

"Ground for Common Action":  
Violet McNaughton's Agrarian Feminism  
and the Origins of the Farm Women's Movement in Canada

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Violet McNaughton's agrarian feminism and its impact on the origins of the farm women's movement in Canada in the years up to 1918. It traces the development of her feminism, an indigenous prairie feminism rooted in the work of farm women, on small family farms of commodity producers, during the developmental stage of agriculture on the Canadian prairies. By finding "ground for common action" her particular kind of feminism, co-operative agrarian feminism, enabled her to play a leading role in the origins of the farm women's movement in Canada. By 1918 she was the most influential farm woman in Canada.

The thesis begins by looking at the impact of her life in radical North Kent, from 1879 to 1909. She came to Canada as a feminist supporter, with radical ideas about class and a knowledge of co-operatives. A Kentish country school teacher, she brought Edwardian enthusiasm and an open-minded attitude to her brother's homestead in the Hillview farm district near Harris, Saskatchewan. Her experiences as a settler in Hillview and her 1911 operation turned her into a feminist activist and led her to begin developing an agrarian feminist ideology. She married John McNaughton, a homesteader from New Zealand and they formed a working partnership to organize the Hillview Grain Growers, one of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) locals that opposed the SGGA conservative leadership. Unlike their opponents, the McNaughtons linked a belief in government intervention in the economy with radical democratic ideas and they identified with the working class. They also linked the need for class equality with the need for gender equality and an end to war and militarism. McNaughton organized the Hillview Women Grain Growers in which she practised her agrarian feminist approach at a local level.

McNaughton's agrarian feminism developed as she organized the provincial Women Grain Growers (WGG), a new kind of farm women's group. The WGG became the pattern for the women's sections of the United Farm Women in other provinces. These groups became a new stream in the farm women's movement, along with the Homemakers and the Women's Institutes. McNaughton's feminism was rooted in her life as a farm woman and the belief that the work of farm women was necessary for the nation. Therefore they should have a say in the nation's business and should be able to live well. McNaughton's feminism matured as she and the WGG worked for numerous reforms and as they campaigned for women's suffrage and for "medical aid within the reach of all" farm women and their families. This campaign eventually led to medicare. The final section of the thesis examines McNaughton's inclusions and exclusions from the agrarian community.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank D'Arcy Hande and the staff of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Ruth Miller and the staff of the Local History Room of the Saskatoon Public Library, and Judy Ferguson, Keith Dryden, and Liz Delahey of The Western Producer, for all help they gave me while I was doing the research for this thesis. I am grateful to all of the people who agreed to be interviewed, especially Rose (Ducie) Jardine, Mary (Crozier) Anderson, and George Tosh. The people of Harris and district were very generous about sharing their knowledge of the McNaughtons, their farm and the Hillview area with me. Sophia Dixon was a friend and, more than anyone else, she helped me to understand the farm women's movement in McNaughton's day. Christine Nielsen, a dear friend, shared countless insights with me about life on a Saskatchewan farm during the thirties. Members of the National Farmers' Union, the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes and the Saskatchewan Farm Women's Network also helped me to understand the lives of farm women and the modern farm women's movement.

Several people shared research with me or discussed our mutual areas of research. I am particularly grateful to Inger Anderson, Catherine Cavanaugh, Alvin Finkel, Jacqueline Hutchings, C. Stuart Houston, Betty McFarlane, Nanci Langford, Patricia Miquelon, Barbara Roberts, Christa Scowby, and Patricia Williams. Dale Miquelon has been supportive and given me practical help. I would like to thank Cindy Picco, who helped me with typing and other practical tasks, and several people who read and made helpful suggestions on parts of earlier drafts.

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My greatest debt is to my family and my friends who have been supportive, generous, good humoured, and patient as I researched and wrote this thesis. I was inspired by my Grandparents, who came from Britain to homestead on the prairies in the settlement period, and my Father, Owen Bruce Taylor, who loved the history of the prairies. I am especially grateful to my Mother, Mabel (Scott) Taylor, whose stories about life on western Canadian farms taught me a great deal, and to my wonderful children, Colin, Andrea, Lochlin and Jordan McLellan and their families.

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1879 November 11, Violet Clara Jackson born in Borden, Kent
- 1909 November 6, Violet Jackson arrived in Hillview
- 1910 May 30, Violet Jackson and John McNaughton married
- 1911 Homemakers' Clubs established in Saskatchewan
- 1911 May & June, McNaughton in hospital in Saskatoon
- 1912 & 1913 McNaughtons organized Grain Growers' locals
- 1913 February, "Women's Congress" at SGGGA Convention
- 1913 to 1914 McNaughton led organizational committee
- 1914 February, Women Grain Growers founded
- 1914-1918 McNaughton first President of WGG
- 1914-1916 McNaughton and WGG focused on provincial suffrage
- 1914-1920 McNaughton and WGG focused on medical aid
- 1915 McNaughton first woman on SGGGA Board of Directors
- 1915 February, McNaughton forged alliance between WGG,  
WCTU, and Political Equality Leagues to form the  
Provincial Equal Franchise Board
- 1915 McNaughton helped to organize UFWA
- 1916 March, women's suffrage granted in Saskatchewan
- 1916 McNaughton and other prairie suffragists begin to push  
for federal women's franchise
- 1916 Municipal hospital and municipal doctor legislation  
passed. Improved in 1917 and 1919
- 1917-1919 McNaughton was Honourary Secretary of WGG
- 1918 McNaughton helped to organize UFWO
- 1918 McNaughton helped organize UFWM
- 1918 February 28 to March 2, McNaughton attended Women's War  
Conference in Ottawa

- 1918 March, Speech from the Throne announced federal women's franchise, effective January 1919
- 1919-1923 McNaughton focused on national work
- 1919 January, the WGG, UFWA, UFWM, and UFWO formed ICFW. McNaughton first President
- 1919 February, McNaughton had "nervous breakdown"
- 1919 May & June, Winnipeg General Strike, McNaughton supportive of strikers
- 1919 June, McNaughton helped to organize PCW and WGG joined
- 1919 Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) formed
- 1919-1926 McNaughton active in the Progressives
- 1919 October 27, Progressives, with McNaughton's help, defeated W. R. Motherwell in by-election
- 1919 November, United Farmers form government of Ontario
- 1920 July, ICFW became WS-CCA. McNaughton first President
- 1921 July, United Farmers form government in Alberta
- 1921 November, 65 Progressive elected in federal election
- 1922 McNaughton first woman on Executive of SGGA
- 1922 SGGA "Ginger Group" (led by McNaughton, A.J. McPhail and George Edwards) begin taking control of SGGA
- 1922 WGG and other farm women's groups withdrew from NCWC
- 1922 Fall, McNaughton, SGGA, and FU do not get enough farm people to sign up for the Saskatoon Wheat Pool
- 1922 November, CCA withdrew its support of the Progressives
- 1923 McNaughton attended her last meeting of WS-CCA and resigned from the Immigration Committee
- 1923 The Progressive started publication, to support Wheat Pool, McNaughton on editorial board for SGGA
- 1923 McNaughton, SGGA and FU get enough farmers to sign up and so Saskatchewan Wheat Pool was launched
- 1924 The Progressive renamed The Western Producer

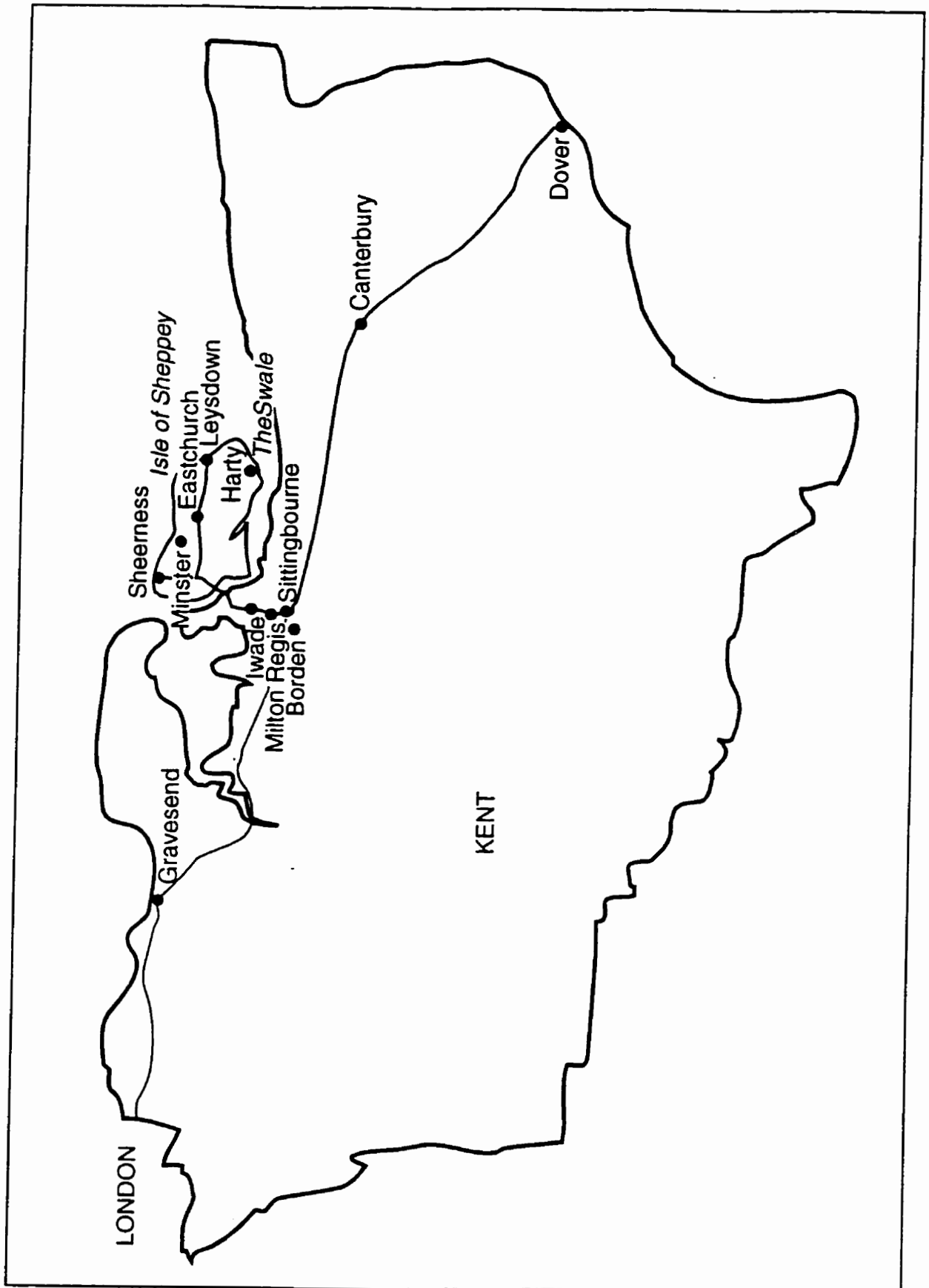
- 1925 January, McNaughton retired from SGGA Board of Directors, after serving on Board for ten years
- 1925 April, McNaughton began to "conduct" the "Mainly for Women" page of The Western Producer as volunteer
- 1925, April to December of 1950, McNaughton was Women's Editor of The Western Producer
- 1925 McNaughton and WGG organized the Egg and Poultry Pool
- 1925 October, federal election, Progressives down to 24 MPs
- 1925-1926 McNaughton on Amalgamation Committee for SGGA
- 1926 McNaughton and Annie Hollis design a new organizational structure for the role of women in United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section)
- 1926 McNaughton and others persuade SGGA and FU to stop fighting and amalgamate as UFC(SS)
- 1926 to 1933 McNaughtons rented farm to chosen sons, Alec and John Hunter
- 1926 December, McNaughtons rented apartment in city & she began to work full-time for The Western Producer
- 1926-1930 McNaughton and Annie Hollis guided United Farm Women in Saskatchewan through transition
- 1928 McNaughtons and UFC(SS) push for Consultative Clinic
- 1929 June, Nativism played big role in Saskatchewan election
- 1929 Fall, McNaughton went to Prague for WILPF conference
- 1930 McNaughtons took Mary Crozier and Wolfgang and Erwin Schwangart as chosen children
- 1934 McNaughton given the OBE for service to practical agriculture and her interest in the welfare of rural women
- 1949 UFC became SFU. Retained structure McNaughton & Annie Hollis designed in 1926 and helped adapt by 1930
- 1950 December, McNaughton resigned as Women's Editor of The Western Producer, but continued to write "Jottings by the Way" column until 1960

