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Foreword

This history is really a composite work of a number of summer students who were employed by Provincial Employment grants over a number of summers. Sonja Allaby, Bruce Grant, Anne MacRae and the final three summers, Ian MacLeod, who put the research and written materials in their final form, and to whom credit is given for the final authorship.

The history has been compiled for the most part from original records and verbatim accounts of Annual Meetings that were found in cardboard boxes in a back store room when I came under the employ of the Federation in 1976. The unique contribution of secretaries who, without tape recorders or modern technology, were able to provide such detailed accounts of speeches and documents of the annual meetings, needs to be acknowledged. They are also part of the authorship of this history. Their names and dates of service, together with the various presidents are printed in the introduction.

An index has been prepared as an appendix which may be helpful in locating names, places and events that played an important part in shaping the history of NSFA in its first 80 years.

*Lester Settle, Secretary Manager
October 1976 to present*

Past Presidents (1895-1975)

1895-97	John B. MacKay, Stellarton, Pictou County
1898	S.C. Parker, Berwick, Kings County
1899	Col. W.M. Blair, Truro, Colchester County
1900	Win. Corning, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County
1901	Geo. C. Laurence, Port Hastings, Inverness County
1902	John Donaldson, Port Williams, Kings County
1903	Samuel J. Moore, Shubenacadie, Hants County
1904	Col. Shippy Spurr, Melvern Square, Annapolis County
1905	Hugh Fraser, Elmsdale, Halifax County
1906	F. Miles Chipman, Nictaux West, Annapolis County
1907	C. Howard Black, Amherst, Cumberland County
1908	E.J. Elliott, Clarence, Annapolis County
1909	A.E. McMahon, Aylesford, Kings County
1910	Howard S. Kennedy, Stellarton, Pictou County
1911	W.H. Woodworth, Berwick, Kings County
1912	R.M Jackson, North Sydney, Cape Breton County
1913	H.W. Corning, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County
1914	Win. O'Brien, Windsor Forks, Hants County
1915	A.S. MacMillian (Hon.), Antigonish County
1916	Ralph J. Messenger, Bridgetown, Annapolis County
1917	Win. Murray, Union Centre, Pictou County
1918	Samuel Freeman, Amherst, Cumberland County
1919	D.R. Nicholson, Coxheath, Cape Breton County
1920	J. Howe Cox, Cambridge Station, Kings County
1921	Johnson Cameron, Stellarton, Pictou County
1922	Walter L. Churchill, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County
1923	Rev. R.L. MacDonald, St. Peters, Richmond County
1924	A. Fitzrandolph, Bridgetown, Annapolis County
1925	Jacob H. Andrews, Coxheath, Cape Breton County
1926	Geo. L. Cox, Cambridge Station, Kings County
1927	W.A. Fillmore, Amherst, Cumberland County
1928	Hary J. Eadie, Antigonish, Antigonish County
1929	Wallace L. Cook, Salem, Yarmouth County
1930	H.A. Moffatt, Ashby
1931	V.P. Leonard, Clarence, Annapolis County
1932	Lorne S. Fisher, Shinimicas, Cumberland County
1933	Harvey Chisholm, Bear River, Digby County
1934	J. Webster Allen, North Sydney, Cape Breton County

The History of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

1935	E.G. Campbell, Stewiacke, Colchester County
1936	R.J. Smeltzer, Mahone Bay, Lunenburg County
1937	J. Howard MacKichan, Cleveland, Inverness County
1938	J. Archie Moore, Shinimicas, Cumberland County
1939	A.M. Gates, Kemptville, Queens County
1940	W.W. Dyer, Antigonish, Antigonish County
1941	W.G. Oulton, Windsor, Hants County
1942	R.L. Moore, Lawrencetown, Annapolis County
1943	Charles Munn, Leitches Creek Station, Cape Breton County
1944	Archibald Cox, Princeport, Colchester County
1945	R. MeL. Taylor, Barss Corner, Lunenburg County
1946	S.M. Ward, Kingston, Kings County
1947	Leo Cormier, Cheticamp, Inverness County
1948	Henry Vaughn, Windsor Forks, Hants County
1949	Hector Hill, Truro, Colchester County
1950	Albert Whittaker, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County
1951	T.B. Thompson, Antigonish, Antigonish County
1952	W.S. MacLean, Eureka, Pictou County
1953	A.H. Duncanson, Gaspereau, Kings County
1954	Ralph MacKichan, Cleveland, Inverness County
1955	Stanton Sanford, Summerville, Rants County
1956	Arthur Brosha, Heatherton, Antigonish County
1957	J.M Johnson, Abercrombie, Pictou County
1958	Ross Hill, Onslow, Colchester County
1959	Murray Ritcey, Cole Harbour, Halifax County
1960	Gordon W. Woodman, Grand Pre, Kings County
1961	Gerard Chiasson, Margaree Forks, Inverness County
1962	Raeburn F. McCunn, River Phillip, Cumberland County
1963	Fraser 3. MacDonald, Green Hill, Pictou County
1964	Frank Cox, Princeport, Colchester County
1965	Paul Bishop, Somerset, Kings County
1966	A.E. Maberley, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County
1967	Eric Harvey, Newport, Hants County
1968	Claude Elliott, Bridgetown, Annapolis County
1969	Howard Fuller, Jlortonville, Kings County
1970	Robert Rhodenizer, Barss Corner, Lunenburg County
1971	Robert Rhodenizer, Barss Corner, Lunenburg County
1972	Kenneth Streach, Elderbank, Halifax County
1973	Arthur Porter, Fort Belcher, Colchester County
1974	Martin Vissers, Bridgewater, Lunenburg County
1975	Ted Mattie, Afton, Antigonish County

Past Secretaries (1895-1974)

1895	Paul C. Black, Falmouth, Rants County
1899	Charles R.B. Ryan, Durham, Pictou County
1925	John M. Trueman, Truro, Colchester County
1926	Harry H. Brown, Pugwash, Cumberland County
1939	W. Saxby Blair, Kentville, Kings County
1944	C.T. Fitzrandolph, Bridgetown, Annapolis County
1945	Nadine Archibald, Truro, Colchester County
1969	Marinus Van de Sande, Truro, Colchester County (Organizational Manager)
1971	Marinus Van de Sande, Truro, Colchester County (1st Secretary Manager)
1971	Earl Maberley, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County (Assistant Secretary Manager)
1973	Allan Sorflaten, Kingston, Kings County (Secretary Manager)
1974	Earl Maberley, Yarmouth, Yarmouth County (Secretary Manager)
1974	Donna Langille, Truro, Colchester County (Assistant Secretary Manager)

Chapter One: Beginnings

The earliest records of farmer's organizations in Nova Scotia are understandably murky, but it appears the colony's first agricultural society was formed in Horton, Kings County, in late 1789. Known originally as the Colonial Societas, its founders were mainly New England immigrants who had settled in Nova Scotia after the expulsion of the Acadians. The broad activities of this society included the importation of seed and livestock, rudimentary co-operative marketing, experimentation and even the establishment of Sunday schools and a circulating library. In 1805 it changed its name to the Kings County Central Agricultural Society.

Coincidentally, the earliest signs of agricultural administration in the colony also appeared in late 1789. In November of that year a group of Halifax gentlemen, led by Bishop Charles Inglis, invited about forty other men from all across Nova Scotia to convene in the capital and form the first "Central Board of Agriculture," a benevolent body to encourage agriculture improvement. Each of the new directors of this board was supposed to have organized a branch society in his home district, but existing records indicate that just three groups - in Truro, Newport, and Windsor - were ever started, and only the latter, headed by Dr. William Cochran of Kings College, withstood the test of time. The Windsor and King's societies constituted the only farm organization in the colony until a third group surfaced in West River, Pictou County, in 1817.

The real popularization of the agricultural society in Nova Scotia did not begin until well into the 19th century and it can be almost entirely attributed to one man. In the fall of 1818, an unknown writer calling himself "Agricola" began contributing a series of articles on new farming methods to the Acadian Recorder, a progressive newspaper. "Agricola" was hardly the first Nova Scotian to promote agriculture, but this emergence was perfectly timed to attract attention. A few years earlier, Nova Scotians had been riding a wave of artificial prosperity induced by the war of 1812 and the Napoleonic Wars. Intoxicated by easy money and expanding markets, many farmers had developed extravagant habits, collected large debts and in some cases, even became convinced that farming was a degrading profession. They could not have been more poorly prepared when the inevitable depression arrived in 1815, accompanied by miserable weather and crop failures. By 1818 Nova Scotians of all callings were more than ready for the comforting message of "Agricola," who declared that their future prosperity could be ensured simply through the introduction of modern farming techniques. Before long, the topic on everyone's mind was agriculture and the question on everyone's lips was: "Who is 'Agricola?'"

The mystery man did not leave his fans in suspense too long. In 1 April, 1819, he revealed that he was in fact John Young, a forty- five year old Scottish merchant whose zealous interest in agriculture had been kindled only after his arrival in Halifax four years earlier. With the keen support of Lord Dalhousie, the colony's governor, this unlikely celebrity soon convinced the colonial legislation to fund a revived Central Board of Agriculture with himself as its Secretary. This board was

given four main functions, all of which it fulfilled to some degrees. First, it was to correspond with agricultural societies in order to pass on information gathered from foreign sources and become acquainted with local conditions; secondly, it was to publish and distribute relevant information; thirdly, it was to offer “judicious premiums from time to time for agricultural improvement”; and finally it was to import and distribute high- quality seeds, livestock, and machinery. Implicitly, the board had another task - that of encouraging the growth and extension of agricultural societies. Between 1819 and 1825 no less than twenty-seven new societies were born.

The ascendancy of Young and his Board of Agriculture proved to be fleeting, however. With the departure of Dalhousie in 1820 and the natural return of prosperity, the fashionability of agriculture quickly waned. The number of subscriptions paid to the board by Haligonians dropped from 235 in 1819 to 79 in 1824. The farmers, too, lost interest in the new learning as soon as it became clear that the old methods were again sufficient to provide them with a decent living. There was still enough unused land in Nova Scotia to allow even the most ambitious farmer to increase his returns simply by expanding, rather than by practicing more intensive cultivation.

Young, moreover, seems to have helped speed his own downfall. The barely concealed delight he displayed over his meteoric rise to power antagonized more established politicians. Not content to serve merely as secretary of the agriculture board in 1820 he arrogantly usurped the position of treasurer from William Lawson, a frequent critic and in the process awarded himself a comfortable double salary. Then he waged three acrimonious contests for a seat in the legislature before finally winning election in 1825. And to some it was not Young’s ambition, but his origins that made him suspect. All but six of the societies that operated during his term as secretary were situated west of the Halifax-Windsor line, where the Scots predominated. The former Yankees of Eastern Nova Scotia were never especially enthused by Young or his ideas. In 1826 the House of Assembly voted 19-12 against renewing the Board’s charter.

Most of the agricultural societies soon followed the second Board of Agriculture into oblivion. In fact, the only societies that survived into the 1830’s were the two that had been created by the farmers themselves in Horton and West River. But the demise of Young’s board did not mean the end of government interest of agriculture. In 1829 the House of Assembly created a standing committee on agriculture, which over the next few years recommended several measures to improve farming conditions in the 2 colony. During the early thirties this committee’s suggestions were sometimes voted down by opposing interests in the House of Assembly and the almost exclusively mercantile Legislative Council, but in 1837 the agriculturalist forces gained control of the lower house and aid to farmers immediately increased.

This turn of events sparked another revival of local agricultural organization, and by 1840 twelve new societies had sprung up. It also inspired the agriculture committee to begin agitating for the return of the Central Board of Agriculture - a proposal which received criticism from many quarters, most notably the overwhelming majority of the new societies, which resented the prospect

of being placed under the dictates of the Halifax-based body.. In 1841 the legislature reached a compromise solution. A new eleven-man board, with four members from outside Halifax, was created, but given little authority over the societies. The board could again order livestock, but only at the specific request of a society. Otherwise, it was to restrict itself to distributing information and fostering the growth of societies, and in this latter objective it seemed to be quite successful. Before the end of its first year, twenty-nine societies were operating, seven of which had branches of their own. However, this support may have been broader than it was deep. Despite the enthusiasm of their leaders, many societies were hampered in their mission by the average farmer's suspicion of innovation and stubborn individualism.. That year (1842) the legislature began making separate grants of 500 pounds to the new board and 1275 pounds to the societies, though each society had to collect ten pounds on its own to be eligible for funding.

Over the next few years the powers of the agricultural societies grew at the expense of the central board. In 1845 a new Agriculture Act stripped the board of its authority to import livestock and grant premiums, cut its grant sharply, and gave the societies the right to incorporate - all of which served to encourage societies to bypass the board and deal directly with the legislature. The same year the board was further debilitated by an unwanted incursion of partisan politics.. Governor Falkland, an unabashed Tory sympathizer, pressured the board's chairman, James McNab, and four other members into resigning and replaced them with Tory leader J.W. Johnstone and three of his supporters (one seat was left vacant). Then to add insult to injury the agricultural committee began to criticize the board heavily for the manner in which it spent its now meagre grant.

This third board of agriculture managed to survive for several more years - largely because of the tacit approval of Joseph Howe's Reformers and the active support of Lieutenant-Governor LaMarchant, who arrived in 1852 - but its actual accomplishments were minimal. In contrast, the societies were experiencing a peak period of activity. Their numbers rose steadily, reaching fifty in 1858 and the attention paid to livestock improvement and the distribution of seeds and implements was unprecedented. In the Annapolis Valley, some societies were beginning to notice the great potential of fruit growing - a development which led a few 3 years later to the formation of the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association, the province's first commodity-based organization.. In

1858, however, a new Tory government, preaching economy, terminated the board and reduced the grant to agricultural societies from fifty to thirty pounds per county - with predictable results. The following year, the number of societies reporting back plummeted by one-third, from fifty to thirty- three. Realizing the need for a change of policy, but not wishing to reverse themselves entirely, the Tories immediately began casting around for some convenient person to fill the job of supervising the societies. Eventually, they snagged the new Superintendent of Education, Rev. Dr. Alexander Forrester, but no sooner had he accepted the task than he started publicly campaigning for the restoration of the board of agriculture. After five years the government finally

complied with his repeated requests.

The fourth version of the Central Board of Agriculture was given much broader responsibilities than its immediate predecessor. Among other duties, it was instructed to form new societies and arouse old ones, to receive annual reports from societies and supervise their compliance with regulations, to publish a journal, and, once again, to import livestock, grains and seeds. The government granted the board a hefty 2000 pound budget and hired Dr. George Lawson, Dalhousie University's Professor of Chemistry, as its secretary. Under the chairmanship of Alexander MacFarlane, a Conservative M.L.A..., this board fulfilled most of its functions remarkably well.. However, one of the most important measures it approved - a new scheme for paying grants to the societies - was seriously flawed. Each society collecting at least \$40 of its own was now to receive double this amount from government, as long as this did not exceed \$200 per society or \$240 per county. Though at first glance it appeared generous, this plan had the unintended effect of penalizing large societies in active counties.

During the 1870's further changes were made to the board. In 1871 the government expanded it from fourteen to twenty-one members to allow greater representation from rural districts.. But this experiment failed miserably, mainly because members from outlying areas could not meet together often enough to get anything done. Two years later the government slashed the board's size by two-thirds and installed its own permanent representative on it. Chaired by Col. J.W... Laurie and staffed mostly by experts, this sixth and final version of the board directed the societies toward livestock improvement and presided over record growth of local organization. Between 1873 and 1884 the number of agricultural societies increased from 61 to a peak figure of 92 with a total membership of over 500.. The new board also corrected the funding system, raising the total grant per county to \$400 and awarding each society two dollars for everyone it collected, up to a maximum of \$250. Ironically, the very success of this last board probably hastened its death. In 1885 the provincial government finally replaced the Central Board with 4 a proper Department of Agriculture, headed by a Secretary accountable to, but not part of, cabinet. Dr. Lawson was appointed the first Secretary of Agriculture..

The eighteen-seventies and eighties also saw the brief emergence of the first widespread, independent farmers' movement in Nova Scotia - the Order of the Patrons of Industry, or the Grange, as it was more commonly known. The Grange was the brain-child of Oliver Judson Kelleam, an employee of the United States Federal Bureau of Agriculture who was concerned about the state of the farm industry in his country following the Civil War. On December 4, 1867, he and six colleagues met in Washington, D.C. to form the National Grange, the governing body of what they hoped would eventually be a nationwide organization. From this humble starting point the movement spread like wildfire throughout the States, fueled by strong discontent among farmers at the power of the railway interests, banks and distributors. Though hardly radical, the Grange did embrace a philosophy of complete non-sectarianism, non-partisanship and, most interestingly, sexual equality. Rural women were encouraged to join the granges as full and equal mem-

bers, and their role on the farm was recognized as just as significant as that of men. By 1875, twenty-two thousand branches, or subordinate granges, were operating in forty-one states of the Union.. The movement reached its apex in Nebraska, where there was one grange for every ninety-six persons.

The Grange entered the new Dominion of Canada by way of Vermont... Eben Thompson, a twenty-four old graduate of Dartmouth College, was spreading the grange' s message in that state when he heard reports of interests from the English-speaking farmers of the nearby Eastern Townships of Quebec. From there Thompson traveled to Southern Ontario, where the movement really took hold.. In fact, so rapid was its progress there that a dilemma soon arose about how best to organize self-government.. Should the Ontario grangers form themselves into a provincial grange, along the same lines as a state grange and under the authority of the National Grange in Washington? Or should Canadian grangers as a whole establish their own, fully independent, national body? On June 2, 1874, at London, Ontario, representatives of twenty-five Ontario granges chose the latter course, and the Dominion Grange was born. Initially, the Americans were less than pleased with this development and, though they made no attempt at subversion, relations between the two national granges were severely strained for two or three years before an understanding was reached.. At its first true convention, on September 22-25, 1874, in Toronto, the Dominion Grange adopted a statement of principles which, following the Americans' example, emphasized rural education and advocated only moderate economic reform.

Having set themselves up as a national body, the Ontario grangers now had to live up to their pretensions.. In 1875 William Clark of Caledon, Ontario was delegated to carry the movement to Eastern Canada.. After passing through New Brunswick, he met Colonel William M. Blair, in Onslow, and the two founded Acadia 5 Grange. During 1878 and 1879, no less than forty-one new subordinate granges were started in the province, largely through the efforts of E.H.) Hilborn, another leading Ontario granger, and George Creed of Hants County. Then, in 1880, mainly at the impetus of Colonel Blair (who would subsequently serve as Master of the Dominion Grange), the national organization gave the Eastern Granges a measure of "home rule" by permitting them to form a Maritime Provincial Grange. Although several granges were by then organized in New Brunswick, and one in Prince Edward Island, the real strength of this new body lay in Nova Scotia.)

Unfortunately, virtually no records exist of the activities of the short-lived Maritime grange. It is known that in 1884 eastern grangers succeeded in convincing the Grange Wholesale Supply Co.), a large co-operative store set up in Toronto in 1879, to open a branch in Halifax, but this enterprise was never healthy and it folded within three years. The truth was that in spite of its rapid initial growth the grange movement in Nova Scotia was doomed even before it began... By 1880 the Dominion Grange had already peaked and was settling into a decline, due primarily to over extension.. Between 1879 and 1884 total dominion membership dropped from 31,000 to just 12,500 and in another ten years its adherents could be counted in the hundreds.. The Mari-

time grange is reported to have still been operational as late as 1886, but by the mid-nineties it had slipped out of sight completely.

Just as the Grange was fading away, however, another attempt at province-wide organization, though much narrower in scope, was starting to emerge. In 1884 a certain Rev. MacDonald, as Anglican minister from Bayfield, founded the Nova Scotia Farmers and Dairymen's Association to help promote better dairying in the province. Several farm leaders of the future, as well as the already distinguished Colonel Blair, were charter members of the Association but, apart from its known support for the creation of the Dominion Dairying Commission in 1889, almost none of its accomplishments or policies has been preserved for posterity.) This may be no particularly great loss, though, for the Farmers and Dairymen's Association was most significant not for its own achievements, but for the part it played in the foundation of a much more lasting and important organization- the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association.

The Nova Scotia Farmer's Association was first conceived, oddly enough, not in a rural town hall or in the kitchen of a farmhouse, but in the offices of Dalhousie University.) One day during the winter of 1894-95 Dr. Lawson and Prof.) H.W. Smith, principal of the small agricultural school at the Normal College in Truro, were having an informal chat about the general state of agricultural conditions in the province.) Towards the end of the discussion Lawson asked Smith to give some thought, on the basis of his wide experience within and without the province, as to how the Nova Scotia government could best assist farmers.. A short time later Smith returned and told Lawson that after careful consideration he had concluded that the government would do well to fund an annual meeting of representative farmers chosen from the agricultural societies. The suggestion so enthused Lawson that he took Smith straight over to Premier W.S. Fielding's office to repeat the idea. According to one account, Premier Fielding thumped his desk in excitement upon hearing Smith's remarks and immediately pledged \$1000 to such an organization. (The contribution is an established fact, the reported reaction may only have been fanciful story-telling). The premier then instructed Smith to go home and draft a rough constitution for the planned association.

Shortly after these events unfolded, the premier received a three-man delegation from the Farmers and Dairymen's Association. Colonial Blair, J.R. Starr of Starr's Point and Paul C. Black of Falmouth (the association's Secretary-Treasurer) had come to present a proposal that the government establish a network of country farmers' associations throughout the province, from which delegates could be selected to participate in a provincial convention. The group's vision of county associations was a bit ahead of its time, but the rest of its recommendations sounded to Fielding like evidence of popular support for Smith's as yet unannounced scheme. When Fielding revealed his government's plan to the association officials they heartily endorsed it, saying it was far better than any concessions they had expected to obtain. With their full approval, Fielding scheduled the founding convention of the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association to coincide with the next annual meeting of the Farmers and Dairymen's Association, set for July, 3-4th, 1895, in Antigonish. In the meantime, however, Fielding was not content to let the matter rest. On March

11, he personally introduced a bill to incorporate the still unorganized association. Completely bypassing the legislature's agricultural committee, Fielding won swift and smooth approval for the legislation. In only nine days it received first, second and third readings in the lower house, passed the Legislative Council and was given royal assent.

The government went out of its way to ensure the success of the NSFA's organizing convention, even going so far as to make arrangements with the railways to provide discounts to farmers traveling to the meeting. The International and Intercolonial lines both agreed to offer reduced rates to anyone carrying a special delegate certificate, while the Dominion Atlantic Railways promised free rides for all participants returning from the meeting if seventy-five or more delegates paid first-class fares for the trip out. The Farmers and Dairy-men's Association took up the entire first session at the Antigonish Court House sorting out its unfinished business, but by supertime its members had voted to merge with the new Farmer's Association. At eight o'clock, with Dr. Lawson as temporary chairman and Paul Black as temporary secretary, the NSFA took over. Lawson offered a brief explanation of the new act of incorporation, then turned the meeting over to the premier, who gave a memorable address on the purpose of the new association. Fielding assured his listeners the NSFA would not be a government-controlled body. The presence of government officials at the meeting was only 7 meant to ensure the best cooperation between the two, he said. The chief objective of the NSFA was to be, in his words, "the holding of a farmers' parliament at least once a year, so that farmers might have a suitable opportunity of bringing their views before the government and the people, formulating their grievances, suggesting remedial measures, and giving and receiving information bearing upon farming operations."

The evening session of July 3 ended with a rather philosophical address from K..B. Black of Amherst, which, though it may have been intended as a benediction for the old Farmers and Dairy-men's Association, served just as aptly as an introduction for the new NSFA. "Fools think any kind of base material will do for a successful farmer," he said. "Thoughtful, practical men know better. Farmers learn to respect yourselves and to glory in your calling. You will find scope for the exercise of your best and most matured powers on the farm. You are engaged in a many sided occupation." According to Black, there were four ways farmers could guarantee themselves success: cultivation of the mind, thoroughness in all things, honesty and truthfulness and the practice of economy and industry. Choosing a good wife, he added, was also a big help.

The following morning the report of the Committee on credentials unexpectedly caused a brief flurry of debate. Hugh Munro of Earltown objected to the fact that all the members of the Farmers and Dairy-men's Association had been given the same voting privileges as the agricultural society representatives. The premier, however, said this was completely in accordance with the act, and several delegates rose after him to defend the old associations' standing.. In all, the committee declared there were fifty-seven voting delegates present: thirty-four from the societies, two from the Fruit Growers Association and twenty-one from the Farmers' and Dairy-men's Association.

Only two counties, Shelburne and Queens, went unrepresented..

Next, the five-man Committee on By-Laws, chosen the previous night, presented to the convention a draft constitution based rather heavily on outline provided by the government. First, and most importantly, this draft articulated the three main objects of the Farmers Association: “To enable the farmers to confer together with a view to united action in matters connected with their profession...To afford an opportunity of bringing before all those engaged in rural industries any improvements and discoveries useful for introduction and practice in the province...(and) To secure eminent and practical agriculturalists at meetings of the association and deliver addresses in the various sections of the province.” These principles may have seemed harmless, and even a little vague, but in the coming years their interpretation, and particularly their relative weight, would become the subject of much controversy, the resolution of which would determine the future course of the new association.

The NSFA’s membership qualifications were designed to emphasize its representative nature while not excluding anyone with expertise or particularly great interest. By far the majority of delegates to annual meetings were to come from the agricultural societies each would be entitled to send one. In addition, any other recognized provincial farm organization - such as Fruit Growers’ and Poultrymen’s Associations - could send two delegates to speak for its special interests. And, for anyone not covered by the above categories, yearly and life-time memberships were available for fifty cents and five dollars respectively. On his return, each society delegate would receive from his home society his full traveling expenses plus two dollars a day, up to a maximum of twenty-five dollars. The society would then be refunded to half this amount by the Association.

The officers of the NSFA would consist of a president, two vice- presidents, five directors (to be chosen from various parts of the province), two auditors and a Secretary-Treasurer. All would be elected annually by the membership, save the Secretary- Treasurer, who was to be appointed by the executive and paid an unfixed salary. The president, vice-presidents, directors, secretary-treasurer and provincial Secretary of Agriculture (ex officio) would constitute the Managing Committee, or executive, of the association would have all their working expenses fully remitted.

After duly approving their constitution and by-laws, the delegates turned to the election of the NSFA’s first slate of officials. The results of this vote showed just how much the new association was indebted to the old Farmers and Dairymen’s Association. The president, first vice-president and four out of five of the original directors all came from the old organization, and later that evening, after the general convention had adjourned, Paul C. Black was formally installed as the NSFA’s first Secretary-Treasurer. Over the next twenty years several more one-time Farmers and Dairymen’s Association members would fill the chair of NSFA President.

The birth of the Nova Scotia Farmers’ Association was quick and unspectacular, but it was not

insignificant. The NSFA was, in fact, the junction of the two main trends of agricultural organization in Nova Scotia: government sponsorship, as represented by the whole history of the agricultural societies; and the “grass roots” movement, as typified by the Grange experiment, the Farmers and Dairymen’s Association and, to a lesser extent, the Fruit Growers Association. Of the two, it must be admitted that the Farmers’ Association was more a product of the former than the latter. The Fielding government not only served as a parent but also as a mid-wife to the new child. However, the government’s task would have been far trickier had it not been able to rely on the popular support of the leaders of the Farmers and Dairymen’ s Association, who were committed to the principle of independent association and action. In the decades to come, the tension of this relationship between organized farmers and government (itself often subdivided into clashing factions of elected officials and professional bureaucrats) would be the single most important factor shaping the destiny of the 9 NSFA. When they co-operated the two sides would perform some great deeds. When they conflicted little of value would generally ensue. But either way, even after eventually severing all formal ties, the two would never be able to ignore one another.

