Acadiensis

ACADIENSIS

The Origins of the Maritime Rights Movement

E. R. T. Forbes

Volume 5, numéro 1, autumn 1975

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/acad5_1art03

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

The Department of History of the University of New Brunswick

ISSN

0044-5851 (imprimé)
1712-7432 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Forbes, E. R. T. (1975). The Origins of the Maritime Rights Movement. *Acadiensis*, *5*(1), 54–66.

E. R. FORBES

The Origins of the Maritime Rights Movement

Canadian historians have devoted considerable attention to post-war agitation on the Prairies; they have virtually ignored similar agitation in the Maritimes, the regional protest movement which became known by the slogan "Maritime Rights." The few comments it has received, in biographical literature or in sweeping analyses of long periods of history, have been largely concerned with its political manifestations.[1] Such a pre-occupation is not surprising. Both Liberals and Conservatives were vociferous in their efforts to portray themselves as the champions of the movement. Shortly before the Antigonish-Guysborough by-election of 1927 a Protestant clergyman set out to review the issues of the campaign from the pulpit. Both candidates, he noted, were clamouring for attention as the defenders of "Maritime Rights." This aspect of their campaign, he said, reminded him of the behaviour of his own young children one evening when he and his wife were getting ready to go visiting. The little girl set up an awful howl from the moment the baby-sitter arrived. She bawled and bawled and bawled. Finally, just as her parents were going out the door, her brother turned, slapped her sharply, and declared, "Shut up, I wanna cry."

There was much more to "Maritime Rights" than the conspicuous wail of the politicians. One cannot begin to tell here the story of the movement—the intensive organizational campaign with its delegations to Ottawa, economic conferences, and country-wide speaking tours; the erratic swings in the popular vote from one party to another as Maritimers searched desperately for solutions to their problems; and the inevitable royal commissions sent in to defuse the agitation[2] — but one can at least attempt a more basic introduction

1 See J. M. Beck, *The Government of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1957), pp. 338-40;W. R. Graham, *Arthur Meighen Vol. II; And Fortune Fled* (Toronto, 1963), ch. 11; H. B. Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: 1924 - 1932; The Lonely Heights* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 67 and 220-24; K. A. MacKirdy, "Regionalism: Canada and Australia" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1959), pp. 245-50; and G. A. Rawlyk, "The Maritimes and the Canadian Community" in M. Wade, ed., *Regionalism in the Canadian Community*, 1867-1967 (Toronto, 1969) pp. 113-5. The only previous study which focused directly on Maritime Rights was Michael Hatfield, "J. B. Baxter and the Maritime Rights Movement" (B.A. honours essay, Mount Allison University, 1969).

2 E. R. Forbes, "The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927: A Study in Canadian Regionalism," (Ph.D. thesis, Queens University, 1975).

through the analysis of the motives of the different social groups which participated in it. Their behaviour suggests that the issues involved went much deeper than mere political manoeuvering or even, as professor G. A. Rawlyk has suggested, the attempt by the local "Establishment" to undercut other forms of social protest.[3] All classes in the region, although often in conflict on other issues, were united in their support of Maritime Rights. Each was aware that its own particular aspirations were incapable of realization until the region's declining influence was checked or reversed.

The social categories employed here will be those used by the people themselves. Maritimers spoke frequently in this period of their "classes." They were not referring to any clear Marxian structure nor did they imply the status-based stratification of the modern sociologist. Essentially they were talking about broad occupational interest groups. Such divisions were partly theoretical; the members of each group of "class" were assumed to have interests in common of which not all might be conscious. But they also had an empirical basis through such exclusively occupational organizations as the Maritime Division of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, retail merchants associations, the United Farmers, federations of labour and, by the end of the decade, the Maritime Fishermen's Union. These were the kinds of groupings to which New Brunswick Premier P. J. Veniot referred early in 1923 when he reported to Mackenzie King that, after looking "carefully into the [Maritime Rights] movement," he had found it was "purely non-political and embraces [the] efforts of all classes to obtain what is sincerely considered fair play for [the] Maritime Provinces."[4]