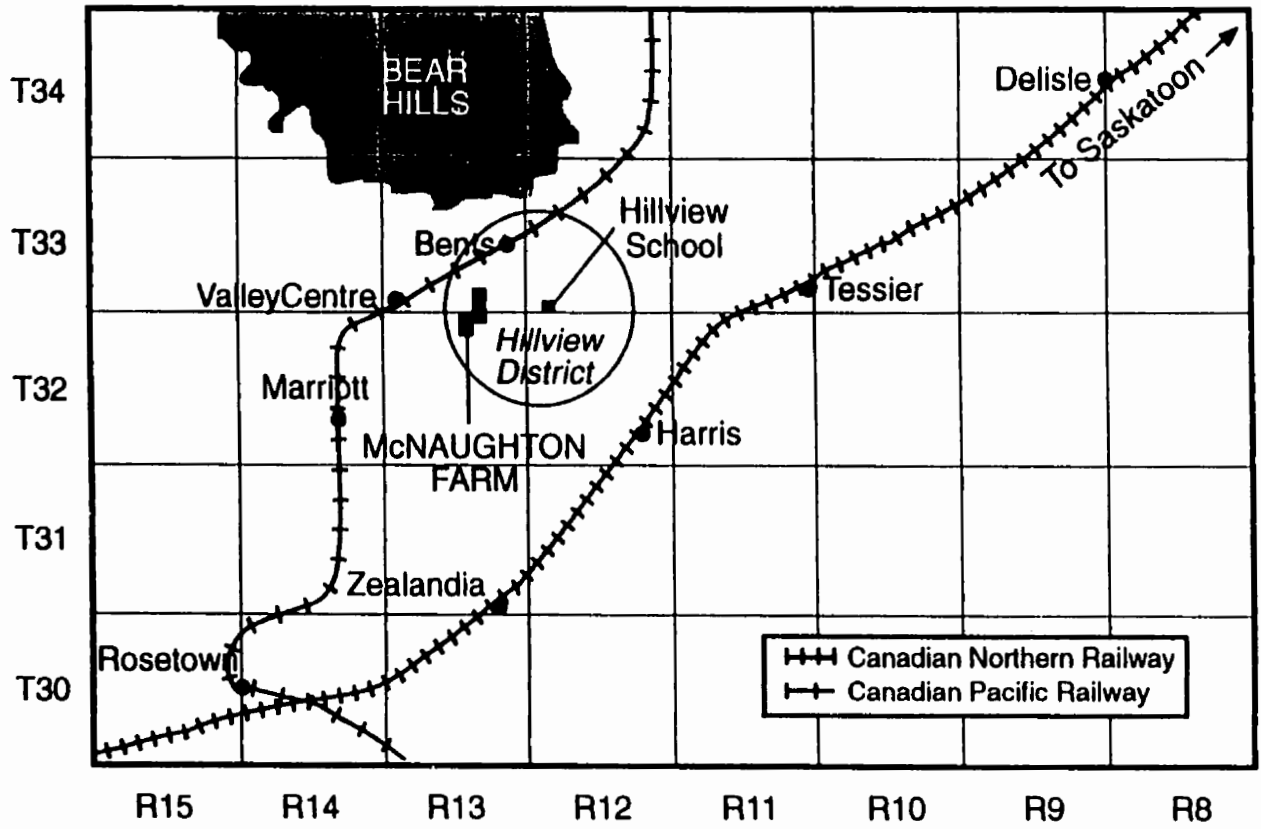


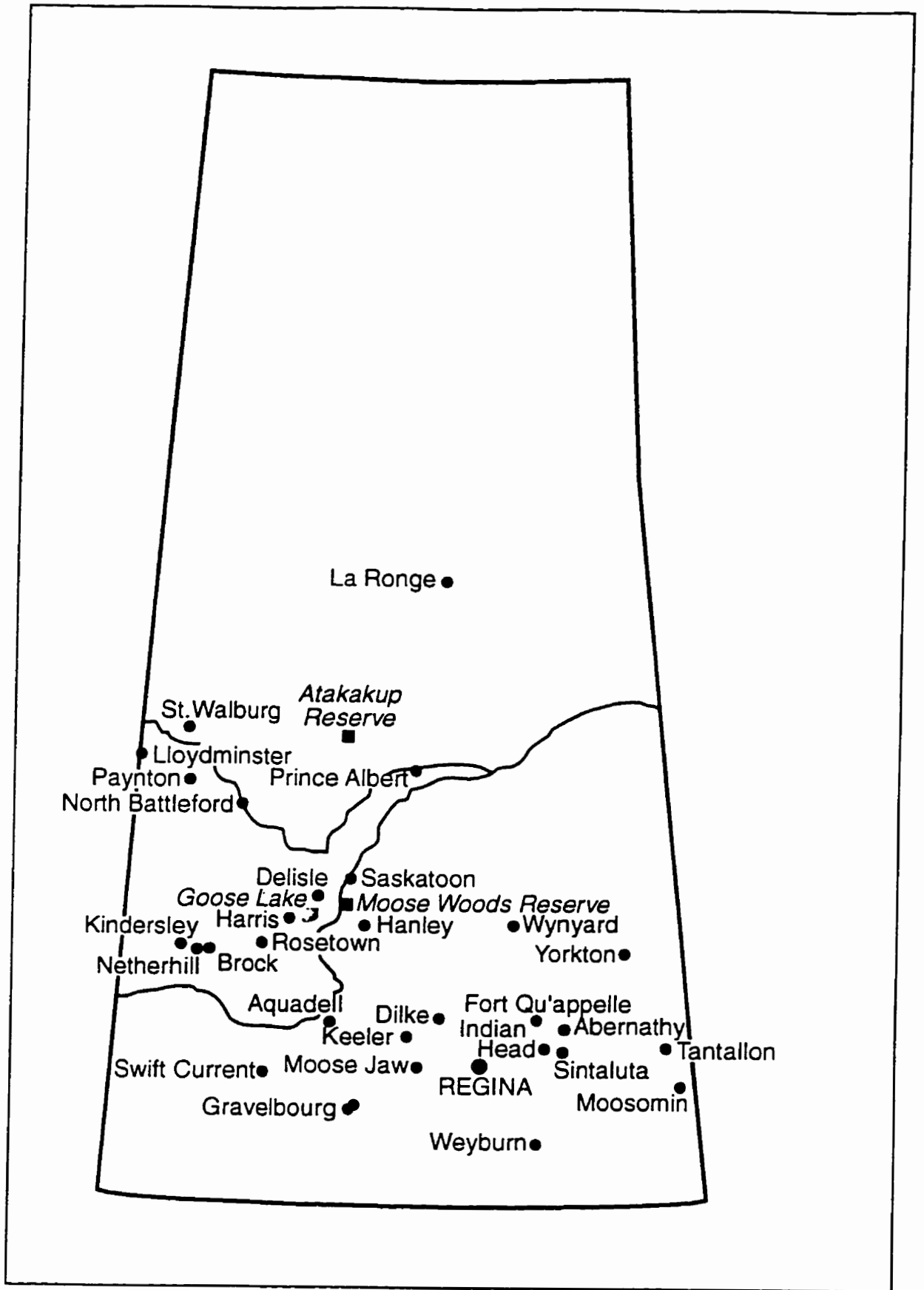
- 1951 May, McNaughton given honorary LLD by the University  
of Saskatchewan
- 1959 McNaughtons sold the farm
- 1965 June 10, John McNaughton died
- 1968 February 2, Violet McNaughton died
- 1969 SFU & other groups became the NFU. Retained structure  
for participation of women designed by McNaughton  
and Hollis in 1926.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AHCS -	Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan
CCIHs -	Canadian Committee of Immigration for Household Service
CCA -	Canadian Council of Agriculture
CCF -	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CNR -	Canadian National Railway
CWPC -	Canadian Women's Press Club
FU -	Farmers' Union of Canada
FWIC -	Federated Women's Institutes of Canada
GGA -	Grain Growers' Association
GGGC -	Grain Growers' Grain Company
GTP -	Grand Trunk Pacific Railway
ICFW -	Interprovincial Council of Farm Women
ICWG -	International Co-operative Women's Guild
MGGA -	Manitoba Grain Growers' Association
MLA -	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP -	Member of Parliament
NCWC -	National Council of Women of Canada
NFU -	National Farmers' Union
NUWSS -	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
ONA -	Overseas Nursing Association
PCW -	Provincial Council of Women
PEFB -	Provincial Equal Franchise Board
PEL -	Political Equality Leagues
SAB -	Saskatchewan Archives Board
SARM -	Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
SFU -	Saskatchewan Farmers' Union
SGGA -	Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association
SPL-LHR -	Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room
SWI -	Saskatchewan Women's Institute
TGGA -	Territorial Grain Growers' Association
UFC(SS) -	United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section)
UFA -	United Farmers of Alberta
UFWA -	United Farm Women of Alberta
UFM -	United Farmers of Manitoba
UFWM -	United Farm Women of Manitoba
UFO -	United Farmers of Ontario
UFWO -	United Farm Women of Ontario
USA -	University of Saskatchewan Archives
WI -	Women's Institutes
WCTU -	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WGG -	Women Grain Growers
WGGA -	Women Grain Growers' Association
WILPF -	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WS-CCA -	Women's Section - Canadian Council of Agriculture
WS-SGGA -	Women's Section - Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association
WSPU -	Women's Social and Political Union
VON -	Victorian Order of Nurses







