanding of motive that substantially differed among the people involved.

⁷⁷⁹ I use this term in the Gramscian sense, where certain beliefs become self-evident and beyond debate through hegemonic processes of cultural production. See, for example: Kate Crehan, *Gramsci's Common Sense: Inequality and Its Narratives*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

The Injustice Frame: Exploitation as Internal Colonialism – Commentary on Material Conditions

As Benford and Snow state, the “injustice frame” is frequently employed by protest movements and interest groups as part of the diagnostic framing task. By identifying “victims” and attributing blame, activists can begin to prepare sympathetic people to take action by mobilizing to right a moral wrong. The three regional protest parties under review in this study, and other regionalists active in the same periods, prominently employed the “injustice frame” as they advanced the “exploitation argument” and “alienation and neglect argument” with respect to socio-economic conditions.

In “Coastal Labrador: Incorporation, Exploitation and Underdevelopment,”⁷⁸⁰ J.D. House delineates three aspects of economic exploitation. First, he notes that productive exploitation⁷⁸¹ entails control over means of production and administration. Second, market exploitation⁷⁸² takes place when

⁷⁸⁰ J.D. House, “Coastal Labrador: Incorporation, Exploitation and Underdevelopment,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1980), 98. He argues that “the contemporary history of Labrador, that is its history since Europeans and their North American descendants started going there in the sixteenth century, has to be understood in terms of a changing drama of interactions among the natural resources of the region, the peoples native to Labrador (Indians, Inuit and Settlers), and European/North American outsiders interested in exploiting the resources for their own use.”

⁷⁸¹ In an example of the productive exploitation at work in Labrador, Burgess and the NLP noted that state control and administration of timber rights worked against the community’s own economic interests. Industrialists John C. Doyle and John Shaheen had obtained control of timber rights in Labrador due in large part to close relations with the Smallwood government and the lack of development of these resources was a strong grievance. (----- “Will the New Labrador Party be another burden for Joey?” *The Aurora*, November 5, 1969, 9.) The private rights-holders would ultimately decide when to exercise their options and Burgess condemned the provincial government for giving away this type of control. The NLP called for collectivism and economic nationalism primarily to obtain a measure of control over the area’s economic future. By sacrificing control to a private interest the local communities could not keep accountable, the Newfoundland government was aiding and abetting in domination of the area. In a brief to the Snowden Commission, the party argued that “all of Labrador’s wood should not be controlled by just two companies, the resources of a province should be under the control of governments, both federal and provincial and not left to the capitalistic whims of a few entrepreneurs.” (See: ----- “NLP brief to Royal Commission,” *the Aurora*, May 23, 1973, 19.) Although the governments were not seen as especially interested in Labrador’s internal development, the NLP saw greater opportunities to affect change through the state. The Labor Party similarly noted how economic domination led to political subservience. In a policy statement released following a monthly meeting, the Labor Party executive stated: “The key to economic independence lies in the successful operation of steel, coal and other major resource industries.” The Labor Party executive suggested that as long as these industries were run by the Halifax and Ottawa governments, they would not be run in the interests of the Cape Breton people but rather in the interests of Halifax and Ottawa.” (----- “Labor Party executive advocates political, economic independence,” *Cape Breton Post*, January 24, 1986, Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567), File #1, Nova Scotia Archives).

⁷⁸² Market exploitation can be seen in arguments about the high cost of living in the area. In a brief submitted to the Mid-North Development Foundation, the NLP noted that “the high cost of food and clothing is the

one party exercises monopoly power. Finally, indirect exploitation occurs when outsiders infringe upon local economic adaptations while pursuing their own interests in an area's resources.⁷⁸³ Yet, in advancing his argument, House notes that he employs exploitation as an evaluative concept that is broader than its use in Marxist economics; in his conception, exploitation refers to "any social relationship in which one party, through exercising its superior bargaining position, gains unfairly at the expense of the other."⁷⁸⁴

House's flexible conceptualization of exploitation – particularly its reach beyond classical Marxist class structures – is very useful to keep in mind when exploring three hinterlands where an aggrieved sense of regionalism emerged and was marshalled by some people into new partisan formations. Regionalists used the term "exploitation" and its variants to explain complex socio-economic processes at work within their communities. By characterizing this exploitation as an affront to the region, and at times either downplaying or ignoring class,⁷⁸⁵ they developed a powerful rhetoric to diagnostically frame a pervasive "injustice." This notion aided their attempts to construct regionalist narratives and symbolism that appealed to the popular imagination and prompted a demand for action.

Casting about for discursive devices to accentuate the victimized position of their regions and regional populations, members of all three parties took inspiration, language and imagery from

predominant factor in the high cost of living in Labrador," and the high degree of exploitation of Labradorians was, "just because we live in the north." (See: ---- "Brief Submitted to the Mid-Canada Development Foundation Inc. By the New Labrador Party," *The Carol Link*, June 11, 1970, 1.) A group known as the Carol Consumers published a series of articles comparing food prices at the local supermarket (a virtual monopoly) to prices in other communities. Although private interests in small communities selling these necessities of life existed in monopolistic or near monopolistic environments, once again the state was looked to as the administrator and therefore avenue to best affect change. "To the Newfoundland Government we ask for facts and figures as to the total revenue from this area, and then the total expenditures, (that is if it's not too embarrassing). Next, we ask for a government inquiry to ascertain if the cost of living is too high here. (That's if it's worth the effort and not too risky on campaign funds)." (Harold J. Mercer, Wabush. "Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood," May 22, 1969, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.012, Memorial University Archives).

⁷⁸³ J.D. House, "Coastal Labrador," 99-100.

⁷⁸⁴ J.D. House, "Coastal Labrador," 99.

⁷⁸⁵ Were these terms conflated due to labour force stratification? Note difference in CBLP language here.

contemporary global decolonization movements to bring a sense of moral authority and immediacy to their concerns. Initially, colonialism was understood to refer to a system of legal control and economic exploitation emanating from an external imperial centre of power over a foreign population – typically overseas and with a distinctive component of ethnicity. To employ the language of colonialism within a domestic context required a re-evaluation or expansion of the concept's definition.

Mexican sociologists Pablo Gonzalez Casanova and Rodolfo Stavenhagen began popularizing the term “internal colonialism” in the 1960s⁷⁸⁶ in reference to this type of power relationship, and as a concept it was most thoroughly interrogated by Michael Hechter's book of the same name. Examining how industrialism disadvantaged Britain's “Celtic fringe,” he argued that the low prestige of a peripheral culture – in this case, the Welsh, Scottish and Irish cultures – cultivates and legitimizes cultural division of labour and stratification of the economy.⁷⁸⁷ Hechter's case-study supported the relevance of internal colonialism interpretation in the U.K., but as Michel Huyseune writes in *Modernity and Secession: the Social Sciences and the Political Discourse of the Lega Nord in Italy*, its general validity is more controversial and it has fallen out of favour among some sociologists.⁷⁸⁸ “Critics of the internal-colonialism paradigm have pointed out that economic disparity within Western nations cannot be interpreted as colonial relations,” he writes.⁷⁸⁹ Moreover, Huyseune notes that this paradigm would

⁷⁸⁶ The term itself has been traced back to Maurice Dabb's work in 1937. See: Joseph L. Love, “Modeling Internal Colonialism: History and Prospect,” *World Development* 17, no. 6, (1989), 906.

⁷⁸⁷ Joseph L. Love, “Modeling Internal Colonialism,” 907. As Love writes in his review of the development of internal colonialism, “This cultural division of labor is the foundation of the survival or recrudescence of nationalism of minorities in developed countries, because this stratification system gives ‘...cultural distinctions political salience by systematically linking them to individual life chances.’”

⁷⁸⁸ Michel Huyseune. *Modernity and Secession: The Social Sciences and The Political Discourse of the Lega Nord in Italy*, (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 18.

⁷⁸⁹ See also: George P. Landow, “The Metaphorical Use of Colonialism and Related Terms,” *Political Discourse: Theories of Colonialism and Postcolonialism*, June 6, 2002. URL: <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/colony2.html>. He notes: “Colonialism and colonize, in other words, have become codewords for any relation involving exploitation. Although authors who use them thus acquire certain rhetorical advantages typical of using politically correct and politically fashionable terms, they also create serious problems as well. In particular, as Sara Suleri and Chandra Talpade Mohanty point out, such rhetorical and metaphorical uses of terms involved with colonization unfortunately (1) turn away from the specific historical realities of colonialism and postcolonialism, and (2) thereby falsely imply that we know all there is to know about

not explain why nationalism would revive in economically well-off areas.⁷⁹⁰ Although there is some evidence of labour stratification within the populations/areas under review in this dissertation (resource extraction and exploitation is fundamental to their economies), the degree of political subordination and exclusion from the metropolitan power that Huyseune argues is required for “colonial relations” to be a convincing description of the power dynamics is mostly absent among the non-Indigenous settler society.⁷⁹¹

Whether the sociological concept of internal colonialism in a given context stands up to empirical historical scrutiny is somewhat of a secondary concern when considering its power to frame the discourses that shape perceptions of a given population’s circumstances, however.⁷⁹² Scholars have

these realities, particularly (3) that all colonialism and colonization was pretty much the same. Finally, (4) when applied to women, such terminology implies that all women, particularly all so-called Third World women, had the same experience and that it has to be judged by the standards and experiences of American and European feminist assumptions.” Huyseune writes: “Minorities within Europe rarely if ever experienced the degree of political subordination of colonies, since their elites were not systematically excluded from metropolitan power.” Michel Huyseune, *Modernity and secession*, 18.

⁷⁹⁰ Michel Huyseune, *Modernity and secession*, 18.

⁷⁹¹ Notwithstanding the lack of local opportunity for post-secondary education that could hinder career advancement within government and business, around the time these three parties emerged local elites were generally not excluded from metropolitan power in the same manner as historic examples of classical colonies. The exception that ultimately proves the rule, would be Labrador (especially prior to Tom Burgess’ election as an MLA). Successful candidates for political office were virtually always parachuted in from the island of Newfoundland and the local population was systematically excluded from positions of authority. The racial/ethnic demographics within Labrador very likely figured significantly in this power-relationship. For example, Rev. F. W. Peacock and Rev. Carl Major, Chair and Secretary of the Ministerial Association, wrote to F. W. Rowe, Minister of Labrador Affairs in 1968 noting there was limited work available at the Churchill Falls mega project for Labrador residents (including settlers, Eskimos and Indians) and presently no Eskimos or Indians working there. See: Rev. F. W. Peacock and Rev. Carl Major, Chair and Secretary of the Ministerial Association, “Letter to Dr. F. W. Rowe, Minister of Labrador Affairs,” May 15, 1968. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.011, Memorial University Archives. In another example, during the Royal Commission on Labrador (Snowden Commission) Rev. Francis Buckle, who had spent five years at Cartwright, noted the absence of a native Labradorian among the commissioners: “In what Province or Territory of Canada would people tolerate an investigating group where three of four members were comparative newcomers to such an area and the fourth person was a dispenser of white man’s laws.” See: ----- “The local scene,” the *Aurora*, October 4, 1972, 3. Internal colonialism could well be a valid way to conceptualize the experience of Indigenous persons within all three areas under review; however, their experience was not indicative of the wider populations of these areas.

⁷⁹² Sean Mills, in his superb *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*, explains how decolonization ideas gained hegemony within leftist circles in Quebec, and particularly Montreal, during the 1960s. By the early 1970s, although these ideas became more complicated and challenged within intellectual circles (along lines of race, gender and sexuality), popular notions of Quebec as an internal colony abounded outside of these circles. Although Mills argues the potency of the anti-colonial rhetoric dissipated as the decade progressed, its lasting affects on Quebecois identity were well-known. See: Sean Mills, *The Empire Within:*

noted how internal colonialism rhetoric can represent an attempt at strategic essentialism in identity creation⁷⁹³ or provide legal justification for secession⁷⁹⁴ within the discourse of nationalist movements. Among the parties under review here, an argument could be made that this type of rhetoric contributed, in part, to the discourses of regionalisms each group sought to manifest into a political identity. There is less evidence that these parties aimed to employ the rhetorical argument of colonialism to justify secession, if secession was part of a party's aims.

Above all, however, discursively using internal colonialism as a framing technique provided these movements with what Robert K. Thomas has called "an obvious and compelling way to sum up a situation."⁷⁹⁵ The frame of an empire exploiting and dominating a colony was universally known and there was great currency in contemporary decolonizing campaigns and strategies employed both by classic colonies and internal colonies.⁷⁹⁶ Jack Hicks pinpoints the concept's peak reach among North American audiences when it was used by political actors during the 1960s American civil rights era,⁷⁹⁷

Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 207-216.

⁷⁹³ See: Jack Hicks, "On the Application of Theories of 'Internal Colonialism' to Inuit Societies," Presentation at Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association Winnipeg, June 5, 2004, 9. URL: <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2004/Hicks.pdf> . Hicks cites the work of Kristian Stokke and Anne Kirsti Ryntveit on Tamil separatism in Sri Lanka.

⁷⁹⁴ Michel Huyseune, *Modernity and secession*, 18. Surveying the European periphery around the turn of the century, Huyseune identifies nationalist movements picking up the rhetoric of internal colonialism because "[t]he term itself was a politically powerful weapon, since within international law a situation of colonial dependence was considered the only justification for secession," Huyseune writes. See also: John Stone, "Internal colonialism in comparative perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, (1979), 279.

⁷⁹⁵ Jack Hicks, "On the Application of Theories of 'Internal Colonialism' to Inuit Societies."

⁷⁹⁶ David Walls, "Central Appalachia: Internal Colony or Internal Periphery? A Critique of Current Models and an Alternative Formulation," Sonoma State University Website, URL:

<http://www.sonoma.edu/users/w/wallsd/internal-colony.shtml> As David Walls writes in his exploration of colonialism rhetoric in Appalachia: "The success of the anticolonial movements in the Third World following World War II has undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of referring to a variety of exploitative situations within both developing and advanced industrial countries as internal or domestic colonialism."

⁷⁹⁷ Jack Hicks, "On the Application of Theories of 'Internal Colonialism' to Inuit Societies," 2. Hicks writes: "In a 1964 speech entitled 'The Black Revolution', Malcolm X argued that 'America is a colonial power. She has colonized 22 million Afro-Americans by depriving us of first-class citizenship, by depriving us of civil rights, actually by depriving us of human rights.' ... It was not until the riots of 1967 that Martin Luther King came to characterize America's black ghettos as internal colonies. In the months before his assassination King began using a vocabulary similar to that of Malcolm X, a vocabulary that would soon also be taken up by Stokely Carmichael, Huey P.

and adds that within Canada “the concept of internal colonialism has been extensively employed by both Québécois and aboriginal nationalists.”⁷⁹⁸ Clearly, for movements reaching for discursive tools to describe a subordinate position in a relationship, internal colonialism’s wide use suggests its power to generate popular support and underscore a moral dimension that was critical in persuasion efforts.

Internal Colonialism Rhetoric in Labrador

In positioning Labrador as an internal colony to advance the “exploitation argument” and the “neglect and alienation argument,” NLP members and sympathizers had to contend with the widely held belief that the province itself was an exploited colony of Canada. Could an oppressed population of Newfoundlanders in turn act or be seen to act as oppressors of a distinct group within their borders? Yes, answered party leader Mike Martin, who put forward the notion in 1973 that “Labrador was and is a colony within a colony.”⁷⁹⁹ In an address to the provincial assembly, he explained that “Labradorians have been forced to suffer the indignities of exploitation by a nation of exploited people.”⁸⁰⁰

To Martin’s Labradorian constituents, Newfoundlanders (in a provincial context) were privileged imperialists:

... who send us down second-rate goods to be dumped upon a captive market at intolerable prices. Newfoundlanders are the people who get all the good jobs in Labrador West while we have to stay home on welfare and unemployment insurance. Newfoundlanders are the people who come down

Newton, and the Black Panthers. King observed: “The slum is little more than a domestic colony which leaves its inhabitants dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated at every turn.”

⁷⁹⁸ Jack Hicks, “On the Application of Theories of ‘Internal Colonialism’ to Inuit Societies,” 2. Hicks writes: “Camille Laurin argued in 1979 that: [The federal government asserts] ‘sole and sovereign authority... Québec remains an internal colony ... it can’t escape political subordination to the central state, it cannot recognize and inscribe in laws its fundamental reality...’ and René Levesque stated in 1982 that: The Québécois are nothing more than ‘an internal colony under the sway of another people.’” See also: Sean Mills, *The Empire Within*, 138-162 and 212-213. ⁷⁹⁹ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, February 20, 1973 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, 593. ⁸⁰⁰ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, February 20, 1973 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, 593. Editorial writers with the *Aurora* had previously concurred with this assessment, noting that “[m]any of Labrador’s most pressing problems derive from an essentially colonial relationship to a provincial government which has neither wealth nor the inclination to fulfill the obligations of a colonial power. See: ----- “Editorially speaking,” *The Aurora*, September 27, 1972, 2. While the federal government could not likely harmonize this relationship without intruding in the province’s constitutionally protected affairs, the editorial suggests it has missed opportunities to integrate the territory into the province and nation with certain programs. “For example, Ottawa finances DREE, but lets the province exclude most of Labrador from the regional planning and industrial incentives which might ease its problem” (2).

the coast on a \$6 ticket on a special CNR boat first thing in the spring and steal our best fishing berths, while the spring ice still traps us in the bay. Newfoundlanders are the same people who tell us that to get out to our own fishing places, on the same boat, a fraction of the distance that carried the Newfoundland fishermen will cost us three and four times the special \$6 ticket that Newfoundland gets. Newfoundlanders are the ones who get the water systems and the fish plants and the air strips and then tell us that we cannot have these things because they are too expensive for us. Newfoundlanders are the people who get their roads cleared of snow while our children have to stay home from school for weeks on end because other Newfoundlanders have decided that we have too much snow clearing equipment anyway.⁸⁰¹

For Newfoundlanders who had grown accustomed to thinking of themselves as victims of Canadian (or British) imperialism, and who were otherwise ignorant of the issues faced by Labradorians, being assigned the position of imperial oppressor may have stung.

Nevertheless, characterizing Labrador as a colony of Newfoundland was a rhetorical strategy used frequently during this period, particularly by NLP-identified supporters and other Labrador-based critics of the provincial government. To cite a few examples where this rhetoric was either explicit or strongly implied, Labradorians referred to islanders as “gobbies” for gobbling up natural resources, they challenged island-based media assumptions about their willingness to accept government explanations using loaded words such as “conquered or pacified,” and they demanded the government treat Labrador as a “part” of the province, rather than a “possession” that belonged to the island.⁸⁰² In short,

⁸⁰¹ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, February 20, 1973 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, p.594.

⁸⁰² In a letter to Premier Smallwood, Goose Bay resident James Barter explained that Newfoundland’s imperialism had entered Labrador parlance historically. “For generations the people from the island were known as ‘gobbies’ to the staunch Labradorian (Newfoundland has had the reputation of draining Labrador of its resources and gobbling up its natural wealth),” he wrote. James Barter, Goose Bay, “Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood,” May 1, 1968. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.011, Memorial University Archives. Following a meeting attended by Premier Smallwood to deal with the chip mill controversy, a local newspaper noted that “Unlike reports in the Newfoundland papers, the people here were not completely *conquered* or *pacified*.” [my emphasis] (---- “Editorial,” *The Northern Reporter*, January 23, 1969, 18); Labradorian expatriate Ruby Michelin Fournier wrote a letter in 1969 to the editor of the *Northern Reporter* pledging support for the New Labrador Party’s effort to rid the region of “the colonial-type government at St. John’s. (Ruby Michelin Fournier, Ottawa, “Letters: Thinks Labrador Party best,” *The Northern Reporter*, March 13, 1969, 18); An editorial in the *Northern Reporter* later that year, titled tellingly “A ‘part’ or a ‘possession’,” dissected the differing attitudes of Labradorians and islanders: “But this is where the difference of attitude lies. To a Labradorian, their country is part of the province of Newfoundland. To the Newfoundland government, and the Newfoundland people, Labrador is a parcel of land which belongs to them. Being ‘a part of’ and ‘belonging to’ are two vastly different things.” (----“Editorial: ‘A part’ or ‘a possession’?” *The Northern Reporter*, July 3, 1969, 2

Labradorians (and some sympathetic observers) saw a dramatically unequal power dynamic between their regional population and islanders (both individuals and as a government that represented these individuals' needs to the detriment of their livelihood). Judging by the frequency with which it appeared in discourse, internal colonialism was deemed to be a fairly effective way to characterize an exploitative relationship. Yet, other words and phrases were also employed to promote this interpretation.⁸⁰³ Regionalists thus primarily attributed Labrador's exploitation to the provincial government; island residents and domestic and international business interests who benefitted from the government's policies more generally were an important, but ultimately secondary concern. The federal government was not nearly as frequently vilified as these other groups, but occasionally it too was on the receiving end of these rhetorical attacks.

A second discursive strategy that employed the injustice frame focused on the rights and privileges of citizenship. Here, notions of inequality⁸⁰⁴ were brought to the fore as regionalist activists and their supporters questioned whether they were full members of a political community – primarily in relation to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, but also Canada. NLP members from the District of Labrador North contended that the party's basic philosophy held that, "as far as humanly possible," all Canadians should have equal opportunities and allowance should be made for "regional

⁸⁰³ Tom Burgess, "Untitled," the *Carol Link*, June 25, 1970, 1. NLP leader Tom Burgess, repeatedly spoke of a need for the government to get rid of to "this strictly extractive attitude towards us of taking all they can get and giving nothing back." Patrick W. Vickers, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Happy Valley, "Letters: No timber should leave Labrador," *The Northern Reporter*, January 9, 1969, 2. Happy Valley Deputy Mayor Patrick Vickers agreed with the assessment, noting that "As a Labrador resident for the past sixteen years [he was] convinced that the Premier's intention is to drain the wealthy land of Labrador for the remainder of the province." ----- "Letters: Stuff it down his throat!" *The Northern Reporter*, January 30, 1969, 2. The island-based government's "taking" and "draining" resources was, in the words of one letter-writer, the work of a "parasite that has been preying on [Labrador] for years."

⁸⁰⁴ For example, when the provincial government eliminated an air fare subsidy, he thundered: "This latest move is another form of discrimination against the resident of Labrador." ----- "Protest removal of air fare subsidy," *The Aurora*, April 10, 1969, 1. The subsidy had been brought in just prior to 1966 election.

diversities which affect Canadian life so profoundly.”⁸⁰⁵ NLP leader Tom Burgess was particularly fond of employing the discursive weight of “citizenship” to addressing issues of regional equality – though his use and understanding to the term appeared to be restricted to a market-based conceptualization where paying taxes was a critical component to being a good and deserving citizen.⁸⁰⁶ And, while this language was present in statements by NLP members, it also appeared in editorials and letters to the editor in newspapers, and personal correspondence to politicians like Premier Joey Smallwood from Labrador residents who were not explicitly partisan.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰⁵ ----- “Comment by New Labrador Party of Labrador North,” *The Northern Reporter*, September 24, 1970, 2. “Governments, Federal and Provincial, have recognized that they must make special allowances e.g. the Northern Allowances paid to civil servants in the Mid and Far North. But this policy must be extended to our teachers, so that there is no regional disparity in education, to the recipients of welfare so there is not a regional disparity in welfare programs, to school children, so that simple facts of climate are recognized and taken into account.” Framing the fundamental concept at stake, the members posed a question: “what right has each Canadian to an equal opportunity with his own brothers in his own land?”

⁸⁰⁶ ----- “Labrador situation points out necessity of link with Canada,” *The Aurora*, July 3, 1969, 3. When a rail strike cut off essential supplies shipped from Northern Quebec, Burgess cited the resulting food shortages as evidence to support calls for road access to Quebec that Labrador West residents had been making for years. With the Smallwood government steadfastly refusing to use tax dollars to fund its construction, the NLP leader argued the province was not living up to the social contract it had with its citizens. He stated that it was Labradorians’ “responsibility as good citizens” to pay taxes in “order to contribute to the overall good of the province and the good of the country.... In return, like good trusting citizens, we assume that governments will act in a responsible fashion toward us, provide the normal amenities and protect our interests and rights and do their utmost to ensure that we are part of the just society.” See also: Tom Burgess, “Letter to G. Davidson,” *The Carol Link*, April 9, 1970, 2. Burgess said the government’s poor response and indifference in times like these made Labrador residents feel as though they were not citizens, or at the very least, that they were being treated like “second-class citizens.” It is interesting to note Burgess has a market-driven idea of what citizenship entails. If someone is not a tax-paying citizen, are they excluded from the capacity to claim the rights of citizenship? Scholars such as Gosta Esping-Andersen (*Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; and *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) Ann Shola Orloff (“Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analyses of Gender Relations and Welfare States,” *American Sociological Review* 58, 1993) and others (Barbara Hobson, Jane Lewis and Birte Siim, eds., *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002) have worked to develop the idea of citizenship more comprehensively.

⁸⁰⁷ Once again, this suggests that the aggrieved regionalism that was present or building in the area was not solely tied to the party. To illustrate, residents complained of not having “equal opportunity,” and instead being treated as “junior citizens,” “second-class citizens” or even “third-class citizens” in terms of access to infrastructure, they cited examples of deprivation of commercial products sold on the island, and even referenced the UN declaration of Human Rights when making a case for better treatment. See: James Barter, Goose Bay, “Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood,” May 1, 1968. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.011, Memorial University Archives; Robert Rumbolt, Mary’s Harbour. “Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” January 2, 1969, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.012, Memorial University Archives; Disgusted Northern Citizen, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Aurora*, July 10, 1974, 6; Claude Rumball, Port Hope Simpson. “Letter to The Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” November 1,

In reviewing both published and unpublished material from this period, references to internal colonialism and the rights and privileges of citizenship were the two discursive strategies most consistently employed by regionalists and regionalist interest groups to frame feelings of oppression and estrangement; other rhetoric derivatively mined similar territory. If not colonial subjects or second-class citizens, Labradorians were alternately treated like “peasants in a forgotten area,”⁸⁰⁸ “creatures from Mars,”⁸⁰⁹ and worse than animals because “even a dog would, at times, get something better than scraps that are left over from the dinner table.”⁸¹⁰ Isolated from context, this extreme language would likely prove to be ineffective. However, when combined with examples of poor treatment from the provincial government or islanders, it reinforced a sense of injustice.⁸¹¹

Internal Colonialism Rhetoric in Northern Ontario

Internal colonialism rhetoric also appeared frequently within Northern Ontario as regionalists promoted a diagnostic injustice frame. Deibel frequently spoke of Northern Ontario as a colony in his stump speeches and in comments to the press during his various campaigns; yet, as noted in Chapter 3,

1969, Smallwood reply dated December 3, 1969. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.012, Memorial University Archives; Labrador City Resident of 10 years, “Letters to the Editor,” *The Carol Link*, July 30, 1970, 8; Charles S. Devine, “Letter: Open letter to Marchand: Not granted same privileges.” *The Aurora*, August 14, 1969, 4; J.R. Jacobs, West-Modeste, “Does Labrador-South exist? Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” April 27, 1971. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.014, Memorial University Archives.

⁸⁰⁸ ----- “Letters: Poor Air Service,” *The Northern Reporter*, November 28, 1968, 2.

⁸⁰⁹ J.H. “Letter to the Editor: The Neglect of Labrador,” *the Carol Link*, September 24, 1970, 6.

⁸¹⁰ J.H. “Letter to the Editor: The Neglect of Labrador,” 6.

⁸¹¹ Art Hale, Happy Valley, “Letters: The Rape of Labrador,” *The Northern Reporter*, March 25, 1971, 2. In a letter provocatively titled “The Rape of Labrador,” Art Hale of Happy Valley wrote about an incident where the St. John’s General Hospital shipped a deceased baby back to Labrador in what appeared to be a green plastic garbage bag. “We in Labrador know only too well the contempt the Government and its servants feel toward us,” Hale wrote, “but surely, shipping an innocent baby back to its parents in a ‘garbage bag’ is going beyond the bounds of common decency. It has been said that ‘all people are born equal’ but it appears that as far as Newfoundland and Labrador are concerned they most certainly do not die equal. In this I am referring to the ‘state’ funeral recently given to a politician by the Government and the kind of treatment given to the Labrador baby.”

Deibel viewed his role as a conduit for communication and he was using these types of terms and descriptors because he had heard them directly from people within Northern Ontario communities.⁸¹²

Talk of Northern Ontario as an internal colony was, indeed, very much present at this time. Just prior to Deibel's first anti-tax meeting, for example, a group of northern prospectors used the term to express frustration about the lack of control northerners had over decisions regarding natural resources in the area and the disproportionately low benefit they derived from them.⁸¹³ What is remarkable about this example is just how casually the term is employed. Whereas regionalists such as Deibel would use the term as a rallying cry, others commenting on the situation uttered it with a sort of resignation that underscores the sense of alienation and hopelessness that perceived powerlessness engenders.

⁸¹² Ed Deibel interview, June 27, 2010. Remembering his first anti-tax campaign meeting in 1973, Deibel stated, "We don't control our natural resources. We don't have manufacturing. We have every conceivable natural resource... to build an industrial complex. We want more say. We were being treated like a colony. There were four words we used: mismanagement, exploitation, neglect, and being ignored. These were the comments from the meeting the night before, so the next day I just put them on the air. This was important, because it was not so much what I say but how I listen to what people are saying." Interestingly, several years later while promoting the NOHP, Deibel noted that electoral victories of parties such as the Parti Quebecois serve as "proof that people with concern for a better deal can be effective [and] such proof will strike a blow against apathy in northerners accustomed to a colonial attitude from the south." James Weaver, "NOHP takes confidence from Parti Quebecois: Secession object of northern party." *The Northern Life*, December 8, 1976, 1.

⁸¹³ John R. Hunt, "Prospectors urge North secession," *The North Bay Nugget*, April 9, 1973, 1. In a brief submitted by prospectors, they stated "that the southern politicians must stop treating the northern residents like a second-class colony of peasants to be dominated and used to suit the absentee feudal landlord with their natural resources largely exploited to the benefits of the south. It was agreed that the United States had far less provocation under the tyrant, King George III, to stage the Boston Tea Party, than Northern Ontario residents have today." The purportedly colonial experience extended to other industries as well. In an editorial by a new Sudbury-based publication, the writers commented that, "Generally speaking, the state of journalism in Northern Ontario is pathetic. Suffering from the same type of colonialism we see in the corporate and government sectors, where decisions are made in Toronto or New York, daily newspapers in the north specialize in training kids to go back to Toronto to break into the real market." ---- "Editorial: Northern Life lives," *The Northern Life*, September 26, 1973, 1. In a follow-up article, a well-known Toronto mining executive named Pat Sheridan made a similar claim: "Northern Ontario is being governed by colonial fashion and the solution lies in separation." See: John R. Hunt, "Toronto mining executive urges North to secede," *The North Bay Nugget*, April 28, 1973, 1.