The development of Maritime regionalism, of which the Maritime Rights movement formed the climax, took place largely in the first two decades of the century. Previously, popular loyalties had been focused upon larger imperial or national entities or upon smaller political, cultural or geographical units. The shift was dictated by a growing realization of the need for co-operation. Co-operation was essential if the three Atlantic Provinces were to counteract the eclipse of their influence which resulted from the rise of the West and the growing metropolitan dominance of Central Canada. Another factor contributing to the growth of regionalism was the progressive ideology of the period, which increased the pressure upon the small governments for expensive reforms while at the same time suggesting the possibility of limitless achievement through a strategy of unity, organization and agitation. Consequently, regional awareness increased sharply in the three provinces. Their leaders joined forces to fight losses in representation, which followed every

3 G. A. Rawlyk "The Farmer-Labour Movement and the Failure of Socialism in Nova Scotia," Laurier La Pierre *et al* eds., *Essays on the Left* (Toronto, 1971), pp. 37-8.

4 P. J. Veniot to W. L. M. King, 27 February 1923, W. L. M. King Papers, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC).

census after 1891; to increase their subsidies, which had fallen far behind those of the Prairies; and to defend the Intercolonial Railway, whose pro-Maritime policies came under attack from both the Prairies and Central Canada.[5]

The manufacturers' stake in the regionalization of the Maritimes was most obvious, particularly for the defense of the Intercolonial Railway. By the end of the 19th Century that railway had become an important agent of industrialization in the region. Its management had accepted the principle that half a loaf was better than none and had reduced rates to develop traffic. It created a basic freight rate structure which was between 20 and 50 percent lower than that in force in Ontario and offered in addition special rate concessions based upon "what the traffic would bear."[6] Built into the structure was a system of "arbitraries" or especially low rates between the Maritimes and Montreal on goods destined for points further west. These rates enabled the secondary manufacturers in the Maritimes to penetrate markets in Western and Central Canada to obtain the sales volume necessary for competitive production.[7] With such encouragement, capital investment in manufacturing in the Maritimes quadrupled between 1900 and 1920.[8] The old dream of some Nova Scotian entrepreneurs that their province would play the role of a great industrial metropolis to a Canadian hinterland was far from realization. But the Maritimers' optimism for their manufacturing potential persisted. The Halifax *Morning Chronicle* in 1906 explicitly touted Nova Scotia's pioneer programme in technical education as encouraging the industrialization which would reverse the region's declining status in Confederation. The Saint John *Standard* in 1916 enthused about a hydro-electric project to harness the Bay of Fundy tides, which, by providing cheaper energy for manufacturing, would raise the Maritimes "to a position of commercial supremacy as compared with any other part of the Dominion."[9]

Such aspirations received a severe check with the integration of the Intercolonial into a national system. The happy partnership between the Intercolonial management and the local producers had come under attack both

5 See Canada, *Sessional Papers* (1910), No. 100; Halifax *Wesleyan*, 12 May 1909; Saint John *Standard*, 30 October 1913; W. Eggleston and C. T. Kraft, *Dominion Provincial Subsidies and Grants* (Ottawa, 1939) pp. 188-9; and the "Presentation to his Royal Highness in Council of the claims of the Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, for Compensation in Respect of the Public Lands of Canada, transferred to Certain Provinces of Canada or held in trust for their Benefit, January 29, 1913," R. L. Borden Papers, p. 5249, PAC.

6 R. A. C. Henry and Associates, *Railway Freight Rates in Canada* (Ottawa, 1939), pp. 266 and 268 and Transcripts of the hearings of the Royal Commission on Maritime Claims, pp. 462-5, Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission (hereafter APTC).

7 See S. A. Saunders *The Economic History of the Maritime Provinces* (Ottawa, 1939), p. 27.

8 *Canada Year Book* (1922-3), pp. 220, 415-6.