## CHAPTER ONE

### THE INTRODUCTION

When Violet McNaughton retired as the women's editor of the 'Mainly for Women' pages of The Western Producer many of her readers wrote to her and, as usual, she replied to every letter individually. She was especially pleased to reply to her "page friends" who had co-operated with her "in such a grand way over the years." Her reply to Dorothy Benwell, a "page friend" and farm woman from Wadena Saskatchewan who had corresponded with McNaughton for fourteen years, was particularly revealing. She thanked Benwell for writing and said that many people had asked her

to write something about the growth and development of the Farm Women's Movement as you suggest. I do not know if that is possible but I have promised to put notes in order so that they may be of help for someone else to do so some day.<sup>1</sup>

From then until 1968, when she died, she treasured her voluminous papers and sorted through them, sometimes making hand written notes on them so that he people would understand them better.<sup>2</sup> Like other turn-of-the-century feminists, McNaughton was conscious of the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D9, McNaughton to Dorothy Benwell, 21 February 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. McNaughton was already concerned about preserving the papers of the WGG in 1920. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), McNaughton to M.L. Burbank, 26 February 1920.

preserving the papers of the women's movement but she was also conscious of the importance of preserving the history of prairie settlers.<sup>3</sup>

McNaughton's papers are one of the best collections of papers on farm women during the first half of the twentieth century in Canada. Her writing in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm and in The Western Producer are also rich sources. Looking at agrarian feminism by focusing on her feminism, in relation to the farm women's movement, is particularly fruitful because McNaughton deliberately annotated and preserved her papers with this in mind. She also wrote numerous autobiographical and historical passages in her column "Jottings by the Way" in 'The Producer' in the 1950s, in lieu of "the memoirs I shall probably never write."<sup>4</sup> She did so, in part, to make her ideas and activities and the farm women's movement more understandable.

This study hypothesizes that Violet McNaughton's agrarian feminism was an indigenous prairie feminism rooted in the work of farm women on the small family farms of

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<sup>3</sup> The Western Producer 20 November 1952, 15 May 1952, 14 May 1953, 7 April 1955, 21 July 1955, 8 September 1955, 22 September 1955, 12 February 1959, 26 February 1959, 2 April 1959, 8 January 1959, 19 February 1959, 26 March 1959, 2 July 1959, 27 August 1959. For a discussion of other feminists who were conscious of the need to preserve women's history see Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Feminist Consciousness - From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 268-273.

<sup>4</sup> The Western Producer 8 December 1955.

commodity producers during the developmental stage of agriculture on the Canadian prairies. It also argues that her particular kind of feminism enabled her to take a leading role during the origins of the farm women's movement in Canada. Although her feminism has been part of the historical debate about feminisms in Canada, and numerous historians have used her papers, no full length study has analyzed her feminism.

I will use a thematic approach to study McNaughton's agrarian feminism by focusing on her activities, ideas, and interests from 1909 to 1918 during the first period of the farm women's movement in Canada. Because the approach is thematic, rather than being strictly chronological, when it is helpful, sections of the chapters will move beyond 1918 if her ideas, interests or activities in later years give added insight into the early period or if they are needed for context.

Between 1909 and 1918 McNaughton developed a distinctly agrarian feminist ideology which focused on farm women and their families. Her agrarian feminism had a significant impact on a new stream in the farm women's movement in Canada that she, and the farm women she worked with, developed. The Women Grain Growers (WGG), the women's section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA), was the first such organization. The United Farm Women in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario were patterned on



the WGG and established with McNaughton's assistance. Variants of this pattern of organization endure to this day in the National Farmers' Union and the Women of Unifarm in Alberta. As a result of her part in the origins of the farm women's movement and in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) by 1919 McNaughton was the most influential farm woman in Canada.

McNaughton's integrative agrarian feminism meant that she and the WGG co-operated with an earlier stream of the farm women's movement, the Women's Institutes and the Homemakers' Clubs, which had come into being between 1896 and 1911. As a result, the two streams of the farm women's movement in Saskatchewan often worked in co-operation with one another rather than competing.<sup>5</sup> In other words, her feminism had a fundamental impact on the origins of the farm women's movement in Saskatchewan and in Canada and on the way it subsequently developed. Although McNaughton continued to exert a great deal of influence on the farm women's movement for several decades this study focuses on the important choices she made during the origins of the movement.

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<sup>5</sup> Georgina M. Taylor, "'A Splendid Field Before Us' Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909-1926," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1993. For her ideas about such co-operation in Alberta see also Catherine Anne Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994, 122-147.

Looking back on her immigration to Canada McNaughton later recalled that in 1909

for thousands of us it was such an entirely new experience. We were on our way to the Golden West - an almost fabulous land - if we were to believe the immigration literature scattered up and down the Old Country.<sup>6</sup>

However when Violet Jackson arrived in Saskatchewan she was to find that life on a homestead was not as "fabulous" as the picture painted in the propaganda disseminated by Canada to encourage immigration.<sup>7</sup> Prairie agriculture had already been constructed as a male endeavour that relied on the subordination of women. Canadians had the basic infrastructure in place to process immigrants. British and European immigrants were moved quickly from the Atlantic, across Canada and onto stark prairie homesteads with few, if any, local services.

Just a few days after she disembarked from the ship in Montreal, Violet Jackson stepped off the train in Harris and soon was riding across the bald prairies toward her brother's homestead, in the Hillview farm district, 65 miles southwest of Saskatoon. In Hillview she was to meet John McNaughton. After a short courtship she was to marry him,

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<sup>6</sup> The Western Producer 13 February 1958.

<sup>7</sup> D.J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton: Immigration and Settlement Policy 1896-1905," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), 290. Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 246.

naively setting out on a long life as a farm woman that was to be far more arduous than she could possibly have imagined in the fall of 1909. In less than two years she was to understand all too well that she definitely was not living in a "Golden West" and she was to resolve to take action in order to improve the dire conditions in which the homesteaders and their families lived.

The international scholarly debate about feminism has produced a vast historical literature. The literature on the history of feminism is helpful in analyzing McNaughton's feminism. The term feminism was first commonly used in France in the 1890s and then in North America by 1913.<sup>8</sup> Nancy Cott contends that the use of the term feminism emerged in North America during a groundswell in support for women's suffrage and "signalled a new phase in the debate and agitation about women's rights and freedoms that had flared for hundreds of years."<sup>9</sup> She points out that

the meaning of Feminism (capitalized at first) also differed from the woman movement. It was both broader and narrower: broader in intent, proclaiming revolution in all the relations of the sexes, and narrower in the range of its willing adherents. As an **ism** (an ideology) it presupposed a set of principles not necessarily

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<sup>8</sup> Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism - A Comparative Historical Approach," Signs 14(1) (Autumn 1988): 126-27. Nancy F. Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, 3.

belonging to every woman - not limited to women.<sup>10</sup>

Since the first use of the term there has been a lively, on-going debate about feminism. I began to use the term "agrarian feminism" and to analyze its meaning in an unpublished paper presented in 1988 about "Feminist and Socialist Women in Agrarian Saskatchewan" from 1925 to 1952.<sup>11</sup> I recognized then that there were many similarities

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Some scholars now argue convincingly that to be a feminist requires "the felt experience of oppression. And this men cannot feel because men are not oppressed but privileged by sexism . . . . Men who support the struggle for gender equality may be called 'anti-sexist' or 'pro-feminist.'" Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller, Against the Tide - Pro-Feminist Men in the United States 1776-1990 (Boston Press, 1992), 3. Kimmel and Mosmiller use "pro-feminist" because it is better at conveying "positive support for women's struggles." Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Georgina M. Taylor, "'Something Attempted, Something Done': Feminist and Socialist Women in Agrarian Saskatchewan," an unpublished paper presented at the J.S. Woodsworth Conference, Vancouver, April 1988, 5-6. In his 1981 thesis "The Women's Section" Marchildon views the women in the WGG as "agrarian activists." He casually mentions that the women in the WGG were "agrarian feminists" on the last page of his thesis, p. 124, but he does not attempt to analyze the term and it is not central to his interpretation of the WGG. Later, in 1985, he argued that to label the women in the WGG maternal feminists was too simplistic. Rather than seeing them as agrarian feminists, as he had four years before, he then saw them as being "part of an aggressive agrarian movement" that was striving to gain equality for "'honest yeoman' and his family." Rudolph George Marchildon, "The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1981. See also Rudolph George Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913-1920," in Building Beyond the Homestead - Rural History of the Prairies ed. David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 104.

between the ideology of Saskatchewan farm women in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) that I had studied and McNaughton's ideology. So I adopted the use of the modifier "agrarian" from Agrarian Socialism, Seymour Lipset's classic study of the CCF in Saskatchewan.<sup>12</sup> Other scholars are now using the term "agrarian feminism" or referring to the beliefs of organized farm women as "farm

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<sup>12</sup> Seymour Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (1950; rpt. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971). For similarities between McNaughton and the Saskatchewan agrarian socialist women see Taylor, Georgina M. "Cooperative Commonwealth Women Collection", an oral history collection of 98 hours, SAB, numbers R:5827 to R:5874; R-8130 to R-8166; R12,135 to R12,162; files of correspondence between McNaughton and three farm women who belonged to the CCF, Sophia Dixon, Annie Hollis, Louise Lucas, and Dorise Nielsen, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D19, D27, D41, and D53. See also Georgina M. Taylor, "Equals and Partners? An Examination of How Saskatchewan Women Reconciled Their Political Activities for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation with Traditional Roles for Women" M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1983; Georgina M. Taylor, "'Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?' The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation 1910-1967," in Women Isolation and Bonding - The Ecology of Gender, ed. Kathleen Storrie (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 79-100. Georgina M. Taylor, "Gladys Strum: Farm Woman, Teacher and Politician," Canadian Woman Studies (Winter 1986) 7(4): 89-93; Georgina Taylor, "Sophia Dixon: 'Progressive Always - Indifferent Never,'" Saskatoon History, 1(1) (1980): 25-31. Georgina M. Taylor, "'The Women Shall Help to Lead the Way': Saskatchewan CCF-NDP Women Candidates in Provincial and Federal Election, 1934-1965" in Building the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation ed. J. William Brennan (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1984), 141 - 160. See also Elaine Orvedahl Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987. Faith Johnston, "Dorise Nielsen, The Life and Ideas of a Canadian Woman in Politics," M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1989.

