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CHAPTER VII

THE PARTY IN THE LEGISLATURE

Political parties in the United States have fulfilled better their role as nominating and electing groups than as governing agencies. Yet it is important to study just how well a party succeeds in enacting the programs it promises the voters. The activities of the Progressive party in this regard will be discussed in this chapter. The special concern here is what advantages or disadvantages the Progressives had as a third party in using power and what effects their actions had upon the success and ultimate disappearance of the party.

Constitutionally speaking, Wisconsin has a weak governor. That is to say, his powers vis-a-vis the legislature are not great. In the first place his function of taking "care that the laws be faithfully executed"[1] is hedged by constitutional and statutory restrictions. Four other state officers besides himself and the lieutenant governor are elected by popular ballot. These officers therefore owe no

[1] Wisconsin Constitution, Art. V, Sec. 4.

necessary loyalty to him and can even be of another political party, as they were during Philip LaFollette's second term beginning in 1935. Many of the most important functions of the state are carried out by multi-membered regulatory commissions. Although members of these are appointed by the governor, their long, overlapping terms and the legal restrictions upon their removal make it impossible for a governor, unless he serves three successive terms, to have an opportunity to appoint them all.

Wisconsin's governor has the traditional duties of recommending measures for enactment by the legislature and of calling special sessions of that body, at which he may prescribe the sole subjects of business.[2] He also has the customary veto power, with an item veto on appropriations. But Wisconsin operates with a system of continuing appropriations; that is, the appropriations act of each session is merely a series of amendments to a previous law. The governor's cancellation of an item therefore merely returns the appropriation to what it was for the previous two years, possibly even a higher sum. With practically all state employees under a merit system, the governor is denied the threat of removal as a control over his subordinates, and he has little to offer in terms of patronage to use in furthering his goals. Even the budget director and the director of

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[2] Ibid., Sec. 11.

personnel are not subject exclusively to the governor's pleasure.

Since the governor's powers are so limited, the student of Wisconsin politics must turn his attention at an early stage to the legislature as an important arena of activity. In particular he must study the relations of the governor with the legislature to judge what place party relations play in their interaction. This chapter will show how the Progressive party operated in the legislature, as illustrated by the organization of the houses and the consideration of certain key measures. A complete survey of the laws enacted will not be attempted.

Control of the Legislature

Although Phil LaFollette was twice named governor as a Progressive, his party never elected a majority of the one-hundred-member Assembly nor of the thirty-three-member state Senate.[3] Without majorities, the party faced a severe handicap in accomplishing any of its program goals. But mere numbers of representatives elected do not tell the whole story of legislative control. Coalitions, bargaining, vote-switching, log-rolling, proselyting, and parliamentary generalship offer to leaders possible means of obtaining results they have not secured by outright partisan majorities.

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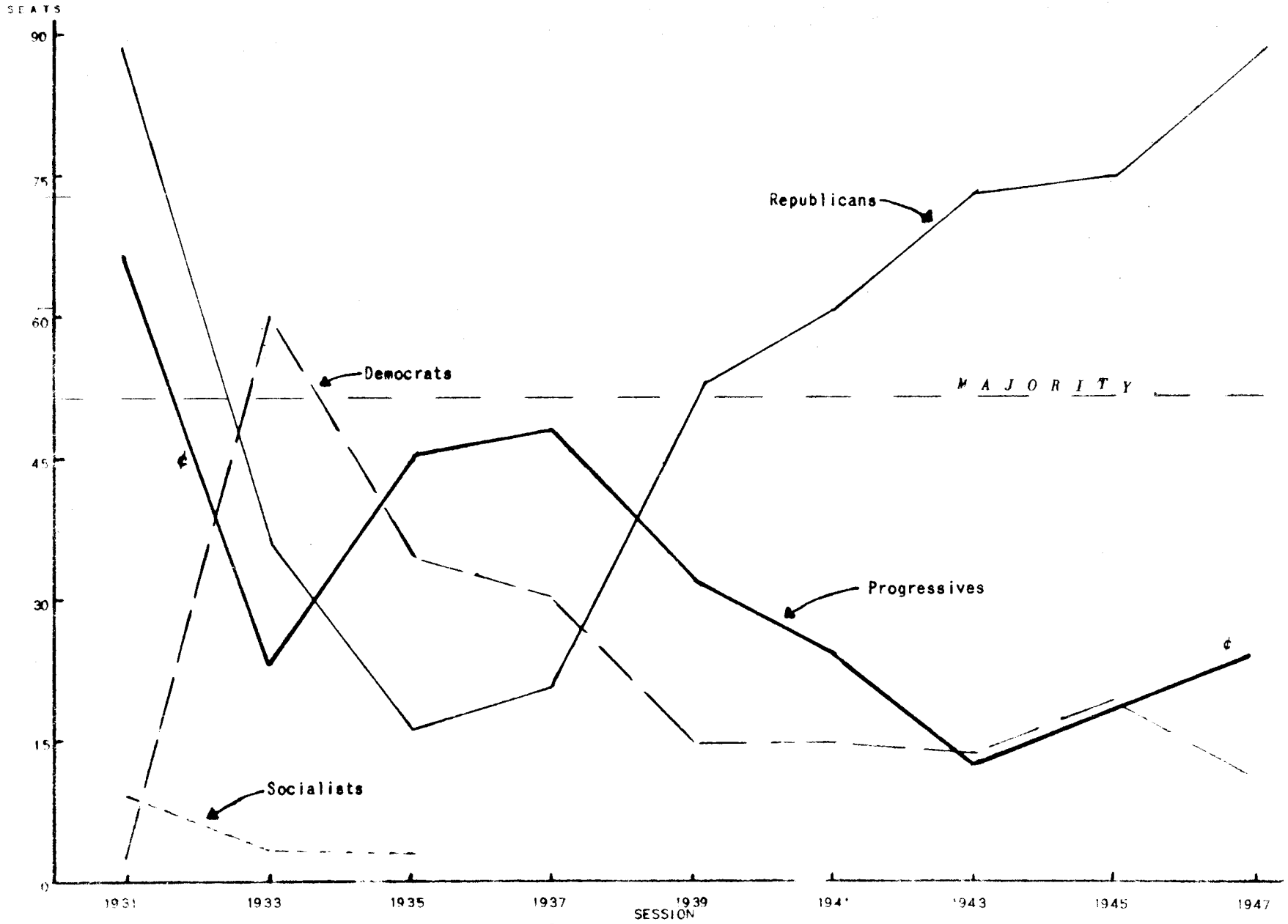
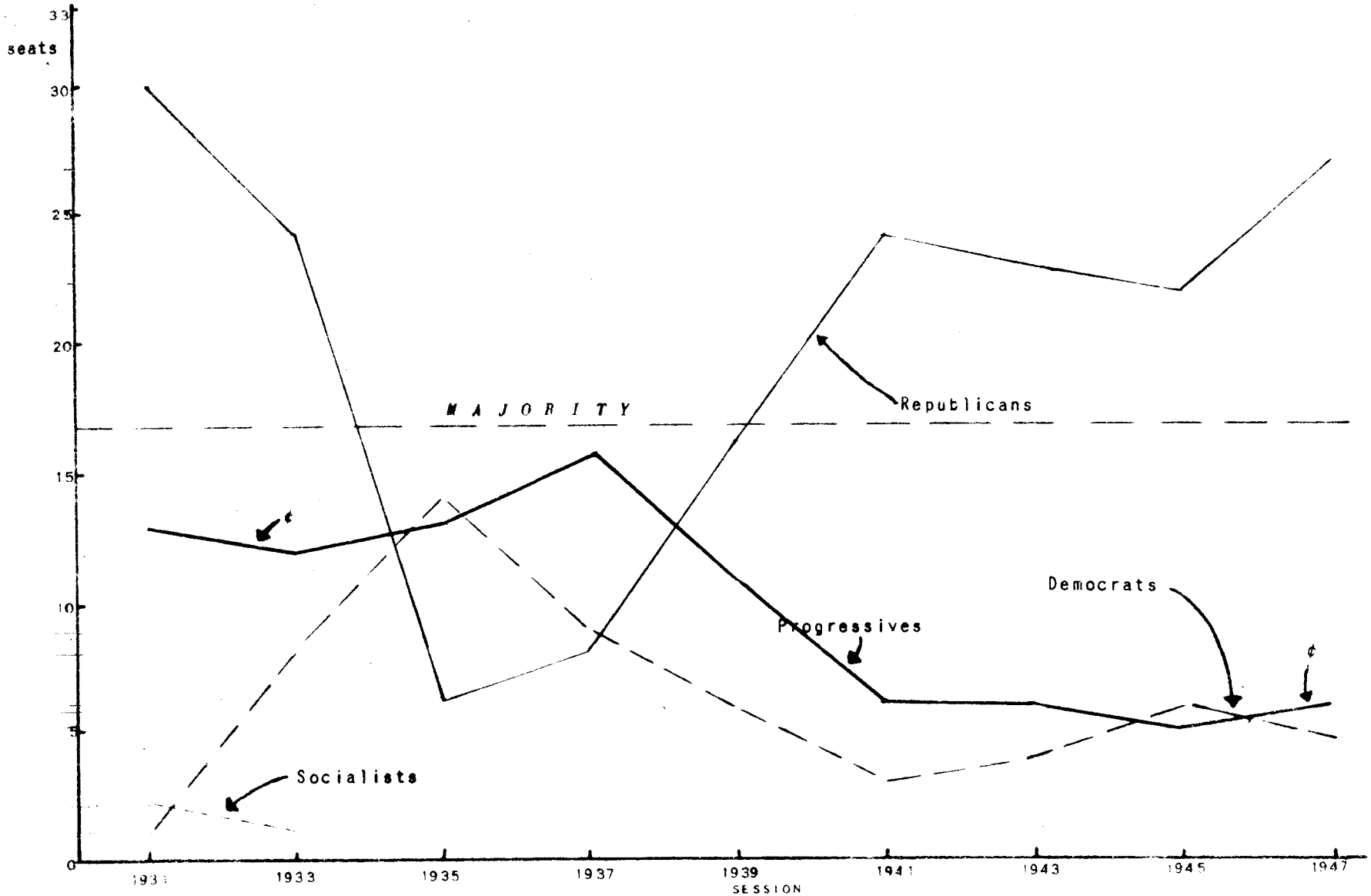
[3] See Figures 8 and 9.



Source: Legislative Manuals, Directories and Journals; Blue Books; discrepancies adjusted by interviews.
*Progressive Republicans. Number also included in Republican totals.

FIGURE 6-- PARTY STRENGTH IN STATE ASSEMBLY, 1931 - 1947.*



*Source : Legislative Manuals, Directories and Journals, Blue Books, discrepancies adjusted by interviews.
¢Progressive Republicans. Number also included in Republican totals.

FIGURE 9-- PARTY STRENGTH IN STATE SENATE, 1931 - 1947.*

Such alternatives were employed by the Progressives.

Before 1934

In the forty years prior to the formation of the Progressive party, except for 1933, Republicans were always elected to the legislature in overwhelming numbers. Within that dominant party, however, the progressive and stalwart wings were usually rather evenly divided. The progressive group as a rule controlled the Assembly when they had elected a governor, but seldom controlled the Senate--only twice in the history of the state before 1930, according to one writer.[4] Citing exact figures on factional strength for the period of the 1920's is difficult because legislative documents do not specify which representatives were progressive and which stalwart. Identification of progressives is further complicated by wet-dry and north-south splits within that faction, as well as by schisms based on personal jealousies.[5] Even the most elementary test of political affiliation--the vote on organization of the houses of the legislature--is an inadequate criterion. In the 1927 session, for example, the division of the legislators into pro- and anti-Zimmerman factions all but obliterated the usual basis of the split.[6]

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[4] Lynn Peavy, Capital Times (Madison), Nov. 8, 1930.

[5] See for example, Edward T. Kaveny, Milwaukee Journal, March 25, 1929.

[6] Fred E. Zimmerman, a Milwaukeean with a progressive background, had been elected governor in 1926 with conservative support.

When Phil LaFollette was elected governor in 1930, he was almost obliged to support the conservative speaker of the previous session, Charles E. Perry, for re-election, though progressive Republicans constituted a large majority of the Assembly. Perry did not agree with the power regulation program of stalwart Governor Walter Kohler Sr., and had stumped the state supporting LaFollette. Further, his personal popularity among the incumbent progressive assemblymen would probably have been enough to secure his re-election to the speakership had he been nominated by the conservatives.

In the Senate in 1931, twelve acknowledged progressive Republicans, two Socialists, an independent Republican, and a Democrat caucused together--a total of sixteen--leaving a majority of seventeen stalwart Republicans.[7] In the vote on organization, however, stalwarts supported a wet progressive against the dry named by the progressive caucus, hoping to split the progressive vote. The progressives' own candidate won out, however, when conservative Philip E. Nelson of Douglas county switched to their side. Faced with controversial measures, however, the progressive coalition proved impermanent.

In 1932, the Democrats elected the governor and swept sixty of their number into the Assembly. Progressives, while counting twenty-three of the thirty-eight Republicans in their fold, stood no chance of influencing the organization

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[7]Kaveny, Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 14, 1931.

of the Assembly. In the Senate, however, although the Democrats had raised their numbers from one to eight, the twenty-four Republicans compromised their factional differences and organized that house. They made the progressive Orland S. Loomis president pro tempore and put two stalwarts on the three-member Committee on Committees. If the progressives could have worked with the Democrats, they might have filled all three places on the Committee on Committees. The Democratic caucus, however, was controlled by conservative Harry W. Bolens. Bolens hoped to deal with the stalwart Republicans, but he was so sweeping in his demands on them that they were driven into the arms of the progressives. As before, this coalition did not operate throughout the session. The conservatives in both parties outnumbered the others, and the vote was often 17-16 against progressive measures.[8]

The 1935 session

After their first election campaign, the Progressive party claimed the allegiance of the governor, forty-five assemblymen, and thirteen senators. Their first task was organization of the houses. Six ballots were required to elect a speaker. The Progressive candidate, Jorge W. Carow of Rusk county, at last was victorious. Despite attempts by Progressives to attract various liberal Democrats to their

[8] Capital Times, Jan. 12, 1933.

candidate with the promise of committee posts and patronage, Democratic leaders held their thirty-five members in line throughout the roll calls, supporting Cornelius T. Young, the Milwaukeean who at the age of 25 in the previous session had been the youngest speaker in the history of the state. The three Socialists put up their own candidate as a gesture on the first ballot, then switched to Carow. Republicans nominated Frank N. Graass of Door county, knowing that he could not be elected by their seventeen members. It was the votes of three Republicans, one switching on each of the last three roll calls, that put Carow in the chair. The last of these Republicans to go over, today says of his vote:

> Carow was a fine man, but was sick and could not discharge his responsibilities. I voted for him on the sixth ballot thinking that after all Progressives came from good Republican stock. I wouldn't vote for a Democrat, because certainly they didn't.[9]

A similar attitude on the part of the Democrats kept the two old parties from coalescing, thereby allowing Progressives to control the Assembly in this session.

In the 1934 election, Progressives had captured half of the Senate seats at stake and had three holdovers.[10] But still their ranks were too thin to organize that body. Instead, the fourteen Democrats and six Republicans coalesced to make Democrat Harry Bolens president pro tem and to con-

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[9] Alfred R. Ludvigsen, interview, Feb. 18, 1955.

[10] They had lost two votes temporarily through a resignation and a death. These were replaced by Progressives at a special election in April

trol the committees. This alliance lasted throughout the session and was successful in obstructing every important measure of Governor LaFollette.

The 1937 session

Phil LaFollette lost no opportunity to focus the blame for his failure to achieve a program in 1935 on the "seventeen reactionary senators." Frustrated by what he considered their purely partisan opposition, he took to the stump in the fall of 1936 in an attempt to retire the ten whose terms were expiring. When the returns were in, three had been re-elected, but five had been defeated in the general election, one had been defeated in the primary, and one had not run. Thus eight of the "reactionaries" were gone. Two of them, however, were replaced by Republicans and one by a conservative Democrat, while one Progressive senator up for re-election was retired by a Republican. To add to their troubles, Progressives could not count on the vote of Progressive John O. Cashman. Cashman had run unsuccessfully for Congress as a Democrat, and was miffed because the LaFollettes had actively campaigned against him in that race. Cashman did not vote with the Progressives on organization nor did he attend the Progressive caucus.[11] The result was that while the Progressives had gained strength in the Senate, they still lacked one vote of having a majority.

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[11] Morris H. Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, (Madison), Dec. 31, 1937.

Thereupon the Progressive leaders pursued a policy of "dicker or persuasion--with dicker seeming to be the most effective."[12] A Milwaukee Democrat, Arthur L. Zimny, was given a seat on the Committee on Committees, the chairmanship of another committee, and a job for his brother in the beverage tax department. Conservative Republican Senator Phil Nelson, who had been a target of Phil LaFollette in 1930 in an attempt to prevent his elevation from the Assembly to the Senate, was made chairman of the Education and Public Welfare Committee and also was placed on the committee-naming group. With the votes of Zimny and Nelson, the Progressives built a bare majority without having to depend on Cashman. Zimny supported Progressive programs reluctantly and erratically, but Nelson cooperated with increasing ardor until he was an acknowledged leader among the Progressives. He secured his re-election on the Progressive ticket in 1938.

In the Assembly the Progressives gained control more easily, though not without manipulation. Paul Alfonsi was elected speaker on the second ballot. Voters in 1936 had elected forty-eight Progressives, counting six former Socialists now listing themselves as Farmer Labor Federation Progressives. Former Speaker Carow, however, though re-elected, had died, leaving the Progressives with forty-seven votes--if they could control all of their members. They could not.

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[12] J. C. Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 10, 1937.

The night before the session began, four Progressives and a Democrat decided to prevent the election of the Progressive caucus candidate, Alfonsi. Three of their votes went to Progressive Victor Nehs. Forty-two Progressives--five less than their total strength--voted for Alfonsi on the first ballot.

On the second ballot, Republican and Democratic conservatives surprised the Progressives by uniting, not on a coalition candidate of their own, but on the Progressive Nehs, whom they considered to be much less radical than Alfonsi. Nehs is said to have agreed to cooperate with the Republicans and Democrats in organizing the Assembly.[13] Conservatives rightly believed Nehs could draw some Progressive votes. Their move would have succeeded except for three things--the tremendous efforts of Phil LaFollette to keep Progressives in line, a split in the opposition, and a trick by Alfonsi.

As for the Progressives, Earl D. Hall and another wanderer were in Alfonsi's column on the second ballot, while two Progressives, including Nehs himself, left it. A Democrat claims he knew of several Progressives who actually wanted to vote for Nehs. He commented, "Phil must really have thrown a scare into them."[14] Hall says:

> Phil was <u>really</u> mad that time because we

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[13] John Pritchard, interview, Feb. 11, 1955.

[14] Elmer L. Genzmer, interview, March 17, 1955.

> would not follow the caucus. He and his secretaries were running through the halls. About every two minutes I would get a note: "Please, may I see you a minute?" I didn't go out, though.[15]

As to the opposition, the Democrats could not control all of their members either. Two of their number went for Alfonsi at the outset; three more joined on the second ballot. These five Democrats were promptly expelled from their caucus. The story behind the Democratic defection is told by Arthur J. Balzer, who with a fellow Milwaukeean was the first to bolt. He says:

> Before the session, I picked up the phone one night to hear "This is the White House calling." It was Marvin McIntyre. He said, "The President wants you to cooperate with the LaFollettes." Well, you can imagine that my pride was inflated. It isn't every man that can say he has been called by the White House. I continued to support Phil and we put through 95 per cent of his program.[16]

The trick, which in connection with the Democratic split turned the election, is described by a former legislator who was sitting nearby, as follows:

> On the second ballot, the vote was actually

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[15] Earl D. Hall, interview, Feb. 8, 1955.

[16] Arthur J. Balzer, interview, Feb. 16, 1955. It is ironic that Balzer, one of the few New Deal Democratic officeholders in Wisconsin in 1937, who was expelled by the conservative Democratic legislative caucus for supporting a Roosevelt-approved candidate, should have been expelled from the Democratic caucus in 1955 during his fourth session by the liberal legislators, then in control of the party, for seconding the nomination of Republican Mark Catlin for speaker. "You see, this current expulsion is nothing to me," Balzer says. "I've been through it all before."

> 49 for Alfonsi and 50 for Nehs. Alfonsi was sitting across the aisle from C. A. Beggs of Barron county, who had been chairman of the Finance committee during the previous session. Paul Alfonsi knew that the vote was against him before it was announced, as he was tabulating it, but he whispered to Beggs that he had won, and that Beggs had better get on the bandwagon. Beggs rose in his seat and had his vote changed from Nehs to Alfonsi. Thus when the vote was announced, it was 49 for Nehs and 50 for Alfonsi. Beggs then realized he had been tricked. Incidentally, he was not reappointed chairman of the Finance committee.[17]

Had there been another ballot, this informant feels, many other Progressives would have deserted Alfonsi because of this act.

After 1938

The Progressives never again controlled either house of the legislature. In the 1939 and succeeding sessions, their numbers fell off until they could claim only six assemblymen and five senators in 1945, a situation described by a conservative Republican newspaper as follows: "Eleven lonely, crust-gnawing Progressives were all that could crawl back to the legislature this year."[18]

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[17] Interview, name withheld

[18] Editorial, Wisconsin State Journal, Jan. 10, 1945.

Legislative Programs

Progressives always attempted to enact a comprehensive program. Their slim control usually made this a difficult task.

The 1931 session

Governor Phil LaFollette as a progressive Republican in 1931, with a majority in the Assembly and a favorable coalition in the Senate, had secured passage of much of his program. Half of his requests were passed at the regular session. The legislature enacted a liberal labor code, all but one of the Governor's power proposals, and established the Executive Council.[19] He did not secure adoption of his proposals on high school aid, unemployment relief, congressional reapportionment, chain store taxation, and the eight-hour day; nor did he get the dividend tax exemption repealed, the

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[19]The executive council, Wisconsin Statutes, chap. 15.001-5, 1931-38, consisted of a group of ten legislators and ten other citizens representing various interests appointed by the governor without confirmation. It was to conduct research, propose major changes in basic social and economic policy, investigate government departments, especially with a view toward reorganization, and to carry on certain housekeeping details. While utilized during the first term of Philip LaFollette, it fell into disuse thereafter because of the political difficulties of interest representation and especially as a result of the divided control of the executive and legislative branches. Despite reorganization in 1933 and 1937 it never fulfilled its intended function, and it was replaced by the Bureau of Investigation under Governor Heil in 1939. This agency, after much criticism, was abolished in 1947. On the first Council see Paul J. Collins, "The Wisconsin Executive Council, American Political Science Review, Vol. 26 (October, 1932), pp. 914-920.

corrupt practices legislation strengthened, or the primary election law revised.[20]

LaFollette lieutenants put through an adjournment resolution in late June when the four-sided coalition that had organized the Senate broke down. Socialist members accused the progressives of "pussy-footing" on aggressive social legislation, while independent Republican Senator J. D. Carroll of Douglas county, who was disaffected from the start because he was not made chairman of the Finance committee, began to stray on roll calls.

In a special session some of the unfinished work was completed: $8 million was provided for relief by doubling the income tax; the gas tax was doubled to provide employment in a grade-separation program for highways; the required congressional redistricting was accomplished; the state banking department was reorganized; a 20 per cent reduction of the budgets of the state departments was ordered; and the nation's first unemployment insurance law was placed on the books. A proposed $5 million farm subsidy and anti-chain banking legislation were killed.[21]

The 1935 session

Governor LaFollette, returning to office in 1935 as a Progressive after an intervening Democratic administration

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[20] United Press, Racine Times-Call, June 27, 1931.

[21] Racine Times-Call, Feb. 5, 1932.

presented the legislature with proposals to enact the new Progressive party's platform. But adjournment September 27, after the longest session in Wisconsin history to that time, found few of his measures on the statute books. A new employment code system, the Wisconsin Recovery Act ("Little NRA"),[22] was established by which the governor would prescribe the regulations to replace the previous law that had been invalidated by the courts. A "fair trade" statute[23] was enacted, and the State Planning Board was made a department. A chain store tax and old age pension machinery were provided. New taxes included a 60 per cent surtax on incomes, dividends and utilities taxes, and an excess profits tax to provide money for relief, old age pensions, and high school aid.

Most of the remainder of the Governor's program cleared the Assembly but was blocked by the opposition-controlled Senate. In a radio review of the session Governor LaFollette called it "a keen disappointment." He said the chain store tax was unsatisfactory, and listed in the order of their importance in his view the measures that had been defeated through "partisan politics":

(1) the Wisconsin Works Program bill
(2) a constitutional amendment for initiative and referendum
(3) a labor disputes bill

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[22] Laws of Wisconsin, 1935, chap. 182

[23] Ibid., chap. 52.

(4) the constitutional amendment for development of electric power resources (passed in 1931, killed in 1933)[24]
(5) a mortgage moratorium bill.[25]

Governor LaFollette refused to call a special session in 1935 despite great pressure, notably from mayors of one hundred cities who clamored for more relief aid. He told them, "If you can show me that your senators will vote for my Works bill or one equally as good, I'll call a special session tomorrow."[26]

The Works bill to which he referred[27] is significant enough as a political issue and as an example of the LaFollette administration's inventiveness to merit special consideration here. The Governor had presented this plan to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and federal relief authorities in response to their appeal for the states to propose some action. The President and his advisers were favorably impressed with the plan and told Governor LaFollette to go ahead and set up the necessary machinery.[28]

Wisconsin had expected to be allotted $120 million by

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[24]To amend the Wisconsin Constitution, a proposal must be passed in identical form by an absolute majority of both houses in two successive sessions and approved by the voters. Art. XII, Sec. 1.

[25]Capital Times, Oct. 29, 1935.

[26]Sheboygan Press, Nov. 26, 1935.

[27]443, S; 987, A, 1935.

[28]Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Vol. I, The First Thousand Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), pp. 355-356.

WPA. Under the LaFollette plan, Wisconsin would ask only $100 million from the national government, of which $30 million would be eventually repaid. Wisconsin was to contribute $109 million, the state raising $7 million annually by a sort of surplus profits tax and the local units irrevocably pledging tax revenues for the remainder. The Wisconsin Finance Authority, a non-profit corporation having no connection with the state, was to be set up to handle the funds, the appointments and removals resting with the governor. The Finance Authority would issue scrip in return for municipal bonds based on the tax pledges. Because of continuous redemption of bonds, $400 million worth of scrip could be issued on the $209 million capital. The scrip would then be used by local units to finance public works, creating employment opportunities and thereby stimulating business back to prosperity. The purpose of using scrip was to keep the business flowing only to Wisconsin contractors, as well as to allow twice as many men to be put to work as if only the dollar capital were spent.

The reason for the separation of the Finance Authority from the government was the existence of constitutional prohibitions of the state's becoming indebted and of engaging in "internal improvements."[29] LaFollette claimed as further advantages for the plan that

(1) projects would be administered locally

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[29]Wis. Const., Art. VIII, Secs. 4, 10.

(2) it would avoid the delay of waiting for the federal government to act
(3) Wisconsin could keep its higher wage scale
(4) borderline cases, denied relief under federal provisions, could be provided for

Critics of the plan, aside from those who said it would not work and that it would mean too much government competition with private industry, claimed that

(1) it was an unconstitutional evasion of the debt prohibitions
(2) municipalities would be bonding themselves without referenda
(3) the agency would give the governor dictatorial powers since it would not be responsible to the legislature
(4) Wisconsin would be losing money, since it would be asking $20 million less than it might get through the WPA without any plan at all, and because Wisconsin was going to pay back $30 million to the federal government
(5) the scrip would depreciate and holders or the state would have to make up the loss
(6) a "gag rule" prohibiting criticism of the Finance Authority was a proscription on free speech.[30]

Governor LaFollette gave this measure top priority on his program, and the Progressive party's full parliamentary reserves were committed to put it through. Enactment was attempted twice, both times failing in the Senate. The first bill lost, 19-14; the second, a version eliminating many of the more disputed items failed, 17-16.

Although, as has been seen, the Progressives controlled the Senate in the next session, the bill was not reintroduced. When twitted by former Senator William D. Carroll about this, a Progressive apologist, Editor William T. Evjue, is said to

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[30] W. E. Bollenbeck, Sheboygan Press, Nov. 27, 1935.

have admitted it was just too controversial.[31]

The 1937 regular session

Although the 1937 session started out propitiously with the organization of both houses by the Progressives with non-Progressive support, it produced little in the way of legislation fulfilling the party platform. Two notable pieces of legislation--the Wisconsin Development Authority Act and the Labor Disputes Act--plus the governor's self-balancing budget successfully emerged from the legislature before it adjourned sine die July 2.