Chapter Two: A Farmers' Parliament (1896-1915)

With the formalities of organization now behind it, the Nova Scotia Farmer's Association got down to business at a special convention in Kentville on January 21 and the 22nd, 1896. One of the first matters considered by the new association was the problem of poor judging at exhibitions. According to William Young, one of the NSFA first directors, the choice of judges for local fairs was often ludicrous. Stories of a farmer with no prior knowledge of seamanship judging model ships and of a first prize for beer and ale being awarded to a bottle of coloured water were neither unfamiliar nor unique. Young argued that the province's exhibitions would not be taken seriously until better qualified and more discriminating judges were selected. "(The) method in which prizes are awarded is the soul of an exhibition," he said. "For if the judges inspired confidence the awarded prize list at our exhibitions would be a chart for the guidance of farmers. It would be to them that the compass is to the mariner; what the law is to be the lawyer in the practice of his profession." But, he added, better judging alone would not make the fairs compasses"; the flawed nature of the prize lists themselves would also have to be corrected. Young said that in their current form the prize lists did not encourage excellence in the proper areas. For instance, the lists of beef classes did not favour the short horn, even though it was the most practical breed for the Maritimes. Later in the meeting, in an effort to bring some consistency to adjudication, the members passed a motion recommending the adoption of the "Ontario" scoring system at all the province's fairs.

The debates on fairs culminated with an executivesponsored resolution calling for the establishment of an annual provincial exhibition in Halifax. Aside from a couple of previous failed attempts at provincial fairs, only county and district exhibitions had been held in Nova Scotia until this time. But even though the provincial government and the city of Halifax had agreed to split the \$100,000 cost of construction, many farmers at the meeting opposed the whole idea, saying it would simply be a waste of time, effort and money. "I find now, from residing in the country with the farmers, that they say they have no chance at these exhibitions," Peter Innes of Coldbrook said. "What ordinary farmer is there among us who can leave his farm for a week and go down to Halifax, and, even if successful, get one half of his expenses back in prizes?" The proposed location of the fair was particularly unpopular. One member reminded his colleagues that two previous exhibitions in Halifax had flopped. Proponents - mostly executive members and representatives of Halifax countered by pointing out that many smaller exhibitions were also failures. One major annual event run along the same lines as the larger Upper Canadian fairs would, they contended, stand a far greater chance of success. In the end, the opposition wilted and a resolution asking that a site for the fair be found in Halifax passed easily. The first provincial exhibition was held in 1897. On another issue the delegates showed themselves to be thinking far ahead of their time. Mayor William Clark of Dartmouth presented an address on the advantages of building a central cold storage plant in Halifax. This type of facility, Clark argued, would make possible the export of perishable goods and, as a result, encourage increased production. He also felt

it would facilitate greater market regulation for such products as butter and cheese, meaning higher prices at home and abroad. The membership responded by calling on the government to build such a plant, but the proposal would remain on the drawing board for decades.

The association held a few special sessions that summer at various spots in Inverness County, but its first “regular annual meeting” didn’t take place until January 27-29, 1897. Attracting between sixty and seventy delegates to Middleton, this meeting heard presentations on such diverse topics as “The Care and Application of Farmyard Manure,” “Fodder Plants,” and “How to Make the Farm Pay.” But ultimately the most significant paper delivered was one by Peter Innes posing the question: are our farmers ready for joint stock enterprise? “Co-operation, as an effective factor in social and industrial economics, is a distinctively and strikingly suggestive modern development, dating from 1844 in England and from 1849 in Germany,” said Innes. “Its growth, extension and success have been steady and marked, and, in one or all of its various forms, it has attained a firm foothold amongst all civilized peoples.” Innes identified three main types of co-operation - co-operation for the purchase and distribution of articles of consumption, co-operation for the production of commodities and cooperation for mutual borrowing and lending. Yet despite its proven success in Europe and other parts of North America, Innes felt co-operation could not flourish in Nova Scotia until the province’s farmers developed a sense of “social efficiency . “I am afraid we are somewhat lacking in the essential feature of mutual cohesiveness , and that we do not always stand as loyally, honestly and honorably by one another as could be desired,” he said. “In short, are we not inclined to be suspicious of one another? And to be, as it were, on the qui vive to see that our neighbor does not get surreptitiously ahead of us? Are we not rather constitutionally slow to move, and when any new enterprise is afoot is it not rather a weakness of ours to stand around, looking on and adversely criticizing it, rather than putting our hands in our pockets and our shoulders to the wheel to help it along?” Innes felt the Nova Scotia apple industry represented the best opportunity for introducing co-operative enterprise to the province. He saw a great deal of merit in a proposed co-op apple shipping company, saying it would reduce transportation charges, eliminate middlemen and rationalize management. Not everyone agreed, though. John Donaldson of Port Williams argued that middlemen freed farmers from the costs and responsibilities of transport. But he was overruled by the majority of delegates, who called on the provincial government to incorporate the apple company. Eleven years later the government finally passed an act allowing farmers to organize co-operatively, and the formation of several Annapolis Valley Fruit companies soon followed.

But even as the 1897 meeting was convening, events were unfolding in Halifax that threatened the very existence of the fledgling Farmers’ Association. Shortly after the delegates headed home from Middleton, the new premier, George Murray, summoned NSFA President S.C. Parker and Vice-President, J.R. Star to his Halifax office, and bluntly asked the two to explain why the association should not have his grant cut off. Parker and Starr did their best to defend the NSFA, reminding the premier of the role it played in launching the provincial exhibition, but Murray left them with no assurances that government support would continue. Not surprisingly, the govern-

ment also turned down a request that each agricultural society be granted \$25.00 to cover the traveling expenses of delegates attending the next annual meeting. The association and societies ended up footing the bill themselves.

There were two reasons for the government's sudden change of heart. First, there was a widespread feeling among farmers and legislators alike that too much of the NSFA's funding was being expended by the executive. The association had operated for eighteen months before holding its first official annual meeting, and during that time the executive had had almost exclusive access to the government grant. Second, and more importantly, the government had become very wary of the possibility of the association's assuming any sort of independent legislative function. Former Premier W.S. Feuding had originally promised that the NSFA would be a true "farmers' parliament," free of all government interference. But by as early as October of 1896 the Murray's administration was warning that payments would be withheld unless the association's intentions were first discussed with the government. The new premier, fearing that the NSFA would become the center of opposition, preferred a more passive, educational role for the association.

As if these threats were not bad enough, a season of poor crops also conspired to make the 1898 convention far less successful than its predecessors. In all, only twenty-eight voting delegates made it to Truro on February 9-10, 1898. President S.C. Parker used his address to boldly lash out at the government for its actions. "The Chairman of the Exhibition Commission, who were granted \$30,000 for exhibition purposes and spent \$55,000 comes jauntily back to the house and asks for \$25,000 more," said Parker, "while the Farmers' Association that gave them their existence as a commission, is snuffed out because, forsooth, certain gentlemen in the House of Assembly think \$1,000 can be better expended in promoting agricultural interests than in granting to this body." Parker had his own theory about what lay behind the government's sudden reversal. The government, he speculated, had only allowed the formation of the NSFA in the first place because it had wanted to enlist the support of the farmers for the Halifax Exhibition. "It seems to me," he said, "that this Association has been used as a 'cats paw' to pull the exhibition 'chestnuts' out of the fire..." Nevertheless, Parker urged the membership to hang together. "Do not desert the sinking ship," he extorted. "She is probably safer than the surf outside... The farmers of Nova Scotia can, when they are properly organized, make and unmake governments, and I look forward to the day when the Farmers' Association shall be a leading organization in Nova Scotia."

NSFA Secretary-Treasurer, Paul C. Black, seemed to echo Parker's defiance when he declared that the association should struggle on with or without government support. But the general tone of Black's message was actually much more apologetic. "You will hear me out, Mr. President, when I say that I have always, from the inception of the Association, contended that we were on the wrong track, and I am more firmly convinced than ever that the function of this Association is chiefly education, and that it is not within our province to dabble so much with legislation," said Black. "My idea...is that we should conduct this Association largely along the lines of the farmers'

institute, by holding one general annual meeting, and after that as many as possible local meetings in various sections of the province, for which the best local farmers obtainable should be engaged, as well as one or more men from outside who are competent to lecture in a thoroughly practical and instructive manner.

Black's remarks obviously pleased Premier Murray, for shortly after the 1898 meeting he informed the secretary that the government would not hesitate to maintain, or even increase, its grant if the Farmers' Association showed a disposition to do "good practical work" (meaning of course, work of a harmless educational nature). Black readily assented to Murray's wishes and in May the two finalized plans for a series of local meetings to be held throughout the province. Twenty-three such meetings were staged before the next convention in Annapolis Royal.

The NSFA may very well have stayed on this course had Black not chosen to step down the following year. Black's successor was C.R. Bryan, the secretary of the Pictou County Farmers Association (the only such organization operating in the province at that time). During Bryan's lengthy term, the NSFA veered away from the uncontroversial direction charted by Black toward a much more aggressive and progressive stance as "the voice of Nova Scotia farmers.

Also at the 1898 meeting, C.A. Archibald vigourously attacked the prevailing pessimism of the time. In an article entitled "Farming Don't Pay," Archibald refuted the common contention that lower returns, higher taxes and a lack of markets had made farming in the province less profitable over the past few years. He reminded his audience that the great scientific advancements of the past generation had significantly improved the agricultural industry. Moreover, far from being in a disadvantaged position, Nova Scotian farmers were, he pointed out, actually two or three days closer than Western farmers to the best markets in the world. If times were hard, Archibald felt it was because the province's farmers were not working up to their potential. "I fancy that if every hundred acre farm in our province was sustaining say sixty milk cows, or their equivalent in beef stock, there would be less grumbling about hard times," he said. "Of course, this would necessitate more extensive farming, which means more work..." Peter Innes remained unconvinced, though. He felt that government assistance was "absolutely necessary" to save the industry from ruin.

The gloominess of 1897-98 was also discredited by the marked growth of the Farmers' Association over the next several years. In 1895 there had been eighty-three agricultural societies in the province with a total membership of 4,600. But by 1901 the numbers had grown to 151 societies and 8,500 members, and for the first time, the total subscription paid by members exceeded the \$10,000 government grant to agricultural societies. And by the same year, according to B.W. Chipman, Secretary of Agriculture for Nova Scotia, the number of farm meetings held had increased to 135, compared with 30 or 40 seven years before, with an aggregate attendance of 5,700.

Just after the turn of the century, livestock producers began using the association to take action against two common threats to their investments—barbed wire and roaming dogs. In response to the first danger, the 1902 convention in Truro importuned the provincial government to pass legislation making it illegal for “the owners of adjacent lands...to construct barbed wire fences without their mutually agreeing thereof in writing.” However, the problem persisted - so much so that thirteen years later the association felt compelled to ask the government to ban outright the erection of barbed wire fences on any dividing line in Nova Scotia.

At Windsor in 1903 a committee was formed to come up with suggestions for dealing with the roaming dogs. This committee recommended amending the provincial Sheep Protection Act so that any farmer whose sheep had been damaged by a dog would be able to make a claim against the municipality in which the incident occurred. The municipality, in turn, would be empowered to place a tax on all dogs. The following year another committee was struck, and another, slightly stronger set of recommendations was approved all to no avail. In 1906 at Truro, J.C. West of Aylesford said many sheep farmers were being forced out of business because of the destruction caused by dogs. “The trouble is that the sportsmen of Halifax have more influence with the government than the farmers have,” said M.G. DeWolfe of Kentville.

The following year the Farmers ‘ Association came close to finally spurring the government to action. At their meeting in Middleton that year, the members approved yet another list of recommendations - this one including a novel proposal that would have seen the issuing of what are now known as dog licenses. The provincial government responded by introducing a new Sheep Protection Act, but it only survived two readings in the House before an outcry from certain interested groups convinced the legislators to drop it. Over the next few years the topic resurfaced regularly at NSFA conventions, until a new act, with the desired changes, was finally passed in 1918.

Another problem that emerged during this period was “seed fraud.” Apparently, many farmers were beginning to make the same disturbing discovery the seeds they had purchased without warranty were full of noxious impurities. At the 1903 meeting, G.H. Clark, seed division head for the Dominion Department of Agriculture, pointed an accusing finger at the sellers. “Considerable evidence (exists),” he said, “to show that there are seedmen who are either incompetent, careless, or who resort to unscrupulous methods in order to increase their profits.” but, at the same time, Clark said seed consumers too were guilty of being more concerned with price than quality. He concluded by suggesting that mandatory seed grading and a wider dissemination of information about the seed trade might alleviate the situation somewhat. At the same meeting, a special committee drafted a resolution petitioning the Dominion Minister of Agriculture to devise legislation to deal with “seed fraud.”

By 1902, the institute programme started by Black had run into serious difficulties. Over the past few years, Secretary of Agriculture, B.W. Chipman had managed to draw several notable agriculturalists to the province to address local farmers meetings, only to find that few farmers

were turning up to hear these lectures. In 1902 a committee consisting of Bryan, Chipman, and NSFA President John Donaldson decided that the trouble lay not in any general apathy, but in poor advertising at the local level. Drawing upon Bryan's earlier experience in Pictou, the committee proposed establishing a province wide network of County Farmers' Associations, the sole responsibility of which would be the promotion of local institute work, this would then free the agriculture societies to pursue their own interests, which by this time centered almost exclusively on livestock maintenance. In an October 27, 1902 letter to Premier Murray, Bryan further suggested that this new system might be over-seen by the NSFA Secretary, rather than the provincial Secretary of Agriculture.

The premier's reaction to the proposal was equivocal. While not objecting to county associations in principle, he was concerned that they might become just another financial burden on government. "I think," Murray cautiously concluded, "that the responsibility for carrying out the agricultural policy of the Province should rest as far as possible on the Secretary of Agriculture, he cooperating with such agencies as exist in the province to the fullest possible extend..." In contrast, Dominion Livestock Commissioner, F.W. Hudson, who had provided the province with many of its guest speakers, said he believed county associations "were really the only means of working out the problem satisfactorily."

In the end the main features of the committee's plan prevailed. In 1903 the government passed an act allowing the Farmers' Association to "organize in any county or municipal district a branch association...for the purpose of assisting and co-operating with the association in the carrying out of its purposes in the county." But even though twelve county associations were formed within a year of the act's proclamation, the problem of poor institute organization did not go away. Over a decade later, at the 1915 annual meeting in Antigonish, R.J. Messenger raised more complaints about low attendance at Local meetings. "An attendance at an institute meeting of over 30 or 40 from a territory of at least 100 farmers is a rare thing." He said, "while the annual meeting of the County Association in many cases owes its attendance to the hope that there may be in it a free trip to the Provincial Convention."

The association's campaign for better agricultural education was fought on several fronts, but its most impressive victory was undoubtedly the establishment of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in 1905. There had been little in the way of farm-oriented higher education in the province before the NSFA's founding in 1895. In 1885 a small school of agriculture, with H.W. Smith as its principal and entire staff, began operating in the basement of the Normal School in Truro. But students at this school had to content themselves with only a few courses in agricultural botany and chemistry, taken along with other unrelated subjects. This institution stood alone until a tiny horticultural school, with a total first enrollment of thirty, opened at Wolfville nine years later. Needless to say, many Farmers' Association members were less than satisfied with these arrangements. At the 1898 meeting, for instance, Colonel W.M. Blair offered these criticisms of the Truro school: "I say if the school is for Normal School students, run it as such and if it is for the

farmer's son, have it reorganized and put upon a proper basis. I think our teachers have already too many subjects to teach in our common schools and many of us do not get a thorough training in the different English branches, let alone trying to give us instruction in the sciences bearing on agriculture." According to Blair, the only solution to this "disjointed arrangement" would be the creation, through Government funding, of "one grand agricultural college" serving all three Maritime provinces.

Blair's theme was taken up the following year by President J.R. Starr. "The farmer and the farming methods of the past are gone forever," said Starr. "The farming of the future will not be the farming of muscle, but of mind...Every consideration clearly points to the wisdom and necessity of having one central institution, where horticulture, agriculture, animal husbandry can be taught and carried on in concert and simultaneously." After a suitable resolution was passed, Dominion Agriculture Minister Sidney Fisher, a guest speaker, offered some encouraging words, but left no doubt that the matter was wholly a provincial affair. A lively exchange then ensued between Col. Blair and Peter Innes over where the proposed college might best be located. Innes thought his home county of Kings was the obvious choice, while Blair argued that separate campuses should be set up in three different regions of the province.

Shortly afterward, the provincial government agreed to set aside \$50,000 for the project, but apparently not with any sense of urgency.. Over the next few years, the association tried incessantly to prod the government into action, but its efforts received little more than rhetoric in return. During the 1901 election campaign, when there were farmers votes to be won, Murray's Liberals were wholly in favour of the school. Once they were safely back in office, however, the voices of dissent began to be heard.. In March of 1902, a resolution was introduced in the House asking for a delay in the awarding of the college's grant. The mover, a Mr. Laurence, declared that he had yet to meet an educationalist who had not pronounced the scheme unsound. Laurence's stand was supported by a March 12, 1902 editorial in the Halifax Morning Chronicle, which claimed that there was "no genuine demand from the farmers of Nova Scotia for a so-called Agricultural College" and, moreover, that those resolutions already passed by the association in support of the college were merely the work of a few interested person.

Heeding these signs, R.J. Messenger warned the 1903 convention that, unless the it s farmers acted vigorously in its defense, the project was in real danger of being scuttled. The members responded by appointing a delegation of ten to interview the government on the matter. But this delegation was never required to fulfill its mandate, for in March of 1903, after some intense lobbying by Prof. J.W. Robertson, Dominion Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying, the government finally committed itself to begin construction immediately. The site chosen was Truro. The Nova Scotia Agricultural College officially opened on February 14, 1905.. Its first principal was Dr. Melville Cumming, a native Nova Scotian most recently employed as Assistant Professor of Animal husbandry at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph. Attractive, articulate and magnetic, Cumming would in the coming years establish himself as the preeminent figure in the

province's agricultural circles, serving as Secretary of Agriculture from 1907 to 1926 and then as provincial Director of Marketing. In his opening remarks, Cumming summarized his philosophy of agricultural education. "Education along all lines is a great means of establishing the dignity of labour and work in all phases," he said. "Education teaches the 'why' to doing things. The farmer who plods along with his plough and turns over the furrow thinking of nothing but getting his work done is accomplishing little compared with him who is realizing all those forces of nature with which he is working....If we could do nothing else than teach the 'how' of things this institution would be accomplishing a great deal. We hope, however, to do more than that, and in large measure teach the 'why' of things. I am interested improving the mental calibre of the students, teaching them to look at all things inquiringly and to know the reasons for all operations they perform on the farm." But Cumming also believed agricultural education was a good, practical investment. He noted that a \$100,000 increase in agricultural education funding in Ontario over the past five years had corresponded with a \$140 million rise in the value of farm production. "We cannot attribute all that increase to what has been done by agricultural education, but I can point out instances by which I could show you beyond fear of criticism that a very considerable amount of that increase has been due to such an institution as this..."

All the speakers on the podium that day emphasized that responsibility for the college's future would be shared. "I am satisfied that a measure of responsibility should be placed on the government for the success of this institution," said Premier Murray. "On the other hand, the government puts responsibility on the farmers of Nova Scotia. The farmers must impress upon their sons the advantages of college education." Col. Blair put it more bluntly: "You must put your shoulder to the wheel and stand by the institution or it will be a miserable failure." Cumming agreed, but he also hoped the college would inspire a "general feeling among the farming constituency which will make the farmers co-operate and demand their rights." He said the college would use its two-week short courses not only to instruct established farmers, but to learn from them. "There is always a danger that those who have to live in towns and study here and there cannot keep in just as close touch as we would like to keep," he said. "(We) would be illy fulfilling our relations if we did not endeavor to keep the practical side of agricultural education here just as far as it can be kept up."

Starting that fall, the agricultural college began offering its two-year "long course," which could be used toward a degree from the Ontario Agricultural College. In all, one hundred and six students enrolled that first year, eighty-three in the short courses and twenty-three in the two-year program. And over the next ten years the college expanded steadily. After its first year a modest ladies' program was added to the curriculum. By 1913, three demonstration farms had been built, and the college had begun to branch out, conducting short courses in four other provincial centers. Enrollment stood at 102 in the long course and 351 in the short a more than four-fold increase within eight years and it remained high through out the war period.

The movement that brought the province its agricultural college did not restrict its attention to

higher education alone. As early as 1899, Freeman McClure, federal M.P. for Colchester, expressed the opinion that agriculture needed to be taught in the public schools, though the suggestion was greeted less than enthusiastically. William Young, for one, said he believed the excessive variety of subjects already being taught in public schools was lowering the value of such an education. Three years later, Prof. J.W. Robertson received a more favourable reaction when he advocated the rural students be given vegetable gardens to grow. Robertson maintained that a curriculum including "nature study" and manual training would provide the student with a more complete education than books alone could offer. "We have had in school," he said, just three things - reading, writing and arithmetic - and because they run in three people said, 'That is all we require.' Let me give you another three. Think of the three H's instead of the three R's. Educate his hand for personal effect, his head for personal understanding, and his heart for his spirit..." (Seeds of 4-H pledge!)

The topic came up again at New Glasgow in 1910 when W.H. Woodsworth of Berwick complained that the teaching of agriculture in common schools had been replaced over the past generation by "Nature lessons." "Now what sense is there in teaching our children about birds and things we do not have in this country at all?" he asked. "Would it not be better for them to learn something useful? If we expect to get an agricultural education, we must study the science of agriculture in the common schools." After some discussion the matter was handed over to a special committee, which produced a resolution asking the Council of Public Instruction "to consider the public school curriculum with a view to replacing some of the subjects taught in rural schools by compulsory courses in nature study and the principles of agriculture." This action did not have much effect, though, and five years later, the general meeting in Antigonish passed another resolution "(urging) upon the government the advantages and necessity of having at least ten agricultural subjects in each of the textbooks used in grades from three to ten."

Meanwhile, the Farmer's Association was attending to other matters outside the broad realm of educational improvement. At the 1906 meeting, S.J. Moore of Truro, a past president of the association, expressed concern over the results of the last two censuses, which had shown a decline in the rural population of nearly every county. "If we travel through these communities," said Moore, "we find thousands of acres of worn out land, and...hundreds of farms that have been abandoned." Moore did not have to wait long to hear a novel solution to the problem. At that same meeting, a Brigadier Howells of the Salvation Army outlined an Army sponsored scheme to provide unemployed English labourers with jobs on Canadian farms. Howells said the program had already been quite successful in Ontario, where over 4,000 immigrants had been settled on farms. The following year, another Salvation Army officer, Adjutant Alfred Jennings, stressed that only those labourers of the finest character would be permitted to participate in the scheme. "Last year," said Jennings, "we received eighty-five thousand letters from people in great Britain asking to be sent to Canada. Out of these we brought to Canada only fifteen thousand...They are not the shiftless, useless sort, but the best that can be secured." Reminding his audience of the growing need for young labourers in the Maritimes (over 8,000 had gone West in the past year),

Jennings urged the farmers to help the Army place as many immigrants as possible in Nova Scotia.. Three years later the NSFA's directors noted with satisfaction that the Dominion government had, at Nova Scotia's request, sent two men to Great Britain to try and induce "suitable emigrants" to come to the province.

In the few years since its inception, the provincial exhibition had established itself as one of the highlights of the rural year in Nova Scotia. Attendance - except when discouraged by bad weather - had grown steadily from year to year. The fair always ended up with a large deficit, but this was primarily because of the unusual manner in which it was financed. Instead of providing an adequate grant before the fact, the provincial government and the city of Halifax simply split the losses afterward. "It is not expected that Provincial Fairs are to be moneymakers," exhibition commissioner Joseph R Wyman explained. "They are, or should be, educators."

In 1906, the Dominion Exhibition came to Halifax for the first time. NSFA President Miles Chipman pronounced the event a "great success," but Commissioner David Logan nonetheless felt compelled to silence the criticisms of those who had expected more representation from outside provinces. "It should be remembered," said Logan, "that even when so-called Dominion exhibitions have been held in more favourable conditions, the proportionate additional display of exhibits over that seen at ordinary exhibitions of the same points, was not more marked, and we did think not so much so as at ours." But the home province still managed to walk away with the lion's share of the prize money - \$9,416.25 of the \$16,413.25 awarded.

Unfortunately, one genuine controversy did emerge to sour the success of the 1906 fair. The presence of "fakirs" operators of games of chance - on the exhibition grounds bothered many spectators. Logan called the fakirs "demoralizing" but explained that the city of Halifax would not allow them to be banned because of the huge amount of revenue they generated. Malcolm McLeod, editor of *The Maritime Farmer*, felt the matter was best left to the individual conscience. "It is the business of those who patronize these things along, and not of others, as to which they patronize," he said. "I also think it is the duty of this association to pass a resolution that these things be eliminated from the exhibitions. Then this association would be clear of that responsibility." After hearing both sides, M.G. DeWolfe managed to tread the middle ground between moral and economic concern. If they were put where the ground is not very valuable," he said, "it would be all very well and good, but to have them occupy the most valuable part of the grounds is not right." In the end, the association passed a resolution expressing their "disapproval of what is known as "fakir row" and instructing their representatives of the exhibition commission to "use their influence to dispense with it." Afterwards, Peter Innes looked at the issue from a slightly strange angle. "It would be a mistake to do away with the Fakir's row," he said. "It gives up a chance to study a phase of life we have never seen. We want to see what to avoid as well as what to do."

Despite its general success, the exhibition continued to be the target of occasional, though un-

coordinated, criticism. At the 1911 meeting in Windsor, several delegates complained about the site of the fair, but no clear consensus emerged over where it might better be located. The very next year in Yarmouth, William O'Brien of Windsor claimed it was not the fair's location, but its duration, that was the problem. According to him, the five day fair virtually forced the exhibitor to be absent from his farm for more than a week. C.A. Maxwell of Pictou, for his part, attacked neither the length nor the location, but the exhibition itself. "I do not think the poor people, the great majority of farmers, in fact are satisfied with the exhibition," he said. "There is a feeling that the poor man can't afford his time to exhibit in Halifax, and that they don't get the actual advantages they do in the local exhibitions." But for every member of Maxwell's bent there was at least one other like W.W. Black, who called the Halifax fair "the best exhibition this side of Ottawa."

The conditions of transportation to and from the Provincial exhibition were also the focus of much attention. At the 1913 convention in Sydney, C.P. Blanchard of Truro said he believed the high cost of transporting produce to the fair was prohibiting most farmers from participating. A majority of the delegates agreed, and a motion was passed urging the exhibition commission to do everything in its power to eliminate the transportation charges on all livestock and farm products bound for the fair. The following year in Bridgewater three related resolutions were approved - two protesting the high rates charged on passenger and animals during the exhibition period; the other complaining about the cruel conditions imposed on livestock while in transit.

Around 1913 rumours began to circulate to the effect that the provincial grant to encourage agriculture might soon be supplemented by federal money. The association tried to take advantage of the situation by asking the provincial government to set aside \$10,000 for the establishment of five district exhibitions. Nothing ever came of this idea, however. In fact, within two years events overseas would cast grave uncertainty on the future of the Halifax Exhibition itself. The outbreak of war in Europe forced a last minute cancellation of the 1914 fair - too late for the commission to avoid feeling the full financial brunt. The commission did manage to stage a fair the following year, but only over the strong objections of the representatives of Halifax, who argued that money was too scarce to justify the expense.