feminism" or "rural feminism."<sup>13</sup>

In 1986 Rosalind Delmar argued that the more work that is done on the history of feminism the more a picture of a "fragmented movement" emerges. She contended that we could no longer assume that the meaning of feminism was clear. She believed that it made more sense to speak of a "plurality of feminisms" than of one feminism.<sup>14</sup> Scholars have since identified many different feminisms.<sup>15</sup> Karen Offen suggested in 1988 that, although feminism varied from one country to another and it varied over time, it would be helpful to have a general definition of feminism that is inclusive enough to cover all feminists. She proposed a definition upon which she hoped historians could generally agree but it has not been possible to agree upon the

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<sup>13</sup> Louise Carbert, Agrarian Feminism - The Politics of Ontario Farm Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Gail Cuthbert Brandt and Naomi Black, " 'Il en faut un peu': Farm Women and Feminism in Québec and France Since 1945," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Victoria 1990, 73-96. Brandt and Black use the term "farm feminism." Donald Marti, "Sisters of the Grange: Rural Feminism in the Late Nineteenth Century," Agricultural History 58(3) (July 1984) 247-261. Marti uses the term "rural feminism."

<sup>14</sup> Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in What is feminism?, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 21 and 9.

<sup>15</sup> For definitions of the eighteen different feminisms see Jill Vickers and others, Politics As If Women Mattered - A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 321-28; and Maggie Humm, ed., Modern Feminisms - Political, Literary, Cultural (New York: Columbia University, 1992), 404-09.

essential aspects of feminism that must be included in such a definition. Therefore it is still necessary for historians "to invent their own definitions of feminism."<sup>16</sup>

McNaughton's agrarian feminism cannot be identified solely by using the two main categories of feminism that until recently scholars have seen as having significance in Canada in McNaughton's lifetime. The first of these two categories has been referred to variously as maternal feminism, social feminism, or relational feminism because of its emphasis on the maternal qualities of women and their difference from men.<sup>17</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt and Naomi Black found that the women in their study of farm women since 1945, in the Cercles de fermières in Quebec and in the Groupements de vulgarisation\développement agricole féminins in France, were social feminists. They used a very broad definition of feminism similar to the one that Black used in her book Social Feminism. They define feminism as

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<sup>16</sup> Offen, "Defining Feminism," 131. Mary Kinnear, Margaret McWilliams - An Interwar Feminist (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 10. Ellen Carol Dubois, "Comment on Karen Offen's 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach'"; Karen Offen, "Reply to DuBois,"; Nancy F. Cott, "Comment on Karen Offen's 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach'"; Karen Offen, "Reply to Cott," Signs (Autumn 1989) 15(1): 195-209. For a discussions of these various conflicts see Conflicts in Feminism, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 169. Offen, "Defining Feminism," 134. Naomi Black, Social Feminism (Ithaca and London: 1989), 1.

the desire for an increase in women's autonomy. We would specify also that (1) feminism recognizes the differences in the situation of women and men, both historically and in the present; (2) feminism insists that women not be judged inferior by male standards or in comparison to men; and (3) feminism has as a minimum policy goal, that women not be disadvantaged because they are women.<sup>12</sup>

The second of these two categories of feminism has been referred to as equal rights feminism or equity feminism because of its emphasis on equality.<sup>14</sup> In their survey of women's history in Canada, Alison Prentice and others argue that "equity feminism" focused

more directly on arguments of simple justice. This view-point stressed how much women resembled men, and how unjust it was that they should have fewer rights. As human beings women were endowed with souls and abilities, but they were barred by custom and law from participating in public life.<sup>20</sup>

Although the principles cited in both of these definitions were part of McNaughton's feminism they are not sufficient to define McNaughton's feminism over the decades. Her agrarian feminism included five additional elements which are essential in order to understand her feminism and the impact that she had on the farm women's movement in Canada. First, her agrarian feminism promoted the recognition of the partnership between women and men on

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<sup>18</sup> Brandt and Black, "Il en faut un peu," 87. Black, Social Feminism, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Prentice and others, Canadian Women, 169.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 190.



family farms rather than defining the production unit as a solitary male farmer. Second, it encouraged farm women to negotiate the conditions of their productive, reproductive and community work in order to improve these conditions. Third, her agrarian feminism aimed at improving conditions in which farm people as a class worked and lived, including the conditions in which farm women gave birth. Fourth, her agrarian feminism was based on the idea that the first National Policy had to be radically revamped before farm women, their families and other Canadians could live well. Fifth, her feminism was aimed at improving the poor conditions in which farm women and their families lived by using the principles of agrarian co-operation.<sup>21</sup> These were the elements that made her feminism uniquely agrarian. In short, the equality-versus-difference dichotomy is not adequate for the analysis of McNaughton's agrarian feminism and its impact on the farm women's movement in Canada.<sup>22</sup>

Until recently the scholarly literature on early twentieth century feminism in Canada has relied heavily on the equality-versus-difference dichotomy in which equal rights feminism is contrasted with maternal feminism. In the

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<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to Rev. H.D. Rans 15 February 1919. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mrs. C.A. Campbell, 29 September 1949.

<sup>22</sup> Joan Scott refers to this dichotomy as the "equality-versus-difference formulation." Joan Wallach Scott, "The Sears Case," Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 171.

1970s, when historians began to try to understand the differences between the feminists of their own day and earlier generations of feminists, this distinction served a useful purpose. But the formulation became one of the binary opposites that scholars relied upon so much that it has become what Joy Parr refers to as a "galloping pair."<sup>23</sup> Recently the equality-versus-difference "galloping pair," which has run wildly through the international and Canadian historical literature on feminism, has been challenged. Sharon Cook, for example, argues that feminists in the Women's Christian Temperance Unions were "evangelical feminists" and thus avoids the false dichotomy of equality-versus-difference.<sup>24</sup>

McNaughton has been viewed as an equal rights feminist because she was a suffragist who promoted equality. Veronica Strong-Boag hypothesized in her influential article "Pulling in Double Harness" that prairie feminists, including McNaughton, moved in the 1920s from a feminism that focused on conventional public politics to a feminism that focused on the private sphere and stressed a feminism of "day-to-day

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<sup>23</sup> Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners - Women Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 9.

<sup>24</sup> Sharon Anne Cook, "'Sowing Seed for the Master': The Ontario WCTU and Evangelical Feminism 1874-1930," Journal of Canadian Studies 30(3) (Fall 1995): 175-194.

life" more like maternal feminism.<sup>25</sup> However a close look at McNaughton and the women in the farm movement in Saskatchewan shows that they did not make the shift that Strong-Boag described. McNaughton was interested in both the partisan politics that had such an impact on the farm economy and hence on farm women, and the day-to-day lives of women in Canada. McNaughton and the women in the WGG were, according to Marilyn Barber, on a campaign to end drudgery in the 1920s, but she did not posit a shift in their feminism.<sup>26</sup> Barber's picture is closer to the mark than the shift that Strong-Boag posits. In my 1988 paper "Feminist and Socialist Women in Agrarian Saskatchewan," I argued that McNaughton and the other farm women in Saskatchewan did not turn away from politics in the 1920s. Subsequently, in The New Day Recalled, Strong-Boag modified her ideas and discussed the unprecedented number of women, including McNaughton, involved in explicitly political organizations

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<sup>25</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie," Journal of Canadian Studies 21(3) (Fall 1986): 34. Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983, 124-31. Carol Bacchi, "Divided Allegiances: The Response of Farm and Labour Women to Suffrage," in A Not Unreasonable Claim - Women and Social Reform 1880s-1920s ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), 1-14.

<sup>26</sup> Marilyn Barber, "Help for Farm Homes: the Campaign to End Drudgery in Rural Saskatchewan in the 1920s," Scientia Canadensis - Journal of the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine 9 (June 1985): 3-26.

during the interwar years.<sup>27</sup>

McNaughton's feminism has been contrasted with the beliefs of the women in the rural Women's Institutes (WIs) and their Saskatchewan equivalent the Homemakers' Clubs. In Liberation Deferred Carol Bacchi dichotomized feminism and used a Central Canadian urban model to paint a misleading, muddled picture of the part played by McNaughton and other farm women in the suffrage campaign in Canada.<sup>28</sup> Bacchi mistakenly portrays McNaughton and the women in the WGG as being enemies of the Women's Institutes. Other scholars have followed her lead and compounded her errors. In Bacchi's book, in Rudolf Marchildon's thesis on the WGG, and in Pauline Rankin's study of modern Ontario farm women, the women in the Women's Sections of the farm organizations are portrayed in a favourable light whereas WIs are seen less

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<sup>27</sup> Taylor, "Something Attempted, Something Done," 5-6. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled - Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), 195-208.

<sup>28</sup> Bacchi, Liberation Deferred, 124-131. See Ernest Forbes, "The Ideas of Carol Bacchi and The Suffragists of Halifax: A Review Essay on Liberation Deferred? [sic] The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1887-1918," Atlantis 10(2) (Spring 1985): 119-126. In this insightful review Forbes praised Bacchi's "revisionist scepticism" and said she included some "useful information" but her "picture of Canadian suffragists is open to question." "This work" he argued, "glosses over the movement in the Maritimes," is "factually misleading," and its "repetitive invocation of class often gives the impression of reductionism."

favourably.<sup>29</sup>

My article "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later," was an overview of the role of Saskatchewan women in the Homemakers, in the WGG and the farm organizations that succeeded it, and in the CCF. In it I portrayed McNaughton and the Farm Women favourably, but I also began to look at the co-operative relations between women in these groups and at McNaughton's role in maintaining this harmony.<sup>30</sup>

Brandt and Black, Yolande Cohen, and Louise Carbert portray the women in the Institutes and the Cercles in a favourable light. Basing her information on McNaughton and Irene Parlby on secondary sources, including Carol Bacchi, rather than research in original sources, Carbert's political science dissertation paints a negative picture of McNaughton, Parlby, and the women in the Women's Sections of the farm organizations.<sup>31</sup> Carbert and I had many fruitful conversations after I read her dissertation. She did more research, and in the book which grew out of her

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<sup>29</sup> Bacchi, Liberation Deferred, 123-132. Bacchi misspells McNaughton's name as MacNaughton. Marchildon, "The Women's Section." Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women," in Beyond the Vote - Canadian Women and Politics ed. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (University of Toronto Press, 1989), 309-332.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?"