Whether Northern Ontario was “a colony of Southern Ontario,”⁸¹⁴ “an economic colony of Southern Ontario,”⁸¹⁵ or “a colony of Queen’s Park,”⁸¹⁶ Deibel frequently used the term to underscore the injustices – higher gasoline prices,⁸¹⁷ poor transportation networks,⁸¹⁸ and underdevelopment⁸¹⁹ – he argued the North faced. And, while explicit references to internal colonialism were quite common, other characterizations of exploitation – often very similar to what was observed in Labrador – were also present in discourse involving Deibel and others that, intentionally or unintentionally, built this narrative argument.⁸²⁰ Deibel’s blunt message, while catching the ear of the southern Ontario-based provincial

⁸¹⁴ Kurt Johnson, “Deibel jolts municipal leaders,” 1. Deibel stated: “Are the northern leaders so stupid as to let the wealth of our northland benefit Southern Ontario as it has for 75 years? ... Let’s make our message to the government loud and clear. We don’t want our mayors and reeves to be professional beggars any longer. We don’t want any more handouts. We don’t want any more promises. We don’t want to be treated like a colony of Southern Ontario. We don’t want any more half-truths. Excerpts of his remarks here: ----- “Deibel speaks about an independent Northland,” *The North Bay Nugget*, May 11, 1976, 5.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁶ See: ----- “Northern Ontario is ‘a colony of Queen’s Park,’” *Sudbury Star*, June 20, 1978, 3.

⁸¹⁷ William Dampier, “The eleventh province,” A1. He asked why beer it sold at one price province-wide but gasoline and heating oil are 20 to 30 cents a gallon higher in an area where distances are vast and winter is interminable.

⁸¹⁸ ----- “Northern Ontario is ‘a colony of Queen’s Park,’” *Sudbury Star*, June 20, 1978, 3. “We must change transportation policy in Canada as a first step in dealing with regional disparities.”

⁸¹⁹ William Dampier. “The eleventh province,” A1. Dampier writes that the provincial government provides special grants for services some communities could not otherwise afford; for example, the Ministry of Education pays for 95 per cent of the cost of schools in some northern towns compared with 35 per cent in Toronto. “But northerners respond that they want development, not hand-outs.” See also: “Since 1961, 10,000 people a year have left Northern Ontario for the southern Ontario job market. Deibel points to this as only one example of how the government treats the North as a ‘colony’ and is not really interested in its development,” Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 50.

⁸²⁰ For example, Deibel suggested that “The fact that we have economically depressed communities throughout Northern Ontario, the fact the economy of Northern Ontario is well below that of the province as a whole, and the fact that the cost of living in Northern Ontario is higher than in southern Ontario make the people of Northern Ontario second-class citizens, creating conflict and alienation that is unacceptable as a condition of government.” (Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 32); While announcing the nomination of an NOHP candidate, Deibel stressed that his party wanted to “develop Northern Ontario, rather than shipping it away.” (----- “North party has first candidate,” *Toronto Star*, August 14, 1979, A14); In the late 1960s, a quasi-separatist movement led by Espanola Mayor Leo Foucault contended that “it’s about time Northern Ontario objected to being treated like poor cousins by the rest of the province...” (----- “Separatism – Ontario brand,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 24, 1966, 6); Letter writer R.J. Bradshaw of Timmins contended that “the people of the North feel that the issue is the economic exploitation of the North,” and suggested “that if southern politicians continue to exploit the North and fail to establish a stable economy with urban development in the North, they will have the same problem Daniel Johnson is having with Northern Quebec and Real Caouette – i.e., separatism within the province.” (R.J. Bradshaw, Timmins, “Letter: Separatism,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 1967, 6).

and national press, was also directed at northern leaders who acquiesced to this intolerable system.⁸²¹

Clearly, Deibel and other regionalists found traction when employing internal colonialism and related rhetoric to diagnose the situation people within Northern Ontario faced as one of inequality, subordination and exploitation.

Internal Colonialism Rhetoric in Cape Breton

Unlike Labrador and Northern Ontario, Cape Breton was once its own classical colony until its annexation with Nova Scotia during the 19th century. Although regionalists did occasionally draw parallels between the area's past political identity and its current economic and political conditions,⁸²² both references to internal colonialism often appeared to draw inspiration from more contemporary comparisons.⁸²³

As a sitting MLA for the party's entire existence, MacEwan used his time in the legislature to great effect in advancing an agenda that framed Cape Breton as exploited and receiving discriminatory and unjust treatment from central governments. MacEwan's frequent use of resolutions (and especially their preambles) provided a prominent space for him to "systematically document the shafting we in Cape Breton are getting and outline options for correcting this."⁸²⁴ MacEwan critiqued the dearth of degree-granting institutions, hospital facilities and government services on Cape Breton Island

⁸²¹ See: Kurt Johnson, "Deibel jolts municipal leaders," 1; and ----- "Deibel speaks about an independent Northland," 5. For example, he rhetorically asked a meeting of Northern mayors if northern leaders were "so stupid as to let the wealth of our northland benefit Southern Ontario as it has for 75 years?" Continuing, he implored them to "make our message to the government loud and clear. We don't want our mayors and reeves to be professional beggars any longer. We don't want any more handouts. We don't want any more promises. We don't want to be treated like a colony of Southern Ontario. We don't want any more half-truths."

⁸²² ----- "MacEwan set to pursue C.B. independence," *Chronicle Herald*, January 13, 1983. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1604), File #7, Nova Scotia Archives. In advancing the possibility of a separate province of Cape Breton, MacEwan presented an old constitution that had granted Cape Breton the same colonial rights as Prince Edward Island to the press.

⁸²³ ----- "MacEwan set to pursue C.B. independence." MacEwan noted that unemployment rates in industrial Cape Breton had "soared to Third World levels," a designation attached to many former colonies.

⁸²⁴ ----- "MacEwan set to pursue C.B. independence."

compared to Halifax, discrimination in terms of available soft-drink containers, and other examples of government spending – such as an injection of funds for a new football stadium and trade centre – where Halifax residents were getting “the cream” and becoming a “fatted calves” while Cape Bretoners went without.⁸²⁵

The issues were varied and ranged from the more substantive concerns of timely local medical treatment, and provincial action to resolve labour issues and systemic unemployment to the more inconsequential soft drink industry bottle discrimination, but they all tended to draw unfavourable distinctions between Halifax or mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island, with government, industry and their benefactors situated as antagonists and exploiters. Although infrequently passed by the House, merely proposing these resolutions often generated extensive media coverage in Cape Breton, assisting MacEwan in his agenda-setting and prognostic framing activities.⁸²⁶

MacEwan’s contributions to general debates in the legislature, his party’s published materials and his inter-personal communications provide further examples of how regionalists employed

⁸²⁵ In proposing the establishment of a degree-granting university in industrial Cape Breton, he noted “there are a fair number of degree-granting institutions of higher learning in Nova Scotia now, but of these, almost all are in Halifax and none are in Cape Breton, so that those who argue against this proposition on the grounds of duplication or proliferation are, in effect, saying that they do not want to see anything coming to Cape Breton.” (Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 285, 3 April, 1981, (Paul MacEwan, Ind), 1365); Noting that soft drinks retail in two litre, plastic, nonreturnable containers on mainland Nova Scotia but not on the island of Cape Breton, MacEwan called it “a deliberate policy of discrimination against Cape Breton Island and its consumers” that was “divisive, discriminatory and deplorable” and asked the House to support a call for the soft drink industry to “make equal facilities and levels of service available to all parts of this province,” and to ask the Department of Consumer Affairs to investigate “this discrimination against Cape Breton, and against Cape Bretoners, by the soft drink industry to see what action can be taken to end this discrimination against Cape Breton.” (Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 390, 28 April, 1981, (Paul MacEwan, Ind), 2194); During a period when there was discussion of the government cost-sharing in the wages at the Halifax shipyards in order to stabilize employment, MacEwan called the action “commendable” but noted that the “workers of Cape Breton are no less important than the workers of Halifax, and equally need to keep working so as to keep their families fed.” He proposed a resolution that would ensure cost-sharing of wages in Cape Breton if the policy went ahead in Halifax. (Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 144, 26 March, 1982, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP), 1006).

⁸²⁶ MacEwan’s fonds contain copies of various resolutions that were sent as a part of a press release and the resulting newspaper articles that documented them.

discursive strategies to aid a narrative featuring themes of exploitation and injustice. In one lengthy address to the legislature, he described the nature of Cape Breton's exploitative relationship with Nova Scotia and how he believed the island's residents would rally around his Labor Party in a revolt.⁸²⁷ Employing the cloak of regional identity, MacEwan spoke of exploitation and injustice at the hands of a central government⁸²⁸ that appeared to cater to residents and businesses in the capital on the backs of peripheral communities. Using powerful terms and phrases such as "milking,"⁸²⁹ "bleed a people white," and "reaching into their threadbare pockets," MacEwan forcefully underscored the exploitation and injustice that were central to this diagnostic framing. To MacEwan, this expectation of a conditioned and subservient Cape Bretoner – again implicitly linked to a colonial position – also pervaded the Halifax-focused provincial political parties.⁸³⁰ These types of comments reinforced the idea that Cape Breton

⁸²⁷ Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, 28 May, 1982, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP), 3382-3383. "The future is here, but what a future. Instead, they are milking Cape Breton for all they can milk it for. They are taking out of our island, the electrical power to make the wheels of Halifax turn. On that count they are certainly getting everything they can get out of Cape Breton, rather than having to use expensive foreign oil.... I think that it is scandalous, and I think that the people of Cape Breton are going to become increasingly aroused on this matter, especially as the Labor Party emerges there to give them political leadership on these types of issues. I think that the people of Cape Breton are going to say, enough is enough, we are tired, we have had it up to here. Give us work, give us opportunity. Give us equality, then we will accept your equal taxes, and then we will accept our obligations."

⁸²⁸ ----- "The Cape Breton Labor Party Information Kit (Sampling of recent items and material concerning the CBLP for the press gallery)," February 27, 1986. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives. [Bold in original] "**It is the government** which has caused this problem [–Cape Breton being left out of the economic life of Canada–], for all our major industries are owned and controlled by government. The federal government in Ottawa owns Devco, C.N. Marine, Atomic Energy, and other major employers, while the provincial government in Halifax runs Sydney Steel, Nova Scotia Power Corporation and much more. In all the government-owned and controlled institutions we see the same problem – a steady pattern of under-development, of cutbacks and closures, of reducing the workforce and avoiding growth. This is why so few of our people can find a job. Ottawa and Halifax treat Cape Breton this way because of an attitude by the top decision-makers that Cape Bretoners will tolerate such things and are conditioned to accept high unemployment as a way of life."

⁸²⁹ MacEwan was not alone in using this type of language. A *Cape Breton Post* editorial titled "Halifax Handout" explained that "it is a fact of life in Nova Scotia that the Halifax-Dartmouth area gets the cream of our provincial resources...." See: ----- "Editorial: Halifax Handout," *The Cape Breton Post*, March 5, 1976, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30), File: "Power rate increases, 1973-1976," Beaton Institute.

⁸³⁰ Paul MacEwan, "Letter to Agar Adamson, Department of Political Science, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Re: *Chronicle Herald* articles on NDP in Cape Breton," April 26, 1985, 9. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30), File: "Labor Party File #1," Beaton Institute. In a personal letter to Agar Adamson, a political scientist who was researching the state of the Nova Scotia NDP in the mid-1980s, MacEwan noted the contemporary NDP's reluctance to accept Cape Bretoners who actively question the nature of this regional imbalance. "[T]hey do not feel comfortable with a Cape Bretoner, unless it be someone of the sort they have found a few of in their efforts to

Island (and particularly industrial Cape Breton) was exploited, that the island and its inhabitants suffered from discrimination, and that Cape Bretoners were looked down upon as an inferior, colonized people who were conditioned to be docile and ruled from afar.

Moreover, like the regionalists in Labrador and Northern Ontario, their Cape Breton counterparts also sometimes invoked rhetoric surrounding citizenship and/or the notion of certain fundamental rights⁸³¹ to bolster their overall framing initiatives.⁸³² In condensing the Labor Party's platform in a single sentence, MacEwan later stated "we demand a Canadian standard of living for Cape Breton and for Cape Bretoners."⁸³³ Implicitly, the message contained in these examples once again harkens back to suggestions of "second-class citizenship" employed more directly by regionalists in Labrador and Northern Ontario. From employment, to healthcare, to public funding for infrastructure, to a general standard of living, movement entrepreneurs advanced a narrative in which Cape Breton and its residents were exploited and treated unjustly.⁸³⁴

re-organize in Cape Breton since I left them – a subservient Cape Bretoner. You can be certain that if Duncan MacIntyre (their new Cape Breton organiser) stood up the way I do and denounced the way in which Halifax interest seek to exploit and treat as second-class colonial Cape Bretoners, they would be jiffy-quick to run him out on a rail."

⁸³¹ In an open letter to party supporters, CBLP Vice-President Charles MacNamara wrote "I've always believed that everyone in a society has the right to work and prosperity. For too long, we've seen our Cape Breton towns falling further and further back, almost into oblivion." See: Charles MacNamara, "Open letter to Party Supporters in Cape Breton East from Charles MacNamara, Vice President, Cape Breton Labor Party and Chair of the Cape Breton East Labor Party," January 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30), File: "Labor Party File #1," Beaton Institute.

⁸³² Paul MacEwan, "Editorial: A time to re-examine Cape Breton's role," *The Chronicle Herald*, October 30, 1980, NDP Provincial 1980 - Scrapbook 141F(2), Beaton Institute. For example, one editorial stated plainly that "something has to be done. It is not right that any group of Canadians should have to tolerate the general conditions which Cape Bretoners have had to live with, day after day, throughout most of my conscious lifetime. We are also Canadians, and we have the right as Canadians to seek what best we can in an attempt to advance ourselves to what we ought to be."

⁸³³ Paul MacEwan, "Open letter from Paul MacEwan to Glace Bay residents," January 1986. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives. [Underlined in original]

⁸³⁴ See: ---- "CBLP Campaign Manual," circa 1984, 28. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30), File: "Labor Party File #3," Beaton Institute. "Let us place the people's just demands before the electorate with pride. Let us demand an end to exploitation. Let us demand an end to injustice."

Regionalists in all three areas deftly employed the exploitation argument as a way to frame the lived and perceived experiences of their communities as a severe injustice. The peripheral region and its people were positioned as victims who suffered at the hands of the superior position of the perpetrator, namely the metropolis – its people, its private corporate interests and especially the government(s) that appeared to cater to them. By expressing these arguments with appeals to equality through common bonds of citizenship and shared imagined identities, or through the sharp language and imagery of internal colonialism, the movement entrepreneurs were able to offer a diagnosis of the problems they faced.

The Alienation and Neglect Argument

The exploitation argument was often accompanied by some variation of the alienation and neglect argument. While exploitation required active processes of extraction of resources in the region or referred to inequalities derived through an imbalance between the negotiating power of the two sides, alienation and neglect were the result of passive indifference and/or ignorance. Yet, exploitation was closely linked to alienation and neglect. The metropolitans (people, private capitalist industry, government) were perceived to be exploiting these areas by withdrawing human and natural resources; in turn, they were not adequately reinvesting in these areas by providing essential infrastructure, nor did they appear to be listening to the population's concerns. The particular way in which alienation and neglect manifested within each area under study (and even within various communities in these areas) differed; however, there were some significant commonalities – particularly between Labrador and Northern Ontario – the two least-developed areas. Poorly conceived and developed communication and transportation networks were an especially strong grievance as communities within these areas often found it difficult to connect with one another, the metropolis or the world. Without strong links to each other and more populated area of the province or country, a stubborn sense of isolation and/or alienation would often develop and a belief that 'out of sight' areas were 'out of mind' for metropolitan

elements seemed to be confirmed through perceived inattentiveness, inaction and neglect. In short, the bonds of an imagined provincial community were strained when regional disparities emerged from a combination of exploitation, neglect and the resulting sense of alienation.

Communication and Transportation Problems in Labrador

“Possibly the greatest single problem common to all of Labrador is the lack of communications.”

In making this statement, letter writer Bernard Heard noted that he included “all manner of transportation and the services – mail, telegraph, telephone, television and radio.”⁸³⁵ Numerous newspaper articles, letters to government ministers and departments and interpersonal discussions between the NLP and community members during visits would seem to confirm this very point. And several years later, when the Snowden Commission was investigating the situation in Labrador, issues relating to both communication and transportation problems occupied a significant portion of the final report. The level of service differed significantly amongst the diverse communities of Labrador, yet people in virtually all areas felt physically and mentally disconnected from the island, and particularly its metropolitan elite. And although the underdevelopment and inadequacy of communications networks were most acutely observable and protested in Labrador (and to a lesser degree in remote parts of Northern Ontario), sentiment expressed in other parts of Northern Ontario and Cape Breton with more advanced networks suggested that their existence did not necessarily translate into being ‘heard’ by the metropolis. Problems with communication and transportation, were thus significant grievances in these areas; concerns ranged from the absence and inadequacy of physical infrastructure to the perception that the metropolis was not listening to the voices of people in these areas, and the result was often the same: a sense of being disconnected or detached from the imagined provincial community.

⁸³⁵ Bernard Heard, “Letters,” the *Northern Reporter*, January 15, 1970, 2.

In some communities in Labrador, particularly in the coastal area, very basic interpersonal communication tools such as telephones and telegraphs were missing.⁸³⁶ Even if these systems were in place, their utility⁸³⁷ and reliability⁸³⁸ varied greatly. For instance, upon visiting the communities of Pinsent's Arm and Charlottetown, members of the Snowden Commission were greatly alarmed to find that phone service had been down for three weeks, being asked "to relay word of a food and fuel shortage when they reached Port Hope Simpson, where the phones were still working."⁸³⁹ Generally, however, when communication became a topic of conversation and consternation within public discourse it tended to be focused on broader networks. Complaints about the quality of radio, television and newspapers often focused on the inattention to or poor coverage of local issues by provincial or national media that, in turn, fostered a sense of alienation and neglect amongst Labradorians. Moreover, residents were aggrieved by the sense they were receiving poor service and an inferior product compared to other Newfoundlanders and Canadians. And, while the sense of unfairness and inconvenience was clearly a factor in this irritation, it's possible to detect a deeper longing and desire to feel a greater sense of belonging to provincial and national communities that could only be satisfied by

⁸³⁶ Rev. Mark Genge, Mary's Harbour, "Letter to The Hon. J.R. Smallwood," October 17, 1964, 2. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.007, Memorial University Archives. In the mid-1960s, for instance, Rev. Mark Genge of Mary's Harbour wrote to Premier Smallwood with concerns about maintaining contact with other communities on the coast after learning that a Receiver Set would be removed by the Department of Transport, since long-distance telephone service had been installed. "This means that the Hospital here and the rest of the people will be completely shut off from all other settlements, not able to send or receive messages," he wrote. "This will be an impossible situation and will make the community far more isolated than it was years ago. There are no other settlements with telephones as yet." ----- "TV News: CJON," circa mid-1960s/1964. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.007, Memorial University Archives.

⁸³⁷ Francis Patey, "Labrador North neglected," *The Northern Reporter*, August 14, 1969, 2. "When I left the coast three years ago the only means of sending a telegram was by radio telephone and most often the whole village knew about it before you did."

⁸³⁸ See for example: ----- "New Labrador Party Members Tour Labrador Coast," *the Northern Reporter*, October 2, 1969, 5. "Concerning telephone service, most communities do have fine house-to-house telephone service within their own community. But in order to get out by telephone, they have to wait for favourable weather conditions so that radio transmission will be clear – and then they are limited to only a few hours a day"; and ----- "Editorial: Round & About," *The Aurora*, August 6, 1969, 4. "Have you tried to dial long distance lately, 10 to 20 minutes later, if you are lucky, the operator in Rimouski will answer. Hard to believe in the age of the Moon Men, yet it seems to be impossible to get an improvement in the long-distance set-up."

⁸³⁹ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, (St. John's Newfoundland, February 1974), 11-12.

having comparable access to the mass media that served these larger communities. If we accept the concept of an imagined community as critical to understanding aspects of identity creation broadly, regional identity creation more specifically, and the subjective understanding of the position of the self, we must pay close attention to real or perceived barriers to participating within the community that can create disenchantment and possibly greater detachment from the imagined community.

Poor radio service was a particular grievance in Labrador West. In one lengthy editorial diatribe, the *Aurora* called the area's CBC radio service "pathetic,"⁸⁴⁰ and argued that blame for government inaction on numerous complaints was due "in no small part to the apathy of you, the listener."⁸⁴¹ Even when the service at Labrador West's "local" station, 300 miles away in Goose Bay, transferred from CBC's Northern Service to the CBC Newfoundland network, there were complaints that local news was essentially St. John's news that came at the expense of national bulletins,⁸⁴² and that rare mentions of Labrador news would not include anything from their area.⁸⁴³ The newspaper contended that a community of Wabash-Labrador City's size deserved its own CBC community station or clearance for a commercial station to start up operations.⁸⁴⁴ As frustrating as it was for Labrador West residents to hear test patterns and local news from distant communities and other provinces, once again the state of radio service in some coastal communities seemed to be from another universe entirely. As an Information Canada report on the "warped" state of broadcasting serialized by the *Aurora* noted, these

⁸⁴⁰ ----- "Editorial: Round and about," *The Aurora*, September 3, 1969, 4.

⁸⁴¹ ----- "Editorial: Round and about," *The Aurora*, September 3, 1969, 4. The paper wondered why an area with approximately 12,000 people was getting local news from Happy Valley on the Labrador coast, and as far away as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, while receiving none of their own. "It is a known fact that the government of Canada receives more in taxation alone from Northern Quebec and Western Labrador than from all the other areas of the 'north' combined, where the CBC has stations," the editorial continued. While noting that a majority of the station's programming was "quite acceptable," a good portion was "strictly junk." "Why do we have to listen to 15 minutes of BUZZ-BEEP & Buzz each Wednesday at noon hour, 'test tones they call it,'" the paper asked. "No one else in Canada to our knowledge has to contend with this."

⁸⁴² ----- "Editorially speaking: Competition and Communications," *The Aurora*, October 21, 1970, 4.

⁸⁴³ ----- "Editorially speaking," *The Aurora*, November 18, 1970, 4. Complaints about radio service: Labrador West not mentioned during a 5-minute Labrador Sports Program update.

⁸⁴⁴ ----- "Editorially speaking," *The Aurora*, November 25, 1970, 4.

communities often received no Canadian radio signals at all, and received their radio news from stations in the United Kingdom or the United States.⁸⁴⁵ Again, an important aspect of communication that would foster ideas of belonging to a larger, imagined community was either of poor quality or completely missing, even as it was available elsewhere in the province.

Television posed similar dilemmas for Labrador's communities. Complaints ranged from a lack of live TV availability,⁸⁴⁶ to poor access to provincial programming to complete absence of television of any kind in some places.⁸⁴⁷ In all cases, however, there appeared to be an underlying sense of missing out on some aspect of a broader community experience. Lacking the ability to receive live transmissions, Labradorians had to wait for tapes to be delivered – and this was largely at the mercy of a poor postal system.⁸⁴⁸ Commentators suggested that it was “deplorable”⁸⁴⁹ that Labradorians were not able to watch history as it happens on live television.⁸⁵⁰ Regionalists were able to highlight the reactions to this

⁸⁴⁵ ----- “Editorially speaking,” the *Aurora*, August 2, 1972, 4.

⁸⁴⁶ ----- “Brief Submitted to the Mid-Canada Development Foundation Inc. By the New Labrador Party,” *The Carol Link*, June 11, 1970, 2. It is interesting to see an “injustice” argument used prominently in this framing. The NLP, in a brief submitted to the Mid-Canada Development Foundation in 1970 wondered why live TV was available to residents in Quebec's far north and towns not far away from Labrador West when only “canned” television programming was available to Labradorians. “Why is it that Labrador is left out again?” the party asked. “We feel that this is a grave injustice to the people of Labrador.”

⁸⁴⁷ See: J.R. Jacobs, West-Modeste, “Does Labrador-South exist? Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” April 27, 1971, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.014, Memorial University Archives: “Television is something most needed here. Not only it will help to broaden the minds of our people and make them have a better view on the province, on Canada and the world, but also it will give some means of recreation. Hardly anything exists here in this matter.”

⁸⁴⁸ Tom Burgess, “Letter to G. Davidson,” *The Carol Link*, April 9, 1970, 1. Speaking to the provincial assembly, Burgess suggested bureaucrats appeared more interested in numbers on a balance sheet than the frustration the situation was causing. “I’m sure they can’t understand why we resent getting our news a week late and our Christmas programs in February,” he offered. “A classic example of the bureaucratic inconsideration which we receive was evidenced last week, when the National Alpine Ski Championship was held here in Labrador City, and for which we have to wait for the film until one week after it’s shown in St. John’s; this means, in essence, we have to wait one month to see a film of an event that was held in Labrador City.” The CBC balked at sending National News via air mail because it would cost an extra \$600 a year.

⁸⁴⁹ ----- “Column Two,” the *Aurora*, April 26, 1972, 14.

⁸⁵⁰ ----- “Column Two,” April 26, 1972, 14; When Labrador West had to wait months 10 months longer than eastern Labrador for live color TV, an *Aurora* editorial, likely written by the same person who penned this column, credited elected councils and strong municipal figure such as Herb Brett for pushing for it faster. See: ----- “Editorially speaking,” the *Aurora*, February 14, 1973, 2.

lethargic effort to advance the area's communication networks as evidence of regional discontent that demanded action. While pining and agitating for live television, the "canned" version available in some communities also left much to be desired. For example, until 1973, the CBC gave the United States Air Force (USAF) a fairly free hand to operate Happy Valley's television station because it was willing to finance the station.⁸⁵¹ "But USAF, paying the piper, largely called the tune," the Snowden Commission found. "The day's broadcast opened with the United States national anthem and continued all day with an American orientation which mocked national policies on Canadian content."⁸⁵² When Canadian television tapes were available for broadcast on Labrador stations, minimal content from Newfoundland tended to be available, once again limiting options to feel part of and nurture an imagined community within the province.⁸⁵³ Summing up some of the more egregious examples of the situation, Burgess told the Assembly: "...It is just inconceivable as far as I am concerned, absolutely inconceivable."⁸⁵⁴ It was a sentiment and a conclusion echoed by opposition politicians looking at deficiencies in Labrador's media landscape.⁸⁵⁵ In an age when dispersed communities were increasingly bound together through mass

⁸⁵¹ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 56.

⁸⁵² Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 56.

⁸⁵³ Burgess often made the quality of CBC taped programming the subject of his statements in the legislature and to the media. While aspects of the network's diverse programming may not have been to everyone's taste, Burgess was concerned with the limited amount of airtime the station provided and especially with lack of Newfoundland-based content viewers in his riding received. For example, he stated: "...I think this has been conceded by all levels of Government that it is not entirely natural to have a miner sit down and enjoy two hours of ballet after he comes in from a mine at forty below zero. It is not entirely natural." Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, March 24, 1969, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 155, 974; Noting that complaints were longstanding and that "even reasonable demands now are being interpreted as being attempts to upset the institutional, condescending, complacent, stodgy, bureaucratic status-quo," he wondered why residents in Labrador West only had access to two Newfoundland-oriented television programs amounting to one half hour of programming. Tom Burgess, "Letter to G. Davidson," 1. And, while criticizing federal authorities for allowing the CBC to provide poor service, Burgess also laid blame at the foot of the province for not apparently caring enough about the discontent between the island and the mainland to pressure their federal counterparts. In an NLP brief to the Snowden Commission, the party once again pressed for more Newfoundland-oriented programming: "We are presently 99 percent dependent on Quebec for our consumer goods, let's not be 99 percent dependent on another province for our programs relating to our heritage." See: ---- "NLP brief to Royal Commission," the *Aurora*, May 30, 1973, 7.

⁸⁵⁴ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 12 June, 1970, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 1228, 7072.

⁸⁵⁵ Progressive Conservative leader Gerald Ottenheimer argued that in contemporary times "adequate radio and television service is not a luxury, but a need. It's certainly necessary for adults and equally necessary for younger people in order that they be aware of what is going on in the capital of their province, the capital of their nation

communication systems, poor physical connections resulted in poor psychological connections and attachment.

Local and provincial oriented news, information and culture were much more present in the print media available in Labrador. However, this form of communication was not without its drawbacks as well. All locally produced community newspapers struggled financially in Labrador – some more than others.⁸⁵⁶ Smaller communities that could not sustain a newspaper of their own would turn to island-based newspapers, though like canned television, slow mail delivery made some of this “news” stale. Most Labradorians hoping to read about their communities in one these larger papers would be sorely disappointed, however.⁸⁵⁷ In an illuminating passage in the Snowden Commission’s volume on Communication issues, the writers note that the physical distance of a remote area of the province, like Labrador, should not be an excuse for the psychological distance generated by this type of reporting. With the provincial press, “centred in St. John’s, which is centred on itself,”⁸⁵⁸ when news stories about problematic issues in Labrador were picked up by larger Newfoundland papers, it tended to be because

and indeed the rest of the world.” ----- “Ottenheimer criticizes transportation in Labrador,” *The Aurora*, June 19, 1969, 3.

⁸⁵⁶ ----- “Editorially speaking,” the *Aurora*, August 2, 1972, 4. While Labrador West’s burgeoning community provided a healthy local base of advertising for the *Aurora*, the Labrador City-based *Carol Link* was mimeographed and dependent on volunteers during its short run. Happy Valley’s *Northern Reporter*, owned and operated by the community’s mayor, Herb Brett, similarly struggled due to its reliance on volunteers and a dearth of government advertising due to the paper’s critical tone. It also folded after a few years. An upstart publication called the *Labrador Press* attempted to serve the entire area, but ceased operations in less than a year because, “in the editor’s view, the three settled areas of Labrador had too little in common to be satisfied with a paper attempting to serve them all, yet the advertising base, resting in St. John’s was too slender to support special additions for the different regions.” Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 51.

⁸⁵⁷ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 54. As the Snowden Commission noted in its survey of the press situation in Labrador: “Of the three Newfoundland papers most widely distributed in Labrador, only the *Telegram* has a very active correspondent. The others run Labrador stories occasionally, but the bulk of these originate in St. John’s, in statements on Government measures affecting Labrador, or in the reports of rivals, radio newscasts or the pages of a competing paper. It is rare, in any event, that a full-time reporter from any Island paper gets up to Labrador, though perhaps no more uncommon than visits to isolated areas of the Island itself.”

⁸⁵⁸ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 59.

the matter would be of interest to readers in areas like St. John's, not to Labradorians themselves. As the commissioner wrote:

A food and fuel shortage on the Labrador coast, or elsewhere in the Province, becomes interesting when those threatened by it become upset enough to protest, and especially if this prompts accusations and debate between the Government and opposition spokesmen. The condition of those left short on fuel and food become a secondary issue, newsworthy to the extent that it creates a controversy in St. John's.⁸⁵⁹

Snowden, striking a conciliatory tone, offered that "Newfoundland, which suffers more than any other Province from the regional disparities which plague Canada, should surely then have some sympathy for the disparities within her own borders."⁸⁶⁰

Snowden's illustration of how a food and fuel shortage can become a news story of interest to the provincial (or national) press provides an example, *par excellence*, of how material circumstances at least partly related to regional patterns can be used by regionalists to frame narratives that produce regionalism. It can also serve as a strong argument for the purpose of a regionally-based protest party – to generate the kind of attention that would be reported on in the metropolis regularly and hopefully inspire action to mitigate the regional disparities that produce issues like food and fuel shortages. As such, it is worth parsing in more detail.