The budget[32] essentially the one which had been defeated by the Senate in 1935, had three schedules, the one to be used depending upon state revenues. Schedule "A" was deflationary, cutting the appropriation of every state department 15 per cent. If no new tax revenues entered the treasury and if expiring emergency taxes were not re-enacted the budget still would be balanced. Schedule "B" not only restored the 15 per cent cut, but increased all appropriations up to 20 per cent if the treasury held enough receipts to finance the increases. Opponents of the plan argued that it really was no budget at all, since it was impossible with its sliding scale provisions to determine how much money in total was appropriated. They also warned that it gave the governor

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[31] William D. Carroll, interview, Dec. 20, 1954.

[32] 74, A, 1937.

too much power, since the LaFollette-controlled emergency board had the power to reduce allocations throughout the state government.[33]

The Wisconsin Development Authority was called the "Little TVA."[34] This was a government-backed corporation that could engage in any line of business except banking. Its primary objective was to encourage publicly owned and operated electric plants. The Progressive coalition in the Senate broke over this issue when the two recruits from the opposition refused to permit immediate action on the bill. Although this breakdown warned the leadership of their weakening control, the delay turned out to be only temporary, caused by legislative jockeying over other issues rather than basic disagreement with the program. Republican Nelson was reported to be piqued because of the treatment given some of his pet bills, while Democrat Zimny was said to be irritated at the forcing of action on a bill placing the beverage tax division, where his brother was employed, under the merit system. A northern Progressive, Roland E. Kannenberg, supported these delaying actions.[35]

The Severson-Sigman Labor Disputes bill was called the "Little Wagner Act."[36] It provided for labor in intrastate

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[33] Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, July 4, 1937; Carroll interview.

[34] Laws of Wis., 1937, chap. 334.

[35] James J. Colby, Milwaukee Sentinel, June 12, 1937.

[36] Laws of Wis., 1937, chap. 51.

industry essentially the same rights and enforcement machinery as those applied to interstate commerce by the federal act. Administration lines held firm on this measure, with Nelson, Zimny, and Cashman supporting it through one hundred or more roll calls.[37]

The adjournment of the regular session in 1937 left many Progressive election promises unfulfilled. A special session was almost a certainty. A relief act was not even introduced in the regular session.

The 1937 special session

Pressure on the Governor to call a special session mounted, coming principally from the municipalities and from the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation legislators. At length LaFollette called the legislators back September 15, 1937, specifying initially two principal subjects for action: a relief appropriation and a highway safety program. He also included various tax law corrections as a part of the business they were expected to consider.

The tax proposals went through without difficulty, but the relief act was stalled by the now-familiar tactics of opposition legislators, as well as by the parliamentary contortions of some Progressives attempting to follow the Governor without offending their county boards, who favored an amendment granting the counties 10 per cent of their relief

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[37] Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, July 4, 1937.

costs from state funds.

Constant clamor from pressure groups and from the legislators themselves for broadening the call was staved off by the Governor, who was waiting results on his initial measures. He criticized the lawmakers for working only two and a half days per week, and for not disposing of the important relief measure after nearly three weeks of consideration. LaFollette chided:

> It is perhaps natural therefore that I apprehend that an extension of the call may be used, not for a sincere effort to enact constructive legislation but to unduly prolong the session, nullify its results, and indulge in partisanship.[38]

At last on October 4 Governor LaFollette notified the legislature that he would extend the call to allow consideration of other bills if they adopted three special rules of procedure to speed consideration. He proposed that

> (1) The houses would work six days a week, and be in session eight hours each day
> (2) No bills would be introduced except through the joint Committee on Finance
> (3) The session would adjourn *sine die* October 16.[39]

Vehement objection to these proposals arose from two quarters. On the one hand twenty-one prominent Democratic and Republican Assemblymen signed a statement protesting the time limitation and proposing an alternate resolution that would let the legislators take what time they needed, with

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[38] *Capital Times*, Oct. 4, 1937.

[39] Aldric Revell, *Capital Times*, Oct. 4, 1937.

the assurance that they would give such subjects their "careful and thorough consideration and would dispose of them at the earliest time possible." Their position was that the measures could not

> . . . receive the consideration of the legislature and be enacted by October 16. We feel quite certain that the Governor himself knew this. . . . To consider and dispose of the above important subjects of legislation, some of which are controversial, within the specified limited time, would be a plain violation of our constitutional right and duty to represent the people of our respective districts, and a complete sacrifice of our constitutional right of free speech and fair and thorough consideration of legislation.[40]

The other critics were thirteen Farmer Labor Progressive Federation Assemblymen and the errant Democrat Balzer. It read:

> The undersigned members of the legislature have always been opposed to curtailment of full, free and complete discussion of public questions. They have opposed sine die adjournment fixed in advance because it prevents serious consideration of legislation badly needed.[41]

But they went on to announce that they would vote for the rules changes. These legislators, mostly from Milwaukee county, were under exceptionally heavy pressure to go along with the Governor because of two measures, the extension of the codes of fair practice, and permission for Milwaukee to raise its school levy.

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[40] Assembly Journal, Oct. 6, 1937, pp. 154-155.

[41] Ibid., p. 128.

A parliamentary question arose as to the vote required to adopt the special rules. Speaker Alfonsi held that a majority vote would suffice, since it was adoption and not amendment of the rules, which action would have required a two-thirds vote. His ruling was criticized as being improper. Though Alfonsi was supported by an opinion of the Chief of the Legislative Reference Service, Lieutenant Governor Henry A. Gunderson did not agree, and ruled that a two-thirds vote would be necessary to adopt the new rules in the Senate.[42]

After three days of argument, the rules were adopted, by surprising majorities--27-4 in the Senate and 61-21 in the Assembly. One senator wisecracked, "We are having a WPA session--With Phil's Approval."[43] The deadlock had been broken when anti-Administration forces began to realize that they could be accused in the next election of having blocked the Governor's program, but if they voted for the special rules and needed measures did not get through, they could throw the onus back to the Governor.

By the time the adjournment rule was adopted, only eight and a half days remained in which to complete work on the bills. The Governor amended the call to include governmental reorganization, confirmation of appointments, retro-

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[42]Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 6, 1937.

[43]Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 5, 1937.

active ratification of some questioned Public Service Commission orders, and the authorization for Milwaukee to increase its school tax levies. Shortly thereafter he further amended the call to add four more measures.

Such an extensive list of legislation to be considered in the short time remaining brought forth a stream of denunciation from opposition leaders. Even the mild-mannered Senator Conrad Shearer, praised from all camps for his fairness, was astounded. He complained bitterly:

> I'll vacate my seat in the legislature before I vote for anything blindfolded. I feel I have been deceived. I am thunderstruck at the immensity of the program. . . . Even if we worked faithfully from now till November 1 or even to Thanksgiving we wouldn't be able to get through with all this work.[44]

Progressive spokesmen reminded the legislators that most of the proposals had been subjected to exhaustive hearings in the regular session. As a matter of fact, all but three of the eleven measures proposed in the extension of the call had been considered. The Joint Finance committee introduced the Governor's bills into both houses on October 7 and 8. Hearings were scheduled in the Assembly before the Committee of the Whole at 9 and 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, and at 10 a.m. and 2, 3:30, 5, and 8 p.m. Monday.

The pace was brutal. Sessions began at 9:30 a.m., continued through the afternoon, and started again at 8 p.m.,

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[44]Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 7, 1937.

lasting sometimes until after 1:30 the next morning. The Assembly usually did not adjourn over the lunch hour, however, but "remained informal" until 2 p.m. in order to fulfill the eight-hour day required by the new rules. The Senate worked equally long hours. On one occasion, finishing a day's calendar in early evening but being blocked in suspending the rules to take up the next day's work, the Progressive leaders even called a session to start at 12:01 a.m. After-midnight work one Friday plus Saturday's regular session brought the total time in session to almost twenty of twenty-seven hours. In objecting to the long Saturday schedule made necessary when Progressives refused to count time after midnight on Friday as Saturday time, Senator Bolens exploded, "Why not stay here through Sunday and fool God Almighty Himself?"[45]

Tempers flared as the work pace increased. A move was made to include in the Journal that liquor had been consumed on the Assembly floor by two of the Progressive leaders. These two did not deny it, but insisted that at least fifty members had done likewise.[46] In the Senate with "four or five Senators on the floor screaming at the top of their lungs"[47] the Lieutenant Governor smashed two gavels and then

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[45] Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 10, 1937.

[46] Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 13, 1937.

[47] Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 9, 1937.

summoned the capitol police to seat a Democrat whom he was not ready to recognize, whereupon the Democrat threatened to introduce an impeachment resolution against the presiding officer. A usually sympathetic reporter described the chambers as being "like a small town carnival or riot."[48] Observers agreed that the session surpassed all others in Wisconsin history in bitterness and partisanship.[49]

Opposition members made a tactical blunder at one point that aided the Progressives. Since 60 per cent of all the members constitute a quorum on appropriations measures,[50] the opposition in the Assembly staged a walkout in hopes of stalling all action. By managing to maintain the 51-vote quorum sufficient for other action, however, the Progressives passed two bills that did not contain appropriations, and put two that did beyond the amending stage. Speaker Paul Alfonsi revived and enforced a rule against dilatory motions, and the rule of germaneness to the call of the session was rigidly enforced. At one point Alfonsi ruled out of order an appeal from one of his rulings, an action unheard of in Wisconsin history.[51] On the last day when appointments were being pushed through the Senate in blocks, President pro tem Walter Rush ruled out of order all protests and allowed

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 14, 1937.

[50] Wis. Const., Art. VIII, Sec. 8.

[51] Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 13, 1937.

the session to continue past the time set for adjournment. It was such action that brought a dramatic protest from the opposition that was to persist as the hallmark of the special session. Opposition Senators rose, raised their arms in the Nazi salute, shouted "Heil!" and left the chamber.[52]

But when the stormy session was over, all of the Governor's thirteen proposals save part of one, the highway safety measure, had been enacted into law in the form he desired. A capitol reporter reflected as the session adjourned, "Philosophers will wonder why the legislature is in such a hurry; politicians will ponder the consequences."[53] Rather than pondering the consequences, politicians attempted to manufacture them. The special session was kept alive as a campaign issue for 1938 and used to good advantage.

This was the last session in which the Progressives had control.

The Progressives as the Opposition

To round out the picture of the Progressive party in the legislature, it will be necessary to examine its actions when not in control. One of the tests of a functioning party is its ability to serve as the opposition.

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[52]Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 17, 1937.

[53]Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 10, 1937.

The 1933 session

Some of the measures that the Democratic controlled legislature of 1933 enacted were considered by progressives to be liberal--revised securities and banking regulations, a mortgage foreclosure act, an act making milk a public utility, a small loan act, emergency relief, better defined and speeded up workmen's compensation procedures, and game and fish regulations. But the legislature did not re-enact the proposed constitutional amendments on public power passed in the LaFollette session of 1931. The Senate defeated bills to limit hours of labor and took no action to restrict prison-made goods from the market. Also, the legislature came near enacting a stalwart bill[54] that would have prevented identifying words from being added to names on the ballot or on political advertising, long a tool of the progressives to identify themselves amidst other candidates in the Republican primary. The opposition of three Democratic senators enabled the progressives to kill this measure by one vote. Progressives were further disillusioned with the Democrats when the legislature postponed for two years the effective date of the compulsory provisions of the old age assistance law. A Democratic assemblyman says that this action, far from showing that the Democrats were against the principle of the law, actually saved it from repeal, since there was no money with which to put it into effect.[55] The Democratic

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[54] 428, A, 1933.

[55] Balzer interview.

budget cut state expenditures 25 per cent.

As to constructive programs of their own, the progressives in 1933 urged such things as old age assistance and aid for dependent children.

Many participants and observers date this legislative session as the time when progressives decided their only alternative was the formation of their own party.

The 1939 session

After the two previously described sessions when the Progressives were in power--1935 and 1937--they found themselves in 1939 in opposition, a status that they never were able to change.

The 1939 legislature included thirty-two assemblymen and eleven senators who were Progressives. Senator Phil Nelson, now wearing the Progressive label, and former Speaker Paul Alfonsi were their leaders. Thirty Progressive legislators met with Governor LaFollette just before he left office to map legislative strategy. The Governor stressed the need for acting as a unit and for attempting to protect Progressive legislation.[56]

Well might they have organized for this purpose, as the attack was to begin at once. The first action of the coalesced Republicans and Democrats was to provide specifically that none of the rulings of Alfonsi or Lieutenant Governor

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[56] Capital Times, Dec. 19, 1938.

Gunderson in the preceding regular and special sessions should be binding as precedent. Next, every one of forty reorganizations of state agencies under the authority of the act passed in the special session were subjected to legislative veto.[57] That this action was motivated at least in part by desire for political revenge is demonstrated not only by the subsequent re-enactment of many of the reforms in closely similar form--minus, of course, the LaFollette appointees--but by the action of the Assembly in killing the plans after the Senate had already accomplished this by its own vote. In fact, Democratic Senator Bolens admitted the vindictive motive. In answer to a question as to just what he thought was wrong with the reorganizations, he is quoted as replying, "I don't know as anything is wrong with them except that it was the damn Progressives that made the changes."[58]

A new labor act replaced the Labor Relations Board with a less powerful board and generally tightened controls on labor union action.[59] Also abolished were the Department of Commerce, the Wisconsin Development Authority, the Wisconsin Agricultural Authority, and the Executive Council. Progres-

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[57]Under this act (Laws of Wis., 1937, Sp. Sess., chap. 9) the governor, with the approval of a special legislative and administrative committee could reorganize departments by executive order. Either house of the next legislative could revoke any order by majority vote.

[58]Pritchard interview.

[59]Howard F. Ohm, Legislative Reference Library Summary, May 6, 1939.

sives fought these repealers without success. They did succeed in defeating the Administration in its efforts to reorganize the Highway Commission and the Public Service Commission. The latter was a significant Progressive victory.

The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin was reorganized, as a result of the dismissal of President Glenn Frank under conditions that aroused accusations of partisan control of the University. Geographic and group representation were eliminated and the number of members reduced from fifteen to ten. Governor Heil was thus able to appoint a new board at once.

A centralized board of tax appeals was created to replace the three-member county boards of review appointed by the state Tax Commission. A Republican reporter described the result: "When the seventy-one existing boards went out more than two hundred Progressive jobholders bit the dust." The same writer also prophesied that the Heil reorganizations, which had put the civil service status of about three thousand state employees in doubt, would "go far to break the Progressives' power."[60]

At one point in the 1939 session, Progressives missed an opportunity to get in some licks against Administration programs when the Democratic-Republican coalition momentarily broke apart. Democrats had been fondly eyeing poll-worker jobs. Under the law these were given to the highest

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[60]Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 8, 1939.

two parties as shown by the preceding general election. In off-year elections Democrats, because of the vote for President two years before, got half of these assignments; but otherwise Progressives took them, since they ranked as one of the top two parties at the gubernatorial elections. Republicans in 1939 had agreed to support the Democrats in making the presidential vote the sole basis for distributing poll jobs in every election, and a measure to this effect passed the Assembly. But just before the measure was to be taken up in the Senate, Democrats refused to go along with a Heil measure to increase the gasoline tax. The piqued Republican floorleader, Maurice Coakley, stalked over to the Progressives and was overheard to volunteer support to kill the Democrats' election bill to give them a "kick in the guts." The election bill was killed, and the Democrats turned on their erstwhile Republican fellows. Progressive leaders recognized their opportunity, but three of their Senators were absent. The remaining Progressives and the Democrats together could not marshal enough votes to accomplish anything, and Coakley adjourned the Senate to allow the breach in the conservatives' lines to be healed.[61]

Republican Governor Julius Heil apparently had few definite ideas on legislation, and in the tenth week of the session Progressives introduced a harassing resolution asking that he reveal his program--other than the "destructive"

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[61] Milwaukee Journal, Aug. 4, 1939.

aspects already enacted. The Republicans had campaigned against the record-breaking long sessions and big budgets of the LaFollette administrations, but the 1939 Heil session ran longer and the budget was larger than any previous ones. Moreover, for the first time in history the legislature adjourned without providing new taxes to balance the budget as required by the Constitution.[62]

The 1941 session

The 1940 election almost halved the Progressive strength in the Senate and cut their Assembly strength by one-fourth, leaving them six Senators and twenty-four Assemblymen. Progressive leadership showed a combination of opposites. The Senate was led by the former conservative Republican Phil Nelson, while in the Assembly former Socialist Andrew Biemiller was in charge. Progressives in this session were further reduced in importance of committee assignments; for example, Biemiller was taken off the Judiciary committee where he had been ranking member in 1939 and was put last on the housekeeping Committee on Engrossed Bills. Also, only one Progressive had a place among the fourteen legislators on the important Joint Finance committee. Democrats received like treatment at the hands of the Republican majority, indicating the end of the erstwhile coalition.

Republican leaders, to avoid a recurrence of the bad

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[62]Art. VIII, Sec. 5; Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 7, 1939.

publicity resulting from the preceding "do-nothing" session, appointed a steering committee to see that the legislature got a program to work on, and to expedite business. As a result, the session was the shortest in history. It was long enough, Progressives accused, for the Republicans to repeal any LaFollette legislation they had missed in 1939. The teacher tenure law and the milk control act were prominent victims of the Republicans' "new broom."[63]

Some of the accusations used just four years before by the Republicans against the Progressives were polished up and flung back at the group now in power when Progressives claimed the majority was using "gag rule" and other devices to silence opposition.

Progressives and Democrats manufactured campaign ammunition by introducing bills which, they said, would carry out the liberal Republican platform. These were killed by early adjournment.

The 1943 session

Although Progressives had elected a governor in the 1942 election, they were unable to increase their Senate strength, and their Assembly strength was halved. The question of how, with so few legislators, they would have controlled the legislature to effect their governor's program was made moot by the death of governor-elect Loomis before

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[63] Progressive, June 14, 1941.

his inauguration. The Progressives thereupon continued as an opposition group.

The succession to the governor's chair of Walter Goodland of Racine, former Republican senator who had been elected as the coalition candidate for lieutenant governor, did not make for a smooth-working Republican executive-legislative team. The Progressives found themselves able, if not to enact legislation they favored, at least to put themselves on record as trying to block some that they considered undesirable. This was possible because Goodland disagreed with his Republican legislative leaders on a number of important measures and did not hesitate to have them challenged on the floor. Progressives thus were in a position to support a popular governor against members of his own party. Republican legislative leaders were angered by the Governor's veto of their repeal of the 60 per cent surtax on incomes and his failure to consult with them on patronage matters.[64]

The legislature reconvened in July 1943 after a three-week recess, and in an unprecedented repudiation of a Wisconsin governor, repassed seventeen bills over Goodland's veto, upholding only three, then recessing again to await his action on other measures. Progressives exulted in Goodland's independence, especially in his position on income

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[64] Milwaukee Journal, July 15, 1943; Frank N. Graass, interview, March 22, 1955.

taxation and secrecy of income tax returns. Cooperation with the Governor, however, was on an issue-to-issue basis rather than being organized as a permanent affair. Frank N. Graass, then a former assemblyman serving as the Governor's legislative and financial secretary, says that Progressive support of Goodland was largely expediential, to exploit the split between him and his legislative leaders.[65]

The relative success of Progressive proposals in the 1943 session cannot be laid wholly to the number of legislators bearing the party's label in the legislature. With seventy-three members in the Assembly, the Republicans experienced a common phenomenon of legislative parties which have tremendous majorities, namely a tendency to split factionally. A group of about forty of these Republicans revolted against the leadership of what they called the "diaper brigade"--the younger men including Speaker Vernon Thomson and floorleader Mark Catlin Jr. These forty, calling themselves "woodchoppers," were mostly from northern Wisconsin, elected from what were one-time Progressive districts. In fact, twelve of them were said to have been Progressives at one time, or to have had Progressive connections.[66] They felt aggrieved that their bills, such as a $5 million high school aid measure, were not considered, and held a separate

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[65]Graass interview.

[66]Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 10, 1943.

caucus.[67] Apparently no formal liaison between this group of Republican insurgents and the Progressives was formed, despite the similarity of their aims.

The 1945 session

When the membership list of the 1945 legislature showed that Progressive strength in the Assembly had halved again, leaving only six, with five senators across the Capitol, these bitter-enders realized they could no longer exist as a party in the legislature and declined even to caucus.[68] Although the Republican "woodchoppers" organized again to push their state-aid measures, they experienced little success compared to the previous term. The reason, expressed by a prominent columnist, was that the southern and urban Republican leaders were no longer grateful for Republican gains in the former Progressive precincts of the north and felt no obligation to accede to the wishes of northern Republicans.[69]

The big fight of the 1945 session, and the big victory as far as Progressives were concerned, was the sustaining of Governor Goodland's veto of the "fence" bill, so called because it would have prevented Progressives from "jumping the fence" into another party.[70] The bill passed the Senate

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[67] Milwaukee Journal, May 30, 1943.

[68] Charles H. Sykes, interview, Feb. 10, 1955

[69] John Wyngaard, Green Bay Gazette, July 20, 1945.

[70] 83, S, 1945. See Chap. V.

18-14, and the Assembly concurred 53-35, opposition coming from Progressives, former Progressives, and Democrats, with a few independent Republicans in their company. Governor Goodland's powerful veto message fanned the intra-party conflict of the Republicans to new fury. Goodland said the bill was contrary to Wisconsin's tradition of free choice of party by elector and candidate. The Senate without recording the vote upheld the governor's veto.

After 1946

In 1946, as has been seen, the Progressives voted to re-enter the Republican party. Thus the session of 1947 found representatives of only two parties in the Assembly, with the Democrats reduced again to their lowest level since 1931. Of the eighty-eight Republicans who organized that house, twenty-two were said to have served formerly in the legislature as Progressives or to have had Progressive connections in their home districts. In the Senate, one Progressive with two years remaining in his term sat with six Republicans with former Progressive legislative experience or connections.[71]

No attempt was made to keep alive a caucus of these one-time Progressives. While camaraderie between the Republicans of former opposing parties appeared to belie suggestions of any disagreements, the former Progressives do not

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[71]Perry C. Hill, Milwaukee Journal, Nov. 1, 1946.

now feel that they have changed their ideas and outlook on measures at all, and many of them are frank to say that their acceptance by the "stalwart"[72] wing is less than complete. The conservatives complain that the former Progressives often refuse to follow caucus decisions. Reconverted Progressives tell how they have stormed out of the caucus room on occasions and voted the way they wished. One of these men stated, "Many times I have been told by my own party, 'Why don't you quit and join the Democrats?'"[73] In fact, many of this group attribute the defeat in recent elections of some Assemblymen of Progressive stripe with long tenure to the positive action of the leadership of the Republican party against them. This is highly resented. On the other hand, in the 1955 session the assumption of control by the younger, urban group of Republicans represented by Mark Catlin Jr. drove the older "stalwarts" and the former Progressives in the Assembly into cooperation to resist this control.

The liberal mantle has more and more been assumed by the Democratic party in the legislature. It includes many of the former Young Progressives, such as Carl Thompson of Stoughton, and Gaylord Nelson of Madison. Although Republicans who were Progressives find some Democrats to be con-

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[72]This term is no longer used to distinguish the more conservative type of Republican.

[73]Sykes interview.

genial personally and on questions of policy, their movement at this late date into the Democratic party seems highly unlikely. These older Progressives are emotionally-committed Republicans; they still feel themselves repelled by the name "Democrat," and are developing a suspicion of the "radical" elements among the urban Democratic legislators reminiscent of the suspicion of outstate Progressives to the Milwaukee area Progressive-Socialist combination of the 1930's.

Legislative Strategy

The principal impression of the period during which the Progressives were taking responsibility for governing Wisconsin--the three terms of Phil LaFollette as governor, whether Progressives had complete, partial, or tenuous control of the legislature--is one of great party discipline. Whether this discipline was automatic through the ideological homogeneity of those elected or whether it was the result of external factors such as the techniques of party leaders is difficult to ascertain, but it is something that must be studied.

The Governor's role

The part of the executive in the proposing and enacting legislation is now commonly accepted by political scientists as being a large and necessary one because of complex social and economic activities by government, and as being desirable

from the standpoint of party responsibility in order to offer the voters recognizable alternatives in elections. Extensive legislative activity on the part of the executive, however, was not always either common or accepted, and in Wisconsin not every governor, even in recent years, has engaged in it. Phil LaFollette certainly did.

Initiation of Legislation

Governor LaFollette called a pre-session conference of progressive legislators in December 1930 to get their advice on measures to be introduced. An informal division of labor was agreed upon, by which certain senators and assemblymen were to gather information on specified subjects such as highways, utilities regulation, and income taxes. On some matters they were to draw rough drafts of bills.[74] The Governor announced before the session that he would have no "governor's bills" and no spokesman in the legislature. Some observers believed this was actually true, and accused the governor of "passing the buck" on important legislation and of not taking responsibility for anything that might prove unpopular.[75] Others, however, noted that the legislature sent to the executive office no bills or amendments embarrassing to the Governor, something that had been common during previous administrations. Moreover, much of the

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[74]Kaveny, Milwaukee Sentinel, Dec. 2, 1930; Daily Northwestern (Oshkosh), Dec. 8, 1930.

[75]Kaveny, Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 27, 1931.

LaFollette previously announced program was enacted. This indicates that he was taking an active part in what went on in the lawmaking chambers.

In later sessions, Governor LaFollette played an increasingly important role and a more independent one. No longer were pre-session conferences held. "Governor's bills" were easily identified. The controversial Works bill of 1935, for example, was developed without previous aid by legislators. In the special session of 1937 the Joint Finance Committee, through which the bills were introduced, was merely a vehicle to transport them to the floors of the chambers, as the bills were prepared in the Governor's office. The reorganization bill, said to have been the result of studies by a special citizens committee, was actually more than that. The committee had sutied and made recommendations about only the Board of Control, which administered the State's public welfare activities, whereas the reorganization act gave authority in many other areas. The Wisconsin Agricultural Authority bill also came from the Governor's "braintrusters."[76] Rather than committees or many individual members initiating the major proposals, the Governor's special staff with the aid of a few individual legislators who had influence with LaFollette, developed most of the measures that were seriously considered. Legislators still serving say that this was much more typical of the Progres-

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[76] J. Earl Leverich, interview, March 22, 1955.

sive era than of today.[77] The group of advisers included such influential individuals as Herman Ekern, legal and economic expert; Harold Groves, former Senator, Tax Commissioner, and University economics professor; John M. Gaus, University political science professor; Ralph M. Immell, adjutant general; Phil LaFollette's law associates, Jack Roe and Glenn Roberts; and his secretaries, Gordon Sinykin and Thomas M. Duncan.

The concentration of decision and policy initiation in the hands of the Governor rankled some Progressive legislators. An assemblyman states:

> I always felt that the rank-and-file were never consulted to the extent that they should have been on legislation. This was to the detriment of the party.[78]

A Progressive Senator talks about "that bunch," referring to the chosen few policy-makers. This Senator's whole conversation indicated he felt himself at the time to be an outsider.

Especially resented were the deals by which Governor LaFollette got a working majority in 1937. In order to bargain a few opposing members into cooperating with Administration programs, influence and patronage went to the opponents of the Governor rather than to his friends (speaking from a policy standpoint). More than one former Progressive

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[77] Allen J. Busby, interview, March 15, 1955; Pritchard interview.

[78] Pritchard interview.

put it this way: "The Governor didn't know who the Progressives were." Speaker Alfonsi complained about this on the floor of the Assembly when one of his bills was sidetracked to let a coalitionist Senator come out with the same measure under his own name.[79] Such bargains were the beginning of the end for the Progressive party, according to several legislators, indicating that the Progressive workhorses lost heart when the Governor neglected them.

Tactical Direction

Those who thought Governor LaFollette had no program in 1931 were controverted by an observation of his activities in regard to the legislative proceedings. In a newspaper published by a conservative Republican senator this account appeared:

> Lieutenant Governor Huber has an office directly off the Senate chamber. To this office the Governor comes when important legislation is pending in the Senate. His leader, Senator Glenn Roberts, and others confer with him there. In the Assembly, the Governor goes to one of the upper gallaries and watches that body in action. By caucuses and direct supervision the present Governor has exercised a positive control over his faction in the legislature. This is exceptional and unusual, for no other governor has attempted to personally direct legislative action. That it is effective is evident by the solidarity of his faction and their obedience to the executive will.[80]

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[79] Havens Wilber, Capital Times, June 15, 1937.

[80] Racine Times Call, Jan. 30, 1932.

Another opposition paper spoke editorially of Senators Roberts and Thomas Duncan as the Governor's "two chamberlains."[81]

Duncan, besides being the inventor of many of the Progressive measures, was the Governor's chief legislative strategist and tactician during LaFollette's last two terms. The accounts of the period are full of the activities of "Tommy" Duncan in this role. A master of parliamentary procedure, he used it to good advantage, given the skimpy margin by which the Progressives held control. An example is his actions on a relief bill in 1937. A certain amount of amending of bills is dictated by local pressures on legislators, and the Governor's proposal had been hopelessly emasculated in this way. Then when the two houses were bogged down in their conflicting versions Duncan had a substitute amendment introduced that was essentially the Governor's original proposal. When passed, a reporter commented that Duncan had given the legislature "enough rope in which to tangle intself into a deadlock."[82] Another example of Duncan's skill is his manipulation of the rule providing that measures coming from the other house shall be laid over one day. He avoided this delay in crucial moments by having the Senate and Assembly working on different calendar days. Thus when the reorganization act of 1937 came from the Senate

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[81] Wisconsin State Journal, June 30, 1931.