9 Halifax *Morning Chronicle*, 17 August 1906 and Saint John *Standard*, 25 March 1916.

from competing Central Canadian manufacturers and Prairie farmers preoccupied with their demand for the equalization of freight rates.[10] The Borden Government apparently decided to get rid of the anomaly of a Maritime-oriented railway once and for all. In November, 1918, it shifted the Intercolonial's headquarters to Toronto, transferred its senior officials to other lines and replaced them with appointees from the Canadian Northern. The following year, the Intercolonial was placed under the *de facto* jurisdiction of the Board of Railway Commissioners which raised the rates to the Ontario level.[11] The process was completed in time to provide an inflated base for the 40 per cent general rate increase of 1920. In Ontario and Quebec freight rates increased 111% between 1916 and September 1920; in the Maritimes basic rates rose between 140 and 216% and the simultaneous cancellation of special rates, such as the special commodity rate on sugar, led to still greater increases.[12]

The rate changes not only threatened the local entrepreneurs' dreams of industrial grandeur, but left them seriously exposed to the pressure for metropolitan consolidation. For many, the campaign for Maritime Rights became a struggle for survival. In 1919 a group of manufacturers mounted a delegation to Ottawa, demanded the restoration of the Intercolonial to independent management and revived the Maritime Board of Trade as a channel for their agitation.[13] They continued to play a prominent role in the leadership of the movement through such representatives as W. S. Fisher of Saint John, a former Canadian Manufacturers' Association president, who served as a spokesman for another delegation to Ottawa in 1921, and D. R. Turnbull, managing-director of the Acadia Sugar Corporation, who, in 1925, became Nova Scotia's representative on the newly-formed Maritime Rights Transportation Committee.[14]

Maritime merchants were also seriously affected by the integration of the Intercolonial into a national system. The wholesalers were injured by the shift in supply purchasing for the railway from the Maritimes to Toronto.[15] They were weakened further, in relation to their metropolitan competitors, by the

10 Judgement of the Board of Railway Commissioners, 15 March 1919, R. L. Border Papers, pp. 131069-9, PAC; Canada, Debates (1917), pp. 787, 4339-77.

11 Transcript of hearings of the Board of Railway Commissioners, 1920, p. 11703, PAC.

12 Calculated from percentages in B.R.C. transcripts 1926, p. 6602, and from "standard mileage rates" in R.A.C. Henry, *op. cit.*

13 Sackville, *The Busy East of Canada,* September, 1919.

14 "Report of Meeting with the Prime Minister and the members of the Government, Delegation from the Maritime Province," 1 June 1921, R. B. Bennett Papers, p. 10142, P.A.C. and F. C. Cornell to H. D. Cartwright, 12 October 1925, Maritime Provinces Freight Rate Commission Papers, APTC.

15 E. M. Macdonald to Mackenzie King, 8 December 1922, W. L. M. King Papers, PAC.

sharp increase in "town distributing rates" — especially low rates which had enabled them to import quantities of goods from Central Canada, break them up and send them out to individual towns and villages at little more than the cost of direct shipment. Similarly higher rates on the Intercolonial accelerated the shift away from Maritime ports as distributing points for products entering from abroad. H. R. Silver, a commission merchant, reported a decline in molasses shipments out of Halifax from 130 carloads in 1916 to 17 in 1921.[16] Retailers were also adversely affected. They had to pay more for their goods and had difficulty in passing the full charge on to their customers. The Halifax *Maritime Merchant* commented tersely in 1920 upon the general effect of the increase: "Added to the handicap already suffered by firms seeking western business, the new rate will be hard on the merchants and add materially to the cost the local consumer must pay."[17]

The issue which generated the greatest heat from the merchant and commercial interests of Halifax and Saint John was the development of their ports as entrepôts for Canada's winter trade. The two cities were engaged in a Darwinian struggle with the American seaports and with each other. The key to victory was volume and variety of traffic. The more traffic, the lower the port charges and ocean rates; the lower the rates, the greater the traffic. The Maritime ports were most conscious of their rivalry with Portland, Maine, which had traditionally enjoyed the advantage of a very active canvass for trade from the Grand Trunk Railway.[18] The Maritime ports' aspirations for Canadian trade, aroused initially by Confederation, had blossomed under the "national policy" of the Laurier Government. Laurier had promised that the National Transcontinental Railway would channel exports, particularly grain, through national ports. In 1903, he appointed a Royal Commission to investigate other means of routing trade through "all-Canadian channels," and in 1911, he pledged that his government would restrict the Imperial preference to goods entering through Canadian ports.[19]

Such expectations were rudely shaken by the federal take-over of the Grand Trunk. With it, the Canadian Government inherited a strong vested interest in the commercial success of Portland. At Halifax, prominent Liberals urged the return of a Conservative cabinet minister in the by-election of 1920 to give the Maritimes at least a voice in defending their port's interest.[20] Early in 1922 the Halifax and Saint John boards of trade appointed a joint

16 F. C. Cornell "Memorandum re the Transportation Problems and Freight Rate Structure of the Province of Nova Scotia," 1926, p. 10 and Transcripts, B.R.C., 1926, pp. 6765-7, PAC.