The Farmers' Association was aware, and sometimes wary, of the changing state of labour relations after the turn of the century. In 1908 the provincial legislature, bowing to pressure from labour groups, began to seriously consider instituting an eight-hour day for the mining and manufacturing industries. Organized labour hailed the prospect as a great step forward, but the farmers would have none of it. Responding to a poll conducted by F.~L Fuller, the new provincial superintendent of Agricultural Societies, members strongly opposed the idea of any such regulation being imposed on the farm industry.~ Although working hours on farms varied widely depending on the season, most respondents felt ten hours constituted a reasonable day. As for the more immediate question of an eight hour bill which would not directly pertain to the agricultural industry, members expressed less unanimity. While generally un-sympathetic in principle, many could see no harm to their own interests in such legislation. Fuller, for one, disagreed. "It would

be almost impossible,” he said at the 1909 meeting in Digby, “to keep the farm labourer who is within sound of a factory whistle at work after his brother labourer had completed his day.” Later in the same report Fuller also raised some philosophical objections to the eight hour day “It must be remembered that the earth and sea comprise the whole source of the earth’s wealth,” he remarked “Therefore, production and inducing men to take up the occupation of making the earth yield of her bountiful supply must be looked upon as a universal blessing. Whereas, anything with a tendency to increasing such cost and driving men from such a noble occupation, should receive our condemnation.” (Such strong words were rare from the normally reticent Fuller. A former employee of the experimental farm in Nappan, Fuller would go on to serve Nova Scotia agriculture as manager of the Truro model farm, superintendent of exhibitions, secretary of the Maritime Livestock Breeders, manager of the Maritime Winter Fair, and a friend of the NSFA. He would earn the esteem of farmers for his dedication and vision..)

Fuller’s remarks sparked a heated discussion, during which delegates took turns attacking the proposed eight hour day from just about every conceivable angle.~ A.N. Griffin of New Minas even went as far as to cast aspersions on the characters of those who supported the idea. “If the men who are clamoring for an eight hour day would make good use of their leisure hours it would not be so bad,” he said, “but in many instances they indulge in some habit or pastime that leaves them in more exhausted conditions than if they had been working on the farm.” But some in attendance refused to bend with the prevailing wind. “The nine or eight hour day is bound to come and why should we oppose it?” asked Peter Innes. “For my own part, I have no difficulty getting my man to turn out and feed his team.” Hugh Fraser of Progress also saw no real cause for alarm. “Let us find work (for hired help) in the winter and keep them contented and use them right, and there will not be half as much talk about this labour problem. If the farmer uses them right he will not have half as much difficulty getting them. But a man who uses his help as he uses his teams always grumbling and will grumble as long as he lives.”

The NSFA’s conservative stand on this issue was by no means evidence of any sort of reactionary attitude toward “progress in general. On the contrary, the Farmers’ Association actively promoted the introduction of twentieth-century conveniences into rural Nova Scotia. A case in point was the group’s campaign to make telephone service available to all farm families. The main features of this policy originated in a 1907 resolution of the Pictou County Association, which stated that certain unwarranted policies of the Nova Scotia Telephone Company had effectively priced the service beyond the means of the average farmer, the answer proposed by the farmers was public ownership. In 1909 the government met them halfway by creating the Public Utilities commission, a three-man board intended to regulate the rates charged for phone service. but, as far as farmers were concerned, any good that might have come of this action was soon overshadowed by the formation of Maritime Telegraph and Telephone, a provincial monopoly. Surveying the situation in their 1912 report, the NSFA Board of Directors found little cause for encouragement. “One company has now the control of all lines in the province,” they wrote, “they are financially very strong, receive provincial privileges and concessions, and are apparently amenable to no

one... Rural communities are paying more than is necessary for, or are being deprived altogether, by the excessive rates, from the advantage of telephone communication, which not only businesses now demand but social life also." The following year, the association passed a motion asking the government to investigate the "working and financial standing" of Maritime Tel & Tel.

Just before the outbreak of World War I, Nova Scotia's creamery industry was making tremendous strides. The province's first creameries and cheese factories had actually been organized in the mid-1890's, but the business never really got off the ground until around 1910. In 1912 the province manufactured 200,000 pounds of butter. A year later, with the addition of two large plants in Yarmouth and River Hebert, production was up to nearly 300,000 pounds.. That year also saw the first meeting of what would soon become the Nova Scotia Dairymen's Association - a body representing the province's creameries and cheese factories. By 1914, with still more creameries opening up Dr. Cumming was telling the annual meeting he looked forward to the day when Nova Scotia would be regarded as "the Denmark of Canada." Dairy Superintendent W.A.. MacKay was a bit more cautious, though, reminding the members that there was still much room for improvement at the production end of the business. According the MacKay, the average cow in the province was yielding no more than 3,300 pounds of milk per year - a figure which he felt could easily be doubled in five or six years with proper feeding and breeding..

Despite the NSFA'S proven willingness to handle any matter of interest to the province's rural resident's there was one segment of the farming population that could justifiably have felt its concerns were not being heard at all. Like most groups of its kind, the association had, for all intents and purposes, an all-male membership. This deficiency began to be redressed in 1913 with the introduction into the province of a new form of rural organization the Women's Institute. According to a 1914 address by Miss Jennie A. Fraser, the Women's Institute movement was born in Ontario in 1899 when a group of women "decided that the government of that province had been doing so much for farmers and the farms...that it was just about time for them to give some consideration to the homes and the women of the province." The province's department of agriculture placated the ladies by granting them their own association, independent of other farm groups.. To the surprise of many, the movement flourished and soon spread across the country, reaching Nova Scotia in the summer of 1913. Miss Fraser explained that home improvement was the first concern of the institutes, but added that "no good homemaker who had perfected the conditions in her home so that they are best suited for the growth, development and happiness of its inmates, is going to allow conditions in the community to be anything but the best." To underscore this point, she told of how some of the province's new chapters had already taken action to secure such benefits for their communities as sidewalks and sanitary drinking fountains. Over the next year the number of institute branches in the province grew from fourteen to thirtysix. But, more significantly, the movement also managed in that short time to gain the attention of government. One proposal in particular - a resolution calling for a domestic science building at the agricultural college - was accepted and acted upon swiftly..

Nova Scotia's first experiment in controlled, co-operative marketing occurred in the NSFA's birthplace, Antigonish, in 1915. The previous year the federal government had passed an "agricultural instructions act," granting the province enough money to hire Dr. Hugh MacPherson as an agricultural fieldsman. Using another new federal policy, MacPherson immediately immersed himself in reforming wool marketing. In 1915 Ottawa established nineteen wool grading stations across the country, including one in Antigonish. Since all graded wool in the province had to pass through this station, MacPherson saw it as a simple means of regulating marketing as well. Under his direction, 12,000 lbs. of wool was marketed in 1915, and lamb marketing soon followed.

But it was with little sense of celebration that the NSFA returned to Antigonish in 1915. The outbreak of war in Europe leant a grim but determined mood to the proceedings.. "We, as farmers, must remember," said President William O'Brien, "that the productive end of this war, business, must be kept going to keep the destructive end going, and the man who stays on the farm producing food for the men fighting in the trenches, is fully as much a hero and benefactor to his country, as though we went to the front." Samuel Freeman, a director from Amherst, proudly accepted this role. "Was it not," he asked, "the province of Nova Scotia that sent the first ship across the Atlantic to feed that useful little country, half the size of Nova Scotia, that was left destitute to be over-run by German hordes? Has not many a Belgian mother blessed the name of Nova Scotia as she has been able to provide for children through the generosity of the farmers of Nova Scotia?" Dr. Cumming also supported the call for high productivity, though he warned members not to bring any economic benefits to the provinces. On the contrary, he reasoned that if every other country involved in the war followed similar policies, the danger of a global food glut would be heightened.

The war induced the association to take a stand on one issue that was not strictly agricultural in nature. In 1915 it passed a resolution asking both levels of government to follow the example of other country's and prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors for the duration. To the farmers' annoyance, neither government responded.

Over its first two decades, the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association proved its worth as a force for rural and agricultural improvement in the province... By 1915, its annual meeting had grown to over one hundred delegates from sixty-seven agricultural societies, twelve county associations and one independent body, the provincial fruit growers' association. The meetings served as forums for just about every topic of rural life, and they provided the medium for the association's transition from the passive, educational course set by Paul C. Black to the more aggressive, parliamentary direction favoured by C.R.B. Bryan. Not all the NSFA's efforts resulted in such successes as the agricultural college and the provincial exhibition, but even its failures justified its existence by making manifest the need for a strong, united voice for Nova Scotia's farmers.

Chapter Three: Decline, Recovery and Reorganization (1916-1930)

The NSFA's third decade of active existence began as its second had ended - under the shadow of war. "When we last met in annual convention,?? said outgoing President A..S. MacMillan at the 1916 meeting in Windsor, "we little thought that at the close of another year's work we should meet again with the dark clouds of war still hanging over us; in many of our farm houses there is the vacant chair, and the loved one, one that could ill be spared, gone to serve his King and country....."But in spite of the devastation inflicted on Europe, and the tragic loss of so many young men, the war years proved to be a boom period for agriculture in Nova Scotia.) In 1916 MacMillan reported that prices for all farm products had reached 'the high water mark.' Markets had also improved, largely because of the disruption of European trade lines.. Great Britain, for instance, was forced to import a lot more Nova Scotia bacon after its traditional supplies from Denmark were curtailed.. The philosophy of "patriotism through higher production" ruled the day, and there Nova Scotia farmers were equal to the task.

Despite occasional complaints about the scarcity of labour and high cost of production, the economic upswing continued right through the war and a couple of years beyond. "We looked for a decline in prices prevailing during the war period," said 1919 President D.R.. Nicholson. "The public especially looked for a decline in the price of farm products. The results you all know. Prices were never as high, are still advancing, and rightly so." The times were so good, in fact, that Nicholson felt compelled to refute criticisms of the farmers's relative prosperity. "The public are clamouring for cheap food," he said, "but it is willing to pay more for shoes, for clothing, for furniture, for transportation and many other things. " As for the various "fair price" boards and committees that were springing up at the time, Nicholson said they displayed "lamentable ignorance." "The only power they have is to investigate," he said, "but without even doing that they, in some cases, issue a statement which is usually so far from correct that it is ridiculous."

The provincial exhibition was held again in 1916, over the misgivings of the city of Halifax, but by this time many farmers feared the fair's entertainment features had almost completely overshadowed its educational aspects. Once again several delegates condemned the presence of these booths on the fair grounds, and once again they were reminded -this time by exhibition Commissioner H.S. Kennedy - that their exclusion would result in a substantial drop in attendance.. The next year, in Amherst, President R.J. Messenger remarked: "The Halifax exhibition is supposed to be a child of the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association. If so, it is a difficult matter to recognize its parentage. It has almost lost its plain country appearance and is now in the full dress of a be-tinselled city vaudeville." The association's board of directors also took a moment in its report to "protest against the increasing menace of morality and decency of the midway exhibitions"

at the Halifax fair. The embattled commissioners had to defend their position as best they could. "While we make no attempt to uphold everything in connection with the Midway," their report read, "it does seem strange to us that the Provincial Exhibition should be singled out and so much fuss made regarding the Midway, while other Exhibitions, and even Institutions which claim to be exclusively for the moral and religious benefit of humanity, recognize and uphold the same things and are permitted to do so without one word of protest."

But all these arguments instantly became irrelevant on December 6, 1917 when the infamous Halifax explosion levelled the provincial exhibition grounds.. The tragedy could not have come at a more discouraging time for the association's two exhibition commissioners , H.S. Kennedy and F.~W. Foster. According to their report, 1917 had initially looked like a year of "bright prospects." The Halifax Board of Trade had been more co-operative than usual; the fair's financial situation was encouraging; and the fall exhibition had been quite successful. But the explosion threw the fair's future into complete uncertainty. Almost immediately after the blast the fair grounds were taken over by the Halifax Relief Commission and covered with temporary housing for the homeless. The exhibition board would not even regain control of the property, let alone begin reconstruction, for another four years.

The last years of the First World War and those immediately following were a period of unparalleled political awareness for Canadian farmers. In his 1917 address, President R.J. Messenger captured the prevailing mood of the era. "Back of all...unsatisfactory agricultural conditions," he said, "is the farmer, inert, passive, submissive, yielding a more or less willing slavery to his servant masters, the politicians and businessmen." Messenger felt this would only begin to be rectified when farmers started asserting their political clout. "The Western farmers have largely become disgusted with party rule and are organizing to see what can be done by united effort, while the politicians are taking heed," he said. "These farmers have adopted a platform, calling for improved, equitable and clean legislation. If they succeed in influencing parliament so as to obtain laws favourable to their interests, it will be a step towards encouraging farmers all over the Dominion to place the call of party second to their own interests."

In fact, the United Farmers of Ontario succeeded beyond all expectations. On October 20, 1919, the new party emerged from a provincial election holding the largest number of seats in the legislature, and, in coalition with the Labor Party, it was soon able to form a government. Similar victories followed in Alberta and Manitoba, and in the 1921 general election the National Progressive Party made a startling entry into federal politics, capturing sixty-four seats. But although the new wave of political enthusiasm captivated Nova Scotia farmers, the NSFA leadership carefully avoided any direct involvement - for obvious reasons. "This movement is rapidly spreading and we cannot ignore it," said President D. R. Nicholson at the 1920 meeting in Kentville. "At the same time this association being a government aided organization, it might not be well to discuss politics." However after that convention officially adjourned most of the delegates remained to pass an informal resolution calling for the formation of an independent farmers' party. Three

months later - on April 14, 1920 - the United Farmers of Nova Scotia was born. By all accounts the opening convention of the UFNS, held in the court house in Truro, was an unforgettable event. The meeting opened with a lengthy address by J.J. Morrison of the UFO, after which the self-appointed delegates voted to adopt the constitution of the United Farmers of New Brunswick (founded two years earlier) and endorse the free-trade New National Policy of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, a politically militant national farmers' body formed in 1909 and centered in the Western provinces. But according to Harry Brown - an eyewitness who would later serve as NSFA Secretary-Treasurer -the real excitement was generated by the debate among the rank and file. Fiery speeches, heated exchange.s and more than a little theatrics dominated the day, with one particularly incredible incident occurring just after the party decided to contest the next election in co-operation with the urban based Independent Labor Party. An unidentified farmer took the floor and moved a resolution opposing the eight hour day - the thorniest point of disagreement between farmers and labourites. The uproar that ensued threatened to bring to a speedy end the new alliance, but calm was restored when someone had the presence of mind to propose that the matter be tabled for later discussion.

Years later, Brown heard from an unsubstantiated source that the resolution had been planted at the convention by the wily Liberal premier, the Hon. George Murray. Whether this story is true or not, Murray apparently took the new political threat seriously enough to attempt to catch it off guard with a snap election. The newly formed party quickly threw together an innovative platform calling for a more progressive agricultural policy for the province, the extension of agricultural education, improved highways, an equalized system of taxation, conservation of natural resources (including a policy of deforestation), better legislation governing co-ops, abolition of the provinces' Legislative Council, higher salaries for school teachers and,not surprisingly, an amendment to the election act requiring sixty days notice before elections. When the votes were counted on July 27, 1920, the United Farmers had won seven seats, enough to form the official opposition, despite having only nominated fifteen candidates. Daniel G. MacKenzie, a successful farmer and one-time businessman and school-teacher from Malagash, was appointed party and opposition leader.

But the sweetness of victory did not take long to sour. That autumn Major Hugh Dickson, on the founders of the new party, lost to a Liberal in a Colchester by-election. Then, the following year, Premier Murray skillfully brought discredit on the party when he announced that a recently discovered surplus would be divided among members of the legislature. Only one member of the United Farmers refused his share of the money, and the party's reputation for honesty and integrity was shattered. Later that session another scandal rocked the party when it was revealed that MacKenzie had secretly accepted a government salary of \$500. A series of defections followed and by 1925 the United Farmers of Nova Scotia had virtually ceased to exist.

The fleeting political experiment appears to have been quickly forgotten by NSFA members. At Truro in 1927, Provincial Dairy Superintendent W.A. MacKay made a passing reference to

the party's demise, attributing it to poor organization rather than apathy. Two years later, D . J. McLeod attempted to revive some of the old spirit of 1920 by moving "that farmers, Conservative and Liberal, be nominated to contest all counties that farmers are by their numbers entitled to represent." "Since coming here," he said, "(What) I learned was that we were a parliament asking favours of another parliament. I think that in the few counties of this province in which labour predominates they have their representatives, and why have not we?" C.P. Blanchard replied cynically: "Your political machines will nominate the man who they think is going to win, be he lawyer or doctor or whatever he is."

The economic boom fizzled just as quickly. In the early twenties a deep recession hit Nova Scotia farmers and, not surprisingly, became a major topic of discussion at NSFA meetings. In 1923, Dr. Cumming noted that farmers throughout North America and Europe were suffering from low returns and bad markets -a situation which he felt had grave social consequences. "So long as any one important class of our citizenship receives relatively less for its labour than any other class," he said, "we can never return to normalcy; and when the class receiving the small end of the returns is such a basic class as the farmers, the situation is all the more serious." The precise reasons for this economic downturn were elusive. Bad luck and poor weather -the perennial scapegoats - were simply inadequate explanations for such a lasting and profound trend. Father R.L. MacDonald - the first clergyman to serve as NSFA President - advanced a more credible theory at the 1924 convention in Antigonish. "Ten years ago," he said, "the world went war mad, and it is today paying the price for its war madness." For Nova Scotia farmers this price took the form of a disruption in their business at its most vulnerable point - markets. With only a rudimentary understanding of marketing techniques and conditions, most farmers were caught completely off guard by the trade realignments that followed the war. As Europe quickly lessened its dependence on imports, farmers were forced to find new places to sell their produce, usually at much lower prices. However, there was little evidence that consumers were feeling any benefit from this. "One of the things city consumers I have met say they cannot understand," said Cumming, "is that they are paying approximately as high prices for farm products as they were in former years; and when I tell them that...farmers are receiving only fifty per cent, and sometimes less than that, of the price formerly received they are astonished. The facts...are that while prices paid at the production point have fallen fifty per cent or more, distributing costs are as high as ever." Farmers were still a long way from controlling the mark-up on their produce.

Yet there was cause for hope. As luck would have it, two potential solutions to the marketing crisis - co-operation and quality control - intersected in one federal policy. Around the end of the war, H.S. Arkell, the federal livestock commissioner, began promoting shipping clubs as a means of promoting livestock grading. But these clubs, which made their first provincial appearance in Antigonish and Inverness counties, also had marketing applications, and many, in fact, would later develop into co-op stores. In 1922, Prof. A.B. MacDonald, a federal fieldman appointed two years earlier, started setting up boys' and girls' swine clubs. These soon spread throughout the province and would prove to be the main form of hog marketing until the 1950's.

In 1928 the Maritime Livestock Board was established to co-ordinate the activities of livestock clubs throughout the region. It was preceded three years earlier by a Maritime Co-operative Egg and Poultry Exchange.

In 1926 Halifax finally decided to respond to the agricultural crisis. The government appointed a special committee of inquiry to travel the province, examine the situation and consult with such groups as the NSFA. But even with this official recognition of the farmer's plight, there was still a widespread lack of sympathy among the public and press. "One would think to read contributions from some of our city writers that, because Nova Scotia imports several million dollars worth of agricultural produce, therefore Nova Scotia farmers have a big market for produce right at their doors," said President Jacob Andrews at the 1926 meeting in Truro. "I would like to remind those who write in this strain of the fact that much of this produce, which is shipped into Nova Scotia, is landed in our markets at a lower price than we farmers in Nova Scotia can produce it." And the government's inquiry was fortuitously timed to correspond with an encouraging change in the economic climate. In his report Andrews noted that conditions had improved, though they were "still far short of the standard necessary to make farming a flourishing business." A year later, Andrews' successor, George Cox, was able to indulge in some unqualified optimism. "Let us not forget those years," he said, "and start over again with every farmer being a booster in his own line, (and) also a booster for province, of which we are all proud." Cox went on to propose that the association's motto for the next year be: "To produce what we consume.

But not all of Nova Scotia's farm industry was in a state of decline. While other sectors were faltering, the apple business enjoyed some of its best years ever. As of 1924, Nova Scotia was producing just under half of Canada's total apple crop -1,891,000 of the country's 3,833,000 barrels. But just as the general economic picture began to improve, bad weather and marketing problems crippled the apple industry. A more notable and lasting success was the province's creamery industry. In 1912 Nova Scotia creameries had produced only 200,000 lbs. of butter. By 1922 production was up to 3,000,000 lbs. and it reached 5,000,000 lbs. after just five more years. There were twenty-eight creameries in the province in 1925, half of which were co-operatively owned and almost all of which had been constructed within the past fifteen years. This growth was all the more noteworthy in that it was not part of a national trend. In fact, according to Natural Resources Minister J..A. Walker in 1927, Nova Scotia was the only province that was increasing its butter production. The advent of testing and grading aided the progress of the creamery industry. Responding to resolutions from the NSFA and the provincial Dairymen's Association, the provincial government authorized testing and grading in a 1922 Order-in-Council. At the 1922 meeting President Walter Churchill gave a favourable assessment of the new program. "Creameries that gave the grading of cream a fair trial," he said, "were more than repaid by securing quick sales and higher prices for the superior article." Others were less enthusiastic, though. Four years later, W.A. MacKay told the assembled members that he refusal to comply with the law had led to three convictions.

The uncommon prosperity of the creamery industry naturally compelled provincial producers to be especially sensitive to two threats to their product: Margarine and low import duties. Margarine - or "oleo-margarine" as it was then called - had twice been banned in Canada by 1886 and 1903 acts of the Federal Parliament. But in 1917 the ban was lifted indefinitely as a "temporary" war measure - a policy the government seemed in no hurry to reverse even after the hostilities had ended. In 1920 the NSFA called for the return of the ban, but it won only tepid approval from the provincial legislature's Agricultural committee. In April of the following year the committee announced that, although they were against the legalization of margarine in principle, they were willing to live with the product if the federal government accepted it. The committee did, however, recommend that the "most stringent regulations" be placed on the appearance and constitution of margarine so that no consumer could be deceived about the true nature of the spread. The association was clearly unimpressed, for in 1923 the membership again condemned the legalization of margarine as "unnecessary" and "contrary to the best interests of Canada."

In a 1924 address entitled "A Timely Warning," Helen MacDougall, the provincial superintendent of Women's Institutes, claimed margarine was both an economic threat to the province and a health hazard to the public. Economically, its manufacture and sale were detrimental because the widespread importation of "tropical oils" lowered the value of locally produced butterfat. Nutritionally, the product's status was questionable because manufacturers were under no obligation to reveal the ingredients of their product. But Miss MacDougall herself was quite convinced that the increasing incidence of a wide variety of ailments - such as heart trouble, hardening of the arteries, kidney stones, and nervous and digestive troubles - was linked to dietary deficiencies resulting from the use of margarine. "May I ask," she concluded, "is it philanthropy, and a whole-hearted desire to make living easier for poor people that makes the manufacturer so desirous of producing oleo-margarine or does the possibility of higher profits have any influence in the matter?"

Toward the end of the twenties the Farmers' Association began to express concern over the low tariffs being placed on butter imported from New Zealand and Australia. At the 1929 annual meeting in Truro the association called for the standard tariff on imports to be raised from four to ten cents per pound. C.P. Blanchard offered the only dissenting opinion, saying that such a resolution was not in the nation's general interest. "When you consider," said Blanchard, "that a recent treaty has made whereby this Dominion sells to New Zealand about three times as much as she purchases from here, and when you ask for a tariff on about the only article that she exports, you are asking that all the nuggets be put in your pocket." W.A. Fillmore of Amherst countered by saying the NSFA had first to defend the interests of Nova Scotia, particularly when such a key sector as the dairy industry was at stake. According to Fillmore, butter imports from Australia and New Zealand had grown from less than 5,000,000 lbs. in 1926 to over 14,000,000 two years later. In September, 1930, the new Bennett government in Ottawa announced a sweeping program of protectionism that included a substantial raising of the butter tariff. But the elation of Nova Scotia farmers at this measure was more than matched by their disappointment about the simultaneous

increases in the duties on imported fertilizers and farm machinery.

The NSFA's attempts to revive the Halifax Exhibition turned into a true exercise in frustration. In 1921 the association's exhibition commissioners stated that the fair would probably not be held for years unless "very strong action" was taken by farmers - a prediction that was only inaccurate in so far as it over estimated the association's influence. In 1922, after the NSFA had passed several resolutions calling for the re-establishment of the fair, commissioner F.W. Foster bluntly told representatives of Halifax and the provincial government that they were not doing their part to support the project. The government quickly responded by pledging \$200,000 but the city did nothing. The farmers countered at their next meeting by asking the government to take steps to relocate the fair if Halifax failed to come through with its share of the funding. By the following year the city had still refused to budge, so the association tried a new tactic. They recommended that the government proceed with the reconstruction anyway and make later arrangements with the city for "an annual payment in keeping with the benefits received."

In 1926 the Halifax City Council at last voted to match the province's contribution dollar for dollar. Soon afterward an architect was hired to design new fair grounds, and tenders were called for the construction work. The commission had some difficulty finding a plan that would be financially manageable, but eventually they hit upon one which they hoped would cost just less than the \$400,000 they had the work with. Meanwhile, in 1926 and 1927 two modestly successful exhibitions were staged at the Maritime Winter Fair grounds in Amherst. Finally, on August 25, 1928 - after eleven year's absence the provincial exhibition reopened on its original site in Halifax. Organizers quickly declared the event as unprecedented success but the return of the fair also brought with it some old, unwanted troubles. At the 1929 convention one delegate informed the association that there had been so much gambling at the 1928 fair that the Halifax police had to close a number of booths. The concerned member felt this did not reflect very well on the farmers who had fought so long and hard for the fair's revival.

In 1926 the NSFA hired Harry Brown of Pugwash as secretary-treasurer. C.R.B. Bryan, who had held the post on and off since 1899, was responsible for much of the NSFA's early success. But after accepting a position with the agricultural college in 1915, he had had little time left for the association. In fact, in later years he had not even been able to attend the annual meeting every year, and the association's records and finances suffered accordingly. When Brown assumed the job the NSFA was operating under a large, and thoroughly unwarranted, deficit. Instead of providing the NSFA with its rightful grant of \$1000, the government had begun in 1924 to only cover the barest expenses of the annual meeting. Brown soon corrected this and resumed publishing an NSFA yearbook in 1930.

Livestock quality remained a major concern after the recession of the early twenties had eased. In the late twenties the NSFA passed several resolutions calling for the promotion, preferably through government grants, of the use of pure bred sires. But the most important initiative taken

in this area was the campaign to make Nova Scotia a restricted zone for bovine tuberculosis. In 1926 the provincial government agreed to set up a TB-free zone under conditions suggested by the NSFA. First, the restricted area would have definite bounds over which the movement of livestock could be controlled. Secondly, two-thirds of the livestock owners in the area would have to sign a petition before any testing could take place.. Thirdly, the Dominion Health of Animals Branch would supply the veterinarians and pay compensation to owners for animals that reacted to the test. And finally, the province would cover the campaign's operational expenses. Petitions were soon circulated through the province, and the task of publicizing the campaign was given to local school teachers - a tactic with obvious drawbacks. The campaign's progress was initially slow simply because not all teachers were equally willing or competent to provide voluntary service. By 1929, however, enough support had been generated to have all fourteen mainland counties declared a restricted zone. J.F. Mahoney, minister of natural resources, told the members at that year's annual meeting that of the 190,192 cattle already tested, only 4,296 had reacted.