[82] Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 1, 1937.

it was put within one step of passage in the Assembly in three minutes.[83]

As a former member of both the Assembly and Senate Duncan had the privilege of the floor, although the rules prevented him from "lobbying." On one occasion during the stormy special session of 1937 the point of order was raised that Duncan was lobbying and should be expelled. Acting Speaker Perry avoided ruling by putting the question to the house, and Duncan was allowed to remain by a 57-13 vote.[84]

Duncan is pictured as

> . . . a tireless strategist . . . constantly at hand, lurking somewhere in the wings, ready at all times with the maneuver which would keep Progressives bouncing one step ahead of their alert opposition.[85]

Other accounts picture him as standing in the rear of the chamber watching the proceedings, occasionally sending a note to one of the party's legislators. One of these notes is supposed to have said, "Sit down and shut up." The recipient is said to have done just that and to have voted against the position he had just been arguing for.[86]

The brilliance of Duncan's maneuvers was never questioned, though it was often resented. After one display of

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[83]Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 14, 1937.

[84]Capital Times, Oct. 12, 1937.

[85]Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 17, 1937.

[86]Genzmer interview; Vernon Thomson, quoted by Revell, Capital Times, Oct. 14, 1937.

Duncan's finesse for which an opposition senator berated him on the floor, the same senator was heard to observe wistfully in the parlor, "He would be worth $100,000 to us."[87] The Democratic author of a substitute amendment on which Progressive leaders sought to force a vote without its being read fumed at the Progressives. He said, referring to Duncan:

> You are taking the word of a little individual who has been successful only in politics. Mussolini and Stalin are wilted geraniums compared to what we are witnessing tonight.[88]

Even the Progressives sometimes chafed under Duncan's direction. Their top columnist wrote in 1937 during the regular session that his "maneuverings would make Machiavelli look like a novice."

Duncan's floor work was not confined to tactical advice. When the crush was on, as in the 1937 special session, he was accused of dictating votes on substantive matters. This was possible because some legislators did not know what bills were about when they read them and had to follow the word of someone else. Even some legislators who could have understood the bills had to take Duncan's word on them in the frantic special session. Many Progressives admit they were voting on bills they knew nothing about.[89]

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[87] Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 17, 1937.

[88] James Callan, quoted in Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 9, 1937.

[89] Interviews, names withheld.

Techniques of Influence

The Governor's legislative luncheon was a common method of contact with the lawmakers. Often whole groups of them would be invited to eat in the governor's reception room and talk over measures or means, but sometimes individual luncheons with just LaFollette, Duncan, and a legislator would be held. At the luncheon, LaFollette would explain bills, ask for objections, try to keep a member from introducing a measure or persuade him to withdraw a bill, offer to support some of the member's legislation, discuss appointments in his district, or arrange a vote trade. A former legislator recalls, "Once he called a meeting just to give me hell for appearing before the highway committee against his bill."[90]

Senator Bolens accused the Progressives of submitting to dictation. He charged:

> You go down like cowering slaves to the stables for feed and then you come back here and sink your conscience, your manhood, your feelings by voting like cringing curs at the order of the dictator of this state.[91]

But he was mistaken; the luncheon meetings were not one-sided discussions. Participants remember some of them as "hot and heavy arguments."[92] Another reminisced, "Phil always kept us red in the face."[93]

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[90] Interview, name withheld.

[91] Wilber, Capital Times, Oct. 13, 1937.

[92] Hall interview.

[93] Walter Rush, quoted by Frank E. Panzer, interview, Feb. 15, 1955.

The instruments of discipline the governor had available were few. The lack of campaign money and large-scale patronage has already been discussed.[94] Some legislators were appointed to state administrative positions. At the close of the 1937 special session, Senate floorleader E. M. Rowlands of Columbia county became Trades Practice Commissioner, Lieutenant Governor Gunderson was appointed to an eight year term on the Tax Commission, and Senator Nelson, the recruit from the Republicans, became chairman of the Grain and Warehouse Commission, considered a sinecure. These appointments opponents characterized as revealing the sordidness of the Progressives' activity in buying support.[95]

Opposition legislators cite as a major weapon for discipline threats by the Governor to participate in a primary contest to defeat recalcitrant party members. No former Progressive legislator interviewed, however, had this experience or could recall knowing of any case where it occurred. Nor can any legislator remember an instance where the local party organization as such contacted him in regard to legislation. Individual members of local party units did talk to him, of course, and they may have been urged to do so by LaFollette. Certainly the state central committee was so used. This group was called into frequent meetings at the capital when

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[94] See Chapters III and V.

[95] For example, see Wausau Record-Herald, quoted in Capital Times, Oct. 26, 1937.

the legislature was in session. They would convene and then spend a day or so contacting the legislators from their areas to urge support for party measures.[96]

A governor can use his power to sign or veto private bills of particular interest to a legislator as an inducement to get his vote on another measure, and Phil LaFollette used this somewhat. But the device works both ways--legislators can vote or threaten to vote against the governor on a measure in order to get his signature on a pet bill. One legislator describes such behavior as "almost criminal" blackmail, but told of a time when he used it, and then by getting LaFollette's measure postponed until the six-day limit for signing his own bill arrived and LaFollette signed, the legislator was free to vote the way he wanted to on the Governor's bill.[97]

Deals of one kind or another were not the strongest technique Governor LaFollette had at his disposal in relations with legislators. Members describe the tremendous persuasiveness he could bring to bear upon them. Besides appealing to party loyalty, he would make all of his measures seem eminently reasonable. On intricate legislation, such as the Wisconsin Works program, the details had been worked out so carefully and would be explained in such detail

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[96]Interviews, Kenneth W. Hones, Dec. 22, 1954, and Harry H. Jack, Jan. 7, 1955.

[97]Interview, name withheld.

by the Governor or his staff or by outside assistants that he could decimate any rational opposition. Such explanations were made not only to individuals or to the party caucus, but often to the legislature as a whole. In 1935 when the Works bill was before the legislature, Jack Roe came to the Assembly chamber and went through the bill section by section until, as a former Progressive Assemblyman describes it:

> I, who am a conservative by nature and background, was convinced as to the absolute soundness of it. No straight thinking man could oppose it. Then it was not necessary for the Governor to say, "You vote for this or else."[98]

At times members heard, "You vote for this or else," but they were infrequent. "If not," one Senator said, "we'd probably have taken the 'or else.'"[99]

Direct Appeals

Direct appeal to voters was a technique of Governor LaFollette in influencing the legislature. During the sessions he made weekly speeches over a statewide radio network, reviewing the progress of the session. During the 1935 session, for example, he repeatedly blasted the opposition in the Senate particularly for its "blatent, malicious, political hypocricy" and "dog-in-the-manger attitude." In

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[98] Pritchard interview.

[99] Leverich interview.

this instance his venom was poured on them for passing a bill which authorized school aids, old age pensions, and shortened state institution hours, but which put up no money with which to put them into effect.[100]

In addition, the Governor sent letters to various groups, such as veterans, the aged, and teachers, discussing the Administration's position on measures of interest to such groups. Because these letters went out from the executive office, they resulted in charges that state monies were being spent to finance the Governor's re-election campaign. Charges were also made that confidential lists of welfare recipients were being used by Progressives to the disadvantage of other parties.

Although several legislators believe that the Governor's direct appeals had some influence on their constituents, one of them says they were overused, and that people get tired of them, greatly reducing their effectiveness. Certainly the accusations of scandal in regard to the welfare letters did not help the Governor's cause.[101]

The letters and speeches may have had an effect, if this can be measured by the resentment they aroused among opposition legislators. These opponents claimed that people were misled into believing that their interest group measures were connected with other LaFollette legislation such as the

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[100] Capital Times, July 20, 1938.

[101] Busby interview.

Works and variable budget bills.[102]

All legislators resented criticism of the way they did their work. In a talk before a Milwaukee service club the Governor said that the legislators did not work hard enough.[103] A Progressive Senator of his own party commented that such criticism by LaFollette was "unwise" in view of the extensive powers of the Wisconsin lawmaking bodies.[104]

The special session

One of the most novel forms of legislative control used by Governor Phil LaFollette was adjournment of the regular session and the calling of a special session within a few months. Since the introduction of bills during regular sessions is practically unlimited in Wisconsin, with only a poorly-enforced time deadline, the legislature is always deluged with bills. These are proposed by members because of their own interests, their desire to have their name on legislation, or their wish to satisfy some interest group by putting in a bill "by request." The total of bills in each session during the period under consideration was usually over 1400, and exceeded 1600 in 1935. The Wisconsin legislature's liberal rules of consideration provide that each bill introduced shall be given a public hearing and be

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[102] Bollenbeck, Sheboygan Press, June 24, 1935.

[103] Capital Times, July 20, 1935.

[104] John O. Cashman, Capital Times, July 20, 1935.

reported by the committee back to the house of origin for action within two weeks.[105] To accomplish this in the absence of a constitutional limit on length of session, given the desire of members to weekend at home from Thursday night until Tuesday morning, makes a legislative session always last many months.

Somehow a short session always has an attraction for the public; it was promised in every party platform of the period. A short session appeals to the economy-minded by saving the $3000 per day the session itself costs, as well as to those who think new legislation is in itself bad.[106] Criticism by the newspapers of a long drawn-out session was cited by many Progressives as a principal motivation for cutting short the regular sessions before all work was complete, especially in 1937 after the 1935 marathon.

If every bill introduced gets consideration on the floor, much legislation would probably get through that would prove embarrassing to the governor's program, not to say to his budget, since many of the pet measures involve appropriations. It occurred to LaFollette strategists that if control of the calendars were exercised so as to clear the "must" legislation through early, the session could be adjourned before many individual bills had completed their

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[105] Assembly Rule 27, Senate Rule 25.

[106] See for examples Capital Times, June 27, 1931; Janesville Gazette, June 29, 1931.

tour through the legislative maze, thus automatically killing them without any definite action being necessary.

Another reason for adjourning a session--the most important one to the Progressives with their narrow margins in the legislature--was to avoid complete loss of control. If their coalition cracked dangerously, the attempt to put through a program might better be abandoned than risk the spectacle of a hostile legislature and governor in battle. This was what happened in two of the three LaFollette sessions.

Sine die adjournment resolutions were adopted in June 1931 and in July 1937. Adjournment caught legislation the Administration desired before it had cleared the legislature, but this could be reintroduced in the special session. Under Wisconsin's Constitution, as has been pointed out, the subjects of a special session are restricted to the items listed in the governor's call; thus no bills not germane to the call can be considered.

The value of adjournment used as a legislative tool, as it was by Governor LaFollette is questionable. It always antagonized some legislators who hated to see their pet bills squeezed out. The agreement to help some particular bill reach the Governor's desk could of course be used as a bargaining lever, as Tom Duncan "held the peavy hook in the log jam."[107] The group most likely to object to a short

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[107] Revell, Capital Times, June 26, 1937.

session was the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation. Having a positive legislative program, they had many bills in the hopper and fought to keep them from being strangled by adjournment. Their bills were political dynamite to the Progressive party, as outstate Progressives felt them to be socialistic. The antagonism of the "right wing" Progressives was avoided through killing these bills, but only at the cost of antagonizing the Federation members. In the 1937 session, what one newspaper described as "the brains of the Assembly" were all against early adjournment.[108] These were Biemiller, John Grobschmidt, David Sigman, and Alfonsi, all Farmer Labor Progressives, the last named being the Speaker and sponsor of the Governor's adjournment resolution! A Republican leader says of this situation:

> Phil LaFollette had promised to exchange support with these left-wingers. They elected him and then came for their pound of flesh. Then the Governor wanted to get out of paying it. Tom Duncan came to me asking for Republican support on the adjournment resolution "to stop all this stuff."[109]

Opponents of sine die adjournment set in advance had a powerful figure on their side, namely Robert M. LaFollette Sr. Old Bob had said on the topic of limited sessions:

> . . . of all the devices resorted to by the enemies of progressive measures there is none more fraught with danger to public good

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Graass interview.

> than limiting legislative sessions by law to a fixed number of days. . . . Put a limitation on the session, however, and there is certain to be a congestion of bills in the closing days. That means either that progressive measures are going to be crowded aside in the rush and confusion or they will be passed without the careful scrutiny by which alone clever "jokers" may be detected. In either event, the progressive cause suffers--and the interests have gained delay. It is not serving the cause of progress to hang platform pledges on the hands of the clock.[110]

Some Democratic assemblymen vowed to investigate the forcing through of the adjournment resolution in 1937, hoping to aggravate the Progressive schism. They characterized the situation as the "re-enactment of the story of Judas." Nothing ever came of the investigation.

The legislative caucus

Although progressives caucused separately before 1934 and continued the practice regularly after that date, the legislative caucus was not the primary means of party discipline among the Progressives during the ascendency of Phil LaFollette. Rather the personal intervention of the Governor with various legislators and his direction of legislation through Thomas M. Duncan accomplished this purpose. A number of possible reasons can be cited for the lack of use of the caucus.

First, Progressive ideology was directed against it.

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[110] LaFollette's Magazine, 1913, quoted in Wisconsin State Journal, June 30, 1931.

In the early days of the movement in Wisconsin, Old Bob LaFollette had fought against the nominating caucus, and when he went to the United States Senate he continued to denounce "King Caucus" that ruled there. The feeling of guilt for using something anti-democratic persisted in Wisconsin into the 1920's and 30's. In 1925 the word from Republican headquarters--that is, from Bob LaFollette Jr. who was the state chairman--was that there would be no pre-session caucus that year, but that election of house officers would be open and above board the first day of the session as in 1923.[111] This decision was changed, however; reports indicated progressive Governor John J. Blaine and Young Bob feared loss of control and a caucus was held after all.[112]

A second reason for the weakness of the caucus as a disciplinary device was the manner in which the Progressive group got control. If because of the lack of a clear majority the dominant party must coalesce with factions of other parties to organize a house, compromise candidates may have to be named to the offices. To the degree these are not the actual leaders of the group or the real spokesmen of the executive point of view, the caucus will be a weak tool for party responsibility in putting through a program. In the 1931 session, for example, in which the progressives had made

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[111] Fred T. Holmes, Wisconsin State Journal, Jan. 7, 1925.

[112] Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 10, 1925.

the Republican Perry their Speaker, he refused to attend the progressive caucus. With Perry's great influence by virtue of position and personal following, this was a severe blow to party discipline. At one stage the progressives deemed it expedient to overrule the Speaker. "This hurt Old Charlie Perry much," a Progressive says,"and his relations with the progressives deteriorated."[113] Splits would occur over individual bills and, since measures are intertwined in the legislative process, such schisms would affect other bills. Thus when progressives turned against Perry on a measure concerning the Milwaukee metropolitan sewage district, Perry retaliated by favoring stalwarts in his appointments to the special legislative reapportionment committee, a group with obvious partisan significance.[114]

An instance of a compromise candidate occurred in 1935 when Jorge W. Carow was named Speaker. He was not beyond the pale of party ideology but was certainly not a "true blue" progressive.[115] Though well thought of in all factions, Carow did not, partly because of ill health, wield the full influence possible as a Speaker.

Secretary of State Theodore Dammann was the permanent chairman of the Assembly caucus. A floor leader was not elected, but one was developed during the session. In 1931

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[113] Busby interview.

[114] Capital Times, May 26, 1931.

[115] Genzmer interview.

a reporter wrote that the reason no leader was picked was that the Governor could not find one whom the progressive members would follow since Alvin Ries had dropped out of the Assembly.[116] The Governor attended caucuses only occasionally, when specifically invited to talk on some particular measure. Duncan was usually there.

A third weakness of the caucus as a disciplinary tool--the main one--was the refusal by the members to be bound by a caucus decision. Progressive leaders could not often secure the necessary unity of viewpoint to make a unit rule profitable. They did not want a floor fight to occur after the caucus had voted a unit rule. As a result, if someone stated that for some reason he could not go along, the unit rule would not be applied.[117] The only time the unit rule was applied, in the memory of several legislators, was on the votes for organization of the houses, and has been seen, even on these some Progressives did not go along. The defectors cannot remember any reprisals for their action.

As the opposition, Progressives had little influence through committee assignments, and did not often employ the caucus to gain full effectiveness of their numbers.

A Progressive assemblyman remembers the 1933 session as the best time he ever had in the legislature. He said:

> You don't have any responsibilities but can

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[116] Kaveny, Milwaukee Sentinel, Sept. 24, 1931.

[117] Hall interview.

> just mess things up for the majority. The minority party doesn't get blamed for anything. If you're the majority you've got to worry about getting the bills passed.[118]

Evidence shows that the progressives in 1933 may have been having such a good time that they did not seize full advantage of the possibilities of their position as an opposition group. They were castigated by the Capital Times for not using the old progressive device of demanding a roll call to create a record on controversial measures such as a state employee pay reduction bill that failed, and the exemption of tobacco stemmeries from minimum wage provisions.[119]

After their defeat in 1938, Progressives continued to caucus for the purpose of naming a candidate for speaker, but apparently their organization was not impressive. The chairman of the state central committee met with the caucus in 1939 and 1941, but Phil LaFollette took no part. Governor Goodland's secretary during the 1943 and 1945 sessions said, "If the Progressives had any organization, nobody knew about it."[120]

Progressives who were elected as Republicans in 1946 after their own party was dissolved never caucused separately nor had any separate organization. Many of them today, looking back, add, "It was a mistake not to organize; we

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[118] Hall interview.

[119] Capital Times, Feb. 15, 1933.

[120] Graass interview.

could have had much more influence." An assemblyman said:

> About half of the Republicans in the 1947 session were Progressives. Now [1955] there are about twenty in the Assembly. If we could get together we could do something.[121]

Ideological unity

Not all of the Progressives' discipline can be laid to Governor LaFollette's whiphand. The people who were in the Progressive party were there by their own choice and not through passive acquiescence in a long-standing situation. They each had, in an overt act, made the break to a new column on the ballot. Such a walkout no doubt resulted in a group with closer identity of views on the problems facing the legislature than would be present in the old, traditional parties of most states. Their ideological homogeneity lessened the feeling of external discipline among the legislators.[122] Further, never having a real majority and often facing a coalition of opposing parties in elections and in the legislature itself no doubt was an added incentive to stick together.

Departures from party votes were based in personality differences, a prominent Progressive feels, rather than a result of differing ideas on the program of the party. Citing one Progressive senator notorious for erratic voting, this leader says, "He is a fool; you have them in all

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[121] Sykes interview.

[122] Jack K. Kyle, interview, Jan. 27, 1955.

parties."[123]

Evaluation

Certainly the Progressives were a highly disciplined legislative party, through one means or the other. All sources believe that the Progressives showed more unity than do the parties of today. A columnist wrote in 1941:

> Save perhaps when the Democrats came into rule in Wisconsin in 1890, there never has been a political entity in Wisconsin so strongly bound by party rule as the Progressives.[124]

"Their discipline was about as perfect as is humanly possible," says a former Democratic assemblyman.[125]

Much of the strength of the Progressive party in the legislature was the result of the firm control maintained by Governor LaFollette. Phil LaFollette's role is set into bold relief by the practices of his successors. Columnist John Wyngaard in 1947 contrasted the relative influence of governor and legislature in the LaFollette period with that in later years. Of the latter period he wrote:

> . . . the state legislature has assumed political leadership in Wisconsin during the Republican era which commenced in 1939. . . . During the nearly nine years that the Republicans have held power in state

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[123] Thomas A. Davlin, interview, Jan. 24, 1955.

[124] Wisconsin State Journal, Feb. 18, 1941.

[125] Genzmer interview.

> government affairs, the reins have been pretty largely held by the legislative branch of the state government, the legislative wing of the Republican party leadership.[126]

Viewing in retrospect the tactics of the Progressive party in the legislature exposes some divergence in views among party members. Phil LaFollette, for instance, apparently believed that the speedup of procedures he developed was a valuable new practice of government that should continue to be used. He defended his action in a radio address following the 1937 special session. The Governor said:

> The special session of the legislature did more real work and achieved greater results in the past five days than any other legislature has in five months. Cumbersome legislative rules . . . were several hundred years old and needed to be discarded in order for work to be accomplished.[127]

The test of immediate results validates the methods. Progressive measures were passed by those means. But if in the process of enacting its program a party provides propaganda issues for the opposition that contribute to its defeat, and if the opposition has been so embittered by the happenings that it vindictively wipes most of the legislation off the statute books in succeeding sessions, the usefulness of the methods must be put in question. And this is what happened in Wisconsin.

Most of the Progressives who were then legislators do

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[126] Appleton Post-Crescent, April 3, 1947.

[127] Capital Times, Oct. 17, 1937.

not share the views of Governor LaFollette on the merit of the methods used. Those still in the legislature are unanimous in the belief that the pressure and haste of the special session were unnecessary, that proper hearings should have been held, and even that most of the measures could have been cleared through the regular session in a few weeks additional time. Some of these men say they urged this point upon the Governor at the time, but to no avail.[128] Consideration before Committee of the Whole is not really a substitute for hearings before regular committees. The general public is not ordinarily heard. Under the accelerated schedule of the special session of 1937, especially, such "hearings" were in no way adequate. Many were held on one day, in rapid succession with debate on one measure cut off when the time arrived for another measure to be taken up as a special order. Further, time was insufficient to advertise the hour to permit interested parties to appear. Says one Progressive, "No one in the party got any good out of the special session."[129]

Elimination of unnecessary delay in the legislature is a commendable goal, but under the circumstances of the slim, jerry-built control with which the Progressives had to operate, delay cannot be avoided if accepted procedures are used. With a few more sure votes, the Progressives could have

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[128] Panzer, Busby, and Pritchard interviews.

[129] Pritchard interview.

suspended the rules from time to time to expedite business; with a less implacable opposition they could have accomplished some routine business under unanimous consent. As it was, however, the Progressives did not have the luxury of a working majority. The price they paid to achieve rapid action was thus the accusation of having used blackjack, "Hitler" methods.

Even conservative members of the legislature admit that the tactics of the Progressives were brought on by the nature of their opposition. Because those opposed did not have enough votes to pass measures, or even to keep Progressive legislation from being enacted eventually, delay was their only weapon. Whether delay was used to give them time to arouse their constituents against a measure or in the hopes of preventing action entirely; whether the opposition was purely partisan and personal, or sincere--one Democratic senator believes they "saved the State"[130]-is not relevant. Parliamentary procedures are the accepted modes of lawmaking, developed in hundreds of years of experience by groups that have been alternately in the majority and in the minority. They cannot be dismissed as "antiquated," but must be changed slowly after most careful consideration by all concerned.

Perhaps Governor LaFollette expected too much in the way of speed from the legislatures of this period. Three parties in the legislature are certain to waste more time

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[130]Carroll interview.

than two. Each must present its views and stage a rebuttal. No party could point to a popular majority and claim that it had the people's mandate to act in a certain way--a propaganda weapon if not a demonstrable truth. A further cause for more time being consumed in sessions of this period than in previous years was the condition of the state. An acute observer, speculating on this point commented:

> More and bigger bills pile into the legislative hopper--pensions, relief, more taxes, schemes to create more governmental activities. In bygone days, bills like these got scant notice. The Socialist coalition has put the stamp of orthodoxy on many measures of this type. No longer outlaws, these bills consume time.[131]

The inability of the Progressive party to gain a clear majority in the legislature even in 1936 when their Governor himself received a popular majority was a serious weakness, if not of the Progressive party itself, at least of the multi-party system. Seldom in any society will division into several distinct groups leave any one with a majority. But perhaps the Progressives did as well as could be expected. Had they been one of only two parties, and all the conservative Republicans and Democrats been voting together, it appears that the Progressives would never have been the larger party and thus would never have had the opportunity to guide the actions of the state at all.

That many of the Progressives' measures had political

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[131]Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Oct. 10, 1937.

appeal is shown by the votes with which they were adopted. Even in the special session of 1937 when measures were bitterly fought at every turn, the final vote shows that many of the legislators supposedly in opposition wanted to be on the side of Governor LaFollette. For example, votes in the Senate and Assembly respectively for the Department of Commerce were 23-7 and 64-30; for mortgage moratorium extension 28-4 and 48-6; for the Wisconsin Agricultural Authority 19-9 and 69-18; for chain store taxation 28-4 and 88-3.

Another test of the appeal of Progressive legislation is what Wisconsin government is like today. The reorganization moves are a striking example: Of all the changes effected by LaFollette in 1938 and vetoed in 1939, all were reintroduced and enacted piecemeal by Republican administrations, the last two--higher education integration and an industrial development agency--by the 1955 session.

The purpose of this chapter, however, was not to evaluate the legislation enacted or attempted by the Progressives, but to illustrate how the party operated in the legislature. The picture is one of executive dominance and great party unity, but with action hampered by failure to win complete control. The attempt at aggressive action under these circumstances led to disillusionment among some Progressives,- to disgust among their opponents, and thus contributed to disaster for the party at the polls.

CHAPTER VIII

TOWARD A NATIONAL PARTY

The political behavior of the Progressive party of Wisconsin can be understood only by including a discussion of its activities in national politics. In a previous chapter[1] mention was made of the party's relations with other parties. The conclusion was that the desires of the LaFollettes to pursue an independent course in national affairs was one of the reasons for keeping their party from closer relations with the Roosevelt administration. This urge toward autonomous expression on the national scene exploded to the surface in 1938 with the formation of the National Progressives of America, a group dedicated to building a new party in the United States.

The story of the National Progressives of America, to be referred to here as the NPA, is an interesting one in its own right. The story cannot be told here in detail; but the NPA cannot be excluded because of the impact its formation

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[1]Chap. VI.

had on the state party. This is the perspective in which the NPA is to be viewed. Its principal effect on the state party was the uneasiness it aroused among liberals in the party who were suspicious of the new organization's principles and method of operation. A subordinate effect was the diversion of Phil LaFollette's attention from the state party resulting from his activities in promoting the NPA outside of Wisconsin.

Background for National Action

The idea of a national party was not new to Progressives. Robert M. LaFollette Sr. concluded in 1924 that both major parties were dominated by conservative groups and ran as an independent preparatory to forming a third party. Though he was beaten, progressive-minded people continued to hope for a new liberal national party. Periodically organizations were set up to forward third party plans, and Wisconsin progressives were often influential in them. The League for Independent Political Action was formed after the 1928 election to stimulate the organization of a farmer-labor party on a national scale. Essentially this same group in 1933 organized the Farmer-Labor Political Federation, which two years later became the American Commonwealth Federation.

In all of these organizations, Thomas R. Amlie, Wisconsin progressive, was a prominent figure. From other states,

men like John Dewey, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, and Paul H. Douglas were active in the later groups. These men were interested becausethey had "a positive conviction that American political life could not continue indefinitely without squaring itself with economic conditions."[2] They hoped to foster third parties in various states that would be nuclei for a new national party. Amlie spent much of his time promoting a third party in Wisconsin, and his work was important in building sentiment for the formation of the state Progressive party in 1934. Wisconsin and Minnesota were the only states in which the efforts of the American Commonwealth Federation bore fruit. The Federation was abandoned in 1936 when the leaders concluded that they "would only benefit crackpots like Gerald L. K. Smith and Henry Long."[3]

From the outset the Progressive party of Wisconsin looked toward national action. A few Progressive interviewees indicated that they were given to understand in 1934 that third party zealots in several other states, notably Minnesota, North Dakota, New York, Washington, and California, were ready to form a national party immediately. The interviewees say that such possibilities were among the most convincing reasons in bringing them to agree to form a separate state party. Had they thought there was no chance of

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[2]John Dewey, "Prospects for a Third Party," New Republic, Vol. LXXI (July 27, 1932), p. 278.

[3]Thomas R. Amlie, interview, Dec. 17, 1954.

a national third party, they would not have favored leaving the Republican party.[4]

Progressive party platforms called boldly for a national party or at least for political realignment between the two major parties. The 1934 platform--the party's first--stated clearly that Progressives did not consider themselves confined to Wisconsin. The preamble read:

> Accordingly, Progressives in Wisconsin, cutting loose from all connections with the two old reactionary parties in this crisis, have founded a new national party under the name Progressive party.[5]

The 1936 platform of the Progressive party did not claim that they were already a national party, but asserted that they aimed to become one. It read:

> The Progressive party looks forward to a national existence. . . . Just as the Progressive party has fought and defeated the two reactionary old parties in Wisconsin, so it expects to defeat these two reactionary parties in the national field.[6]

In 1938 the Progressive party, without mentioning the newly-formed National Progressives of America, stated:

> We pledge ourselves to a political realignment on a national front which will serve the people of the nation as the Progressive party has done . . . in this state.[7]

Progressive leaders also often spoke out repeatedly on

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[4]For example, Verl W. Pool, interview, Dec. 21, 1954.