To review: a critical supply shortage results from unreliable or compromised transportation networks that are shared amongst some communities in a given area. The shared nature of the problem, if communicated to and/or understood by these communities, creates a sense of identification and shared grievance. A "local" story such as a shortage is not, in and of itself, deemed to be newsworthy by media gatekeepers deciding what type of content an audience in a distant market receives – even if this media is also accessed by people in the community facing the shortage and by

⁸⁵⁹ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 59.

⁸⁶⁰ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, Volume 1*, 59.

other similar communities. If such a story reaches a critical point when gatekeepers ascertain that the local story has broader implications that may interest the distant media market, coverage may materialize. But even then, the coverage will be shaped to be of interest to the main market. Local, community-based print media were an important component of developing the sense of shared identification and grievance. But, action (or reaction) to a news story often required uptake from the provincial or national media to generate pressure from decision-makers within government. The absence or delay of coverage in the main media market and lack of action by decision-makers until it became a matter of concern outside the affected area underlined the alienating and isolating effect of the situation.

Transportation is another site from which we can tease out how feelings of exploitation, alienation, and neglect and the diversity of the region fed regionalist narratives. Transportation issues – some shared, some unique to particular areas – were frequent grievances for Labradorians, and perhaps none more so than road travel. Roads, or rather lack of roads, were frequently cited as the evidence of how the area’s wealth was removed without due compensation in the form of internal infrastructure development. With jurisdiction belonging to the province, the absence of public roads appeared to demonstrate profound disinterest in in the area’s long-term development or internal connectedness.⁸⁶¹

⁸⁶¹ Smallwood’s early political promises to begin constructing roads to connect coastal communities went unfulfilled. In a 1962 letter to the premier, W. J. Brown lamented that a 10-year old promise to build a road from Red Bay to Pinware for medical emergencies and transporting firewood during changing ice conditions when ice road travel unsafe was still only a dream. W. J. Brown, Red Bay, “Letter to The Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” January 22, 1962, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.005, Memorial University Archives. When local roads were constructed, residents criticized the provincial government’s lack of attention and interest. In another letter to Smallwood, Reverend Mark Genge noted that \$8,000 had been given to the local road board to begin cutting trees for a road connecting Port Hope Simpson to Mary’s Harbour, but there were no planners or surveyors to plot out the direction. “The men are told to cut the road as best they can and whichever way they go, that will become the road of the future,” he wrote. “I can hardly imagine anything like this being done in Newfoundland.” Rev. Mark Genge, Mary’s Harbour, “Letter to The Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” October 17, 1964, 2-3. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.25.007, Memorial University Archives.

While the island of Newfoundland was seen to have a bounty of newly paved roads⁸⁶² and planners to survey them, unlike Labrador, the two portions of the province did share one aspect of road-building in common – the gasoline tax partially used to fund transportation infrastructure. This was a two-fold irritation for Labradorians; first, they were vocal in their belief that wealth generated by the community in general, and the gasoline tax they paid as individuals, was being used to build road infrastructure elsewhere in the province and the country.⁸⁶³ In short, they were being exploited for the benefit of people in other regions. Second, foreshadowing arguments used during the 1973 gas tax revolt in Northern Ontario, fuel oil in the Labradorian environment was seen “not a luxury but an absolute necessity and the high price makes its purchase almost prohibitive.”⁸⁶⁴ Thus, Labradorian residents had distinct needs based on a distinct environment that was poorly reflected in provincial policy. Compounding these grievances was the provincial government’s apparent disinterest in providing any sort of mitigation.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶² James Barter, Goose Bay. “Letter to Mr. Earl Windsor,” November 7, 1967, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.010, Memorial University Archives.

⁸⁶³ Evelyn N. Miller, “Letters to the Editor,” *The Carol Link*, July 2, 1970, 5. “I am sure that we have paid for the Trans Canada Highway across Canada. We have only four miles of it here, from Labrador City to Wabush. It is the only bit of road built by the Government”; Rene Boyer, Labrador City, “Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood,” March 10, 1964. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.26.002, Memorial University Archives. “I buy gasoline. Again I am taxed. Why? You will reply that the tax on gasoline, as well as that on automobiles, helps to defray the cost of maintaining highways. To that I reply that there isn’t on foot of highway which is maintained by the Government here in Labrador City. In order to get out of here the only means of adequate transport is the airplane.”

⁸⁶⁴ Angus Macdonnell, Wabush, “Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood,” November 28, 1964, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.26.002, Memorial University Archives. This letter writer argues that the road tax per gallon of gasoline is “excessive, unwarranted and completely unfair” given that there are just four miles of road in the area; “Proceedings of the Fourth Session, Thirty-Fourth General Assembly of Newfoundland, 1971, Vol. ?, No. ?.” Newfoundland and Labrador. House of Assembly. Hansard [unpublished]. Tape #674, May 17, 1971. During debate in the House of Assembly on the gas tax one MHA noted that residents in coastal and northern parts of Labrador who shared similarly poor access to roads were more likely to use skidoos and therefore objected to the tax. (3914).

⁸⁶⁵ In a debate Burgess suggested that if gas taxes were taken away “it would show the people that there is some concern in the hearts and in the minds of our Government here. And by showing this concern, it would remove this psychological isolation and resentment and frustration that is prevalent in the minds of the people.” Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 12 June, 1970, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 1227, 7063.

The closely situated communities of Wabush and Labrador City in Labrador West did have some well-paved and planned local roads within their boundaries; however, they were built and paid for by the mining companies operating there and not the government. Unfortunately, the communities were completely cut off from travelling anywhere else by car or truck as there was no public road towards Quebec⁸⁶⁶ and only very poor secondary roads leading elsewhere.⁸⁶⁷ Landlocked, the communities relied on expensive air travel and rail shipments to connect with the outside world – a situation that led to a widely expressed sense of the aforementioned isolation.⁸⁶⁸ The provincial government’s refusal to build a road to Quebec – compounded by Premier’s Smallwood intemperate choice of words – fueled their sense of neglect.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁶ In a submission to the Royal Commission on Labrador, the New Labrador Party suggested that a road outlet to Quebec could be the foundation for a road system in the area, and greatly reduce the incidents such as food shortages, cancelled holidays, postal disruptions caused by air and rail strikes. Evelyn N. Miller, “Letters to the Editor,” 5.

⁸⁶⁷ ----- “NLP brief to Royal Commission,” *Aurora*, May 23, 1973, 20. As residents and politicians like Burgess repeatedly pointed out, the only roads the government had any hand in constructing in the area were the four miles of Trans-Canada Highway that joined the two communities together. “Transportation in Labrador West is by air and rail. There are virtually no roads in Labrador West and consequently no roads connecting it to the rest of Canada. There are only a couple of hundred miles of roads in all of Labrador and these are 99 percent tote roads used for moving supplies for the various companies in Labrador.”

⁸⁶⁸ Residents hoping to travel outside the community by car would have to ship their vehicle by train to Sept Ilse, Quebec a few days in advance, and it would not always come through unscathed. Robert Mercer, Secretary of the NLP, “Brief submitted to the federal government’s standing committee on Transport and Communications,” *Carol Link*, May 13, 1971, 3. There were often complaints about vandalism during the shipping process as cars were hauled separately from people. Mercer calls it “a grave injustice to the people who work and live in Labrador West. When one considered the amount of taxes that those same people pay into the federal and provincial treasury, it is even graver.”

⁸⁶⁹ While conceding to one Wabush letter writer that gasoline taxes paid by Labradorians were being used to fund road construction elsewhere, Premier Smallwood contended that they also would fund future roads in Western Labrador. Angus Macdonnell, Wabush, “Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood,” November 28, 1964, J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.26.002, Memorial University Archives. But those roads would not lead to Quebec. In another example of how the provincial government’s actions could fuel existing regionally manifested discontent, the premier stated “...he would rather lose Labrador, than spend one cent towards building a road to the border.” Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 24 March, 1969 (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 969. In the House of Assembly, Burgess suggested that “one of the biggest insults that has been handed to the people of Labrador was the assertion on the part of the Hon. Premier that if he were to receive a letter from thirty thousand people in Labrador, that he would not build a road. Now I ask you what kind of administration is that – because thirty thousand people comprise the total population of Labrador. Is this government for the people, by the people? No, it is not Mr. Speaker.” Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 24 March, 1969 (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 969.

The patchwork of roads meant that air travel was a crucial means of transportation for people living in many communities in the area, but also a very expensive one. Complaints about costly-yet-poor-quality air service were common, with the laments about “first class rates and third class service.”⁸⁷⁰ One report from Information Canada noted that “the details of the problem are complex, and they include such maddening inequities as the fact that a passenger flying on Eastern Provincial Airways (EPA) from St. John’s to Montreal via Wabush actually pays \$20 less than a passenger on the same flight who gets off at Wabush. Moreover, the Montreal-bound passenger gets a free meal.”⁸⁷¹ Other regulations prevented EPA from picking up passengers at Wabush to protect the market for a Quebec Air flight. Expensive and limited flight options were constant frustrations made much worse by events that publicized the high personal costs of such circumstances. In a column in the *Aurora*, Vina K. O’Toole recounted the story of how, when a relative died, they tried to ask the Iron Ore Company, in vain, to arrange a flight out, even if paid for by themselves.⁸⁷² She explains that she uses this personal experience not to obtain sympathy, but because “it points out once again most forcibly how powerless the ordinary workmen and their families are in isolated communities such as ours and others in the North in the event of a personal emergency.”⁸⁷³ O’Toole used the example to bolster her call for collective action as a region: “People in ALL of these frozen northern locations, the men working under incredible conditions, MUST get together to do something constructive about our situation.... I know that our communities are strung like beads on a long irregular and broken line formed by the boundary between Quebec and Labrador-Newfoundland. But let us realize one point – and a VITAL one. We are all

⁸⁷⁰ ----- “Untitled,” the *Carol Link*, August 26, 1971, 1. For example, the House Standing Committee on Transportation received complaints about the Wabush air terminal not being properly maintained and investigation determined these complaints were justified. See: ----- “Federal government urged to take lead in providing Labrador roads,” 11.

⁸⁷¹ ----- “Editorially speaking,” the *Aurora*, September 20, 1972, 4.

⁸⁷² Vina K. O’Toole, “Death in a family: what northern isolation really means,” the *Aurora*, January 31, 1973, 4.

⁸⁷³ Vina K. O’Toole, “Death in a family: what northern isolation really means,” 4.

in the same situation, whatever our nationality or creed.”⁸⁷⁴ O’Toole’s call for action was not a lone voice, but rather part of a growing chorus that urged regional unity to combat these issues.⁸⁷⁵

Problems with transportation and communication⁸⁷⁶ systems were critical components of many of the Labradorians’ other grievances – including food and fuel shortages, the exorbitant cost of living, and a widespread sense of isolation that manifested differently depending on the part of Labrador in which a person resided. As Burgess noted in a speech to the legislature, tying these strands together: “...What do we refer to when we talk about regional disparity between various parts of the Province? Are we referring to the amounts of dollars that they had to spend in the course of a month, or the course of a year? Or do we refer to the disparity in the provision by Government, or normal social services that come as a matter of form in normal centralized areas – and I lay emphasis on roads, communications and all its facets, adequate medical facilities – adequate educational facilities – adequate hydro-power facilities, and all the other lesser social facilities that come by virtue of every community as being part of the whole.”⁸⁷⁷ Burgess contended that it was “about time that regional disparity became an issue in Canada, with all its ramifications,”⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁴ Vina K. O’Toole, “Death in a family: what northern isolation really means,” 4.

⁸⁷⁵ Happy Valley Mayor and *Northern Reporter* publisher Herb Brett urged his readers to find common cause with people in other Labrador communities in order to pressure the state to act. While each community had special needs, Brett contended that a concentrated and collective voice could bring structural change that would hasten other developments: “We must utilize our public servants more than we do – We must keep after them and see that they supply answers to our question. There is no reason why Happy Valley shouldn’t or hasn’t got a stadium, why Goose Airport can’t be an international one, why Wabush, Labrador City don’t have their connecting road to Montreal, why the Labrador Coast does not have five flights each week (at least until we get a road) and a bridge across Northwest River. However, to achieve these accomplishments or to get a start we must have a similar aim. We can’t be like the weeds in the garden going in all directions. We must have one common issue. I suggest we put transportation and better communications at the top of the list – We must nail this issue to the wall. It appears that this is the most common problem from the West to the North Coast.” Herbert Brett, “1969 will only be what we make it,” *The Northern Reporter*, December 24, 1968, 21.

⁸⁷⁶ See: Lloyd Janes, “Labrador’s Dilemma,” *The Northern Reporter*, July 11, 1969, 6.

⁸⁷⁷ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 24 March, 1969 (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 970.

⁸⁷⁸ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 24 March, 1969 (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 970.

Northern Ontario Communications and Transportation Issues

Northern Ontario communities also faced a multiplicity of grievances and problems involving communications and transportation issues that regionalists and regionalist interest groups employed as evidence to diagnostically frame the metropole's neglect of the periphery and explain the resulting alienation. While lack of adequate infrastructure primarily motivated the grievances, the distance – both physical⁸⁷⁹ and psychological – between the metropole and periphery was central to the frame having regional significance and resonance.

The severity of these grievances and problems varied dramatically within the vast area. For example, during the period when Deibel was beginning his campaigns, some isolated communities, particularly north of the CN rail line, had yet to receive telephone service;⁸⁸⁰ when the northern lights would disrupt long distance radio signals, these communities were unable to call out for assistance.⁸⁸¹ Much less critical, but still irksome for many people during this time, was press coverage. Most large centres had daily newspapers and often a community weekly, while smaller communities had weeklies or biweeklies.⁸⁸² Although these media served communities fairly well, coverage of Northern Ontario affairs in the larger southern Ontario press was poor.⁸⁸³

⁸⁷⁹ "Some communities in Northern Ontario are further away from the seat of government in Toronto than Halifax or Miami." Leo Bernier, "Remarks by the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Northern Affairs, at the Conference of Northern Ministers, Fort McMurray, Alberta," September 27, 1978, 2. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 12.38, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁸⁰ ----- "A Summary of Government Programs for Northern Ontario," circa 1975/1976, Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 06.02, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁸¹ "Until very recently their only long-distance communication was by radio. When the northern lights blanked out the radio, they did not communicate.... In the last two years the telephone has reached many communities." Tom Miller, "Cabin Fever," 228.

⁸⁸² Tom Miller, "Cabin Fever," 230-231.

⁸⁸³ ----- "Editorial: Northern Life lives," *The Northern Life*, September 26, 1973, 1. Moreover, as Tom Miller noted in "Cabin Fever: The Province of Ontario and its Norths": "Every now and then, a day-tripper from the *Globe and Mail* or the *Toronto Star* will come up north to do an in-depth piece on a strike or a troubled Indian reserve (they catch to morning flight in and the night flight out) and put together an interesting, but usually garbled account of the event." Tom Miller, "Cabin Fever," 230-231.

However, few issues generated as much irritation⁸⁸⁴ as the paucity of radio and television service and poor-quality programming compared to what was available for their southern counterparts. In reviewing both published and unpublished reports and opinions about the state of radio and television services, it quickly becomes apparent that the dissatisfaction over the quality of the service was punctuated by a sense of inequality that was perceived to be rooted in neglect from the metropole (and thereby exacerbating feelings of alienation).⁸⁸⁵ In addition to issues relating to CBC service and general cable availability, a special focus of Northern Ontario grievance was the provincial government's own channel, T.V. Ontario (TVO).⁸⁸⁶ The issue was of such widespread concern that it even drew the attention and limited resources of the NOHP.⁸⁸⁷ The sentiments expressed in letters, petitions and news reports reveal a number of interesting similarities with what was observed in Labrador, in spite of different contexts. First, not all residents in these areas had previously lived in communities where these technologies were available or had experience using them. Yet, in learning about what they were missing, either through media reports or from first-hand accounts from people who had used this

⁸⁸⁴ ----- "Jerome, 'where's our cable... where's Juneau?'" *The Northern Life*, September 4, 1974, 1. "The long-awaited decision on cable television for Sudbury is still not out, and some people are getting a little irate about it."

⁸⁸⁵ Access to the federally funded CBC radio and television networks was entirely absent in some areas. John P. Bowiec, Kenora, "Letter to MP John Reid," February 9, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.01, Archives of Ontario. Although the northwestern portion of the province often found itself in Manitoba's orbit in terms of culture and economy, Bowiec noted not even tuning into the Winnipeg signal was easy to do as it is spread across four different locations on the broadcast band. Likewise, access to television service was poor and rather than simply being an inconvenience it was often framed as an affront to the community. See: Tom Miller, "Cabin Fever," 230; --- "Petition from residents of Sioux Lookout," April 25, 1975. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 06.29, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁸⁶ In 1977, D.J. Dowhos of Thunder Bay wrote to Leo Bernier to compare and contrast the quality and delivery of TVO between his community and southern Ontario communities. While TVO viewers in the southern Ontario received full-colour, commercial-free broadcasts for 16 hours a day, 365 days of the year of high technical quality and with a detailed summary of programming distributed to the public, Thunder Bay only received rebroadcasts through video-tape, for five hours per day, five days per week, and not at all during the summer months. D.J. Dowhos, Thunder Bay, "Letter to Leo Bernier," January 12, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.49, Archives of Ontario. See also: L.A. Pomber, Thunder Bay, "Letter to Leo Bernier," circa January 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.49, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁸⁷ In 1979, Daniel Bowers, an NOHP nominated candidate from Dryden, sent a petition to Bernier with more than 1,200 names, demanding equal Northern Ontario access to TVO. Of the people who signed the petition, Bowers stated that about 80 per cent had never even seen TVO despite public funds contributing between 80 to 85 per cent of its operating budget. Daniel Bowers, Dryden, Ontario. "Petition," November, 1979. Leo Bernier Fonds, File 15.24, Archives of Ontario.

technology, many of these same people felt aggrieved and neglected. Second, in the case of government-funded networks such as CBC or TVO where, as taxpayers, they provided some direct funding for these services, these people believed they were clearly and unfairly being treated differently from other members of a particular state. In some cases, there was an expectation for full equality of service, while others acknowledged that factors such as population and distance worked against this concept but still argued there was room for much improvement. Third, and perhaps most significantly in terms of stoking regionalism, the absence or poor quality of these mass communications services resulted in less access and/or attachment to the larger imagined community of the province (or country) that this media fostered. Not only was there quantifiably less information, art and entertainment available through these media for people in underserved communities, but they could not experience it qualitatively together.⁸⁸⁸

In addition to poorly developed communication networks, a second major point of contention was the quality of transportation systems. As previously mentioned, transportation networks in the area were primarily designed to facilitate the extraction of raw natural resources, not intra-community travel. Transportation routes designed for the latter kind of travel were generally constructed “after a population build-up rather than before.”⁸⁸⁹ Roads in the North were seen to be especially problematic, both by residents and visitors⁸⁹⁰ and poor road infrastructure likely heightened frustrations when there

⁸⁸⁸ Benedict Anderson’s original work on nationalism as an “imagined community” explored the role of communal access to newspapers and public spaces where ideas were shared or consumed together, thereby creating a sense of group belonging. Mass communications scholars have widely applied this concept to consumption of television programming and especially live television where viewers feel as though they belong to an imagined community of viewers who are experiencing an event in a temporal aura, See, for example: Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn, eds. *Understanding Reality Television*, (New York: Routledge Press, 2004), 140.

⁸⁸⁹ Terrence Wills, “Must the North secede,” 7.

⁸⁹⁰ While on a 3,200-mile tour of Northern Ontario in 1973, Liberal party leadership candidate Donald Deacon identified housing shortages and roads as flash points of anger among people he had met. “If we in southern Ontario had to put up with the road system of the North,” Deacon said, “I think the minister of transportation and communications would be hung in effigy from every stop sign.” ---- “MPP says Ontario ‘fiddles’ as North ‘burns’ with anger,” Unknown newspaper article, circa 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 08.14, Archives of Ontario. Although there was likely substantial political motivation behind Deacon’s assessment, municipal politicians and residents

were deficiencies with alternative methods transportation.⁸⁹¹ While the notion that transportation networks were under-developed was an grievance in itself, the lack of apparent concern about the issue from decision-makers in the metropole gave the resentment a particular bite.⁸⁹²

With discontentment simmering to a point that some people in the metropole began to take notice, regionalists offered a variety of prescriptions for how to address the issues, including appointing a dedicated cabinet minister for the area and designing special programs to acknowledge the disparity and reduce it.⁸⁹³ Northern Ontario agitation over these issues intensified following Robarts' successor's controversial 1973 budget; a Throne Speech and budget the following year aimed to address this sentiment. In a partisan speech to an audience in Thunder Bay in 1974, Bernier marveled at how far things had progressed. He explained that only a few years earlier "the idea that the Ontario government might design programs specifically for the North was, we were told, an impractical, unrealistic and impossible pipe dream."⁸⁹⁴ Yet by the mid-1970s, in addition to creating and expanding a new air service to better connect Northern Ontario (NorOntair), lowering freight rates⁸⁹⁵ to assist both consumers and

provided much corroboration. See: ----- "Continue raw resource exports, Davis tells Northern Ontario," *The Globe and Mail*, October 15, 1973, 9.

⁸⁹¹ In an opinion piece for the *Northern Life* on the possibility of reducing options for rail transport, David DeLoye asked: "Why is Northern Ontario again going to get the short end of the stick? Our highways leave much to be desired. By the time four-lanes appear in this part of the country, the traffic will have increased to such an extent that six lanes will be insufficient. Southern Ontario has the roads, and it would appear they are going to have the rails too. We need an alternative, they don't. It will really be shame if CN is allowed to discontinue operations in the north. If anything, service should be increased." David DeLoye, "Viewpoint - Trains: The North takes it in the ear," *The Northern Life*, October 27, 1976, A4.

⁸⁹² John R. Hunt noted in an article reporting on suggestions from mining executives that the North should consider secession, that there were two industrial ports in Northern Ontario. One in Little Current cannot be used for anything not transported by the CPR line. In effect, it means an industry in Espanola cannot haul products 10 miles to Little Current but must take the CPR train. "It is a situation which could be corrected in one afternoon by one parliamentarian making a speech, but for years this has not been corrected." John R. Hunt, "Toronto mining executive urges North to secede," *The North Bay Nugget*, April 28, 1973, 5.

⁸⁹³ Terrence Wills, "Must the North secede," 7.

⁸⁹⁴ Leo Bernier, "Remarks by the Hon/ Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, to the Port Arthur Progressive Conservative Speaker's Club, Prince Arthur Hotel, Thunder Bay, November 8, 1974," 2. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.28, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁹⁵ Gordon Carton, minister of transportation and communications noted recent freight rate reductions would benefit both producers and consumers in the North. ----- "Just what was said about the north," *The Northern Life*, October 17, 1973, A-5.

producers in the North, and building, extending and improving roads (Northern Ontario Resources Transportation),⁸⁹⁶ Bernier could also speak to a transportation initiative – the Young Travelers program – that seemed to directly address Northern Ontario perceptions of alienation and neglect from southern Ontario.⁸⁹⁷ When examined in the context of the type of concerns that were raised with respect to communications (and particularly access to TVO), such a program could be lauded for its underlying principles of promoting accessibility and access to important public institutions. Distances were transcended by the program in a way that fostered participation in an imagined community; people, or at least young people, from Northern Ontario communities could benefit from educational visits to science, culture and political centres in a way that was previously not possible.⁸⁹⁸ Another Northern Ontario-specific program, launched in the late 1970s, addressed complaints about Northern Ontario motor vehicle owners paying more than southern Ontario drivers for licensing.⁸⁹⁹ Whether for cynical political ends or based on a genuine appreciation of the disconnect between the lived experience and needs of people in different parts of the province – more fully explored in the following section centred on the diversity argument – these types of programs were important contributions to countering feelings of alienation and neglect that had developed over time.

As in Labrador, underdeveloped communications and transportation networks in Northern Ontario not only fostered feelings of alienation, detachment and neglect from its metropole, but also

⁸⁹⁶ Leo Bernier, “Remarks by the Hon/ Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, to the Port Arthur Progressive Conservative Speaker’s Club, Prince Arthur Hotel, Thunder Bay, November 8, 1974,” 4. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.28, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁹⁷ “For the first time, and for Northern Ontario only, the needs of our very young people to travel to the provincial capital so that they can too benefit from such educational facilities as the Ontario Science Centre, the Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario Place, and visit their legislative buildings have been recognized in the new “Young Travelers” program,” Bernier enthused. Leo Bernier, “Remarks by the Hon/ Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, to the Port Arthur Progressive Conservative Speaker’s Club, Prince Arthur Hotel, Thunder Bay, November 8, 1974,” 4. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.28, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁹⁸ Interestingly, adopting an internal colonialism frame allows for a substantially different interpretation – a visit to the metropole for educational purposes could be viewed as a type of educational dependency.

⁸⁹⁹ ----- “Editorial: Motorists get break,” *The Thunder Bay Times-News*, no page number, circa 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 09.06, Archives of Ontario.

frustrated any sort of cohesive identification within the area. As Miller explained: “These communities have little identification with each other, which weakens the already small political voice of the region, and problems of access to their nearest relatively large service centre make it difficult for the latter to perform a proper metropolitan function, had it the means or the will, to do so. The larger city has a louder voice, often gets more rewards, and may be looked upon, with some justice, as a hinterland hogtown.”⁹⁰⁰ Regionalists could thus point to these issues as ones of mutual concern when diagnosing the problem; however, the absence of strong internal communication and transportation networks ironically frustrated the very attempts to build unity that could have been a more potent force for action.

The Diversity Argument

Perhaps best viewed as an offshoot of the alienation and neglect argument, the diversity argument was employed to suggest that the region and its populations had certain special needs and/or values that were not fully understood or adequately addressed within the larger political unit as it was currently structured. Alienation within the region was, according to this argument, explainable because the centre could not (ever) truly understand the lived experienced in the periphery, only people with intimate knowledge of the region could know what they needed. Regionalists argued that in provinces as vast and diverse as those in Canada, a one-size-fits-all policy-making approach would be unlikely to provide workable solutions,⁹⁰¹ and if smaller, less populous, and often more remote areas of the province lacked the clout to contribute to this policy making, they would disproportionately feel the effects of its failures.

⁹⁰⁰ Tom Miller, “Cabin Fever,” 230.

⁹⁰¹ As the NLP wrote in its submission to the Snowden Commission, “Many Government programs, both Federal and Provincial are conceived for the massive Southern population with no thought given to their application in Northern Canada. Many of the laws and statutes of the Province of Newfoundland are near impossible to enforce in Labrador, especially in remote localities.” ----- “NLP brief to Royal Commission,” the *Aurora*, May 9, 1973, 16.

For example, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador did not subsidize school buses for students living less than a mile away from their school⁹⁰² based on the expectation was that a child could walk that distance. However, parents in places such as Labrador West contended that the frequency of severe cold weather in their area made this policy impractical and unfair. In a debate in the House of Assembly, Burgess contended that parents could not allow their child to walk to school with the low temperatures common during winter in Labrador, adding that two people had frozen to death since he's lived there.⁹⁰³ Ultimately, Minister of Education F.W. Rowe rejected requests for a modification of the one-mile limit based on cost and the anticipated demands from other areas of the province with particularly cold temperatures.⁹⁰⁴ Other examples of issues where a region's special circumstances were cited included the cost of travel for public officials,⁹⁰⁵ the generally higher cost of living,⁹⁰⁶ and laws preventing use of studded tires.⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰² ----- "Lab West Hassles With Government," *The Northern Reporter*, September 17, 1970, 1.

⁹⁰³ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 26 February, 1970, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 122, 537.

⁹⁰⁴ "If an exception were made for all of Labrador, clearly a similar concession would be demanded by the Great Northern Peninsula and inland areas of Newfoundland where sub-zero temperatures are frequently experienced," he contended in a telegram to protesting parents, noting the cost would be \$3-4 million to cover all of these areas of the province. ----- "Lab West Hassles With Government," 1.

⁹⁰⁵ F. W. Peacock, Chair, Labrador East Integrated School Board, Goose Bay. "Letter to the Hon. F.W. Rowe, Office of the Minister of the Department of Education," November 24, 1969. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.012, Memorial University Archives. Peacock cited the need for dedicated travel funds to cover the 511 miles by air of the district: "Ours is a very different situation from that of any other School Board in the Island and if there is to be regional parity then the Government must consider our special circumstances and enable us to do effective work for our schools in Labrador."

⁹⁰⁶ ----- "Carol Consumers," the *Carol Link*, June 25, 1970, 7. This column lists 28 products at random that reveal a 31 per cent price difference between Sept. Isles and Labrador City. It argues in favour of a co-op store; see also: Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 26 February, 1970, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 122, 536. Burgess noted Labrador West residents were charged 40 cents more per bottle of liquor than in St. John's. "Granted we live on the western extremity of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador – granted we live on this, but do we have to pay for it?... Why should we be charged additional? Because by virtue of our geographical location.

⁹⁰⁷ J.S. Robinson, "Editorial," *The Carol Link*, May 28, 1970, 1. The author argues the law requiring the removal of studded tires that is part of the *Newfoundland Highway Act* should not apply in this district "as we are just as apt to get four inches of snow in July as easily as May 23."

In Northern Ontario, the issues that were raised and the way complaints were framed were remarkably similar. Fred McNutt, president of the Northeastern Chambers of Commerce, suggested that “legislation drafted principally for the highly populated urbanized south often does not recognize the North’s essential differences which make these procedures either impractical or even impossible. Northern and southern Ontario, must, in order to provide for the optimum development of both, be envisaged as two parts of a complementary whole.”⁹⁰⁸ And, in a series of letters to Northern Ontario cabinet minister Leo Bernier in 1973, Thunder Bay barrister Steven W. Lukinek endeavored to provide evidence that policy made by the southern Ontario-based provincial bureaucracy was often at odds with Northern Ontario’s particular needs, and the southern bureaucracy’s ignorance of Northern life was generally identified as the source of the problem.⁹⁰⁹ Lukinek’s letters and others like them from the early to mid-1970s reveal the perception that southern Ontario did not understand the unique and special needs of the Northern region. Implicit in his letters is the idea that only authentic “Northerners” could appreciate the needs of the people in the Northern part of the province and that these Northerners should have more input into government policies that applied to them and special treatment if necessary.

For regionalists, individually these issues were frustrating; collectively, they were evidence of a distinct lifestyle and culture that were not adequately understood by the metropole. Interestingly,

⁹⁰⁸ Colin Vezina, “Strong voice in own gov’t sought for Northern Ont,” *The North Bay Nugget*, November 4, 1974, 1.