But despite the solid support given to the program by the province's producers, politics intervened to transform it into one of the hottest issues of the day.. As soon as the Conservative government gave its approval to the scheme the Liberals declared their opposition to virtually every aspect of it.. Brown would, many years later, dismiss this strategy as "one of the stupidest moves ever made by a political party," but, to be fair, the Liberals did get a lot of political mileage out of the issue. In the provincial election of 1928 the Conservative's legislative majority was slashed from thirty-seven to four seats.. The government found an easy scapegoat for its losses in the TB campaign, and after the election it avoided authorizing a second test requested by the association. The province's politically coloured press also saw great potential for polemics in the TB campaign. On February 2, 1929, for instance, the Halifax Daily Star ran an editorial which severely questioned not only the test's effectiveness but also the very integrity of the association itself.. "It would be an interesting study," the paper observed, "to know whether Government officials are members of the Association or not and whether they have votes." In his response a week later, Brown called these insinuations "wholly unwarranted." As for the test's efficiency, he admitted that it was not 100% accurate but added that practical experience had been sufficient to convince most farmers of its benefits. But the press, as usual, had the final word. In the April first issue of the Daily Star a mundane listing of the producers who had received compensation for TB cows appeared under a glaringly large headline proclaiming that the program had cost \$69,345.

The TB debate eventually travelled full circle, finding its way back to the NSFA's annual meeting. At the 1929 convention, C.P. Blanchard, a delegate with some legal training, rose to protest strongly a motion of thanks to the campaign organizers. Charging that the plan had only been approved after some shady campaigning by "emissaries of government," Blanchard brought his speech to a fiery climax. "Gentlemen," he said, "if you vote for this resolution you...put yourselves on record as restoring and bringing back from the times of long ago the making of your fellow citizen a serf of enthralling officialdom that is German in everything but name. You will be im-

peaching and submitting the very principles of democracy itself, and I can think of no act on your part fraught with greater possibility of evil than a vote in favour of this resolution.” Blanchard’s oratory was impressive, but he only managed to convince three to vote with him.

The NSFA had other things on its collective mind during the twenties. At the 1920 meeting, Highways Minister H.H. Wickwire announced a “radical change” to the province’s highway laws that would replace the old system of “statute labour with a permanent fund for road improvement partly drawn from a new automobile tax. At first, the association supported the move, but by 1929 farmers had evidently lost their enthusiasm and were calling for a “decided reduction” of the car license rate. Alarmed by a clear decline in rural population (more than 11,000 Maritimers moved off the land between 1911 and 1921), the association participated in another Salvation Army scheme to place selected English boys on Canadian farms in 1923. In 1926 there were several developments in the field of agricultural education. The provincial government absorbed what remained of the NSFA’s original commitment to inform and educate established farmers through the creation of agricultural extension services. At the agricultural college, Dr. J.~M. Truman replaced Dr. Cumming, who also moved from Secretary of Agriculture to the new position of Director of Marketing. And the NSFA set up a permanent, three- member committee on rural education. (At that time, according to an address by Dr. H.F. Munro, Nova Scotians paid less than seven dollars per capita annually on education, and most school children finished their education “somewhere below grade nine, nearer probably to grade six.”) Also during the twenties, the NSFA adopted more coherent policies for lobbying the authorities in charge of setting freight and telephone rates.

The late twenties were a time of intense self-examination for the Farmers’ Association. It had become obvious that the NSFA’s original constitution needed nothing short of a massive overhaul. The association’s two subsidiaries - the agricultural societies and county associations - were suffering from an increasing lack of integration and direction, and general interest in the whole organization, as measured by membership and attendance records, had clearly waned. These symptoms were not new - in fact, they had been recognized in resolution form as far back as 1921. But it was not until the hiring of Harry Brown, and the subsequent appointment of Dr. Truman to the position of provincial superintendent of agricultural societies, that anyone was in a position to address the structural faults that lay at the heart of the problem.

Every level of the NSFA had its own particular problems. At the bottom, the agricultural societies had experienced a steady drop in popularity during the twenties. The records of F.L. Fuller show that the number of societies in the province decreased from 225 with a total membership of 8898 in 1921 to only 189 with 6664 members just five years later. This decline in interests can be largely attributed to a severe narrowing of the societies’ collective scope. When first formed in the 19th century, the societies had served as true community groups, dedicated to the general improvement of local farming conditions. Over the past few decades, however, and especially since the passage of a 1914 act “to encourage the incorporation of farmers co-operative societ-

ies,” the agricultural societies had become little more than a convenient means whereby small groups of farmers could purchase and maintain bulls. Narrowness led both to fragility, as many of these “bull societies” disintegrated over minor disputes between beef and dairy producers, and the alienation of those farmers who were not primarily interested in cattle breeding, particularly the province’s large contingent of fruit growers.~ Meanwhile, the broader concerns of the rural community - the issues of greatest interest to the NSFA leadership - were often being left to a new class of unrecognized local organizations.

At the same time, the county associations were dying from their own anachronism. Created just after the turn of the century to promote educational work throughout the province, these bodies soon had their original purpose usurped by the Agricultural College and the Extension Services program.. Some county associations managed to find new roles, such as organizing exhibitions, but most simply atrophied. By 1927 only five such groups were still active and even Dr. Trueman was questioning the need for their continued existence.

Finally, the Farmers’ Association itself was in decline. Attendance at the annual meeting, which had topped one hundred before the war, fell during the twenties to a steady average of fifty to sixty delegates - a paltry figure when one considers that there were nearly two hundred agricultural societies in the province, each eligible to send one delegate. Instead of reaching out to all types of farmers across the province, the NSFA was now relying on the same farming fixtures and departmental employees to carry its meetings every year.

And poor turnouts were not the NSFA’s only problem. Through a growing dependence on public funding and a lack of strong leadership, the association had, by the twenties, effectively abdicated any autonomy from government it might have once claimed. At no time was this more evident than during the heyday of the United Farmers’ Party, when the association was conspicuously reluctant to bite the hand that fed it by becoming directly involved in the opposition movement. Many critics interpreted this attitude as conclusive proof that the NSFA was little more than a servant of the provincial Department of Agriculture - a view the department itself seemed to be doing its best to confirm. By the time of Brown’s appointment Dr. Cumming, the secretary of agriculture, felt himself in a strong enough position to demand the right to co-sign all NSFA cheques. Brown saw this as an affront to the association’s integrity and refused to comply. “It would be impossible, “ he later reasoned, “to convince anyone that the Farmers ‘ Association was not part and parcel of the Department of Agriculture if its cheques went out to all parts of the province bearing the name of the Secretary of Agriculture.” The brief feud that ensued between Brown and Dr. Cumming only further convinced the Secretary-Treasurer of the pressing need for financial independence. The whole sorry situation warranted nothing less than a total restructuring of the Nova Scotia Farmers’ Association.

But the old constitution could hardly be discarded until a new one, addressing all the present problems, had at least been envisaged. W.A. MacKay unexpectedly provided the necessary

innovation in a 1925 report on "The Farmers' Relation to the Creamery.." Straying far from his topic, MacKay suggested that the best means of curing the NSFA's ills was through its existing components. The county associations, he said, could be transformed into delegate bodies representing the agricultural societies, while the societies themselves could be compelled to broaden their interests to encompass all local agricultural concerns. Meanwhile, the other provincial organizations - such as the Dairymen's the Poultrymen s and the Fruit Growers Associations -might be brought more clearly into the picture by being made subsidiary and accountable to the NSFA.. (By a curious coincidence, this plan bears a close resemblance to a proposal taken to the provincial government by the old Farmers and Dairymen's Association in 1894. But no one in the twenties appears to have recognized or realized this similarity)..

MacKay's ideas would remain largely unnoticed until after the first major debate on reorganization in 1927.. That year, merely for the sake of generating discussion, Brown slipped into the agenda a vaguely worded resolution calling for a strengthening of the agricultural societies, county associations and the NSFA - "so as to provide for the increased activity..., co-ordination-and....absolute independence of all three bodies." F.L. Fuller set the tone for the debate when he boldly suggested in his last speech as Superintendent of Agricultural Societies that five dollars should be deducted from the grant to any agricultural society that did not send a delegate to the annual meeting. Trueman developed this theme further, saying that unless there was a reasonable excuse , grants should be cut off entirely from all non-participating societies. He also called on the government to raise the minimum membership of societies to forty of fifty from the present fifteen and permit these groups to take up other activities besides holding fairs and keeping bulls. W.L. Cook of Yarmouth concluded the debate by noting that it would be foolish to take any of the proposed punitive measures against agricultural societies until the system of covering delegate expenses was made more equitable. "It has been our custom," he pointed out, "for the delegate to provide his own expenses, and on his return...he takes up with his Farmers' Association and is reimbursed. Now it costs as much as \$25., and how about the fellow who has not that \$25.? There are many of them in this country."

The motion eventually carried, but only because, as Brown later admitted, no one had known what it meant. Working independently over the summer, Brown and Trueman both rediscovered MacKay's proposals and fashioned them into remarkably similar reorganization schemes. Instead of eliminating the county association, the two decided it should be transformed into the central link in the provincial organization - a delegate body representing not just the agricultural societies, but other local farm groups, such as farmers' clubs, co-op stores and shipping companies, as well. And, in a departure from the previous meeting's debate, they proposed that the county associations replace the agricultural societies as the direct source of NSFA delegates and send only one member for every three societies in the county. Apparently, Trueman had come to realize there was no point in demanding a turnout three or four times higher than the convention was presently prepared to handle. The delegate system would also, he hoped, permit the convention to make more efficient use of its time by allowing members to fully determine

their positions beforehand at their county meetings. Surprisingly, when the time came at the 1928 convention for the membership to discuss Brown and Trueman's massive constitutional resolution, it was not these main points, but certain minor provisions that attracted the most attention. In particular, one clause stating that agricultural societies would have to hold monthly meetings in order to qualify for provincial funding drew sharp criticism from some members who believed it would be futile to attempt to impose a community conscience on these groups. In the end, the proposed regulation was watered down to demand only eight meetings a year. Other 1928 amendments included introducing a per capita tax on agricultural societies to pay for the upkeep of the county associations; basing the number of delegates a county could send to the NSFA on its total membership, rather than its number of agricultural societies; and allowing other provincial farm organizations to send two representatives each to the annual meeting. Trueman admitted he had inadvertently omitted this last provision, which merely continued established tradition.

After another summer's worth of committee work under Trueman's auspices, a new act of incorporation, combining the essential features of the 1928 resolution with many of the suggested improvements advanced in the subsequent debate, was ready for the membership's approval. Under the proposed bill, every county with at least three agricultural societies would be required to organize its own, representative farmers' association. Each agriculture society would be entitled to send between two and six delegates, depending on the size of its membership, to the county meetings, from which between two and six, again depending on membership, would be selected to attend the NSFA annual meeting. In addition, two delegates would be invited to the convention from "any other provincial association engaged in promoting or improving any department of agricultural industry."

The new act also redefined the purposes of the Farmers' Association and its county affiliates. According to the bill, the object of the revamped association was "to enable members to confer together for the interchange of information with a view to united action in matters relating to welfare and progress of the province generally, in the several departments of agriculture and other rural industries." In other words, the NSFA was finally going to discard its long out-dated educational obligations and become a true "farmers' parliament."

To Brown's dismay, however, the NSFA was not yet confident enough to attempt financial self-sufficiency. The best the farmers of the new constitution could do was create a fixed system of transfer payments within the association which would ensure each member was contributing his fair share and could receive adequate reimbursement for expenses incurred while attending the annual meeting. Each agricultural society would now pay twenty-five cents per member to the county association (later reduced by amendment to fifteen), five cents of which would then be passed along to the parent organization. Any delegate to the NSFA convention would be entitled to receive out of the association's funds his "actual reasonable travelling and hotel expenses," up to a specified maximum amount. His county association would then be billed one-half of the average railroad fare of all delegates plus a specific rate (originally set at three dollars per day)

for every member it sent.. All the executive's working expenses would be fully covered by the association.. Interestingly, one provision approved at the 1928 meeting did not find its way into the bill presented in 1929. The clause requiring agricultural societies to hold eight meetings per year appears nowhere. No explanation of this omission was given (nor was any requested) but perhaps someone concluded that attempting to recruit other types of local organization into the fold would be more fruitful than trying to teach old societies new tricks.

The 1929 bill did not, of course, please everyone. Once again, individual members proposed many modifications from the floor, some of which eventually found their way into the final version of the Act.

But the hottest debate centered, rather belatedly, on whether any reorganization was needed at all. Several prominent members voiced the belief that the new act would cripple or even kill the agricultural societies. Even W.A. Fillmore, a recent president, held very strong reservations. "I think (the new act) is going to hurt the agricultural societies," he said. "One great reason why they keep up is because they want to send, and the delegates want to come, to this convention, and I think this convention should have as many members as (it) possibly can get here." The bluntest comments, though, came from G.R. Nichols of Berwick. "My opinion is that if you adopt this you will have killed interest in the Nova Scotia (Farmers) Parliament entirely," he said. . "Some of the societies have died, and, while we all believe in the resurrection, I believe the hardest thing to resurrect is a county association..." Scott Hebb of Bridgewater, another dissenter, actually attempted at the last minute to move that no changes be made to the existing constitution but he was ruled out of order and the new act of incorporation was approved overwhelmingly, fifty-eight to seven. Several finishing touches were added to the bill before it reached the legislature, most notably in the sections dealing with the executive and board of directors. The superfluous position of second vice-president was eliminated, and the size of the board was fixed at six - two from each of three geographic zones in the province. In addition, the directors' terms were extended to three years, with elections being staggered so that only two new directors would join the board each year.

It was now up to J..F.~ Mahoney to secure government approval for the package, and he did not disappoint. Before the end of the 1929 session he had steered the bill through first the legislature's agriculture committee and then the House of Assembly.. The victory was, however, tempered by tragedy. Only a few months later the Farmers' Association mourned the young minister's sudden and untimely death. And, sadly, one other father of the new constitution would not live to see it come into full force.. W~.A. MacKay died in September, 1930. The first results of the reorganization looked very encouraging. By the end of the 1929 farmers' associations were again operating in all but four of the province's eighteen counties, news which inspired the cautious hopefulness of W.L.. Cook's 1930 president's address. "As yet we are not full-fledged butterflies," he said. "We are only in the caterpillar stage. . but I trust after the adjournment of this convention, with a few minor adjustments applied later, we will become welded into one solid

body from Cape North to Cape Sable - all working together for the future uplift and improvement of our chosen profession, regardless of race, colour or creed.”

The dawn of a new decade seemed to breathe fresh optimism into the Nova Scotia farming community, despite the ominous economic signals from Wall Street.. Only a few years previously, the NSFA directors had bemoaned the fact that farming was becoming an increasingly less attractive way of life. “The farmer,” they had written, “has an unending round of acres and responsibilities which, while interesting in themselves, yet as a whole prove repulsive to the wide-awake, ambitious youth who want simple, uniform work in business or as merchants with stated hours of service and definite rates of pay.” By 1930, though, the mood had changed radically.. “I am personally of the impression,” said O.P. Goucher, the new natural resources minister, “that there is a great deal more to encourage young people to take up life in our rural communities than was the case a few years ago. Telephones, automobiles, labor saving devices, greater quality of food, and many other improvements have so gradually found their way into the farm homes of Nova Scotia that I think we sometimes fail to realize how much improved the farmer’s lot is. Or, as W.L Cook put it more succinctly: “Today many farmers just turn on the switch - gasoline or electricity pulls the load. Practically everything goes by a system and much of the bad luck..... has vanished.”

Chapter Four: Depression, War and More Reorganization (1931-1945)

The “dirty thirties” are usually thought of as a time of unparalleled hardship for Canadian farmers, conjuring up images of rural families living in desperate squalor, aimless youth riding the rails and fertile soil reduced to bleak wasteland by drought. But conditions were not nearly so bad in Nova Scotia -at least judging by the comments made at NSFA meetings. “In spite of the fact that people cry hard times, I cannot find anyone in Nova Scotia seriously affected by these hard times,” Dr. J.M. Trueman told the 1931 convention. “They look happy, seem well fed and they are paying their bills, except in a few To - cases. be sure, low prices often below the cost of production - hit Nova Scotia farmers hard. But, according to several NSFA members, there was no great danger they would see their standard of living slip seriously, as long as they exercised restraint and adapted to the situation. “I do not for one moment suggest that our condition is hopeless,” said 1931 president V.B.. Leonard. “I fully believe that our problem can, and, to a great extent, will be solved; and that we will continue to live on our farms in much the same comfort as in the past. The big job before us today is to ‘meet conditions.’” This air of cautious optimism contrasts surprisingly with the gloomy atmosphere that accompanied the economic downswing of the early twenties. But perhaps the very fact that Nova Scotia farmers had so recently survived this other “trying” period helped equip them to face the thirties with modest confidence. At least one of the many anti-depression strategies invoked at NSFA meetings certainly had a familiar ring to it. Once again co-operation was the most popular topic for guest speakers, though each of them seemed to attach his own particular meaning to the term. To C.N.R. Superintendent of Agriculture F.W. Walsh, in 1931, co-operation was almost a spiritual ideal - a restructuring of the social order along Christian lines. To W.H. McEwan, manager of the Canadian Livestock Co-operative (Maritime), speaking eight years later, it was an economic ideal - the substitution of the “service motive” for the profit motive, which he called “the root cause of war and the evils attendant upon unequal distribution of wealth”. To Prof. A.B. MacDonald in 1934 the practical value of co-operation far outweighed its abstract attractions. “Co-operation in the abstract is a very fine thing to talk about,” he said. “You can bring tears to the eyes of a downtrodden farmer. But that is not much good unless it is applied in the solving of the problems of the farmers, so what we should do is apply the principles of co-operation in all our endeavors.” MacDonald’s solution to the farmer’s economic ills was co-operative purchasing power on a province wide scale. Only Melville Cumming now provincial marketing director, cautioned in 1932 that the “real test of co-operation centers around the loyalty of those groups of farmers who have benefitted from the operation of the co-operative body during the period when it does not give any substantial gains.”

But the farmers of Nova Scotia did not need to be told of the nature and benefits of co-opera-

tion - they were already giving the principle active and growing support. In 1935 the provincial government passed a new act on co-operation - the Nova Scotia Co-operative Association Act - which greatly facilitated the foundation of small-scale co-operative enterprises. Under this act any group of five subscribers could petition the government's Inspector of Co-operatives for permission to form their own co-op. If approved, the new co-op would have to file annual financial reports and lists of directors and maintain a fixed reserve fund from its yearly surpluses, but these regulations could not have been too difficult to uphold, for in the ten years following the act's passage about one hundred new co-ops appeared in the province. The growth of the co-op movement was so great, in fact, that in the early forties a Nova Scotia Co-operative Union was formed to protect and promote co-operative interests. Of the major co-operative companies established in the twenties, the Canadian Livestock Co-operative (Maritime), formerly the Maritime Livestock Marketing Board, displayed the most impressive progress.

The depression also brought more calls for rational marketing techniques. Throughout the early thirties, Dr. Cumming regularly reminded his listeners that maintaining consistently high quality in farm produce was essential during a period of restricted markets. "The markets today are so insistent upon quality, which includes good grading and packing, that it is practically impossible to sell much of the produce which formerly found its way to market," he noted in 1931. "I cannot therefore too strongly recommend that farmers grow varieties which are in favor on the market; that they rigorously grade the crop after it has been harvested; and that they do not hesitate to spend the extra few cents necessary to obtain new bags or other packages which will place their products on the market in a way that will appeal to the trade." Later that year Cumming's office started a campaign to encourage Nova Scotia shopkeepers and consumers to "Buy Nova Scotian Products and Make Nova Scotia Prosperous," but the initiative only met with limited success. Three years later in his president's address, I-I .E. Chisholm remarked that "when a merchant in Nova Scotia wishes a carload or half a carload of turkeys, it is easier for him to wire to an organization such as the Egg and Poultry Pool in Western Canada, and when the purchase has been made he has no further worry as to the quality of the products purchased."

Nova Scotians were not, however, quite ready for the strict regulations of marketing boards. In 1935 the Supreme Court struck down a national marketing act, attempted by the Bennett government, because it violated provincial trade jurisdiction. Several provinces then introduced their own marketing legislation, but in Nova Scotia agricultural opinion was still divided on the subject. At the 1934 meeting teams from Guysborough and Annapolis counties faced off to formally debate the question. The affirmative side contended that the free market system had grown outmoded, particularly for a small and relatively uncompetitive region like Nova Scotia. Marketing legislation such as was already operating successfully in Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and parts of the United States would, they said, bring stability, security and fairness to the otherwise chaotic agricultural industry. "The law of supply and demand is not fixed such as the law of gravity or any other law of the universe, but is created by human needs, and the scheme we

advocate will scientifically create supply to demand and thus eliminate an over-supply at any particular time and a shortage at another time,” Thomas Ferguson, captain of the affirmative, concluded. The negative side, however, argued that marketing boards represented nothing more than government price fixing, and ancient tactic which had been tried time and time again and always found wanting. “(Just) think for a moment what this would lead to if we should adopt this kind of marketing in Nova Scotia...,” said captain V.B. Leonard, “We might all be government officials and what a fine time we would have trying to pull ourselves out by our bootstraps.” (The judges disagreed and gave the victory to the affirmative.)

Another subject that received some attention was the cost of production, though the experts disagreed about how to lower it. The most positive step taken by the NSFA was its policy of pressuring the provincial government to subsidize limestone purchases. In 1931 the association voted to ask the government to make limestone available at \$2.50 a ton, about \$1.50 lower than the going rate.- The department of agriculture met this request partway, bringing the price down to \$3.50, but the association stood by its previous demand, and in 1934 added a call for community limestone crushing in remote areas. The following - year the department both complied with this proposal and reduced the limestone price to \$2.75 a ton.

For a time, taxation and the high cost of government caught the interest of financially strapped NSFA members. At the 1933 convention, A.H. Cutten of Truro asserted that the average family tax burden in Canada had more than doubled - from \$144.10 to \$356.10 - since 1913. Cutten had no doubt this increase was largely due to the rapid growth of government in response to public demands for social services. “We are drifting toward socialism too fast by going to governments for everything the mind of men can conceive of,” he warned. But the flirtation with government slashing was brief. In 1937 the association rejected a resolution calling for an actual reduction in the number of government bodies.

One specific tax issue did, however, receive more than passing notice from the Farmers Association. During the First World War, when jobs had been plentiful, the province had lowered the assessment age for the poii tax from 21 to 18. But by the 1930’s few boys could afford to pay the annual five dollar rate, three dollars of which was supposed to go to the Dept. of Highways. The leftover tax burden ended up either on the shoulders of the boy’s fathers, or if they refused to pay, in the lap of the municipality when the highways department came around for its yearly cut.- The association passed resolutions calling for a return to the assessment age of twenty-one years in 1934, 1936, and 1937 before the provincial government finally complied.

The NSFA also concerned itself with improving the discouraging state of farm credit. In 1931, it approved a resolution asking the provincial government to make arrangements with the banks allowing farmers to secure longer term loans at lower interest rates. “I do not believe that the men with sufficient money that they do not need to borrow realize how the banks are using us poorer people,” remarked C. Perry Foote of Lakeville. Two years later the association endorsed

the provincial government's decision to legalize rural credit unions, but it would take some time for the average farmer to feel the full benefit of these institutions.

And as if it didn't have its hands full coping with the depression alone, the Farmer's Association found itself having to battle certain economic policies of the federal government. When the Conservatives of R..B. Bennett took office in 1930 they brought in a sweeping program of protectionism, parts of which survived after MacKenzie King's Liberals returned to power in 1935. Nova Scotia farmers had no quarrel with this policy in general, but they vehemently opposed two specific elements of it - the duties on imported fertilizer and farm machinery. Calling the fertilizer duty "an injustice", members were particularly incensed that chemical fertilizers could still enter the country free for use by commercial manufacturers, but not for farmers who did their own mixing. Their protests about both duties fell on deaf ears, however.- Resolution followed resolution for the rest of the decade, with no discernable result. The NSFA directors also called for an "exhaustive investigation" of the farm machinery industry, but when a federal parliamentary committee completed such an inquiry four years later its results were judged unsatisfactory. Not all of Canada's tariff policies hurt Nova Scotia farmers, though. In 1931 Canada decided to allow corn imported from British possessions for farm feed into the country free. And in 1932 the Nova Scotia fruit industry benefitted from a trade preference negotiated at the Imperial conference in Ottawa, though an agreement six years later reduced the advantage by one-third..

With the return to power of the provincial Liberals, now under Angus L. MacDonald, in 1933, two prominent farmers joined the provincial cabinet. John A. McDonald, recognized as one of the province's top farmers, assumed the post of Minister of Agriculture, while A.S. MacMillan, a former NSFA President, became Minister of Highways. MacMillan would go on to serve as premier for five years while Angus L. MacDonald took a leave of absence from partisan politics to help administer the Canadian war effort.- But surprisingly this infiltration did not produce a new era of close co-operation between the government and Farmer's Association. No sooner had John McDonald taken over the agriculture department than a bitter power struggle erupted between he and Harry Brown.- According to Brown, the dispute began with a disagreement about where the association should hold its annual meeting-. In 1933 the association moved its regular venue from Truro to Halifax to take advantage of lower rates offered by a hotel there. But McDonald didn't want the association to meet in the provincial capital. Just as the 1934 meeting was assembling in Halifax, he sent word to Brown that unless the meeting was moved he would withhold the NSFA's grant. Brown and the rest of the NSFA directors threatened to resign and make the matter public, but drastic action was averted when Whitfield Ells, a director and constituent of McDonald's privately convinced the minister to hand over the cheque.

From then on, according to Brown's later recollections, McDonald waged a campaign to discredit Brown. But one must be wary of swallowing this side of the story whole. In fact, over his twelve years as minister of agriculture, McDonald gained a reputation as a firm supporter of the interests of farmers. And in 1945 he would achieve the rare distinction of being appointed to the

Senate without first having been turned out of office by the electorate. The feud between McDonald and Brown can perhaps best be explained as the clash of two strong egos, both of whom were convinced they knew what was best for the farmers of Nova Scotia.

Despite the depression, the Farmer's Association continued to devote most of its attention to "business as usual." In 1932 it began to take steps to aid young men who wanted to get started in farming. "Up and down this country today, if a young man 25 years old wants to start farming, unless his father can start him, it is almost impossible for him to buy a farm," said V.B. Leonard. The following year the government amended the Provincial Land Settlement Act to permit young men who had graduated from the agricultural college, been members of boy's clubs, or who simply had practical farm experience, to take out loans of up to \$3,000, but only for the purchase of land, not for stock or equipment.

This discussion brought to the NSFA's attention other parts of the Land Settlement Act which were intended to help unemployed miners settle on unoccupied farms. One delegate, a Mr. McWilliams of the Pictou United Farmers, denounced these measures as nothing more than a plan of government relief for miners. "You can make a miner out of a farmer, but you can't make a farmer out of a miner," he said. This view was supported by Dr. W.-V. Longley, provincial Director of Extension Services, who reported that some of his agricultural representatives were spending two-thirds of their hours working on land settlement, leaving them little time for more important tasks like marketing. The association then passed a resolution asking the government to find someone else to do this work.