17 *Maritime Merchant*, 16 September 1920, p. 104.

18 Transcripts, Royal Commission on Maritime Claims, p. 2173, APTC.

19 "Report of the Royal Commission on Transportation . . . 1903," Canada, *Sessional Papers* (1906), No. 19a; Canada, *Debates* (1922), pp. 708-10.

20 Halifax *Herald*, 18 September 1920.

committee, consisting largely of merchants and manufacturers, to co-ordinate their agitation on such issues as the restoration of the Intercolonial and the routing of trade through Maritime Ports.[21] The merchant's position in the Maritime Rights movement continued to be a prominent one through the organized activities of boards of trade and the role of individuals such as W. A. Black, of the leading merchant-shipping firm of Pickford and Black. At seventy-six years of age, against "his physicians' advice, his wife's fears and his family's opposition," Black came out of retirement to fight the Halifax by-election of 1923 on a platform of Maritime Rights. [22]

Another business group, the lumbermen, also jointed the agitation. For them, the impact of the increased freight rates was compounded in 1921 by increased American duty on timber products under the Fordney tariff. Angus MacLean of The Bathurst Company, later president of the New Brunswick Lumberman's Association, appealed to Mackenzie King for relief on both issues.[23] When none was forthcoming he and other so-called "Lumber lords" of New Brunswick such as Archie and Donald Fraser, owners of the second-largest lumber company in the Maritimes, threw their very considerable support behind the Conservative "Maritime Rights" candidates in the federal election of 1925.[25] In that year, MacLean became the titular leader of the protest movement as president of the Maritime Board of Trade.

Although labour in the Maritimes was at the peak of its "class" consciousness in 1919, it joined with the business groups in the agitation. Between 1916 and 1920, reported union membership in the Maritimes had quadrupled to about 40,000.[25] Spurred by the anticipation of a "new era" to follow the War[26] and beset by the grim reality of galloping inflation,[27] the workers attempted new techniques in organization and challenged their employers in a series of strikes in 1919 and 1920. At the same time they were conscious that their aspirations for a greater share of the fruits of their labour could not be achieved if their industries were destroyed from other causes. Early in

21 Minutes of the Council of the Saint John Board of Trade, 13 July 1922, New Brunswick Museum.

22 Hector McInnes to Arthur Meighen, November 1923, Arthur Meighen Papers, p. 051956, PAC.

23 A. MacLean to W. L. M. King, 25 April 1922 and 8 October 1924, W. L. M. King Papers, PAC.

24 J. C. Webster to Arthur Meighen, 26 September 1925, and R. O'Leary to Meighen, 3 September 1925, Arthur Meighan Papers, PAC.

25 *The Fifth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada 1916* (Ottawa, 1917), pp. 206-7 and the *Tenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada 1920* (Ottawa, 1921), p. 279.

26 For examples of their optimistic rhetoric see the Sydney *Canadian Labour Leader*, 8 February 1918; the New Glasgow *Eastern Federationist*, 19, 26 April 1919; and the Moncton *Union Worker*, February 1920.

27 *The Labour Gazette,* January 1921, p. 117.

1919 the *Eastern Federationist*, published by the Trades and Labour Council of Pictou County, argued that the freight rate increases violated the "rights of the Maritime Provinces' people under the terms of Confederation."[28] After the Amherst "General Strike" in May and June of 1919, the *Federationist* was particularly incensed by reports that the Canada Car Company was planning to transfer its Amherst operation to Montreal. The thrust of the editor's bitterness was directed at both the capitalists involved and the trend towards metropolitan consolidation which posed a continual threat to Maritime industry and jobs.[29] Similarly the Halifax *Citizen*, the organ of the local Trades and Labour Council, severely criticized the removal of the railway headquarters from Moncton and commended the activities of the Maritime Board of Trade president, Hance J. Logan, in seeking Maritime union as a counterweight to the declining political influence of the region. Bemoaning the unfair treatment accorded the Maritimes by the rest of the country, the *Citizen* concluded that there was "very little hope of any justice for us under present conditions."[30] The journal periodically returned to this theme and remained a consistent supporter of Maritime Rights.