[5]Blue Book, 1935, p. 477, emphasis added.

[6]Blue Book, 1937, p. 268.

[7]Blue Book, 1940, p. 470.

the subject of expansion. Phil LaFollette before 1938 constantly stressed the inevitability of a national party. In his view such a party would be a rallying point for all liberals, and all conservatives would unite in one of the old parties. After LaFollette's first victory on the new state ticket in 1934, he answered queries about a national party by saying, "During the campaign we said that there must be a political realignment and we meant it."[8] The next year LaFollette announced he favored the organization of a national third party "as soon as possible" and that he would do everything in his power to promote it.[9]

Despite these hints, no national LaFollette third party appeared for the 1936 election. Instead the LaFollettes urged the re-election of Roosevelt. Robert M. LaFollette Jr. chaired a conference in Chicago in September 1936 where one hundred and twenty of the nation's most prominent liberals endorsed Franklin D. Roosevelt for re-election. The conference was interpreted as a move to warn liberals not to risk electing Landon by supporting the Union party's candidate, William L. Lemke.[10] Some of the conferees, notably Phil LaFollette, were reported to be looking toward 1940 as the time for their emergence as a national party. Under the two-term tradition Roosevelt would not then be running, he

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[8]Progressive, Dec. 1, 1934.

[9]Capital Times (Madison), May 20, 1935.

[10]Milwaukee Journal, Sept. 12, 1936.

reasoned, and in that event the Democratic party would fall again under the domination of Southern Bourbons and big city bosses.[11]

The executive committees of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association and Wisconsin Farmer Labor Progressive Federation met jointly in Madison in 1936, with Phil LaFollette in attendance. They agreed to commence action immediately after the election for a new party in the 1938 congressional and 1940 presidential elections.[12]

The decline in the economy in 1937 after the New Deal leaders had declared the depression was over apparently was the last proof that Phil LaFollette needed that the time was ripe for his effort on a national scale. He was correct in perceiving the discontent of liberals with the Roosevelt administration.[13] As a Christian Science Monitor reporter wrote, "Many of the doubting disciples of the New Deal are just now looking for a convenient landing place when they bail out."[14] LaFollette hoped they would jump in his direction, and he prepared a place for them to land.

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[11] Quoted by William T. Evjue, interview, Dec. 14, 1954.

[12] Milwaukee Journal, Aug. 21, 1936.

[13] See Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, The Inside Struggle (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 326, 339-340.

[14] Frank L. Perrin, quoted in Daily Northwestern (Oshkosh), June 29, 1937.

The National Progressives of America

Phil LaFollette announced the formation of the National Progressives of America at a gigantic rally in the University of Wisconsin Stock Pavilion April 29, 1938. He devoted most of his time thereafter until late 1941 to promoting it.

Nature of the group

Phil LaFollette claims that the NPA was not a political party.[15] Instead, he says, it was an association of persons who believed that a new national party should be formed. He knew that forming a significant party was not a simple task. He had said in 1934, "Obviously you can't wave a flag and announce that there will be a national party."[16]

This view stemmed from his father. Robert M. LaFollette Sr. always insisted that he had not started a third party in 1924. Accepting the endorsement of the Conference for Progressive Political Action in that year, Old Bob LaFollette wrote:

> Permanent political parties have been born in this country after and not before national political campaigns, and they have come from the people, not from the proclamations of individual leaders. If the hour is at hand for the birth of a new political party, the American people next November will register their will and their united purpose by a vote of such magnitude that a new political party will be inevitable.[17]

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[15] Philip F. LaFollette, interview, April 18, 1955.

[16] Progressive, Dec. 1, 1934.

[17] Edward N. Doan, The LaFollettes and the Wisconsin Idea, (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1947), p. 125.

Apparently the elder LaFollette hoped to attract voters with his personality and his discussion of burning issues and so to be elected without the benefit of an organization. When this did not happen, he apparently changed his mind on the proper procedure for establishing a new party. He said in 1925 to what remained of the group that had supported him:

> I have often thought that the way to national redemption lies along state by state occupation and conquest until we have enough states for a national base of commanding proportions.[18]

This change of view probably was based in part on his experience in not being able to get on the ballot in some states and on his belief that he had not received a fair count.

Phil LaFollette concurred as to the proper organization of a new party. He said in 1934:

> We learned in 1924 . . . that a movement for a new political party must be born in the states. You can't put a roof on a house before you have laid the foundation.[19]

Therefore his NPA in 1938 was not a party, but the first step in forming one. After he had established a functioning organization in ten or twenty states a real party convention was to be called to build a real national party.[20]

In spite of all this talk about what the NPA was technically, the newspapers, including the LaFollette's own

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[18]Belle C. LaFollette and Fola LaFollette, Robert M. LaFollette, Vol. II (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 1158.

[19]Capital Times, Sept. 16, 1934.

[20]Willis Thornton, NEA, Progressive, June 11, 1938.

Progressive, heralded its formation as the starting of a new party. The Progressive said: "Governor Philip F. LaFollette of Wisconsin Thursday night made political history by launching a national Progressive party."[21] LaFollette himself said in the speech initiating the new group, "Make no mistake, this is NOT a third party. As certain as the sun rises, we are launching THE party of our time."[22]

Principles

A new third party commonly issues a statement of a definite program to justify its creation. Yet weeks after the NPA was started people were still asking, "What does it stand for?"[23] The main statement of principles was given in Phil LaFollette's speech inaugurating the NPA. His planks were:

(1) public ownership and management of credit
(2) restoration of the right of everyone to earn an honest living
(3) reorganization of executive government to get things done without dictatorial power
(4) security for farmers and workers
(5) an end to coddling or spoonfeeding the American people
(6) belief in the sacred destiny of the Western Hemisphere as a place where man should work out the final act in the great drama of life.[24]

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[21] Progressive, April 30, 1938.

[22] Ibid., speaker's emphasis.

[23] Letter, Geoffrey [Parsons] to Phil LaFollette, Philip F. LaFollette Papers (Wisconsin State Historical Society).

[24] Edward M. Sait, American Parties and Elections, 3rd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1942), p. 301.

The principles were admittedly vague. LaFollette explained that he trusted the compass rather than the blueprint. If the direction is true, he said, the exact road to the destination can be developed as one goes along. Furthermore, LaFollette pointed out, an indefinite program is a harder target at which opponents can aim.[25] On two subjects LaFollette presented more detailed plans of what he had in mind--railroads and housing. For railroads he proposed a mammoth survey and a complete reconstruction and modernization program. For housing he wanted an engineering and architectural survey of the situation to develop a project, and "an order that it be done."[26] These programs would eliminate unemployment for years, he claimed. The programs would not be idle make-work schemes, he insisted, but programs that would add to the productive capacity of the country. The key to the problem that faced America, LaFollette thought, was this: Production must be increased, for unless it is, there is not enough wealth to go around and people squabble over its division, losing their freedom to dictatorship in the process.

A much more thorough analysis would have to be made of these ideas of Phil LaFollette if they were to be evaluated on their logical or practical merits. Since this is not an

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[25] Willis Thornton, Progressive, June 11, 1938.

[26] Progressive, April 30, 1938.

analysis of proposals to solve economic crises, more important for this study is the reaction of certain leaders and groups to them and to the manner in which they were propounded.

Organization

The articles of association of the National Progressives of America describe its structure. Apart from the "original members," whose names were not made public, new members were to be admitted by majority vote of the existing members. Branches could be chartered also by the same vote. Members could resign; others might be expelled by majority vote. The president after the first year was to be elected by majority vote of the members. Phil LaFollette was designated to fill the office in the interim.

An important aspect of the organization was that membership was on an individual basis rather than through groups. In his Stock Pavilion speech, as well as in later talks, LaFollette stated that he did not believe a coalition of various groups would suffice for a new movement. Coalitions tend to be expediential and temporary, he thought, and besides the individuals concerned would feel their primary allegiance to the basic groups rather than to the composite organization. Without a unified, homogeneous membership, LaFollette believed, the National Progressives would be no better able to carry out a program than the present faction-

ridden major parties.[27]

National headquarters for the NPA was set up in a nine-room suite in downtown Madison, with six full-time secretaries. Adjutant General Ralph M. Immell was named executive director. Immell retained his state job, which was expected to be an aid to the NPA, since Immell's "duties as adjutant general take him to many states throughout the year, and it is expected that as executive director of the new party he will contact organizations from other states on his travels."[28]

Intensive organization began at once. Governor LaFollette traveled into several other states as far apart as New England and the West Coast to speak on the need for a new party and to set up NPA locals. Fifteen states were said to have National Progressive groups organized, but these were only nuclei, "mostly composed of unknowns."[29]

In five states, candidates were entered for some office in 1938. None of them was successful in the election.[30] In a speech in New York the next year LaFollette denied that the National Progressives had an immediate goal of winning elections. One of the greatest disasters that could come to

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[27] See Robert S. Kleckner, Milwaukee Sentinel, Sept. 2, 1941.

[28] Capital Times, May 16 and 26, 1938.

[29] Elmer Davis, "The Wisconsin Brothers," Harper's Vol. CLXXVIII (Feb. 1939), pp. 268-277.

[30] Hugh A. Bone, American Politics and the Party System, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1949), p. 392.

a new party, he said, was to start it with a definite objective of winning certain elections. Anyway, he insisted, successful new parties were not formed around people but were made by conditions.[31] Yet before the 1938 election he had written about the Wisconsin election:

> At the election November 8 the people of this state will in a measure give expression to their willingness to see a National Progressive party undertake the task of national reconstruction along the lines proven sound by the history of progressivism in Wisconsin.[32]

If LaFollette seriously believed this, he would have had to interpret his defeat as a rebuff of the National Progressives idea. He obviously did not consider it final, for he continued organizing and speaking for the NPA.

In late 1941 Phil LaFollette as much as admitted that the NPA had little chance to become a third party by itself. He announced that he would be willing to participate in any movement of liberals united on a noninterventionist foreign policy if at the same time they agreed on a militant domestic program founded on liberal social concepts. He implied that NPA adherents could easily be absorbed into a new political party.[33]

LaFollette today marks Pearl Harbor Day as the death

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[31] Winter Everett, Wisconsin State Journal (Madison), April 4, 1939.

[32] Progressive, Oct. 1, 1938.

[33] Kleckner, Milwaukee Sentinel, Sept. 2, 1941

date for the National Progressives of America. "People are not interested in new parties during a war," he explains.[34]

The NPA's sources of money were never revealed. As one item, lapel buttons bearing the NPA emblem were sold for one dollar apiece. It was reported that 3000 were sold the night of the Madison rally and 1000 more the next day.[35] LaFollette's aides calculated that they could sell one hundred thousand of the emblems in Wisconsin alone. "We were carried away," one of them admits, as their sales rapidly dropped off.[36]

Charles Ward, Minneapolis printing executive, was reputed to be the principal backer of the NPA. He admitted to having made only a small contribution.[37] Ward had been a close friend of Minnesota's Governor Floyd B. Olson and had met the LaFollettes through him. After Olson died in 1936 and Elmer Benson became governor, Ward severed his connections

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[34]Philip LaFollette interview.

[35]Morris H. Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, April 29, 1938.

[36]Thomas F. Davlin, interview, Jan. 24, 1955.

[37]Progressive, Sept. 10, 1938. Ward was sensitive about his financial affairs owing to publicity about how he had come by the ownership of Brown & Bigelow, gigantic calendar firm in St. Paul. While in the federal penetentiary at Leavenworth on a narcotics charge he had befriended Herbert H. Bigelow, who was serving time for income tax evasion. Ward claimed to have taken care of Bigelow when he cracked under the strain of prison life, and in return was given a job at the company, and eventually inherited it. Ward was reported to be worth five million dollars and to have an annual income of $400,000. Ray Tucker, quoted in Capital Times, June 20, 1938; Jack Alexander, quoted in Capital Times, Aug. 30, 1938; Progressive, Sept. 10, 1938.

with the Farmer-Laborites and turned his attention to Wisconsin. Ward was a Wisconsin resident through his ownership of farms at Hudson, and he was made a member of Governor LaFollette's military staff.

Reaction to the NPA

Negative reaction to the National Progressives of America arose on three grounds: its opposition to President Roosevelt; Phil LaFollette's unilateral action in starting it; and the fascistic implications of the manner in which it was organized.

Opposition to Roosevelt

The formation of a new party by Phil LaFollette at this time was universally interpreted as a direct challenge to Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership of liberals. Those groups and individuals who supported Roosevelt because they thought he advanced the liberal cause were therefore antagonized.

LaFollette recognized the hold Roosevelt had on liberal groups. He paid tribute to the "brilliant leadership" of the Administration. But he also insisted that leadership alone could not solve the problems facing the country when that leadership was not backed by a unified group to translate its proposals into action. The Democratic party was not such a group; therefore, ran LaFollette's argument, the President was helpless to act. Furthermore, LaFollette

stated, the premise of his leadership was wrong, because while people were "ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed," the New Deal was striving to restrict production.

Wisconsin labor leaders, who had supported Phil LaFollette up to this time, did not follow him in breaking with Roosevelt. Gunnar Mickelson, director of the state CIO, wired LaFollette before the Stock Pavilion rally:

> I trust the efforts of reaction to use your good work as a wedge to split progressive, liberal forces will be answered tonight, once and for all. Our organization stands solidly behind President Roosevelt's recovery program and we look with confidence to your conference for similar support.[38]

Immediately after the meeting, Henry Rutz of the AFL-dominated Farmer Labor Progressive Federation held a conference with several national labor leaders. They discussed possible attitudes toward the NPA and decided to boycott it.[39] A short time later eleven Wisconsin AFL and CIO leaders filed a statement criticizing LaFollette's action in establishing the NPA. It is quoted at some length:

> The attempted launching of the National Progressives, Inc., by Governor LaFollette tends to split the unity of the people, which is the only safeguard of Progressive victory. . . . We feel that it does not represent the sentiment or desires of the progressive people of Wisconsin who are unalterably opposed to any break with the progressive forces and features of the New Deal.
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> We have been deeply concerned to note

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[38] Wisconsin State Journal, April 28, 1938.

[39] Henry Rutz, interview, May 29, 1955.

> that the program of the National Progressives, while making no attacks upon the Wall Street monopolies, makes sharp attacks on the standards of organized labor and on the relief and WPA which are at the present time the sole means of subsistence of the millions who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Particularly his remarks about "coddling and spoon-feeding the American people" have given encouragement to the reactionary opposition to the New Deal legislation.[40]

Their last statement was justified in that almost the only favorable comment on the NPA came from Eastern conservative newspapers such as the Journal of Commerce, and from Republican statesmen such as Herbert Hoover, who was quoted as saying that the NPA was the "entering wedge for the Republican party to get back into power."[41]

Other Progressives, notably William T. Evjue, also were alienated when LaFollette turned on Roosevelt. Evjue says that Phil LaFollette had him out to the family farm on a Sunday preceding the formation of the NPA to explain what he proposed to do and solicit Evjue's support. Evjue states that he was shocked at the proposal to break with Roosevelt. He told LaFollette:

> The New Deal is nothing but the Wisconsin Idea applied to the nation, and Roosevelt is the man who has carried it out. Therefore he is entitled to our support. It would be rank ingratitude to abandon him now.[42]

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[40] Progressive, June 4, 1938.

[41] Progressive, June 4, 1938. See also Davis, op. cit., p. 275.

[42] Evjue interview.

Unilateral action

The second major criticism of the National Progressives of America was that Phil LaFollette had consulted none of the prominent national leaders of third party sentiment before launching the new group. It appeared to them to be strictly a one-man show.

LaFollette stressed that he had been carrying on five years of consultation with various people about the need for third party action. He claimed to have met two thousand people in various luncheon meetings in the few months preceding the initial rally. LaFollette said:

> So far as I know never before have so many people taken counsel together upon a problem of this kind. Average men and women from every walk of life have been at grips with this decision. After mature deliberation the men and women, individually and by groups, have made their choice and marked out the course we are to follow. Their decision is practically unanimous.[43]

Yet the surprise that greeted the formation of the NPA indicates that LaFollette had not been specific in divulging his plans for the new group. Moreover, the consultations had been largely with Wisconsin Progressives, and not necessarily with the most prominent of these.

None of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation officials had been consulted before the move, and they were highly displeased at the slight.[44] A search of "strongholds

[43] Progressive, April 30, 1938.

[44] Rutz interview.

and habitations of liberals" in Washington by a Madison correspondent revealed not a person who had heard of Phil LaFollette's meeting the day after it was announced. Senator George W. Norris had not been invited, nor had any of the Wisconsin Progressive congressmen. No officials of the national AFL, CIO, or Labor's Nonpartisan League were asked to attend.[45]

The appearance is that LaFollette wanted to launch the NPA himself, expecting that other liberal leaders would jump on the bandwagon. The delay in announcing the list of "original members" might indicate that he anticipated several big names to ask to be included. The Articles of Association show the signatures of only thirteen of the inner LaFollette group, with blank spaces left between some of the names.[46]

Whatever his intentions in getting a broad sponsorship for the NPA, LaFollette was not in fact joined by the other minor party leaders of the nation, except for Upton Sinclair of California. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor party, which had worked closely with the Wisconsin group for many years, stayed out. Harold Peterson, its executive secretary, stated, "We will go in if we see that the new party is democratic and thoroughly expressive of the will of third-party minded people in the nation."[47] He expressed concern that

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[45]Ruby A. Black, Wisconsin State Journal, April 24, 1938.

[46]Philip LaFollette papers.

[47]Progressive, May 7, 1938.

not enough people or organizations had been consulted before the NPA was launched. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City, who just the week before the Madison rally had predicted a sweeping realignment between the two major parties before 1940, intimated that the time was not ripe for such a step as LaFollette's.[48] Senator George W. Norris thought the NPA "ill-advised."[49] In Iowa, the existing Farmer-Labor party was ignored and a separate NPA group set up.

Without the aid of the other prominent third party supporters around the nation, LaFollette was free of a need to make compromises and share the leadership of the NPA, but his task of organization was immeasurably more difficult.

Manner of forming

More vitriolic than either of the preceding criticisms of the National Progressives of America was the complaint against the manner in which the new group was launched. In essence this was that the NPA bore signs of fascism.[50]

Many Progressives as well as their opponents noticed a similarity between the staging of the Madison rally where the NPA was announced and that used by Adolph Hitler for

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[48] New York Times, May 1, 1938. A. A. Berle Jr. had been at Madison as an observer for LaGuardia.

[49] Milwaukee Leader, April 30, 1938.

[50] "Fascism" was the word actually used by the critics. They implied similarity to the techniques of the dictators of Europe rather than specific doctrines.

Nazi party rallies in Germany. The University Stock Pavilion was replete with bunting, dominated by a twenty-foot wide white banner overhanging the stage. The banner bore a blue cross in a red circle, the symbol of the new organization. The Milwaukee Journal immediately characterized it as a "modified swastika." A more distinctive characterization, however, has stuck in the minds of those who speak of the symbol today. Because the modification of the Nazi device was to cut the ends off, the symbol was termed a "circumcized swastika."[51]

Other similarities between the Madison meeting and those of the Nazis were noted: University of Wisconsin athletes wearing letter sweaters were lined up before the stage in a phalanx of ushers to handle the four thousand spectators that were able to get seats. A helmeted band paraded the stadium with martial music. LaFollette appeared suddenly before the crowd flanked by his lieutenants, Herman L. Ekern, Ralph M. Immell, and Alvin C. Ries. Dramatic lighting played on LaFollette, who was almost alone on the big platform. Some even saw in the speaker's gestures an adaptation of the Nazi salute. The Wisconsin State Journal printed a picture of LaFollette against the banner with his mouth open, his hair overhanging his forehead, and his arm upraised in emphasis of a point. Under another picture of

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[51]See for example, Capital Times, May 18, 1941.

LaFollette as he came to the platform the caption pointed out that the man greeting him "was caught by the photographer in this accidental Nazi stormtrooper stance."[52]

Others saw more resemblance to fascism in the formation of the National Progressives than in the mere physical staging of the initial rally. They pointed to the speech, which stressed nationalism, a tightly organized party group, and granting the executive more power. The Socialist party issued a pamphlet attacking LaFollette's program. It read in part:

> Phil LaFollette's party moves not toward a cooperative commonwealth but toward Fascism. . . . Like Hitler and Mussolini, Governor LaFollette makes a highly emotional appeal to both left and right--to labor and capital. At those points where their respective interests plainly conflict he takes refuge in mysticism and symbolism.[53]

Sentiment among liberal writers was typified by Max Lerner, who was reported to be "not only disturbed but disgusted with the whole proceeding."[54]

Some Progressives did not approve of the groups Phil LaFollette began to keep company with after he had formed the NPA. He spoke often before businessmen, assuring them that capitalists were not at fault for the nation's troubles.[55] In his visits around the state LaFollette "had tea"

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[52] Wisconsin State Journal, April 29, 1938.

[53] Quoted in Chicago Tribune, Oct. 8, 1938.

[54] Quoted by Ickes, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 393.

[55] See for example Milwaukee Journal, July 8, 1938.

with officials of large corporations. As he put more emphasis on isolationism LaFollette associated with General Robert Wood and other America First leaders. In one county LaFollette bypassed the unsympathetic local Progressive party officials and worked through a Coughlinite group to organize the NPA.[56]

Effect of the NPA on the Progressive Party

In general the formation of the National Progressives of America had a divisive influence on the Progressive party of Wisconsin. The reasons are to be found principally in the reactions just discussed. Having to choose between following Phil LaFollette in his new national venture and continued support of Franklin D. Roosevelt, many prominent Progressives stuck with Roosevelt. The Socialist party, dismissed by LaFollette as being on the wrong track in moving toward solution of the country's problems, was alienated, thus weakening the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation as an instrument of electoral coalition in the crucial Milwaukee area.

The most serious effect of the NPA on the Progressive party was the disaffection of important party leaders because of the manner in which it was formed. Expressions of disgust and disappointment were often as strong from liberal

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[56] Samuel Sigman, interview, May 27, 1955.

Progressives as from Republican and Democratic opponents of the LaFollettes. The most common attitude expressed in interviews was one of nausea. "I was sick when I entered that hall and saw what it was like," said one. "I never came so near tossing up my toenails as I did that night," another commented.[57] Their initial reactions to the staging of the rally remained as their attitude to the NPA in every regard. The kindest thing interviewees had to say about the NPA was that it was ill-timed, or that it was a mistake, or that LaFollette received a lot of bad advice on it.

A few interviewees claimed that a difference of opinion existed between Bob LaFollette Jr. and his brother over the wisdom of launching a drive for a new party at the time. Senator LaFollette did not attend the Madison meeting. He was in Chicago for a speech the night before, but did not continue on to Madison. The official reason was that he wanted to get back to Washington to vote on the Navy bill.[58]

Whatever speculation on the prior doubts of Bob LaFollette about the NPA that existed were put to rest shortly after the Madison rally, when he showed that he backed his brother's venture completely. In a telegram to Wisconsin Progressive leaders the Senator said:

> It is clear that if democracy is to survive and our institutions are to be preserved in this crisis there must be a genuine political

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[57] Interviews, names withheld.

[58] Wisconsin State Journal, May 9, 1944.

> realignment in this country. . . . I believe that Progressives should reaffirm these principles and declare that it is their solemn determination to forge a national political instrumentality which will safeguard these rights.[59]

In a nationwide radio speech two weeks later Bob LaFollette Jr. called for work to begin at once toward a political realignment by building third parties in various states. He did not minimize the tremendous task involved, but thought it could be accomplished by people who really believed in the Progressive program. Friends of Senator LaFollette say that he wore a button bearing the NPA symbol long after the lack of popular response to the new organization was apparent.

Several interviewees believe that the NPA was an issue in the 1938 election that contributed to Progressive defeat in their area. Yet it would be unfair to leave the impression that this feeling was universal among Wisconsin party leaders. At a conference in Madison shortly after the Stock Pavilion rally, Phil LaFollette solicited the reaction of local party leaders. He heard mostly expressions of approval. "We're with you, Phil," many of them said, although some of these had been heard to express disapproval earlier.[60]

Only one Progressive interviewed thought the NPA was a good idea. Two others say they were not surprised by the

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[59] Progressive, April 30, 1938.

[60] Sigman interview.

NPA since Progressives had always believed a national third party was necessary. But many leaders, especially in the northern part of the state, were merely unimpressed by it. They failed to see any ideological or organizational complications arising from the organization of the NPA nor yet any great enthusiasm created for it. The new group apparently failed to make a splash of any kind in their areas.

A further disruption of the state Progressive party resulting from the NPA was the diversion of Phil LaFollette's attention from state problems and state party affairs. The NPA was not merely a trial balloon by LaFollette. He was deadly serious about forming a new party. He wrote in the Progressive:

> As great as Wisconsin's previous accomplishments have been, this step transcends in importance anything we have ever undertaken before.[61]

His activities in the next year or so show that he meant it. LaFollette was said not to have wanted to run for governor again in 1938, but to devote his full time to organizing the National Progressives. He was prevailed upon to change his mind by local party leaders and by his own recognition that he needed a forum from which to attract national attention. Though he ran in Wisconsin in 1938, he devoted most of his attention to the new national group, neglecting state party affairs. After his defeat in 1938 he spent almost no time

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[61] Progressive, Oct. 1, 1938. See also, Thornton, Progressive, June 11, 1938.

on Wisconsin party activities. The dependence of the party upon LaFollette's interest and effort meant that diversion of his attention could only weaken the party.

Evaluation

"Phil's movement was a damned flop."[62] This statement concisely evaluates the National Progressives of America. Started with great éclat, the NPA lasted only a little more than three and a half years.

The formation of the NPA shows that the LaFollettes always looked beyond Wisconsin as the arena for their operations. Many Progressives believed that the state party would have to become national in order to survive. Phil LaFollette chose what he considered a propitious time and method to attempt to expand the party, but failed. If one accepts the premise that a state third party must expand or disappear, the failure of the NPA to become a national party might explain why the Wisconsin Progressive party did not last. Yet at least as convincing evidence can be marshaled to show that the formation of the NPA contributed to the decline of the state party.

The continuance of a strong state Progressive party in Wisconsin would likely have given the best assurance that a national party organization could someday be achieved. Had

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[62] Evjue interview.

Phil LaFollette been re-elected governor in 1938, or had another Progressive been able to regain the governorship shortly thereafter, LaFollette could have continued to command nationwide attention. He might then have been able to publicize and popularize the National Progressives of America.

Why did the National Progressives fail? It has been shown that Phil LaFollette did not consult with leaders of other political or economic groups before launching the NPA. Neither did he secure their support later, and in fact several prominent labor leaders actively opposed him. This "one-man show" feature was a serious weakness of his movement. Another weakness might be its organizational principle. Perhaps it is not possible to organize a party in the United States on an individual basis ignoring economic group leaders.

Other reasons for the failure of the NPA may be advanced as speculations. Among them are the coming of the war, the continuing in politics of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the traditional American attitudes against third parties.

The difficulties facing any new third party were compounded for the National Progressives. Besides the usual problems of getting on the ballot in many states and raising money, the National Progressives began at a time when interest in partisan activity was falling off with the coming of World War II. The war began in Europe the year after

LaFollette organized his group and soon claimed the major interest of people attentive to public affairs. Increasing government expenditures for national defense began to lift the nation out of the depression, sapping the issues of groups who appealed to the economically discontented.

But perhaps most important, the approaching war was probably the greatest factor in persuading Franklin D. Roosevelt to run for another term as President. With this formidable figure still on the scene, minor parties had little chance to wedge their way into a share of power. Many liberals were dissatisfied with the reforms of the New Deal, but they could not be persuaded that Roosevelt was so conservative as to warrant starting a party against him at the time. Furthermore, a writer has pointed out, the belief of liberal groups that they can be the alternative to another somewhat less liberal party is misconceived. The swing in politics is from left to right, he believes, and not from left to farther left.[63] This premise receives support from the 1938 elections, when the anti-Roosevelt vote across the nation went Republican.

Two other observations are interesting to relate at this point. One is the speculation made in 1934 about the course of the LaFollettes just as they were forming their state party. In that year the New Republic cautioned:

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[63]Dale Kramer, "Where Are the Third Parties?" Common Sense, Vol. IX (October 1940), p. 22.

> . . . during the next few years Middle Western progressivism may take on some of the habiliments of American Fascism. . . . We are not suggesting that men like the LaFollettes are likely deliberately to abandon the democratic dogma; but only that they might find themselves participants in a movement which would get out of their control. . . . The Progressives on the whole are for nationalism as against internationalism. . .; for preserving private capitalism and for maintaining the predominance of the middle class; so are the Fascists. The progressives . . . need an army for which they can be the generals. . . . We do not predict that this strange amalgamation will happen; we only observe that here is a pot which deserves watching--lest it boil.[64]

The Wisconsin pot boiled in 1938, but not for long. Certainly there were in Wisconsin and elsewhere both within and without the Progressive party those who thought the party had become fascistic. This leads to another observation, made by Thomas Amlie. Amlie spoke of the plight at this time of the social democrat--someone who wanted more governmental action in both production and distribution than the New Deal offered, without wanting to go to dogmatic extremes. Starting from essentially the same premises, Amlie reflects, Wisconsin Progressivism had turned to the right, while Minnesota Farmer-Laborism had turned left and had come under the domination of Communists. Between these two the social democrat was left without a vehicle for action.[65]

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[64] "The Progressives' Dilemma," New Republic, Vol. LXXVII (Jan. 17, 1934), p. 268.