Animal damage resurfaced as a topic of serious concern in the thirties. Oddly enough, though, the biggest threat farmers perceived was not any wild beast, but the tame deer, which was thriving under protective game laws and doing considerable harm to crops. In 1931 the association asked the provincial government to amend its game laws to allow a farmer to keep the meat from any deer he killed while it was causing damage to his farm. The government responded by allowing farmers to kill deer on their land, but only if they could prove the animal had done damage to their property. A.M. Gates of Kemptville, summed up farmers' feelings about this stipulation, "When you catch a thief you don't wait to see if he is going to steal 10 or \$10. You deal with him at once." In 1937 the association asked that open season on deer be extended to one month and that each hunter be permitted to keep one deer of either sex. The government relented on these proposals, but held fast to its "burden of proof" clause. Other animals to draw the NSFA's wrath were muskrats, bears and, once again, stray dogs.

The provincial exhibition continued to be the subject of much discussion and controversy. Over the previous three decades, the fair's success had been erratic, but in 1931 optimism about the fair's prospects ran higher than ever. "Today we have in Halifax the finest exhibition plant and equipment in the East," Exhibition Commissioner D.R. Nicholson boasted. "This plant cost the province, the city of Halifax and the commission over \$700,000. All this, gentlemen, is yours."

However, the manner in which some of these new facilities had been financed soon became a source of misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. The province and city of Halifax had covered the \$477,000 cost of the first phase of reconstruction in the late twenties through grants, which left no impression on the fair's deficit. But a second plant, costing \$267,000, was paid for through a mortgage scheme that inflated the exhibition's annual deficit several times, to close to \$30,000.- To uninformed critics this large red figure suggested gross financial mismanagement. The NSFA's two commissioner's lobbied unsuccessfully for several years to have this financial arrangement changed.

Far deeper criticism concerned what many NSFA members felt were the uncertain or misguided priorities of the exhibition management. Throughout the thirties a constant tug of war raged within the Exhibition Commission over the timing of the Fair.- While the Halifax members of the commission preferred staging the exhibition in late August, when fair weather was most likely to attract big crowds, the NSFA representatives pressed to have it held in late October, arguing this was the only time a satisfactory agricultural show could be presented. A couple of times the NSFA won its way, but a few days of rain or a few less paying customers were all that was needed to have the exhibition pushed ahead again. To many NSFA delegates, this dispute, coupled with the age-old disagreement about the proper place of "amusements" at the exhibition, brought into serious question the credibility of the Halifax fair as an agricultural exhibition. "A provincial exhibition is unnecessary, I think, and is a bill of expense...of no use to the farmers," said A.M. Gates in 1935. "If it cannot be put on a paying basis, what is the good of it?" In 1937 the government finally banned the operation of gambling booths at the exhibition. Exhibition Commissioner V.B. Leonard reported that though there had been strong opposition to this measure within the commission, the NSFA's representatives stood firmly behind the government's decision. The membership overwhelmingly supported this position.

The Farmers' Association also maintained its interest in rural education during the thirties and early forties. Its criticisms were neither new or radical for the NSFA, but behind them lay some deep doubts about the direction of public education in Nova Scotia. "We...almost view with alarm the present educational tendencies which appear to us as being diametrically opposed to the best interests of the rural population of our country," said Perry Foote in 1934, on behalf of the NSFA Rural Education Committee. "We refer to the apparent trend of education which apparently provides that all children are to be fitted for attendance at our higher institutions of learning." Foote argued that instruction in natural science and bookkeeping would be of far greater use to the average farm boy leaving school in grade nine than "a smattering of French and Latin." A.W. MacKenzie, an employee of the Department of Agriculture, agreed. "As far as our educational system goes we have built up probably a wonderful system for taking boys and girls and working them through the common school and high school and college and sending them to some place outside of Nova Scotia," he said at the 1935 meeting. "But for the large per cent, which I think should run to 80% or 85% in the rural districts, where the pupil gets to the seventh, eighth or ninth grade, we have been leaving them high and dry without any foot-

ing.” At least one member, though, worried about taking too narrow an approach to education. “Are we not losing sight of one important point?” asked W.G. Oulton of Windsor in 1935. “The educational curriculum must be suited to the province as a whole. They teach things that every person should know, no matter what they are following.” In 1941, two NSFA appointees, Rev. Dr. Hugh MacPherson and Rev. A.S. Hart, released a report calling for a system of rural high schools, which would provide complete vocational training for agriculture. The minutes of the 1942 meeting record that MacPherson and Hart’s report was “favorably received,” but only after 11.11. Blois of Halifax warned members against any tendency towards “caste education.” Said Blois: I would not favor any system of education that says this boy is fitted only for a farmer and he must stay on the farm. I do not think it is our place to determine that the other fellow should stay on the farm. Fit the boys for the best of life and let them take what they like. Provide them with the knowledge to choose.

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College received undiminished support from the Farmers’ Association, despite a brief but sharp drop in enrolment at the beginning of the thirties. In 1935 the NSFA began calling upon the provincial government to place the college under its own fully independent Board of Trustees so that employees would not have to worry about losing their jobs every time the government changed. The legislators in Halifax, however, were not quite ready to move this far. The previous year a bill had been introduced in the legislature to create just such a board, but by the time members on both sides of the house had reportedly finished watering the idea down all that remained was a weak advisory committee. In 1937 the association added a request that a dormitory be built for the college. The Minister of Agriculture pledged support to this project, but unfortunately he was forced to shelf it after the outbreak of World War II. Not all news from the college was bad, though. In 1938 the NSFA applauded the recent establishment of new departments in Agricultural Engineering and Agronomy.

Another continuing concern of the Farmers Association was livestock quality. In 1931 the association called for legislation that would enable cattle owners to designate their localities “pure bred cattle areas,” within which only pure bred sires approved by the department of agriculture could be used for breeding purposes. This motion was soon translated into law, but it proved less successful than a new bull bonusing policy, announced five years later by Eric Boulden, the Provincial superintendent of agriculture. Over the next four years, the number of advanced registry bulls in the province increased from 38 to 120 and the number of cows bred grew from 12,714 to 15,058. Boar and ram bonusing soon followed.

In the mid-thirties the NSFA began to take seriously the threat of contagious abortion, commonly known as Bang’s Disease. In 1939 it asked the federal government to place Bang’s Disease under the Contagious Disease Act, the same legislation that provided for the creation of TB restricted zones. The federal government didn’t comply, but the following year the provincial department of agriculture organized a limited testing plan under which the province would pay for a veterinarian to perform the test for Bang’s Disease in any community within twenty-five miles

where “all the owners of 100 head” consented. In 1941 the service was extended to those owning fifty or more head.

But the main thrust of the NSFA’s campaign for livestock improvement continued to be directed against bovine tuberculosis. At the time of the first province-wide TB test in 1927 the province’s Conservative government had promised to hold a required second test, as well as a first test for Cape Breton, within two years. However, partisan politics turned the program into an untouchable issue for years to come. The Conservatives chose to blame the heavy losses they sustained in the 1928 election on the TB test, which the Liberals had strongly opposed. They were therefore reluctant, in spite of the NSFA’s pleas, to carry it any further during their remaining five years in power. And things only got worse after the Liberals swept the Tories out of office in 1933. The party which had scored so many points fighting the test could hardly be expected to do a complete about-face now that it was in office - at least, not immediately.

Nevertheless, in 1936 the government - responding more to the urgings of F.W.Walsh, the new director of marketing, than to the NSFA’s yearly protest - found a way of conceding without losing face. The farmers could have their test - if they repeated the whole process of petitioning all the province’s cattle owners, without the help of any departmental employee, and again obtained a two-thirds majority in each county. Brown and the NSFA directors cried foul, claiming that under federal regulations the original petitions were still valid, but there was really little they could do but try to make the best of a bad situation. The farmers began their herculean task that summer at two “ends” of the province - Yarmouth and Cumberland Counties - in the hope of gradually progressing inward. In October the department of agriculture made a gesture toward generosity by granting the association \$500 to help meet the expenses of members circulating TB petitions, but this sum was only enough to get the project started.. Moreover, the minister of agriculture irritated Brown by suggesting that the association would have to report back to the department on how the money was being spent. Brown reminded McDonald that the NSFA was financially accountable for its own directors. In 1938 the association made a last ditch attempt to change the government’s mind, demanding it declare immediately that a second test would be held unless within six months a petition opposing the move was signed by farmers owning over one-third of the province’s cattle - but to no avail. No test would be permitted until the petitions were distributed and signed, and no government official would be allowed to help circulate the petitions.

Eventually, the farmers managed by the sweat of their own brows to establish a TB restricted zone in Nova Scotia. Once testing began in Yarmouth and the northern counties around 1940, petitions spread quickly throughout the rest of the province and the process was virtually complete by the end of the war. But the whole frustrating experience left a bitter taste in the mouths of NSFA leaders, making many yearn for the day when no government would dare ignore the interests of organized agriculture.

The NSFA dealt with a few other topics of interest during the thirties. In 1931, following the lead

of Quebec farmers, it began a competition to honour farmers who excelled in their profession. Farmers judged top in the province were named “Scotia Premier Farmers”, while the best in each county received the title “Scotia Banner Farmer”. A third award, “Scotia Honour Farmer”, was introduced in 1932 for those who had contributed to Nova Scotia agriculture but who were not eligible for other awards. Also in 1932 the association adopted its present emblem of clasped hands over the motto “In Union - Strength.” The NSFA made its first attempt to get provincial weed control legislation in 1931, some thirty-six years before an act would eventually be passed. It didn’t have to wait quite so long, though, for a provincial veterinarian to be appointed. The government granted that request after only seven years’ lobbying. On another issue the NSFA made a complete reversal of policy within ten years. In 1931 the directors came out against systemized snow ploughing, arguing it would interfere with the farmers’ sleighs. By 1937 they lowered their demands to eight inches of snow on main rural roads, and four years later the association gave in completely. The car, it seems, now reigned supreme.

Not all events of consequence to the NSFA occurred at annual meetings, or even in the halls of Province House. In 1934 a group of farmers in far-off British Columbia, upset that they were unable to obtain legislation permitting them to control prices, began a movement which would soon span the nation. At the 1936 meeting Brown read a letter from the recently formed B.C. Chamber of Agriculture inviting the NSFA to send delegates to the founding convention of a new national farmers’ organization later that year. The B.C. farmers hoped this new body would give all the country’s farm associations and co-operatives one strong, united voice, matching in influence the labour movement and big business. In November 1935 two Nova Scotia delegates joined farmers and co-operators from all across Canada in Toronto to found the Canadian Chamber of Agriculture. Eight months later a regional chapter, the Maritime Chamber of Agriculture, was born in Moncton. At its 1937 meeting the NSFA pledged full support to both fledglings, though more than a few members had doubts about their chances for success. “The new Canadian Chamber of Agriculture may be a good thing,” said President R.J. Smeltzer, “But to me it seems to be built in the clouds, and few people can give a logical idea of its value.” But such skepticism was not widespread. In spite of a slow start in the Maritimes, the CCA made rapid strides and fast became recognized as the leading voice for Canadian agriculture. In 1940 both chambers of agriculture renamed themselves federations of agriculture.

During the thirties the NSFA’s new constitution was tested in practice with mixed results. In certain respects, the 1929 reorganization achieved its aims. The resurrected county farmers’ associations had become, if not vibrant, then at least functional channels for local concern, providing many of the resolutions later debated at NSFA conventions. At the provincial level, the NSFA acquired a larger measure of stability through both its new delegate system, which ensured fair and evenly distributed representation from all parts of the province, and its graduated fee structure, which put the organizations’ finances on firmer ground. Annual meetings traded a little color for efficiency, concerning themselves a bit less with guest speakers and over-excited debate and a bit more with forming reasonable policies. And the farmers themselves, instead of departmental

employees, were now doing most of the talking.

But the 1929 constitution failed to cure many of the NSFA's chronic ills. Brown and Dr. Trueman, the two main architects of the reorganization, had tried to compensate for the hopelessly limited scope of the agricultural societies by allowing other community organizations to join on equal terms at the county level. The two had neglected one significant detail, though - agricultural societies received hefty government grants, out of which they could easily pay their 20¢ per capita membership fee; other farm groups did not. In other words, while agricultural society members belonged to the NSFA automatically and virtually free of charge, members of other local groups would have to pay out of their own pockets if they wanted to join. Not surprisingly, few community clubs or co-ops felt very enthusiastic about coming in to the NSFA under these terms. Indeed, to many outsiders the Farmers' Association looked increasingly like nothing more than a government-subsidized cattle breeders' club with delusions of grandeur. As Dr. Longley put it in 1935: "I can never see why the agricultural societies which are supported by grants from the government should built up an organization and call themselves a Provincial Farmers' Association, when we have the Fruit Growers' Association and Poultry Association, Fox Breeders' Association and various other clubs that have just as much right to call themselves the Provincial Farmers' Association as the agricultural societies have...(Why) call this the Provincial Farmers' Association, when we have equally strong organizations clearly optional? It seems to me we should call this the Annual Meeting of the Agricultural Societies."

All this only mired NSFA membership down at an unsatisfactorily low level. While estimates placed the number of bona fide farmers in Nova Scotia at anywhere between 20,000 and 40,000, total membership in the NSFA through the agricultural societies was stuck in the five to six thousand range - a "ridiculously small" figure, according to the 1935 directors' report. Moreover, nobody could be sure how many of these agricultural society members were genuinely devoted to the association. Only about fifty delegates were invited to the NSFA's convention each year, many of whom became annual fixtures, so there may have been no more than a few hundred farmers in the province who had actually had direct contact with the association. Brown, for one, believed low membership sapped the association's moral weight. "It has amazed me at different times," he said in 1935, "to see the delegates coming in here and soberly discussing questions and passing resolutions thinking they were doing something; and as far as any action that can be obtained by the passing of these resolutions, the whole bunch might just as well have been put in a river to swell the tide." No experience better exemplified this truth for Brown than the acute frustration of trying to convince the government that the farmers of Nova Scotia really wanted a TB test. "We went last year and they said, 'Who are you? You don't represent 2% of the farmers in this province,' and coming down to it, it was pretty nearly right, It is all right to say go and have this thing put through, but how are they going to do it when they know very well that you don't actually represent the voice of the province?" A legislative accident unexpectedly gave the Farmers' Association further cause to consider changes to its internal structure. In 1932 the provincial government discovered it had inadvertently never approved the by-laws the associa-

tion had passed with its 1929 constitution. The 1933 convention attempted to correct this by drafting another set of by-laws along the same lines as those originally submitted, but these were rejected by the government because they did not accord with the constitution on a few minor details. The government did agree, though, to remove certain sections of the 1929 constitution in the expectation that a new set of by-laws passed the next year would cover these points. But this strategy backfired when the by-laws passed at the 1934 meeting were also declared unacceptable, leaving the association with only a truncated constitution. The whole comic sequence of events came to its illogical conclusion when Brown learned from the provincial Deputy Attorney General that the NSFA was no longer, strictly speaking, a legal based organization.

Nonetheless, with the tacit approval of the government, the NSFA carried on as usual, though it was careful to keep its constitutional uncertainties out of the press.. In 1935 and 1936 a committee presented proposals for an entirely new Act of Incorporation, but one of its recommendations sparked considerable controversy. The committee, led by Brown, called for removal of the right of other provincial agricultural organizations - such as the Fruit Growers' and Poultrymen's Associations - to send two delegates each to the NSFA convention. Several members strenuously opposed this move. "The purpose of this convention is to obtain the view points of the farmers on general policies," said W.G. Oulton. "I maintained that that viewpoint cannot be obtained without the co-operation of these other organizations... Why they should be cut out I don't understand.." Brown, however, contended that the members of these other groups would do themselves and the NSFA more good by joining at the county level than by merely sending a couple of delegates to the annual meeting. "Our object, as I understand it today, and as I have understood it ever since we re-organized," he said, "is to get just as many individual farmers into these local units as we possibly can, so that our county or district organization, association and convention will be representative of the farmers within the area covered by that district association, and from them delegates to the provincial organization, which will be as representative as possible of the farmers of the entire province...What we want is not two delegates representing the 2000 members but we want 25 or 30 delegates representing the 2000 and they will then have some say.

This whole issue may have seemed fairly trivial - after all, as several members pointed out, the attendance of a few extra delegates made little difference to the over-all operation of the association. But behind this dispute lay strong feelings about the relationship between the NSFA and other provincial farm organizations. Was the NSFA really the supreme representative of farmers in Nova Scotia? Or was it merely one of many organizations representing a particular aspect of the agriculture industry - in this case, the "bull societies?" Brown always maintained that the Farmers' Association should be pre-eminent -the united voice of all Nova Scotia farmers. But others were willing to admit that in practice certain interests were better represented by specialized groups, such as the NSFGA, and that therefore the Farmers' Association should recognize these organizations' special status. In the end, the association resolved this dilemma by ignoring it. In 1937 the association approved yet another set of proposed by-laws, which this time dropped all references to the composition of the annual meeting. The government further blurred the situa-

tion by duly rejecting the package, once again because of legal technicalities.

Meanwhile, the NSFA had not yet given up entirely its hopes of reforming the agricultural societies. A reduction in the government grant to agricultural societies in 1933 prompted the association's directors to call for basic changes to the system of funding societies, which at that time encouraged farmers to fragment these groups in order to get more money... Instead of simply giving each agricultural society a set amount, the directors recommended that grants be varied according to the work done by each society. However, the man charged with supervising agricultural societies disagreed with this stand, saying it would be impossible to administer.. "Some of the societies that put in the poorest reports so far as bookkeeping is concerned, I think are doing the best work," Eric Boulden said in 1937.. "We had one report with an 'x' on it for the signature of the secretary, but I am not disparaging that. He may be doing better work than those who have too much education."

In October 1938, in the midst of the NSFA's constitutional muddle, Harry Brown resigned. Ill health finally slowed down the tireless secretary-treasurer, who had for twelve years somehow managed to juggle the hectic duties of his office with the full-time obligations of a family and farm. Though his blunt and controversial nature irked some, few could question Brown's commitment to Nova Scotia farm organization. During his term he had wrested the Farmers' Association from a state of near vassalage to the department of agriculture and set it on the path to greater independence and prestige. With the deaths of Fred Fuller in 1932 and Dr. J.M. Trueman in 1937, Brown's departure seemed to complete a "changing of the guard" in the NSFA. Brown would go on to serve Nova Scotia agriculture in a variety of capacities and, in later years, win renown for his histories of Cumberland County. His successor, announced at the 1939 convention was none other than Dr. W.Saxby Blair, recently retired provincial Superintendent of Experimental Farms and a long-time friend of the association. In 1938 a special committee released its recommendations on how to save the NSFA from its constitutional morass. After reciting the well-known problems with the agricultural societies, committee chairman J.A. Moore of Shinimicas presented three possible courses of action. First, the association could dispense with the agricultural society and replace it with a strictly geographical subdivision of the county. Secondly, the NSFA itself could be eliminated and replaced by a provincial farmers' council, drawn from the various commodity-based organizations. And thirdly, the present set-up could be retained with a few modifications. The report favoured the third option. Under this plan, the grant to agricultural societies would be increased to \$15,000 (it had plunged from \$20,000 in 1923 to less than \$10,000 by 1936) and each society would be funded according to membership and activity. More diversity would be achieved at the county level by permitting groups other than agricultural societies to join at bargain rates. And the province would hand a special grant of up to \$100 to each county association to cover the costs of reaching out to these groups.

All parties concerned quickly accepted this scheme. In 1939 the government translated the plan almost word for word into legislation and, in the process, finally put the NSFA safely back into the

statute books. The new Agriculture and Marketing Act -a revision of various existing laws governing agricultural administration and organization - authorized the suggested grants to agricultural societies and county associations and set the membership rate for other local farm groups at 10 per capita. To the associations's chagrin, however, the government also reduced the tax on county associations from 10 per member to in the hope of giving the NSFA even greater incentive to gather new members. Fearing financial ruin, the association anxiously asked for, and received, the reversal of this provision.

After a dozen years of almost constant constitutional debate, NSFA members could have been forgiven for expecting the 1939 formula to settle the matter once and for all. But this was not to be. The new arrangement did entice some new groups into the association, but not nearly as many as its planners had originally wished for. By 1942 the association had gained 904 new members from outside the agricultural societies - far short of the nearly 4000 co-operative members optimistic NSFA leaders had aimed at recruiting in 1939. At the 1942 convention Dr. Blair noted that not all counties had done enough organizational work to qualify for their full \$100 grant.

More serious than this difficulty, though, was the grave budgetary crisis that hit the association soon after the 1939 act came into effect. In 1941, Blair reported that expected expenses for the coming year would exceed revenue by \$600, not counting the \$100 cut in pay he was willing to give himself. The main culprit for this crisis was the high cost of printing and distributing about 8,000 copies of the associations's large annual report. A special budget committee recommended taxing each county association an extra 5 per member above the regular levy to cover the cost of the report, but this was only a remedial measure. It had become obvious that the association could no longer afford to pay for the services expected from it. Instead of dropping membership rates to induce new members, the Farmers' Association now clearly had to contemplate raising its fees across the board substantially.

With these problems in mind, the association's newly formed committee on Co-operation and Co-ordination took another, closer, look at the first option presented by Moore in 1938 - geographical subdivision of the county association. In 1943, the committee recommended that the NSFA finally cut its long outdated formal ties with the agricultural societies and create two new levels of farm organization: the community club and the district farmers' association. Any local organization - a co-op store, a credit union, a co-op creamery, a women's institute or, indeed, an agricultural society - could qualify as a community club, as long as at least one such group existed in each rural school section of the province. These clubs would meet regularly at central locations under the title of district farmers' associations, the geographically defined branches of the county associations. Each district association would be entitled to send five members to the annual county meeting, and the district association would replace the agricultural society as the formal source of the NSFA membership. In this way, the committee hoped the Farmers' Association would penetrate each and every rural community in Nova Scotia, forging an unbroken chain

of organized agriculture from the humblest farm village to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in Ottawa.

The committee on Co-operation and Co-ordination also proposed another radical break with tradition - complete financial independence from the provincial government. Ever since its formation in 1895, the NSFA had received a \$1000 annual grant from the province.. Although this public money allowed the association to operate at a minimal cost to members, it also provided a powerful lever for government interference and made the association look more than a little suspect to some observers. Harry Brown had always wanted to free the association from this troublesome dependency, but he never felt he had enough popular support to attempt the drastic step. By 1943, however, attitudes had changed. Not a single dissenting voice was heard when committee members W.G. Oulton called for a large increase in membership fees to render government assistance unnecessary. Now the only question seemed to be; by how much? "It is said we should be ashamed of ourselves for our contribution to organized agriculture," remarked J.H. MacKichan of Cleveland. "We must have more. What should the farmer pay? There have been a few, moved by the spirit, who said \$5.00. I think that it will be just a little difficult to get \$5.00 from every farm in Nova Scotia and possibly, with a little discretion, I would suggest that if we had \$1.00 from every active farm in Nova Scotia finding its way back into the central organization, then we would be getting somewhere ."

At the 1943 convention the association approved these constitutional changes in principle, but voted to delay their implementation two years until trial runs were completed in three counties - Inverness, Hants and Yarmouth. Early results were so encouraging, however, that the very next year the membership voted to go full steam ahead with the full reorganization. In March 1944 the government formalized the plan through amendments to the 1939 act, and the following month the NSFA hired its first full-time secretary-treasurer, C.T. Fitzrandolph of Bridgetown. (For his contributions to the reorganization, Dr. Blair was given the title of NSFA "Honourary President" until his death in 1967.) The provincial agricultural department lent the Farmers' Association invaluable assistance in carrying the new message of farm organization to every corner of the province, but there were some misgivings in Halifax about finally loosening the NSFA's knot.. "(We) take for granted that the farmers do not want their organization used for political purposes either now or in the future," said John MacDonald in December 1944.. "In fact, we cannot envision the sound farmers of this province stepping out of the realm for which they are being organized and entering into active political participation, especially in light of the unfortunate political experiences of farm organizations in other parts of Canada."

The 1944 constitution would prove far more lasting than its two immediate predecessors, but it was no miracle cure. Reality soon swept away the initial objective of recruiting 40,000 members ("every farmer and one son").. By the end of 1944 the NSFA's total membership stood at a humble six thousand - actually a drop from recent years, though the directors were quick to point out that the new members were more dedicated because they had all consciously chosen

to join.. But this meagre figure didn't just wound the NSFA's pride; it also hit the association in the pocketbook. For its first few years under reorganization, the association could only keep afloat with special donations from member groups and individuals.. In December 1944 it attempted to drag itself out of the hole by revising the constitution to permit farmers' sons and wives to swell its ranks and by adjusting its fee structure so that 50 out of every membership dollar went to the provincial organization. At the same time the directors scaled down their recruitment goal to a more reasonable ten to twelve thousand members.

In September 1939 Nova Scotia again felt the dreadful tremors of erupting world conflict. The exigencies of war would force a fundamental reassessment of the relationship between the farmer, society and government. For the first time the federal government would systematically intervene in the agricultural industry to control production and ensure reasonable returns to farmers. The free market was hardly discarded overnight, but once farmers began to feel the benefits of these policies, they became very reluctant to turn back the clock.

In 1940 the King government began holding annual meetings with the provincial ministers of agriculture to set productivity goals for the coming year. It also established a Wartime Prices and Trade Board, which fixed maximum and minimum prices for farm produce. The Farmers' Association had no objection to price ceilings, but it insisted they be set higher than the cost of production and accompanied by fair minimum prices.. In 1944 the federal government enacted a "floor prices" act, Canada's first legislation designed to stabilize returns at profitable levels. W.G. Outlon, the NSFA representative to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, called this act, "a victory for organized agriculture." "During these war years consumers had been supplied with comparatively cheap foods," he said.. "If in the post-war period it is the continued policy to provide cheap foods for our workers, the responsibility must continue to be that of the people as a whole, and not the responsibility of farmers alone."

In addition, governments initiated various assistance policies during the war, the most significant of which was undoubtedly the eastern freight rate subsidy.¹ For years Nova Scotia farmers had protested the inequitable federal transport policy which allowed Western feed grain to be shipped eastward at a far lower rate for export than for domestic use. In 1941 war-time conditions at last forced the federal government to right this inequity by providing a full subsidy, less 50 per ton, on all feed grain freighted to eastern farmers. The benefits were felt almost immediately.. At the 1942 convention, F.W. Walsh, now director of marketing, reported that in October 1941 the price of northern wheat was \$28.49 per ton, down from \$62.35 fifteen years before, while feed barley had dropped from \$42.27 to \$26.38 per ton over the same period.

Another important development of the war years was the rapid rise to prominence of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.. Almost from the beginning of the war, the King government recognized the young federation as the legitimate representative of Canadian farmers and consulted its leaders on nearly all matters related to agricultural policy. By the middle of the war, the

CFA had representatives on no less than fifteen government advisory committees and sat as a full partner at all Dominion-Provincial conferences on agriculture. "What a contrast to just a few years ago when farmers were knocking on the door but were not admitted", W.G. Oulton said in December 1944.. "They are not only being admitted to the National Council, but are being made welcome, and that is as it should be." In 1941 the CFA opened a national office in Ottawa, and by the end of 1944 its membership topped 350,000.