The Railway Brotherhoods, which, after the United Mineworkers, constituted the largest bloc of organized labour in the region, were directly involved in the Maritime Rights campaign. During the first decade of the century the brotherhoods had won the acceptance of the principle of seniority in promotions and lay-offs on the Intercolonial.[31] In theory at least, the humblest employee could aspire to the highest office on the road. Under the new regime after 1918, that principle went by the board. According to one estimate, 400 employees were transferred out of the Moncton headquarters and any replacements came from other government roads. In addition, the repair shops declined and staff was reduced all along the line. To some workers it seemed the principle of seniority had been replaced by the principle that no Maritimer need apply.[32]

Labour did not need to be coaxed into the Maritime Rights movement by the Halifax *Herald* or other politically-oriented journals in the 1920's; large segments were already there, drawn by a consideration of their own immediate interest. The railway centres provided the most consistent voting support for Maritime Rights candidates throughout the 1920's. F. B. McCurdy attributed his victory in the important Colchester by-election of 1920 to the

28 *Eastern Federationist*, 8 March 1919.

29 Ibid., 7 June 1919.

30 The Halifax *Citizen*, 21 May and 10 September 1920.

31 "Being an address by Mr. Geo. W. Yates, Assistant Deputy Minister of Railways, Before the History and Political Science Club of Western Ontario, Feb. 16, 1923", Arthur Meighan Papers, pp. 157485-9, PAC.

32 *The Busy East*, June and July 1923.

railway workers' belief that in the cabinet he would "be strong enough to afford some relief in the railway grievance." He blamed his defeat in the general election of 1921 on his inability to do so.[33] Labour also threw its support behind W. A. Black in the Halifax by-election of 1923.[34] Neil Herman, Labour-organizer, Social Gospel clergyman and sometime editor of the Halifax *Citizen* was a founder and executive member of the Halifax Maritime Club.[35] He later accompanied its president, H. S. Congdon, in a tour of Central Canada to drum up newspaper support for the movement. When the so-called "Great" Maritime Rights delegation went to Ottawa in February 1925, J. E. Tighe, president of the Saint John local of the International Longshoreman's Association, was one of four speakers who addressed the Members of Parliament on Maritime problems.[36]

The farmers were only slightly behind labour in their support for Maritime Rights. They too had expected to play a greater role in the new society which was supposed to follow the war; instead they were confronted by the realities of rural depopulation and community disintegration.[37] They challenged the business groups with new or intensified, political, occupational and economic organization. But their problems were in part those of the region. The new freight rates hit them, both as producers and consumers. Some were also angered by federal policies which seemed not only to encourage new immigrants to by-pass their region but also to promote westward migration at their expense. As much as they might resent the growth of industrial towns and their own relative loss in status, the farmers were conscious of their dependence on these towns for their markets. Even those who sold their apples or potatoes in Great Britain or the West Indies usually earned a significant proportion of their income in local markets — an important hedge against the sometimes widely fluctuating international prices.[38]

For a brief period the farmers' regional concern was obscured by their participation in what they believed was a national "class" movement. But their organizations, such as the Canadian Council of Agriculture, were dominated by the Prairies. Manitobans, T. A. Crerar and George Chipman, also sought to direct the movement in the Maritimes through the *United Farmers' Guide*. The *Guide*, theoretically the organ of the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia

33 F. B. McCurdy to Robert Borden, 21 December 1921, Robert Meighan Papers, PAC.

34 H. L. Stewart to W. L. M. King, 9 December 1923, W. L. M. King Papers, PAC.

35 "Minutes of the Maritime Club of Halifax," 11 February 1924, H. S. Congdon Papers (courtesy of Mr. H. H. Congdon, Huntsville, Ontario).