⁹⁰⁹ For example, in a letter concerning Ontario Labour Board practices, Lukinek notes: “...[I]n Northern Ontario the time limit set for carrying out the Board’s instructions are hopelessly inadequate. They are much too short having regard to the fact that everything is conducted by mail. I am aware of more than one case where the mail has been received by the employer after the date set out by the Board for the performance of certain filings. The Board’s procedure in this regard is hopelessly out of date having regard to the distance involved and the unreliability of the mails.” Steven W. Lukinuk, “Letter to Leo Bernier, Re: Ontario Labour Board Procedure,” August 3, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.8, “Thunder Bay.” Archives of Ontario. In another letter concerning the provincial government’s advisory committee for farm classification, Lukinek noted that “it must be almost impossible for a Committee of this nature to understand farming problems in Northern Ontario when they do not understand the meaning of terms such as ‘Crown lands’, ‘Unorganized township’, ‘Local Roads Board’, etc.” See: Steven W. Lukinuk, “Letter to Leo Bernier, Re: Advisory Committee – Farm Classification Feasibility,” August 30, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 02.8, “Thunder Bay.” Archives of Ontario.

governments in Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario both experimented with ministries designed to address this diversity and, at best, create advocates to present a regional policy lens to other ministries. The results were mixed.

The Department of Labrador Affairs

In 1962, after three years as Commissioner of Labrador, A.A. Edwards wrote to Premier Joey Smallwood with a proposal to create a department of Labrador Affairs centred in St. John's. He envisioned the department would include education, welfare, Municipal Affairs, Indian and Eskimo Affairs, Mines, Agriculture and Resources, Economic Development, Labour Relations, Public Works and Health,⁹¹⁰ and expressed hope that one or more representatives from each division, who preferably would have first-hand knowledge of Labrador, should be organized in the department.⁹¹¹ Requesting a budget line for administrative purposes, he otherwise projected minimal expenses since staff would be repurposed from elsewhere and he also volunteered to head the department.⁹¹² Edwards' proposal was accepted by Smallwood's government, but in the succeeding years it grew to be much loathed by people in the area.⁹¹³ Rather than operating as a departmental advocate highlighting provincial policies that might need to be adapted for Labrador's particular needs, it was seen to be an ineffective partisan tool of the Liberal government. When the Progressive Conservatives came to power, the party looked to

⁹¹⁰ A.A. Edwards, "Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood," October 9, 1962. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 3.24.036, Memorial University Archives.

⁹¹¹ A.A. Edwards, "Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood," October 9, 1962. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 3.24.036, Memorial University Archives.

⁹¹² A.A. Edwards, "Letter to the Hon. J.R. Smallwood," October 9, 1962. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 3.24.036, Memorial University Archives.

⁹¹³ Rev. Carl Major, "Letter to The Hon. J.R. Smallwood," February 18, 1968. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.012, Memorial University Archives. Major wrote: "I would like to impress on you that the Dept. Of Labrador Affairs in Labrador is a complete farce.... I have been here for eight years and will most probably be here a lot longer, much of my time travelling all over Labrador, I know the people and the way they think and live. They are not happy at the present time, and the Dept. Of Labrador Affairs is not helping the situation with its present structure."

eliminate it.⁹¹⁴ Reviewing the department's existence, the Snowden Commission concluded that "the idea of creating a separate Government department for a separate region was unwise. A special department for Labrador could not have, and should not have, attempted to meet responsibilities which other departments have there."⁹¹⁵

As this review of the exploitation argument and the alienation and neglect argument suggests, the principle of "one province – one people" was not always visible to regionalists in practice. Yet, these two arguments tended to be expressed predominantly as negatives. The diversity argument, nevertheless, while arguably a derivative of these arguments, also provided a space for a more positive notion of identity.⁹¹⁶ The existence of a department for a region and, in essence the people of a region, served as a powerful marker of distinction and identity as the Northern Ontario experience reveals.

The Department of Northern Affairs (Ontario)

As long as I can remember, we Northerners have felt that our special needs deserved special⁹¹⁷ treatment from Queen's Park. Premier William Davis has now responded to this need by setting up Ontario's first Ministry for Ontario lying north of the French River. I consider it a great honour to be the first Minister for the Ministry of Northern Affairs. It is my hope that this new opportunity to serve Northerners directly will enable us all to move ahead more quickly and more effectively in our dealings with Queen's Park.... I am pleased with the very positive

⁹¹⁴ With the department of Labrador Affairs up for elimination, Labrador Liberal MLA Melvin Woodward offered an admission that it had fallen short of its intended function but was still a better option than the alternative being proposed. Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 9 June, 1972, (Melvin Woodward, Lib) Tape 654, 2024-2025.

⁹¹⁵ Donald Snowden, *Report of the Royal Commission on Labrador: The Role of Government, Volume 7*, (St. John's, NL: February, 1974), 1297. It continued by noting: "While it is recognized that there are problems peculiar to certain parts of the Province and that certain agencies should be more active in those problem areas than others, the Commission affirms the principle that Newfoundland and Labrador is one province and the people one people, regardless of ethnic origin. Physical separations exist in Quebec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia, but this basic principle is accepted in these provinces."

⁹¹⁶ "...when we talk about representation, the affairs of Labrador have to be governed and guided by people who essentially live in Labrador and who are aware of the changing problems and the problems that exist." Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 12 June, 1970, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 1229, 7077.

⁹¹⁷ Another cabinet minister from the North chose to use the same language. Rene Brunelle told a Northern Ontario development conference: "The Government does recognize that the people in the area require a special voice at Queen's Park. And that is why you have heard recently that a new Ministry of Northern Affairs has been created to respond to this need." Rene Brunelle, "The Government Role in the Future of Northern Ontario," *Boreal: Journal of Northern Ontario Studies* 8, 8.

response the establishment of this new Ministry has received from Northerners. I will do the best job I can to represent you as you wish to be represented in this new portfolio.⁹¹⁸

-Leo Bernier, Minister of Northern Affairs

For Kenora MPP Leo Bernier, becoming Minister of Northern Affairs in Premier William Davis's Progressive Conservative government on March 4, 1977 was more than a lateral move in the provincial cabinet and a routine change in job descriptions. It was "the greatest thing for Northern Ontario since Confederation."⁹¹⁹ Bernier's statement may have been hyperbole but, judging from the overwhelmingly positive responses from his constituents and residents across the extensive region, the announcement was clearly significant for the North. Likely more than any other initiative of the Davis government, the creation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs had a profound effect on the Northern Ontario identity; it was both a symbolic reinforcement of a regional identity and also evidence that the state was responding to the agitation of "Northerners"⁹²⁰ – a distinct political subjectivity.

⁹¹⁸ Leo Bernier, "Leo Bernier Reports from Queen's Park," March 15, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.22 "Newsletter," Archives of Ontario.

⁹¹⁹ "Leo Bernier in New Portfolio as Minister of Northern Affairs," *The Temiskaming Speaker*, February 9, 1977, 1. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario.

⁹²⁰ The culmination of years of lobbying from Northern communities and political representatives, the new Ministry of Northern Affairs was initially designed to foster communications between other government departments to ensure Northern needs were remembered and met when programs were developed. The symbolic importance of the ministry was, at least initially, of greater significance than its political weight within the government, however. The ministry's budget was reapportioned from other departments and specific programs were moved under its direction over time. For many people in Northern Ontario the idea that they now had a dedicated voice at Queen's Park and a department staffed in large part by fellow "Northerners" to advocate on their behalf was a long overdue response to Northern Ontario grievances and alienation from the provincial government. The formation of the Ministry of Northern Affairs was the third such attempt at building a cabinet portfolio and department specifically for Northern Ontario. The most recent previous version of the ministry (as part of the ministry of natural resources) had been disbanded by the Davis government five years earlier under a restructuring initiative. "When we restructured (in 1972), we felt the interests of the north would be accommodated by the ministry of natural resources, but it has become evident that the people in the north want more direct representation," Davis said at the time of the announcement. See: ---- "Leo Bernier in New Portfolio as Minister of Northern Affairs," *Temiskaming Speaker*, Feb. 9, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario. Named as the first minister, Leo Bernier vowed to "bring new clout for the North at Queen's Park," and noted that his staff in Toronto would also be largely composed of Northerners – including his first Deputy Minister Tom Campbell. See: ---- "Our Own Minister," Editorial, *Temiskaming Speaker*, February 9, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario; Leo Bernier, "Leo Bernier Reports from Queen's Park," March 15, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.22 "Newsletter," Archives of Ontario.

Bernier's personal, political and ministerial files from his time in the Davis cabinet reveal the significance of a Northern Ontario identity. Within these records there are numerous examples of Bernier's constituents, rival politicians, and Bernier himself constructing, referring to or appealing to a 'Northerner' identity in hopes of tapping into a potential source of political capital. When this regional identity was employed as a political subjectivity its users were able to interact with the state in interesting and differing ways. Constituents seeking to make claims upon the government could position themselves as part of an identifiable group that was bound by a historical sense of alienation, marginalization and neglect, and owed certain special consideration by the state – very much an extension of the diversity argument that regionalists used to frame their issues.

As representatives of these people, politicians drew upon the Northern identity to gain not only a base of popular support but also an authenticity that legitimized their own claims upon the state or their actions as agents on its behalf. Thus, by rhetorically positioning oneself "as a Northerner" in relation to the state, some Ontario residents could call upon an historically-rooted regional identity to achieve a contemporary political subjectivity and a heretofore unseen responsiveness from the state to satisfy, or at least appear to satisfy, some of their collective demands. Although this type of political subjectivity was evident in other parts of the diagnostic framing process – for example, the Northerner as a colonial subject – Bernier's comment in relation to the Department of Northern Affairs that "our special needs deserved special treatment" provides a particularly vivid example of how it could be employed when making the diversity argument. The minister's files contain a sampling of dozens of letters he received in light of his appointment; they were both uniformly positive and overflowing with examples of language that called upon the Northerner subjectivity in a manner with consistent with the diversity argument.⁹²¹

⁹²¹ Ken E. Myles wrote that he was sure Bernier "will serve this new ministry with dignity and honour as *only* a Northerner can" [emphasis added]. See: Ken E. Myles, "Letter to Leo Bernier," February 25, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario. Denis Belleville enthused that "we finally

There were some voices expressing caution and a few that offered outright opposition.⁹²² Yet the attacks against the Ministry of Northern Affairs were viewed by some Northerners as attacks against the North itself. In a hand-written note to Bernier, "Dave" suggested: "It's amazing how the Southern Ontario press react to situations *they don't understand* [emphasis added], especially when they smell an election. Just like a pack of wolves on Lac Seul. It's easy to dwell on and exploit issues that are 1,200 miles removed from their readers. I can sympathize with those in Alberta who were saying 'Let those Eastern Bastards freeze in the dark.'" ⁹²³ In a strongly-worded editorial, the Thunder Bay *Chronicle-Journal* argued that "by terming the ministry 'redundant and another level of bureaucracy, it looks suspiciously like the opposition parties are currying southern Ontario voters at the expense of the north.... If the ministry was a political gesture, we could certainly think of worse ways of reconciling the north.'" ⁹²⁴

have a full-fledged Ministry for the North with control of the budget and a voice in the inner circle of cabinet." See: Denis Belleville, "Letter to Leo Bernier," February 10, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario.

⁹²² J.A. Tschirky, in an otherwise laudatory letter, warned that he hoped "the new ministry will not become a symbol of alienation from Queen's Park and the rest of the province." J.A. Tschirky, "Letter to Leo Bernier," February 10, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario. An editorial in the *Espanola Recorder* noted there was some "natural cynicism of northerners who have been hearing for years that the north was getting a raw deal and that things would get better," adding that the department must be controlled by Northerners to have any legitimacy. "We do not want another empire dictated and operated from the south," the editorial stated, recalling rhetoric used in the exploitation argument. "We have had a bellyful of that over the past number of years." ----- "New Ministry could be advantage," *The Espanola Recorder*, February 15, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario. There was also some suspicion, both from opposition members and the press, that with a provincial election only months away, the creation of the ministry was a bit of crass political opportunism on the part of a governing party seeking to win new seats in the region.

⁹²³ ----- "Hand-written note to Bernier from 'Dave,'" February 9, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario.

⁹²⁴ ----- "Northern Affairs Ministry Not To Be Criticized," *The Chronicle-Journal*, February 5, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 "Northern Affairs, Ministry of," Archives of Ontario. Perhaps mindful that government recognition of the North's identity and special needs would provoke such rigorous defenses from the region, three years later, when Liberal leader Stuart Smith toured Northern Ontario and spoke about his party's plans for ministerial restructuring he carefully phrased his proposed dismantling of the ministry as a net benefit for the north. ----- "Transcript of CBC Thunder Bay news story for Ministry of Northern Affairs," October 9, 1980. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 17.3, "Stuart Smith Versus MNA," Archives of Ontario.

Whatever the motives behind the creation of these policies, programs and, ultimately, a stand-alone Ministry of Northern Affairs, their emergence sent a strong message to Northerners that they had found an important subject position from which they could make claims upon the state. Regardless of which people constituted Northerners, there was definite and growing recognition that “speaking as a Northerner” carried significant political weight.

Although the experiences of Labradorians and Northern Ontarians varied greatly in terms of their interest in and acceptance of distinct government ministries tasked with handling their affairs or representing their interests within other government departments, their symbolic existence underscored the main thrust of the diversity argument put forward by some regionalists: their regional community was different and distinct from the rest of the province and it had particular needs that government could only hope to satisfy by acknowledging this difference. Where regionalists differed, as will become evident in the next chapter, was whether acknowledgment and limited government action was enough to satisfy the region’s needs.

Internal Diversity Within the Regional Project

Prior to concluding this section of the diversity argument and this chapter on diagnostic framing arguments, it’s important to briefly problematize region and question its stability and integrity – particularly as it has been used by some regionalists in their framing initiatives. In an opinion piece for the *Northern Reporter*, Selby Learning highlighted the importance of contrasting a region with an ‘other’ to better understand its own distinguishable attributes. While positive notions of belonging to a region through the basis of a shared history, or geographic terrain, or lived experience were key, understanding these facets of a regional identity required something for comparison. Moreover, a mutual dislike or loathing of this other could bind together members of a region.⁹²⁵ Noting the similarities to Canada’s

⁹²⁵ Selby Learning, “Labrador – Land of Paradox,” *The Northern Reporter*, December 18, 1969, 13. “We all seem to be proud of our heritage and of the fact we were born or became attached to Labrador in some way or other and the fact that we are not going to let those Newfies take over here,” Learning wrote. “But we are singing a tune to

relationship to the United States of America, Learning expressed a regional unity through a sentiment of ignorance or second-rate understanding from this 'other': in case the case of Labrador, both Canada at large, but potentially the island of Newfoundland itself.

Logically, if people in a country such as Canada could find a unifying element of identity in comparison to another country, or if people within a province or region within a country could use the country as a contrasting other to help understand its subnational identity, surely a sub-provincial region would not be immune to internal division. This was certainly the situation in all three cases under review. Internal diversity was expressed both through identification with a smaller conception of regions or a particular locale and also through other limited identities. Regionalists were generally aware of competing interests and rivalries within the bounds of their regional projects and would alternately attempt to accommodate them, subsume them or ignore them.

Internal diversity within Labrador was top of mind for regionalists. Although poor communication and transportation networks created physical isolation among population centres that led to some estrangement, cultural, material and racial differences between population groups were well known and routinely recognized as factors which proved to be obstacles to building and strengthening a pan-Labrador identity.⁹²⁶

the wind for if it were not for Newfoundland we would probably have forgotten who we are by now. It is dislike for or the discontent towards the Island which helps remind us of who we are."

⁹²⁶ Labrador West District Association, The New Labrador Party, "NLP brief to Royal Commission," *The Aurora*, May 2, 1973, 16. The region's diverse conditions were underlined in a submission by the Labrador West NLP to the Snowden commission. "Our problems stem mainly from the remoteness and relative isolation of our communities," the brief stated. "Many are problems conceived by an affluent society. We ask for live T.V. when other parts of Labrador ask for the privacy of a telephone. We ask for a road to the outside world when many would settle for one mile of road in their community." Ern Condon, an NLP member who later led a new iteration of the party at the turn of the millennium, lived in Labrador West at the time of the NLP's founding. He explains that the settler population on the southern coast of Labrador tended to see everyone in Labrador West as "come from aways" who, as fairly recent migrants to the area, were not truly Labradorians. Ern Condon, Interview by Will Stos, Phone Interview, March 19, 2011. Among the other groups with long-term connection to the land, there continued to be both suspicion towards each other (and even hatred) based on past historical grievances and disputes, and somewhat competing visions of the future (for example, self-governance initiatives among the Inuit).

Anthropologist John C. Kennedy, in his indispensable article “Being and Becoming Inuit in Labrador,” describes some southern coast “Settlers” as being incredibly reluctant to discuss their Indigenous ancestry: “The condescending manner in which locals discussed ‘native people’ further north led me to suspect that the social stigma of looking ‘native’ or ‘Skimo,’ the pejorative term locals commonly used to refer to ‘Eskimos,’ inhibited acknowledgment of Aboriginal ancestry.”⁹²⁷ Kennedy, who traces the development of identity politics from the 1960s to contemporary times suggests certain ideas of the self and community were present during this early period, but identity politics itself had not taken root among certain groups yet. Nevertheless, the sense of difference, while perhaps masked by identification with local villages, was very much present in these communities and growing over the 1970s.

Could a pan-Labrador identity be created and be sustainable with such deep-seated hostility among component populations? The regionalists who formed the New Labrador Party handled this issue deftly. Unity would be found through diversity. While emphasizing common elements such as land, the distinct groups and their special needs would be recognized but not diminished or subsumed by the larger Labrador identity project.⁹²⁸ This acknowledgement of internal diversity, rather than serving to underscore divisions amongst the population, provided the space required for participation towards achieving common goals without minimizing differences or suppressing burgeoning identities among constituent groups.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁷ John C. Kennedy, “Being and becoming Inuit in Labrador,” *Études/Inuit/Studies* 39, no. 1, (2015), 225–242. Kennedy’s article offers a superb anthropological account of the development of Labrador identities during and after the period in which the NLP was active.

⁹²⁸ For instance, organizers within the party considered anyone who chose to live in Labrador and make the area their home should be considered a Labradorian. Yet, when engaging in symbolic identity creation and promotion astute party members such as leader Mike Martin also made accommodation for difference. In creating the Labrador flag, which attained widespread acceptance and popular support in the area, he included elements in the flag that reflected both common experience and different historical development and distinctness.

⁹²⁹ In some respects, this idea of unity through diversity may be comparable to Canadian efforts to promote Official Multiculturalism and a national civic identity. See, for example: Jos E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011.

For a word that appeared so frequently in public and private it is notable and very instructive that “Northerner” is never explicitly and satisfactorily defined by its users. The Northern Ontario identity – if it can be described as a singular identity at all – must be understood as both fluid and relational.⁹³⁰ There appears to be continual disagreement over the boundaries of Northern Ontario and who constitutes “Northerners” between the provincial government and communities and amongst the people of Northern Ontario themselves.⁹³¹ Internal disagreements about who could claim an authentic Northerner identity based on geography and location⁹³² were challenging obstacles for regionalists who might otherwise share common goals. Moreover, other identity groups within Northern Ontario –

⁹³⁰ See, especially, the work of John Agnew: John Agnew, “Working the Margins: The Geopolitical Marking of Italian National Identity,” *Carte Italiane* 2(11), 2017; and John Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2003.

⁹³¹ At the time of Confederation “Old Ontario” (the former Canada West) and “New Ontario” (territory that was added to Canada West between Manitoba and Quebec) were generally viewed as distinct regions of the province. Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 5. “New Ontario” would in time come to be known as Northern Ontario (some franco-Ontarians continue to refer to Northern Ontario as *Nouvel Ontario*) while “Old Ontario” became southern Ontario. Historically, the provincial government recognized Northern Ontario as the area north of the French and Mattawa Rivers, but later included the District of Parry Sound. In 1977 political pressure from Parry Sound residents brought the district into Northern Ontario. The Muskoka region was added to Northern Ontario for provincial funding purposes for a period of time but later removed.

⁹³² Representing Kenora, a riding in the northwest of the province, Bernier’s files contain many instances where he and his constituents identify primarily with Northwestern Ontario – generally referring to the three most northwestern districts in Northern Ontario. As this regional identity is sometimes used interchangeably with the Northern Ontario identity, some Northwestern Ontarians arguably viewed themselves as authentic Northerners compared to Northeastern Ontarians. When questions arose about which communities and political representatives would benefit from government funding of Northern initiatives, an east-west and north-south divide was often evident in the documents. In an editorial in the *Espanola Recorder*, for example, Muskoka MPP Frank Miller – then newly appointed as Minister of Natural Resources – is called a “semi-northerner.” ----- “New Ministry could be advantage.” Northern Ontarians from smaller communities, and particularly rural areas in the far north, sometimes complained that urban centres were unfairly deemed to share the Northern identity. An editorial titled “Prière de ne pas nous oublier,” by Paul Tanguay in *Le Nord* warned that the new Ministry of Northern Affairs considered “southern cities” like Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay to be the north. Tanguay noted “Bernier will have to consider the towns up north more seriously deprived and should not just concentrate on the big centres of ‘South North.’” ----- “Prière de ne pas nous oublier,” *Le Nord*, February 9, 1977. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 10.20 “Northern Affairs, Ministry of,” Archives of Ontario. English quotations taken from translation in ministerial file.

notably Indigenous Peoples⁹³³ and francophones⁹³⁴ – were sometimes excluded as ‘Northerners’ when their agendas came into conflict with the agendas of other self-identified Northerners.

Regionalists such as Diebel struggled with how to respond to this internal diversity when promoting his partisan operation and/or envisioning a separate Northern Ontario province. The idea that not all “Northerners” would necessarily feel accepted, accommodated or respected by policy prescriptions other “Northerners” might favour was one point at which the limits of a common regional identity become visible. Deibel recalled that he met very few francophones during his various campaigns. While his inability to speak French was not a concern voiced by most of the francophones he did meet, his ideas about the place of the French language within a Northern Ontario province would likely have prompted reaction in some quarters if they were widely known.⁹³⁵

⁹³³ Indigenous peoples were sometimes considered “Northerners” when their socio-economic position and historic government neglect fit into the larger aggrieved Northerner narrative. However, when the government of Ontario negotiated an agreement with reserves to allow for special fishing privileges for status Indians, these Indigenous Peoples almost instantly had their “Northerner” identity revoked by irate letter writers who complained the change in policy would mean “Northern children” – meaning non-status Indian children and probably implicitly white children – would have to move away from the region to find economic opportunity. These letter writers stated that the provincial government had once again betrayed the North.

⁹³⁴ About 200,000 of the province’s 500,000 francophones lived in Northern Ontario. Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 53-54. Sometimes regionalist promoters of a Northern identity used this demographic data to demonstrate difference between the northern and southern parts of the province; other Northerners would occasionally depict government policy designed to recognize and protect French language rights as part of a hostile southern agenda that went against the interests of the people of Northern Ontario. For example, in a letter to Bernier, G.B. Leckie of Kenora expressed concern that Premier Davis’s support for Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s constitutional proposals was “nothing more than an attempt to establish permanently the dominant control of Ontario (Southern Ontario specifically) and Quebec over the rest of Canada.” G.B. Leckie. “Letter to Leo Bernier,” April 7, 1981. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 19.10 “Premier’s Office: Constitutional Amendment,” Archives of Ontario. Chief among the letter writer’s concerns was the potential for increased bilingualism within the government.

⁹³⁵ While pledging support for the French culture in the region and encouragement for its development, Deibel told journalist Gordon Brock that he was personally opposed to Official Bilingualism and believed French should not have special status in Canada. Preferring a multicultural and multilingual society, Deibel supported abolishing the French language and separate (Catholic) school boards and creating a single school system where learning English and a second language (not necessarily French) would be mandatory. Arguing that separate language schools “ghettoize” the community, Deibel stated: “If some people are interested in only promoting the French language at all costs then the NOHP is not the party for them.” Gordon Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 55. For francophones (and others) who saw the sizable French minority in Northern Ontario as a feature worth preserving and enhancing in the region, this position would have, at the very least, given some pause for thought.

Deibel's party platform and his interactions with Indigenous peoples also suggested some significant difficulties in promoting a regionalist vision that could accommodate internal diversity within the region. NOHP policy called for giving all 70,000 status Indians free university education in order to become better prepared to adapt into the 'mainstream of society.' "Our view to solve the problem⁹³⁶ once and for all for Native people is to give them free university education if they want it," Deibel stated. "We owe them that. The university graduate will be able to cut the strings, take a job of his choice, and make it in a white man's world." Interestingly, while the education policy appeared to support a form of cultural assimilation, Deibel was also on record supporting a July 1977 declaration of independence by Treaty Nine Cree and Ojibwa Indians in which they declared themselves "a free and sovereign nation," and sought self-rule by 2000.⁹³⁷ Some of the apparent contradictions in policy were almost certainly based on unfamiliarity and outright ignorance of internal Indigenous politics. Whereas Deibel had acted as a kind of conduit/megaphone to amplify the kind of resentment, frustration and ideas he had heard on his listening tours, he had simply not heard much from Indigenous voices and had crafted some of this policy based on his own ideas or the prescription of other non-Indigenous Northerners. Of the 10,000 signatures he obtained to formally launch the NOHP, Deibel told writer Gordon Brock that only about 100 were from people who either self-identified or whom Deibel considered to be Indigenous. It's unclear how actively he sought out their signatures, but years later when recalling one meeting with a group of Indigenous people in a pub in Thunder Bay, Deibel revealed that his (and indirectly his party's) ideas and approach to Indigenous-centred policy were challenged. After listing all that he and his party planned to do for Indigenous people, Deibel found his audience was not at all receptive. One man took pity on him, brought him outside and said: "You know, you keep saying what you're going to do. What you should doing is asking us, 'what do you want to be done?'"

⁹³⁶ Although this could be read as "The Indian Problem" and be seen as favouring assimilation, it is probable that Deibel was referring to poverty within reserves and among Indigenous people more generally.

⁹³⁷ Brock, *The Province of Northern Ontario*, 52-53.

Upon returning to the table, the formerly one-way conversation changed into a true discussion over the need for clean water, sewer systems and rights over the land. “We more or less ended up agreeing that Indian rights should be respected,” Deibel remembered.⁹³⁸

The dynamism of the Northerner identity, its fluidity, and its users’ ability to put it on, take it off, or confer it on or revoke it from another person is very much in keeping with its utility as a political tool. It was an identity that could both claim and reject individuals or groups based on situational political necessity. As it became recognized by the Ontario government as an historically significant designation that entitled its users to special recognition and support, some “Northerners” found this regional identity allowed them to make claims upon the state from a potentially powerful political subject position. Yet, internal diversity and suspicion or competition amongst communities or other identity groups were very present. Regionalists such as Diebel who did not acknowledge these differences, paid only cursory attention to them, or were ignorant of the needs and aspirations of people holding these identities undermined their own efforts to obtain affiliation of a larger Northerner identity.

Historian Robert J. Morgan, whose two-volume *Rise Again!: The Story Of Cape Breton Island* offers a comprehensive account of the island’s development, relates a personal anecdote⁹³⁹ in the introduction to the second volume to characterize the internal division within Cape Breton – namely the divide between industrial Cape Breton and surrounding rural areas. In cultural and economic terms, these two geographic spaces had diverged as the island developed over the course of a century. Industrial growth in pockets of the island brought about significant changes in infrastructure and a wider sense of modernity not apparent in rural areas. Moreover, the industry’s labour demands not only drew rural Cape Bretoners into large towns and the city of Sydney, but also pulled a significant number of

⁹³⁸ Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

⁹³⁹ Morgan, *Rise Again! Book 2*, 1-2.

immigrants from elsewhere in Canada and around the world; this diverse population developed its own particular culture through social interactions.⁹⁴⁰

Nevertheless, these divisions did not appear to be insurmountable to some Cape Breton regionalists. Among senior members of the Cape Breton Labor Party there was an understanding that the party's initial base and strength would come from the island's industrial core, where organizational efforts would be focused. Areas on the island without a strong organized labour tradition may have been less receptive to the party's ideas, yet MacEwan made a conscious effort to broaden the definition of labour to appeal to men and women there through party symbols, images and iconography. Party members were cognizant that to appeal to diverse groups within Cape Breton they needed to reflect that diversity in their promotional materials.

Diversity and division therefore, within these regional projects, was very much present. The potency of these two elements, like larger regional identity, would wax and wane in relation to opposing entities or when based on certain circumstances. Regionalists who hoped to build or harness the power of larger regional identities dealt with these differences in a variety of ways. The more successful of these regionalists were keenly aware that unchecked internal division with their regional projects would weaken a unified front that would be key to their own diversity frame arguments. Members of the New Labrador Party and, to a lesser degree, the Cape Breton Labor Party acknowledged these differences and either made attempts to positively incorporate them into the larger region or work around it if they

⁹⁴⁰ Although Morgan acknowledges witnessing some elements of rural Cape Breton life among older generations of Sydneyites who were transplants, the romantic and nostalgic aspects of the Island's heritage were largely missing from its industrial centres, and this loss was mourned. Other critical voices, such as Ian MacKay in *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, would have a very different perspective from Morgan on the validity and historical accuracy of this heritage and its place as a part islander identity, yet the material divisions Morgan described were quite real. Culturally, industrial Cape Bretoners could be said to be both aware of and, at times, estranged from a broader Cape Breton identity that MacKay argues was consciously constructed by appeals to conservative notions of folklore. The political radicalism within some industrial centres beginning in the 1920s and the increasingly diverse ethnic immigration to these areas was, likewise, completely foreign to people living in the rural periphery. Migration from rural to urban areas over the preceding and following decades would provide some familial links and awareness of this kind of political culture, but the differences between these two parts of Cape Breton could be stark.

posed a problem to their agenda. Members of the Northern Ontario Heritage Party demonstrated a less sophisticated understanding of the nature of this diversity and division and appeared to choose to ignore or accommodate it with a more paternalistic approach.

Conclusion

Although there would be disagreements about how to solve the socio-economic and democratic problems present in these areas among varied regional movement entrepreneurs as explored in the next chapter, there was often remarkable agreement as to the nature of the problems. Moreover, during this time, regional movement entrepreneurs also shared some common rhetorical strategies to frame the problems to a regional body politic and an external audience that may have been in a position to either sympathize or act to address these issues. Engaging in rhetoric that communicated these problems as evidence of internal colonialism at work, alienation or neglect from an outside power, or cultural or material difference from a larger group, all worked to diagnostically frame a situation. Each of these arguments could prove compelling and effective among the target audience, as evidenced by how well this rhetoric was received and perpetuated, and how some arguments prompted (or at least contributed) to action taken by governments and power brokers concerned by this type of regionalist sentiment and the agitation for significant change it could bring.

Problem? Meet Solution(s): Making and Countering Arguments for Regionally-Based Political Parties, and Building and Sustaining Party Organizations and Membership

The problems were clear – so clear that they were accepted in many quarters as common sense and unquestionable. Regionalists could confidently point to multiple inequalities within their province that were not being adequately addressed by the groups who could conceivably bring about change. There were material differences in terms of communication and transportation systems; diverse, sustainable economies (which were more apparent in provincial heartlands) were absent in areas defined by extractive industrial systems; and, people in power or with power (namely private capitalist interests, the provincial and sometimes federal governments, and people living in or benefitting from the metropole) were variously dismissing, ignoring, or actively promoting this situation.