During the First World War, farm leaders had exhorted their brethren to produce selflessly for King and country. This timethe rhetoric was again patriotic, but with a distinctly more militant tinge. Nova Scotia farmers were more than willing to contribute their fair share to the war effort, as long as it was not to their own long-time detriment. The lessons of the early twenties, when farmers saw a war-time boom quickly fade into peace-time bust, had apparently not been forgotten. "The farmers are soldiers on the land," remarked C..M. Davies of Clarence in 1940. "They must produce the munitions of war on the land, and if it is right for the manufacturer to produce the munitions of war at cost plus ten per cent, a farmer has the right to produce his munitions at cost plus ten per cent, irrespective of the fact of whether the person that buys them can afford them or not. The supply and demand market says produce less because of the cost of production, but we are told to produce more.. Therefore the law of supply and demand does not hold true at all." The oratory became a bit more traditionally jingoistic during the darker, middle years of the war, but, as soon as victory appeared certain, farmers asserted their right to a piece of the post-war pie. "The time has come when we must get returns, so that we, who are engaged in agriculture, can pay our employees a wage equal to that in any other industry, as well as provide for the needs and education of our families," said outgoing President Charles Munn in January 1944. "In short, a farmer should be able to enjoy the same standard of living as those who consume his product."

Sometimes this militancy bordered on the radical and idealistic. At the 1943 convention, which centered on the theme of co- operation, several speakers compared the faults of the old world order - based on greed, competition and conflict - with the virtues of the new, more humane society they hoped would emerge after the war. "In my opinion," said W.H. McEwan, "we cannot justly lay all the blame for this war on any enemy power when the fruits of our own country's business system are competition and war.. How would we have got out of the depression of the thirties, which had demoralized business and people alike, without the war - or an internal revolution?.....(So) as I see it the making of this new world order must begin at home and it can only be done by changing the control of business so that the people can never again be made the victims of want in the midst of plenty." During the years of alliance with the Soviet Union, some speakers even suggested looking to that nation for inspiration.. Most weren't prepared to swing this far left, but many called for greater solidarity with the union movement. "Through (the farmer's) union with (other vocational groups) he can save himself and assist in bringing about economic equality and preventing privilege," said J.T. MacDonald of Sydney. 'He cannot help in destroying monopoly advantage and reduce the level of price of the consumer goods he buys.

He can acquire a valuable education and a satisfying fellowship with former strangers in other vocations in the process of doing these things. And above all, through his own participation in running the people's business he will gain a new conception of what democracy is and how it can be made a reality, rather than a half-achieved dream, as it is today."

The war brought with it one major economic burden - an acute labour shortage, which the Farmers' Association attempted to ease through a variety of measures. At one time or another, it called for the early release of boys from high schools, exemptions from military service for farm labourers, farm training for women, the use of Italian prisoners of war and the conscription of all men not in uniform for farm work. In the end, it was none of these groups, but the enlisted men themselves, who were pressed into farm service at harvest and planting times. War also meant some austerity for civilian life. One of the first casualties on the home front was the provincial exhibition. The 1939 version of the fair had the bad fortune to be held on the same week the Nazis invaded Poland - an event which understandably dampened the enthusiasm of most of those who might have planned to attend. Nevertheless, the exhibition commission initially decided to go ahead with the 1940 fair, mainly because it had to continue paying its mortgage anyway. But a few months later, when the Navy offered it \$18,000 a year to rent its plant, the commission changed its mind. Then the next year the defense department purchased the whole fair ground for a mere \$225,000.. The commission was disbanded and replaced by a board of trustees without NSFA representation. The Scotia Premier Farmer project was also suspended for the duration, but it had already been in decline for a few years, so the war may only have provided a convenient excuse to terminate it.

But for the most part, war again spelled short-term prosperity for Nova Scotia farmers. As it had in the First World War, Canadian agriculture stepped in to take the place of devastated European farm production. For instance, in 1941 the federal government agreed to supply 450 million pounds of bacon to Great Britain, which normally received 85% of its imported bacon from Denmark. By 1942 this export was up to 600 million pounds. Similarly, during 1941 Canada sent 550,000 cases of eggs to Britain, compared with 25,000 to 30,000 per year before the war. Only the fruit industry suffered greatly because of the war. In 1939 Annapolis Valley fruit growers grew a bumper crop, only to see their biggest market - the United Kingdom - cut off by war. The federal government partially bailed the growers out by purchasing 1,500,000 barrels of apples bound for processing plants at 65% of the average price over the previous three years, but further intervention would be required to keep this industry afloat.

Other issues appeared on the NSFA agenda during the war. Midway through the hostilities the federal government imposed year-round Daylight Savings Time on the nation, hoping that a later work day would foster greater production of war materials. But this measure caused great inconveniences for farmers, and the CFA and NSFA lobbied diligently, though unsuccessfully, for its modification. In 1941 the association again began pressing the provincial government to extend electrification to all unserved parts of the province, and particularly to rural schools. The problem,

as the NSFA saw it, was that power administration was split between private companies, which handled the popular and prosperous areas, and a public utility that serviced rural areas at often unaffordably high rates. In a December 1944 resolution the association called for one, province-wide public system with uniform rates. The NSFA also began lobbying for a federally inspected abattoir in Nova Scotia. At this time, all beef and pork producers had to send their animals to Moncton, at considerable added cost, if they wanted them killed in an inspected slaughterhouse. And in January 1941 the CBC started its popular Farm Forum radio series. Farmers were urged to meet in small groups and discuss these half-hour shows. NSFA veteran Oulton was a guest on the first Farm Forum broadcast.

Shortly before the outbreak of war Nova Scotia's dairy industry made its first step toward centralized regulation. For years milk producers had been urging the Nova Scotia government to enact milk control legislation similar to that in force in most parts of the country. An early attempt at protective dairy legislation did pass third reading in the house in 1933, but it was hastily drafted and never proclaimed. In 1938 the NSFA passed a resolution stating that stricter regulation of the milk trade was needed to reduce the widening spread between the price paid to producers and that charged to consumers. After briefly describing how such legislation might work, Provincial Dairy Superintendent W. J. Bird told the membership that though he was generally against government involvement in business, he had yet to meet any knowledgeable person who opposed milk control.

Bird's influence was evident in the "Act to Regulate the Sale of Fluid Milk for Human Consumption" passed by the legislature just a few months later. The act established a Dairy Arbitration Commission with limited powers to regulate the price and distribution of fluid milk, though unlike similar bodies in other provinces this Board had to submit its decisions for government approval and initially had authority only over the milk trade around Halifax. Pressure from dairy producers soon moved the government to extend the commission's scope to include Yarmouth, Amherst and industrial Cape Breton, but some distributors found ways to work around the law and cut prices. In October 1940 a strike by organized Cape Breton producers collapsed when cheap milk was reportedly shipped in from Amherst, Pictou, and Colchester counties. Nevertheless, the 1938 Dairy Arbitration Act succeeded within its modest limits. By 1943 the number of distributors in the Halifax area had been reduced from a chaotic twenty-six to eight. But, more importantly, the price paid to producers rose from \$2.00 to \$3.13 per cwt, while consumer prices only increased one cent a quart, from twelve to thirteen cents.

The Farmers' Association sparked off controversy, though, when it tried to have the province's creameries placed under the dairy commission's control. The fireworks began just minutes after an NSFA delegation presented the idea to the legislature's agriculture committee on March 24, 1944. Not missing the opportunity to engage in a little mud-slinging, Tory Opposition Leader Fred Blois charged that certain creamery owners were defrauding producers by using up to 27% less than the legally required amount of cream in their butter. The cabinet, he went on to insinuate,

was suppressing an investigation into the matter because one of its members, Highways Minister John D. MacKenzie, was himself a creamery owner. J.J. Creighton a representative of the province's creamery owners, ignored Blois's accusations, but freely condemned the proposed regulation. "Why should we be singled out from the large group of business people who are dealing with the primary producers to have additional restrictions placed upon us?" he asked., "During the last twenty years the creamery business has shown greater progress in Nova Scotia than any other branch of agriculture and we creamery men feel keenly the apparent desire from some quarters to create a feeling of distrust between the creamery operators and the cream producers." For his part, Clarence Fitzrandolph, the new NSFA Secretary-Treasurer, said regulation would protect both the creamery owner and the producer precisely because it would remove all cause for suspicion.

The government's decision on the NSFA proposal, announced a week later, came as a complete shock to everyone. The dairy arbitration commission was disbanded and all its duties, as well as control over creameries, were handed over to the province's Public Utilities Board. Premier MacMillan and Agriculture Minister John McDonald claimed the move was made because the P.U.B. was a superior arbitrator, with greater judicial authority and independence, but many NSFA members agreed with Blois's comment: "There is something in the wood pile that doesn't smell altogether sweet." Ralph Loomer of Falmouth said the co-operative movement had been "sold down the river....so that the present creameries (could) have a monopoly of the butter business and milk production." In fairness to the government, however, the move appears to have been a compromise between the wishes of the cream producers and the fears of owners, who felt the department of agriculture representatives on the dairy arbitration board - W.J., Bird and F.W., Walsh - would be biased toward the farmers.

By the end of the war Nova Scotia was almost ready to take the plunge and legalize marketing boards for farm products. In the spring of 1945 a natural products marketing act was introduced by the provincial government, only to die at the end of the session without having received third and final reading.. Proponents charged that opposing private interests had persuaded the house's Law Amendments Committee to drop the bill, but the government said the act had been shelved because there was not sufficient time to hold public hearings on it.. Whatever the case , the mere mention of marketing legislation was enough to push some citizens past the boiling point.. "I have not read the similar acts of the other provinces, but if this one is a sample, they are the most flagrantly Fascist pieces of legislation it would be possible to imagine.. ..and would eventually reduce farmers to the conditions and mentality of the domestic hen," wrote J.B . Leefe of Waterville in an April 19,1945 letter to the Berwick Register. But despite the setbacks and the criticisms, orderly marketing was now inevitable, though it would take decades to reach its potential. Once farmers had tasted the benefits of centralized management and comprehensive assistance schemes - and once the rest of society had seen that such methods need not be fraught with horrors - governments were unable, even if they had wanted to, to resurrect the conventional wisdoms of a bygone era. In war farmers had finally begun to secure the kind of "new deal" they could only have dreamed of during earlier days of peace-time depression.

Chapter Five: From Association to Federation (1946-1960)

If the depression and war years can be said to have produced a revolution in attitude toward the farmer's place in society, the post-war years were a period of consolidation, during which farmers strove to maintain and refine the concessions they had won. One important measure to outlast the war was the freight subsidy for feed grains, which became, in one NSFA member's words, the "lifeguard" of the province's hog and poultry industries, both of which had a healthy resurgence after the war. Another gain was price support. Having willingly submitted to price ceilings during the war, farmers quite naturally expected to be rewarded with floor prices in peacetime. In 1946, at the urging of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Federal Government passed a Floor Prices Act that set aside \$200 million to ensure that farmers would get a fair return on their products.

Perhaps the most significant concession, though, was a more tolerant attitude among governments to the principle of organized marketing. In 1947 the provincial government passed the Natural Products Marketing Act, setting up a three-man Nova Scotia Marketing Board, headed by Director of Marketing, R.J. MacSween, and empowered to handle requests from farmers for marketing schemes. But this first act only covered apples, wool and poultry. Revisions in 1954 and 1957 were needed to expand the bill's scope to encompass all conceivable farm products. The very concept of marketing legislation continued to have its critics, but CFA Representative R.J. Scott put the farmer's position succinctly at the 1946 annual meeting. "There may be some people here who are fearful about giving up their individual liberty," he said. "I want to say very frankly, I think you can give up a share of your individual liberty and put it in a pool of collective liberty, then I can draw out of that pool and my share will do me more good than the individual liberty I gave up."

Nova Scotia farmers chose the relatively weak wool industry for their first official foray into organized marketing. In 1947, the provincial board authorized the establishment of a Nova Scotia Wool Marketing Board, using the Canadian Wool Growers Association as its central selling agency. With Harry Brown as one of its first directors the Wool Board didn't lack organizational skill or spirited self-defense, but it still had some problems. In the early fifties the board, along with the NSFA, began complaining about the persistence of illegal independent buying and selling. But the provincial authorities, unused to this sort of law enforcement, refused to prosecute "bootleggers" unless they could be assured of "reasonable proof" an infraction had been committed and "reasonable possibility" a conviction would result.

Because of the growing strength of the hog industry, the provincial department of agriculture

announced it was going to discontinue its hog bonusing program. In response, hog producers took immediate steps to set up their own marketing board. Following an 87% affirmative vote, the board and its three directors were ready for business in January, 1953. The hog marketing scheme largely formalized what had already existed. The board authorized the licensing of all livestock shipping clubs and chose Maritime Co-op Services as its central selling agency. A federal order-in-council in October, 1953, gave the board power over inter-provincial and export trade. In 1960 the board's authority was extended beyond the mainland counties to Cape Breton Island.

Not all attempts at organized marketing were successful, though. In 1947, an association of tomato growers in the Annapolis Valley tried to get a marketing scheme for their product, but couldn't overcome the opposition of some wholesalers. And dairy producers still had to contend with the inexpert and indifferent regulation of the Public Utilities Board. After trying futilely for a couple of years to convince the government to revert to something similar to the old Dairy Arbitration Commission, the NSFA and Milk and Cream Producers Associations managed to get dairy products placed under the Natural Products Marketing Act, but no marketing scheme ensued. The best the NSFA could come up with was a 1953 resolution calling on the Department of Agriculture to study the possibility of forming a "milk pool", which would control quality, distribution, prices and importation.

Towards the end of the fifties, however, the NSFA began to investigate extending organized marketing to other livestock breeds and fruit and vegetables, particularly cannery crops. And on a national scale, the NSFA advocated giving the Canadian Wheat Board, rather than the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, control over the grain marketing across the country. At the January 1948 meeting in Kentville, President Leo Cormier of Cheticamp put farmers' complaints about the free-market grain exchange this way: "A man buys grain in the morning and sells it in the evening. There we have two buyers and a seller. It is very often that not one of the three is a farmer and is not connected with farming. He is not interested in the feed nor the livestock - he is interested in buying as cheaply as he can and selling as high as he can." Along with its national organization, the NSFA also campaigned successfully for a broadening of federal marketing legislation after the Supreme Court declared Ontario's legislation ultra vires in 1957 because it impinged on inter-provincial commerce. The new federal provisions gave provincial boards the power to impose levies on products coming in from other provinces "for the purpose of equalizing returns amongst the producers.

Nova Scotia farmers were as aware as anyone of the dramatic shift in geopolitical alignments that followed the Second World War. "Although our nation is free from war, we are not living under everlasting peace," Cormier warned in 1948. "Leaders of at least one nation are using all means at their disposal to spread their ideas beyond the boundaries of their country. They have met with success due to an army of agents well trained and expertly guided. Let us be on guard against false propaganda." Fears of another global conflict grew particularly high in 1950 with

the outbreak of the Korean War. But most speakers at NSFA meetings saw the post-war future as a time of opportunity rather than danger. Food, they reasoned, could be used as a weapon for peace and against the spread of hostile ideologies. "This is the issue and this alone that is going to control the spread of totalitarianism and all other 'isms' that are the result of desperate people grasping at they know not what because the ways they have believed in have failed them," said member E. Loomer in 1949. "To preserve democracy, if we are to practice the teachings that we believe in, we must make sure that the products of our farms take our rightful place in feeding the hungry people of the world." M.P. Neily added: "If our brilliant leaders can raise money to fight a war, why can't they raise money to keep the peace? I do feel that our financial leaders at Ottawa are falling down when they can't make some arrangement whereby payment can be gotten for food some way or other for some countries that really need products from the farms." Canadian farm organizations initially had high hopes that international co-operation through such new bodies as the United Nations and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) could cure chronic global inequities. In 1946 the Canadian and Maritime Federations of Agriculture participated in the founding meeting of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) in London, England.

Reality didn't live up to these bright visions, however. "Watching proceedings at the FAO, it seemed that the governments of the world are shying away from taking positive action along bold new lines in seeking solution to what we believe are the basic causes of war," CFA Secretary C.G. Groff reported to the December 1949 meeting in Debert. That same year, the UN Rejected a proposal to establish an International Commodity Clearing House to direct surpluses to needy areas. Instead of greater international harmony and co-ordination, the fifties, produced currency exchange problems and rampant protectionism.

Having once again benefited during European War, Canadian Agriculture felt the familiar pains of readjustment when the devastated nations began to rebuild their farm economies. Nova Scotia Farmers again lost the large United Kingdom market to Holland and Denmark, only this time they couldn't console themselves with the prospect of imperial trade agreements. With the post-war dissolution of the Empire, Great Britain increasingly became just another trading partner - much to the detriment of the province's declining apple industry. As high wartime production met tightening peacetime markets abroad the inevitable outcome was surpluses and low prices. With price supports now in place, farmers might have been able to bear low returns had the costs of production behaved themselves. But the explosion of new farm technology, besides spurring farmers to produce even more, had made agriculture a far more expensive proposition. As the fifties wore on talk at annual meetings centered more and more on the "cost-price squeeze" and the disposal of surpluses became less a question of altruism than of survival. The NSFA found itself in the tricky position of having to convince a society enjoying an unparalleled period of prosperity that it could not expect its boom to last while agriculture remained threatened.

Some of the NSFA's worst fears about the cost-price squeeze began to be realized in the mid

-fifties with the advent of “vertical integration” or “contract farming.” In order to ensure fair returns on their produce, many Nova Scotia farmers had to resort to signing themselves over to large companies that sometimes controlled every aspect of the agricultural business from the field to the kitchen table. Most farm leaders found this trend to be repugnant - a contradiction of every principle of co-operation, organized marketing and the family farm. “I don’t think it is the intention of any truly democratic country to allow a few to benefit at the cost and freedom of the many,” said President J.M Johnson at the 1958 meeting in Truro. “It seems to me that we must either agree to control our own business or be controlled.” Added R.J. MacSween the following year: “Under a vertical integration contract, the financing of the deal, the supervision of the operation and the marketing of the product are controlled by the integrating company. And with all those functions out of his hands the farmer is virtually reduced to the status of a sharecropper.

One of the solutions the NSFA proposed for the cost -price squeeze was a complete revamping of the farm credit system. By the mid -fifties responsibility for farm credit was fragmented amongst several federal and provincial agencies. As of 1956, the Canadian Farm Board offered a maximum 30 -year loan of \$15,000 at 5 per cent, but it had a reputation for tight-fistedness. The Nova Scotia Land Settlement Board, mainly directed at young farmers and immigrants starting out, provided individuals with loans as high as \$10,000 at 4 1/2 per cent. The Veterans Land Act loaned war veterans as much as \$9,300 to settle on farms. And the Farm Improvement Loans Act offered medium -term credit to a maximum of \$5,000 over three years. Apart from its obvious confusion, the NSFA found plenty wrong with this system. First, and most fundamentally, the NSFA complained that not enough money was available and not enough time was afforded to pay it back. Despite regular increases, the loan ceilings of government credit agencies simply had not kept pace with the accelerating costs of farming. (At the 1956 annual meeting, F. W. Walsh, the province’s deputy minister of agriculture, said the costs of starting a farm had increased sixfold since 1935). In its 1957 brief to the Hawkins Royal Commission on Rural Credit, the NSFA called for an “open end” loan policy and farm mortgages as long as 40 years. The NSFA was also concerned that not enough of the available credit was going toward improving and expanding existing farm operations, and it felt that credit should be based on total farm value, instead of just the value of land and buildings. “Even as late as 1931 land and buildings constituted 77% of the total farm value in Canada,” the NSFA directors wrote in their 1959 brief to the Nova Scotia Members of Parliament. “Today, land and buildings comprise not more than 50% of total land value. The other 50% is in stock and equipment.” Finally, the NSFA believed loan agencies should pay greater attention to economic prospects of the farms they were financing. The brief to the Hawkins Commission suggested that borrowers be compelled to adopt a farm management plan and submit to supervision. “The greatest imprudence in farm credit is to loan just enough to get the farmer in trouble,” the brief concluded. The Hawkins Commission eventually recommended the consolidation of all farm loan agencies. The federal government partially complied by creating the Farm Credit Corporation in 1960 to handle farm mortgages.

On the cost side, the NSFA strove to halt the increase in municipal taxation. Since tax assess-

ment was based largely on land value, the rising costs of such tax -funded services as hospitalization and education hit farmers as a class disproportionately hard. In a 1954 brief to the Pottier Commission on Educational Finance (the fifties truly were an age of royal commissions) the NSFA directors wrote: "Our farming communities have neither the people nor the substance that they had a quarter of a century ago, and are becoming less and less able to make the necessary contribution towards the provision and maintenance of the school facilities necessary for the education of their children." The brief recommended that the federal government make annual contributions toward school financing and that financing and taxation be restructured more equitably. A 1956 resolution added a request that residential property, rather than land, form the basis of tax assessment.

Another strategy the NSFA pursued was to press the federal government to make international agreements to reopen export markets and, at the same time, establish special institutions to dispose of surpluses in needy regions without disrupting those regular trade lines. This was clearly a tall order and, most of the related resolutions the NSFA directed at the feds and CFA were rather vaguely worded. One specific proposal the CFA did come up with, though, was for the Federal Government to redirect 10% of the defense budget into a sort of food bank. The NSFA supported this proposal in 1951, but, predictably, the federal government was not nearly as enthused.

Closer to home, the NSFA sought to enhance the farmer's position by encouraging the location of new industries in the province. NSFA leaders contended that industrial development would both expand local markets for farm products and stem the flow of rural youth to the cities. In a 1955 resolution they urged the provincial government to use the province's natural resources to entice industries. The NSFA also passed several resolutions calling for the establishment of a pulp mill in Eastern Nova Scotia, reasoning that this would provide a market for farm woodlots. This idea was realized in the late fifties with the opening of the Abercrombie Mill. But perhaps the most important response to the cost -price squeeze of the fifties was a shift in attitude toward farming among the farmers themselves. Hand in hand with the decline in the rural population, and with its increasing demands on government, came the recognition that farming had to be treated more as a business and less as a way of life. Cautiously but perceptibly, the NSFA moved away from the position that it could in the same breath defend the interests of- all farmers, from the smallest subsistence farmer to the owner of the most modern agricultural enterprise. More and more, NSFA briefs, reports and speeches began to mention bigger farms as one way of increasing profit margins - an idea that found much favour with E.D. Haliburton, Minister of Agriculture in the Tory Government that swept to power under Robert Stanfield in 1956. "We suggest that the prospects for agriculture.. .will mean less farmers but more prosperous and efficient farm units," wrote the NSFA directors in their 1955 brief to Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects. "It will draw to the land people who are known drawn into industry - the manager or operator with skill and education." Two years later, in their submission to the Hawkins Commission they added: "The transition from subsistence farming to modern commercial farming was swift and beclouded by a war and its aftermath, pervaded as it was by great changes in technol-

ogy and practice.. .In the past it was believed that the farming population composed a distinctive culture with values of their own and certain satisfactions were stressed which could not be measured in terms of money. (This) philosophy is fading swiftly and the farmer's wife finds little romance in feeding chickens and milking cows." Still, the NSFA was not about to give up on the family farm. In fact, when threatened by vertical integration, they rallied to its defense. It would be more accurate to say the NSFA now sought to make the family farm a solidly commercial proposition.

The late forties and early fifties were an unusual long period of constitutional stability for the NSFA. Though in its first few years of financial independence the NSFA only made ends meet through private member donations, the 1944 reorganization ultimately proved quite successful. No doubt aided by the strength of its national organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the NSFA enjoyed previously unmatched prestige. Governments paid much closer attention to the NSFA's views, putting most of its major policy suggestions into effect sooner or later. And, by the same token, the NSFA began to take itself more seriously and conduct itself in a more business -like manner particularly when framing resolutions. While weaker farming counties often failed to pay their NSFA dues, the stronger ones proved equal to their expanding allotments, although often begrudgingly. Still, as Ralph Loomer of Falmouth pointed out at the 1953 meeting in Truro, even with bigger NSFA budgets, farmers were getting more agricultural service than they were paying for. "It is costing this organization in the vicinity of \$60,000 to \$70,000 to operate. About \$13,000 is put up by the members through our allotments and the balance by the government. We do not promote our own organization, we do not pay our organizers such as the Agricultural Representatives who do such fine work in connection with our farm organizations and 4 -H Clubs."

At the district level, the NSFA' s mainstay was Radio Farm Forum. At the peak of popularity in the mid-fifties these broadcasts drew almost 150 organized discussion groups to their radios every Monday night. The NSFA even passed resolutions asking all other community organizations to avoid holding meetings on Mondays. With the advent of television toward the end of the decade, though, the popularity of Farm Forums plummeted. The NSFA lobbied unsuccessfully to have farm broadcasts put on television.

At the other end of the organizational scale, meanwhile, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture continued to grow in stature. Building on the status it attained during the war, the CFA remained on the leading edge of agricultural policy in Canada. Much of the CFA's success was probably due to its thoroughly non-partisan approach. "I think we have learned that the political route is not the best one for farmers to follow in their search for a solution to their economic and social problems," said CFA Secretary C.G. Groff in 1949. "We believe that when farmers go into politics as a group they not only become just another political party, but also put all other parties in opposition to them...There is a time to be militant, but I think it is important to select that time very carefully and make sure that we are thoroughly united in our militancy." Another obvious strength

was CFA President and Managing Director Dr. H.H. Hannam. In a January, 1960 column in the Toronto Star, noted journalist Gordon Sinclair called Hannam “Canada’s leading lobbyist with the best cause.”

In late 1948, C.T. Fitzrandolph resigned as NSFA Secretary - Treasurer. Fitzrandolph, who freely admitted he never wanted the “treasurer” part of his job, had drawn some criticism for spending too much time and money on out-of -province meetings, and his departure sparked a debate on the whole role of the Secretary-Treasurer. The directors felt Fitzrandolph’s replacement should be a full -time stenographer and bookkeeper, but many delegates wanted a field organizer and they succeeded in having a resolution passed to that effect. The directors, however, had the last word and, led by President Hector Hill, they dismissed the idea as unfeasible. “I think the best field man you can get is a farmer who had made up his mind that he wants to work with his fellow farmer and do something about solving his own problems.” In June 1949, shortly after procuring a central office, in Truro, the NSFA hired Nadine Archibald as Secretary-Treasurer, a position she would retain until 1970. In 1954 the NSFA added a full-time stenographer to its staff, and four years later it moved its offices across town to the Colchester Co -op Building. In 1955 the NSFA participated in the founding of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC). And in 1959 it formed the Senate Club, an informal advisory body composed of all past NSFA presidents.

The most significant constitutional change of the fifties arose quite spontaneously. Visiting the 1950 meeting in Debert, Dr. Hannam remarked: “As I have been sitting here listening to the meetings, I felt that this is the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, and I wonder whether or not you have considered changing the name.” The membership liked the idea and the following year passed an appropriate resolution. It took the government until 1953, however, to make the necessary legislative revisions to formalize the name change for all branches of the NSFA.

Though the name change was merely a recognition of the NSFA’s association with the CFA and did not herald any structural change, the directors thought it provided a good opportunity to consider some minor by -law revisions. But when they approached the government in early 1954, they discovered that, once again, the NSFA was without any by-laws to revise. Apparently, when effecting the reorganization of 1944, the government failed to authorize the accompanying by-laws, probably because they didn’t fully accord with the new constitution. (President Ralph MacKichan suggested that the 1944 by -laws had attempted to set membership fees when this could only legally be done by the County Associations). The newly styled federation had no choice but to pass a complete set of by-laws the following year. These by -laws contained virtually nothing new, except for provisions adding the Past -President to the executive and removing full delegate status from representatives of other provincial agricultural organizations. (These groups had seldom sent members in recent years).