<sup>31</sup> Yolande Cohen, Femmes de parole - L'Histoire des Cercles de Fermières du Québec 1915-1990 (Montreal: Le Jour, 1990). Louise Carbert, "Agrarian Feminism: The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women," Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1991, 82-113.

dissertation, Agrarian Feminism - The Politics of Ontario Farm Women, she presented a more positive portrait of McNaughton, the Women's sections of the Grain Growers and the United Farmers, and the women in the National Farmers Union.<sup>32</sup>

Past interpretations of McNaughton's feminism have over-simplified a long, complex evolution in her thinking and in her practice. There has been an attempt to push her into one or the other of two antagonistic categories of a dichotomized feminism. The only full-length academic study that focuses on McNaughton, Sheilagh Steer's well-balanced "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton," is based on a thorough reading of the McNaughton papers. Many of the key ideas in Steer's thesis are summarized in her article "Violet McNaughton and the Struggle for the Co-operative Society."<sup>33</sup> The descriptive details in Steer's work are

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<sup>32</sup> I would like to thank Louise Carbert for the many stimulating conversations we have had about farm women, for her friendship, and for the co-operative way in which she worked with me as a colleague when she was teaching at the University of Saskatchewan. In writing her book Carbert was faced with a difficult task because, although recent scholarship deconstructs the equality-versus-difference dichotomy, the research for her dissertation from which the book came had been based on a questionnaire that was designed using the dichotomy. Carbert, Agrarian Feminism.

<sup>33</sup> Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979. Sheila [sic] Steer, "Violet McNaughton and the Struggle for the Co-operative Society," in Educating for a Brighter New Day: Women's Organizations as Learning Sites ed. Michael Welton (Halifax: School of Education Dalhousie University, 1992), 139-59.

much more reliable than most other secondary sources that refer to McNaughton. However Steer deals with McNaughton as an adult educator and a reformer. This is a cautious analysis of McNaughton's politics, since McNaughton defined herself as "first and foremost a farm woman", as a "radical" on a left-right spectrum, and by saying "I am an ardent feminist."<sup>34</sup> In other words, she was a reformer and an adult educator her ideology entailed much more than a commitment to adult education and reform.<sup>35</sup>

Two critiques, by Joan Scott and Angela Miles, of the equality-versus-difference dichotomy are helpful in understanding McNaughton's feminism. The first of these critiques, Scott's post-modernist analysis, suggests we do away with the dichotomy.<sup>36</sup> The second, by Angela Miles, a

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<sup>34</sup> Steer "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(6), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 7 April 1937. For McNaughton's self-definition as a feminist see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D12, McNaughton to Peter Bludoff, 11 April 1942 and SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E33, McNaughton to Andrew Sibbald 27 September 1934. For her self-definition as a radical see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(6), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 7 April 1939. For her attitude toward "highbrows" and "the fear of radicalism" see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(7), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton 5 August 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Although McNaughton was not a Communist, she supported the Russian Revolution as "a fair-minded person". SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to the Editor of "Starbeams," 27 May 1919; A1 E53(1), McNaughton to R.M. Johnson, 2 March 1920; A1 D54(1), McNaughton to Irene Parlby, 1 May 1919. The Western Producer, 19 November 1931, 30 April 1931, 11 December 1930, 25 December 1930.

<sup>36</sup> For a recent debate about dichotomies by Canadian feminist historians, which involves a discussion of Joan Scott's work, see Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-

scholar of adult education, also criticizes the dichotomy by analyzing what she refers to as "integrative feminisms."

Proponents of the equality-versus-difference dichotomy posit that equal rights feminism was based on arguments for equality and premised on the similarities between women and men. Alternately social or maternal feminism, it is claimed, was based on arguments for women's autonomy and premised on the differences between women and men. Scott suggests that we not "argue within the terms of discourse set up by this opposition."<sup>37</sup> Instead, she says, we need to deconstruct binary categories which dichotomize feminism.<sup>38</sup> She suggests we

refuse to oppose equality to difference and insist continually on differences - differences as the condition of individual and collective identities, differences as the constant challenge to the

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Assessing Gender History and Women's History in Canada," left history 3, 1 (Spring/Summer 1995): 109-121. Franca Iacovetta and Linda Kealey, "Women's History, Gender History and Debating Dichotomies," left history 3, 2 (Fall 1995)/4, 1 (Spring 1996): 221-237. Karen Dubinsky and Lynne Marks, "Beyond Purity: A Response to Sangster," left history 3, 2 (Fall 1995)/4, 1 (Spring 1996): 205-220. Joan Sangster, "Reconsidering Dichotomies," left history 3, 2 (Fall 1995)/4, 1 (Spring 1996): 239-248.

<sup>37</sup> This debate between modern equity feminists and social feminists culminated in the United States when two leading historians of women, Alice Kessler-Harris and Rosalind Rosenberg, testified on the opposite sides in the Sears Case. Scott, "The Sears Case," 167.

<sup>38</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism," in Conflicts in Feminism, ed. Hirsch and Keller, 134-48. This article also has a discussion of four "useful" post-modernist terms that feminist historians are now using, language, difference, discourse, and deconstruction.



fixing of those identities, history as the repeated illustration of the play of differences, differences as the very meaning of equality itself.<sup>39</sup>

Although it is easier when analyzing some feminists other than McNaughton to use the "neat categories," as Scott refers to them, of equity and maternal feminism, it is not possible to do so with McNaughton and the agrarian feminists with whom she worked.<sup>40</sup>

To understand what McNaughton's feminism was, instead of simply understanding what it was not, it is helpful to turn to Angela Miles' Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s-1990s. Miles not only offers a critique of the equality-versus-difference dichotomy, she also posits the notion of integrative feminism. Theoretically Integrative Feminisms is helpful in attempting to understand McNaughton's feminism, even though it does not focus on her

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<sup>39</sup> Scott, "The Sears Case," 174-75. See also Karen Offen, "Reply to Cott," Signs 15(2) (Autumn 1988): 207.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, "The Sears Case," 176. Among the recent studies that have attempted to deal with the complexity in women's lives, to which Scott refers, are Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde eds., Gender Conflicts - New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); and Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz eds., Unequal Sisters - A Multicultural Reader In U.S. Women's History (New York: Routledge, 1990). These studies often show groups of women, like McNaughton and the farm women with whom she worked, who worked within their community for survival and improvements in the face of opposition from more powerful groups in their society. Nancy A. Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood," Unequal Sisters, ed. DuBois and Ruiz, 5.

generation of feminists.<sup>41</sup>

Miles' analysis "is grounded in actual feminist politics as they are lived all over the world by various feminists."<sup>42</sup> She argues that the distinct categories of feminism that were named and claimed in the 1970s, such as socialist, radical and lesbian feminism, included both reductionist and integrative politics.<sup>43</sup> In these categories

there were self-defined lesbians, radicals and socialist feminists who recognize all oppressions and are committed to integrating the personal and the political and means and ends in their practices, and there are feminists within each of these self-definitions who to not. In the mid-1970s, reductionist positions tended to dominate the feminist published debate.<sup>44</sup>

Miles argues that "types of feminism usually perceived as absolutely different, even opposing, share important integrative principles."<sup>45</sup> Although Miles highlights shared principles, she does not suggest that different feminisms be

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<sup>41</sup> Angela Miles, Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s-1990s (New York and London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Miles, Integrative Feminisms, x.

<sup>43</sup> Reduction is "the process whereby concepts or statements that apply to one type of entity are redefined in terms of concepts, or analyzed in terms of statements, of another kind, normally one regarded as more elementary." Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, eds., The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 530.

<sup>44</sup> Miles, Integrative Feminisms, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., x.

homogenized nor that their distinctions are meaningless. She argues that, although feminism benefits from diversity, it is very helpful to recognize "shared integrative intentions and visions."<sup>46</sup>

Miles argues that dichotomies are "false choices" and "oppressive dualisms".<sup>47</sup> She also argues that in "integrative feminisms" both "women's commonality" and "women's diversity" become "necessary aspects of each other - to be affirmed and transformed together."<sup>48</sup> She calls them "integrative feminisms"

because (1) they are essentially antidualistic, refusing the fragmentation of industrial patriarchal society ; (2) they integrate resistance to all dominations as essential aspects of women-centred and women-defined feminist politics; (3) the life-centred values they endorse in opposition to dominant separative values are integrative ones such as community, sharing, nurturing, and co-operation; and most important, (4) these are *dialectic politics* in which the apparently opposed principles of women's equality and specificity, their commonality and diversity become dynamic contradictions that, far from being mutually exclusive, are mutually constitutive, each transformed by the other.<sup>49</sup>

Although McNaughton focused on agrarian feminism she also espoused integrative principles that were common to different kinds of feminisms. Her feminism was similar to the current integrative feminisms Miles analyses in several

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 27, 38.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

ways, even though she did not use the language that Miles uses. McNaughton's feminism was not theoretical; it was grounded in "actual feminist politics" to use Miles' terminology. While McNaughton's agrarian feminism was different from that of other feminisms of her day, such as the evangelical feminism of the WCTU, she also shared with them what Miles refers to as "important integrative principles." Her ability to work with evangelical feminists in the WCTU and equal rights feminists in the Political Equality Leagues was clearly evident in the suffrage campaign. Like current integrative feminists, McNaughton's feminism was antidualistic, affirming both what Miles refers to as "women's commonality" and "women's diversity," this being very evident in her campaign for medical aid.<sup>50</sup> As the chapter on medical aid will show, she wanted better medical services available to all, especially to the many farm women who were giving birth in remote areas. In other words she recognized women's commonality; females were the sex who gave birth. She also recognized women's diversity. Women in the urban areas of Saskatchewan were different from the farm women in remote areas whose medical services were worse than the urban women. In order to grapple with the high rate of infant and maternal mortality she believed that mothers and infants in remote areas were in particular need of better care. Otherwise their mortality rates would remain

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., x - xii.

higher than others.