Diagnosing these problems and noting how they were evident throughout an area of the province highlighted commonalities amongst the people and communities within them. In creating and/or fostering a shared sense of regional identity – based significantly, but not solely, on grievances directed towards an outside ‘other’ – regionalists could now begin proposing solutions to the problems. In a framing analysis, these actions can be identified as part of a prognostic framing process. Despite coming to similar conclusions about the nature of the problems and naming similar institutional actors who could potentially address them, regionalists within all three areas proposed differing political solutions. Some ardent regionalists concluded that joining or supporting a brokerage party or other political party with appeal outside the region would be the best way of advocating for regional needs – particularly if that party formed government. The supporters of distinct regional parties tended to argue that this strategy had failed to achieve desired results in the past. Instead, they variously argued that a new party could offer a unified voice and speak about pressing regional issues openly in ways representatives from larger parties could not, potentially win concessions from the government in

minority parliaments, and embody a regional identity.⁹⁴¹ Yet prognostic frames that promoted the value in the creation of a new, regionally-based party were countered by opponents of this type of regionalist. While arguments against creating these parties were manifold, two counter frames common to all three parties gained particular prominence and salience: the suitability of the leaders of these parties to do the job, and the destabilizing threat to identity posed by parties that were (or were perceived to be) advocating for separatism.

In this chapter I first trace the arguments some regionalists made while advocating for the need for a regionally-based party. I then examine some of the practical obstacles to these parties' lasting chances of success and consider their responses to these challenges. Finally, I explore how counter arguments posed by other regionalists (or opponents of regionalism) frustrated the drive towards building a regionally-based party and ultimately undermined their messaging and image among potential members and/or voters.

Prognostic Framing: The Need for a Party and Finding an Effective Voice

In his article "Cabin Fever: The Province of Ontario and Its Norths," Tom Miller suggests that the regional perception of neglect and exploitation felt by Northern Ontario towards southern Ontario is similar to the regionalism present in the Prairies towards central Canada. "But [whereas] the prairie West has provinces and a political voice; northern Ontario is part, and electorally a very small part, of the province that exploits it. Political frustration [thus] gives northern resentment a very special bitterness."⁹⁴² In Labrador and Cape Breton⁹⁴³ too, the presence of a strong, unified regional political voice is absent. Municipal governments, if they were present at all (i.e. Labrador), and their umbrella

⁹⁴¹ Another option put forward was to explore non-partisan avenues to advance regional interests such as building regional institution, groups or communication and research networks.

⁹⁴² Tom Miller, "Cabin Fever," 227.

⁹⁴³ Although Cape Breton's proportion of the population represents a fairly sizable percent of the province's total.

organizations, were politically weak mechanisms with which to leverage the provincial governments; and, even when they were employed, internal regional rivalries and competition often negated their ability to speak authoritatively as a collective. Cultivating a strong regional voice through provincial political parties was, likewise, inherently problematic. If a region's seats were occupied by representatives belonging to different partisan affiliations, competing and sometimes conflicting loyalties between party and region could weaken a representative's ability to speak candidly about certain regional interests or to put partisanship aside to support initiatives or ideas from another party's regional representatives.

Shortly after founding the NLP, Tom Burgess made statements in the House of Assembly and to the press that suggested that his difficulty in balancing the interests of party and region was a prime reason he opted to associate with a new regionally-based party. To his colleagues in the Assembly, he explained: "After I sat on that side of the House for a year, I came to the realization that all I was, was a voting delegate for the good of the party to vote in time of need.... I was to know, and I think it is what every member in this House of Assembly should search into his mind, where does party loyalty cease and duty to your constituent begin, and this is why I made the decision – that I had a duty to the people who elected me."⁹⁴⁴ Speaking to the readers of the *Northern Reporter*, he argued: "If Labrador formed its own party and nominated its own representatives in each of the Labrador ridings, then Labrador would have a common voice, and the party would set its policy to suit our local situation. [And,]...although the Labrador Party would only have three voices in the Assembly, at least their voices would be united towards one common cause."⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴⁴ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 24 March, 1969, (Tom Burgess, NLP) Tape 154, 971.

⁹⁴⁵ ----- "Burgess advocates Labrador Rights Party."

Other party organizers and supporters made similar statements that were also carried by the media. NLP president Mac Moss noted that the party “must get the point across to the people of Labrador that we stand strictly for Labrador, and that is our main policy.” In essence, regional interests and party interests would never conflict because the party’s only interests would be regional interests – or at least, regional interests would always come first. In a newspaper commentary, the NLP of Labrador North stressed that “regional disparity,” mattered more than party politics.⁹⁴⁶ Letter writer Mansell Cooke, in offering his public support to the party, stated that such an organization would “at least give us hope that somebody will be fighting for our rights in Labrador.”⁹⁴⁷

The unicameral nature of these provincial legislatures, with members elected through a first-past-the-post system based on the principle of representation by population, may have served to aggravate these grievances. Regional minority groups, like other minorities, were numerically disadvantaged in this system. Federally, the founders of Confederation had instituted a second chamber – the Senate – to provide regional balance to the popularly elected House of Commons; the lower chamber was more closely based along the lines of geographic representation by population while the upper chamber was designed to better represent regions and minorities. Some of the first colonies to join Confederation initially continued to operate second chambers that served a similar purpose, though over time all provinces transitioned to a unicameral apparatus. In the absence of a formal outlet to more fulsomely express regional interests, regional parties offered one way to amplify these interests within the current system.

In reviewing Northern Ontario’s political history, Geoffrey Weller has noted that the area’s tendency to vote for the governing party “has most likely been an attempt by voters to make the region

⁹⁴⁶ ----- “Comment by New Labrador Party of Labrador North.”

⁹⁴⁷ Mansell Cooke, Happy Valley, “Support For Burgess,” *The Northern Reporter*, September 11, 1969, 2.

useful politically to the party in power, in this way hoping to obtain a few handouts.”⁹⁴⁸ This electoral culture is part of what A. Rasporich has called “the politics of colonialism.”⁹⁴⁹ Although a similar pattern was evident in Labrador around the time of the emergence of the NLP, particularly in coastal Labrador, that area’s more limited history of voting makes a direct comparison more difficult. Yet, as Tom Miller writes, Northern Ontario has tended to receive greater consideration of regional interests when its voters do not reliably elect government members. Writing during a lengthy period of Progressive Conservative governments, Miller noted that the North fared best in periods of minority government where Northern seats are not securely NDP (the most popular of the opposition parties in the area at the time) or Conservative: “The banning of studded tires, which were highly valued in the North, was the action of a majority government. The flat \$10 car license fee, to compensate for the North’s high gasoline prices, was the gesture of minority government.”⁹⁵⁰

Miller was not alone in making this type of observation. Regionalists who favoured creating new partisan organizations suggested these groupings would be especially potent agents for change in the event of a minority government. While collecting signatures to register his new party, Deibel told reporters that his party’s “strength would lie with a minority government where the NOHP could hold the balance of power. In that position, they could support measures advantageous to the north, and scuttle those that wouldn’t. The very existence of the NOHP would make a minority more likely.”⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁸ Geoffrey Weller, “Policy and Politics in the North,” in Graham White, ed., *Government and Politics of Ontario, 5th Edition*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 293.

⁹⁴⁹ Tom Miller. “Cabin Fever,” 239.

⁹⁵⁰ Tom Miller. “Cabin Fever,” 240.

⁹⁵¹ James Weaver, “NOHP takes confidence from Parti Québécois,” 1. Cabinet minister Rene Brunelle, a regionalist himself, told Deibel that he doubted how effective they would be in a minority. He argued that even optimistically, if Deibel elected 10 MPPs, that would still only be 10 out of 125 Members. He states there are three established parties and “I think we have to work through these parties.” Ed Deibel, “Why A New Political Party Today And A New Province Tomorrow?” *Boreal: Journal of Northern Ontario Studies* 8, 95.

In motivating Cape Bretoners to consider an alternative to voting for governments (or parties that tended to form them in Nova Scotia and Canada), MacEwan made observations similar to Miller's – first while supporting the NDP and then as leader of the CBLP. In an editorial from 1980 he noted:

Traditionally our people have placed their faith in political institutions to remedy their problems. A wide range of strategies have been tried, some unorthodox elsewhere in the Maritimes. The basic orthodoxy of electing a solid contingent of 'government members' has been tried, most recently in the February, 1980, federal election, with three Liberals out of three returned, yet there has been no demonstrable advantage. If voting for the party in power was the answer, Cape Breton should be swimming in plenty, through an increased federal commitment to its welfare; yet this has not happened.⁹⁵²

Moreover, although he did not explicitly frame his argument in terms of holding the balance of power in a minority situation as Deibel and Burgess had, in his report to party members following the 1984 election MacEwan noted a strong contingent of Labor representatives in the assembly would prevent politics as usual from taking place.

The goal of the Labor Party is not to form a government so much as to attempt to influence the course of governing. If a platoon of fighting men and women were elected to the legislature, so large that no party could govern without first granting justice to the people, then the Labor Party would have done far more than by becoming one more government, and being buried alongside a dozen other governments that did nothing.⁹⁵³

When parsing these comments, it should be noted that MacEwan did not frame his arguments solely in regional terms; this sets his party apart somewhat from the NLP and the NOHP. MacEwan had raised the long-term possibility of forming a nation-wide left-wing party,⁹⁵⁴ suggesting that his CBLP might be an example for other disaffected left-wing voters seeking an alternative to the NDP. However, when the CBLP was focussed more on developing a regional narrative, MacEwan employed arguments using similar language to other regional party proponents. Speaking to a reporter following his re-

⁹⁵² Paul MacEwan, "Editorial: A time to re-examine Cape Breton's role," *The Chronicle Herald*, October 30, 1980, NDP Provincial 1980 - Scrapbook 141F(2), Beaton Institute.

⁹⁵³ Paul MacEwan, "Report on the 1984 Provincial Election," January 9, 1985, 8-9. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 3, Beaton Institute.

⁹⁵⁴ Clayton Campbell, "Labor Party may test mainland vote," *Chronicle Herald*, November 28, 1983, Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives.

election as leader of the party, he explained: "None of these parties are [sic] for Cape Breton. In the provincial Legislature Cape Breton members are in the minority with 11 seats out of 52 and they can't control the party. We need politicians from Cape Breton who are free to speak, and if we had five or six Labor seats, national attention would be far greater."⁹⁵⁵ And, in a party information kit that contained material from the 1984 campaign, MacEwan argued: "The more Cape Breton Labor Party Members we elect, the more we will shake the top brass out of their apathy towards Cape Breton. Electing Cape Breton Labor Party Members Will Thus Bring About An Improved Future For Cape Breton."⁹⁵⁶ He also stated that "All the other parties contesting this election are run from Halifax and consider Cape Breton only as an after-thought. Stand up for Cape Breton!"⁹⁵⁷ Regionalists promoting new partisan organizations thus also advanced notions of assuming local/regional control over a party's provincial agenda. Elected members could then speak freely about local/regional issues without worrying that their regional interests would clash with the interests of another region or be detrimental to a party's electoral fortunes. Additionally, participating in this kind of party could generate more provincial and/or national attention for their region than they might otherwise accomplish as members of larger parties.

Why Not a New Party?: Disadvantages and Drawbacks to New Partisan Organizations

While these arguments could be very effectively employed as a part of prognostic framing for the general public, proponents were also privately aware of the difficulties and drawbacks of forming new electoral parties. In a private letter to a political scientist examining the rise of the CBLP and the decline of the NDP on Cape Breton Island, MacEwan noted that the main disadvantages to forming the

⁹⁵⁵ Al Casagrande, "Re-elected leader says island justice is goal of Labor." *The Cape Breton Post*, December 2, 1985, 23. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1588) File: #3, Nova Scotia Archives.

⁹⁵⁶ ----- "The Cape Breton Labor Party Information Kit (Sampling of recent items and material concerning the CBLP for the press gallery)," February 27, 1986. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives. (Capitalization in original).

⁹⁵⁷ ----- "The Cape Breton Labor Party Information Kit (Sampling of recent items and material concerning the CBLP for the press gallery)," February 27, 1986. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives.

Labor Party was “lack of an established organisational and financial base and the difficulty, at least at first, of persuading people to leave the N.D.P. and sign up with us.”⁹⁵⁸ The relative ability of these proponents to overcome these disadvantages substantially corresponded to their success – at least according to conventional definitions for political parties.

Finances/Organization

The enthusiasm regionalists initially generated for new partisan organizations and/or specific initiatives related to their projects generally provided an adequate base from which to begin operations. For example, party membership drives served a dual purpose of organizing the party by identifying supporters while also generating much-needed funds. The NLP initially sold memberships to assist the newly independent Tom Burgess supplement his meagre MHA salary, and had great success in the Labrador West area when asking for a day’s pay from miners to launch the party. Ed Deibel initially raised funds from memberships to his New Province Committee, and later the NOHP, mostly while on his tours. And MacEwan’s name recognition and support helped the CBLP build a substantial membership base and funds. The NLP’s active constituency organizations and women’s group also launched fundraising dinner-dances, held raffles, and sold knitted goods⁹⁵⁹ and cookbooks to generate funds and enthusiasm.

However, there were several obstacles to securing a steady stream of larger donations. First, although participation in a minority government or coalition government was a possibility, corporate and/or or union donors who may have sought to influence government policy tended to direct funds to

⁹⁵⁸ Paul MacEwan, “Letter to Agar Adamson, Department of Political Science, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Re: *Chronicle Herald* articles on NDP in Cape Breton,” April 26, 1985, 8. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30), File: “Labor Party File #1,” Beaton Institute.

⁹⁵⁹ “I remember being down in Labrador South, in L’anse au Clair, when the ladies of the community had to sell woolen goods for him, like woolen mitts and sweaters, to get him enough money to get out of there.” Percy Dumaresque, Interview by Will Stos, in-person interview, Labrador City, Newfoundland and Labrador, June 30, 2011.

the larger, more established parties. All three regional parties did receive corporate and/or union donations, though the varying requirements (or absence thereof) for reporting party revenues and expenses make it difficult to ascertain much about them. Generally, these donations appeared to be from local businesses or union locals. Individual donors tended to provide smaller amounts or in-kind donations that helped with some aspects of campaigns (such as accommodation and food), but not as much with others (such as travel and advertising). However, reaching out to individual donors could be difficult over the expansive distances the regionalist entrepreneurs sought to represent. Moreover, some of these areas were economically depressed,⁹⁶⁰ further complicating attempts at individual fundraising. Problems securing stable financing appear to be a central element contributing to the demise of each party.

In the first campaign contested by the NLP, Labrador South candidate and future leader Mike Martin recalls that Tom Burgess undertook to provide all the funds the party would require. "He had a huge pool of resources in Labrador West. It was a booming community and he had no problem raising funds," Martin says. Yet the party's election expenses were also extremely high, particularly for Burgess's air travel. Party president Mac Moss noted that when the NLP appeared to hold the balance of power following the 1971 election, he and Burgess negotiated a deal that the Conservatives would pay a substantial portion of the party's election expenses. "That money would be transferred to the party's bank account in Labrador City," he said "But it didn't get transferred to the party, it got transferred to Tom Burgess. He had so many personal debts that it swallowed the whole thing. So, we're left with nothing. It was very frustrating."⁹⁶¹

⁹⁶⁰ In 1969, Burgess estimated that 50-60 per cent of the workforce in Labrador North and South was unemployed. Len Walsh, "Labrador unemployment rate heartbreaking says Burgess," *The St. John's Daily News*, September 29, 1969. (File: "NLP Clippings General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

⁹⁶¹ Moss, interview.

Following Burgess's defection, the party's fortunes in Labrador West cratered and in his subsequent campaigns Martin was forced to rely on local donations and his own savings. Contributions from local communities, individual contributions, or personal in-kind contributions of transportation, accommodation, and food were helpful and expenses for advertising were minimal. However, fundraising enough for travel during the final campaigns was impossible. "I had to travel. It was winter time. We travelled by aircraft and skidoo. I started off with no mortgage and money in the bank, and I wound up with a \$40,000 mortgage. I dropped \$40,000 in this in the space of 10 months. And this was back in the 70s, so that sum was a lot of money," he says. When Martin quit politics prior to the 1975 election, lamenting that it was "a rich man's game,"⁹⁶² the NLP declined to nominate candidates as it could not afford to supplement the income of any elected members and an MHA's salary alone was not enough to ensure full-time, effective representation for Labrador-based candidates without resulting in individual financial ruin.⁹⁶³

When Ed Deibel initially proposed the idea of a new province in Northern Ontario, he received financial assistance from angel investors who were keen to explore the level of public support for the idea.⁹⁶⁴ Although further large-scale funding was not forthcoming, by relying on his own savings and in-kind donations, he was able to launch several other tours. When the party was formally launched and donations to sustain its growth were not as large as anticipated,⁹⁶⁵ Deibel sold his motel trailer

⁹⁶² ----- "Labrador to Calgary move set." *Calgary Herald*, March 22, 1975. (File: "NLP Clippings General," The Newfoundland And Labrador House of Assembly Library Collection).

⁹⁶³ The party rejected an offer of full funding from former Premier Joey Smallwood's new Liberal Reform Party in exchange for a promise to support Smallwood as premier, in order to remain completely independent.

⁹⁶⁴ Percy Bishop and Murray Watts, a Toronto-based investor and prospector, respectively, donated \$5,000 towards his printing and promotional expenses in a bid to gauge what kind of support might be present for a new province. A local North Bay businessman also provided a credit card for the gasoline he would need for his car trips. See: Ed Deibel interview, June 12, 2012. In a published article from the time, Deibel quoted a figure of \$2,000 as a donation from "friends of the committee" and stated he was using \$500 of his own money to finance the trip. See: ----- "Kenora group will promote new province," *The Calendar*, September 19, 1973, 2.

⁹⁶⁵ As an independent candidate prior to forming the NOHP, Deibel accepted \$1,278 in receipts and spent \$1,250, including \$275 for the campaign audit in 1976. (See: Arthur A. Wishart, *The Second Annual Report of The Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses: Administering The Election Finances Reform Act For The Year*

campground business in support of his work for the party.⁹⁶⁶ When he left the executive years later, the party's finances were virtually non-existent. The new executive did not appear to do any fundraising, nor did they contribute their own money; instead the executive drained most of what remained to pay for the audits required under election laws. Upon hearing that the party would be deregistered, Deibel made a frantic attempt to save it but admitted that he didn't personally have the money to sustain it. He said he considered distance (to travel through Northern Ontario) and lack of money as the major reasons behind the party's failure.⁹⁶⁷

Of the three parties, the CBLP's founders and leader had the most political fundraising experience. MacEwan had previously created an NDP area council to fund a leader's salary for Jeremy Akerman (and help to organize eastern Nova Scotia in advance of an election). A long-time detractor of the provincial NDP's policy not to accept corporate donations (even small business donations),⁹⁶⁸

1976, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, February 28, 1977), 19). The NOHP was not required to file an annual return for 1977 because it was registered on Oct. 19. (See: Arthur A. Wishart, *The Fourth Annual Report of The Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses: Administering The Election Finances Reform Act For The Year 1978*, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, January 31, 1979), 1). The following year returns showed only \$300 in net contributions and \$270 in other receipts for a total of \$570 for the year. In contrast, the Progressive Conservative Party, New Democratic Party, Liberal Party, Libertarian Party and Communist Party took in \$1,609,187, \$1,210,458, \$394,872, \$37,239, \$17,676, respectively. With an \$85 surplus from the previous year carried forward, after paying \$577 in expenses, the party was left with \$78 and \$333 in assets. (See: "Appendix A Financial Data Extracted from Registered Political Party 1978 Annual Financial Statements Filed With The Commission" in Arthur A. Wishart, *The Fifth Annual Report of The Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses: Administering The Election Finances Reform Act For The Year 1979*, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, Jan. 31, 1980), 17.) In its first full year of filing financial records with the commission, only one donation over \$100 was recorded (\$250 from a corporation). (See: "Appendix B – Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses. Statistical Report on Number and Total Dollar Value of Contributions Received in Excess of \$100 By Each Registered Political Party and Its Associates For The Annual Reporting Period In The Calendar Year 1978" in Arthur A. Wishart, *The Fifth Annual Report of The Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses: Administering The Election Finances Reform Act For The Year 1979*, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, Jan. 31, 1980), 21). In subsequent years the party received no more than one or two corporate and/or individual donations per year over the \$100 mark, and for a few years prior to its decertification its only financial activity appeared to be the expense for a mandated audit. The NOHP was deregistered on July 31, 1985 for failure to file the 1984 Annual audited statements. (See: Gordon H. Aiken, *The Eleventh Annual Report of The Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses: Administering The Election Finances Reform Act For The Year 1985*, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, March 24, 1986), 15.)

⁹⁶⁶ It's unclear how much he transferred to the party itself versus what he spent out of pocket as he engaged in his campaigns. As no candidate ever contested an election under the NOHP banner during its initial existence, it's also not known whether the party could have financed an effective election campaign.

⁹⁶⁷ Deibel, interview.

⁹⁶⁸ MacEwan, *The Akerman Years*, 126.

MacEwan had the freedom to rely upon a variety of sources for funds once he was ejected from the party. His past electoral success, personal popularity within his riding, and his own Committee of 3,000 fundraising initiative also permitted him to secure a loan from the Whitney Pier Credit Union⁹⁶⁹ when he ran as an Independent candidate in 1981. Undoubtedly, few individual politicians could claim the kind of experience and expertise MacEwan possessed when launching a new party. Yet, despite successfully raising enough funds to run strong campaigns in a by-election and three targeted ridings during a general election, the party's limited resources curtailed expansion efforts and required some candidates to run campaigns on shoe-string budgets where they were outspent by their opponents many times over. Supporting partisan infrastructure outside of election campaigns was also difficult,⁹⁷⁰ and like Martin and Deibel, MacEwan's personal financial contributions were eventually exhausted:

...I had to close down the Labor party, because I could no longer afford to keep it out of my own pocket," he contended. "I did not have the resources Lloyd Shaw did to run a private political party. I only had my own MLA salary, and as much as MLAs are held up to public ridicule for being overpaid and underworked, there was a limit to what I could do every time someone made a trip to Sydney to attend a meeting and wanted \$20 out of me for gasoline to get home.⁹⁷¹

With these kinds of financial difficulties more than apparent (to varying degrees) to these regionalists, what created expectations that they could be overcome? MacEwan's response to NDP financier Lloyd Shaw, when presented with an itemized budget of what it would take to fund a partisan organization that was created to persuade him to abandon his effort, provides the clearest answer.

⁹⁶⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 84.

⁹⁷⁰ The party prioritized funding competitive campaigns in ridings where they stood a better chance of winning and narrowed organizational efforts to areas the leader could easily access while fulfilling his responsibilities as an MLA. "I wish I had equal access to Yarmouth or Guysborough," MacEwan states, "but I did not. The trick is to take advantage of whatever resources you have to work with, and the Halifax area was the only place in Nova Scotia, other than in industrial Cape Breton, to which I had regular access. Hence, it became priority number two, for the Labor party, to do what it could in the Halifax area, while there was still time available. MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 150. See also MacEwan's correspondence with the province's chief electoral officer: D. William MacDonald, "Letter to Paul MacEwan from Chief Electoral Officer," December 8, 1983. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: Cape Breton Labor Party # 1, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute. in Paul MacEwan Fonds, File 1, MG 9.30, Beaton Institute.

⁹⁷¹ Correspondence with Paul MacEwan, September 4, 2010.

“Shaw’s whole analysis was based on projected dollars and cents. It made no provision for *momentum* [emphasis in original], which in my view is the decisive element in politics.”⁹⁷² Momentum, a swell of public support for a new party, could allow its candidates to punch above their weight and counter any inherent advantage more established parties had in terms of existing organization and financial resources.⁹⁷³

Existing Partisan Loyalties

For any wave to happen the new party would need to bring in people not previously motivated to vote or convert past support for other parties. Research on partisan identification in Canada indicates voter loyalty to a specific party is not as strong in this country as it is elsewhere.⁹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it could be a challenge amongst some segments of the population.

Most of Labrador was reliably Liberal prior to the emergence of the NLP. Labrador West, a riding that experienced a tremendous influx of new migrants as the mines boomed, had elected an independent candidate before Tom Burgess retook the riding for the Liberals, suggesting partisan loyalties were weakest there.⁹⁷⁵ Elsewhere, overcoming entrenched loyalties proved more difficult. “Joey Smallwood brought us into Confederation, so the mindset was that you had to be a Liberal on the coast of Labrador at the time,” NLP executive member Ernie Davis states. “Just like the old saying, you

⁹⁷² MacEwan, *The Cape Breton Labor Party*, 105.

⁹⁷³ See, for example: Patrick J. Kenney and Tom W. Rice, “The Psychology of Political Momentum,” *Political Research Quarterly* 47, no. 4, (1994), 923–938.

⁹⁷⁴ Although Clarke and Stewart note that “national surveys conducted between 1965 and 1980 indicate considerable aggregate stability in Canadian’s party identifications,” this “aggregate stability in federal and provincial party identification is not matched at the individual level.” Harold D. Clarke and Marianne C. Stewart, “Partisan Inconsistency and Partisan Change in Federal States: The Case of Canada,” *American Journal of Political Science* 31, no. 2 (May, 1987), 384-386. See also: Marianne C. Stewart and Harold D. Clarke, “The Dynamics of Party Identification in Federal Systems: The Canadian Case,” *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 1 (January, 1998), 97-116; and Lawrence LeDuc, Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson and Jon H. Pammett, “Partisan Instability in Canada: Evidence from a New Panel Study,” *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 2, (June 1984), 470-484.

⁹⁷⁵ Davis, interview.

could run a dog there and if he's a Liberal he'd get in. They had a very uphill battle to run there."⁹⁷⁶ The party benefitted from key supporters who knew the communities well. Prior to the 1971 election, for example, Mike Martin worked for about eight months developing contacts, holding meetings on behalf of Burgess, and supplying the NLP organizers in Labrador West with names and community histories.⁹⁷⁷

The age of a voter was also noted as a factor in willingness to change partisan support.⁹⁷⁸ "As for the demographic, I think, if memory is still serving correctly, that in general the older generation electors were fundamentally Liberal because they remembered the confederation battles and what Joey had done for them," Martin recalls. "The younger generations - my group - remembered what Joey did TO us. But that is a general statement. There were several elders who were ferocious supporters of the NLP and vehement in their condemnation of Smallwood. These tended to have been bread and butter separatists who had always believed that we should never have been lumped in with Newfoundland in the first place."⁹⁷⁹ Davis noted there could be inter-generational and sometimes intra-family friction⁹⁸⁰ based on this demographic divide as the NLP won over previously Liberal voters. While Labrador West's youthful and transient population could accept the NLP with relative ease, elsewhere "the hardline party people were astounded by the fact they had children voting for the New Labrador Party," Martin

⁹⁷⁶ Davis, interview.

⁹⁷⁷ Martin, interview.

⁹⁷⁸ Clark and Stewart write: "Both the cohort and life-cycle models stipulate the existence of strong correlation between age and partisan instability, with the former suggesting that in Canada in the 1970s instability will be concentrated heavily in the youngest age groups. The latter, in contrast, suggests that instability will decline gradually across age categories to a very low level among the oldest voters." However, they note neither model fits their empirical data well as even among older voters in Canada there does remain a substantial pool of voters who change partisan identification, though not nearly as many as younger cohorts. See: Clarke and Stewart, "Partisan Inconsistency," 391-392.

⁹⁷⁹ Mike Martin, "Email Correspondence with Author," August 23, 2012. (Emphasis in the original.)

⁹⁸⁰ Davis, interview. "But in Goose Bay, they were Liberals solid, solid, solid. My father, when the New Labrador Party called, he threw out his provincial Liberal membership. And he said no, I'm going for Labrador. That was it. He wasn't the only one. Mind you, there were die-hard Liberals too. So in the community of Goose Bay, I saw more friction there than any other community I could see. [In Labrador West people would say] 'I'm not voting for the Liberals just because my dad is for the Liberals.' There was a different mindset, different population."

remembers. “...If you’re a Liberal you’re a Liberal, if you’re a PC you’re a PC. When we got going, we blew them out of the water.”⁹⁸¹

Without contesting any elections⁹⁸² it is more difficult to determine how successful Deibel’s NOHP was in converting partisans, though in promoting itself as a protest party there was some thought that it could appeal to people who had previously cast ballots for the NDP more out of general political protest than ideological support for a social democratic programme. The CBLP, as an NDP splinter party, drew the bulk of its votes from disaffected or disillusioned members of that party and though it claimed some defectors from the Liberal and Conservative ranks, the party clearly targeted former NDP voters and non-partisan protest voters. As by-election candidate Gary Mosher stated: “And when you get right down to it, splinter parties are that. And you’ve got voters that have been traditionally Liberal their entire life, or traditionally Conservative their entire life. And it doesn’t matter what the message is, they’re just going to vote for their party. Because traditional parties always manage to hold their voters and always manage to do traditionally well.”⁹⁸³

While stable finances, organizational challenges and lingering partisan loyalties were privately recognized as significant obstacles by some of the new party-supporting regionalists, none of these appeared to be insurmountable – at least not at the beginning of their campaigns. Publicly they suggested that, however difficult it may be to launch these new parties, the regions they sought to represent would be better served by these organizations; and, considering that alternative methods had failed to achieve desired results, it was worth a try at the very least.

⁹⁸¹ Davis, interview.

⁹⁸² And with fewer organizational team members/canvassers to survey.

⁹⁸³ Mosher, interview.

Counter-Framing: Opposition to Regional Parties

Making a case for the necessity of a new regionally-based political party – the prognostic framing activity of some movement entrepreneurs – was not done in isolation; opponents, including other regionalists working within existing political parties or outside the party system entirely, made counter arguments and introduced counter frames to stymie their plans.

The counter arguments were manifold: New regionally-based political parties wasted scarce financial and human resources that could/should be marshaled to support the region in other ways; they could never form a government but could remove regional voices from a governing party; as a perpetual opposition, their criticism would not be constructive; and they were definitively parochial.⁹⁸⁴ Beyond these arguments, however, two additional notable counter frames were advanced to undermine these fledgling operations. First, opponents took specific aim at their leadership. By questioning the leader's motives, their abilities or their temperament, opponents could sow doubt about the viability of these specific regionally-based parties. Second, by raising the spectre that these parties were destabilizing separatist vehicles, erstwhile supporters of regionalism might balk at supporting a group that could radically alter the existing political system. This counter frame proved to be especially salient in Canada during the post-Quiet Revolution period when Quebec nationalism and separatism appeared as an existential threat to the country/nation.

At the very least, combatting these arguments and counter frames was an unhelpful distraction for regionally-based political parties at a time when their full effort was needed to organize, fundraise,

⁹⁸⁴ Paul J. Chiasson, Halifax, "From our mailbag: Labor Party no longer attractive option," *The Cape Breton Post*, December 14, 1985, 5. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1588) File: #2, Nova Scotia Archives. For example, in responding to letter to the editor from Colin Donovan, former Labor Party voter Paul J. Chiasson noted "...the CBLP is a splinter group; it is protesting very specific issues that deal with Cape Breton as a region of a greater whole. It is not concerned with the broader political outlook of provincially or nationally based parties such as the NDP and the Liberal parties. The basis of the CBLP is not a positive, policy-based one; its policy is a negative one, to bash in the provincial NDP and Alexa McDonough in order to ruin the base of support the NDP still has, though weakened at the moment in Cape Breton."

and define themselves to the public. At best, their opponents sapped their incipient strength and cast doubt on what they sought to – or actually could – accomplish for the region.