Three years later, however, the federation briefly reconsidered, once again, the place of other farm organizations in the NSFA. The interim report of a Committee on Organization and Finances,

released in late 1957, was supposed to focus on revisions to the NSFA's financial structure, but it called for another complete reorganization. "Because of the great diversity in the types of farming in this province; because of the percentage decrease in the farm population; because of the constitutional structure of our government, and because of the conditions of organized agriculture, this Committee firmly believes that the best kind of organization for the farmers of this province is a federation embracing all commodity groups and other sectors of the industry," the report said. The committee said co-ops, credit unions, marketing organizations, breed associations and commodity groups should not just be affiliates or observers, but full voting and paying members of the provincial organization. It recommended that each organization be represented on the same basis as the counties and hold one place on an expanded board of directors. These organizations would pay an allotment of \$25 per member. Despite a thoughtful presentation, though, the farsighted report was dropped without ever having gone to a vote. In December, 1960, another organization report offered no significant proposals, saying only that commodity groups should "channel their problems and recommendations through the county units to the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture."

Not long after the Second World War, the NSFA was again called upon to go to bat for the agricultural college. In 1948, the college's main science building burned down, forcing the school (and the NSFA's annual meetings) to move temporarily to the military camp in Debert. Naturally, the provincial government pledged to rebuild but, as usual, it wasn't in any hurry. The NSFA did its best to press Halifax into action, but it was not until 1950 that the government even chose a site for the new buildings. The delay may very well have cost the government. By the time the college returned to Bible Hill in 1953, it had become so used to the residence facilities at Debert that government would not be able to hold out much longer against its requests for its own dormitory. Again the NSFA helped prod the government and again it was successful. At the 1955 meeting Liberal Premier Henry Hicks formally announced that construction of a dorm would begin next spring. But he added some words of warning. "Not so long ago," Hicks said, "I read where this organization was taking credit for the decision of the government to erect this dormitory. I have no intention of debating that proposition this afternoon...but I do want to remind your organization, Mr. Chairman, that if you are taking the credit for the decision... you must also assume the responsibility for keeping this dormitory filled." The Stanfield government upheld Hick's commitment and in 1957 "Trueman Hall" - named after the late Dr. J.M. Trueman - opened. It was designed to hold 125 students - about 25 more than the college's average enrollment.

The NSFA found less cause for encouragement in the state of the province's new rural high schools. After calling for years for a parallel secondary education system suited to rural needs, the NSFA found little new in the so-called rural high schools that began popping up after the war. A few offered some spotty credit courses on agriculture, but most did not, mainly because of a dearth of qualified teachers. In the interests of centralization, many rural schools were even placed in larger towns. The NSFA registered its disapproval in the form of resolutions, but to little avail. "While they are excellent buildings and may employ teachers with high standards," the

NSFA directors wrote in their 1951 brief, “we are fearful that these schools may fail to accomplish that which we had hoped would be accomplished, and that is to make rural people more rural minded.” At the 1953 annual meeting, Dr. W.V. Longley of the federation’s education committee pointed out that while 83% of Nova Scotia boys take academic courses, compared with 36% nationally, 40% drop out at grade 7 or 8, 23% more than the national average. “If rural municipalities are to be taxed further for high schools,” he said, “then it would appear necessary that the schools should at least train part of the young people for the farms so that they will go back into our rural communities and there help to increase wealth that can aid in paying for said taxation.” George Leighton of Nine Mile River had a more fatalistic view, though. “We cannot keep our young boys on the farm if we do not have markets for produce,” he said. “If we cannot find markets I would say he would be much better off in some other industry rather than on a farm.”

The state of the dairy industry was another object of considerable concern after the war, and margarine continued to be the main threat dairy farmers perceived. The NSFA left no doubt about its opposition to the spread of margarine (no pun intended), but it seemed unable to develop any coherent anti -margarine policy. Sometimes, as in a January 1948 resolution, the NSFA advocated an outright ban on vegetable oils substituting for animal fats. At other times, forsaking the traditional anti -protectionist stance of Canadian farmers, the NSFA called for duties on imported oils to make margarine process less attractive. And at still other times, recognizing the inroads the margarine industry had made in other parts of Canada, particularly Ontario, the NSFA merely argued margarine should be placed under the same sort of regulation as dairy products. In a March 3, 1947 letter to Erie Kitchen, Secretary of the Dairy Farmers of Canada, C.T. Fitzrandolph said that if margarine were to enter the market on the same footing as butter it ought to be placed under a dairy marketing board. “In this way,” he wrote, “high pressure advertising could be absolutely eliminated and the distribution could be regulated so as not to interfere unduly with the distribution of butter... If we just continue to try to keep oleo (margarine) off the market, the day that case breaks we really lose, especially if oleo is introduced through the channels of large packing companies.” At the December 1948 meeting, Stanton Sanford said a continuation of the colour ban was sufficient. “I believe that if we could have margarine brought in strictly as margarine, without colouring, that we wouldn’t have nearly the trouble (we would have) if it looked like butter,” he said. “Without colouring it looks like shortening, which it is anyway, and people will not be so eager to buy it.” NSFA members found some encouragement in federal and provincial acts in 1951 and 1953 limiting the distribution of margarine to and in Nova Scotia. But a few realized it was ultimately futile to oppose the introduction of a product most Nova Scotians now wanted. Speaking against a 1950 anti-margarine resolution, Ralph Loomer said: “The passing of this resolution would continue the driving of the wedge which certain interests would like to see driven between labour and the farmer. I am sure that organized labour would take a very dim view of tariffs that would increase their cost of living this way... (and if) we think of the demand for both butter and butter substitutes in terms of world needs, we must realize that there is a demand for all the butter substitutes and butter that we can possibly produce in our lifetime.”

The NSFA also continued to work for better electrical and telephone service. Farmers had two main complaints about the province's electrical service. First, the numerous private companies that ran the system - there were 25 of them as late as 1954 - were reluctant to extend power into unprofitable rural areas. As a general rule, companies wouldn't bother putting power lines along a road unless there were at least four houses to the mile, and the publically-owned Nova Scotia Power Commission demanded that rural dwellers pay for power line development. Secondly, where there was rural electrical service, rates varied widely and were invariably higher than those in town. The board of directors' 1946 brief to the Nova Scotia Cabinet summarized the gravity of the situation. "If we are to develop agriculture as it should be developed so that it can compete successfully with other provinces and countries, and leave for our farmers fair margins of profits, and if we are to make rural life attractive to the boys and girls growing up in the country, then there must be made available a sufficient supply of cheap electricity," it read. Three years later, Harry Brown put it more bluntly. "The Rural Electrification Act, in my opinion at least, was drafted on the advice of engineers for the purpose of providing revenue for the Power Company without much respect to the value or the convenience of the users of power," he said. "It is controlled by the Board of Public Utilities that consists of eminent lawyers and lawyers not so eminent who have comparatively little knowledge or sympathy with the rural dweller." Until the mid-fifties the NSFA simply registered its complaints through vague resolutions calling for "cheap electricity", extended power lines and an end to the "homes -to -the -mile" formula. In 1954, though, the federation made its first call for public control of the industry.

The problems with telephone service were similar, though the system's structure was quite different. Instead of being pitted against an array of private companies, farmers had to contend with one large provincial monopoly, Maritime Tel & Tel, which was worse in some ways. Without the impetus of competition, MT & T apparently felt no compulsion to move quickly in unprofitable rural areas. In 1948, the NSFA began calling on the provincial government to form a commission to take over the telephone service, at least in rural areas. But this solution was not popular with all members. "If we are asking the government to take over the telephone system," said J.H. Murray of Meadowville in 1950, "we might just as well ask them to take over the Steel and Coal Industry. That would be making a dictatorship of the country... If they do this, we will have no more free enterprise left." George Leighton responded: "When things come to be Public Utilities, I think the government should take them over to benefit the people in the province to the full. Today we are just running them for the benefit of the monopolies." After a few years of fruitless lobbying, the federation began to temper its stand. In 1955 it passed a resolution asking the government to compel, MT & T to move into rural areas, even if this meant subsidization. And five years later it merely called on the telephone company to correct its own defects.

During the late forties and early fifties, Nova Scotia farmers began to resign themselves to Daylight Savings Time, despite its obvious inconveniences. Daylight Savings Time threw a spanner into farm routines, particularly where hired hands were involved. (In the words of one member, "The farmer's hired man goes home in the middle of the afternoon and the poor farmer has to

work to bed just the same.”). But once it achieved popular success in other segments of society, the farmer’s campaign against it was clearly lost. In 1948, 1952 and 1960, the NSFA called for a provincial plebiscite on DST, but most years it simply asked the provincial government to apply DST uniformly across the province for a fixed period between Victoria Day and Labour Day.

Such factors as Daylight Savings Time, unsatisfactory rural education and the relative unattractiveness of farm life forced Nova Scotia farmers to pay more attention to the “hired people”. In 1951, the NSFA passed a resolution asking the federal and provincial governments to establish “a satisfactory Farm Labour Policy under which all immigrants will be carefully selected and compelled to carry out the terms of agreement of employment.” The province had a policy at this time of bringing in immigrants for farm work, but apparently many of these immigrants were not farmers and soon left for the factories of Central Canada. “For the first months they are a decided deficit to the employers,” said Russell Eagle of Gaspereaux. “They do not understand our language or our customs. For the next period of about four months they break even. In six months when you would expect to get the good of the labour - when by that time they are ready to understand agriculture - they leave for the profession they were originally trained for.” On the whole, though, the NSFA avoided a heavy -handed approach to farm labour. Instead, it sought to make the work more attractive and competitive by lobbying for Unemployment Insurance and Workman’s Compensation for farm labourers.

Another issue of long standing concern to the NSFA was the threat to farms posed by predators - both of the animal and human variety. As usual, the NSFA passed a wide variety of resolution calling for measures against foxes, raccoons, porcupines, deer, bears and wild cats and stray hounds in the late forties and fifties. It also lobbied for changes to the province’s game laws to allow farmers to shoot harmful animals within 100 feet of highways and in 1958 even called for the appointment of a Predatory Animal Control Officer. By the mid-fifties, however, the Federation began to pay more and more heed to the dangers of careless human hunters. At first it advocated stiffer fines for hunters trespassing farmland and killing livestock. Then it called for the establishment of a fund, paid for by increased hunting license fees, to compensate farmers losing animals to hunters. In January 1960, it called for the prohibition of the use of lights for night hunting.

In 1954, the NSFA got into the insurance business. For low premium rates, a new group accident insurance plan covered hospital and medical costs for members suffering accidents, as well as providing settlements for loss of life. This undoubtedly enhanced the popularity of the NSFA. No longer could dubious farmers say they saw no concrete benefits in membership. It also seemed to strengthen federation interest in other forms of insurance. “One of the things I would like to see eliminated from car insurance field is this business of saying who is wrong,” said Ralph Loomer in 1953. “the need is just as great for those who suffer the losses.., for the driver being on the wrong side of the road as (it is) the other way around.” The NSFA further lobbied to clarify the relative responsibilities of drivers and cattle -owners at cattle crossings and it called for lower insurance rates for young drivers with safe driving records. The federation took its opinions to

the Royal Commission on Automobile Insurance in 1955 and was gratified two years later when the Commission recommended compulsory car insurance. The government was in no hurry to respond, though.

The NSFA had better luck with health insurance. In a 1951 report, the NSFA's Health Committee found the province's health care to be deplorably inequitable. Medical care, it said, was far more accessible and cheaper in cities and towns, even though rural inhabitants were generally far poorer. "This means that rural people with lower cash income than town workers are saddled with a burden they cannot bear, (and) the result is neglect and frequently untimely death, and the increased trek of rural people to the towns and cities," the committee wrote. "We must recognize that the ultimate solution to our health problems must be through the adoption and operation of an overall government -operated plan ... that will draw support ... from federal, provincial and municipal governments." On January 1, 1959, the government introduced a National Hospital Plan and, accordingly, the NSFA adjusted its insurance scheme to provide compensation instead of hospitalization coverage.

Other smaller issues did not escape the NSFA's attention during this period. The NSFA continued to work for better protection against livestock, voting for several refinements to existing legislation. After prodding from the federation, the province passed a Brucellosis Act along the same lines as the earlier TB Act. The NSFA lobbied for effective weed control legislation and managed to win a marshland reclamation policy from the provincial government. It pressed successfully for the continuance of the province's land breakage, lime, ditching and veterinary assistance policies. And in 1957, it convinced the provincial government to lower the license rates for farm vehicles. Finally, in two examples of fine foresight, the NSFA passed two separate resolutions calling for the erection of a causeway at Canso and a bridge across the Shubenacadie River connecting Colchester County with East Hants.

Maritime Co -operative Services, formerly the Canadian Livestock Co-operative (Maritime), experienced rapid growth during the late forties and early fifties, becoming a \$10,000,000 business by the early fifties and adding various insurance services and its own grocery label. Another highly successful co -operative venture was the Nova Scotia Artificial Breeder's Co -operative Limited. In 1951 it branched out from its original location in Lower Truro and began setting up sub-units throughout the province. By 1955 it was breeding nearly 9,000 cows and heifers in eleven counties. But undoubtedly the most impressive co-operative enterprise of the fifties was the new abattoir. Calls for a modern inspected abattoir in the province had first been heard as far back as before the war. In 1946 the NSFA passed a resolution calling for the establishment of an abattoir and made clear to the cabinet its preference for public or co -operative ownership. "As our farmers are progressing in their thinking, and are learning of the evils whereby big businesses have become virtual monopolies in their control of the processing of farm products, and in their distribution of farm necessities," its brief read, "they are demanding that in any further establishment of business having anything to do with farm requirements that sufficient controls

be introduced to assure that at all times such businesses will be operated to the advantage of the producers.” F.W. Walsh, deputy minister of agriculture, worked hard to get a plant but he could not convince any private companies to come in without massive concessions, and the idea lay idle for a few years.

Two factors revived the project. First, Nova Scotia farmers began to see livestock as one avenue out of the cost-price squeeze. With surpluses and tight markets abroad, about the only way farmers could see making their production profitable again was to rechannel it to areas where the province itself wasn't self-sufficient. One such area was livestock production, particularly beef, which clearly suffered the lack of proper abattoir facilities. The other factor was the decision by farmers to take it into their own hands. In 1955, the NSFA formed the Nova Scotia Co-operative Abattoir Ltd., which quickly began canvassing the province for subscriptions. In their annual report, the directors boasted: “No more serious attempt has ever been made by our Federation to put a greater amount of the consumer's dollar in the hand of the producer, if he wants to avail himself of that opportunity.” Guest speaker J.A. Courteau, General Manager of Quebec's Co-op Abattoirs, described the unqualified success of his business and pledged full support to Nova Scotia farmers in their venture. “I know that the ones that go into that abattoir the first are going to be happy about it,” Courteau said. “It is not going to cost you money, it is going to make you money.. .” Stanton Sanford, who had almost single handedly conducted the subscription campaign, added: “It is not a donation for anyone, but is an investment which can pay us back well.

The following year, the project hit a couple of snags. An architect's plan had to be rejected because it was too expensive, and the provincial government changed, raising uncertainties about government support. But the Stanfield government proved to be more generous than anyone could have foreseen.

In 1957, it offered to match farmer's subscriptions three dollars to one, provided the farmers could come up with \$400,000. With Douglas Curtis, a former manager of the Artificial Breeder's Co-operative, at its helm, the abattoir campaign reached its target in a year. “We believe this will go down in the annuals of our Federation as the greatest single effort to date, to prove outstandingly successful,” the directors wrote in their 1958 report. In 1960, the Nova Scotia Co-operative Plant opened in Halifax, with Curtis as its managing director. The NSFA immediately began a beef promotion campaign and passed a resolution asking for equalized transportation rates to the Abattoir.

The end of one decade and the beginning of a new one brought with it a rare instance of disagreement between the provincial and national federations of agriculture. In 1957, the federal government began contemplating changing the price support system. Until then, the government had guaranteed returns on low priced items by buying out surpluses at a set rate. But now it proposed simply paying a “deficiency payment” for any product that had its price drop below 80% of the average price of the previous three years. The CFA liked some features of the new

plan, particularly its formal recognition of the desirability of price support and its mechanism for regularly reviewing the level of support. But it deplored the fact that the deficiency payments would not take into account the difference between a product's price and the cost of its production. In fact, during a prolonged period of declining prices, the new plan's deficiency payments would also decline. The NSFA, however, wrote in its 1960 brief to federal MP's that the new policy would "put production back in the hands of family farm units, where it belongs, and out of the hands of speculators, packing houses and feed companies." Whether or not it was right, history would support the NSFA's side.

Chapter Six: Challenge and Still More Reorganization (1961-1975)

During the 1960's, Nova Scotia farmers recognized that the "cost - price squeeze" was not just another cyclical economic phenomenon but the manifestation of a major re -alignment of the agricultural industry. While the "input" costs of farming, particularly the cost of new technology, rose steadily, prices stayed put at best, leaving net income crushingly low. At the December 1964 annual meeting, David Kirk the CFA's Executive Secretary, estimated that Nova Scotia farmers were netting only about \$2 million on \$46 million total business - less than half the industry's total wage bill and just one-fifth the amount paid for feed and seeds. And according to Earl Maberly, 1966 NSFA President, net farm income had risen from \$1,670 to \$3,837 since 1946, while manufacturing wages had gone from \$1,516 to \$4,200. "Many farmers are not just doing badly," Kirk concluded. "They are losing money hand over fist..."

Farmers took great pains to point out that this situation did not result from any inefficiency on their part. In fact, under the circumstances, they had no choice but to be ruthlessly efficient. [In 1966, Maberley said output per man in agriculture was increasing 5.3% per year, compared with 2.3% in the rest of the economy. "Simply stated, the farm sector has more than doubled the output per man of the non -farm sector and has received less money for it," he said "...Any farmer who has survived the past twenty years of the cost -price does not have to apologize for his managerial ability, or the efficiency of his operation." but the costs of this efficiency were staggering. In 1952 there had been 23,000 farmers in Nova Scotia. By 1962 there were only 12,500 farm properties making as much as \$50 a year from farm sales, and probably only 7,000 to 8,000 full time farmers. After another ten years, this figure was down to 6,000. The farming community was also getting older. According to 1967 president Eric Harvey, less than nine per cent of Nova Scotia's farmers were now under 35 years of age. Clearly, the economy was forcing Nova Scotia's farm industry to move toward fewer and bigger farms, though family -ownership continued to be more prevalent than large -scale commercial enterprise. But in the process farming was in danger of losing virtually a whole c~ceneration of new farmers, and hence its future. As I.W. Ak-erleyjust appointed provincial minister of agriculture, warned the December 1964 annual meeting: "(No) community can retain its identity as a thriving community, nor will it remain a thriving community, if we continue to skim off too much cream in the form of the most brilliant and aggressive of its citizenship..." The economy was further mortgaging farming's future by compelling many farmers to survive only through the depreciation of their buildings and soil.

What really irked the NSFA about the cost -price squeeze, though, was government's complicity in it. By the sixties, it was becoming increasingly apparent that governments were happy to pursue a "cheap food" policy. According to a 1965 address by F.W. Walsh, a former provincial

deputy minister and now director of Co-op Advisory Services, one week's wages for the average worker could now buy 5.2 baskets of food, or twice as much as in 1936. Such statistics suggested to farmers that they weren't just suffering in the midst of prosperity - they were actually paying for the prosperity of others. Needless to say, NSFA leaders found the cheap food policy to be not only unfair but unsound. "If the present trend continues," said Earl Maberley in 1966, "it may well be that the so-called 'new Nova Scotian,' employed by a British electronics firm, driving a ruggedly constructed automobile of Swedish components, will live in a house that is both heated and lighted by energy from a heavy water plant. He will cross the deep pile of his wall-to-wall carpeting, turn on his hi-fi set, only to have its clear tones drowned out by the deep rumbling of an empty gut, because the only thing he will have to keep his belly from rubbing against his back-bone will be a bottle of wine produced from California grapes." In other words, cheap food could not be bought at the peril of agriculture.

Awareness of the cheap food policy soon led to more vociferous demands for government assistance. "To realize the full potential of agriculture in Nova Scotia, many things are necessary," said 1965 resident, Paul Bishop. "Most important is a substantial investment of government monies to replenish the soil, to replace and renew obsolete farm buildings and to provide adequate working capital for farmers." The next year, Maberley added: "It is interesting to note that those countries who have this food to sell, at least at the present time, are those who have enough faith in their farmers to spend that part of their national tax dollar, that is commensurate with the contribution agriculture makes to its over-all economy... In order to survive the cost-price squeeze, the farmer at considerable sacrifices has met and accepted his responsibilities. Now let those who have a responsibility to agriculture accept theirs." Many NSFA speakers also noted that, contrary to popular opinion, other industries were at least as heavily subsidized as agriculture.

Not everyone shared these ideas, though. E.D. Haliburton, Akerley's predecessor as agriculture minister and a firm believer in the power of productivity, expressed misgivings in 1961 about the growth of government assistance. "I suggest that we, as farmers, give serious thought to the requests we make on government and attempt to make sure that the implications will not erode to much of our individual freedoms." While admitting that "the concept of individual freedom does not, and never did in a civilized society, envisage a freedom which permits an individual to injure others in exercising it," Haliburton said the concept was difficult to apply to economics. "To illustrate it is clear that farmer A hurts farmer B when he hits him over the head with a fence stake," he said. "It is not so generally accepted that farmer A hurts farmer B when he sells his produce below the established market price." The following year Haliburton was more forceful, using a wide array of statistics to question the effectiveness of just about every government assistance program and concluding: "we need less philosophy and more sweat." (To be fair, though, Haliburton did not seem to allow his private conservatism to alter the existing policies of his department.) Akerley shared his predecessor's reluctance to adopt further assistance policies. "I suggest to you" he said at the 1965 meeting, "that if we have the power, the tenacity and the aggressiveness to stick with agriculture, and to accept our losses as well as our gains - and

it is not going to be easy - I think, and hope, that agriculture will still take the place it should in the economy of the province.”

But the Federation persisted and in 1966 it proposed a comprehensive policy of financial assistance for agriculture. The plan called for a series of capital grants and subsidies to pay for new crop lands, farm buildings, livestock, soil building and maintenance, breeding, woodlot expansion, tax relief and a moratorium on loan interest. The maximum assistance to any applicant would be \$26,000 over five years, taking the total cost of the program \$52 million for 2,000 “commercial” farmers. At first, the provincial government was reluctant to commit itself one way or the other on the proposal. It struck a special joint committee with the NSFA in early 1967 to consider the matter, but they behaved as though this were merely a stalling tactic. In April, the Federation took the unusual step of calling a full meeting of the membership. The 500 assembled members formally called on Premier Stanfield to head a delegation to Ottawa to seek federal participation in a capital grants program. News then surfaced that Akerley had come up with his own counter-proposal, but when asked, he refused to release it to the NSFA or the special joint committee. The Federation’s directors responded by requesting at least interim relief on loan interest. Akerley refused, saying there was no money. Throughout 1968 the Joint Farm Policy Committee - a standing committee of NSFA executive members and provincial agriculture officials - continued to work on the policy.

Finally in 1969 the provincial government announced its own, more modest assistance plan. The government made available maximum grants of \$5,000 once in three years for capital expenditures of up to \$40,000 and subsidized half the interest rate on all government farm loans up to a 2 1/2% subsidization. This program was available to all farmers who made in excess of \$10,000 or 50% of their incomes from farming and who loaned through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board, the Farm Credit Corporation or the Veterann’s Land Act. Over the next several years the NSFA lobbied to have this last provision changed so that any “bona fide” farmer, regardless of where he loaned his money, could participate. The other new major government assistance plan of the 1960’s was the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act, or ARDA. A federal-provincial cost-sharing program, ARDA was supposed to absorb such existing provincial assistance programs as marshland reclamation, fresh water erosion prevention and community pasture promotion, as well as providing funding for new projects on a local or provincial level. The success of ARDA was, however, qualified at best Nova Scotia farmers appreciated some of the programs initiated under ARDA, particularly the land consolidation and improvement schemes of the late sixties. But the NSFA expressed frequent frustration at the slowness to act of ARDA administrators, most of whom were professional economists rather than practical agriculturalists. In 1966, the Federation’s ARDA Committee even recommended its own termination. “We note from newspaper announcements that there are a large number of ARDA study projects going on in Nova Scotia,” the three -man committee reported. “However, none of these projects hold out any hope for our hard -pressed farmers. Our people in rural areas have heard too much talk and seen too little action, with regard to rural development from government sources. We have shouted the

message, but we feel it has fallen on deaf ears.” But when the federal government announced that ARDA was to be terminated in 1970 and its responsibilities placed under a much broader Department of Regional Economic Expansion, the NSFA rallied to the defense of some sort of separate federal -provincial agricultural agreement.

“It was apparent that there was little intent in Ottawa that (DREE) monies would be used in the development of land or in the primary state of agricultural production, even though there have been considerations by (DREE) to grant money to the processing sector of the industry” the directors wrote in 1970. A third assistance plan that received a lot of attention during this period wasn’t new at all. Improvements in Canada’s transportation facilities produced a lengthy tug-of-war over the future of feed freight assistance in Eastern Canada. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1955 had thrown the scheme out of kilter by introducing a cheaper means of shipping feed grains eastward. In 1960 the federal government largely corrected this by introducing differential rates of assistance for sea and rail transport, but neither the Diefenbaker Conservatives nor the Pearson Liberals that followed could pass up the opportunity to further tinker with the policy. With rumours of all sorts of changes flying around the CFA recommended in 1963 that a new federal agency be set up to administer all aspects of feed grain policy, including transport assistance and public grain storage. In 1964, the federal government announced some harmless looking changes, altering the basis of payment and extending the subsidy of trucks, but when Maritime farmers read the fine print they realized the amendments would cost them an extra \$300,000. Only a quick, united effort, aided by the CFA convinced the federal government at the last minute to refrain from implementing the offending provisions. In 1967, Ottawa took the CFA’s advice and founded the Canadian Livestock Feed Board, along with an advisory committee of producers, one of whom was former NSFA President, Ross Hill. Two years later, however, on the recommendation of an Agricultural Task Force, the government began cutting the program back with the intention of eventually phasing it out. The NSFA strongly opposed this move, and at its 1970 meeting Hill dismissed the task force as “a group of armchair farmers?? with little understanding of agriculture outside the Prairies and noted that feed freight assistance was one of the first policies to fight regional disparity, “a subject we hear much about these days.” Over the next few years the NSFA continued to fight for not only retention of the subsidy, but its extension to cover protein concentrates, phosphates and other feed substitutes. At the same time, the Federation began promoting greater local grain production, though it opposed having grain -growing assistance linked to the transport subsidy because it recognized Nova Scotia could never be self-sufficient in feed grain.

As in the fifties, the NSFA promoted other strategies to fight the cost -price squeeze. One, oddly enough, was further increases in productivity, particularly in livestock, the reasoning being that Nova Scotia farmers would have an ample and secure market if they simply concentrated on filling their own province’s needs. E.D. Haliburton was a great believer in this policy. “This would really be a permanent investment, like putting money in the bank, a soil bank, because as the farm improves in productivity it increases in value,” Haliburton said in 1961. “So there should be a

capital return as well as a current profit. And this whole proposition is so simple that it hardly calls for government participation or government assistance.” The livestock promotion campaign never came close to fulfilling these visions, though, largely because farmers hadn’t at first appreciated the enormity of the task. Not only would they have to increase livestock volume two or three fold to attain self-sufficiency, they would also have to expand all the other parts of the farm that supported livestock production, including buildings and forage crop production - and all at a time when they had never been more financially strapped. By the end of the sixties, the province’s hog and poultry population had increased substantially, but cattle and sheep had slipped back. And the center -piece of this campaign, the co-op abattoir, proved to be not one of Federations’s great successes but on of its greatest dissappointments. Despite being termed a “magnificent” government move by F.W. Walsh as late as 1965, the co -op abattoir was a consistant money -loser. The conservative administrations of Robert Stanfield and G.I. Smith covered the abattoir’s losses throught the sixties, but in February, 1972, the Regan Liberals effectively closed the plant by announcing they were withdrawing support. Over the next few years the NSFA lobbied the provincial government unsuccessfully for, the establishment of alternative slaughtering facilities.