Like current integrative feminists she also integrated a resistance to other forms of domination into her feminism, such as the domination of prairie farm people by those who supported the first National Policy and the domination of the working class. McNaughton integrated the personal and the political and she valued community building, sharing, nurturing, and co-operation, as do integrative feminists today.<sup>51</sup>

In short, using Miles' notion of integrative feminism, McNaughton was an integrative agrarian feminist. That is to say, although her feminism was broad and inclusive, she focused on a distinctive kind of feminism, agrarian feminism. She worked with all manner of farm women and she formed alliances with other feminists and other reformers based on integrative principles that they shared. Hers was not an exclusive feminism based on a rigid narrow definition of feminism. She sought to harmonize her efforts with feminists and reformers of other stripes, such as evangelical feminists and radical men in the farm and labour movements.

Canadian feminists who were involved in labour politics and worked closely with male trade unionists took an approach similar to McNaughton's approach to farm men. For example Janice Newton, who argues that the "polarizations of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., xii, 7.

equalitarian feminism and maternal feminism have outlived their usefulness," rejects "the notion that a concern for maternal or domestic issues is inherently nonradical" and she argues that

a small core of feminist women within the socialist movement accepted maternal feminism and turned it to radical ends, making the home a primary site for radical socialist transformation to enhance the autonomy of women. Not only did they use it to claim their rightful place in politics, as did the suffragists, but they challenged their comrades to advocate a socialist restructuring of domestic work and mothering, just as socialists advocated a socialist restructuring of the factory.<sup>52</sup>

Like these socialist feminists McNaughton challenged the men of her class, farm men, to advocate changes which would restructure the conditions in which farm women worked, just as they were advocating improved ways of marketing and transportation of the agricultural products they raised, thereby attempting to restructure farming. Rearing children was as important as raising hogs.

Although Veronica Strong-Boag argued that there was a shift away from politics in the twenties by prairie feminists, recent studies of prairie feminism reject the false dichotomy of equality-versus-difference and, or, they argue that prairie feminism had a continuity of political

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<sup>52</sup> Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900 to 1918 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 10.

purpose.<sup>53</sup> Earlier scholars defined Nellie McClung as a maternal feminist while McNaughton and Irene Parlby were cast as equal rights feminists. In Firing the Heather - The Life and Times of Nellie McClung, Mary Hallett and Marilyn Davies argue that positing equal rights feminism as the reverse of maternal feminism is a false dichotomy. They found that McClung "shared both points of view."<sup>54</sup> In her doctoral dissertation "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868 - 1965" Catherine Cavanaugh argues that the two are a "false distinction."<sup>55</sup> She sees Parlby's beliefs as being similar to McClung's and McNaughton's. Although Cavanaugh does not use Miles's notion of integrative feminisms, she argues that Parlby, McNaughton and McClung shared many integrative principles and that,

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<sup>53</sup> These are ideas that I have frequently discussed with these several scholars in recent years. I worked closely with Marilyn Davies when she was completing the book that she and Hallett began before Hallett died. Catherine Cavanaugh, Nanci Langford, Barbara Roberts, Randi Warne and I all belong to the WASH (Women in Alberta and Saskatchewan History) Workshop. I would like to thank Cavanaugh, Davies, Langford, Roberts, and Warne for the many stimulating conversations about the history of prairie feminism, especially about a paper I gave to the Canadian Historical Association. Georgina M. Taylor, "'A Splendid Field Before Us' Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909-1926," an unpublished paper presented to the CHA, 1993. For their use of this paper see Prentice and others, 2nd ed., Canadian Women A History, 219.

<sup>54</sup> Mary Hallett and Marilyn Davies, Firing the Heather - The Life and Times of Nellie McClung (Saskatoon: Fifth House Ltd., 1993), 113.

<sup>55</sup> Catherine Anne Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994, 125.

although they did not always agree, overall they admired and respected one another.<sup>56</sup> Nanci Langford's article "'All That Glitters': The Political Apprenticeship of Alberta Women, 1916-1930" argues convincingly that Alberta feminists did not move to maternal feminism, turning their backs on partisan politics in the twenties, as Strong-Boag argued in "Pulling in Double Harness". Instead Langford found that they continued to be very concerned with partisan politics in these years.<sup>57</sup>

Because McNaughton's agrarian feminism grew out of an amalgam of feminist ideas and the ideas of the farm movement in Canada, there are bodies of scholarly literature other than the debate over feminism that are important to an analysis of her feminism and her involvement in the farm women's movement. One is the literature about the much-debated National Policy. The prairies on which the McNaughtons farmed were shaped, in part, by the national policies that are referred to collectively by historians as

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<sup>56</sup> Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life," 122-147. For information on McNaughton Cavanaugh relied mainly on Parlby's correspondence with McNaughton, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54; Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton;" and Taylor, "Violet McNaughton - History of a remarkable woman."

<sup>57</sup> Nancy Langford, "'All That Glitters': The Political Apprenticeship of Alberta Women, 1916-1930," in Standing on New Ground - Women in Alberta ed. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993), 71-85.



the National Policy.<sup>54</sup> Of the extensive scholarly writing on the National Policy, the literature that uses the notion of a first and a second National Policy is the most helpful in understanding McNaughton's agrarian feminism.<sup>55</sup> The notion of a second National Policy was introduced by Vernon Fowke, developed by Janine Brodie, used by historian Gerald Friesen, and it fits well with historian Alvin Finkel's analysis of the West, social programs and the constitution.<sup>56</sup> Fowke suggested that what historians generally refer to as "the National Policy" was Canada's

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<sup>56</sup> John Thompson points out the dangers of regarding people in country communities as passive. McNaughton and the people she worked with were anything but passive, so it was not just the first National Policy that shaped prairie agricultural. It was much more. John Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life and Agriculture" in Writing About Canada - A Handbook for Modern Canadian History, ed. John Schultz (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1990), 111. For documents with regard to the shaping of agriculture at the provincial level in Saskatchewan see David E. Smith, Building a Province - A History of Saskatchewan in Documents (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992), 203-270, 276-279.

<sup>59</sup> Freisen, The Canadian Prairies, 2, 162, 165, 174, 181, 184-9, 444-445, 447, 449, 463. Howard Palmer, Alberta A New History (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990) 50, 59, 77, 136, 278, 279.

<sup>60</sup> V. C. Fowke, "The National Policy - Old and New," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 18(3) (August 1952) 271-286. Janine Brodie, The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism (Toronto: Harcourt Race Jovanovich Canada, 1990). Gerald Friesen, "The Prairies as Region: The Contemporary Meaning of an Old Idea," in The Constitutional Future of the Prairie and Atlantic Regions of Canada, ed. James N. McCrorie and Martha MacDonald (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre University of Regina, 1992), 9-10. Alvin Finkel, "Social Programs, the West and the Constitution," The Constitutional Future, ed. McCrorie and MacDonald, 167-180.

first National Policy.<sup>61</sup> The high tariffs that protected industries in Canada and hampered farmers, like the McNaughtons, were the first plank of the first National Policy. The federal immigration policy, that encouraged agriculturalists in the United States, Europe, and the rural areas of Britain to come to the prairie West, and building the railways, that Violet Jackson and the other settlers took to get to prairie homesteads, were the other two planks. The McNaughtons and the Jacksons religiously read The Grain Growers' Guide, a forum for the grievances of the prairie grain growers who had great difficulty transporting the products they grew and selling them on the international market while buying on the protected Canadian market. McNaughton and other western agrarian activists struggled against these, and other ramifications of the first National Policy for decades.<sup>62</sup>

Fowke suggested that the first National Policy was complete by 1930 as a second National Policy was struggling

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<sup>61</sup> Fowke, "The National Policy - Old and New," 275.

<sup>62</sup> For additional literature on the first National Policy and the prairies see Vernon Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957) and Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 184-189. See also MacLeod, "Canadianizing the West"; Kenneth H. Norrie, "The National Policy and the Rate of Prairie Settlement A Review"; T.D. Regehr, "Western Canada and the Burden of National Transportation Policies" in The Prairie West - Historical Readings, ed. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, The University of Alberta Press, 1992), 225-238, 243-263, 264-284; and Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life," 99, 106.

into existence. Under the second National Policy, wealth redistribution measures were developed.<sup>63</sup> Gerald Friesen sees the depression of the 1930s as having had such a devastating effect on prairie people that they adopted "distinctive approaches to political economy including social democratic and redistributive approaches."<sup>64</sup> Building on Fowke's work, Brodie argues in The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism that Canada developed through a series of "national policies", which she defines as "overarching state development strategies formulated in response to internal political pressures and to the demands of the international political economy."<sup>65</sup> She contends that the 1920s marked the end of the epoch of the first National Policy, that there was a period of drift in the 1930s in which Canadians were groping toward a new national development strategy, that in the 1950s and the 1960s a new model for national development was adopted, and that this new strategy of wealth redistribution which restructured Canada was the second National Policy. She suggests that the second National Policy also linked Canada more closely with the United States and that this reinforced regional

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<sup>63</sup> Fowke, "The National Policy - Old and New," 278.

<sup>64</sup> Friesen, "The Prairies as Region," 10.

<sup>65</sup> Brodie, The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism, 46.

interests and contributed to a new source of regionalism.<sup>66</sup> Friesen believes that using the notion of a first and a second National Policy is a viable approach to prairie history but he suggests that "the arguments for a sharp divide in prairie history around 1930 and of prairie continuity during the next-half century will require further elaboration." He sees prairie people as having played an important part in the creation of the social welfare programs of the second National Policy.<sup>67</sup> My research, especially with regard to McNaughton's campaign for medical aid suggests that early programs in Saskatchewan, such as the municipal doctor program, which were later incorporated into the second National Policy, began well before the thirties.

As subsequent chapters will show, McNaughton's agrarian feminism was, in part, an attempt to create political pressure to replace the first National Policy with a New National Policy including the redistributive measures of second National Policy, although she was not always successful. She believed this would be better for Westerners

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 135-180. Brodie goes on to argue that the second National Policy began to unravel in the 1970s. She contends that in the seventies and the eighties Canada was groping toward a new National Policy and that when the free trade agreement came into effect on January 1, 1989 the era of Canada's third National Policy, a policy of continental rationalization, began. Ibid., 181-223. See also Friesen, "The Prairies as Region," 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> Friesen, "The Prairies as Region," 10.

and farm women and their families. Wealth in Canada, she hoped, would be redistributed both from wealthy individuals to those individuals who needed more resources, through such programs as municipal doctors programs, and regionally through federal grants. Therefore the West, which McNaughton believed had "never been given a chance", would get a "square deal".<sup>58</sup> In essence she agreed with historian Alvin Finkel that because of the "vulnerable character of the western Canadian economies" national programs are necessary "to protect citizens against poverty and aid the sick, old, out-of-work and out-of-luck". Her agrarian feminism was also based on ideas similar to Finkel's who argues that the capitalistic and patriarchal ownership and control that exists within the productive and reproductive spheres "should be characterized by democratic and egalitarian values."<sup>59</sup> In other words McNaughton did not trust the elites, including the elites in Canada who had designed the National Policy. She trusted the "plain common people" and wanted them to make decisions about their own

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<sup>58</sup> The Western Producer 9 April 1925, 16 July 1925. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Prairie Woman," ca. 1913.