Poor Leadership: A Captain who will Sink the Ship

The first major counter frame to the party argument employed by opponents – namely other partisans and their supporters, unsympathetic political columnists in the media, and local/municipal officials who had a vested interest in supporting provincial or federal counterparts – was the poor leader narrative. By casting doubt on either the abilities of the regionalist party's leader or questioning their aspirations and motives, opponents hoped to dampen the interest of potential supporters. Moreover, if opponents could frame these parties as a veritable "one-person-show," damaging the credibility of the leader could prove disastrous for the party's future prospects.

Ed Deibel was particularly vulnerable to this type of criticism. Of the three inaugural leaders of these parties, Deibel had by far the least amount of previous political experience and his novice mistakes were well-publicized by the news media. First, Deibel tended to over-promise and under-deliver in terms of attracting grassroots support. Poorly attended meetings during his early tours across Northern Ontario appeared to demonstrate both a lack of interest in his ideas and his own inability to be an effective organizer – that latter criticism being somewhat unfair given his previous work with the North Bay Winter Carnival and his initial anti-tax petition. Noting poor attendance at pro-secessionist meetings, Ontario's Minister of Industry and Tourism, Claude Bennett said he felt most northern residents "generally think it's a joke," and added that he gave one secessionist organizer (probably Deibel) three minutes of his time to listen to his arguments and decided "that's three minutes too much."⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸⁵ ----- "Idiotic subject," *The Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal*, September 17, 1973. Leo Bernier Fonds, File: 08.14 "Northern Ontario Secession," Archives of Ontario.

During his autumn 1974 tour through some northern communities, Deibel suffered the indignity of occasionally drawing more news media than actual attendees to his events,⁹⁸⁶ or pulling in noticeably smaller audiences than his first time through a year earlier.⁹⁸⁷ His comments to the press, which offered lessons he had learned from suffering poor turnouts at meeting,⁹⁸⁸ or which claimed moral victories in drawing crowds of curious school children to his Queen's Park camp out instead of the thousands of Northern Ontarians he expected,⁹⁸⁹ while undoubtedly earnest, likely undermined his stature as a potential leader for the party or a larger movement.

Beyond criticism of his leadership abilities, Deibel's various campaigns gave some critics the impression that he was on an "ego-trip."⁹⁹⁰ Reflecting on Deibel's campaigns, Thunder Bay-area NDP MPP Jim Foulds remarked: "I don't think we ever saw him as a serious threat. To say he was a buffoon is a bit extreme, but I always got the sense that it was more about Ed Deibel than it was about Northern Ontario. Every politician needs to have an ego. But I think in this case there was more ego than realism."⁹⁹¹ While arguments in favour of labelling Deibel's campaign self-aggrandizing are debatable, they did, in part, undermine the party's viability among some would-be supporters.⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁶ ----- "Ed Deibel Waited And Waited," 1. "Ed Deibel's public meeting which was scheduled at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall here last night ended up being a press conference because the only three persons on hand were from the news media."

⁹⁸⁷ John R. Copps, "Separate Province Meeting Draws Audience Of Seven," *The Timmins Daily Press*, September 11, 1974, 13. The article notes there was not strong support during a recent meeting. The previous year only 25 people attended. In 1974 there were 10, including three from the news media.

⁹⁸⁸ John R. Copps, "Separate Province Meeting Draws Audience Of Seven," 13. Deibel: "I have come to the conclusion that this committee cannot just depend on publicity through the media to get support. What we need is personal contact...."

⁹⁸⁹ Mike Shapcott, "Deibel calls for political party," 6. Deibel wanted 10,000 strong at the Queen's Park protest, but only 8 showed including three members of Deibel's family. But he cited some success – sometimes as many as 200 school children would stop to talk to them.

⁹⁹⁰ Annoyed in North Bay, "Letter: About tax protests," *The North Bay Nugget*, April 30, 1973, 4. Former Northern Ontario NDP MPP Floyd Laughren, upon hearing that Deibel planned to relaunch the NOHP in the 2000s, also stated: "I don't want to be mean to Mr. Deibel, but at some point you wonder how much of it is ego and how much of it is wanting real change." Laughren, interview.

⁹⁹¹ Foulds, interview.

⁹⁹² Michael Atkins, "Editorial: It may be pie in the sky but... Northern Ontario should be a separate province," *The Northern Life*, September 19, 1979, 4.

Unlike Deibel, both Burgess and MacEwan had years of experience in politics and even their critics lauded aspects of their political skills and considered them potential threats. For example, upon learning of MacEwan's plans to formally launch a new party, Sydney Mayor Manning MacDonald told reporters: 'I hesitate to underestimate that gentleman. He's been underestimated before. He's still a powerful force to be reckoned with. I think he'll get somewhere with the (Labor) Party.'⁹⁹³ And while reporting on the start of a new session of the legislature, reporter Jim Jamieson noted that MacEwan, his party's sole MLA in the legislature, had once again assumed his "usual role as de facto opposition leader as the legislature started its first routine day." He further explained, "It's MacEwan's turns of phrases that separate him from the opposition pack – and make government members pay strict attention to what he says."⁹⁹⁴

Opponents who sought to undermine the leadership of the three parties thus set about developing slightly different narratives. As former members of other political parties with whom they had very public splits, Burgess and MacEwan grappled with being labelled "mavericks,"⁹⁹⁵ "renegades,"⁹⁹⁶ or "having the temperament of a raging bull."⁹⁹⁷ Political opponents and other commentators contended that these men, however individually successful they had been politically, were not team-players.

⁹⁹³ Parker Donham, "Cape Breton breakaway becomes election issue," *The Financial Post*, October 16, 1982, 7. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1552), Nova Scotia Archives.

⁹⁹⁴ Jim Jamieson, "MacEwan's in fine form," *Halifax Daily News*, March 1, 1986, Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File #1, Nova Scotia Archives.

⁹⁹⁵ See: ----- "Weakening the NDP." *The Cape Breton Post*, June 4, 1980, 6; ----- "Newfoundland maverick plans own political party," *The Toronto Star*, Jan. 7, 1969, 1.

⁹⁹⁶ Paul MacEwan, "Letter to Allan Jeffer, Provincial Reporter for the Chronicle Herald," August 18, 1986. Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 E) "Cape Breton Labour Party – Leader's Correspondence 1982-1986, File 1," Beaton Institute. In his letter, MacEwan stated: "...I do not like being called a 'renegade.' I value my reputation and do not appreciate it when I sense that someone is trying to spill as much mud on me as he can. ...I would ask you to avoid using damaging words like 'renegade' when referring to me."

⁹⁹⁷ *Daily News* reporter Cliff Boutilier wrote some articles about the NDP that included references to MacEwan. In a letter to the editor responding to Boutilier's article, MacEwan took "particular exception" with his depiction of MacEwan as having "the temperament of a raging bull." MacEwan stated that he wouldn't have lasted in politics for long if he did. See: Paul MacEwan, "Letter: MacEwan scorns NDP," *The Halifax Daily News*, March 8, 1985, 14. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1588) File #3, Nova Scotia Archives.

Moreover, the critics sometimes argued that their motives for being involved with their new parties – or behaviour while serving as party leader – were evidence of ego at work.⁹⁹⁸

On the question of motive, Burgess's and MacEwan's decisions to launch or help launch new party apparatuses were arguably more about self-preservation than self-aggrandizement.⁹⁹⁹ Past political experience revealed the tremendous difficulty independents faced in the party system, and building a new partisan organization, while fraught with difficulties, is sometimes the wisest avenue for an independent's continued political survival or long-term political prospects. Although Burgess had received entreaties from both the fledging NDP and the somewhat more established Progressive Conservative parties in Newfoundland, neither appeared to have much capacity to run a successful campaign in Labrador. With tentative efforts by others to organize a Labrador-centred political movement already underway, Burgess likely figured his own values and political interests would be best served if he joined. In MacEwan's case, published reports around the time of his expulsion suggested he was still very much interested in reconciling with the NDP, or moving to another of the established political parties. When rapprochement with the NDP appeared impossible and other parties appeared

⁹⁹⁸ In a letter to the editor published around the time the CBLP was gaining some momentum, David Delaney offered a particularly withering critique of the party-as-one-man fed by personal ambition. He wrote: "All Cape Bretoners should be proud of those who advance the interests of this fair island and her people. Unfortunately, this would seem to be the furthest thing from the mindset of this party. During the incipient stages of its formation one suspected it was designed to serve as little more than the political front of one man. Regretfully that initial impression has not abated.... The Cape Breton Labor Party and its 'leader' have cultivated confusion and fed on fear. Exploiting the despair and misery of people may seem like leadership to some, but to me it is a reprehensible act of political cowardice. Negativism offers no answers. Anyone can identify problems. What we need is someone prepared to do something about them. When the Cape Breton Labor Party is prepared to talk realistically about those things that vex us, when it is prepared to remove its anti-Halifax shroud of paranoia and when it is prepared to recognize that politics is much more than simply advancing one's personal ambition, it will be taken seriously, but not until then. The problem of course is that should it do these things it will cease to justify its own existence." David L. Delaney, Marion Bridge, "Letters: Reader Hits Out At Labor Party," *Cape Breton Post*, February 8, 1983. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1604) File #7, Nova Scotia Archives.

⁹⁹⁹ Criticisms of ego-centric behavior did emerge after the party's founding, however. "His demands kept increasing. He wanted to be Minister of Mines, Agriculture and Resources. He wanted to control everything the government did in Labrador. He wanted a Trans-Labrador Highway. It was all ego stuff." See: John C. Crosbie with Geoffrey Stevens, *No Holds Barred*, 102.

less than welcoming, MacEwan set about trying to replace the NDP, at least on the island of Cape Breton, with a splinter party.

When Burgess and Deibel each stepped down as leader of their respective party, their former supporters still loyal to the regionally-based party began to echo some of the arguments their opponents had been making and took them even further. The NLP's Robert Mercer suggested that Burgess's statements to the press about the NLP being "'a one shot deal' confirms that Mr. Burgess is suffering from megalomania and also it's a good thing that Mr. Burgess is in Labrador, because it's the only place that's large enough to accommodate his ego."¹⁰⁰⁰ An editorial printed years later also cited Burgess' egomaniacal tendencies as detrimental to the party, noting that in the 1971 election he had brought the party's two candidates to a big rally in Labrador West 10 days before the election he was assured of winning, while both of the others lost by close counts that might have been overturned if they were able to continue campaigning locally.¹⁰⁰¹ Burgess' own statements to the press while he was being courted by the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives to support them in government were also phrased in a way that made this type of characterization appear reasonable. He stated: "I'm the guy who's auctioning the whole thing off... I'm the guy who calls the shots... I'm the one who asks for specific things and I haven't seen a refusal from the party yet."¹⁰⁰² Nevertheless, Burgess's wife Rhyna MacLean has noted that her husband was "not self-interested. He was always helping people."¹⁰⁰³ Though his statements and actions in the above instances can point to a degree of ego, his underlying motive for being involved in politics in Labrador did genuinely appear to be about community building.

¹⁰⁰⁰ ----- "Letters to the Editor," the *Aurora*, March 22, 1972, 27. Another unsigned letter printed the same day referred to Burgess as "our local Uncle Tom."

¹⁰⁰¹ ----- "Editorially speaking," the *Aurora*, February 26, 1975, 6.

¹⁰⁰² Daily News Staff Writer, "Burgess outlines cost of his support," The *Daily News*, Nov. 2, 1971, 1. Interestingly, Burgess revealed that he had been encouraged to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party and he had "no doubt [he'd] win it."

¹⁰⁰³ McLean, interview.

Deibel's former supporters also criticized his leadership abilities once he had stepped down from the position. Much like Burgess's comment that the NLP was a "one shot deal," when Deibel announced his resignation he told the press that "If the Heritage Party dies now, then it was a one-man deal. And so it should die. It's not the way to promote Northern Ontario with any kind of organization."¹⁰⁰⁴ The party struggled on, mostly in name, for several more years, but Deibel's successor Garry Lewis suggested its founder had run it into the ground, first with his speculation about separation from southern Ontario and more fatally with his attempt to win the federal Progressive Conservative nomination in Nipissing. "After that everybody just said, 'That's it,' so I've had to start from scratch," Lewis explained. "I guess he realized afterward what he'd done. It was *the* [italics in original] mistake. How he ever got talked into running, I don't know."¹⁰⁰⁵

Interestingly, neither Lewis nor his replacement, Ron Gilson, were successful enough in generating attention for the party to garner even negative comments about their leadership from the party's opponents or the media. Moreover, in a later interview, Deibel suggested that neither subsequent leader was able to even approximate his ability to fundraise modest amounts to keep the party running or willing to draw upon their own savings to bankroll it as he had done in the past; they appeared uninterested in the unglamorous, but necessary, work of organizing and fundraising.

In contrast, Mike Martin, Burgess's replacement as leader of the NLP was initially drawn into the party as an organizer and had very little interest in becoming a politician, let alone party leader.¹⁰⁰⁶ To NLP supporters and even opponents, Martin's genuine lack of egoism or grandstanding made such criticisms unlikely. Instead, critics took issue with another aspect of his politics – his idealism. Upon

¹⁰⁰⁴ D.W. Robertson, "Deibel drops reins," 2.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Rudy Platiel, "Northern heritage party tries to forget its past," 5.

¹⁰⁰⁶ During the second campaign he received a call from two people in the Labrador North association saying they needed a leader and no one was in the offing and they wanted him to step in. He reiterated he didn't want to be a politician and didn't know anything about leadership and said no thank you. But they continued to "harass" him and finally he agreed. "I was the most reluctant leader," he stated. Martin, interview.

hearing his inaugural speech in the assembly, Progressive Conservative MHA Brian Peckford said Martin's speech was full of Utopian ideas, but noted that politics dealt "in a very human and frail world in society," while Liberal MHA Ed Roberts told his colleagues that Martin had "his head in the clouds."¹⁰⁰⁷ The "reluctant" leader's ideas about what politics *should* be and what he witnessed in the assembly, combined with the severe financial stress involved in leading a small party, brought about an early end to his leadership. "I couldn't carry on," he notes. "I was going to be forced into bankruptcy. But I was also happy to leave because I just felt humiliated every time I went into that place and became a part of the silliness acting out on the floor in front of the galleries. It was the most humiliating experience of my entire life sitting in that place."¹⁰⁰⁸

MacEwan was the only leader who was at the helm of his party for the entirety of its existence. While most of his followers were fiercely loyal, as the party neared its dissolution there was some internal criticism. Upon defecting from Labor to the NDP, Blair Matheson told reporters that "MacEwan wanted to be chief cook and bottle-washer himself. He didn't seem to like having anyone else with any intellectual ability around him. As a leader he wasn't paying proper respect to his workers."¹⁰⁰⁹ Another former party supporter contended that as a partisan organization so closely associated with its leading personality, it faced a bleak future in his absence. "MacEwan is what gives the CBLP its strength," wrote Paul Chiasson. "Without him this party would soon falter and die."¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰⁷ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 7 February, 1974 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, 328.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Martin, interview.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Iain McLeod, "Matheson defection a coup for NDP," *The Halifax Daily News*, Nov. 21, 1985, Paul MacEwan Fonds, (MG 9, 30 A), File: 2, Beaton Institute, Beaton Institute. Matheson has never gone into detail publicly about exactly what prompted his falling out with MacEwan and the Labor Party and declined to explain his reasons in a recent interview. The bitterness that came from the split appears to have abated, however, as he has commended MacEwan's performance as an MLA and maintains contact with the former party leader. Matheson, interview.

¹⁰¹⁰ Paul J. Chiasson, "From our mailbag: Labor Party no longer attractive option," 5. Chiasson wrote: "The CBLP cannot survive licking its wounds like it is doing because it has not positive policy mechanisms with which to build itself up from petty grudges. The CBLP, if it is to survive, must remember that Paul MacEwan cannot lead it forever; it must develop viable policy statements with a broad base of support; it must forget its petty squabbles with the NDP and learn to show people that it is worth something for the policy it puts forth, not just its grudges."

Commentary from outside the party at this time echoed these critiques. MacEwan's foe on the opinion/editorial pages of the *Cape Breton Post*, John Hanratty, called the CBLP "imaginary" in a series of editorials about the state of party-politics on the island. Deeming it a splinter group or regional party at best, and a one-man band at worst, Hanratty said the party would simply disappear without MacEwan at the helm. "The 'party' is simply a pretense so he won't have to call himself an independent MLA, but that's what he is," the editorialist wrote. "Some of these realities are registering... Supporters will eventually see the futility of such a way-out protest vote."¹⁰¹¹

Scholars of politics have noted a general tendency over the latter half of the 20th century for political parties in parliamentary systems to focus greater attention on leadership in promotional campaigns – sometimes referred to as the personalization or presidentialisation of parliamentary systems (both institutionally and symbolically).¹⁰¹² Regardless of the reasons behind such a shift, the growing importance of leadership for all parties, let alone fledgling ones without deep histories of partisan attachment, made criticism of a leader a significant counter frame for opponents. If a regionally-based political party aimed to amplify the voice of grievance from a region, all eyes would be on the person behind the loudspeaker, and casting doubt on that person's ability or motivations could be significantly detrimental to the credibility of the movement as a whole.

Separatist Anxiety: Regionally-Based Provincial Political Parties as a Separatist Threat

A second, and perhaps even more effective counter-frame, found opponents of regionally-based political parties linking these groups to the destabilizing prospect of separatism. In her work *The Question of Separatism*, Jane Jacobs suggests that "[i]t's hard to even think about separatist movements or secessions because the idea is so charged with emotion. Sometimes people literally acknowledge this

¹⁰¹¹ Patrick Jamieson, "The Only Honest Politician: Paul MacEwan and the Strange World of Fourth Party Politics in Cape Breton," *The New Maritimes*, October, 1986, 9.

¹⁰¹² See: Lauri Karvonen, *The Personalisation of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*, (London: ECPR (European Consortium for Political Research) Press, 2010), 6-14.

when they say ‘It’s unthinkable.’”¹⁰¹³ This is not to say Jacobs would have found equivalence with what she was writing about – broader movements with deep roots, infrastructure, and popular with the goal of regional separation/independence through varying means including violence. It would be a stretch to consider regionalists within the NLP, NOHP or CBLP to be comparable to Basque activists in Spain or Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka. However, just as the regionalists in this study adopted the rhetoric of decolonizing movements as they engaged in diagnostic framing, their opponents would draw allusions to “the unthinkable” to link them with powerful and disturbing imagery that was widely known. Accordingly, the leaders of the three parties under review in this dissertation were required to walk a very fine line when they, their political opponents, or the news media raised the specter of “the unthinkable.”

Writing in 1980, Jacobs was acutely aware of the contemporary Canadian context, that is the debate surrounding Quebec sovereignty, particularly since the dawn of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution and the creation of the Parti Québécois in the 1960s. The emergence of a serious and credible separatist movement presented a threat to what Ian McKay has called the project of Canada.¹⁰¹⁴ Separatist ideology, which challenges the hegemony of the state itself, is clearly a provocation that the state, its agents and beneficiaries have a stake in disputing. These political actors¹⁰¹⁵ often respond by seeking to placate and reintegrate the region – in this case a province – into the larger body politic or by questioning the legitimacy of this course of action and attempting to discredit its leaders; often it is a combination of the two. The ultimate objective of this course of action is to neutralize the separatists and protect the interests of the state, and subordinately, the interests of state agents that depend on its existence. But these objectives cannot be achieved efficiently without the support of the public.

¹⁰¹³ Jane Jacobs, *The Question of Separatism*, (New York: Random House, 1980), 3.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ian McKay, “A Note on ‘Region,’” 91.

¹⁰¹⁵ Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1994), 5.

Here, the role of the state agents in combating a real or perceived separatist threat is aided greatly by separatism's destabilizing effect on the self. If a concept like separatism is emotionally charged, it suggests that profound attachments to a given community exists, and, as Gregory Millard among many others has posited, this attachment is fundamental to the way people constitute their own sense of self.¹⁰¹⁶ In his work *Secession and Self: Quebec in Canadian Thought*, Millard writes that "an identity becomes possible only as situated within, and relative to, manifold ontological and ethical discourses. '[O]ne cannot be a self on one's own. I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors...A self only exists within what [he] call[s] 'webs of interlocution'."¹⁰¹⁷ Arguing that agency itself is rooted in discursive embeddedness based on both universally valid commitments and through particular identifications, he contends that "a specific issue, such as resistance to Quebec secession, is, therefore, woven into wider complexes of ethics and identity."¹⁰¹⁸ If one of these identity interlocutors is compromised, the self can become destabilized. A threat to identity thus creates a sense of uncertainty that may result in conservative or even reactionary impulses that can be marshaled by the state.

Writing about apocalyptic nationalism, Canadian historian Jon Suffrin notes that "by creating a sense of crisis, the apocalyptic attempts to mobilize public opinion in support of a given set of solutions."¹⁰¹⁹ Although Suffrin explains that the solutions these apocalypses offered varied greatly, the crisis of separatism, among other threats to the state, permitted them to promote alternatives. Suffrin's doctoral thesis on apocalyptic nationalism contends that concerns about Quebec separatism played a substantial role in making the years 1963-1983 "a period of intense Canadian self-examination that has come to be characterized (both in the period and afterwards) as the 'new nationalism.'"¹⁰²⁰ It would be

¹⁰¹⁶ Gregory Millard, *Secession and Self: Quebec in Canadian Thought*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 9.

¹⁰¹⁷ Gregory Millard, *Secession and Self*, 10-11.

¹⁰¹⁸ Gregory Millard, *Secession and Self*, 10-11.

¹⁰¹⁹ Jon Suffrin, "The Canadian Apocalypse: Nationalists and the End of Canada, 1963-1983," (PhD diss., York University, January 2009), 15.

¹⁰²⁰ Suffrin, 17-18.

too simplistic and reductionist to suggest that the national debate was simply reproduced on a smaller scale within each of the provinces under study here. There were substantial differences between these parties and the Parti Québécois, and among the three themselves, with respect to how they dealt with questions of secession, separatism and their *raison d'être*. However, the debates encouraged within these provinces must be understood through a lens that acknowledges the pivotal role the Quebec question played in the contemporary context.

Each of these parties introduced themselves, at least initially, as representatives for people living within a specific and recognized region within a province. Secession from the province was usually not a primary aim of the parties or seen to be an end in and of itself. When these parties did take a position on secession, they tended to raise secession as a possible—if usually remote—consequence of the provincial government's refusal to respond to regional grievances. However, partisan opponents, sometimes aided by a news media usually centred in national and provincial capitals, set about creating a secessionist narrative for these regional parties. By implicitly or explicitly arguing that provincial secession was the ultimate objective of these parties and that such an eventuality would be undesirable, political opponents vigorously sought to prevent a climate of broader regional angst from coalescing behind these protest parties.¹⁰²¹ In referencing the unnerving specter of Quebec separatism – and occasionally other separatist movements – to further discredit the new party, opponents cultivated a *separatist anxiety* that roused intense fears that were circulating within Canadian society during this historical period. Responding to these fears became a distraction for parties during crucial periods of political organization and contributed to dampening their potential for growth.

¹⁰²¹ This stands in contrast to the successful “The West Wants In” rhetoric of the Reform Party, a populist federal party of the 1980s-1990s that emerged with a strong regional character.

NLP or the Labrador Liberation Front?

Even before the NLP had been officially launched, Burgess's opponents labeled the Liberal defector as a separatist. Although Burgess did raise the possibility of secession upon leaving the Liberal caucus, he told reporters that it would be a last resort and that it would only become a political goal if Labrador continued to be ignored by the province. This nuanced statement appears to be the closest Burgess ever came to publicly advocating for separation, but it was sufficient for both the governing Liberals and the provincial and national news media based in St. John's to sow doubt about his true intentions over the next few years.¹⁰²²

Liberal MHAs Steve Neary and W.N. Rowe both called Burgess's yet-to-be-formed party "The Labrador Liberation Front," drawing explicit comparison with the Front de Libération du Québec that was engaged in violent acts in support of an independent Quebec at the time.¹⁰²³ Adding to the fears of separatism, the nascent party's agitation for a road link to the province of Quebec was also rejected out of hand by Premier Joey Smallwood. He contended that such a plan would lead to a flood of new Quebecers moving into the area and the realization of what René Levesque called the "peaceful occupation of Labrador."¹⁰²⁴ And, in a 1969 front page news story titled "Secessionist sentiment:

¹⁰²² The NLP was also reportedly monitored by the RCMP. Attempts to request information relating to the investigations by filing access to information requests did not result in any documentation being released.

¹⁰²³ See: Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 27 February, 1971 (S.A. Neary, Lib) Tape 34, 4; and Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 1 March, 1971 (W.N. Rowe, Lib) Tape 74, 1.

¹⁰²⁴ ----- "Rene makes waves in Labrador," *The Globe and Mail*, October 19, 1968, 8. In an interview, past party president Mac Moss confirms "there was a concern of the spillover from Quebec because all the iron ore mined in Labrador was shipped over to Sept-Iles, Quebec. And quite a few of the employees from the mines were from Quebec." He notes that some of his Québécois friends in the mine were separatists, "but we just dealt with them like regular friends. They had their issues and we had ours." Moss, interview. In a letter responding to a newspaper column that suggested separatism, and particularly separatist influence from Quebec, was a part of the NLP, Moss explained: "Here in this portion of Labrador we are surrounded by the province of Quebec on three sides, the closest border is less than eight miles from Wabush. A full 99 percent of our food, clothing, etc. comes from or through the province of Quebec in addition to all materials for consumer and industrial use.... When Quebec gets a cold... we sneeze. When Quebec itches, we scratch." Yet, he took issue with the writer suggesting that agitators of Quebec origin in Labrador were the source of this sentiment in the area. Moss blamed the social system in both Quebec and Labrador for breeding this kind of malcontent. See: Mac Moss, "Letters to the Editor," *the Aurora*, November 29, 1972, 6.

Smallwood's political problems shift to Labrador," the *Globe and Mail* reported on talk of secession from Labrador municipal officials in virtually the same breath as Burgess's new party.¹⁰²⁵ Interestingly, buried in the same article, was a brief mention that Burgess's NLP planned to contest some seats on the island of Newfoundland, an indication that the party had plans to represent other remote areas of the province where residents believed they were not receiving enough attention in comparison to the more populous Avalon Peninsula. Nevertheless, symbolically, the NLP and secession were being linked in public discourse. Although party members repeatedly stated that they were not a separatist entity,¹⁰²⁶ suspicions continued to be entertained and aroused by the media. In a news report shortly before the 1971 provincial election, a CBC radio reporter noted that "[w]hile Mr. Burgess is quick to point out that this is not a separatist movement, it has all the trappings. The movement could cry to Ottawa for help and ask for recognition, say as a territory, rather than remain part of Newfoundland."¹⁰²⁷

Although the party leadership did not promote secession there was discussion about the merits of the idea among some rank-and-file party members and party supporters. In a series of letters to Premier Smallwood around the time of Burgess's defection, Goose Bay resident James Barter raised the possibility of Labrador secession and disputed the premier's comments to a newspaper that most of the secession talk in Labrador came from transient workers who don't intend to stay very long anyway.¹⁰²⁸ Noting that he had lived in Labrador for about 20 years, Barter referred to himself as one of many people wanting a better deal and being angered by news of massive infrastructure expenditures on the island of Newfoundland. "Now that the separatist talk has started, it will get more momentum because

¹⁰²⁵ ----- "Secessionist sentiment: Smallwood's political problems shift to Labrador," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan. 8, 1969, 1.

¹⁰²⁶ A Toronto Star article, published just before the election, titled "A new political party in Labrador tries to throw off the Newfie yoke," noted that among Labrador residents "[o]ccasionally separation from the province is mentioned, but even Tom Burgess and the New Labrador Party eschew that idea, at least for now." W. Evan Golder, "A new political party in Labrador," 20.

¹⁰²⁷ Ken Cathcart, *Sunday Magazine*, CBC Radio, October 24, 1971,

¹⁰²⁸ James Barter, Goose Bay. "Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood," dated September 12, 1968, Coll-075, File 1.24.011, p. 1.

more Labradorians will read the papers. Therefore, it is a must to develop projects [such as a highway from Wabush to Churchill Falls] and improve communications... If these developments are not realized it will be 'separatism' for Labrador by the fall of 1969, and former Newfoundlanders will vote in favour, and you better believe it."¹⁰²⁹

Moreover, despite rejecting secession as a policy, the party's executive did understand and acknowledge the appeal of the option among some Labradorians, including among some of their own supporters. In an October 1972 letter protesting the absence of Labradorians on the Snowden Commission, signed by 26 people including Mike Martin, the letter writers state: "It is not hard to understand why many of the younger Labradorians vote for the New Labrador Party or why many of us have separatist inclinations. Would territorial status be any worse than the disinterest, mismanagement and neglect we have experienced from the past and present Newfoundland government?"¹⁰³⁰ Months later in his inaugural speech to the legislature detailing the rise of the party, Martin noted "...at first we were accused of being a separatist movement, a neat ploy to discredit us, and not an entirely unexpected one by the other political parties. But I wish to reiterate here what I have said many times in other public forums that we are anything but separatist, though God knows we have every reason to be so."¹⁰³¹ He continued: "The wonder of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that there has not already been a serious and successful separatist movement, all the ingredients are there to be sure."¹⁰³²

Mike Martin recalls that officially opposing separatism was "a very deliberate decision." He remembers:

We dealt with that problem as a group, as two [riding] associations meeting in conference. Our main purpose was to get a better deal for our people from the provincial government. I mean

¹⁰²⁹ James Barter, Goose Bay, "Letter to the Hon. J. R. Smallwood," September 12, 1968, 3. J. R. Smallwood Collection (Coll-075), File: 1.24.011, Memorial University Archives, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

¹⁰³⁰ ---- "Letters to the Editor," the *Aurora*, October 11, 1972, 4.

¹⁰³¹ Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 20 February, 1973 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, 594.

¹⁰³² Newfoundland and Labrador, House of Assembly Debates, 20 February, 1973 (Mike Martin, NLP) Tape 189, 594.

that was the nub of the whole thing. We just wanted fair play. And we felt if we put something else into the mix, some other emotional issue like separatism, we would lose sight of the original plan. Not only that, but if we declared ourselves separatists we would never get a better deal from the provincial government and we'd wind up being even worse off than before. So, the thing came to the floor. It was debated, it was discussed and it just wasn't something we were interested in.... Mind you, there were radicals in the party who wanted it to be a separatist party and we had to put the clamps on them. We had to keep them quiet and shut them up because they would have been a very disruptive force. So, we contained them; but [our opponents] nevertheless went out and called them things like the Labrador Liberation Front and all that kind of stupidity. But it was only a couple of people."¹⁰³³

Past party president Mac Moss concurs, stating that "separatism wasn't on the agenda. We were young¹⁰³⁴ and full of piss and vinegar, but we were small and realized that was not something we could aspire to. We didn't want to lose the connection with Newfoundland or to break up the province. We just wanted fair treatment."¹⁰³⁵ Party member Ernie Davis agrees, explaining that most of the people in Labrador West had ties to the island and from his perspective they did not want to separate from the island. "But we know we were flagged as such by other parties – splinter party or separatist party or someone trying to do their own thing."¹⁰³⁶

Appreciating the power of the term as a political weapon, there were also instances when the label was affixed to the party's opponents. Burgess pejoratively called one of his political rivals a separatist to further disassociate himself from the label soon after the party was born.¹⁰³⁷ In defending Martin against charges of separatism from a newspaper columnist, Moss wrote that when Martin noted that some in the party would endorse separatism, the writer should have asked how many in the Liberal and PC parties in Newfoundland still say they would have been better off on their own or with the U.S.