The NSFA also continued to fight high taxation. In a 1963 brief to another provincial commission of inquiry into taxation, the Federation reiterated its stand that farmland ought to be assessed according to its ability to pay rather than its speculative value. The brief identified high taxes as one of the main reasons for the exodus away from rural areas, noting that unlike many others, farmers could not pass along their tax burden to the consumer. Little came out of this inquiry, but four years later the provincial government exempted livestock and farm machinery, a gesture which 1967 President Eric Harvey interpreted as nothing more than an admission that municipal taxes had always been unfair. In 1969, the province made yet another study of municipal taxation. The NSFA found its recommendations encouraging, but little came of it. At the 1974 annual meeting the NSFA Board of Directors called for a complete reversal of assessment policy so that land being kept out of production for speculative purposes would be taxed at a higher rate than producing land.

In the late sixties the federal government began considering changes to its tax system that would affect the farm industry. In 1969 Ottawa proposed changes to estate and gift taxes and the introduction of a capital gains tax. The NSFA opposed estate and gift taxes outright, and while it agreed with the capital gains tax in principle, it was concerned it would unintentionally hit farmers harder than its real target, the wealthy.

At the 1969 meeting, Earl Maberley, now CFA director, warned that new provisions for taxing estate inheritances could hamper the simple transfer of a family farm from father to son. “ The heavy taxes which in these circumstances especially, will be imposed will often cripple the enterprise with a load of debt and greatly reduce the chances of the inheriting son to make necessary new investments to keep up with the demands of new technology, and so make a go of it,” he said. The following year he expressed similar misgivings about the capital gains tax. In

1972, the federal government handed over responsibility for estate and inheritance taxes to the province, a move which did not impress the NSFA. The Federation asked the provinces for large tax exemptions for all members of the immediate farm family and for a provision allowing farmers to make a once-in-a-lifetime gift of 350,000 to his family. The following year farmers won significant changes to the federal capital gains tax. Neither farm transfers within the family farm nor increases in the value of “basic breeding herds” would now be considered capital gains. But these exemptions were not available to family farms that were incorporated, and over the next few years the Federation strove to rectify this. The NSFA also strove to have the provincial sales tax removed from all “agricultural inputs.”

But the most important strategy the NSFA invoked against economic adversity was, once again, organized marketing. In the late sixties, twenty years after winning provincial marketing legislation, Nova Scotia farmers finally began to organize marketing boards on a wide -scale. In 1966, a provincial chicken marketing board was formed, and four years later it proved invaluable in protecting Nova Scotia farmers from low -priced, surplus Central Canadian birds in the so -called “chicken and egg” war. In late 1968 the province ‘ s egg producers voted down a provincial scheme that was to have been part of a CFA-sponsored national plan. But the CFA later found there was not adequate federal legislation to set up such a plan anyway. In 1971 the CFA got its federal act, though by the time it had made its way through parliament it was so watered -down that it only authorized market quota systems for eggs and poultry. Two years later, the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency opened for business with Nova Scotia participation - only to gain quick notoriety in 1974 when it allowed eggs to rot in storage while prices were low. Despite tremendously adverse publicity, both the national and provincial federations stood by the agency the principle of organized marketing. Provincial Turkey and Tobacco Marketing Boards were established in 1972 and 1973 respectively. Also in 1973 the province’ s pork producers convinced the Regan government to set up a provincial hog stabilization program. They hoped this would prevent a recurrence of the events of 1971 when they lost \$700,000 because their Marketing Board was unable to counter act the effects of a continent-wide oversupply of pork.

Oddly enough, though, the most significant innovations in organized marketing came from the one major farm sector that did not have fully producer-controlled marketing. In 1967 the Nova Scotia government formed a Provincial Dairy Commission, a subsidiary of the new National Dairy Commission and the latest in a line of independent regulators of the dairy industry. (One of the Commission’s five members was a producer.) Along with the Chicken Marketing Board, the Dairy Commission pioneered supply management and price negotiations that took into account the cost of production. And in 1973, at the recommendation of the Nova Scotia Milk Producers Association, the Commission began using a formula pricing system, under which the price of milk was set and adjusted according to a definite formula. In 1970 the National Dairy Commission decided to start a new national policy under which producers would be given marketing sharing quotas (MSQ) and have to pay penalties for over-production. At first, Nova Scotia dairy farmers didn’t think it to their advantage to participate in the scheme, but in 1975 they agreed in principle

to join.

By the mid-sixties, the NSFA once again began to feel the pressure to reorganize. Despite some strong years for the county federations at the beginning of the decade, several factors served to weaken the lower levels of the Federation. First, there was the sheer decline in farming population. Secondly, the increasing specialization of farming led many farmers to more naturally gravitate toward commodity groups for their organizational strength. And, thirdly, the growing financial needs of the provincial federation placed crushing financial burdens on the county federations. The cancellation of Farm Forum broadcasts in 1965 marked the end of organization on a community level, and district federations began to fall by the wayside and amalgamate at a rapid rate. By the last sixties, even some of the smaller county federations were lapsing into complete inactivity.

The Federation's solution to these developments was to resurrect an old idea most recently proposed in the late fifties - fully integrating commodity groups into the NSFA. At the 1966 annual meeting an organization committee recommended that local and county organizations be retained but that Co-ops and commodity groups should be given membership on the board of directors if they agreed to fund the Federation. It also recommended that the NSFA be funded only by the "commercial farmers" of the province and that its budget be increased from just \$20,000 to at least \$40,000. (In fact, by 1975 the Federations budget would be up to \$70,000.) The changes were taken to the county federations, approved the following year and put into formal effect in 1969. The province's hog, chicken and tobacco associations joined the Federation in the first year of its new by-laws, and the large milk and cream producer association had agreed to join in principle. But no sooner were the new by-laws on the books than the Federation's Organization and Finance Committees began tinkering with them. At the December 1969 meeting the former committee recommended a minimum membership fee for associate, non-voting members (presumably to accommodate past members who didn't meet the definition of "commercial farmer" - at least \$5000 gross income). The latter meanwhile, came up with a county allotment formula that took into account both the number of commercial farmers and the gross value of production. Commodity contributions were based on the previous year's production but were initially paid through county allotments. The Federation also tried unsuccessfully in 1970 to have its constitution placed under the Societies Act rather than the Agriculture and Marketing Act.

Further changes came in 1972 as part of a broad reassessment of the direction of the NSFA. The Federation adopted a new set of objectives, consisting mainly of representing farmers' interests policy formulation and co-ordination, although they also included a clause authorizing to assist farmers in negotiating or bargaining for farm supplies if requested. The Federation decided to retain its county branches as main sources of memberships and made provision for amalgamating the weaker counties, but it chose to neither encourage nor discourage the further development of district federations, meaning essentially that it was content to see them die out. The

commodity check-off and county assessment were separated and the counties would now only have to pay that part of the Federation budget that wasn't covered by the commodity groups - about fifteen per cent, as it turned out. (Two years later, the board of directors recommended eliminating county allotments altogether.) Commodity representation on the board of directors was altered so that each group was entitled to one director per \$10 million in cash receipts, and both county federations and commodity groups were now entitled to one delegate at the annual meeting per \$1,000 contribution, provided this amounted to no less than two and no more than five. The board of directors also suggested changing the Federation's name to the "United Farmers of Nova Scotia," though they didn't consider this a high priority. They felt the term "Federation of Agriculture" did not identify it as a producer organization and could even be confused with the department of agriculture. The voting delegates disagreed, however.

In the mid-seventies, the Federation again began toying with an idea that had surfaced several times in past decades - compulsory farm organization. Many members argued that since all Nova Scotia's farmers had benefited from the NSFA's actions, all should be compelled to belong. But, the idea was controversial. "While it may be an advantage in one respect, the compulsion aspect of this exercise is one which will cause the greatest opposition as no doubt some farmers will point out that this is an infringement upon their freedom to do as they like," a 1972 report reads. "This of course is only a disadvantage to those who don't want to belong to any organization or a specific organization, those who feel it is their sole prerogative to decide whether to join or not and these who may be members but are not fully convinced they should be. The advantages are on the side of those who have been good members and have paid their dues, while the disadvantages are on the side of the less faithful or non-supporters." As the new constitution took hold, however, these arguments became largely irrelevant. By 1975 all the province's major commodity groups save the fruit growers had joined the Federation or were on the verge of joining.

In 1969, the NSFA fulfilled a long-time wish of its members by hiring Marinus Van de Sande, a former Department of Agriculture employee, as full-time Organizational Manager. Van de Sande's main task was to have been recruiting new commodity groups into the Federation. But almost as soon as he accepted the job, NSFA Secretary, Nadine Archibald was involved in a traffic accident and he had to take over her duties as well. In 1971 Archibald formally resigned to become manager of Colchester Credit Union and Van de Sande became the Federation's first Secretary-Manager. Earl Maberley, a former president and CFA director, became Assistant Secretary-Manager. Allan Sorflaten replaced Van de Sande in 1973 only to resign the following year to move into full-time farming. Maberley then became Secretary-Manager and Donna Langille, Assistant-Secretary-Manager. The NSFA maintained its involvement with such other organizations as the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the Atlantic Winter Fair and the Voluntary Economic Planning Board, and in the early sixties the NSFA was asked to participate in a new provincial exhibition in Truro, though its involvement did not extend much beyond placing members on the exhibitions board of commissioners. In 1970 the Federation began publishing the "Nova Scotia Farmer," a quarterly newspaper.

Movements were also afoot in the higher levels of farm organization. Throughout the sixties, the CFA attempted to achieve a union - or at least an accommodation - with the National Farmers' Union, a rival group. Though it had little presence in the Maritimes, the NFU was well established in Ontario and the West. In principle if not in practice, the NFU was more militant than the CFA, more concerned with the survival of the small farmer and suspicious of the larger manifestations of "agri-business," including big co-operative enterprises and marketing boards. But it would be wrong to simply label the NFU as "radical" and the CFA as "conservative," since it was the NFU that was more resistant to change. These overtures were unsuccessful, but the CFA did manage in the sixties to more closely integrate itself with the national commodity organizations, particularly the Dairy Farmers of Canada,

In 1972 the Maritime Federation of Agriculture folded with the mutual consent of its members. It was replaced by a less formal Maritime Farmers' Council, and each of the three Maritime Federations was given its own member on the CFA board of directors. The following year the Eastern Agriculture Conference, which had annually preceded the CFA general meeting, was cancelled as a regular event.

In the sixties the NSFA began paying greater attention to the farm woodlot. At the 1961 annual meeting, President Gerard V. Chaisson foresaw the day when farmers would treat their woodlots in the same way as their acreage and livestock, carefully determining how to maximize their yield and income. Over the next few years the Federation passed resolutions calling on the provincial government to place pulpwood under the Natural Products Marketing Act. And after a Nova Scotia Woodlot Owner's Association was formed in 1962, NSFA delegates voted to work for an amalgamation of the two groups. In 1964 the Federation presented its views to R.J. MacSween, recently appointed a one-man provincial commission on pulpwood pricing, and two years later the NSFA Woodlot Committee was pleased to report MacSween had come to largely the same conclusions. "The root cause of most of the problems of pulpwood producers is lack of organization," MacSween reported. "This handicap leaves them in a position where they are not able to do very much to improve their economic standing or to participate effectively in programs which may be designed from time to time by government and others for their benefit... (The) involvement of these producers in any systematic program of forestry development including utilization and conservation is utterly impracticable except on an organized basis." That same year the NSFA worked out an elaborate agreement with the province, ARDA officials and the extension department of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish to stage a \$150,000 organizational project for woodlot owners. The project was funded jointly by the province and ARDA and administered by St. F.X. By 1969 a new provincial organization with membership in 16 counties was in business. As its president, Thomas Smith, explained in 1969, the new association had three options before it - to form a pulpwood marketing board, to participate in an independent commission, similar to the dairy commission, or to form a labour union of woodlot owners and forestry workers. Smith left no doubt he favoured the first option, even though it would involve the largest effort by a commodity group in the province's history.

The NSFA also succeeded in getting the province's first effective weed control legislation passed in the mid-sixties. In 1966, with the help of Henry Maggah, the provincial government's legislative counsel, the Federation's Weed Control Act. The government then invited William DesBarres, the committee's chairman, to sit on In the mid-seventies, the Federation again began toying with an idea that had surfaced several times in past decades - compulsory farm organization. Many members argued that since all Nova Scotia's farmers had benefited from the NSFA's actions, all should be compelled to belong. But, the idea was controversial. "While it may be an advantage in one respect, the compulsion aspect of this exercise is one which will cause the greatest opposition as no doubt some farmers will point out that this is an infringement upon their freedom to do as they like," a 1972 report reads. "This of course is only a disadvantage to those who don't want to belong to any organization or a specific organization, those who feel it is their sole prerogative to decide whether to join or not and these who may be members but are not fully convinced they should be. The advantages are on the side of those who have been good members and have paid their dues, while the disadvantages are on the side of the less faithful or non-supporters." As the new constitution took hold, however, these arguments became largely irrelevant. By 1975 all the province's major commodity groups save the fruit growers had joined the Federation or were on the verge of joining.

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consult with their county federation before declaring a plant a noxious weed. But it also placed the onus for controlling such weeds on the farmers. A whole new hierarchy of weed inspectors could order farmers to take “prompt, effective action” against weeds on his property within seven days. If the farmer didn’t comply, he would have to pay for an inspector to do the job. In addition, the act set up a Weed Control Advisory Committee, which was to have at least one NSFA representative. Over the next two years, the Federation weed committee held educational meetings throughout the province to explain the new act to farmers.

The decline in rural population and growth of towns and cities kindled a great interest among NSFA members in land use. Starting in 1967, the Federation passed several resolutions calling for a provincial policy of land zoning. Two years later, with the announcement of ARDA’s termination, the NSFA lobbied for the retention of existing land consolidation and land improvement policies. (The land consolidation program allowed farmers to extend their farms by leasing additional land, while the land improvement program gave farmers grants to upgrade land they already owned.) At first, the Federation was only half successful. The land improvement program survived, but land consolidation came to an end in March, 1970. In 1973, the provincial government started a small farm development program, but it proved highly unpopular. The following year, however, the Regan government launched a \$5,000,000 farm land leasing and land bank program similar in spirit to the old land consolidation plan. Through leasing, the new program allowed farmers to expand their land base without the burden of repaying a capital investment, in the process protecting land for agriculture in the future. Also in 1973, the provincial government started a provincial land use zoning committee (and the NSFA immediately called for representation on it). The next year, it announced a comprehensive new land use policy, which was to have been under the supervision of a land resources board, though as of 1975 there was no sign of it.

Probably the hottest issue related to land use was expropriation. The extension of highways and other public facilities in the sixties put strains on the province’s expropriation mechanisms they simply couldn’t handle. While recognizing the need for expropriation, the NSFA worried that its indiscriminate use could have the gravest implications for democracy. A working paper at the 1972 semi-annual meeting noted: “While the immediate concern in an expropriation exercise may be the disruption of one’s business, loss of revenue and inconvenience, the basic issue is the power to take a man’s land without his consent... It is our contention that most expropriation powers completely ignore this basic democratic principle and any further legislation should be drafted with this right upper most in the legislator’s mind.” But most of the NSFA’s complaints were more mundane than this. The Federation wanted earlier contact and settlement of expropriation deals, compensation for damaged crops and construction of highway under-passes for cattle and machinery. At first, it did not get much help from government. When it first brought its concerns to Halifax in the mid -sixties, it was bluntly informed that adequate expropriation procedures were already in place. The Federation continued to push for better treatment of farmers - at one point even considering paying a lawyer a retaining fee to handle expropriation conflicts - before finally getting a sympathetic hearing from a select committee of legislature in March, 1969. But though

this committee came up with some good ideas - such as setting up a tribunal to handle disputes - it was so rushed it could only recommend minor amendments to existing legislation - and then the amended act was passed but not proclaimed. In the mid-seventies the expropriation issue centered around the construction of Highway 101 through the Annapolis Valley. The provincial government favoured a northerly route for the highway, which was shorter but would have gone through prime farmland. The NSFA, which had passed a resolution back in 1964 calling for the new highway, argued for a more southerly route.

The Federation's interest in land use and weed control also brought it into conflict with the new environmentalism of the late sixties and early seventies. The NSFA was certainly not blind to the dangers of pollution. It passed anti-pollution resolutions in the sixties before the subject became fashionable. But after decades, or even centuries, of thinking of themselves as "trustees of the soil" Nova Scotia farmers couldn't help but regard the protests of environmentalists as naive and even harmful, particularly when they directed their campaigns against farm pesticides and herbicides. In a 1972 draft of a submission to Glen Bagnell, the province's minister of mines and resources, the Federation put its opinions bluntly: "Pollution means different things to different people. To the farmer, spreading manure on his fields, he is returning organic plant nutrients to his land in a recycling process that had been an accepted agricultural practice long before the meaning of recycling was heard of. To the urbanite, who has left the concrete jungle to get away from the thermal dust and carbon monoxide for a weekend at his summer cottage, the farmer carrying out this operation is a polluter." The Federation was also peeved that there was to be no farmer representation on a proposed environmental control council, which would review the use of farm chemicals. "The question we pose here.., is, who is going to determine what is harmful and on what basis? Is it going to be made on the basis of scientific fact, or on the emotional ravings of some uninformed group, who seem to see only the bad things that have happened with the use of these materials and are not aware of the tremendous contribution that the proper use of chemical have made to the environment." H.F. MacRae, principle of the Agricultural College, summed up the feelings of farmers about environmentalists in a 1973 address. "It must be remembered," he said, "that the new generation of extreme environmentalists advocating immediate legislation to produce the Utopian environment are part of a privileged class in an affluent society and country. They have never been hungry. They take an abundance of food for granted. They wish to protect the countryside from ruin. They want to protect the farmer for himself."

Crop insurance became available to Nova Scotia farmers in 1969 under a program financed 25% by the federal government, 25% by the province and 50% by the farmers themselves. The idea of crop insurance was first debated in 1962, but, despite heavy crop losses that year, the Federation decided it would be of little advantage to a province like Nova Scotia, which depended very little on home-grown crops. Once Nova Scotia farmers had accepted the idea, though, it quickly caught on. By 1975 the plan covered eight different crops, including blueberries and strawberries, although it only insured the costs of planting, not the replacement value of lost crops. The NSFA wanted the plan applied on an individual field basis, but the programs administrators did

not think this practical. In another development in the area of insurance the Federation's own group accident plan was altered to accommodate the introduction of national medicare in 1969. Increased compensation benefits replaced remaining medical coverage provisions. Nonetheless, the growing government presence in the health field, coupled with farming's declining numbers, hurt the Federation plan. In 1971, with the number of policies down to just over 300 and falling fast, the plan's benefits had to be reduced and its future looked shaky.

Agricultural education still drew the Federation's attention on occasion, though not nearly as frequently as in past periods. In the early sixties the Federation evidently gave up on rural high schools and focused instead on vocational schools. In 1962, the NSFA directors reported that of the 450 vocational schools then being built or remodelled in Canada not one had plans to offer agricultural courses, and the Federation passed a resolution to correct this. But, as usual, it had better luck at the post - secondary level. In 1965 the provincial government embarked on a program of expansion for the Agricultural college, culminating three years later with the construction of the Cox Institute of Agricultural Technology, named after long-time principal Kenneth Cox, who had resigned in 1964. Cox was also made NSFA Honorary President in 1967, after the death of W.S. Blair. By 1975 enrollment at the college was up to 400. In the late sixties rumours began floating around that the college was to be given its own, independent board of governors. The Federation immediately called for representation on such a board, but as of 1975 it was still all speculation. In 1975 the NSFA began its lengthy, and ultimately unsuccessful, campaign to have a Maritime veterinary college located in Truro.

Other issues cropped up at NSFA meetings from time to time. Throughout this period, the Federation voiced complaints about the farm machinery industry, particularly its poor maintenance practices and perceived profiteering. In its Submission to the Barber Royal Commission on Farm Machinery, formed in 1966, the NSFA pointed out that while the average farmer's machinery investment had tripled, his share of the consumer's dollar dropped from \$59 to \$41. The Federation agreed with the Commission's conclusions and, along with the CFA, tried for several years to convince Ottawa to implement them. The NSFA had better success reversing 1972 changes to the provincial labour standards code. A new act did not continue farm labour exemptions from minimum wages and other common provisions. But after heavily federation lobbying the government reverted to the former policy. (Farmers were in no way opposed to the labour movement - they simply couldn't afford a lot of modern labour standards. They did however, gain the option of providing workmen's compensation for farm labourers during this period).

In the mid-sixties, the NSFA and Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia began their joint rural beautification campaign! Though originally conceived as a centennial project for 1967, it became permanent with the help of funding from the provincial department of tourism. The NSFA continued to lobby for measures to redress damage done by indiscriminate trespassers and in the seventies it had to contend with a new trespassing menace - snowmobiles. Even worse, it had to defend farmers against a 1973 Ontario court decision that declared a farmer liable for injuries

sustained by trespassers on his property. And in 1972 the Federation's call for "public power~~ were finally realized when the Nova Scotia Power Commission became the sole and complete authority for distributing electric power in the province. The Commission promised that the standardized rates and services long desired by the Federation would soon become reality.

The mid-seventies saw the first great wave of optimism hit Nova Scotia farmers since the second world war. There were several reasons for this. First, prices and incomes at long last rose substantially. According to Minister of Agriculture Jack Jlawkin' s estimates, between 1971 and 1973 annual gross farm income increased from \$71.5 million to \$103 million and net farm income from \$15.6 million to \$31.4 million. Secondly, the public and government response to this turn of events was encouraging. In the midst of the first "energy crisis" of the mid -seventies, consumers seemed unusually appreciative of the condition and contributions of farmers. "If there is one bright spot...", said 1973 President Arthur Porter, "I would say it was the fact that today the farmer is being recognized as a very necessary and important individual in our society. Never before has the farmer been in this position and I think that now is the time for farmers to strenghten their organization and speak with a united voice because governments and people are prepared to listen." The provincial government listened, and at the 1974 annual meeting Hawkins announced that over the next five years the province was planning to spend \$80 million to aid agriculture. (By comparison, the province was then spending a total of just over \$7 million annually on assistance programs). The new policy would focus on livestock improvements, grain production, land improvement, horticultural development and farm enlargement. "(What) we are talking about is massive long-term aid - aid that will lift agriculture to the position and the priority it deserves in Nova Scotia, aid that will assist our farmers increase production, aid that will make farm operations in the long run more profitable and farmers themselves in a sound economic situation."

Finally, the Nova Scotia economy as a whole suddenly seemed to be on the brink of unprecedented prosperity. "The possibilities of large deposits of ore one off our coast, the possibility of developing Fundy Tidal Power all spell the word 'growth' for Nova Scotia...", noted 1972 President, Kenneth Streach. "Nova Scotia's farmers can take their rightful place in society with a reasonable return for their investment and a comparable return to labour, providing government recognizes the fact that agriculture and farmers are important to the development of the Nova Scotia economy." None of these mid-seventies causes for optimism would quite live up to its initial billing, but at the time Nova Scotia farmers were cautiously but genuinely, hopeful.

The two most interesting things about any history are seeing how much times have changed and seeing how much they've stayed the same. Certainly many of the topics discussed at early NSFA meetings - gambling at exhibitions, the threat of margarine and the danger to rural youth of automobiles and movies, to name a few - now seem dated and even a little quaint. But more remarkable is the continuity of many themes throughout the NSFA's first eighty years. Thumbing through any NSFA yearbook, one wouldn't have to look far to find some treatment of a few basic topics - the need for better agricultural education, the need for greater co -operation among

farmers, the need for more orderly marketing, the need for greater government support, the need to make the NSFA more relevant to changing times. In fact, the history of the NSFA can arguably be summarized in three words. The first is adjustment. Perhaps the greatest singly achievement of the NSFA was its ability not just to survive but to grow in prestige and influence during an era when the farm population declined sharply. Almost from its start the NSFA was unusually keen to readjust its own structure to meet the needs of farmers and reflect the changing state of the industry. When the NSFA needed to take education to the farmers, it created its county branches. When this work was taken over by others, and when the agricultural societies no longer represented the broad interests of farmers, the NSFA rebuilt the county branches to attract more farmers, the NSFA rebuilt the county branches to attract more farmers. When the NSFA felt the time had come to free itself of government funding and permeate all rural communities of the province, it became independent and set up district branches. And when the industry moved away from small, mixed farms toward larger, more specialized operations, the NSFA invited commodity groups into the fold. But more than just changing its by-laws, the Federation gradually shifted its philosophy and demands to fit the tenor of the times. The NSFA tended to avoid policy stands that had little realistic chance of being fulfilled. Instead, it appeared to stay one step ahead of government and the public and wait until circumstances brought society around to its way of thinking. For instance, it didn't demand wide -spread government involvement in the industry until the depression and second world war had proven it desirable. To be sure, this probably wasn't always a conscious, calculated policy. To some degree, farmer's ideas undoubtedly reflected the general evolution of social thought. But more often the NSFA's own healthy balance of prudence and vision guided its actions.

The second word is security. Farmers, as a whole, have little entrepreneurial spirit. They experience too much risks simply trying to grow their crops and keep their livestock healthy to have much of a taste for it in their economic relations. Moreover, the whole structure of the industry in Nova Scotia has tended to discourage strict free market solutions. The industry is composed of many individual farmers too small by themselves to control marketing. The development of production technology, particularly since the second world war, has forced farmers to keep pace or go under, often at the cost of a staggering debt-load. And when production does inevitably increase it often only results in lower prices. The NSFA recognized these realities and was always championing new measures, by they co -operative ventures, marketing boards or stabilization programs, to give farmers greater security and control over the industry. And this policy wasn't only in the interests of farmers. As Jack Hawkins put it in 1974: "Everyone, no matter what his profession, whether he is a doctor, a lawyer, a writer or whatever, must eat. A nation, like Napoleon's army marches on its stomach. Farmers are primary producers, first citizens of the country. All wheels of industry, of education, of culture, of business stop when agricultural production stops." In short, no nation can prosper without an adequate and secure supply of food. The final word is unity. Traditionally, farming has always been one of the most individualistic professions - a fact which has made all attempts at farm organization extremely difficult. Yet this individualism creates a powerlessness against larger interests that can only be rectified through some sort

of common front. The history of the NSFA is almost as much about farmers trying to coax their peers to stand together as it is about farmers confronting others. And, ironically, the Federation only finally achieved its aim of near universal membership because of the decline in rural population. But there can be no doubt that virtually all the gains Nova Scotia farmers made between 1895 and 1975 came, directly or not, through various forms of unified action. As the NSFA consolidated its position as the voice of Nova Scotia farmers, governments found it increasingly difficult to ignore. Indeed, they sometimes seemed to welcome its direction. In a curious way, collective action also brought talented individual farm leaders to a prominence they may never have achieved on their own. From Bryan to Brown to Blair to Maberley the quality of leadership in the NSFA has always been impressive. The faces have changed, the issues have changed, even the organization has changed, but one thing has remained true since 1895. The motto: "In Union -Strength."