[65] Amlie interview.

CHAPTER IX

PARTY LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a key factor in the success of any group. A large mass cannot act directly or continuously but must have individuals who act in its name. More important, not only do the leaders act for the group, they act on the group as well. Thus leaders can shape what a group is and does. Who the leaders are and the degree of shaping possible is determined by the situation in which the group finds itself as well as the qualities of the leaders.

The nature of the leadership process is a fascinating subject and could be fruitfully explored through an examination of the Progressive party of Wisconsin. Since this study deals with the party as an organization, however, only one facet--the effect of the leaders on the party--is discussed in any detail. The chapter therefore is not political biography, intellectual history, psychological analysis, nor sociological explanation of leadership as such.

Questions the chapter will attempt to answer are: Who were the leaders, besies the LaFollettes? What ideas pro-

fessed by them influenced the party? How did their personalities influence the party?

Robert M. LaFollette Sr.

"Old Bob" LaFollette died nine years before the Progressive party of Wisconsin was begun. Yet as the founder in the 1890's of the faction that became an independent party in 1934 he deserves mention. Especially is this true when one understands the nature of his leadership and the continuing influence his memory and his name exerted.[1]

The most obvious influence of Robert M. LaFollette Sr. was his name. Thirty-five years of controversy had made it a household word throughout Wisconsin, either of esteem or odium. The LaFollette name alone was worth 150,000 votes, a writer estimated.[2]

The senior LaFollette originally had the support of

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[1] Once a year Progressives paid a special tribute to Robert M. LaFollette Sr. On the anniversary of his death, June 18, party people from all over the state made the pilgrimage to his grave at Madison. These exercises became great attractions. A platform was usually erected, from which a Wisconsin Progressive or an out-of-state speaker would expound on the glories of Old Bob and the needs of progressivism today. The opposition usually referred to these gatherings as political affairs, claiming that at this well-timed meeting the plans for the primary campaign were laid or possible candidates discussed with outstate leaders. A few Progressive sympathizers among interviewees expressed disgust with the continued grave-side ceremonies as being pagan or, worse, cynical exploitation of sentiment.

[2] Julia Schnabel, "Wisconsin Coalition; Progressives and Socialist Party Unite Their Miseries," Weekly People, Jan. 4, 1936.

Norwegian farmers. His opposition to involvement in World War I earned him the votes of Wisconsin Germans.[3] These two groups constituted a tremendous reservoir of support. Then dying in harness, so to speak, after a courageous though futile presidential race, LaFollette acquired somewhat the aura of a martyr. This, coupled with the fame Wisconsin achieved in state government and the steady adoption of once-radical progressive reforms around the nation, led to the softening of partisan feeling about him and turned him into an all-state hero. Nothing is more common in reading material in the period of the 1930's and 1940's than to find flattering references to the elder Robert M. LaFollette's personality, character, or work, even in the most conservative Republican and Democratic newspapers. All groups called upon the name of Old Bob to prove that they were the true advocates of Wisconsin's best tradition. The Progressives obviously had the advantage in this claim, and they exploited it. But various Progressive factions commonly cited some actual or conjectured viewpoint of Old Bob to further their arguments with each other.

The greatest influence of Robert M. LaFollette Sr. in the years after his death was through his two sons, Robert Jr. and Philip. The father consciously trained the sons for political activity. Both youngsters were raised in an

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[3] Wallace S. Sayre, "Left Turn in Wisconsin," New Republic, Vol. LXXX (Oct. 24, 1934), p. 300.

intensely political environment. Accounts tell of the boys being in on all manner of political talk at the LaFollette home from their earliest years. Apart from this, Bob Jr. served as his father's secretary in Washington for several years. It was taken for granted that the LaFollette boys would go into politics. The elder LaFollette is quoted as having urged Colonel John J. Hannan, one of his aides, to "help the boys along" after LaFollette's death.[4]

Another influence of the elder LaFollette is to be seen in the structure and practices of the Progressive party. The manner in which he organized his workers in local areas, influenced primary elections, campaigned, and managed the legislature have been mentioned in the chapters dealing with these activities of the Progressive party. The practices of the Progressive party after 1934 in these areas were largely a continuation or development of those used by Old Bob LaFollette.

Philip F. LaFollette

Philip Fox LaFollette was by all odds the major leader of the Progressive party of Wisconsin. He was the most influential advocate of its formation. He ran as its gubernatorial nominee in its first three elections, and served as governor after two of those elections, besides his previous

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[4] John W. Reynolds, interview, Jan. 7, 1954.

term as a Republican. Phil LaFollette imprinted his own program ideas on party platforms. He had prepared and introduced every major item of legislation considered by the legislature while he was governor, and his agents guided their passage. Phil LaFollette bore the major share of the campaign speaking duties during the first three campaigns of the party and fought off the attempted domination of programs and candidacies by "left-wing" economic groups. He alone selected the time and the means for launching a venture toward a national party after resisting the attempts of Franklin D. Roosevelt to absorb Progressives into the New Deal alliance. It will be well worth while to look at this man through the eyes of his contemporaries to see how his actions affected the party.

Ability

"Phil LaFollette had a brilliant mind."[5] This was a typical comment for anyone who discussed the top leader of the Progressive party. Persons who make such comments are usually not prepared to go into detail about ways in which LaFollette exhibited his capacity.

LaFollette's associates remember most vividly his skill as an advocate. Persuasion through argument was the method of dealing with people he most favored. "Right by agreement," he calls it, after Max Otto. LaFollette explains

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[5]Thomas F. Davlin, interview, Jan. 24, 1955.

this as follows:

> Given people who respect each other, you can sit down no matter what your differences and come out with some kind of higher agreement.[6]

LaFollette was confident of his ability to get his point adopted once he was brought face to face with his opposition. While he was governor he often invited various businessmen and newspapermen to conferences, perhaps over dinner or cocktails, to discuss his legislative proposals. He would explain his measures and invite criticisms of every sort, which he answered with further argument. LaFollette is described as being very effective in these meetings with opponents--effective in that he won their respect for his ability, though seldom their support for his programs, because their interests were often irrevocably opposed. A newspaper reporter quotes his employer as saying after one of these sessions, "That S.O.B. really has some good ideas, hasn't he?"[7]

Phil LaFollette's vigorous efforts for the adoption of his proposals laid him open to the charge of being a dictator. He recognized this, but thinks the charge ridiculous. "You can't tell people what they should do," LaFollette says. "You have to convince them by free argument--talking things

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[6]Philip F. LaFollette, interview, April 18, 1955.

[7]Morris H. Rubin, interview, Jan. 28, 1955.

over, the Progressives called it."[8] LaFollette explained in 1935:

> Folks used to think Dad was a dictator, but he wasn't. He held the same kind of conferences that we held. Party leaders got together and discussed pressing problems and gradually reached an agreement on which was the best course to follow. It is not necessary to have a party dictator. On the theory that two heads are better than one we are able to find the solution of many problems that would baffle one person who is trying to get at the root of things.[9]

That persuasiveness can become pressure, however, and that intrinsic merit is not the sole determinent of which views emerge from a conference would be pointed out by any student of group dynamics.

Personality

The first aspect of Phil LaFollette's personality mentioned by Progressives is his vanity. "He thought of himself as superior clay and showed it," a Progressive stated.[10] It resulted in a self-sufficiency in which he cut himself off from the people. It is on this point that Progressives compared Phil LaFollette unfavorably to his father. All Progressives believe that Robert M. LaFollette Sr. had a deep feeling for people. "He was of the common people and loved them," they say.[11] Belle Case LaFollette reports that

[8] Philip LaFollette interview.

[9] Capital Times (Madison), Dec. 24, 1935.

[10] Amlie interview.

[11] Ibid.

just before his death her husband expressed this emotion. The elder LaFollette said to Bob Jr.:

> I am at peace with all the world, but there is a lot of work I still could do. I don't know how the people will feel toward me, but I shall take to the grave my love for them which has sustained me through life.[12]

Phil LaFollette was not of the people, and as a consequence, so interviewees say, lacked the sense of what they wanted and what they wanted him to be.

LaFollette's feelings of superiority tended to make him imperious. This is one regard in which he resembled his father. Phil LaFollette's actions in dealing with the legislature earned the disfavor of some legislators. A prominent Progressive assemblyman said, "No one liked Phil after that first session."[13] Progressives who organized the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation believed that LaFollette's opposition to that group was based not so much on the radical program they espoused, as he claimed, but on the fact that he objected to an independent center of decision-making.[14] "The LaFollettes always had to run everything. They would have been poor union men," a Federationist said.[15]

Phil LaFollette always insisted that, far from wanting

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[12] Belle C. LaFollette and Fola LaFollette, Robert M. LaFollette, Vol. II (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 1168.

[13] Interview, name withheld.

[14] See Chap. IV.

[15] Sigman interview.

to run things himself, he welcomed criticism and advice.[16] Yet many tales are told about occasions on which LaFollette was actually not receptive to suggestions. A Democratic legislator, friendly with Phil LaFollette and supporting his program for some time, dates their alienation to the time he told LaFollette:

> You are smart, but do you know what you lack? Humility. You ought to get down on your knees and say, "O God, I need your guidance."[17]

A Progressive county leader says that when he spoke up in opposition to the symbol of National Progressives of America LaFollette reproached him for his ingratitude in criticizing when he was allowed to participate in the new movement.[18]

The superiority attitudes of Phil LaFollette in regard to party members were most apparent in the governor's office at the capitol. Here LaFollette was almost inaccessible to party visitors. Nothing was more striking about the interviews for this study than the unanimity with which interviewees commented distastefully or even vehemently upon the treatment they received by Phil LaFollette when they came to Madison. They tell of being made to wait for hours while LaFollette was in conference, often with newspapermen or businessmen of opposition parties. They mention difficulty

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[16] See, for example, Capital Times, Nov. 10, 1934.

[17] Arthur J. Balzer, interview, Feb. 16, 1955.

[18] Sigman interview.

even in getting appointments in advance. They bring up the lack of enthusiasm or what they believe was insincere cordiality with which they were met when they did see LaFollette. Some of their comments follow:

A county leader:

> I went to Madison to see Phil LaFollette. I was kept waiting three hours and at last had to go without seeing him. I thought to myself as I came out, "That's the last time I ever work for Phil LaFollette."[19]

A Progressive state Senator:

> I had a very important matter to see him about for a constituent. Finally I got an appointment. I kept going down to the office, but he was out. At last I told the girl to call upstairs when Phil was in. She did, and I went down with my constituent and Phil was gone. "He couldn't wait," the girl said. This made me sick. Phil LaFollette spent all his time with industrialists, newspapermen, and with the conservative legislators whom he had got to support him. The regular Progressives who pretty much went along on everything were ignored.[20]

Progressives were not accustomed to this kind of treatment. One of the outstanding things the older party workers remember about Robert M. LaFollette Sr. was his real pleasure at seeing them. The minute they entered the office Old Bob was out shaking their hand, asking about themselves, their family, and the political situation in their area. No conference was too sacred to be above interruption for this purpose. An industrialist who came to confer with the senior

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[19] Joe Schantz, interview, Dec. 21, 1954.

[20] Allen J. Busby, interview, March 15, 1955.

LaFollette in the Governor's office one time asked him why he had kept him waiting just to speak to some farmer who had come in. LaFollette replied:

> Henry is an old friend of mine who has been campaigning for me down in Argyle ever since I ran for Congress. He's one of the stanchest supporters I've got. In fact, he was campaigning for me before you ever knew me. I'm never too busy to see him.[21]

Other progressive governors before Phil LaFollette continued this practice. An upstate Progressive leader said:

> There was none of this "inner office" stuff with John Blaine. I used to go down to see him without an appointment, and he would come out. I would be out in two minutes--I would always have everything ready--but he talked to everybody. This was Zimmerman's secret as a votegetter, too, only he took longer. Everybody that came in would sit around the big table and a free-for-all would result, just like a party.[22]

It should not be surmised that LaFollette never consulted with local party officials. The luncheon meetings of 1938 with Progressive leaders from all over the state are an example. These were planned conferences, however, and as many as fifty leaders met with the Governor at once; thus the luncheons lacked the intimacy of private audiences.

Phil LaFollette's ambition was another aspect of his personality that caused adverse comment--among opponents, naturally enough, but among Progressives as well. LaFollette

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[21] Edward N. Doan, The LaFollettes and the Wisconsin Idea (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1947), pp. 108-110.

[22] Schantz interview.

wanted to be President of the United States. Of this there was no doubt. No one denied that he had what it takes to fill this office. A reporter wrote, "Not even his calumniators deny he is White House calibre. The question is how and when."[23]

Wisconsin Progressives would not have been adverse to seeing their leader in the White House, but many of them were displeased by what they considered an overweening ambition to get there. This was manifested in several ways, they say. First, he concentrated much of his attention and energy on national affairs, some thought to the detriment of the state and the state party. Second, he kept up a constant criticism of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, thinking that he had to keep himself clear of any connection with the New Deal, but actually antagonizing many who thought Roosevelt should be given a chance to work things out. Third, he formed the National Progressives of America with the obvious intention of promoting his own national candidacy, making it a one-man show rather than a team effort. LaFollette denied that this last point was true. He pointed out in his speech at the 1938 rally where the National Progressives of America was launched that the NPA was not to be the vehicle to promote the fortunes of any one person. To the crowd outside of the Stock Pavilion he stated, "I want to assure you that

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[23]Aldric Revell, Capital Times, April 17, 1937.

I have no personal ambitions in regard to this move tonight."[24] But no interviewee believed this. On the contrary, most observers were convinced the sole reason for launching the National Progressives was to start a presidential boom for Phil LaFollette.

Progressives also thought that LaFollette's desire to advance himself to higher office led him to act excessively from expedience. Several interviewees indicated their resentment at the overtures LaFollette made to businessmen and industrialists at the time of the formation of the National Progressives of America in 1938. They believed he was making concessions to the "rightists." Others were disturbed to find what they considered the original principles of the party being abandoned.[25]

LaFollette would probably have denied any accusation about being an opportunist. In a letter to his wife, published in the Progressive in 1944, LaFollette depreciated compromise as a political technique. He wrote:

> For my part I think it more important to blaze new trails in the right direction than to enjoy the questionable satisfactions of so-called "success." Because "success" usually means that one has so compromised one's self that in order to stay "successful" one must tack to every erroneous political breeze that blows across the sky.
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> Now I recognize that one must not fail to be practical, and not to withdraw into a world of dreams, but I think that a man like

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[24] Progressive, April 30, 1938.

[25] For example, see Capital Times, Jan. 11, 1938.

> Lenin was far more important in human development than, say, a man like Franklin Roosevelt or Winston Churchill. In so far as I can, I would prefer to work with those aiming at the Lenin type of contribution than either Roosevelt's or Churchill's.[26]

The consensus, then, is that Phil LaFollette had the defects of his virtues: his intellectual brilliance robbed him of humility; his knowledge and background in political operations made him forget that there is more to politics than manipulation and expedience; his striking advantages of name and situation made him inordinately ambitious; his ease of achieving political success led him to ignore the source of that success.

Ideas

Some of Phil LaFollette's beliefs on government were esepcially controversial. Those that affected the Progressive party by arousing opposition will be discussed here.

Phil LaFollette's most controversial belief was the need for increasing the powers of the government in general and of the executive in particular. LaFollette was convinced in the 1930's that unless the government had power to act in the economic crises that faced the nation, people would become restless and turn to violent remedies, such as fascism or communism.[27] In his inaugural address as a second-term governor LaFollette said:

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[26] Progressive, July 3, 1944.

[27] Wisconsin State Journal (Madison), Oct. 6, 1937.

> No thoughtful person can deny today that popular government is menaced. . . . We must have action. To do nothing, in such times as these, in itself violates the spirit of our government and its constitution. The basic change in our lives calls for measures never before adopted in our country or state. Let us not be afraid to use such measures if they are needed for the well being of the people.[28]

His father had similarly justified his use of every resource against legislative delay. The senior LaFollette had said he was obeying the mandate of the people and that it was the legislators who were abusing power.[29] Phil LaFollette talked much, especially in connection with the National Progressives of America, about "making democracy work." In expressing approval of the 1937 special session he said:

> By its legislative accomplishments last year Wisconsin has shown once more that democracy can function, that it can act constructively to solve the complex problems of contemporary government.[30]

Convinced after his first term that the legislature was not a suitable agency for policy-initiation, LaFollette told Thomas Amlie that never again would he accept responsibility without power.[31] The nature of modern society with its complex of industrial-monetary-social relationships, he was

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[28] Progressive, Jan. 12, 1935.

[29] Quoted by Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 24, 1937.

[30] Fred Graff, Chicago Tribune, Sept. 27, 1938.

[31] Thomas R. Amlie, interview, Dec. 17, 1954.

convinced, was such that only the experts could devise the programs that the government should follow. The solution, LaFollette reasoned, was for the executive to consult with experts in a given field and to devise a plan of action.[32] The people's representatives could then accept or reject it, the presumption being that they would accept it if it was soundly based in modern knowledge and adequately explained. In other words, the executive would propose; the legislature, dispose.

LaFollette's proposals for increasing executive power met similar charges that he wished to become a dictator. He was compared to Huey Long and Adolph Hitler.[33] Accusations of this nature were especially numerous during and after the special session of the legislature in 1937. At this time, when a number of substantial pieces of legislation were pushed through in the last eight days of the session, opponents and Progressives alike talked about "legislation by executive decree."[34]

Several times LaFollette showed himself to be disillusioned with some of the democratic processes, especially

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[32] It is not meant to suggest that this idea was new with Philip LaFollette. His father through his "soil and seminar" cooperation with university professors had worked out the regulatory and welfare legislation of the early progressive periods.

[33] Janesville Gazette, quoted in Capital Times, Oct. 21, 1937.

[34] William T. Evjue, interview, Dec. 14, 1954.

those of the legislature. "I've lived with the legislature for three terms and it is discouraging," he said.[35] He expressed impatience with "wrangling" and the "cumbersome legislative rules several hundred years old" that provided his opponents with so many opportunities to delay action on his proposals.[36]

Another belief Phil LaFollette developed in later years, according to interviewees, was the primacy of emotion over reason as guides of human action. Thomas Amlie says that he first noted such ideas in Phil LaFollette after he had been defeated for a second term in 1932. LaFollette had run an unexceptionable administration, Amlie insists, and yet had been defeated. Therefore, LaFollette apparently concluded, voters do not decide between candidates or parties on the basis of reason.[37] "People aren't interested in principle," Phil is quoted by another party leader as saying; "they just want something they can look at and follow."[38]

From this conclusion came the methods used in founding the National Progressives of America. LaFollette's rationale, according to persons close to him, was this: He had become convinced that democracy had to act decisively to solve economic problems in order to survive; such action could come

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[35] Capital Times, Sept. 29, 1937.

[36] Capital Times, Oct. 17, 1937.

[37] Amlie interview.

[38] Davlin interview.

only by strong executive action; an executive was helpless unless backed by a solid militant organization; any mass organization could be built up only by offering people an emotional, quasi-religious experience aroused by banners, symbols, marching, and appeals to nationalism.

The obvious similarity of this analysis of the political problem to that of the Nazis in Germany intensified the belief of many people that LaFollette actually was another Hitler who wanted to institute an authoritarian and totalitarian regime in the United States. Progressives have much to say on this matter. None of those interviewed thought that Phil LaFollette was a fascist similar to those in Europe.[39] One prominent party leader, however, says that he heard some shocking statements by LaFollette in the privacy of the executive office at about the time of the formation of the National Progressives. At one of these meetings LaFollette is reported to have said, "People aren't worthy of governing themselves."[40]

Certainly LaFollette was impressed by Nazi Germany. Phil LaFollette was in Germany in 1933 when Hitler came to power, and again in 1936 and 1939. LaFollette is reported to have been struck by the vitality of the regime. A Pro-

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[39] As indicated previously persons in this period who argued in these terms did not distinguish between Fascism and Nazism as represented in Italy and Germany. The term "fascist" was used derogatorily to refer to anyone accused of emulating the European dictators.

[40] Interview, name withheld.

gressive leader quotes LaFollette as saying in private, "Look at what progress Germany and Russia have made!"[41] Most Progressives believe it was the paraphernalia of the Nazis rather than the substance of the Nazi doctrine that he approved. As one Progressive put it, "Phil LaFollette didn't believe in the stormtroopers and the rough-house stuff, but only in the trappings."[42] LaFollette told party leaders in justification of the National Progressives that liberals had to adopt Nazi methods to achieve democratic aims in order to keep rightists from using them for their authoritarian aims.[43]

The last important idea of Phil LaFollette to be discussed here is his isolationsim. LaFollette spoke out sharply on this issue.

Isolationism was good Progressive doctrine, of course, since Old Bob LaFollette had been a martyr to the cause in World War I. Phil LaFollette said in 1936:

> What right have we to tell other nations of the world how to run their affairs when we are stumped by problems of our own. Let us clean our own house first. Let us find our way out of this depression, and even the European dictators will be sending over commissions to learn how we did it.[44]

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[41] Kenneth W. Hones, interview, Dec. 22, 1954.

[42] Amlie interview.

[43] Samuel Sigman, interview, May 27, 1955

[44] Sidney Hyman, interview with LaFollette in University of Chicago's Phoenix, reprinted in Progressive, Dec. 12, 1936.

Later he stressed the horrors of war. In 1938 Phil LaFollette wrote:

> Let us remember that the Progressive party is the only party which is unalterably opposed to the sacrifice of American blood on European battlefields. . . . But we know that when irrational war passions are aroused, when war profits are in the offing --the only statesmen who can be counted on to stand for peace are those belonging to the Progressive tradition.[45]

Phil LaFollette spoke before many America First groups. He debated foreign policy with Harold Ickes early in 1941. Ickes wrote that he was impressed with LaFollette's insincerity in the debate.[46] Progressives interviewed for this study admit that LaFollette's stand was partly to oppose Roosevelt, but they believe he was sincere in his opposition to war. Once the war broke out, isolation was not an issue, and Phil LaFollette served with the United States Army in the years following 1942 on the staff of General Douglas MacArthur.

Influence on the party

Phil LaFollette dominated the Progressive party in its early years. By inheritance he was in a position to assert leadership over the forces moving toward a new party in Wisconsin, but by his adroit control he shaped the party into

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[45] Progressive, Oct. 1, 1938.

[46] Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, Vol. II, The Inside Struggle (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 422.

what he wanted it to be. This tendency was apparent from the start. Although Phil LaFollette was not even a delegate at the Fond du Lac convention in 1934, he welcomed the delegates, acted as tally clerk for the balloting, advised Chairman William T. Evjue on parliamentary procedure, and made a long speech after debate for the others had been closed off. Phil LaFollette served as first chairman of the state central committee of the Progressive party, resigning, as required by law, when he ran for governor.

Not all Progressives were opposed to LaFollette's paramountcy. "Some people like to worship heroes," Dan Hoan commented.[47] Worship is the word a few Progressive leaders used to describe their own feeling toward Phil LaFollette in his earlier years.[48]

The effect of LaFollette's dominance on the Progressive party was that the party became greatly dependent on him. As a result, when he "just quit" after the 1938 defeat, the party was left rudderless.[49] An ordinarily sympathetic reporter jeered in 1942:

> Progressives yelled that the LaFollettes dominated the party in Wisconsin, that if Phil would go, young leadership would develop. The LaFollettes have been out since 1938, but no leaders have developed. Now they blame Phil for not taking a more active part

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[47] Daniel W. Hoan, interview, May 29, 1955.

[48] Hones interview.

[49] William R. McCabe, interview, Jan. 4, 1954.

> in Wisconsin political campaigns. . . . Too many Progressives still look to Phil for leadership.[50]

Phil LaFollette's ideas had an effect upon the Progressive party as an operating group in that while he was governor his ideas were identified in the popular mind as those of the Progressive party. Accusing LaFollette of emulating foreign dictators may have contributed to the unpopularity of the Progressive party in 1938.

The Progressive party with Phil LaFollette constantly introducing plans for new government action was never bereft of ideas. Most Progressives are today convinced that these programs were sound. They are proud that many of them have since been adopted in Wisconsin or by the national government. "Phil was twenty years ahead of his time," they say.[51]

But as might be expected there were also Progressives who did not like the things Phil proposed. Or at least they thought new things should have been initiated more slowly. "Phil tried to move too fast," some say. Others thought he was "too full of ideas."[52] Phil LaFollette constantly had to bear charges of being "socialistic" from more conservative centers. Inevitably, also, some Progressives thought Phil LaFollette moved too slowly or did not exert forthright

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[50] Revell, Capital Times, March 3, 1942.

[51] J. Earl Leverich, interview, March 22, 1955.

[52] Louis Adamic, "LaFollette Progressives Face the Future," The Nation, Vol. CXL (Feb. 20, 1935), p. 214.

and sincere leadership toward liberal goals. This criticism came principally from the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, the organization of liberal economic groups. Although as has been seen, the Federation gained much in the way of legislation in the short period when the Progressives had effective control of the legislature, they were not satisfied with the leadership Phil LaFollette exerted in their behalf. Especially when he started the National Progressives of America and seemed to veer "rightward" they were disillusioned. A leader of the Federation said:

> Phil was not the liberal he was made out to be. Progressive legislation was passed because he couldn't help it. He didn't leave many birthmarks on this liberal legislation. His true colors came out in 1938. When he associated with Colonel McCormick, I was through.[53]

Phil LaFollette's isolationism split the Progressive party. This has been mentioned in several connections. Some Progressives followed Roosevelt, while the LaFollettes maintained the traditional Progressive position. The distinct impression was gained from the interviews for this study that the isolation-internationalism schism was the best test of which Progressives returned to the Republican party and which became Democratic. Many Progressives who are now Republicans commented that World War II was "none of our damn business."

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[53]Hones interview; also, Frank E. Panzer, interview, Feb. 15, 1955.

The greatest influence of Phil LaFollette on the Progressive party, however, was the demoralization of the local party workers by the treatment they received at the hands of Phil LaFollette himself and of his assistants in the executive office. How this personality element could be so significant in the success of a political party can be realized only when the nature of the Progressive party organization is recalled. The party had no patronage to speak of, and no money to pay local workers. It was not constructed with permanent, hierarchical, self-sustaining local organizations in which a few leaders contacted by the top party leaders could inform the local workers about what should be done. Quite the contrary was true. The old progressive faction, and consequently the Progressive party after 1934 was nothing but a network of thousands of personal relationships between local workers and the top party leaders, particularly the LaFollettes. Robert M. LaFollette Sr. knew that this was the basis of his continued success and cultivated those relationships. Phil LaFollette may have known it, but he did little to renew and perpetuate them. Worse, he actually antagonized many of these workers.

Robert M. LaFollette Jr.

Besides Phil LaFollette, the other principal leader of the Progressive party of Wisconsin was his brother, Robert

M. LaFollette Jr. Young Bob LaFollette was United States Senator from 1925 until 1947, and he was no run-of-the-mill lawmaker. His ability, his knowledge of facts and parliamentary procedure, and his devotion to certain issues made him one of the most influential men in Washington. He was universally respected there, and received the 1946 Collier's $10,000 award for distinguished congressional service in connection with his work on the Legislative Reorganization Act that bore his name. Bob LaFollette Jr. had been deeply involved in Wisconsin politics before he had taken office, having served as his father's campaign manager and chairman of the Republican state central committee in 1922. This was in his earlier years, of course, and the purpose of this section is to assess his influence on the Progressive party of 1934 and after.

Personality

Bob and Phil LaFollette were always thought of together, and rightly so. They were associated in every enterprise, public and private. They were co-inheritors of their father's political stimulation and previous organizational work. Yet they were personally very different. "Phil LaFollette was the brains of the party; Bob LaFollette was the sense."[54] This statement typifies how many Progressives compared the two younger LaFollettes.

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[54]Amlie interview.

Any original difference between the personalities of Bob and Phil LaFollette was undoubtedly accentuated during Bob's young manhood. Bob LaFollette was not well; in fact, he never finished the University of Wisconsin because his health broke down. At one time, in 1918 and 1919, the elder LaFollette was out of public life for many months nursing his oldest son back to health from recurring attacks of streptococcic pneumonia. The story is told that during a critical period, the father held his son in his arms and kept him alive through the sheer force of his will.[55] Young Bob was made his father's secretary after his recovery. He is said to have felt himself a failure when his father died because he had always been on his father's payroll.