¹⁰³⁸ And, writing "to correct, in the public mind," the notion that the NLP were separatists, Lee Michelin,

¹⁰³³ Martin, interview.

¹⁰³⁴ Martin suggests that the strongest separatist voices in the party were actually some of the oldest members – people who had been alive at the time of Confederation and who believed the territory shouldn't have joined Canada in the first place.

¹⁰³⁵ Moss, interview.

¹⁰³⁶ Davis, Interview.

¹⁰³⁷ Charles S. Devine, "Letter: Labrador Politics," *The Aurora*, March 4, 1970, 2.

¹⁰³⁸ Mac Moss, "Letters to the Editor," November 29, 1972, p. 6, 12. Comments about separatism by Martin during a trip to Labrador West had provided fodder for a Nov. 14 column in the St. John's *Daily News* that suggested new

President of the party's operations in Labrador North, suggested the "real separatist attitude" was on the part of the governing Liberals for treating the area "more like a colony of it than a part of it." He wrote: "We believe that Labrador should be fully a part of the province and not just an appendage of it to be exploited by the Island. We want equal rights for this part of the province. We cannot see a Dept. of Provincial Affairs and a Dept. of Labrador Affairs any more than we should see a Dept. of Provincial Affairs and a Dept. of Burin Peninsula Affairs."¹⁰³⁹

Michelin's letter rejecting the separatist label included a line of defense – national pride and loyalty – which the other two parties under study would also utilize, and much more frequently. Enumerating and correcting mistaken impressions of the party, he wrote: "A[nother] error is that we are concerned only for our own benefit. Nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, we are Canadians. We feel that this area of Canada, known as Labrador, holds a vast wealth of potential resources, natural and human. We know that the investments already made in Labrador have greatly benefitted both our Province and our Dominion. We ask that further investments be made on greater scales to increase the prosperity of our Nation."¹⁰⁴⁰ The influence of the situation in Quebec is once again very evident in the presentation of these comments. The nature of the types of demands regional parties were making could be conceived as parochialism by observers in the larger province or country.

arrivals to the region from Quebec were making noise about separatism in the NLP. Party president Mac Moss attempted to downplay the renewed fears that the NLP was a separatist entity and that Mike Martin was to Newfoundland what René Levesque was to Canada. In a letter to the editor, also carried by the *Aurora*, Moss once again outlined the problems with distance, poor communication and indifference that stoked separatist sentiment in a portion of Labrador, both on the part of new arrivals and life-long Labradorians, while reiterating that "the New Labrador Party has never and does not now endorse the theory of separation of this province." Martin, he wrote, was merely stating the obvious: in any party there are a diversity of opinions and ideologies among members. Moss rhetorically asked whether the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives were completely absent any members who say the province would have been better off if it had joined the United States or whether there were not people in the province who subscribe to the Communist Doctrine. "Is it not the right of an individual to hold whatever belief he chooses without fear of persecution and slanderous attack from those who either do not understand or chose not to understand his reasons for it?" he asked.

¹⁰³⁹ Lee Michelin, President, Labrador North District, "Letters: Not A Separatist Group," *The Northern Reporter*, March 19, 1970, 2.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Michelin, "Letters: Not A Separatist Group," 2.

Localism and exceptionalism, often necessary ingredients in building or appealing to a regional identity, can obscure the fealty to a larger political unit's identity and interests. Yet it is notable that the provincially-oriented NLP, like the NOHP and the CBLP later, would see the need to assert its connection to the nation. With no federal wing and nothing on record to suggest members of the Party had any interest in leaving Confederation,¹⁰⁴¹ the statement should be recognized as a further attempt to disassociate the party from the contemporary Quebec separatist movement and the negative sentiment and anxiety it roused in Islanders, non-Québécois Canadians and even among some Labradorians themselves. These types of statements not only reveal how opponents and some segments of the media characterized the party, but also the greater context of the period and the acknowledgement that linking the NLP to Quebec separatism was potentially damaging or even ruinous to the party's ability to attract broader support.

In sum, raising the possibility of separation if Labrador's needs were not met by the provincial government represented a serious threat to the existing order. Burgess's initial musings of not necessarily separation, but separation if necessary were arguably essential in alerting the provincial government to the seriousness of the dissatisfaction in the region as well as the potential for a radical rupture in the Newfoundland body politic if Labrador alienation and anger were not addressed.¹⁰⁴² However, in simply entertaining the idea of secession from Newfoundland, Burgess and the NLP opened themselves to accusations that they were separatist sympathizers, radicals or that they harboured a secret agenda. In addition to public statements, minutes of the NLP's meetings reveal the extent to which the party's executive had to reassure their own members and potential supporters that they were

¹⁰⁴¹ If anything, suggestions among some members about establishing a new Canadian territory or province would indicate a closer relationship between Labradorians and non-Newfoundlander Canadians.

¹⁰⁴² Even as the party appeared to be in its death throes, the *Aurora* noted that keeping the party as a vehicle to promote secession "keeps Government 'on its toes.'" In an editorial it concluded: "*Aurora* feels NLP is a good 'watchdog' at present. There has to be a change of attitude emanating from Confederation Building or drastic measures will have to be taken." ----- "Editorially speaking," *the Aurora*, February 26, 1975, 6.

not a separatist entity but rather a regional-interest party with a nuanced position on their place in the province.¹⁰⁴³

NOHP: To Be or Not to Be Separatist

Unlike leading members of the NLP, North Bay's Ed Deibel had no hesitation, at least initially, in calling himself a secessionist. Yet Deibel, who admits to having a certain political naïveté when he started his campaign, encountered a decidedly mixed reaction to promoting outright separation from the province so quickly, and later tempered his statements and prospective timelines in a bid to build more popular support for his movement.

As noted in Chapter 3, Northern Ontario had a long history of sporadic separatist movements and sentiment that, like a long-smoldering ground fire, flared up given the appropriate conditions. Around the same time as the grassroots protests to the 1973 provincial budget were building, a group known as the Northern Prospectors' Association announced their own intention to initiate discussions across the north towards forming a separate province at their meeting in Cobalt. The group, which had 100 members, was reportedly solidly behind the proposal, presented as a brief to Premier William Davis and Natural Resources Minister Leo Bernier.¹⁰⁴⁴ A *North Bay Nugget* editorial suggested that while the prospectors' call for secession was an old one that hadn't been heard much lately, "it [was] liable, however, to be heard in growing volume since the announcement in the Ontario budget of those higher taxes on energy and fuel..."¹⁰⁴⁵ As organizer of the North Bay anti-tax campaign, Deibel had also heard similar sentiment expressed. Reporter Betty Alcorn noted that a stack of letters delivered to Deibel at one of his meetings included statements like: "Set up our own government and forget about Mr. Davis and Southern Ontario," and "There may be some logic to the idea of a Northern Ontario province,

¹⁰⁴³ See New Labrador Party Minutes, "General Membership Meeting," Sept. 14, 1970, 19; and "Annual General Meeting," November 6, 1972, 49. New Labrador Party minutes ledger, Memorial University Collection (MF-314), Memorial University Archives, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Hunt, "Prospectors urge North secession," 1.

¹⁰⁴⁵ ----- "Editorial: Ontario government in more hot water," *The North Bay Nugget*, April 14, 1973, 4.

separate from the urban jungle in Southern Ontario.”¹⁰⁴⁶ Toronto financier Percy Bishop, one of the prospectors calling for a study on secession, even drew allusions to the American War of Independence when he spoke at one of Deibel’s meetings: “If you think there was much justification for the Boston Tea Party, let me say you have enough justification to throw the whole crew into the harbor.”¹⁰⁴⁷

Seeing Deibel’s populist appeal, Bishop and a fellow prospector thought they might have found someone to help lead the mutiny, and they provided him with seed money for a trip to determine just how much support there was among Northern residents for the idea. Clearly, the unpopular budget had roused lingering hostility from previous grievances and resentments, and some residents and officials signaled their intent to seriously explore the idea of secession. For example, the Tri-town and Area Planning Board, representing the towns of Cobalt, New Liskeard, Latchford and Haileybury and the townships of Coleman and Dymond, added its voice to calls for a study into secession. This motion was believed to be the first of its kind by a responsible elected or appointed body in Northern Ontario.¹⁰⁴⁸ A front page editorial in Sudbury’s *Northern Life* also supported such a study. And, in his conversations with Northerners on this first tour, Deibel was convinced there was a sizable portion of the electorate that was prepared to give secession a serious hearing.

However, Deibel’s decision to stridently campaign for a plebiscite on the issue prior to any of these studies being completed, and his decision to support the creation of a new province, prompted a myriad of criticism ranging from outright opposition to the proposal, derision of his “half-baked” campaign, and even concern from some would-be secessionists that a premature vote could be detrimental to a more serious and fully-fledged secessionist campaign. Representing the first camp, Fred McNutt of Temagami wrote in a letter to the *North Bay Nugget*: “There is no doubt that an eleventh province sentiment exists and has been smouldering for many years. Frustration breeds such ideas. If

¹⁰⁴⁶ Betty Alcorn, “New taxes decried at N. Bay rally,” *The North Bay Nugget*, April 19, 1974, 1.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Alcorn, “New taxes decried at N. Bay rally,” 6.

¹⁰⁴⁸ John R. Hunt, “North meeting: Demand secession study,” *The North Bay Nugget*, April 21, 1973, 1.

the fact of a separate province were to be achieved it would be a sad event as the results of such emotionally inspired parochial movements tend to be.... We do not need a separate province. However, we in the North, must continue to fight for a rational fully integrated development plan for the whole of Ontario which recognizes and fulfills the priorities of the North. Mr. Davis has taken a firm step along the way.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Suggesting that Deibel and other secessionists spurred on by the anti-tax campaign were not seeing the bigger picture, letter writer David MacKay was representative of a second view that argued that “separation deals with far beyond the new taxes, and if the idea was thought through it would not be very popular because Northern Ontario’s population base could not sustain good government services nor would there be much likelihood that it could become a tourist mecca or industrial giant.”¹⁰⁵⁰ In its editorial, the *Northern Life* spoke favourably about secession leading to better government representation, but urged Deibel’s group to set aside its plebiscite campaign until it could come up with meaningful figures about the financial cost of setting up a new province:

If the push for a plebiscite is made before these things are known it could well be disastrous – whichever way it goes. If the north voted to separate and then found that to govern itself it would have to raise the taxes to exorbitant levels, then everyone has lost. If the people voted against it because the facts are not known we could lose out on a solution to the problems we encounter each and every day. It would be difficult to have a second plebiscite arranged.... Let’s do things in the right order instead of talking through our hats.¹⁰⁵¹

Deibel’s political position on secession gradually developed over the course of the 1970s, partially because many of the people signing his petition appeared to be against secession but in favour

¹⁰⁴⁹ Fred McNutt, Temagami, ON, “Letter: North must keep fighting,” *The North Bay Nugget*, May 23, 1973, 4. Other letter writers were supportive of McNutt’s suggestions. “All energy devoted to separatism should be channeled into setting up this committee to present the needs to the premier, whomever he may be at the time.” Paul M. Girard, North Bay, “Letter: About Northern Ont. Separation,” *The North Bay Nugget*, May 26, 1973, 4.

¹⁰⁵⁰ David MacKay, North Bay, “Letter: If we secede...” *The North Bay Nugget*, April 19, 1974, 4. In a letter to the editor, Walter R. Borowicz likewise contended that the numbers would not add up: “When Ed Deibel visited Sault Ste. Marie recently to promote his cause of separating Northern Ontario from the rest of the province, it was fortunate that he failed to stimulate much support. However, the support he obtained was alarming insofar as some leading citizens signed his petition.” He suggested that such a policy, if implemented, “would cost us a phenomenal fortune.” Walter R. Borowicz, “Letter: Into Mr. Deibel’s hands,” *The Sault Daily Star*, October 8, 1974, 6.

¹⁰⁵¹ ----- “Editorial: Need Much More Study Before Secession Move,” *The Northern Life*, August 15, 1973, 1.

of a debate about Northern Ontario's treatment by the provincial government. In advance of its founding and certification as a registered political party, the NOHP did not list secession as a primary political goal. Instead, Deibel promised that if members of his party were elected to the provincial parliament they would serve a four- or five-year term during which time they would lobby for better treatment for the region. If the provincial government had not demonstrated a willingness to address Northern Ontario's needs during that time, members of the party would run for re-election with a platform that would seek a plebiscite on secession. Like the NLP, Deibel now suggested that secession was not a given, but a possibility if efforts were not made to modernize the region.

However, the NOHP faced an additional dilemma as Quebec's separatists continued to make gains and anchor themselves into the country's consciousness in the early to mid-1970s. Just as the NLP had to contend with comparisons to the Parti Québécois, Deibel found himself at pains to distinguish his aims from the separatist ambitions among a growing portion of the population in la belle province. The linkages had been made by news media since the days of the New Province Committee. "That created problems because the national news media were associating us with separation," recalled Deibel in an interview. "And I said, no, no, no. When we separate we'll be under the constitution. And we support Canada and all of that. [Quebec separation] was a big issue then.... Everybody in Canada was against Quebec separating, and we were going to separate too? And that's what the media did. That scared the hell out of [people]. That killed it right there. As soon as you talked about separation they said 'I don't want nothing [sic] to do with it.' And I was the same with Quebec. I didn't want them to separate."¹⁰⁵²

Although Deibel attempted to put the genie back into the bottle by vowing to work towards improving Northern Ontario's situation within the province, the NOHP's more nuanced stance on the question of secession did little to allay these fears. And, once again, Deibel's political naiveté may have at least partially contributed to negative media coverage of the issue. An offhand response to a

¹⁰⁵² Deibel, interview, June 27, 2010.

reporter's question about the Parti Québécois' recent election, which Deibel suggested was evidence that "people with concern for a better deal can be effective,"¹⁰⁵³ proved devastating to communicating the party's evolving position. Although the subsequent article, provocatively headlined "NOHP takes confidence from Parti Québécois: Secession Object of Northern Party," noted the parties' objectives differed in a final analysis, Deibel contends that "[w]hen they put that in the headline, that killed it right there."¹⁰⁵⁴ The article's characterization of Deibel as being "blatantly ecstatic" over the PQ's victory also contributed to concern about his loyalties.¹⁰⁵⁵

Party president Guy Matte also recalls the influence of the national context during the party's rise as being a detriment to their ability to draw in people who might otherwise be sympathetic to the cause. "I think I was called a separatist," he remembers. "This was just in passing, in conversation. There might not have been any malicious intent, but I took it hard, being a bilingual person. I said, listen, I'm no separatist. I just believe in the party and a better deal for Northern Ontario."¹⁰⁵⁶ "There's a stigma the minute you mention separatists," he continues. "What comes to your mind? We had nothing to do with that. There was a lot going on in Canada at that point. As soon as that word 'separate' came up, people would turn around and never want to talk to you again. How else would you phrase something like that? We'd like to take care of our own? What would you say? Split? The stigma stuck."¹⁰⁵⁷

To combat the Quebec separatist connection, throughout his decade of campaigns Deibel went to great lengths to demonstrate his Canadian bonafides. While driving around Northern Ontario on his initial petition campaign, Deibel displayed an "I'm Proud To Be A Canadian" bumper sticker on his

¹⁰⁵³ Weaver, "NOHP takes confidence from Parti Québécois: Secession object of northern party," 1.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Deibel interview, June 27, 2010.

¹⁰⁵⁵ In an editorial column from the same newspaper, publisher Michael Atkins contended that Northern Ontario had much to learn from René Levesque and argued there was nothing sinister about what was happening in Quebec. However, this nuance did not appear to be well received by the larger population. Michael Atkins, "We have much to learn from Rene Levesque," *The Northern Life*, November 24, 1976, A4.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Matte, interview.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Matte, interview.

car,¹⁰⁵⁸ and his son proposed a potential Northern Ontario Flag that contained a Canadian Maple Leaf in the centre surrounded by ten bars representing the ten districts in the region. Deibel declared that he “just love[d] the maple leaf [and he] always wanted to associate whatever [the party was] doing as being good for Canada. Not just good for Northern Ontario.”¹⁰⁵⁹

Although Deibel’s idea for a new province, first through his petitions and Committee and later through a more nuanced policy plank within the NOHP, was not generally supported, his tireless campaigning did garner some sympathy and admiration. Throughout the aspiring politician’s travels media commentators and other Northern politicians repeatedly stated that Deibel’s lasting contribution to Northern development would be his knack for generating attention. During Deibel’s second northern sojourn, the *Sault Daily Star* noted that “the proposal for the creation of an eleventh province in Northern Ontario continues to be dismissed by most northerners as a mildly amusing joke,” and serious-minded northerners are giving Deibel the “cold shoulder.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the paper urged readers not to be unkind to him and to consider the service he was providing to the North:

There are indications that while northerners don’t take Mr. Deibel too seriously some people in southern Ontario may believe that he is the voice of northern discontent crying out for a better deal for the north country. Maybe that’s why so much attention has been given in southern Ontario to the Northern Book of Beefs, a compilation of Northern Ontario complaints and concerns put together by [Sault Ste. Marie] Mayor Ron Irwin. So, while Mr. Deibel’s idea of a separate province for Northern Ontario can’t really be taken seriously, perhaps he does deserve some praise for possibly being a factor in creating greater southern awareness of Northern Ontario’s problems and needs.¹⁰⁶¹

In a similar vein, in a 1979 article *Northern Life* publisher Michael Atkins wrote that while Deibel was correct in arguing that Northern Ontario should be a separate province, he was not the right person to lead such a charge nor would such a secession likely ever happen, especially through a vehicle like the

¹⁰⁵⁸ Charlotte Montgomery, “Separatist stirs up Ontario’s North,” B6

¹⁰⁵⁹ Deibel, interview, June 12, 2012. The economic nationalism that was the centerpiece of the party’s platform also spoke to this concern for Canadian sovereignty.

¹⁰⁶⁰ ----- “South may get the message,” *The Sault Daily Star*, Sept. 21, 1974, 6.

¹⁰⁶¹ ----- “South may get the message,” 6.

NOHP. The reasons were manifold: Deibel offered “poorly researched ‘pie in the sky’” platitudes to support his opinions, there was no common language, culture or philosophical base for a political movement, only a tenuous geographic association, and as a result it had been impossible for the NOHP leader to attract any real thinkers to his cause.¹⁰⁶² Still, Atkins repeated a conclusion other commentators had also reached: Deibel’s campaign, in and of itself, was contributing to agenda-setting that would steer the conversation towards topics and grievances other Northern Ontario politicians would be better placed to tackle.

Although the idea of Northern Ontario secession proved unpalatable to many residents during Deibel’s tours and connections made between his campaign and that of the Parti Québécois was detrimental to the NOHP’s electability,¹⁰⁶³ in retrospect Deibel’s flirtation with secession helped to illuminate the types of issues Northern Ontarian politicians of various partisan stripes had long desired to discuss.

CBLP: Blowing Up the Canso Causeway?

Now joined to mainland Nova Scotia by the rock-filled Canso causeway and a swing bridge, during the colonial era the island of Cape Breton had been a separate political entity from the rest of the province. When he announced plans to create an independent Labor Party based on the island, former NDP MLA Paul MacEwan says members of his former party contended that if he had his way he’d blow up the causeway, lead the island out of the province and back to its former independence in colonial times. Expelled from the NDP in 1980 for purportedly promoting the idea of secession, among a number

¹⁰⁶² Atkins, “Editorial: It may be pie in the sky but...,” 4.

¹⁰⁶³ Years later, when Deibel was no longer the leader of the NOHP, the *Globe and Mail* reported that the party was going into the next provincial election in disarray, still “trying to live down its reputation as a separatist party.” New leader Gary Lewis said the party had had difficulty getting members since it was organized because people thought it was advocating separation from the rest of the province. “That hurt us considerably and it’s been a hard thing to throw. I’m still running into it,” he is quoted as saying. Platiel, “Northern heritage party tries to forget it’s past,” 5.

of other issues,¹⁰⁶⁴ MacEwan argues that the suggestion that he favoured separatism was concocted as a myth designed to hide the more insidious reasons behind the schism in the party and to stunt the Labor Party's growth potential.

Prior to forming the CBLP, Paul MacEwan had crafted a reputation for standing up for the island's interests in both partisan and non-partisan debates. In early 1973 as a new legislative session was beginning, he drew headlines arguing that the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives parties were dominated by a "Halifax Clique" of merchants who were "unsympathetic to Cape Breton at best and at worst downright hostile." He stated that if the legislature failed "to bring in a massive program designed to guarantee Cape Breton its rightful place, Cape Bretoners should unite in telling the Liberal and Conservative parties where they can go and begin searching for some new means of securing justice."¹⁰⁶⁵ Just what "new means" this would be was left unspecified, but later in the year, when a group of municipal representatives proposed provincehood for Cape Breton, MacEwan's blistering response made it clear this was not the kind of justice he envisioned for the island.

Representatives of six municipal units in Cape Breton County gave unanimous approval to the idea at a Metro Planning Commission meeting. "The more you think of the idea, the more reasonable it sounds," said Dan Munroe, Mayor of Glace Bay and president of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities.¹⁰⁶⁶ Discussion about municipal amalgamation or regional government had taken place for years with little to no interest from the capital in Halifax. "We're just not getting anywhere the way things are and the province idea is the sort of thing that might get the ball rolling."¹⁰⁶⁷ An editorial in the

¹⁰⁶⁴ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 62-72.

¹⁰⁶⁵ ----- "Paul MacEwan, MLA attacks Halifax Clique," *The Cape Breton Post*, January 10, 1973, "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁶⁶ ----- "Municipal Heads Want To Turn Cape Breton Into A Separate Province." *Cape Breton Post*, December 14, 1973, 3. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁶⁷ ----- "Municipal Heads Want To Turn Cape Breton Into A Separate Province." *Cape Breton Post*, December 14, 1973, 3. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute. John Capstick, chairman of the Cape Breton Regional Tenancies Board and an economist, also speculated the discussion was not serious and emerged as a pressure tactic. See: ----- "Says Economist: Separation will not solve needs of CB," *Cape*

Cape Breton Post suggested the question was entirely political for there was no strong economic data yet gathered to be analyzed,¹⁰⁶⁸ and supporters and opponents were left to argue whether the island would be better or worse off economically. Sydney's Deputy Mayor Archie MacRury, who denied the issue was being used as a political football, suggested the province was keeping an unfair portion of federal funding for health care, advanced education and economic development for the mainland portion of the province,¹⁰⁶⁹ while James "Buddy" McEachern, NDP candidate for Cape Breton Centre argued the island would not have a sufficient tax base to maintain present levels of municipal funding.¹⁰⁷⁰ Premier Gerald Regan suggested that the question of provincial status for Cape Breton as supported by the Cape Breton Planning Commission "should not be given the dignity of treatment as a serious question but... should not be treated with levity."¹⁰⁷¹

MacEwan came down strongly against the notion of Cape Breton separatism at this time, calling it "so ill-thought out that one wonders whether it is a serious proposal or some sort of cynical political manoeuvre."¹⁰⁷² He questioned whether the new province could sustain government investment into major industries such as the Sydney Steel Plant and noted that in two Cape Breton towns the province funded 92 cents out of every dollar spent on education. "Can the advocates of separatism show that a province of Cape Breton could continue their services in their present form?" he asked.¹⁰⁷³

Breton Post, December 18, 1973. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁶⁸ ----- "Editorial: Ceap Breatuinn Gu Brath?" *The Cape Breton Post*, December 15, 1973, 4. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁶⁹ ----- "MacRury favors separation." *The Cape Breton Post*, December 17, 1973, 4. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁷⁰ ----- "Would Pose 'Serious Problems,'" *The Cape Breton Post*, December 17, 1973, 4. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁷¹ Lyndon MacIntyre. "Cape Bretoners would reject separatism – Regan," *The Cape Breton Post*, December 19, 1973. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁷² ----- "Separatist Advocates Blasted By MacEwan," *The Cape Breton Post*, December 19, 1973. "C. B. Separatism Scrapbook 28 – C.B Bid for Provincial Status, 1973." Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁷³ ----- "Separatist Advocates Blasted By MacEwan."

Nevertheless, though he believed Cape Breton provincehood made little economic sense, a few years later in his polemical book *Confederation and the Maritimes*, the astute politician noted how such proposals and campaigns can force the ruling economic and political elites to act. Calling the Parti Québécois the best chance to shake up the “Toronto is Canada” crowd, MacEwan asked his readers to “imagine the drastic and traumatic effect the holding of such a referendum would have on the White Rhodesians of the Rideau.”¹⁰⁷⁴ He suggested that Quebecers took a more sophisticated approach to the federal games than their Maritime counterparts and rather than complaining jealously of that province’s success, “it behooves us to examine why that province has more influence than we in terms of the dynamics of Confederation, and see what we could do to improve our position based on these lessons.”¹⁰⁷⁵ Thus, although he found some value in how promoting separatism could be used as a pressure tactic to make a central government more responsive to a region/province, there is little in the public record to suggest he was working towards building an independent province of Cape Breton prior to his expulsion hearings.¹⁰⁷⁶

MacEwan suggests the 1980 NDP charge that he was facilitating a “split” between the mainland and island portion of the province was solely designed to mask a schism within the party that fell partly, though not entirely, along regional lines.¹⁰⁷⁷ According to the embattled politician, evidence for this

¹⁰⁷⁴ Paul MacEwan, *Confederation and the Maritimes*, (Windsor: Lancelot Press, 1976), 41.

¹⁰⁷⁵ MacEwan, *Confederation and the Maritimes*, 42. MacEwan contends anti-French feeling is to blame for Maritimers not looking seriously at the Parti Québécois’ example. Moreover, unlike the Québécois who see themselves as a nation, the Maritimes share common geography, but have always had separate jurisdictions. “But they have never been united at any time, and within Nova Scotia indeed there were at one time two separate jurisdictions, Cape Breton and Mainland Nova Scotia, a division which in sentiment exists to a degree to this day,” (74).

¹⁰⁷⁶ In a post-expulsion article on the CBLP’s birth, reporter Glenn Wanamaker notes “MacEwan never championed provincial status for Cape Breton before.” Glenn Wannamaker, “Nova Scotia: Launching the separatist ship,” *Atlantic Insight*, November 1982, 14. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Marilla Stephenson, “MacEwan may form new provincial party,” *The Chronicle-Herald*, July 8, 1980. New Democratic Party (Provincial) 1965-1981, Scrapbook 141F(1), Beaton Institute. See also: MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 63. In his manuscript he outlines two potential interpretations for the word “split” – advocating political separation leading to provincehood or a partisan split. He contends evidence for either charge was absent among the NDP executive members seeking his removal, but both the former and the latter were

claim was circumstantial at best and spurious at worst. It consisted of imaginary connections to other noted separatists (1880s Cape Breton MP Newton McKay and Scottish National Party founder Sir Alexander MacEwan), unsigned cartoons purported to be his, and records suggesting he once signed out a book written by Parti Québécois leader René Lévesque.¹⁰⁷⁸ Strenuously denying this accusation at the time of his expulsion and during his 1981 election campaign as an independent, MacEwan was again labelled a separatist when he organized the CBLP.

At this point, however, the debate over separatism became more philosophical as the new party, with MacEwan as its leader, voted at its 1982 founding convention to “favourably examine” the idea of a separate Cape Breton province.¹⁰⁷⁹ At the time, MacEwan told reporters that “all sides of the issue should be heard... but it will be up to the delegates what the party’s stand should be.”¹⁰⁸⁰ His position on the issue, to allow open discussion and debate on a controversial subject, fit very much into his belief that a democratic political party should entertain whatever concerns or ideas its members bring forward. But, although delegates passed the resolution, the party’s 1984 election manifesto contained no mention that a referendum on secession was an immediate goal. Some astute observers noted that neither MacEwan nor the CBLP supporters at this founding convention appeared to be “impassioned separatists,”¹⁰⁸¹ yet this motion, and subsequent comments to the media,¹⁰⁸² made it easier for some of his political opponents to continue to characterize him as a separatist.

employed again two years later when he did opt to set up a competing party and explore the question of provincehood. He suggests this charge likely derives from long-standing suspicions NDP financier Lloyd Shaw had of him dating from the 1960s (60).

¹⁰⁷⁸ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 63

¹⁰⁷⁹ Parker Donham, “Cape Breton breakaway becomes election issue,” 7.

¹⁰⁸⁰ ----- “Party to discuss provincial status for Cape Breton,” *The Chronicle-Herald*, August 27, 1982. New Democratic Party (Provincial) 1965-1981, Scrapbook 141F(1), Beaton Institute.

¹⁰⁸¹ Glenn Wanamaker, “Launching the separatist ship,” 14.

¹⁰⁸² He planned to unveil a 1784 constitution that granted Cape Breton separate status on equal terms with Prince Edward Island and told reporters “This is what we should still have today and we wouldn’t be in so much of a mess.” See: ----- “MacEwan set to pursue C.B. independence,” 1.

The label upset him greatly. During a 1983 by-election campaign – the first electoral test for the party – MacEwan and candidate Gary Mosher co-authored a press release that took exception to the term “separatist party” as a euphemism for the organization: “Those who do not want to see Cape Breton get ahead have sought to undermine our party by spreading false gossip that the Cape Breton Labor Party is a separatist party. Nothing could be further from the truth. Separatists want to break away from Canada while we, on the other hand, want to join Canada as full and equal Canadians.”¹⁰⁸³

MacEwan also used his position in the legislature to propose several resolutions that first sought to counter the negative connotations of the separatist label and then publicize the nuance of this portion of the party’s platform. A resolution on February 25, 1983 noted that “the members of the Cape Breton Labor Party, as proud Canadians, do not support separatism at all, as advocated by the Parti Québécois and the Western Canada Concept, and do not in any way sympathize with these separatist political parties” and asked the House to acknowledge and support “the anti-separatist position of the Cape Breton Labor Party, [that] applauds and endorses all efforts to keep Canada one, strong, united, and with equal standards of living for all Canadians.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Two further resolutions in March of that year noted that the CBLP’s approach to the question of provincehood was that it required “diligent research before it could be endorsed one way or the other”¹⁰⁸⁵ and that it is “not something to be approached lightly or superficially, nor has MacEwan advocated any such approach.”¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸³ ----- “‘Separatist’ label upsets MacEwan,” *The Chronicle Herald*, February 16, 1983. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567), File #7, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 3, 25 February 1983, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP). Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1623) File: #6, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 52, 8 March, 1983, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP). Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1623) File: #6, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Legislature Debates, Resolution No. 92, 8 March, 1983, (Paul MacEwan, CBLP). Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1623) File: #6, Nova Scotia Archives. As noted in Chapter 7, during the final years of its existence as it debated proposals for party logos and emblems, concern over linkages to separatism and disloyalty to Canada remained top of mind with some party members.