36 Saint John *Telegraph Journal*, 27 February 1925.

37 See A. A. Mackenzie, "The Rise and Fall of the Farmer-Labour Party in Nova Scotia" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1969) and L. A. Wood, *A History of Farmer Movements in Canada* (Toronto, 1924).

38 *Proceedings of the Select Special Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into Agricultural Conditions* (Ottawa, 1924), p. 475.

United Farmers Associations, was in fact a subsidiary of the *Grain Growers' Guide*.[39] The two regionalisms were soon in conflict. Western organizers tried in vain to get unequivocal statements against the tariff from the United Farmers of Nova Scotia and were cool to suggestions that "necessary" protection for local industries should be retained.[40] At the same time they offered no support for the Maritime positions on such issues as the Intercolonial, freight rates and subsidies. Most Maritime farmers realized they could not achieve their regional goals through a movement which was, in federal politics at least, "an agrarian and sectional bloc from the continental West, the representation of the monolithic wheat economy.[41] In 1921 support for the western-affiliated United Farmers Associations rapidly dwindled. By mid-summer "a majority" in the Maritime Co-operative Companies was reported anxious to dispose of the *United Farmers Guide* in which they had initially invested but were unable to control.[42]

The agricultural interests of Prince Edward Island had been involved in the Maritime Rights movement from the outset. At the Maritime Board of Trade meeting in 1919 they were happy to associate with the broader issues of the movement their own special problems. These were two: the need for a second car ferry and the completion of the widening of their narrow guage railways to permit a more rapid, reliable and cheaper delivery of their products to mainland markets.[43] In 1921 the Mainland farmers met in conference with representatives of manufacturing, merchant and shipping groups to launch a delegation to Ottawa to demand the return of the Intercolonial to independent management.[44] Thereafter, farm leaders assumed an increasingly important role in the Maritime Rights agitation. In 1923, for example, A. E. McMahon, president of the United Fruit Companies and a former vice-president of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, became president of the Maritime Board of Trade, and, a year later, of the Maritime Development Association. One of the primary purposes of the latter organization was the rehabilitation of the rural areas through immigration and colonization.[45]

39 Three of the five members of the directorate were Manitobans. C. F. Chipman to "The Editor" *Maritime Farmer,* 13 March 1920, T. A. Crerar Papers, The Douglas Library, Queens University.

40 J. M. Pratt to T. A. Crerar, 9 November 1920, and G. G. Archibald to T. A. Crerar, 4 October 1920, *ibid.*

41 W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), p. 129.

42 S. H. Hagerman to G. F. Chipman, 18 June 1921, T. A. Crerar Papers, Douglas Library, Queens University.

43 *The Busy East*, September 1919. See also M. K. Cullen, "The Transportation Issue, 1873-1973" in F. W. P. Bolger, ed., *Canada's Smallest Province: a History of Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, 1973), pp. 255-7.

44 *Ibid.*, May 1921.

45 Charlottetown *Evening Patriot*, 23 January 1925.

The fishermen's contribution to the Maritime Rights movement was largely restricted to the intensification of the discontent which underlay it. Their aspirations had been relatively moderate. The victims of a declining salt fish trade with the West Indies, they hoped to restore their industry through the expansion of their sales of fresh fish in Central Canada and New England. The former had been encouraged by a federal subsidy of one third of the express rate to Montreal on less than carload lots, the latter by a *modus vivendi* with the United States which had permitted them to land and sell their catches directly at American ports.[46] In 1919, the federal subsidies on fresh fish were terminated just as the trade was hit by the higher freight rates.[47] Needless to say, the fish merchants passed on their losses to the largely unorganized fishermen. Meanwhile, the door to the New England market was slammed shut by the American cancellation of the *modus vivendi* and the introduction of the Fordney tariff.

In the election of 1921, some fishermen seem to have accepted the Liberal promises of reciprocity to restore the American markets.[48] When this failed to materialize, their desperate plight led many (for example, the Yarmouth halibut fleet) to pack up and move to the United States.[49] Those who remained formed one group in Maritime society which seemed genuinely prepared to contemplate secession in their frantic search for markets. It was surely no coincidence that both Howard Corning, who proposed the famous secession resolution of 1923, and the lawyer Robert Blauveldt, self-proclaimed secessionist and Maritime Rights publicist[50] were both residents of Yarmouth county.