Because of Bob's more retiring nature, and because of Phil's outstanding University success and obvious speaking talents, it was assumed that Phil would attempt to succeed his father in the United States Senate. But Old Bob LaFollette died in 1925 when Phil was two years under the constitutional minimum age for senator. For this reason alone, it is generally believed, was Bob Jr. chosen by his mother to run for the seat. He won a special election in 1925 and served in the Senate for three full terms thereafter.

Bob LaFollette always deferred to Phil on political matters, observers agree.[56] The boys were so close and

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[55] Doan, op. cit., p. 92.

[56] For example, Evjue interview.

affectionate that neither would do anything that might harm the other, but Phil apparently was always able to persuade Bob to his point of view.[57] Thus various interviewees insist that Bob discouraged the formation of the new party in 1934,[58] that Bob might have abandoned the state third party to join the Roosevelt administration but for the persuasion of Phil,[59] and that Bob did not approve of the formation of the National Progressives of America but went along because Phil was convinced it was the right course to take.[60] One Progressive even claims that he heard that Bob's speeches were written in Madison.[61] A confirmation from an outside source of Bob's constant consultation with Phil comes from Harold L. Ickes. Ickes says that he discussed with Senator LaFollette the holding of a conference of liberals in Chicago in 1939. Bob thought it a good idea, but he "wanted to talk it over with Phil."[62] That Bob was "swayed by his flashy brother" was held against him in later years when

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[57] Hones interview.

[58] Phil LaFollette denies this point and insists his brother was enthusiastic about the new party. Interview.

[59] Hones interview.

[60] Evjue interview; Drew Pearson, "Washington Merry-go-round," Capital Times, Oct. 31, 1940.

[61] Amlie interview. Amlie does not believe this to be literally true, only that Bob consulted with Phil before writing them. In a letter to Phil May 29, 1934, Bob asks for "the twelve points you had in mind" for inclusion in a speech. Philip F. LaFollette Papers (Wisconsin State Historical Society).

[62] Ickes, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 711

Phil was in disrepute.[63]

Bob Jr., with a somehwat less aggressive personality than Phil and an unwillingness to say anything that would hurt anyone, was by far the better-liked of the two among Wisconsin Progressives, if the reaction of interviewees is a fair indication. "I liked and respected Bob immensely," one said. "Otherwise I never could have worked so hard for him."[64] An indication of the comparative feeling among Progressives for the two LaFollettes is the reception they got at the platform convention in 1938. A reporter noted that the convention "applauded the Governor but shortly afterward gave a spontaneous standing ovation to Senator LaFollette as he walked to the speaker's stand."[65]

Yet Bob LaFollette's personal relations with local party leaders were far from perfect. An interviewee related this incident to show Young Bob LaFollette's neglect of political niceties. He said:

> In 1942 on a tour into some western Wisconsin counties, Bob printed notices in local papers announcing that he would be in the courthouses at specified times for consultation. Later I learned that the major Progressive party leader in one of these counties was miffed because LaFollette had failed to call him while he was in town. When I told Bob of his reaction, Bob replied, "Why should I call? If he had any-

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[63]Drew Pearson, op. cit.; Carey McWilliams, "Wisconsin Riddle," The Nation, Vol. CLXI (Dec. 15, 1945), p. 657.

[64]Hones interview.

[65]Arnold Serwer, Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 5, 1938.

> thing to say to me why didn't he come to the courthouse?"[66]

On this same point longtime Progressive Thomas Davlin says:

> Bob LaFollette had no use for people. Glenn Roberts and I ran his 1946 campaign outside of Milwaukee county. But Bob never wrote me or called me or came to see me after the campaign.[67]

Other interviewees remember that Bob was ill at ease with people. After a conference, for example, a Progressive remembered that Bob would rather retire to his room than to mix with the party men in the lobby of the hotel. Whether this was owing to a dislike or a fear of people, the interviewee could not decide, but he attributed it to Bob's more sheltered early life.[68] On the other hand, Bob was not inhibited in the contacts incident to his official duties. Whether in committee or in private conferences or on the Senate floor, LaFollette was masterful.[69]

Ideas

With his long career of active service in the Senate, it is to be expected that Robert M. LaFollette Jr. would have declared himself on almost every matter of public concern that arose in two decades. Only those few ideas that had a special effect upon the Progressive party of Wisconsin

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[66] Richard Lund, interview, Dec. 22, 1954.

[67] Davlin interview.

[68] Hones interview.

[69] Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 25, 1953.

need be mentioned here. A detailed study of his action in Congress would perhaps reveal many influences on the party. These would have to include such things as favoring reciprocal trade although Wisconsin dairy farmers disapproved, and his special committee that studied violations of civil rights by employers that pleased organized labor. Only two of Bob LaFollette's ideas will be mentioned, however, and only one of these is discussed at any length. The other, his position favoring the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, had a definite effect upon the party, but the alienation of large numbers of Roman Catholic voters over this issue has been discussed earlier.[70]

The stand of Bob LaFollette's that caused the most serious dissension in the Progressive party was that on general American foreign policy. Young Bob, like Phil, stuck consistently to the traditional LaFollette isolationist viewpoint. During the 1930's this was a source of strength to the party, since the party was unified on the subject. When the war began in Europe, however, and the dictator nations appeared close to a victory, many Progressives began to doubt the feasibility and wisdom of isolation. The issue was clearly drawn because President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose domestic reforms pleased many Progressives, and Bob LaFollette were on opposite sides. To the extent that some Progressives supported Roosevelt's desire for an active role

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[70] See Chap. IV.

in the war and in subsequent international organizations they drifted away from undeviating Progressivism.

Influence on the party

The example just cited, of the result of Robert M. LaFollette's position on foreign affairs, is a good illustration of his influence in the party. Receiving nationwide attention from his actions in the United States Senate gave LaFollette great prestige in Wisconsin. When decisions were to be made at Progressive leaders conferences, therefore, the chant would always be, "Let's hear what Bob has to say." Rather than being resented, Bob LaFollette's advice was expected since he, like Phil, was thought of as having a sort of proprietary interest in the party.

Bob LaFollette's influence at these leaders' conferences was often through a formal speech. At the Madison meeting early in 1934 where preliminary plans were broached for forming a new party, his statement that his own political future was an unimportant consideration was taken as an indication that he was prepared to go ahead with the formation of the party. Likewise his speech at Fond du Lac in which he said that he was prepared to throw his lot with a new party convinced all but the most recalcitrant doubters. Moreover, his long speech at Portage in 1946--supposedly spontaneous, but actually prepared in advance--was rescheduled to a spot earlier in the program to head off the unex-

pected resistance to going Republican that developed.[71]

Bob LaFollette Jr. had another important influence on the Progressive party. To him more than to anyone else can be attributed the last four or even six years of the party's existence. Several Progressives believe that local leaders might have gone back to the Republican party in 1940 and certainly in 1942 had not Bob LaFollette, in a timely speech at the party conference in those years, declared that he was sticking it out as a Progressive regardless of what they would do.[72]

Bob LaFollette's influence on early party platforms was somewhat less pronounced than Phil's, though no differences of view are apparent. His dominance in later years was certainly not complete, for in 1944 Progressives went against his advice at the statutory convention in adopting an internationalist plank after a preliminary conference had supported his declaration warning against foreign entanglements.

Bob LaFollette did some campaigning in the state even in years when he was not a candidate, but his activities were not as extensive as Phil's. One northern Progressive said Bob had been to his city only once, whereas Phil had been there perhaps twenty times.[73] Phil was by far the major figure as far as party organization goes, until his defeat

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[71]W. J. Bollenbeck, Sheboygan Press, March 18, 1946.

[72]For example, Dedrick M. Langve, interview, Dec. 21, 1954.

[73]Hans Hanson, interview, Dec. 21, 1954.

in 1938. After that, at first because of Phil's inactivity in party affairs and later his absence from the state in military service, Bob was the chief personality. Bob cannot be said to have replaced Phil, however, for Bob did not increase his activities in state party matters; on the contrary, he decreased them after 1940, leaving the party mostly on its own resources.

After 1940, says Richard Lund, a secretary and campaign manager of Bob, LaFollette's interest in the political parts of his job fell off. Lund believes that LaFollette no longer cared whether he was elected, although this is a hard proposition to accept in the view of later events. Be that as it may, LaFollette spent much less time on state party affairs. It must be said in his justification that during the war Congress was in session almost continuously, and conscientious attention to national affairs kept him in Washington. But even when he did come to Wisconsin Bob did not consult extensively with leaders nor travel through the state, interviewees assert. William T. Evjue stated scornfully, "He spent all his time in Madison with that Maple Bluff Country club crowd."[74] Another Progressive accused Bob of consulting with only those Progressives who agreed with him.[75]

Bob LaFollette's 1946 campaign for the Republican sena-

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[74]Evjue interview.

[75]Arthur Padrutt, quoted by Revell, Capital Times, Jan. 21, 1944.

torial nomination has already been described.[76] It should be mentioned again here only enough to try to determine his attitude toward re-election. He was defeated by a narrow margin, it will be remembered, after a two week campaign. Senator LaFollette definitely had reason to stay in Washington to complete action on the LaFollette-Monroney reorganization bill. But on the other hand, he certainly had come to forget, as Phil had forgotten much earlier, the main wellspring of his support--the devoted and loyal party workers, whose only reward was contact by their leaders. Bob admitted this.[77] Yet one of his campaign managers insists that he was never over optimistic, that he did not take his re-election for granted.[78] LaFollette seemed to show this in his post election statement in which he said;

> I have always realized that an elective office is not a vested right, but rather a temporary honor and privilege accorded by the citizens of a democracy.[79]

The statement, seemingly philosophical, actually covered a great deal of bitterness.[80] LaFollette continued to reside in Washington after his defeat until his suicide in February 1953.

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[76] See Chap. V.

[77] John O'Donnell, Wisconsin State Journal, March 5, 1953.

[78] Jack K. Kyle, interview, Jan. 27, 1955.

[79] Doan, op. cit., p. 161.

[80] John W. Reynolds, Letter, Capital Times, March 18, 1953; see also L. C. Eklund, Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 25, 1953.

William T. Evjue

A different kind of influence in the Progressive party from that of the LaFollettes was exercised by William T. Evjue. Never a candidate nor an officeholder, except for a term in the legislature in 1917, his influence stemmed from his long association with progressive movements in Wisconsin, and from his access to the body of Progressive party members through the editorship of prominent Progressive publications.

Evjue was an early supporter of Robert M. LaFollette Sr. One of the principal reasons for his starting the Capital Times in 1917 was to defend Old Bob's stand opposing World War I. Evjue became part owner and editor of the Progressive when it replaced LaFollette's Magazine in 1929, holding the positions until 1940.

It is difficult to assess the particular influence of a man when he is in substantial agreement with other prominent party officials. If, however, he breaks with them and goes into opposition, it is easier to trace evidences of his influence. Had Evjue continued to support the LaFollettes as he did in the early years of the party, therefore, all that could be said of him was that he was a supporter and an insider, citing such evidences as his chairmanship of the Fond du Lac convention where the Progressive party was formed. But starting about 1936 and rising to a fever pitch in 1938, Evjue began to oppose Phil LaFollette and the general trends of the Progressive party in Wisconsin. Progressives conclude

that Evjue, while not creating breaches in the party, at least personified, defined, and probably aggravated them. This section will attempt to show in what measure this was so, and to speculate on the reasons for it.

Personality

Personality among political leaders is ordinarily considered for its effect on their office-seeking potential. Yet the explanation of the actions and influence of other party leaders must also be sought to some degree in their personality. This is especially true, observers believe, of William T. Evjue. Morris Rubin, a newspaper reporter who succeeded Evjue as editor of the Progressive, believes that only psychoanalysis of Evjue and Phil LaFollette could explain the real causes of the schism between the two antagonists.[81] This obviously will not be attempted here, but a few impressions about Evjue's behavior from various sources will be recorded.

Evjue broke sooner or later with every prominent Progressive. He split with John J. Blaine over prohibition (Evjue was a dry and Blaine a wet). He broke with Phil LaFollette over his abandonment of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He broke with Thomas Amlie for his radicalism. He broke with Ralph M. Immell for his lack of liberalism. He broke with Loomis for failing to state his principles. He broke

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[81] Rubin interview.

with Thomas M. Duncan for wanting to broaden the base of the Progressive party by bringing in conservative groups. And he broke with Robert M. LaFollette Jr. for his isolationism.

Some observers thought they detected in this forever-opposed position a frustration at never being selected for major office. J. C. Ralston, Milwaukee Journal political writer, claimed that Evjue wanted to run for governor in 1930, but that "the family" decided Phil should get the nomination. Then when Evjue could have run in 1934, Ralston added, he would not, thinking the chances of being elected as a Progressive hopeless.[82] Phil LaFollette discounts opinions that Evjue was ever seriously considered for governor. "He never could have been elected," LaFollette declared.[83] Evjue himself denies ever having any ambitions for office. When a group of Dane county residents presented him with a petition to run for governor in 1940 he stated why he had never been a candidate and never accepted any political appointment. Evjue said:

> I adopted this policy in order to promote the independence of the Capital Times and make it a newspaper that would be a power in serving the public welfare. I have only one ambition, and that is to make the Capital Times a powerful institution that will become semi-public in nature. I want the Capital Times to continue to be a policeman in the field of government, seeking always to point out those acts and trends in government that

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[82] Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 20, 1938.

[83] Philip LaFollette interview.

work against the public good.[84]

Phil LaFollette lays Evjue's alienation to a frustrated journalist's desire to "scoop" every decision. LaFollette said:

> Evjue always wanted to be on the inside of every conference. Then he would publish an exclusive release in the Capital Times. You can't run the governor's office this way. You have to treat all papers alike.[85]

The Milwaukee Journal saw as Evjue's major grievance that the progressive movement had "degenerated into a purely LaFollette movement instead of remaining a LaFollette-Evjue partnership."[86]

Progressive leaders themselves expressed dissatisfaction that Evjue did not choose to play a more significant role in the party. According to the Progressive, Evjue was never willing to join in the "day-to-day chores connected with the operation of a political party."[87] Apparently this meant he would not accept responsibility for helping to frame Progressive policies or aid in organization, but only sat in judgment on what was done by others.

Some observers, as might be expected, attributed to Evjue more venal motives for breaking with the Progressive leaders. Although the Capital Times had been a shaky enter-

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[84] Capital Times, Jan. 31, 1940.

[85] Philip LaFollette interview.

[86] Milwaukee Journal, April 13, 1941.

[87] Progressive, Oct. 23, 1944.

prise for years, after a business merger with the Wisconsin State Journal in 1937 it became a highly paying proposition, along with its subsidiary, radio station WIBA. Reporter Ralston insinuated that Evjue's enlarged income explained his lessened progressivism. Ralston theorized:

> Evjue has waxed fat and content through his journalistic enterprises, and is so contented . . . that the call to the Progressive wars comes to his ears more faintly than it once did.[88]

Whatever the explanation--frustrated ambition, journalistic desire, monetary reward, or some other--Evjue's readiness to call to account others in the Progressive party through the columns of his newspaper was acknowledged to have an influence on the party.

Ideas

The specific issues on which Evjue differed with other Progressives will be mentioned. Evjue was close to a 100 per cent Roosevelt supporter. When Progressives deviated from New Dealism, as determined by what Roosevelt asked, Evjue excoriated them. In 1938, for example, Evjue blasted four Progressive Congressmen for changing their votes and not supporting the President's government reorganization plan.[89] Evjue termed Phil LaFollette's formation of the National

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[88] J. C. Ralston, Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 20, 1938. See also Rubin, Wisconsin State Journal, Nov. 14, 1937; John B. Chapple, interview, Jan. 4, 1955.

[89] Capital Times, April 10, 1938.

Progressives of America to challenge Roosevelt in national leadership "the rankest kind of ingratitude."[90] But it was the issue of foreign policy on which Roosevelt followers among Progressives were most clearly out of line with the LaFollettes, and Evjue led the defectors. His change from being an Old Bob LaFollette isolationist to an interventionist in World War II is an interesting switch. While Evjue chided Phil LaFollette for abandoning progressive ideals in other regards, some people pointed out that Evjue himself had abandoned one of the main tenets of progressivism, its opposition to war.[91]

The main theme Evjue used in explaining his own growing differences with the Progressive party was that it had abandoned the principles that had justified the formation of a third party in 1934. Evjue saw the Progressive party in a "sorry state," having become a vehicle for the gratification of personal ambition and thus a party of expedience. Evjue wrote in 1941:

> . . . the Progressive movement is now at its lowest ebb in three decades. The idealism which characterized the movement in the days of Old Bob LaFollette is gone. . . .
>
> Today the Progressive movement has degenerated into a political vehicle to ride a few individuals into public office. . . . Progressive principles have become mere political merchandise peddled before election and forgotten after election. The movement

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[90] Capital Times, Oct. 19, 1944.

[91] Chapple interview; Rubin interview.

is riddled with political expediency.[92]

Evjue took issue with persons in the party who were saying that conditions had changed and therefore that the party should adapt to become more conciliatory and less dogmatic. Evjue could see no need for any essential adjustments. He said:

> There is still the fundamental principle of right and wrong. There is still the issue of honesty and dishonesty in government. There is still the issue of sincerity and insincerity in the public service. There is still the old struggle between self-interest and the public interest, and the battle between special privileged and the public welfare is as intense today as it was a generation ago.[93]

Principle was important to the party, according to Evjue because

> . . . the moment the Progressive movement begins to sacrifice the principles upon which it was founded for the sake of expediency and the mere winning of members and voters it will forfeit the confidence of those who have been enlisted in the movement for years because of devotion to principle.[94]

Evjue constantly appealed for a "spiritual rebirth of the Progressive movement in Wisconsin, a rebirth under which principle and program will be placed foremost and office and patronage be made secondary."[95] But the spiritual rebirth

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[92] Editorial, Capital Times, May 18, 1941.

[93] Capital Times, Jan. 11, 1938.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Capital Times, June 15, 1942.

was not only to bring victory for the party. Evjue said;

> The Progressive movement would have been worthwhile if it had never elected a candidate to public office. I believe that a fighting militant movement dedicated to principle and program will do more for the public good while OUT of power than a political movement IN power whose primary concern is to perpetuate itself in power and in office.[96]

Yet Evjue saw that the Progressives had become futile as a separate party, since they were too "disorganized and demoralized" to rally Wisconsin liberals. In 1944 Evjue's charges were rebutted by an editorial in the Progressive, voice of the LaFollettes. The editor accused Evjue of "attempting to wreck the Progressive party" and asked, If Evjue was so interested in principle over mere success in office, why was he advocating that Progressives join the Democratic party?[97]

Influence on the party

Evjue ordinarily spoke to Progressives only through his journals, the Progressive while he was editor, and the Capital Times. Occasionally he would make speeches around the state. As editor of the Progressive until 1940, he worked with the LaFollettes. The Capital Times, on the other hand, was always Evjue's personal mouthpiece. In it he felt free to pass on the qualifications of Progressives offering them-

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Progressive, Oct. 23, 1944.

selves for office[98] and to criticize any aspect of the party's program or methods of action.

The influence of the Capital Times in Progressive party affairs is, of course, impossible to measure directly at this time. Only the impressions of observers can be cited. Those who were asked universally ascribed to Evjue through the Capital Times considerable influence. In the early days of the Progressive party, when Evjue was in accord with Phil LaFollette, Progressives believed that the opinions expressed in the Capital Times reflected the views of the LaFollettes. In later years when Evjue had broken with Phil LaFollette, the Capital Times was still read and had perhaps some effect in sharpening the cleavages in the Progressive party. Especially is this true in regard to the isolation issue where Evjue's interventionist stand encouraged Progressives to choose up sides. Also Evjue's disgust with the circumstances of organization of the National Progressives of America probably spread doubts in the minds of liberal party members about the trend of their party.

It was remarkable to notice in how many of the homes or offices of people interviewed for this study the Capital Times was lying on a table. These interviewees were selected on the basis of their prominence in statewide or local Pro-

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[98] As expressed by J. C. Ralston, Evjue "scanned the sheep and goats, personally picked candidates worthy of his support, and splashed them with his inky benedictions." Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 20, 1938.

gressive affairs. The conclusion suggests itself, although admittedly on an unstatistical sample, that if these people were subscribing to the Capital Times in earlier years as well, party leaders were reading it. A highly impressionistic estimate of the paper's influence was made by noting the frequency which these interviewees employed the favorite cliché's Evjue used in discussing and evaluating the Progressive party during its existence and afterwards. Whether or not prominent Progressives were influenced in their attitudes by reading the Capital Times, they often used the words of its editor to describe what they thought.

The other effect of Evjue's criticism of the Progressive party was on its electoral success. The Progressive said in 1944 that Evjue's faultfinding had "furnished Republicans and reactionary Democrats with their most effective ammunition."[99] That is, opposition newspapers, which ordinarily discounted Evjue's views against their own candidates and policies as the irresponsible attacks of a sensational and partisan journalist, used his criticisms of Phil LaFollette and other Progressives as clinching proof of Progressive wrongdoing. Phil LaFollette blames Evjue for seriously weakening the Progressive's chances for continued success in this manner. LaFollette says, "Evjue's snide barbs really hurt. The opposition picked them up right away."[100]

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[99]Quoted in Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 18, 1944.

[100]Philip LaFollette interview.

Observers' estimates of Evjue's influence in the Progressive party vary to extremes. While some think he was uninfluential because of the small circulation of his paper, others, including the "staggering Progressive leaders at the statehouse," complained loudly that they were "being slaughtered by the jawbone of an ass."[101] A few reflective Progressives credit Evjue with a crucial influence in the party. One of these thinks it is just possible that Evjue was in motive and effect "a real Brutus,"[102] with Phil LaFollette expressing a Caesar-like reaction to the attack.

Other Leaders--Candidates for Office

The remaining leaders of the Progressive party who achieved any degree of statewide note are few. Only two other men were nominated for governor, and only two for the United States Senate. Two of these four ran in 1944 and received an insignificant vote, and need not be mentioned.

Orland S. Loomis

Orland Loomis, called "Spike" among familiars, was the only Progressive party candidate besides Phil LaFollette to be elected governor of Wisconsin. This occurred in 1942, after he had failed of election in 1940. Loomis died after suffering three heart attacks in Madison December 7, 1942, a

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[101] Editorial, Wisconsin State Journal, Jan. 14, 1938.

[102] Lyman A. Fischer, interview, Jan. 6, 1955.

month before he was to take office. It was generally believed that the strain of his campaigns contributed materially to hastening his death. Previous to running for governor Loomis had served as attorney general in Phil LaFollette's last administration, 1937-1938. He had run for that office in 1934 after a term in the state Senate but lost the nomination. Governor LaFollette made him state director of the Rural Electrification Administration.

Loomis, though "a Progressive to his toenails,"[103] was not considered to be a "heavy" by most Progressives interviewed. But all seemed to like him and to respect him. "He was sincere and honest," a state party leader recalls.[104] His earnestness was an electoral asset, especially against Julius Heil. Loomis was a member of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation. Although he came from Mauston in the western part of the state, not by any means a strong labor area, he was convinced that farmers and laborers had to cooperate to advance their separate aims.[105]

Many Progressive leaders point to his death as the crucial blow to the party. Typically this group reasons as follows:

> Things would have been different if Loomis had lived. The Progressive party could have succeeded, because he could get along

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[103] Richard O. Wipperman, interview, Feb. 1, 1955.

[104] Davlin interview.

[105] Leverich interview.

> with both sides and didn't always demand his own way.[106]

But those who hold these views do not reckon with the accepted fact that Loomis planned definitely to run for re-election as a Republican in 1944 and thus to abandon the Progressive party as a separate vehicle.[107]

Loomis's main influence on the Progressive party was keeping many Progressives in the party for a longer period than they might otherwise have stayed. He himself is reported to have been persuaded by Robert M. LaFollette Jr. to remain Progressive when he entertained ideas of running on some other ticket.[108] Persons who cite the death of Loomis as the blow that killed the party also fail to note that this last surge of vitality of the Progressive party in 1942 was due not alone to Loomis's own popularity or that of the Progressive ticket. The Progressives actually lost strength in the legislature and county offices in 1942. Many Republicans voted for Loomis because of their disgust with the Heil administration.

Herman L. Ekern

Herman Ekern comes into the picture of the Progressive party in the 1938 campaign for the United States Senate. In May 1938 he had been appointed lieutenant governor by Gover-

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[106] Earl D. Hall, interview, Feb. 8, 1955.

[107] See Chap. V.

[108] Ibid.

nor LaFollette to replace Henry Gunderson who resigned. This maneuver, its legal dubiousness resolved in Ekern's favor by the Supreme Court, was generally believed to be a move preparatory to running him as a candidate. For although Ekern had been a progressive of note since the earliest days of Robert M. LaFollette Sr.--serving as Assembly speaker, insurance commissioner, attorney general, and candidate for governor--he had not been prominent in the later Progressive party period. He had a large legal practice in Chicago, but maintained his residence in Wisconsin.

Ekern's influence on the party was based on the respect Progressives had for his knowledge. He was a nationally-renowned expert on government regulation of insurance and banking. He was the principal author of the national government's railroad retirement war risk measures, and a co-author of the Wisconsin teachers retirement act. Ekern was often consulted in the framing of Wisconsin legislation.

But Herman Ekern did not make a vivid appeal as a campaigner, at least in 1938. He could not dramatize the issues. A local Progressive leader commented:

> Ekern talked about the basing point and Pittsburgh plus, but he could not make the worker or farmer see how it affected what was in their living room, kitchen, or basement. Thus he had little appeal.[109]

It must be said that Ekern lost the senatorship in a three-way race against a former Progressive and a conservative

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[109]Lyman Fischer interview.

Republican, just as he had lost the Republican nomination for governor in 1926.

Thomas R. Amlie

Herman Ekern defeated Thomas Amlie for the Progressive nomination for United States Senator in 1938. Before that, Amlie had been a congressman for two and a half terms, and was often rumored to be available for the governorship, although he would never run against Phil LaFollette.

Amlie is a Progressive whose ideas counted heavily toward his influence or lack of it. Many Progressives thought Amlie was radical. A Progressive state senator called him "a wild-eyed left-winger."[110] "Tom Amlie considered himself radical," is the opinion of Phil LaFollette. LaFollette is right in saying that Amlie admitted his own radicalism, but of an intellectual rather than an agitational type. "I have never gone out just to raise hell," Amlie said.[111] Amlie describes himself as a democratic socialist with technocratic overtones. He is a disciple of Veblen, and thus insists his beliefs are indigenous rather than Marxist importations; he believes party Socialists to be "crackpots."[112]

As a congressman, Amlie is described to have been highly

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[110] Busby interview.

[111] Herbert Harris, "Three's a Crowd," Today, Vol. VI (Oct. 17, 1936), p. 23.

[112] Amlie interview.

capable, since he was a veritable encyclopedia.[113] He was a left-wing critic of Roosevelt, advocating extensive government planning for industrial expansion. But Roosevelt thought enough of him to nominate him to the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1939, though the nomination had to be withdrawn owing to opposition from Wisconsin sources.

Amlie today admits his variance from the typical in American politics. He says:

> I guess I was a failure as a politician. I was an engineer, believing that you should have a blueprint, a plan, and work toward it. Roosevelt was the quarterback--he had the military point of view that the action depends upon the situation. Perhaps Roosevelt followed the only way to get anything done.[114]

Amlie's influence on the Progressive party was restricted because of his unpolitical attitude. An interviewee related that Amlie used to allow a gambler to walk to lunch with him, not caring about the political repercussions,[115] and that he insisted on supporting Loyalist Spain as a matter of principle, though the action cost him many Roman Catholic votes.

Amlie's influence on the Progressive party cannot be rated low because of his failure to secure the Senate nomination in 1938. In the first place, he was one of the prime movers of the movement that led to starting the Progressive

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[113] Hoan interview.

[114] Amlie interview.

[115] Hoan interview.

party in 1934. He had spent years propagandizing for a third party nationally and in Wisconsin. The fruit of this work was evident at the conferences at which third party activity was considered. Strong sentiment for the new party was manifested there by the rank and file. Also, Amlie was one of the initiators of the Farmer Labor Progressive League, which had much influence on the first Progressive party platform.[116] The League was soon absorbed by the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation. Amlie was not active in this new group, but he had its endorsement in 1938. Phil LaFollette believes that Amlie had no standing outside of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation group.[117]

A further influence of Amlie was in the breakup of the party. As one of the first Progressives to join the Democratic party, Amlie encouraged Progressives to abandon independent action.

Ralph M. Immell

Although Adjutant General Ralph M. Immell was never a candidate for office during the life of the Progressive party, he was constantly rumored to be available. John J. Blaine was reported to have said in private conversation, "The time will come when the Republican party will unite on General Immell for governor."[118] Immell was the Progressives' choice

[116] See Chap. IV.

[117] Philip LaFollette interview.

[118] Fred C. Sheasby, Milwaukee Journal, April 11, 1937.

for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in 1946 and 1948, after the Progressives had become Republican again. For these reasons he is considered here among other candidates.