A more thorough exploration of his views from this time can be found in a letter he sent to a researcher from the University College of Cape Breton studying the question of provincehood that he attached to the last of these resolutions.

I do not favor the term 'separation' to describe the idea of provincehood for Cape Breton. 'Separation' is not what we are talking about at all. Cape Breton was created separate from Nova Scotia by God; we are not questioning that I hope. Further, the word 'separatism' to most Canadians conjures up a mental image of bomb-throwing F.L.Q.ers of the sort who murdered Pierre Laporte, and who want to break up Canada. It would set the cause of gaining provincehood for Cape Breton back irreparably, in my view, if provincehood were to be confused with 'separatism' and the idea conveyed in that term. I think the people who apply the word 'separatism' to the cause of provincehood for Cape Breton are either using the word without thinking about what they are doing, or else deliberately, to try [to] hurt and ridicule the cause. For myself, I am not separatist at all, but a 100% loyal and patriotic Canadian who would like to see Cape Breton stand on equal terms with all other parts of Canada.¹⁰⁸⁷

In his letter MacEwan stated plainly that he did not know whether provincehood was the answer to Cape Breton's problems, but stressed that "some hard economic data is required, first and foremost, if we are to address the question of provincehood seriously," because "uninformed opinions on so important a question are really not of any use at all."¹⁰⁸⁸ Such economic data included finding what percentage of tax paid by Cape Bretoners to the province was being returned to the island's communities and what percentage of federal transfers was Nova Scotia receiving on behalf of Cape Breton. The position MacEwan staked out is one he compared to a response by Cape Breton economist William Gallivan to a municipal politician's provincehood proposal around this time and also bears a striking resemblance to the *Northern Life's* editorial around the time of Deibel's early organizing in Northern Ontario: provincehood within the Canadian Confederation is an idea that should not be rejected out of hand nor supported with abandon until more research, particularly economic research, is completed. MacEwan, though frequently critical of the intellectual elite during his political career, was a

¹⁰⁸⁷ Paul MacEwan, "Letter to Miss Linda Lee King," March 9, 1983, 1. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1623) File: #6, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Letter from MacEwan to Miss Linda Lee King, dated March 9, 1983, 3-4. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1623) File: #6, Nova Scotia Archives.

figure more in line with the type of “serious thinker” the *Northern Life’s* Michael Atkins wished for – but found absent in – Deibel’s organization.

This nuanced position was difficult to communicate effectively, however. MacEwan’s opponents in the NDP (and to a lesser degree the other parties) continued to label him a “separatist” akin to the Parti Québécois in order to saddle him and his party with the baggage this entailed in the contemporary Canadian context. MacEwan recalls that NDP leader Alexa McDonough would suggest that “I was at heart a Cape Breton separatist akin to the Parti Québécois. ‘Oh, but we can’t deal with that crowd, for you know in their hearts, they are all a bunch of Cape Breton separatists,’ Alexa would croon to any [mic] within range,”¹⁰⁸⁹ he writes.

The CBLP’s expansion onto mainland Nova Scotia prior to the 1984 election further frustrates a simplistic separatist narrative. Noting that party members had received membership applications from mainlanders and that this “should be encouraged,” MacEwan told reporters that although his party’s priority was to retain and expand upon its base in industrial Cape Breton, its platform called for “full political economic and social justice for all the people, not just the people of Cape Breton.”¹⁰⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the question of provincehood for Cape Breton,¹⁰⁹¹ and with it the characterization of the party as a separatist vehicle, continued to be a significant frustration for the party executive.

Colin Donovan, director of youth organization for the CBLP, offered a spirited defence of the party’s goals in a series of letters to the editor and opinion pieces. “Should Cape Bretoners care if our island’s provincehood would be an inconvenience to bureaucrats in Ottawa? If it would create a more

¹⁰⁸⁹ MacEwan, *The History of the Cape Breton Labor Party*, 158.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Hugh Townsend, “C.B. labor party ready to tackle mainland N.S.,” *The Chronicle Herald*, undated, circa 1983. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1567) File: #1, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁹¹ In a manuscript for a political biography of MacEwan, historian Ian Stewart provides multiple published examples of comments where MacEwan appeared favourably disposed to provincehood for Cape Breton. See: Ian Stewart, Chapter 12. The Cape Breton Labor Party manuscript in-progress, 4.

just society on our island, isn't it a worthwhile concept that the whole nation would benefit from?"¹⁰⁹²

he asked rhetorically in one opinion piece. "The only thing standing between PEI's stability and total social injustice (i.e. Cape Breton) is the shield of provincehood."¹⁰⁹³ He continued:

Aside from party members sending a few letters to the editor, what exactly is the CBLP doing to promote provincial status? Are we parading with banners on Parliament Hill or Province House? Is the CBLP popping up on the National News burning the N.S. flag in protest? Are we threatening terrorism if we don't get our own way? The Cape Breton Labor Party is not doing any of this; nothing as terrifying as a petition. Is CBLP leader MacEwan going up to Halifax and harping all day about independence? No, he is fighting for workers and the unemployed. Please remember it was the provincial government who refused to support or endorse island-wide bicentennial celebrations because they feared it might be a focal point for separatist sentiment. The Cape Breton Labor Party seems to need defining because the Post's attacks have proved people do not know us at all. To spell it out, we are a party based on the island which shall never share any power or alliance with the other mainland parties in Nova Scotia. The CBLP is simply a Cape Breton First party.¹⁰⁹⁴

Judging the party by its platform, by MacEwan's motions and contributions to debate in the legislature and by the party's internal documents, the CBLP's policy efforts overwhelmingly concerned the material betterment for the people of Cape Breton (and, to an extent, Nova Scotia at large); however, combatting charges of separatism lobbed by political opponents and reproduced by media in reports that used the separatist label somewhat interchangeably with "independence," "provincehood," and "secession," occupied a disproportionate amount of its members' time. It is evident that simply raising secession as a legitimate, if remote, possibility, was often enough for political opponents, aided by some elements of the news media, to cast doubt on the primary aims of these regional parties in the minds of voters or encourage confusion about their loyalties. The idea of secession undoubtedly appealed to some supporters of these parties; however, by and large, the leadership of these parties appeared far more interested in representing the region and its perceived interests within the provincial legislature through platforms designed to improve living conditions in these areas within the existing

¹⁰⁹² Colin Donavan, "In My Opinion: Labor Party Open On Question of Provincehood," *The Cape Breton Post*, June 7, 1985. Nova Scotia New Democratic Party Fonds, (MG2 Vol. 1588) File: #3, Nova Scotia Archives.

¹⁰⁹³ Donavan, "In My Opinion: Labor Party Open On Question of Provincehood."

¹⁰⁹⁴ Donavan, "In My Opinion: Labor Party Open On Question of Provincehood."

state structure. Evidence of a strong sense of regional alienation in each of these geographic areas suggests they had the potential to be fertile grounds for parties whose primary interests were regional in nature. Unlike parties who campaigned across these provinces and attempted to balance the interests of multiple regions within them, the NLP, the NOHP and the CBLP could speak authoritatively on behalf of a specific region. Yet secession, the possibility of a radical rupture to the provincial or national state and the identity they embody, was a powerful discourse that could be used to dissuade voters from even entertaining these parties as an option to express their frustrations and ultimately effect change. In utilizing a discourse that had the potential to destabilize the self in addition to the state, the opponents of these parties often succeeded in their attempts to stunt their growth and limit their appeal. In neutralizing these regional protest parties, agents of the state ironically reemerged as the safer and more stable alternative to address the underlying issues that had prompted the birth of these parties in the first place.

Conclusion

Regionalists could generally agree on the problems their communities faced. Diagnostic framing activities, therefore, benefitted from a unified voice of politically active persons within these areas and passive acceptance of the diagnosis of these problems by many others. Diagnostic framing, and its accompanying rhetoric, was an important component of the process of regional identification and the creation or reshaping of regional identities within this context. However, divisions among regionalists resulted in some dispute over what, if any, political solutions could or should be promoted. Supporters of new partisan groups engaged in prognostic framing activities that argued in favour of new regional vehicles to affect change. Competing with these frames were counter-frames that sought to undermine their favourable reception by questioning the suitability of party leadership or raising the spectre of a destabilizing political programme that may be associated with separatism. Thus, the ability of the

regionalists advocating for new political parties to achieve widespread acceptance was constrained by this rhetorical competition, in addition to other organizational and institutional considerations.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the lessons of this study, two statements on the nature of politics by famous world leaders come to mind. American President Calvin Coolidge once wrote: “Politics is not an end, but a means. It is not a product, but a process.”¹⁰⁹⁵ Considering that process, the immensely quotable Winston Churchill might add, “[s]uccess is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” In political history, when assessing the relative successes, failures, and legacies of certain actors and projects, we tend to privilege particular results and use the means in an attempt to explain them. With what criteria would we define relative success or failure? Size of electoral victories? Political longevity? The enactment of certain policies? The creation or refashioning of institutions? The popular mobilization of members of a society as judged by names on a petition, crowds at a rally, or volunteers for a campaign? In some respects, all these markers are valuable ways to measure the effects of politics as process. But the significance and value of politics cannot be confined solely to its outputs. The act of politics – the process itself, in whatever form it takes – is significant, even if it is fleeting.

In introducing my study on an aspect of regional political history, I recounted the story of how a seemingly inconsequential decision to change “Northern Ontario” to “northern Ontario” in the Canadian Press Caps and Stylebook created a minor uproar among residents of N/northern Ontario. For most people who were even aware of that tempest in a teapot, it is now likely a very hazy memory, if not entirely forgotten. Yet at the time it occurred, it prompted some intense discussion about the nature of region and the external and internal forces that shape its fluid character. The specifics of that news story, the cast of characters involved, and the outcome are not especially important in the larger scheme of Northern Ontario regional history and regional identity, but its existence added metaphorical

¹⁰⁹⁵ Calvin Coolidge, “Have Faith in Massachusetts,” *Massachusetts Law Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (November 1919), v.

kindling to a slow burning fire of Northern Ontario regionalism - one that occasionally flashes brightly, sometimes appears almost dormant, but has (as yet) not been snuffed out.

The work of regionalists, including people who created, supported, or only lent a sympathetic ear to regional political parties, provided another kind of fuel for this fire in a much more noteworthy and sustained fashion. And while it is both fair and necessary to examine and assess their legacy within the more conventional markers of success and failure, it is also absolutely essential to recognize that their contributions to the process were in and of themselves significant in shaping region-making: for even failures affect the contours of a project. By analyzing these contributions – the strategies they employed in the “pursuit of regionness” – it is thus possible to historicize the region as a subject in the making – “an open process [that] can only be defined postfactum.”¹⁰⁹⁶ If we accept that the constitution of region changes as the conversation of region continues, the inherent value of studying the actors who prominently engaged in the conversation and the methods they employed to sustain themselves becomes abundantly clear. Moreover, by drawing on the historical context of the times in which they were active, we can better understand why they made certain decisions, how they were constrained by larger forces operating alongside them, and ultimately appreciate how their actions contributed to a historicized regional project.

Reviewing the Situation

In an effort to explore, analyze and evaluate three regionalist political parties in this dissertation, I opted for a multifaceted approach to the subject matter. My introductory chapter assessed the state of region in Canadian historiography. Unlike race, class and gender, region was deemed to have “evaporated” as a category of analysis in many social and cultural histories by the turn of the century. Historians who did see a continuing utility in region advocated for a thorough analysis of

¹⁰⁹⁶ Hettne and Soderbaum, “Theorising the rise of regionness,” 36.

its concepts, a demarking of related terminology, and dispensing with its past association with determinist metaphors. By engaging with some recent scholarship on region, I presented my own understanding of the duality of region – both an observable, empirical concept (and category of analysis), and the result of explicitly political projects. I contended that the existence of region as a concept used to understand the nexus of significant flows in an area does not suggest a deliberate imagining of the region-as-project is imminent, nor that such regional phenomena will necessarily resonate with people in its midst. Nevertheless, the politics involved in promoting an imagined region can potentially affect these flows.

Although region is a concept employed by many disciplines and my subject matter could be approached from the schools of political science, geography, or political economy with interesting results, I opted to engage this topic as a political historian for several reasons. First, an imagined region must be situated historically to some degree in any of these other kinds of studies. Second, scholars within these disciplines who have been ‘doing’ history as a part of their work on region have expressed a desire and need for historically sensitive case studies that historians are probably best placed to provide. Third, by combining historically informed narratives with thematic analysis that employs insight from these disciplines, a rich hybrid study can be presented in a reasonably accessible format and the basis for additional discipline-specific perspectives. While historicizing the story of three political parties, I employed a range of tools and insights from other disciplines to inform my analysis. As such, the balance of my introductory chapter outlined some theories and approaches to the study of region and political parties and movements within the fields of geography, political science, and political economy. I also introduced a framing concept from communication studies that served as a useful organizational tool for subsequent comparative chapters.

In Chapters Two, Three and Four I undertook narrative case studies of the NLP, NOHP, and CBLP, respectively. Although the social, cultural, economic and political histories of each area differed in many

respects, there were similar themes and types of events evident in all three narratives. In all three areas where parties formed economies were based primarily on resource extraction (and some subsistence-based practices). Located significant distances away from the seat of power within their respective provinces (and within the country), local populations in these hinterlands experienced geographic and psychological separation from the heartland that fostered a sense of alienation, mistrust, and detachment. In each narrative, I highlighted a seminal event that appeared to prompt existing resentment towards a provincial government to flare into a searing anger that presented a clear opportunity for a potential regional protest party. In the case of the NLP, that began organizing on a small scale prior to a government decision to move a chip mill from Labrador to the island of Newfoundland in 1968-1969. However, this event spurred significant growth and local support for the party. Neither the NOHP or CBLP existed when the 1973 Ontario budget or 1980 MacEwan expulsion sparked a widespread negative reaction toward their respective provincial heartlands, yet each event propelled some regionalists toward forming partisan operations in the years that followed. The amount of time that passed between each of these formative events and a party's organizational zenith appears to be a key element in its electoral prospects. In short, as anger from these events dissipated over time, a party may have found it more difficult to sustain enthusiasm for its efforts.

Each narrative chapter also presented a nuanced portrait of key leadership figures within each party and attempted to demonstrate how the extent of their political savvy aided or hindered their party's growth. Burgess and MacEwan were strong communicators who also had good understandings of the need for strong organizations to support their efforts. Deibel, while an experienced community organizer, lacked political experience and made some unforced errors as he led efforts to build his party. Martin, while a strong organizer, was not a politician in the same mould as the others and struggled to serve a leadership role when he was better suited to be a constituency-focused MLA or protest figure working outside formal political institutions. Martin, Deibel and MacEwan all encountered significant

headwinds in trying to maintain interest, and particularly the financial health, of their respective parties. Without the ongoing presence of other significant events to rekindle the regionalist anger that was essential to feeding these parties' coffers and membership ranks, each operation folded under the weight of a political system which disadvantages smaller parties – particularly ones limited by geographic boundaries. Nevertheless, each narrative chapter attempted to highlight the legacies of these parties and sought to question whether their stories indicated they were short-lived novelties that ended in failure to be self-sustaining or more significant parts of a larger regionalist history in these areas.

Having offered a narrative evaluation of each individual party, in Chapters Five and Six I endeavoured to draw out some elements within these stories for a more detailed comparative analysis. Using a framing analysis, both an organizational structure and explanatory tool, in Chapter Five I explained how regionalists within a given area understood their problems and defined them in a way to engender support from a wider community. In all three areas, regionalists cited historical examples of exploitation of resources (natural and human) within a hinterland for the benefit of a heartland. Historicizing this moment, it becomes clear regionalist found currency in recent and/or contemporary decolonization movements and associated language. Framing exploitation as internal colonialism served as a potent tool to characterize the kinds of material conditions a community experienced and develop emotional reactions among populations to their position relative to a favoured and privileged outside group. Moreover, regionalists crafted messaging that encouraged people to identify as an alienated and neglected group that was denied access to and/or ignored by the metropole. Poor communication and transportation systems, particularly in Labrador and Northern Ontario, hindered internal and external networks. Finally, regionalists put forth the diversity argument – that people within an area were different from an outgroup and, as such, required special recognition, services or self-determination.

Although there appeared to be general agreement among regionalists about the nature and extent of the problems within an area, there was disagreement in terms of solutions that would be integral to region-making and region-sustaining. In Chapter Six, I examined the arguments in favour of (and against) forming regionally-based political parties to represent a region and respond to identified problems. Pro-party regionalists various argued that only a new dedicated partisan organization could offer a unified regional voice that would not be muted by competing regional interests within larger parties. They suggested that even if these party could only elect a limited number of MLAs or MPPs, in a minority parliament these representatives could potentially hold the balance of power and exert a disproportionate amount of influence. Even in a majority parliament, regionalists argued the presence of a regionally-based party could prevent “politics as usual” from taking place.

Opponents or critics of these parties pointed to several reasons why it would not be wise for a regional population to spend time, energy and money in such organizations. First, a limited population base in what was often an economically disadvantaged or depressed area would make funding new parties difficult. Second, although these parties formed during a time when traditional partisan loyalties were beginning to show evidence of waning, converting long-term partisans or habitual voters would still be a formidable challenge. Third, when surveying the potential leaders of these emerging parties, opponents and critics questioned their character, motives, and competency. They wondered whether a region should put its trust in the putative leaders of these operations based on their histories of disagreements within other parties, lack of political experience, or reputations as political mavericks. Fourth, each party was associated, to some degree, with a separatist platform or ideology. Although only the NOHP, which grew out of a New Province Committee, promoted the possibility of secession from an existing province in a sustained manner, all three parties were linked to Quebec separatists (or other separatist movements around the world) and characterized as destabilizing entities.

In sum, while some regionalists who supported these parties contended they could be effective vehicles to carry regional voices to centres of power and affect positive changes for communities, other regionalists (or outright opponents to regionalism) who disagreed with the party option employed rhetorical competition and/or arguments about the limits imposed by organizational and institutional considerations to dissuade potential party supporters from entertaining or accepting this option. In reviewing the individual narrative arcs of these parties and comparing their experiences in presenting and defending an argument for their existence, I would contend that assessing their relative success and failure is complex and in need of many provisos.

Success, Failure, and the Act of Pursuing Regionness

The four major leaders¹⁰⁹⁷ of the three political parties under investigation can be said to have succeeded and failed on different counts. Three of the four (Burgess, Martin, MacEwan) were elected or re-elected as provincial parliamentarians under their regional party banner – some of them with convincing margins of victory. Although their personal popularity as candidates may explain why they received some of the votes cast, they chose to run as partisans for political operations that explicitly promoted regional consciousness and identity; and, a plurality of voters in their ridings accepted and supported this identification, at least tacitly. These successes weren't definitive – Burgess was handily defeated after defecting to the Liberals, Martin could not stand for re-election under the NLP banner due to impending financial ruin, and MacEwan found the weight of carrying his party was unsustainable, preferring to return to Independent status before eventually joining the Liberal ranks. Deibel, who lost several municipal campaigns and was never elected provincially, also failed in his attempts to achieve access to formal political power in the Ontario Assembly.

¹⁰⁹⁷ The tenure and activity of the leaders of the NOHP following Ed Deibel was almost negligible and the information uncovered is not sufficient to offer significant thoughtful analysis.

But, although they were not elected, some party candidates made respectable showings in terms of ballots casts or the extent of the campaigns they managed, given the paucity of resources at their disposal. Conversely, parties nominated some candidates who were no more than a name on a ballot or were not able to nominate any candidate for a riding they would have been expected to contest during a general election or by-election.

Finally, the three parties under investigation all ceased operation less than 10 years after they formed, failing to achieve longevity and become an established presence in their respective provincial political systems. Nevertheless, the appearance of new or revived versions of the NLP (now simply called the Labrador Party) and the NOHP (initially revived by Deibel with its original name and now called the Northern Ontario Party) in the first decades of the new millennium suggest this lack of success was viewed by some proponents of regional partisan operations as only a failed first attempt. Perhaps at best, in view of their electoral records, they can be judged as achieving mixed results, rather than ignominious failure.

These regionalists found somewhat greater success in seeing certain policy proposals enacted by governments in their respective provinces or the introduction of or changes to certain political institutions, though their claim to effecting these changes is highly contested. However, the NLP's political agitation very likely contributed the pressure required to launch the Snowden Commission on Labrador. While there have been many critiques about the relative effectiveness of these inquiries¹⁰⁹⁸ and cynicism about governments using them as a means to avoid actually dealing with problem areas, their ability to compile useful information for political action and to inform and educate the public about important issues suggest they have the potential to create great change. Similarly, the NOHP's various campaigns likely contributed to provincial government decisions to launch a dedicated cabinet portfolio

¹⁰⁹⁸ See: Justice John H. Gomery, "The Pros and Cons of Commissions of Inquiry," *McGill Law Journal* 51, (2006), 783-798.

and eventually a department for Northern Affairs. Symbolically, at least, these creations ensured issues of concern that were a part of each party's agenda gained additional attention and prominence.

As movements or popular partisan organizations, the level of engagement they managed among members of the region they desired to represent is another way to evaluate their relative success or failure. Once again, the result is mixed with some notable achievements and notable failures. The NLP and CBLP both enjoyed strong levels of party membership for some periods during their existence, relative to the population of their respective regions. The NOHP did not achieve the same level of dedicated memberships as the other parties, although Diebel's petition campaigns were relatively successful. The NLP's party-based organizing activities, rallies, and membership meetings were well attended, and the CBLP's organizational efforts both during and following the 1984 election also resulted in some sustained engagement. Deibel, despite holding widely reported organizational meetings where the media outnumbered attendees, also drew interest from some dedicated volunteers. Long distances, poor communications and limited finances likely conspired to prevent these contacts from blossoming into more active members, at least in part.

Critically, the institutional, functional and practical drawbacks of mounting and perpetuating a substantive regional party made the entire endeavour more prone to failure than success. The similarities in terms of the narrative arc of these parties – an event sparks a protest, there is initial organizational energy and zeal, and then there is great difficulty sustaining an effective partisan infrastructure during the more mundane politics of the everyday process – would suggest that using these parties to assist in the project of region-making may not be a worthwhile investment of time, energy and money compared to some alternatives. The question thus becomes, why bother at all? The answers are many.

For Burgess and MacEwan, two established and elected parliamentarians who found themselves without a partisan structure to support their ongoing campaigns, these parties provided both an organizational heft and a political purpose with which to continue their careers. Yet, it would be completely cynical to suggest either of them became involved in these efforts solely for their own benefit. Each one had experienced regional frustrations within their previous party and witnessed these types of frustrations and tensions within their ridings and beyond. Burgess was both personally frustrated by Premier Joey Smallwood's actions and attitude toward his own political ambitions and by what those actions and attitudes toward Labrador meant to his community. MacEwan's long-standing battle with the NDP's "Halifax elite" was evidence of regional frustration and grievance within Nova Scotia on a smaller scale, and forming a regionally-centred party (even if it ultimately had grand provincial aspirations to replace the NDP) was seen as a preferable way to address those grievances. Deibel's initial anti-tax campaign provided him with an introduction to the world of political organizing, which he found immensely appealing. Additional campaigns opened his eyes to the regionally-based grievances that were commonplace within his community and in others like it; he assumed a role as a conduit that amplified the sentiments he heard on his travels gave him a personal sense of purpose.

Martin, who was the most reluctant of the four eventual leaders to run for office, conceived his regional party as more of a protest movement and less of a political party. As the only one of the four major leaders not to lead the party at its inception (rather he was a loyal organizer and party foot soldier), his example also sheds light on the motivations of some of the other people who supported these organizations. Why devote time and energy to a fledgling regional movement party? Although these parties attracted some people who were disenchanted with existing partisan groups or otherwise excluded from them, many supporters and sympathizers saw the creation of and participation in these regional movement parties as one way to effect change in terms of policy. The more optimistic of these people may have believed that attaining some form of political power through elected office was a

possible route to accomplishing this goal, but others saw their involvement as a method to publicize issues that concerned them and to act as a pressure group to effect change. In a formal party, they could claim an element of credibility, respectability, and legitimacy that may have been absent in some other forms of protest. As discussed in the framing analysis of regional projects, not all proponents of region necessarily agreed with this method to address grievances and effect change, and some critics argued that supporters of these parties would find more success focussing their efforts elsewhere. While this is certainly a reasonable argument, regional party supporters could convincingly answer that they did not need to limit themselves to one course of action or one expression of region. For example, Martin's work in creating a lasting symbol of regionness – the Labrador flag – was done concurrently with his partisan work yet promoted separately. Participation in a partisan organization did not preclude other social activities, cultural creations or economic activity that would also build and shape contested regional projects.

This act – participation – more than any singular successes or failures, should be the enduring legacy of these parties. They became vehicles with which to drive the project and process of region, whether actively through obtaining membership, organizing, or plotting policy and direction, or more passively by discussing their activities, policies, or even personalities. As vehicles, they were primarily functional creations, their design dictated by the needs of their creators and supporters and shaped by prevailing trends within a given historical context. To expand upon this metaphor, in politics as process, these vehicles shared a transportation network with other vehicles whose drivers may have had different destinations in mind, and who may have set up hazards or detours in a bid to control traffic congestion. When these parties as vehicles broke down or became obsolete in the face of newer models, their passengers were not necessarily stranded. They could hitch a ride on some other form of vehicle and attempt to influence its direction, again, with varying degrees of success or failure. Yet by accessing this roadway and participating in some respect as they promoted some aspects of region-

making, they were giving life to region as process. Focussing on one particular type of vehicle as a lens through which to examine region is therefore an immensely fruitful exercise when historicizing this concept – and the comparative method, while challenging and imperfect, does provide an additional degree of depth and confirmation of observations made.

At the time these parties were active, regionalists framed their particular regional projects using three major arguments to diagnose the problem: exploitation; alienation and neglect; and diversity from other communities. Rhetoric used within these arguments employed the idea of internal colonialism, and discourses of citizenship, fairness, equality, and distinct lived experience. When it came time to offer prognostic frames, the strategies to solve the problems of region differed and in terms of formal politics, a major division occurred among regionalists. Some viewed pan-provincial brokerage parties as viable vehicles for addressing these issues, while others concluded that a new regionally focused partisan operation was necessary (although other reasons also contributed to a decision to join either kind of party). Rhetorical devices and symbolic imagery were then employed in motivating these frames. Several key themes were reinforced: shared historic grievances, shared contemporary experiences, and notions of what could bind a regionally community into the future.

Participating in these framing activities brought the regional project to life. If, as Philippe De Lombaerde has argued, “regions are constructed and reconstructed through social practices and in discourse,”¹⁰⁹⁹ engaging in diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational framing activities involving notions of region was essential to a regional project’s vitality, currency, and relevance. Although the focus in this study was of the formal and conventional political process, it should be stressed that *using* region as a discursive tool in a variety of contexts is an inherently political act. The contributions regionalists made while participating in region as process and as project assisted in bringing notions of regionness to the

¹⁰⁹⁹ De Lombaerde et al., “The Problem of Comparison in Comparative Regionalism,” 6

fore among certain subjects who may have adopted this discursive cloak (or had it placed on them) when constituting identity.

As a limited identity, region co-existed with and/or was in competition with many other identities. The idea of “region as project” shares similarities with other imagined communities – notably nation – and regionalists used these imagined communities to discursively situate themselves and their projects. In this study, I have illustrated how certain regional projects have come to ‘know’ themselves by standing in contrast to ‘other’ imagined communities, particularly a province or the Canadian nation state. If these larger communities are figments of the imagination with proponents who have access to a more formal form of power, could we call regionalism within them largely using these larger communities them for the purpose of ‘Othering,’ – as *fragments of the imagination*? Such a hierarchical stratification of identities privileges state boundaries, of course. In the context of organized regional political parties operating within a formal and conventional political sphere, these borders *do* matter to the extent that they are defined in order to exercise and execute a specific kind of power. To make a claim on that power, without a radical extra-democratic tactic, requires this type of regionalist to acknowledge that power. However, as geographers have argued,¹¹⁰⁰ the more empirical characteristics of region tend to blur in transition zones that may or may not coincide with formal borders. Moreover, internal regional diversity and affinity to populations that may be situated across formal political borders also obscures the arbitrary lines that are used with the imaginings of community bound to a state structure. In short, borders and boundaries matter – to an extent. However, the fluid notion of region as a process and project make definitive pronouncements of territorial integrity and shared community identity suspect. While there may be some utility in privileging these imagined communities while engaging in political discourse that requires a significant degree of relational awareness, the regional

¹¹⁰⁰ Bone, *The Regional Geography of Canada*, 9.

projects advanced by regionalists in this study would not necessarily require the particular 'Other' they have identified to retain and promote their region. As previously mentioned, when examining region using the core-periphery or heartland-hinterland concepts, the constellation of relationships exists within moments of time and they need not be inextricably bound to one another.

Regionally focused protest parties were one method among many employed in the pursuit of regionness. Functionally these entities could be used for multiple purposes, but their symbolic structure and their contributions to discursively constructing region, are significant aspects of their legacies. Drawing upon historically articulated grievances (exploitation of natural and human resources, neglect in terms of sustainable development, and ignorance of material differences that may require flexible policies or alternative solutions), emerging grievances (poor tele-communications service that weakened cultural connection to the broader provincial or national community), or positive and unifying visions of regional community (for instance, the meaning behind elements of the Labrador flag) these parties offered messages that would filter through the public's consciousness and give the notion of region meaning. Their success can be understood in their ability to draw attention of both the public's imagination and their political rivals. Winning at the ballot box was less significant than their ability to win some concrete measures, such as the Ministry of Northern Affairs in Ontario, and a Royal Commission and lasting recognition of the needs and distinctiveness of Labrador.

The "region as project" promoted by some regional movement entrepreneurs was, much like regional parties themselves, unsustainable in a singular form. The dynamism of region, the perpetually occurring meaning contests that inform understanding of a region at any point in history, and the changing needs of regional project supporters dictates that the process of region-making, not the ultimate destination, must be the site of inquiry if we are to best understand the concept.

During this general period of Canadian political history, debates about identity were significant and pervasive. A wave of nationalism among many English-speaking Canadians outside of Quebec during the centennial year coincided with a Quebecois nationalism inside the province that challenged ideas of country and nation for many people. An official policy of multiculturalism opened a debate about hyphenated Canadians and what exactly bound Canadians together outside of a shared government. Burgeoning Indigenous activism, including a shift in terminology to “First Nations” variously reported to have begun in the 1970s or early 1980s, brought additional dimensions to discussions of nationalism. Regionalism within Canada, which was often conceived in relational terms to the nation or other regions, was not immune to these larger discussions, or a global context of decolonialization initiatives.

Within this climate – where civic engagement was high, the political party system remained strong despite a growing interest in extra-partisan activity among youth especially, and modern communication both informed communities about each other and underscored disparity within them – the growth of conditions conducive to the formation of regional parties makes their development more understandable and explainable. By examining appeals to regional grievances, the rhetoric and tactics used to sustain these appeals and derive support, and the motivations of party workers and supporters, a study of these parties can therefore illuminate why these nominally marginal political operations would be such a rich source to historicize regional projects during these times and, perhaps as such, to add contours to larger studies of nation or other limited identities within the Canadian context.

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