The role of professional classes in the Maritime Rights movement was prominent, but their motivation ambiguous. It is often difficult to discern whether lawyers, doctors, clergymen, academics and journalists were speaking for themselves or for the other groups in society by whom they were directly or indirectly employed. Certainly they played an important function in articulating and rationalizing the aspirations of the other groups. This role was explicit in some cases. The Nova Scotia government retained H. F. Munro of Dalhousie University to aid in the preparation of its submission to the

46 *Report of the Royal Commission Investigating the Fisheries of the Maritime Provinces and the Magdalen Islands* (Ottawa, 1928) pp. 32, 61-5.

47 "Fifty-third Annual Report of the Fisheries Branch . . . 1919," *Sessional Papers* (1919), No. 44, p. 11.

48 G. B. Kenny reported to Hector MacInnes after a trip along the Eastern Shore that the Liberal candidates had "actually got many people to believe that real free trade with the U.S. is in sight." 21 November 1921, Hector MacInnes Papers, (courtesy of Donald MacInnes, Halifax, N.S.).

49 Transcripts of the hearings of the Royal Commission Investigating the Fisheries . . . 1928, p. 3476, APTC.

50 R. Blauveldt to H. S. Congdon, 30 September 1924, H. S. Congdon Papers.

Duncan Commission. The boards of trade hired freight rate experts, professional organizers and lawyers to prepare, publicize and help present their cases before the federal government and its various commissions. Significant also was the relationship between Maritime Rights journalists and the interests who paid their salaries, or patronized their newspapers through advertising and subscriptions. The lumberman-industrialist, Angus MacLean, for example, was reportedly "the principal owner" of the Saint John *Telegraph Journal.*[51] That paper in 1925 promoted the cross-country speaking-tours of president J. D. McKenna and editor A. B. Belding as part of its campaign for Maritime Rights. Similarly C. W. Lunn, who was credited with the initial popularization of the defence of the Intercolonial as guaranteed under the "compact of confederation," aspired to a labour readership and was even hired for a brief period to write for the *Eastern Federationist.*[52] More tenuous but still significant was the relationship between clergymen and the congregations which they represented. It is clear, for example, that the priests who protested the Duncan Commission's failure to help the fishermen were acting as agents for the fishermen in their parishes. Their intervention resulted in the Royal Commission investigation of the fisheries in 1928.[53]

In articulating the progressive reform ideology, which provided an important element in the developing Maritime regionalism, the professionals' motivation was also ambiguous. As various American scholars have pointed out, "progressivism" with its optimism, social criticism and focus on government as an agent of reform might be inspired by many and mixed motives.[54] To farmers, labour and their representatives, "progressivism" could be the desire to improve the lot of the weak and exploited, namely themselves. On the part of the business-oriented it might be concern for efficiency, the replacement of old-fashioned party structures, and the development of a more dynamic role by government which might more effectively serve the interests of the entrepreneur. To the professionals, besides any humanitarian concern, "progressivism" might mean an improved status or an expansion of their role in society in social work, health services or the government bureaucracy.

In the Maritimes, the clergy and academics were most prominent in articulating the various strains of an amorphous progressive ideology. The clergy, imbued with the social gospel, promoted a variety of reforms ranging from prohibition to widows' pensions and occasionally engaged in wholesale at-

51 J. J. McGaffigan to Arthur Meighen, 28 February 1924, Arthur Meighan Papers, PAC.

52 See Halifax *Morning Chronicle,* 16 November 1921; C. W. Lunn to H. S. Congdon, 13 April 1929, H. S. Congdon Papers.

53 Transcripts, Royal Commission to investigate the Fisheries . . . 1927, p. 6.

54 See for example R. H. Wiebe, *The Search For Order,* 1877-1920 (New York, 1967); Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (New York, 1963) and D. W. Noble, *The Progressive Mind 1890-1917* (Chicago, 1970).