Immell, as one of Phil LaFollette's lieutenants, stood high in the ranks of the influential in the Progressive party. From 1923, when Governor John J. Blaine had made Immell "the boy general," until he went on active duty with the United States Army in World War II, Immell served as head of the Wisconsin National Guard. The adjutant general in Wisconsin has a lifetime position--to make him nonpolitical--but General Immell always had other duties both officially and unofficially that kept him involved in state politics. He was appointed a conservation commissioner by Governor LaFollette in 1931. He was first state administrator of the Works Progress Administration, serving for seven months in 1935 and 1936. General Immell also served as a legman for Phil LaFollette. Party leaders tell of occasions on which they received calls from General Immell on behalf of Governor LaFollette urging them to do some job.

Immell's name was involved in speculation as a possible candidate for governor or United States senator in 1938, when Phil LaFollette apparently was undecided about seeking office again. Immell began to issue press releases, to send greetings to Progressive workers, and to make speeches before many associations around the state. All this was supposed by some to be the beginning of a boom for Immell on the part of the

executive office. Governor LaFollette denied pushing Immell, but says today that he believes Immell to have been "a splendid administrator,"[119] and undoubtedly would not have been averse to seeing him in office.

Immell had the reputation, at least among Progressives in the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, of being a "rightist." Immell's feelers for office in 1938 were opposed vehemently by Kenneth Hones of the Farmers Union.[120] Some of this opposition among farm groups apparently stemmed from the National Guard's part in breaking the milk strikes of 1934. Immell says he approved the use of the Guard by Democratic Governor Albert G. Schmedeman only because he wanted to repulse the Chicago gangster elements he believed were using the farm discontent to organize a racket.[121] But as late as 1946 Immell's part in this affair was used against him by opponents in his campaigns.

Immell's most nearly official role in the Progressive party was his work in connection with the National Progressives of America. He is generally credited with staging the rally with its military and Nazi trappings, although he denied knowing in advance about the banner with the encircled cross that aroused so much antagonism.[122]

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[119] Philip LaFollette interview.

[120] Thornton Smith, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 27, 1938.

[121] Ralph M. Immell, interview, Aug. 8, 1955.

[122] Ibid.

Immell became a full-fledged Republican in 1946. Two times he tried for the guvernatorial nomination, in 1946 and 1948, and has run as a presidential convention delegate. In addition he has made radio and television appearances on behalf of the Republican party.

Other Leaders--Not Candidates

A few other Progressives bear mention in this chapter, though they never sought office during the party period.

Thomas M. Duncan

The activities of Thomas M. Duncan as a secretary of Governor Phil LaFollette have been mentioned in a previous chapter.[123] Duncan was the contact between Governor LaFollette and the Progressive members of the legislature. Duncan's overt influence on the party was mainly through this means--his generalship of the bill passing process. His actions aroused admiration or resentment depending on who was hurt or helped within the party.

But no one believed Duncan's influence on party affairs was confined to parliamentary practice. He was believed to be one of Governor LaFollette's closest advisers both on the substance of legislation and on party procedures in general. Duncan served as LaFollette's secretary--officially as his

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[123]Chap. VII.

financial secretary, but actually exercising a much broader advisory field--from 1931 until a few months before the end of LaFollette's last term, except for the two years LaFollette was out of office following 1932. Even in that interim Duncan maintained close connections with progressive activities. Duncan's connection with the Governor's office ended abruptly in March 1938 when he was involved in an automobile accident in Milwaukee that resulted in his being sentenced for manslaughter.[124]

Duncan had risen rapidly in politics. He was 45 at the time of the accident, having been in politics since he was 20. Duncan was graduated from Yale in 1913, a Phi Beta Kappa in his sophomore year. He was employed in bond work in Milwaukee financial institutions before becoming secretary to Mayor Daniel W. Hoan in 1920. Duncan served as a Socialist

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[124] Briefly what happened was this: Entering Milwaukee from Madison he sideswiped one car and swerved into another halted car, killing the driver who was standing behind it. Duncan did not stop, but drove about three miles farther, sideswiping another car and going through an arterial stop before being halted by police. Duncan denied knowing he had hit anyone, and denied having had more than "two beers" on the trip from Madison.

In his trial he attempted to establish a medical defense that he had hardening of the arteries of the brain, a condition that could cause temporary blackouts. The judge refused to accept this argument, and found, although all character witnesses insisted he was a very conservative drinker, that Duncan had been under the influence of liquor. The judge found him guilty of first degree manslaughter, but sentenced him to one to two years, the fourth degree manslaughter penalty, which action he later admitted was legal error. Duncan was sent to the House of Correction. He was pardoned on Christmas Eve that same year by Governor LaFollette in one of his last official acts. Capital Times, March 10-June 4, 1938; Milwaukee Leader, July 1 and Dec. 24, 1938.

assemblyman from 1922 to 1928 and as a Senator from 1928 until he became the Governor's secretary in 1931.

"Tommy" Duncan, as he is called by most Progressives, was a cause of controversy within the Progressive party. Some of the more conservative farm area legislators resented what they felt to be his pressure for socialistic bills. Some of them believed he worked harder for legislation favoring Milwaukee than for outstate areas. A few Progressives say he was a likable person, but many others attribute to him the same superior attitude and impatience with people that Phil LaFollette displayed. A Progressive described Duncan's demeanor as follows:

> Tom Duncan antagonized people. Visitors could not see the Governor but were met by Tommy, who would sit looking bored, tapping his Phi Beta Kappa key against a coin all the time they were there. How in hell would you like to come in and see this?[125]

A young Progressive worker was in tears when he described to Thomas Amlie how Duncan had laughed at his stuttering. Amlie adds that complaints to all of the Progressive congressmen on how the homefolks were treated in Madison were so numerous that the representatives finally had to speak to Phil LaFollette about it. Thereupon LaFollette employed as receptionist a woman, who improved the atmosphere somewhat.

A far more serious negative effect on the Progressive party resulted from Duncan's accident. It was unavoidably

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[125] Amlie interview.

linked in many people's minds with the LaFollette administration in general, and the opposition press made the most of it. They declared that the Governor's chief secretary had been drunk, that he had shown cowardice in leaving the scene of an accident, that he tried to escape his penalty, and that he was pardoned before the end of an unduly short sentence. Amlie, then in Congress, remembers commenting to another Wisconsin Progressive when they heard the news of the accident, "Something like this could easily take us all down to defeat."[126]

A further political reverberation was felt in Milwaukee county. The district attorney prosecuting Duncan was Progressive Herbert J. Steffes. Steffes pressed for full conviction and maximum sentence, and appealed the case to the Supreme Court to try to get a heavier sentence. Although Steffes ran and was re-elected that fall as a Progressive, he ran as a Republican in 1940, many said because he was convinced he would not have the support of Progressives.

Glenn D. Roberts

Glenn D. Roberts, was the Progressive state chairman after 1942, and "served more or less in the same capacity before that time."[127] Roberts was talked of occasionally for a nomination to office, but he always denied any ambi-

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Roberts interview.

tions of this kind. He had served as Dane county district attorney in 1927 and as a state senator for a term after that. Roberts was an indefatigable worker and a heavy contributor to the Progressive party, but is not often spoken of by outstate Progressive leaders. One said, "Roberts was a satellite of Phil LaFollette, and satellites never have a chance to develop any ideas of their own."[128]

Jack Kyle

John K. Kyle was state chairman of the party from 1938 to 1942. He had been secretary to Governor Blaine, to Congressman Amlie, and to the younger Senator LaFollette. A pleasant, mild-mannered man, Jack Kyle was not a type to arouse factional disputes, but was probably not aggressive as a party organizer.

The few other leaders with statewide reputations were the perennial holders of constitutional offices Secretary of State Theodore Dammann and State Treasurer Solomon Levitan. Dammann and Levitan had independent sources of power through their connections with various groups and through the opportunities they had to keep their name before the public. No indication was found that they were influential in party matters except during campaigns. As a member of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, Dammann was endorsed for governor in 1938, but he refused to run against Phil LaFollette

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[128] Robert Fischer, interview, Jan. 6, 1955.

once LaFollette announced himself a candidate. Dammann fought against the formation of the third party in 1934, but went along once it was on the ballot.

Leader Recruitment

The efforts of a political party to cultivate a continuing supply of new leaders is a significant part of its organizational strength. The efforts of the Progressive party in this regard will be examined next.

Phil LaFollette said on this point that no efforts were made to recruit leaders in the party, since this is impossible. Leaders just arise, he believes. That is, someone perhaps shows up well in the legislature and then may gain recognition by being elected attorney general.[129] Several progressives became gubernatorial timber by following this path.

Lack of a definite recruitment plan for leaders is one matter. Positive discouragement of leaders is another. The accusation has been made that the LaFollettes actually discouraged new leaders from developing, either by actually inhibiting them or by dominating the party so completely that none could arise.[130] Attempts were made during interviews to probe this question, with little success.

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[129] Philip LaFollette interview.

[130] Langve interview; Rubin interview.

A few Progressives claim that Phil and Bob LaFollette Jr. discouraged new leaders. Thomas Davlin said, "Any young men who showed promise were shunted off into an important job--but out of the public eye--so they wouldn't develop."[131] Pressed for specific cases, Davlin named Alvin C. Ries, Orland S. Loomis, and E. Myrwyn Rowlands. Ries ran for attorney general in 1932 against incumbent John W. Reynolds, and LaFollette supported Reynolds. This should not be surprising, since Reynolds was the incumbent. Ries was later made counsel to the Public Service Commission, and was then appointed as a circuit judge. A former Progressive legislator says this last appointment was "killing him off,"[132] because a judge is not expected to engage further in open partisan activity. But it is difficult to see how anyone with political ambitions would have to accept the post. Loomis became attorney general in 1937 and was twice the candidate of the party for governor. If there was any opposition by the LaFollettes, it was apparently unsuccessful. Rowlands, a state senator, ran twice for the Progressive nomination for state treasurer, unsuccessfully, but without evidence of LaFollette opposition. These cases do not support the contention that new leaders were discouraged. Other Progressives absolutely deny that new leaders were blocked. A party chairman stated, "If a man showed promise

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[131] Davlin interview.

[132] Langve interview.

he was encouraged."[133]

Without being able to cite evidence of active discouragement of new leaders, some interviewees mentioned that the same result was achieved through total domination of the party by the LaFollettes. Under such a situation, potential leaders had no opportunity to develop. A few legislators whose service extended over the period before and after the occasion of Phil LaFollette to the governorship claim to have witnessed a deterioration in the quality of leadership among legislators. They recall the days under Governor Blaine and even during the first term of Phil LaFollette as epitomizing self-contained and self-developed legislative leadership. Under the more positive type of executive leadership exercised by Phil LaFollette, however, these Progressives believe, there was less for legislators to do in the way of decision making. Therefore legislative service attracted fewer of the leader-type of Progressives, and those with potential who appeared in the legislature could not exercise it. "LaFollette just wanted a bunch of 'yes men,'" a Progressive said.[134] A proposition such as this on discouragement of leadership is hard to prove or disprove. The difficulty of extracting specific cases of leadership impairment would seem to indicate that it did not occur frequently, or at least was well camouflaged.

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[133] Kyle interview.

[134] Langve interview; also Hall interview, Davlin interview.

Evaluation

This chapter has shown that the LaFollette brothers were far and away the most important leaders of the Progressive party of Wisconsin. No other person had more than minor influence on the course of action or decision making. This is true because the other leaders of note were either satellites of the LaFollettes or somehow were not able to capture popular appeal sufficient to give them an independent base of power.

This domination in policy was resented by many Progressives. Gradually a suspicion of Phil LaFollette arose from both wings of the party. The more liberal element, as represented by the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, thought he was turning to the right. From the other side LaFollette was thought to be "too advanced" and "too socialistic" because of the influence of the Socialists in the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation. That Phil LaFollette was able to follow a path intermediate between these groups might class him as a politician in the best sense, except that instead of compromising to satisfy them all he seemed to antagonize both sides.

Under the domination of a few leaders, the Progressive party became so dependent upon them that it was left rudderless when the LaFollettes quit exercising their control. Phil LaFollette did so in 1938 after his defeat. Bob LaFollette lost interest in the state party following his re-

election to the Senate in 1940. Without these two colorful personalities with their reservoir of prestige and publicity it was easy for the attention of Progressives to be distracted from their young state party and to look to the national scene where dramatic personalities in the older parties were contending. This is what happened. Without dynamic and personal leadership, the sole basis of organization since the party had no permanent local structure, the Progressive party collapsed. "People need leaders because they are scattered," the most successful Progressive district chairman stated, "and the leaders need leaders. You've got to have a flagpole on the parade ground to rally around."[135]

The most significant thing to come out of this study of the reaction of Progressives to their leadership is the undermining of the base of Progressive support by the LaFollettes' treatment of local workers. Since the time of Old Bob LaFollette votes for Progressives were garnered through the devoted work of thousands of local Progressives, who had no thought of financial or vocational reward, but only the satisfaction of being valuable parts of a worthy movement. Phil LaFollette apparently underestimated the importance of the morale of these people. At least he failed to cultivate the personal relationships between himself and the local workers that his father had spent so much time developing. Instead, by his concentration on other things, and by his

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[135] McCabe interview.

"high and mighty" demeanor, he antagonized them or failed to recharge in them the desire to continue their work for the party.

Progressives interviewed were incredulous in remembering how hard they had worked for the party in its first years. Most of them today cannot explain what could have motivated them to this extent. The Progressive party seemed to be a real crusade. But they describe their increasing suspicion and disillusionment with Phil LaFollette's public actions and especially their wounds from his treatment of them. A crusader, expecting so much more than a paid functionary, becomes much more dejected when the movement goes sour. When they became disillusioned, Progressives either relaxed or totally suspended their efforts for the party. As the interviews accumulated, the general impression from all of them seemed to reveal in former Progressives what can be described as "political fatigue." Like nervous and physical fatigue that suddenly overwhelms one who has engaged in difficult but exciting work, local Progressive leaders suddenly found themselves tired of working for the party and resentful of the time they had already spent. They returned to their private affairs with vigor, but more or less withdrew from politics. A few Progressives moved immediately into the Republican or Democratic parties as workers, but this is not typical among those leaders interviewed. Most of them, even those who were not old by then, simply suspended their poli-

tical activity. Many of them were not aroused again until 1952 or 1954, when several former outstate Progressive county leaders began to take an interest in the reviving Democratic party. Several of these have become Democratic county chairmen. Those who have done this state that they have again become aware of the "domination of wealth over man" of the Republican party and could no longer stay out of the battle.

In this sense, more than any other, can Phil and Bob LaFollette be said to have been responsible for the decline of the Progressive party in Wisconsin. "They forgot the people who put them where they were."[136]

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[136]Davlin interview.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In bringing to a close this study of the Progressive party of Wisconsin, the material set down in the preceding chapters must be reviewed in order to see whether the hypotheses stated in the introduction apply.[1]

Original Hypotheses

The first hypothesis can be disposed of readily. It stated that third parties of more than one kind have existed, some of them being primarily office-seeking groups like the major parties rather than agitational groups without real hope of gaining power. The Progressive party of Wisconsin adequately proves this hypothesis. It offered candidates not merely as a technique for drawing attention to its principles, but with real hopes of putting its candidates in office at once. Nor was it sectional; its appeal never carried beyond the boundaries of Wisconsin to the nearby states

[1] See p. 22.

with similar economic bases, as shown by the failure of the National Progressives. Instead, the Progressive party must be classified as a splinter party. It sprang almost full-grown from one of the major parties, for the reasons the theoreticians had postulated--the leaders were dissatisfied because they could not keep control, and some of the rank and file were discouraged because they could not secure desired government action.

The value of this hypothesis and this study in connection with it is to point out the fallacy of applying loosely the unqualified title "third party" to any political organization that grows up apart from the regular parties. "Third party" covers several quite distinct behavior patterns, and should be preceded by qualifying words. Unless otherwise specified, "third party" in this chapter implies the kind that seriously seeks power after splintering from a major party.

The second hypothesis, about the causes of formation of third parties, is also borne out by this study. The principal impetus for third parties, the hypothesis stated, comes from economic discontent or personal desires for power by certain leaders. A combination of these factors appears to have set the Progressive party in action. Dissatisfied groups of organized workers and farmers provided much of the drive toward a new party. Demonstrations of great interest on their part were necessary to push many officeholders such

as Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr. and Secretary of State Theodore Dammann into supporting the new party movement. Yet Philip LaFollette appears to have encouraged the activity of certain persons who were agitating for a third party, and he was the major guiding force of the third party sentiment as it crystallized in early 1934. The hypothesis therefore was, as intended, an aid in directing attention to certain aspects of the Progressive party in order to understand it better. But the experience of the Progressives provides little aid in showing the relative importance of economic as against personal factors. Different conditions at different times may not have the same result.

The third hypothesis, about the inevitable disappearance of third parties, is the one explored by most of this study. The hypothesis stated that certain legal, practical, and psychological handicaps make it impossible for a third party to operate for a long period. Further, it was stated that if the third party had as its goal becoming a major party and occupying office a good share of the time and did not continue, or if it sought to bring about an ideological realignment between the other parties, and this did not result, the party could be said to have failed.

The Progressive party by this test did fail. It sought office successfully three times in six tries, but was in power only the first four years of its twelve-year life. Progressives had been more successful when they were in the

Republican party, holding the governorship in eleven of the seventeen administrations since 1900. Hence factionalism would appear to be more promising than a third party movement. The Progressives hoped to bring about the ideological realignment of the political parties both in Wisconsin and over the nation, but did not accomplish this result. The orientation of the Wisconsin Democratic party changed to become more liberal, it is true, but this event was undoubtedly delayed rather than aided by the Progressive party. The Progressives themselves officially rejoined an unregenerated Republican party. This is why it can be said that they failed.

Why the Party Failed

An attempt to determine whether the failure was due to the reasons stated in the hypothesis occupies the balance of this chapter.

An analysis of the Progressive party also should lead to conclusions about the meaning of that party's experience for political science. No claim is made that these are principles proved by this one case study. Rather they are hypotheses formulated on each topic for testing in future research on other state third parties.

Organization

In brief, the Progressive party did not have a tightly-knit, disciplined, hierarchical, permanent, statewide organization. Rather, it was loosely-built, personal, intermittent, and incomplete. With such weak organization the Progressive party could not last. Not that an organization such as the one described is powerless; the numerous successes of Progressive candidates refutes this. The weakness in this kind of organization lies in its dependence upon the action of the state leaders. The study showed that a vital organization could not be created anew in a large state like Wisconsin with its seventy-one counties in the period of a few short months before each election. It showed that when the Progressives were defeated and the LaFollettes lost interest in party work and failed to maintain their local contacts, the party fell apart. Without a continuing bureaucracy and without intermediaries who had an interest in keeping the party active between elections, the Progressive party had no organizational reserve to fall back on after the lapse of the only cohesive force it had, namely the leadership of the LaFollettes.

Political scientists are interested in this evidence to assess the importance of formal organization to a political party and to evaluate the success of purely personal leadership. A suggested hypothesis is that formal organization, while not a guarantee against erosion by the forces that

determine the outcome of elections, at least provides a cushion against a party's being destroyed by one or two reverses at the polls. With a self-sustaining organization, a party has a base from which to build and can exploit the advantages of economic cycles and the mistakes of the party in power to win an election at some later date.

Why the Progressives did not develop a firmer organization is another question. Progressives never had much money or patronage, yet party officials seemed to think the lack was not an insurmountable handicap. An observer might point to their disregard of these traditional organizational props as a fatal error, but it does not seem to be so. The Progressive party had its most complete organization in 1934 before their first victory gave them any patronage at all to dispense. What organization they had was built by assiduous cultivation of local workers. The suggested hypothesis is that large sums of money and patronage are not necessities for successful organization of state parties. The decline of the Progressives' 1934 structure set in because the leaders concentrated their attention between elections on matters of program rather than organization. A hypothesis might be that leaders of splinter third parties with definite policy goals are likely to overemphasize the importance of program at the expense of organization as the determinant of party success.

Group support

The Progressive party in its early years had the support of leaders of the most prominent farm and labor organizations of the day. In fact, agitation among groups of this type provided the major impetus for the formation of the new party in 1934, lending support to the hypothesis about economic origins of third parties.

The farmer, labor, and political groups that affiliated with the Progressive party through the Farmer Labor Progressive League and Federation provided an electoral coalition in the Milwaukee area that materially aided Progressive electoral potentialities. But the Progressives soon lost the support of most of the Federation's component groups as a result of factional differences within the Federation and actions of Phil LaFollette in restricting its growth.

The conclusion from this is that substantial economic group support is necessary in order for a third party to be successful. If a third party can attract important existing groups, it is more likely to reach major party size quickly enough to avoid discouragement among its sponsors.

Once a third party has accepted the aid of economic groups of one political coloration, it cannot afford to alienate them. Opposing groups will probably have become committed to other parties. Should its original groups fall away, the third party will not only lose adherents but will be less able to differentiate itself from the major parties.

When the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation broke up, its liberal-minded clientele drifted toward the Democratic party. The rapidly rebuilding Republican party held the loyalty of most conservatives. The Progressive party then found itself between two strengthened major parties with different ideological orientations, thus losing its advantage as an electoral alternative.

But a party's commitment to particular groups should not be too complete. Even several powerful economic groups together represent only a minority of the voting population, and the party leaders cannot afford to be branded a tool of certain groups. Phil LaFollette knew this and tried to avoid associations with the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation while still accepting its support. His move was unsuccessful, as he fell victim to assertions that he favored the "socialistic" proposals its left-wing economic groups at the expense of the interest of other groups in the state.

Other hypotheses about group behavior in politics are lent weight by the experience of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation. Students of American politics are familiar with the fate of labor and farm groups that have tried political action through the use of a third party. In the event of its collapse they find themselves without access to decision-making points in the government. When the Progressive party was defeated in 1938, the Republican and Democratic legislators without hesitation leveled the gains labor unions had

made under the Progressives.

The experience of the organizers of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation lends support to another political truism: that farmers and working men do not easily see that their interests are related. The leaders of the separate interest groups making up the Federation saw the need for united effort, though perhaps more as a marriage of convenience in which through the election of Progressives they could each satisfy their separate interests in legislation than as true cooperation for common goals. Individual members of the separate groups did not see such a close relation, as is shown by the failure of the Federation to gain any appreciable membership outside of the areas of labor union and Socialist party dominance.

The small over-all membership of the Federation and especially its few members in rural areas bears out yet another political hypothesis. It is that interest group leaders can only imperfectly mobilize their membership for political action. The fatal weakness of the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation was that it was formed by group leaders without authority to commit to Federation action the groups they represented or the funds they controlled. Some of the group leaders seriously tried to interest their respective members in the Federation through direct mail promotion, but most did not. Most of the leaders knew their followers would disapprove attempts to influence their behavior in political

matters beyond the immediate economic interests of the group. When the Progressive star was waning, even the most devoted supporters of the party among economic group leaders found it necessary to withdraw completely from Federation and Progressive party action, or at least to reduce their activity to covert aid.

Seeking power

The Progressives as a party campaigned essentially as they had while a faction of the Republican party. That is to say they relied on extensive personal-appearance speaking tours of the major candidates, often featuring the LaFollettes, and upon a large number of local workers who on their own time and at their own expense spread the word and got out the vote.

With this type of campaign the Progressive party won in 1934, 1936, and 1942. The 1942 victory can be explained as a deviant case, since it resulted at least as much from the votes of Republicans disgusted with their own Governor Julius Heil as from any campaign activity of the Progressive party. Given the other factors in the earlier victories, the campaign techniques were at least adequate. The question then arises as to whether in 1938 and after the Progressive vote-capturing machinery broke down so as to be unable to produce another party victory. In 1938 the Progressives went through the usual routines of campaigning--Phil LaFollette made an

extensive speaking tour, and the party handbook was distributed to local leaders. Yet the Progressives were soundly defeated. Some observers speculated that campaign requirements changed, and that the Progressives did not adopt new techniques. These observers point to the use of billboard and other business types of advertising by the Republicans in 1938. But knowledge of the realtively small influence of election propaganda in changing votes makes these arguments unconvincing. More likely another part of the Progressive apparatus broke down. Research in voting behavior has shown the importance of personal contact in attitude formation and in activating the electorate. The special dependence of the Progressive party on its local leaders to get out and work has already been pointed out. Evidence shows that many of the local leaders in 1938 and thereafter did not stir at all, or worked only half-heartedly for the party. This was the result of leadership factors to be discussed shortly. While campaign methods no doubt do not alone determine the outcome of elections, the point is that the Progressives did not keep what campaign machinery they possessed in good working order. The hypothesis is that a party must maintain some sort of electioneering machinery if it is to continue seriously to contest for power.

Other possibilities appear as explanation for Progressive party impotence at the polls in the later years. For example, the Progressives failed to put up full slates of

candidates for all offices in every election. The success of incumbents regardless of whether they switched tickets casts doubt on the assumption that partisan considerations rank high in county elections. While some Progressive leaders believed this, others thought having local tickets was necessary for statewide success and blamed the disintegration of the party on their failure to procure full tickets in all the counties. But even though many sympathetic county officeholders did not switch to their ticket, the Progressives actually covered the state well in their first election in 1934. They proved it was possible to build local tickets if sufficient effort was expended. That the numbers of candidates and offices contested declined in every year after that, even in 1936, the year of outstanding Progressive success, shows that party leaders paid less attention to this phase of party work than at the outset. The hypothesis is that program-oriented third party leaders neglect such necessities as ticket building as well as local organization.

Still another possible explanation of Progressive downfall in Wisconsin is that the party ran out of issues. The hypothesis is that a third party probably has to present a more challenging program than does a regular party, since it must attract voters away from traditional party alliances. Actually the Progressives proposed no startling programs for campaigns in 1934 and after. Any new programs they had were devised by the Progressive brain-trust in the course of

attempting to solve certain pressing problems. These were later cited at campaign time as accomplishments. Progressives thought it unnecessary to propose bold new ideas in campaign during their party period, because they assumed it was well known what their ideas and approaches would be if entrusted with power. They envisioned the Progressive task as the championship of man, though in more subtle ways than at the turn of the century, in the continuing struggle over wealth.

All party leaders seemed to agree that thinking voters could see a clear difference between the Progressives and the other state parties, regardless of how similar their platforms might sound. Later, however, when the Progressive party could not make up its mind on the most important issue of the day--isolation versus intervention--it lost votes in wholesale fashion to both sides. Lack of a clear stand on policy in this instance, even though irrelevant to state politics, was important in the fate of the party. The hypothesis is that voters in a state with parties offering policy alternatives may come to expect parties to take a stand on all issues.

All hypotheses about internal weaknesses in campaigning, ticket-building, or issue-raising must be tempered with tentativeness. The defeat of the Progressive party in Wisconsin in 1938 coincided with the downfall of liberal state administrations in Minnesota, Michigan, and several other states,

and with a nationwide resurgence of Republican strength against New Deal congressmen and senators. These phenomena hint of larger forces at work in motivating American electoral behavior than can be found within one state. Phil LaFollette himself believes the Progressive defeat in 1938 was one manifestation of a widespread dissatisfaction that economic conditions had not improved.[2]

Relations with other parties

The effect on the Progressive party of their status as a third party between the two state parties with national connections cannot be over-emphasized. Though internal weaknesses of the Progressive party have been cited, this external fact explains much about the ultimate decline of the party.

Progressives left the Republican party in 1934 to form their own party "never to return." They believed their programs and leaders could no longer be accommodated in that group. Yet Orland S. Loomis before his death in 1942 was definitely planning to lead the Progressives back into the Republican party. And in 1946, after the Progressives repeatedly had been beaten, Robert M. LaFollette Jr. did just that. Loomis apparently believed the Progressives could control the Republican party in 1942. Real doubt existed as to the possibility in 1946. No one pretended that the Repub-

[2]Philip F. LaFollette, interview, April 18, 1955.

lican party of 1946 was different from the Republican party the Progressives had left in 1934; it was a move of desperation. The hypothesis is that for a splinter third party, holding office is more important than the supposed principles on which they broke away from the parent body.

During the period the Progressives had working relations with the national Democratic administration, however incomplete, they fared well. Not only did they receive some patronage to dispense, but more important, they were able to share the limlight at national election with Roosevelt as the true representatives of New Dealism in Wisconsin. Occasionally they got outright endorsements from Administration personalities. At other times Roosevelt at least refrained from endorsing their opponents.

When Phil and young Bob LaFollette broke with the Administration, this aid ceased. In attacking Roosevelt they took on a major adversary. His appeal to voters far outclassed theirs. When the Progressives tried to sit out national elections and issues by remaining uncommitted, they were cursed or ignored by the voters. This was true because the period of the 1930's and 1940's was one in which the people's interest became concentrated on national affairs and in which relatively clear alternatives were being offered on that level. Voters wanted to feel that they had a part in determining major issues, and the real battles of the country were being fought in presidential elections. The major

issues were first those of the depression and then of international affairs. If a third party ignored these issues it would be ignored by the voters; if it took a definite stand on either side it would lose some of its supporters.