<sup>59</sup> Finkel, "Social Programs, the West and the Constitution," 176. See also Jim Silver, "Constitutional Change, Ideological Conflict and the Redistributive State," in The Constitutional Future, ed. McCrorie and MacDonald, 231-272. I would like to thank Alvin Finkel for his insights while discussing these ideas and numerous other ideas about prairie history with me.

lives.<sup>70</sup>

To understand McNaughton's agrarian feminism and her role in the farm women's movement, it is helpful to look at the way in which prairie agriculture was historically constructed as a white male endeavour, which was subordinate to industry and commerce. As Jeffery Taylor points out, the domestic work of farm women was subordinate to the agricultural work of farm men, and their work was subordinate to businessmen.<sup>71</sup> In addition to government policies with regard to immigration, railways and the tariff, other government policies contributed to the historical construction of prairie agriculture as an endeavour for male Euro-Canadians and immigrants. The people of the Canadian prairies, like the people of nineteenth century England that Catherine Hall studied, "were constructing identities which drew on, challenged, and constituted hierarchies of power formed through the axis of gender, race and class."<sup>72</sup> In rural Canada the axis of region, ethnicity, and religion were also important and there was a series of fluctuating agricultural identities; therefore agricultural hierarchies of power on the prairies

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<sup>70</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924.

<sup>71</sup> Taylor, Fashioning Farmers, 14.

<sup>72</sup> Catherine Hall, White Male and Middle-class - Explorations in Feminism and History (New York: Routledge, 1992), 33.

were complex.<sup>73</sup>

The complexity of these hierarchies is obvious if we look at the axis of gender, race and class, let alone other aspects of agricultural identity. Neither nature nor divine will foreordained that Euro-Canadian men would be privileged but Canadian hierarchies of power and the construction of agricultural identities did privilege them, when compared to women and Indians. It was not foreordained that most women on the prairies would be prevented from owning land nor that the Indians would be held on reserves, prevented from being effective agriculturalists, and identified as people who "never were farmers."<sup>74</sup>

Countless historical decisions meant that on the Canadian prairies, Euro-Canadian and immigrant men owned and

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<sup>73</sup> For discussions of agricultural identities on the prairies see Christa L. Scowby, "'Divine Discontent': Women, Identity and The Western Producer," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996; Christa L. Scowby, "'I am a Worker, not a Drone': Farm Women, reproductive Work and the Western Producer, 1930-1939," 3-15. Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers - Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre University of Regina, 1994), 16, 48-68, 88-89. The identity of farm men is also discussed in Jeffery Taylor, "Theoretical and Practical Ideologies in the Making of Early Twentieth-Century Farm Men," Prairie Forum 17(1) (Spring 1992): 13-31. See also Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?" Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988).

<sup>74</sup> Sarah Carter, "'We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live': The Plains Cree and Agriculture to 1900," in Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), 467.

operated the homesteads, farms, and ranches. The infrastructure that was put in place to open the West was created during the mid-nineteenth century when racism and the ideology of two separate spheres were at their peak.<sup>75</sup> Euro-Canadian male legislators and public officials in Canada, who were steeped in the separate spheres ideology and in racism, made the decisions which created a West in which women and Indians were subordinated to white men.

Agrarian gender identities on the prairies varied, changed over time, and were contested. Jeffery Taylor argues convincingly that in Manitoba in the early part of the twentieth century conservative ideologues who taught at the Manitoba Agricultural College propagated a view of farm men as "professional" farmers who were "a perfect combination of efficient producer and manager, the skilful market player, and the solid family and community man."<sup>76</sup> In this construction of gender the man was to be "a benevolent

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<sup>75</sup> For an explanation of the ideology of two separate spheres see Ruth Roach Pierson, "Two Marys and a Virginia: Historical Moments in the Development of a Feminist Perspective on Education," in Women and Education - A Canadian Perspective ed. Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1981), 212-213. See also "Women's Sphere," chapter 6 of Prentice and others, Canadian Women A History, 142-168. For details about the rise in racism in Western Canada in the nineteenth century see Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties" - Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870, (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980), 231-242.

<sup>76</sup> Jeffery Taylor, "Theoretical and Practical Ideologies in the Making of Early Twentieth-Century Farm Men," Prairie Forum 17(1) (Spring 1992): 25.



patriarch" who managed the farm and left his wife "alone to manage her own department in the enterprise."<sup>77</sup> Taylor argues that this construction of gender identities by conservatives, though it was part of the dominant ideology in Manitoba, was resisted by agrarian activists.<sup>78</sup>

McNaughton was to be one of those who resisted such a construction, first in Saskatchewan and later at a regional and nation level.

In opening the West for large-scale agricultural development Canadians had not only constructed the railways, over which historians have lavished gallons of ink, they had also constructed homesteading and farming as a white male endeavour by a series of historical decisions.<sup>79</sup> By the

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 27. See also Taylor, "The Language of Agrarianism", chapter 6 of Fashioning Farmers 90-116.

<sup>79</sup> For an analysis of the agricultural enterprises that these decisions helped to construct, in southwestern Saskatchewan, by American historical anthropologists who were careful to include gender as a category of analysis, see John Bennett and Seena Kohl, "A Longitudinal Cultural Ecology Study in Rural North America: The Saskatchewan Cultural Ecology Research Program 1960 - 1973," in Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society ed. Donald A. Messerschmidt (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), 91-105; Seena B. Kohl, "The Making of a Community: The Role of Women in the Agricultural Setting," in Kin and Communities Families in America ed. Allan J. Lichtman and Joan R. Challinor (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian International Symposium Series, 1979), 175-86. Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Woman and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan (Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1976). Seena B. Kohl, "Women's Participation in the North American Family Farm," in Women's Studies International Quarterly 1 (1977): 47-54. John Bennett in association with Seena B. Kohl and Geraldine

time the Jacksons and the McNaughtons moved to the prairies, the government had developed policies and passed numerous laws to guarantee white male farmers and their families were settled in the West in a more orderly and peaceful manner than had been the case in the United States.<sup>80</sup> Before large-scale settlement, most of the prairie Indians had been subjugated and pushed into signing treaties that had been used to remove all but a tiny part of their lands.<sup>81</sup> They had been hived off onto reserves while their lands were distributed to white men and they had been defined as being incapable of large-scale market agriculture.<sup>82</sup> The Métis Uprisings had been violently suppressed making it safe for

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Binion, Of Time and Enterprise - North American Family Farm Management in the Context of Resource Marginality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915-Pioneer Adaption and Community Building-An Anthropological History (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

<sup>80</sup> For examples of this sort of legislation see a series of acts of Parliament with regard to the aboriginal peoples in Dave De Brou and Bill Waiser, Documenting Canada: A History of Modern Canada in Documents (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992), 26-9, 81-84, 94-106, 112-16, 135-140, 167. See also "The Dominion Lands Act" Ibid., 56-67, and "The Chinese Immigration Act" Ibid., 150-153.

<sup>81</sup> For details of the subjugation of one of the nations of prairie Indians see John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," in Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, third edition, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990) 122-147.

<sup>82</sup> Carter, "We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live" and Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserves Farmers and Government Policy, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

the in-coming white settlers. The lands of Western Canada had been surveyed into square sections and railways built to bring in the white settlers and their supplies and to ship out their produce. Immigration laws, policies, and practices were encouraging white immigrants, like the Jackson and McNaughton families, and for the most part keeping out people of colour. The Royal North-West Mounted Police, a federal instrument of the National Policy, was keeping the aboriginal people in their place and overseeing the settlement of the whites on prairie homesteads.<sup>33</sup> Euro-Canadians and white immigrants were higher than the few other people of colour who had managed to get into Canada and onto the prairies.<sup>34</sup> However, the white male farmers were very conscious that they were lower in the Canadian hierarchies of power than the upper- and middle-class urban white men, such as Clifford Sifton and Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, who controlled, industry, big business and

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<sup>33</sup> Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 162-194. R.C. MacLeod, "Canadianizing the West: The North-West Mounted Police as Agents of the National Policy," in The Prairie West, ed. Francis and Palmer, 225-238.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese in Canada, 1885-1971," Canadian Ethnic Studies 12(1) (1980): 58-73. R. Bruce Shepard, "Plain Racism: The Reaction Against Oklahoma Black Immigration to the Canadian Plains," in Racism in Canada ed. Ormond McKague (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991), 15-31.

the federal government.<sup>35</sup>

Differences between Canada and the United States in homestead legislation shaped the settlement patterns and the roles played by women in the respective Wests. In the United States the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Kinkaid Act of 1904 made it possible for "spinsters, widows, and female heads of households to claim homesteads on the same terms it extended to men."<sup>36</sup> Thousands of women claimed homesteads in the American West.<sup>37</sup> Claiming homesteads gave Western women much greater access to property than women had had in older American farm communities, settled before women could get homesteads, such as New York state and Sugar Creek,

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<sup>35</sup> Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 242-279. Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians" An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 25-56. Howard and Tamara Palmer, "The Black Experience in Alberta," and Ann and David Sunafara, "The Japanese in Alberta," in Peoples of Alberta - Portraits of Cultural Diversity ed. Howard and Tamara Palmer (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 365-393, 394-412. Colin A. Thomson, Blacks in the Snow - Black Pioneers in Canada (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Canada Limited, 1979), 22-24. Peter Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese in Canada, 1885-1971," Canadian Ethnic Studies 12(1) (1980): 58-73. Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad with Veronica Strong-Boag, History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1993), 276-277. Taylor, Fashioning Farmers, 90-108.

<sup>36</sup> Glenda Riley, The Female Frontier A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), 19, 118, 132-47. Katherine Harris, Long Vistas - Women and Families on Colorado Homesteads (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1993) 20.

<sup>37</sup> Riley, The Female Frontier, 118, 132, 134.