tacks on the capitalist system.[55] Academics used a more secular terminology but they too championed a wide range of reforms for the welfare of the community. Dr. F. H. Sexton hailed Nova Scotia's programme of technical education — he happened to be its superintendent — as a valuable means of "social service" in improving the lot of the miners and industrial workers.[56] That it was also a service for local industry went without saying. Dr. Melville Cummings, of the Truro Agricultural College and Rev. Hugh MacPherson of Saint Francis Xavier University displayed a similar zeal for agricultural education and farmers' co-operatives as the means of rural regeneration. President George B. Cutten of Acadia University, having failed to persuade governments to undertake the hydro-electric development of the Bay of Fundy, organized the Cape Split Development Company in an attempt to interest private capital in the scheme.[57]

All these progressive proposals placed strong pressure upon provincial governments to inaugurate or expand programmes for which revenue was not readily available. This fact led progressive elements into an ephemeral campaign for Maritime union, which was expected to provide a more efficient use of available resources[58]; and into a more substantive campaign for Maritime unity, one object of which was to wrest from the Federal Government a "fair" share of Dominion revenues.

Increased federal subsidies were sought, for example, by professionals concerned about the declining quality of instruction in the schools as higher salaries drew experienced teachers westward. But, since fiscal need had never been accepted as a justification for higher subsidies, Maritime governments developed the claim that they were entitled to monetary compensation for grants of land from the public domain—grants such as had been given to On-Tario, Manitoba and Quebec in the boundary settlements of 1912. They also demanded subsidies in lieu of the increasingly lucrative "school lands" funds held in trust by the federal government for the Prairie Provinces. The Maritime Educational Convention at Moncton in 1918 and a Catholic educational conference at Antigonish a year later both discussed the subsidy claims as a matter vital to educational reform.[59] In the latter year the Conservative Halifax *Herald* enthusiastically endorsed a Liberal resolution which outlined the

55 See E. R. Forbes "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn 1971), pp. 15-19 and his review of Richard Allen, *The Social Passion*, in *Acadiensis* Vol. II No. 1 (Autumn, 1972), p. 98.

56 Halifax, *Daily Echo*, 24 May 1913.

57 *Industrial Canada*, August 1918.

58 See J. M. Beck, *The History of Maritime Union: A Study in Frustration*, pp. 31-44.

59 O. T. Daniels, *The Claims of the Maritime Provinces for Federal Subsidies in Lieu of Western Lands* (Halifax, 1918) and *Proceedings of the Second Annual Educational Conference, Antigonish,* (1919).

Maritime claims in the Nova Scotian Legislature. The "serious material injustice" inflicted upon the Maritimes through "the unfair distribution which has been made of federal assets by successive governments" had, according to the *Herald*, starved local government services or supplied them" in such a niggardly manner that progress is almost impossible" The *Herald* advocated the launching of "a concerted movement and (sic) properly directed activity. *We suggest that a maritime popular league should be forthwith organized, with provincial and county and town and village branches in all parts of the Maritime provinces, until the whole country has been enlightened, aroused and arrayed in a support of the resolution unanimously adopted by the Nova Scotia legislature.*"[60] Although as their problems increased, Maritimers sought more fundamental solutions, the subsidy claims remained one of the basic components of the campaign for Maritime rights.

The Maritime Rights agitation which had emerged by 1919 was a regional protest movement which saw all classes united in their demands upon the rest of the country. This did not mean that different classes did not have distinct aspirations of their own; on the contrary, they were probably more conscious of them in 1919 than in any other period before or since. Each held a dream of progressive development in which its own collective interests were directly involved: for the manufacturers, their growth as the major industrial suppliers of the country; for the urban merchants, the final attainment of their communities' status as the entrepots of Canada's trade; for labour and farmers, the emergence of a new more democratic society in which they would break the economic and political dominance of the business classes; for the fishermen, the chance to rehabilitate their industry through the new fresh fish trade; and for the professionals, the elevation of Maritime society through education. But none of these aspirations was capable of realization with the continued decline of the economic and political status of the Maritimes in the Dominion. Just as electricity might channel the usually conflicting molecular energies of an iron bar to produce a magnetic force, so the federal government's adverse policies served to re-align the various "classes" in the Maritimes to produce a powerful social force — regionalism. This force, dressed up in a variety of complex rationalizations, became the Maritime Rights movement of the 1920's.

60 Halifax *Herald*, 10 May 1919.