Moreover, because the problems were national the Progressives could not propose to solve them with state action alone. Their suggested remedies were steps that only the national government could take effectively. Therefore the Progressives could not hope to carry them out without becoming a national party.

The position of the Progressives as a third party poses a most interesting question to political science--whether a splinter third party can endure in the United States. It is common dogma in the discipline that a minor party cannot continue for the familiar reasons that the major parties will sap away its issues or leaders, raise difficulties in the way of its getting on the ballot, or even coalesce to defeat the intruders. These arguments have been made regarding third parties on the national level. When Phil LaFollette launched the National Progressives of America, he faced some of those obstacles to organizing a third party. Whether the generalization applies equally to third parties on the state level is another matter.

During the first years of its existence, the Progressive party had none of these troubles. The laws did not stand in its way, its leadership held out, and few voters

were misled by the attempts of the other state parties to look progressive. The Progressive party got most of the votes in three elections. It suffered as a third party at first only in that the continuance of the Democratic and the Republican parties in the field with a certain amount of traditional support made it impossible to gain the majorities in the legislature necessary to carry on government.

Later however, the Progressives were beset by the expected troubles of third parties. First of all, liberals began to win Democratic nominations. They did not win office, but cut into Progressive strength enough to defeat the Progressive slate. Next, some of these candidates were former Progressives who had joined the Democratic party because of its New Deal liberalism or internationalism, and many Progressive voters followed them. A few Progressive leaders were taken into the Roosevelt administration during the war and transferred their party loyalties there. The Republicans attempted to throw legal blocks in the way of the Progressives by closing the primary, although most of these efforts failed. Progressives in Congress, of course, were kept from rising to positions of formal power because of their minority status. In the state some Democrats and Republicans even tried a coalition, which appears to have been a contributory, though perhaps not the crucial, factor in the Progressives defeat in 1938. The conclusion is that a state third party, despite initial successes, cannot sur-

vive in the face of the advantage its opponents have by their national connections.

The continuance of Republican and Democratic parties in Wisconsin in the face of almost total extinction at one time or another during this period is persuasive evidence of the durability of those conglomerations of diverse groups that constitute America's national political parties. The Republican party in Wisconsin was all but eliminated in 1934. But even without the aid of a national administration the Republicans came back in 1938 to become the dominant party in Wisconsin even to this day. Likewise the Democrats, who were nothing before 1932 and who were reduced to nothingness again after 1936, still hung on and were able to stage resurgences of power in 1940 and 1944, sinking back again only to re-emerge in the 1950's. Devotion to national party ideology kept the Republican party going. The hope of patronage by local Democrats and the interests of the national Administration in controlling delegates to the national convention kept a semblance of party organization alive in the state.[3] In lean years, then, both regular parties had nuclei of organizations that could expand when voter sentiment seemed likely to favor their group again.

Party life under a three-party system is not simple

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[3] Frank J. Sorauf Jr., The Voluntary Committee System in Wisconsin: An Effort to Achieve Party Responsibility (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1953); interview, Gustave J. Keller, May 27, 1955.

opposition between the ins and the outs for majorities. Instead, elections in Wisconsin became three-way battles for pluralities. The Progressives constantly suffered from propaganda attacks about exercising or causing minority rule. They used similar arguments when they had not won. The democratic dogma of majority rule is strongly entrenched in America. The consequent belief in the two-party system therefore is a handicap to the continuance of a third party.

One further point must be made in regard to the Progressives' relations with other parties. It concerns the Socialists. When the Progressive party was born in 1934 there was already another third party of considerable strength in the state. The Socialists drew heavy votes in the Lakeshore region of Wisconsin, although they had no statewide base of power. This four-party system in the Milwaukee area introduced a further split in the liberal vote that allowed the election of conservative legislators. The Progressive party was able to take over most Socialist voters through the Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, under whose influence the Socialist party went off the ballot in 1936. The Socialists hoped to extend their influence in the state through the Federation, but they were effectively limited to their former strongholds by LaFollette action. The Socialists never again became a political force in their own right, although they have since captured the Milwaukee mayor's chair again. The Socialists' former labor union support

and most of their leaders became first Progressive and then Democratic. Once again a minor party was decimated through absorption by a larger party.

The Progressives meanwhile benefited from the electoral support of the Socialists, but suffered from being identified with them in the minds of more conservative voters. This demonstrated the essential moderation of most American voters that has handicapped third parties of a radical mein.

The party in the legislature

Never during the ascendancy of the party did the Progressives have clear control of all the policy-making branches of the state government. Only by bargaining with individuals from the other parties was bare majority control achieved in the 1937 legislative sessions. Certain Progressives, who insisted that the party be one of principle, resented the compromises necessary to gain this control. Since a multi-party system makes it unlikely that majority control will be achieved through the electoral process, two paradoxical hypotheses appear. First, a third party splintering from its parent organization on principle is likely to find the compromise of expediency made more necessary to get those principles enacted. Second, a third party pledged to act decisively finds it has introduced complications in the legislative process that result in more delay.

Phil LaFollette fought vigorously for his programs with

every resource--parliamentary, forensic, demogogic, personal, and material. With his aide, Thomas M. Duncan, LaFollette proved to be an adept driver of the legislative vehicle, who did not hesitate to use extreme means to gain his destination. Progressives got what they wanted in the way of legislation eventually, but it was achieved at such a price as to cause serious dissension in the party itself and to give the opposition parties ideal propaganda weapons to drive the Progressives from power. A third party probably feels an even greater need to produce results than does a regular party, since it must justify its existence as well as its right to stay in power. This may lead to extreme measures that react against it.

The Progressives' experience in power raises questions about the viability of a governmental system of separation of powers, in which the executive can be almost totally frustrated by the legislative branch. Phil LaFollette thought he had the answer by enacting future programs of many sorts through the use of executive initiative, a legislative veto technique. But his other actions and his general criticisms of the legislative process aroused suspicion. The conflict between LaFollette and the Wisconsin legislature showed the tremendous force of tradition behind established legislative practices. LaFollette's attack on them harmed him politically and perhaps thwarted or delayed any efforts toward comprehensive reform. As shown by Franklin D. Roosevelt's

attempt at this same time to change the United States Supreme Court, an assault upon a traditional institution under the stress of partisan combat brings out its defenders and can give the institution a push toward immortality.

Toward a national party

The formation of the National Progressives of America, though it had no significant impact nationally, had profound effects upon the Progressive party of Wisconsin. First, its openly proclaimed opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt estranged the many Progressives attached to Roosevelt. They now had to make a choice between two leaders, and for many their national loyalties proved the greater. Second, it diverted Phil LaFollette's attention from state party matters that were seriously in need of his attention. A party leader cannot, in reaching out to broaden his sway, afford to lose his base of power in his own state. Third, the manner of the formation of the new organization, with its trappings of Nazism and its overtures to conservative groups, aroused the suspicion of many liberal-minded Progressives as to the motives and beliefs of Phil LaFollette. It was their dissatisfaction with LaFollette's forming the National Progressives that caused many of the hardest-working local leaders to sit out the campaign of 1938 and allow the party to go down to defeat.

The Progressive party, it can be seen, faced a dilemma in that becoming a national party was essential for survival

and desirable for policy goals, yet the attempt to form one was impossible under the conditions of the times and destructive of state party unity through the attempt.

These data confirm a primary hypothesis of American politics, that attempts to form a national third party with realistic chances of coming to power are futile. No longer content to remain the leader of only a state party, Phil LaFollette made an open bid for national leadership against Franklin D. Roosevelt. Without the powerful personality of Roosevelt on the political scene, several interviewees believe, Phil LaFollette might have been successful in a new party venture. The political scientist doubts that party personalities can overcome the operation of the American party system in preventing third parties from becoming major parties. Robert M. LaFollette Sr. had little success in 1924 even against such colorless personalities as Calvin Coolidge and John W. Davis, while preservation of the two-party system was a strong argument against voting for him as an independent.

That the two-party system is well-rooted in American beliefs is shown by a Fortune opinion poll in 1938. Even in that era of political discontent, most Americans did not think third party action was necessary or desirable. The most economically dispossessed classes as well as those with greater stake in the status quo strongly favored keeping the

traditional arrangements.[4]

Phil LaFollette's effort toward formation of a national third party therefore did not have even a latent group to which to appeal. The implications for the future are that national third party movements are equally doomed to failure, barring a drastic change in attitudes. And, if as is here hypothesized, a state third party cannot last unless it gains national party status, such state third parties also are doomed.

Leadership

Progressivism in Wisconsin was LaFollettism. The sons, Phil and Bob Jr., inherited a faction from Robert M. LaFollette Sr. and with little change otherwise made it into a party. Their views commanded great respect. In the early years all the candidacies and decisions within the party awaited an announcement of "what Phil would do"; when he had left the arena, no move was taken without consulting Bob.

With such power in the hands of two men, how they exercised it determined within the limits of events how the party fared. Since the party was successful for a time its leaders must have functioned satisfactorily. Yet the party's ultimate failure was in part the result of its leadership. The adverse effects were two: over-dependence on a few leaders,

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[4] Murray S. Stedman Jr. and Susan W. Stedman, Discontent at the Polls (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 156.

and failure of those leaders to continue to provide the satisfactions their followers sought.

First, since no patterns of action had been developed that did not include the LaFollettes, the party disintegrated when they decreased their leadership activities. The party never developed a crop of new leaders to replace them. Some people believe it was because the LaFollettes hindered the development of new leaders either positively or by virtue of their continued monopoly of important offices.

One hypothesis on this subject is that a party built around one or two particular leaders cannot last. A correlate is that a party needs a conscious policy of leader development to insure continued life. But starting a splinter third party movement requires leaders strong in dominance and surgency to overcome the inertia of tradition among officeholders and voters. Such leadership is likely not to be the kind that would stimulate or even tolerate the rise of young leaders who could take over the party.

Another hypothesis on leader recruitment, formulated by an interviewee, should be examined. It is that a liberal party has a more difficult time developing young leaders than a conservative party. The reasoning is that it cannot as easily attract young lawyers, one of the best pools of political leadership. A new lawyer comes to a community and finds that his best chances for financial success lie in representing business interests. He is therefore hesitant

to enter liberal political groups for fear of antagonizing his potential clientele. Or a lawyer who does begin to rise in liberal politics may be in effect bought off by being offered opportunities in conservative enterprises that he cannot afford to turn down. This study could not test this hypothesis adequately; the first part of it, however, would seem to be refuted by the nature of the local political leaders of the Progressive party. Many of the younger group were graduates of the University law school during the 1920's. In that heyday of progressivism, it was considered the thing to do in college to be a Young Progressive. Many of them became Progressive leaders in the communities where they settled. How many of these later turned conservative in an attempt to be successful in their profession cannot be stated at this time. But the likelihood is that if a party has a chance of success because of its popular appeal it will attract ambitious young people to be its leaders regardless of its ideological leanings.

The other principal conclusion on Progressive leadership is that while the young LaFollettes successfully asserted a prescriptive claim to leadership of the group, they eventually failed to satisfy the party's needs.

Bob LaFollette Jr. was liked personally by party leaders and received the deference due a person of his position and knowledge. But he did not well fulfil the role of an organizer or agitator. His speeches did not stimulate masses

to action, and he disliked numerous personal conferences with party workers. The Progressive party seemed to require frequent stimulation by its leaders in order to activate its workers.

Phil LaFollette, on the other hand, met these requirements better. Yet Phil was inadequate as a leader in other regards. He irritated and antagonized those local Progressive workers who were bound to the party by personal ties that had been carefully cultivated by former governors. He also became rather cynical about democracy and lost patience with some of its practices. This alienated the class of local workers whose ties to the party lay in attachment to its principles. Both of these types of workers thereupon ceased their activities in the party, resulting quickly in its decline.

Within a given group situation leadership is a process of interaction between the leaders and followers involving personalities, attitudes, and needs. When the followers perceive their leader's needs and goals to have diverged from their own, they will abandon him.

Resulting Hypotheses

Following is a summary of the hypotheses proposed in the foregoing pages for future research on state third parties of the splinter type:

(1) Formal organization of a third party is necessary for survival.

(2) Large sums of money and patronage are not necessary to the success of a state party if it has a substitute in large numbers of workers motivated by non-pecuniary aims.

(3) Third party leaders who splinter from their parent bodies for policy reasons are likely to overemphasize policy at the expense of organization.

(4) Substantial economic group support is necessary for third party success.

(5) When a party has identified itself with certain economic groups, it cannot later seek support elsewhere, because opposing groups will have come to distrust it.

(6) Economic groups that affiliate with a third party will find themselves disadvantaged by their action when the major parties return to power.

(7) Farmers and workers do not easily identify with each other for political purposes.

(8) Interest group leaders cannot mobilize their entire groups for political action in one party.

(9) A party cannot seriously contest elections unless it maintains local workers by some means.

(10) Local candidacies have a bearing on the success of a statewide ticket.

(11) Program-oriented third party leaders may neglect the importance of presenting candidacies for local offices.

(12) Presenting clear policy alternatives is especially necessary for third parties.

(13) Where parties have ordinarily presented clear policy alternatives, a third party cannot straddle important issues.

(14) A splinter party exists to gain office; when it can no longer do so as a third party, it will join a regular party.

(15) A state third party cannot endure unless it is supported by a national party or can itself become national.

(16) The attempt by a state third party to become a national party may contribute to its decline by threatening the regular national party loyalties of its own voters.

(17) Popular belief in majority rule brings disfavor on third parties who split the vote and cause minority rule.

(18) Identification with radical groups and programs handicaps a third party.

(19) A multi-party system results in more delay and increased need for compromise in the legislature.

(20) A third party feels a greater need than regular parties to produce results when in power.

(21) Changing established governmental institutions and practices under partisan stress is politically dangerous and can result in the strengthening of those institutions.

(22) Attempts to form effective national third parties cannot be successful.

(23) A party built around one or two particular leaders cannot last; it needs a conscious policy of leader recruitment.

(24) Successful splinter third party leaders, who must exhibit dominance and surgency in order to overcome the inertia of party regularity, will resist development of new leaders.

(25) Although liberal parties may tend to lose potential leaders to conservative groups who can offer more private gain, any party with a good chance of success will attract young leaders.

(26) A leader who diverges from his followers' conception of the group's needs and goals will be abandoned.

Epilogue

A few comments of local interest may be made on the importance of the Progressive party to Wisconsin politics.

It was an ambitious state third party that was outstandingly successful at its inception but that was short-lived.

That a third party could exist and prosper even for a time in Wisconsin shows that the regular two-party system was not effectively operating. The Progressives in reality were at first not a minor party at all, but a major party; in fact, they were the strongest party in the state for several years. This was possible because the Democratic party was weak and the Republican party unpopular. The Democratic party in Wisconsin, although it won a temporary victory in 1932, had no organization, no leaders with experience in government, and provided no real program alternatives to the Republican party. Furthermore, since the state Democrats were not ideologically aligned with the national Administration they did not get its full support. The state Republican party had been made to suffer the discredit of the Hoover administration, and its local organization was disrupted by the Progressive schism. Therefore, when the Progressive party appeared, it did not have to wedge itself between two vital parties but could operate at first in somewhat of a political vacuum. Later the Democratic party was captured by more liberal elements and got the complete

support of the national Administration. Meanwhile the Republican party rebuilt its organization and restored the morale of the conservatives. Then the Progressives found themselves to be only a minor party between two major parties who presented adequate alternatives to the voters. The Progressives thereupon lost supporters and at last went out of existence.

The major permanent significance of the Progressive party in Wisconsin was its influence on party alignment. The withdrawal of the Progressives from the Republican party in 1934 effectively purified the ranks of the latter in terms of national ideology. The re-entry of the Progressives into the Republican party in 1946 was on the terms of the Republican leaders, who influenced enough votes to keep control of most of the nominations and hence of the platforms. The crucial victory for the Republicans was the defeat of Bob LaFollette Jr. for the United States senatorial nomination in 1946. The Progressives never re-established themselves as an effective caucus within the Republican party. Had the Progressives won or been granted a material say in Republican affairs, Wisconsin might have remained a one-party state. But the insistence of Republican leaders on ideological conformity at last drove many former Progressives into the Democratic party. Some, however, remain within the Republican party and constitute the basis for a division that shows up at times in the legislature and in primaries and presidential delegate elections.

The effect of the Progressive party on the Democratic party of Wisconsin was to delay its growth to major party status in the state. The Wisconsin Democrats had the opportunity in 1932 of becoming a first-rank party. But the party remained under conservative control and thus lost the active aid of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the votes of the progressives who had helped bring it to power. After several abortive attempts, the Democratic party at last in 1948 was firmly taken over by people in ideological harmony with the national administration--people who, for the most part, though not major Progressive leaders, had been identified with the Young Progressive group. Had the Democrats absorbed the Progressives earlier, they might earlier have become a serious contender for power in Wisconsin.

Hardly any one talks about the Progressives any more in Wisconsin, except as a tradition. When they do, the speaker is ordinarily forgetting the immediate past of the Progressive party and looking at the more remote progressive era of Robert M. LaFollette Sr. The conflicts of that age are blurred, and all parties can share in the tradition. Yet the later period--the period of the Progressive party--as has been seen, was big with change for Wisconsin politics. It created a political climate that encouraged increased party vitality and invested state government with a sustaining importance in the minds of the voters.

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Amlie, Thomas R. Attorney. Madison, Dec. 17, 1954, 3 hours, 10 minutes.
Progressive Republican and Progressive Congressman, First district, 1931-1933, 1935-1939; candidate for Progressive United States Senate nomination, 1938.

Balzer, Arthur J. Jeweler. (West Allis). Madison, Feb. 16, 1955, 1 hour, 20 minutes.
Democratic state representative, 1933, 1937, 1939, 1955.

Beggs, Lyall T. Attorney. Madison, Jan. 25, 1955, 30 minutes.
Dane county district attorney, 1935-1938; Progressive assemblyman, 1941-1948, National Commander Veterans of Foreign Wars; Republican County Chairman, 1953.

Berquist, Henry J. Salesperson. Rhinelander, Jan. 5, 1955, 15 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman 1937-1942; Progressive candidate for lieutenant governor, 1942; chairman, Wisconsin Conference on Social Legislation.

Busby, Allen J. Attorney. (West Allis). Madison, March 15, 1955, 1 hour.
Progressive assemblyman 1931-1932, 1935-1936; state senator 1937-1940; Republican state senator, 1940-present.

Carroll, William D. Mayor. Prairie du Chien, Dec. 20, 1954, 1 hour, 5 minutes.
Secretary, Democratic state central committee; Chairman, 1938-1940; state senator 1933-1936, Candidate for Democratic gubernatorial nomination, 1936.

Chapple, John B. Editor. Ashland, Jan. 4, 1955, 1 hour, 40 minutes.
Editor and publisher, Ashland Daily Press. Republican candidate for United States Senate, 1932, 1934; candidate for Republican guvernatorial nomination, 1936, and senatorial nomination, 1938.

Davlin, Thomas F. Madison, Jan. 24, 1955, 2 hours, 10 minutes.
Secretary to Robert M. LaFollette Sr. and Philip LaFollette; treasurer Progressive state central committee, 1934; state highway commissioner, 1935-1941.

Evjue, William T. Editor. Madison, Dec. 14, 1954, 50 minutes.
Editor Capital Times; Chairman of Fond du Lac convention, 1934.

Fischer, Lyman A. Attorney. Manitowoc, Jan. 6, 1955, 2 hours.
Progressive district attorney, 1926-1932; county chairman, 1934-1946.

Fischer, Mrs. Lyman A. Manitowoc, Jan. 6, 1955, 5 minutes (phone).
Secretary, Fond du Lac convention, 1934; Progressive district committee member.

Fischer, Robert. Attorney. Shawano, Jan. 6, 1955, 1 hour, 5 minutes.
Progressive district attorney, 1923-1931, county chairman; state conservation commissioner 1934-1941; Democratic county chairman, 1954.

Gates, Clough. Managing Editor, Superior Evening Telegram. Superior, Jan. 3, 1955, 2 hours.
Candidate for Progressive lieutenant governor nomination, 1944; state teachers college regent 1912-1932; University regent 1934-1941.

Gehrmann, Bernard J. (Mellen). Madison, Feb. 4, 1955, 1 hour, 20 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman 1927, 1931, 1947-1953; state senator 1933-1934, 1955; congressman, Tenth district, 1935-1942.

Genzmer, Elmer L. Mayor. (Mayville). Madison, March 17, 1955, 30 minutes.
Democratic assemblyman 1935-1944; Republican assemblyman, 1944-present.

Graass, Frank N. Fruit growing business. (Sturgeon Bay). Madison, March 22, 1955, 20 minutes.
Republican assemblyman 1917-1919, 1935-1941, 1950-present; legislative anf financial secretary to Governor Walter Goodland, 1942-1946; conservation lobbyist.

Graunke, Walter A. Attorney. Wausau, Jan. 5, 1955, 30 minutes.
Progressive county chairman.

Gulbrandsen, Martin. Vernon County Judge. Viroqua, Dec. 21, 1954, 10 minutes.
Progressive Republican and Progressive district attorney, 1926-1938, 1941-1944; Republican district attorney, 1947-1950, 1952-present.

Hall, Earl D. Farmer. (Tunnel City). Madison, Feb. 8, 1955, 50 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman, 1925-1937; Republican assemblyman, 1950-present.

Hanson, Hans. Jackson County Judge. Black River Falls, Dec. 21, 1954, 1 hour, 55 minutes.
Republican district attorney, 1928-1932; Progressive district attorney, 1934-1938, 1941-1942.

Hoan, Daniel W. Milwaukee, May 29, 1955, 1 hour, 15 minutes.
Socialist Mayor of Milwaukee, 1916-1940; Executive board Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, 1935-1941; Democratic candidate for governor, 1944, 1946.

Hones, Kenneth W. President, Wisconsin Farmers Union. (Colfax). Chippewa Falls, Dec. 22, 1954, 1 hour, 20 minutes.
Vice chairman of Progressive state central committee; executive board member, Farmer Labor Progressive Federation; University regent, 1936-1939.

Immell, Ralph M. Attorney. Madison, Aug. 8, 1955, 1 hour, 50 minutes.
Adjutant General 1923-1942; state director, Works Progress Administration, 1935; Conservation commissioner, 1931-1937.

Jack, Harry H. Appleton, Jan. 7, 1955, 20 minutes (phone).
President Wisconsin Cooperative Milk Pool; executive board, Farmer Labor Progressive Federation; vice chairman Progressive state central committee; candidate for Progressive lieutenant governor nomination, 1936.

Kehoe, John D. Attorney. Green Bay, Jan. 6, 1955, 15 minutes.
Treasurer, Democratic state central committee.

Keller, Gustave J. Attorney. Appleton, May 27, 1955, 30 minutes.
Chairman, Democratic Party Organization of Wisconsin 1940-1944; Democratic candidate for attorney general, 1940; candidate for Democratic gubernatorial nomination, 1942.

Knutson, Clarence H. Attorney. Dodgeville, Dec. 20, 1954, 1 hour, 10 minutes.
Progressive Republican district attorney 1928-1932.

Kostuck, John. Piano tuner. (Stevens Point). Madison, Feb. 9, 1955, 25 minutes.
Assemblyman, 1931-present--progressive Republican, 1931-1934, Progressive, 1935-1941, Democratic, 1942-present.

Krieps, Martin M. Superior, Jan. 3, 1955, 1 hour, 25 minutes.
Chairman, Douglas County Progressive Organization; AFL organizer; weekly newspaper publisher.

Kyle, Jack K. Madison, Jan. 27, 1955, 1 hour, 30 minutes.
Director, Wisconsin Association of Cooperatives; executive secretary, Progressive state central committee, 1928-1930, 1936; chairman, 1939-1942; secretary to Sen. Ryan Duffy, 1932-1936.

LaFollette, Philip F. President, Hazeltine Electronics Corporation. Little Neck, L. I., New York, April 18, 1955, 1 hour.
Governor, 1931-1933, 1935-1939.

Langve, Dedrick M. (Westby) Viroqua, Dec. 21, 1954, 15 minutes.
Progressive Republican assemblyman 1929-1934.

Leverich, J. Earl. (Sparta). Madison, March 22, 1955, 35 minutes.
Progressive state senator 1935-1938, 1942-1945; Republican state senator, 1946-present; director, Wisconsin Agriculture Authority, 1937-1938.

Ludvigsen, Alfred R. Semi-retired farmer. (Hartland). Madison, Feb. 18, 1955, 25 minutes.
Republican assemblyman, 1935-present.

Lund, Richard. Eau Claire, Dec. 22, 1954, 1 hour, 20 minutes.
Secretary, Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr. 1939-1941; campaign manager for Adolph Benz, 1944; campaign secretary, Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr., 1946.

McCabe, William R. Railroad engineer. Superior, Jan. 4, 1954, 1 hour, 5 minutes.
Chairman, Progressive Tenth district committee; vice chairman state central committee; chairman, Grain and Warehouse Commission, 1931-1934.

Panzer, Frank E. County board chairman. (Oakfield). Madison, Feb. 15, 1955, 25 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman, 1931-1932; Progressive state senator 1934-1938; Republican state senator, 1942-present; Senate president pro tempore, 1947-present.

Pool, Verl W. Viroqua, Dec. 21, 1954, 1 hour, 45 minutes.
Vernon county clerk, 1935-1939, 1942-present, Progressive until 1944, Republican 1944-present.

Potterton, Ina M. Dodgeville, Dec. 20, 1954, 10 minutes.
Republican clerk of court, 1924-present.

Pritchard, John. (Eau Claire). Madison, Feb. 11, 1955, and March 14, 1955, 1 hour, 50 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman, 1933-1941; Republican assemblyman, 1942-1954.

Pyle, Charles. Iowa County Judge. Dodgeville, Dec. 21, 1954, 30 minutes.
County Republican Voluntary Committee leader.

Reynolds, John W. Sr. Attorney. Green Bay, Jan. 7, 1954, 35 minutes.
Progressive Republican attorney general 1928-1932; chairman, Progressive state central committee, 1934.

Roberts, Glenn D. Attorney. Madison, Dec. 15, 1954, 1 hour, 5 minutes.
Progressive Republican state senator, 1928-1932; chairman, Progressive state central committee, 1942-1946.

Rose, Frances E. Madison, Dec. 7, 1954, 20 minutes.
Executive secretary, Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

Rubin, Morris H. Madison, Jan. 28, 1955, 50 minutes.
Reporter, Wisconsin State Journal, to 1940; editor, Progressive, 1940-present.

Rutz, Henry. AFL International Representative. Milwaukee, May 29, 1955, 1 hour, 45 minutes.
Executive secretary, Farmer Labor Progressive Federation, 1935-1940.

Samp, Edward J. Director Wisconsin Department of Securities. Madison, Jan. 25, 1955, 1 hour, 20 minutes.
Republican candidate for state treasurer, 1930, 1932; chairman Republican Voluntary Committee, 1935-1937; candidate for Republican United States Senate nomination, 1938.

Schantz, Joe. Farmer. Sparta, Dec. 21, 1954, 1 hour.
Progressive county chairman.

Shannon, Sydney M. Appleton, May 27, 1955, 1 hour, 30 minutes.
Republican county clerk of court, 1928-present.

Sigman, Samuel. Attorney. Appleton, May 27, 1955, 1 hour, 30 minutes.
Chairman, Farmer Labor Progressive League; Progressive state central committee; executive board, Farmer Labor Progressive Federation; Progressive district attorney, 1935-1936.

Smith, William C. Superior, Jan. 4, 1955, 15 minutes.
Republican county treasurer, 1930-present.

Stafford, Harold E. Attorney. Chippewa Falls, Dec. 22, 1954, 10 minutes.
Candidate for Progressive gubernatorial nomination, 1940.

Sykes, Charles H. Retired farmer. (Chetek). Madison, Feb. 11, 1955, 25 minutes.
Progressive assemblyman, 1939-1944; Republican assemblyman, 1945-present.

Wipperman, Richard O. Statistician, Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce. Madison, Feb. 1, 1955, 45 minutes.
Secretary, Republican Voluntary Committee, 1925-1929.

TITLE OF THESIS The Progressive Party of Wisconsin, 1934-1946

Full Name Charles Herbert Backstrom

Place and Date of Birth Valley City, North Dakota -- October 5, 1926

Elementary and Secondary Education Northwood and Rolla, North Dakota; Hitterdal and Crookston, Minnesota.

Colleges and Universities: Years attended and degrees

South Dakota State College, 1944

Moorhead State Teachers College, 1947-1949, B.A., B.S. Ed.

University of Wisconsin, 1951-1956, M.A., 1953, Ph.D., 1956.

Membership in Learned or Honorary Societies

American Political Science Association

Publications None

Major Department Political Science

Minor(s) Economics

Date June 1, 1956

Signed Ralph K. Huitt
Professor in charge of thesis