Illinois.<sup>88</sup> In Minnesota, which was settled under the 1862 legislation,

women homesteaded in all regions of the state right from the start. In 1863, when the land titles office opened for homesteading, a Minnesota sample shows that one unmarried woman homesteaded for every four unmarried men - a ratio of one out of every five, or 20 percent. In another sample, homestead records show that about 2,400 women without husbands homesteaded in Minnesota from 1863 to 1889 for at least a year and gained title to their land.<sup>89</sup>

In Colorado and Wyoming, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, 11.9 percent of a sample of homestead applicants were women. "Of them, 42 percent proved up on their claim, more than the 37 percent of the men who proved up."<sup>90</sup>

Katherine Harris found, in her study of women and homesteading in Colorado, that the Homestead Act offered women expanded opportunities. For single women, homesteading

offered an opportunity rarely available to women of that day: the possibility of owning land. Significant numbers of single women took advantage of their homestead rights, succeeding at a rate equivalent to that of men. Homesteaders' narratives confirm that female patentees received compensation for the sale of their claims, even when they originally entered them to increase

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<sup>88</sup> John Faragher, Sugar Creek - Life on the Illinois Prairie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 53-54. Nancy Grey Osterud, Bonds of Community - The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 62-67.

<sup>89</sup> Anne B. Webb, "Women Farmers on the Frontier," in History of Women in the United States - 6. Working the Land ed. Nancy F. Cott (New Providence: K. G. Saur, 1993), 133.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 134.

family holdings.<sup>31</sup>

The research Harris did showed that the patenting of land by single women,

encouraged rising expectations among other females in the community. In an environment where women enjoyed some of the same economic choices as men, the prevailing labor shortage coupled with an easy companionship between the sexes stimulated the development of novel behaviour patterns among women and girls.<sup>32</sup>

Paula Bagman, who studied single women homesteaders in Wyoming, concluded that the Homestead Act in the United States from 1862 onward, was "one of the great democratic measures of world history, in that it allowed women the right to own land by homesteading."<sup>33</sup>

Canada, on the other hand, had a more patriarchal homestead system. The Dominion Lands Act of 1872, which was passed to settle the prairies, set out the terms whereby quarter sections of land were being given away to in-coming homesteaders in exchange for compliance with its rules. Conservatism in Canada during the Confederation period meant that the democratic right of claiming a homestead was given to men but very few women were extended the same right.<sup>34</sup> The Dominion Lands Act only allowed women who were sole

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<sup>31</sup> Harris, Long Vistas, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 153-154.

<sup>33</sup> Paula Bagman, "Single Women Homesteaders In Wyoming, 1880-1930," in Working the Land ed. Cott, 321.

<sup>34</sup> W.L. Morton, "The Conservative Principle in Confederation," Queen's Quarterly 71 (1964): 528-546.

heads of families with dependent children to claim a homestead.<sup>95</sup> After the 1876 revision the only women that were allowed to apply for homesteads were "widows, divorcees, and in scrupulously documented cases, separated or deserted wives" providing "that they had children under eighteen dependent on them for support."<sup>96</sup> These women would be able to support their children and then their sons would inherit the land. In Canada unmarried women could not get homesteads but bachelors over 21 years old could do so.<sup>97</sup> The assumption was that bachelors were heads of households who likely would be the heads of farm families but women were not heads of households and likely never would be. In other words the Dominion Lands Act supported a patriarchal family structure and it placed greater constraints on prairie women than those on their American counterparts.

Therefore, although Violet Jackson's widowed father, her bachelor brother, and her future husband were all able to take out homesteads, she could not do so. This meant that prairie women like Violet were not only lower in the

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<sup>95</sup> De Brou and Waiser, Documenting Canada 56.

<sup>96</sup> See a copy of the Dominion Lands Act in De Brou and Waiser, Documenting Canada, 56-67. See also Chester Martin, Dominion Lands Policy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 140-174. Susan Jackel's introduction to Georgina Binnie-Clark, Women and Wheat (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1914; rpt. 1979), xxi.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 60.

agricultural hierarchies of power in Canada than were the men in their families, they were also lower than women in the American West. To put it another way, farm women's limited access to land and their particular disadvantages on the Canadian prairies were historically constructed. This increased women's economic dependence on men and it fuelled the fires of Western Canadian feminists who were well aware of the homestead regulations in the United States. This spawned a "homesteads-for-women movement" which McNaughton was to support. It peaked between 1909 and 1913 but, even though it continued sporadically until 1930, when the prairie provinces were given control of public lands, it never succeeded in getting the federal government to give women greater access to homesteads.<sup>98</sup>

Fuel was also added to the fires of prairie feminists by yet another curtailment of their property rights on the Canadian prairies, the lack of dower rights.<sup>99</sup> In Ontario, the Maritimes, in Britain and in the United States married women had ancient common law dower rights. In other words, they could retain an interest in the estates held by their husbands after their husbands died. Common law dower was eliminated in 1886 in the Canadian West, since it was

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<sup>98</sup> Jackel, "Introduction" to Binnie-Clark, Women and Wheat xxi. Jackel gives details of the movement. Binnie-Clark's book argues for homesteads for women.

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of the property rights of prairie women see Cavanaugh, "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership," 198-225.



thought it would impede land registration.<sup>100</sup> When Violet Jackson arrived, women did not have dower rights, therefore they could lose their homes and the farms on which they worked. As Cavanaugh argues in her article "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership: The Alberta Campaign for Homestead Dower, 1909-1925" the campaign for property rights reveals that "patriarchy was preserved on the prairies."<sup>101</sup> She found that

the combined effect of federal and territorial law was to ensure that, in the newest provinces, land, and therefore wealth, was to be overwhelmingly owned and controlled by men, reinforcing a traditional patriarchal social order that dictated a dependent womanhood.<sup>102</sup>

In short, in the nineteenth century before the majority of the white settlers arrived, farming in Western Canada had been constructed to exclude most women from owning farmland. This was exceedingly important because land, and the buildings, implements, and livestock that went with it, were the means of production. Land and property rights were the basis of economic power in agricultural communities. Therefore, compared to Britain, the East, and the American

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<sup>100</sup> Cavanaugh, "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership," 203-204.

<sup>101</sup> For other discussions of women's property rights see Prentice and others, Canadian Women A History, 174-5, 187, 196-199; Elizabeth Ann Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1993, 35. For a discussion of farm women and property see Faragher, Sugar Creek, 105-9 and Osterud, Bonds of Community, 62-67.

<sup>102</sup> Cavanaugh, "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership," 204.

West, in Western Canada there were more severe limitations on property ownership and farming by women. This severely curtailed opportunities for women outside of marriage on the Canadian prairies and had a profound effect on gender relations. It was to fuel the fires of the prairie feminists, including McNaughton, who wanted women to have access to homesteads, dower rights and marital property rights.<sup>103</sup>

In 1909, when Violet Jackson arrived in Saskatchewan white male farm organizations, dominated by Manitobans, Ontarians, and British and American immigrants, were fighting to raise the status of farmers in Canada and to make prairie farming commercially viable.<sup>104</sup> Although a few European immigrants belonged to these organizations, their positions in the hierarchies of power on the prairies were low. White males in government, farm organizations, and agricultural schools were participating in a construction of agriculture in which prairie farms usually were operated by individual, white, male owners. The government census reflected this construction by labelling them as "farm operators," allowing only one operator to be listed for each

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<sup>103</sup> Cavanaugh, "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership."

<sup>104</sup> Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life and Agriculture," 97-120. Donald E. Willmott, "The Formal Organizations of Saskatchewan Farmers, 1900-1965," in Western Canada Past and Present ed. A.W. Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1975), 28-41.

farm, and listing women married to farmers as having "no occupation," a designation that McNaughton and other agrarian feminists opposed. The few exceptions to the general pattern served to prove the rule. For example, there were blocks of land for colonies of Hutterites who farmed co-operatively rather than as individuals, a few women like Georgina Binnie-Clark had enough money to buy land and operate farms, and Mennonite inheritance customs were more advantageous to women than was usually the case.<sup>105</sup>

On a labour intensive prairie homestead, if a 'farm operator' was to thrive and to have children to inherit the land a farm man needed more than land. He needed a wife. Gerda Lerner points out that

in contrast to hunting/gathering societies, agriculturalists could use the labor of children to increase production and accumulate surpluses. Men-as-a-group had rights in women which women-as-a-group did not have in men. Women themselves became a resource, acquired by men much as the land was acquired by men.<sup>106</sup>

A Canadian prairie farmer's greatest assets were his land and his wife. McNaughton was recognizing women as a resource

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<sup>105</sup> Robert Macdonald, "The Hutterites in Alberta," in Peoples of Alberta - Portraits of Cultural Diversity, ed. Howard and Tamara Palmer (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 348-364. Binnie-Clark, Women and Wheat. Royden K. Loewen, "'The Children, the Cows, My Dear Man and My Sister': The Transplanted Lives of Mennonite Farm Women, 1874-1900," Canadian Historical Review LXXIII (3) (1992): 359-363.

<sup>106</sup> Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 212.

when she referred to "the asset that farm women are."<sup>107</sup> Government policy encouraged farmers to depend upon the work of their wives, their children, other family members, and upon hired help. Clifford Sifton, the federal Minister of the Interior in the formative years from 1896 to 1905 and who had been very influential in the settling of the prairies. He had clearly articulated the need for women and children as a resource in the agricultural West. He included them in his now familiar description of a desirable immigrant as "a stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, **with a stout wife and a half-dozen children.**" [My emphasis is added.]<sup>108</sup> As Sifton envisioned it, hard-working male farmers were to be in charge on prairie farms. Further, these men needed sturdy, fertile women who were able to work hard on the land while producing many children, who would also work on the farm. Frail women were not wanted. McNaughton interpreted Sifton's words to mean that he wanted "a peasant class of farmer who will work long hours, whose wife and children will likewise work long hours, and who will be content with a very low standard of living."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 22 May 1915.

<sup>108</sup> Hall, "Clifford Sifton," 295.

<sup>109</sup> SAB, G125, "The Torch" May 1923.

Frank Oliver, who replaced Sifton as the Minister of the Interior in 1905, believed that "to admit [women] to the opportunities of the land-grant would be to make them [independent] of marriage."<sup>110</sup> For politicians running a department that was trying to settle the prairies with white agriculturists, it was crucial that women be dependent on the marriages that would produce children to work on farms. Outside of marriage, the only work for large numbers of women was domestic work which was worse, if anything, than being married to a farmer.<sup>111</sup> The government deliberately attempted to construct Western farming so that women were the wives of farmers.<sup>112</sup> In this construction of an agricultural hierarchy of power, all others who worked on prairie farms were to be subordinate to the white male 'farm operator,' whether he wore sheep-skin, tweed, or denim.

As the wife of a male 'farm operator' of British descent, who was prosperous enough that she could leave the farm to do public work, McNaughton was able to use her place in the class, ethnic, racial, and marital hierarchies of power to work to better the lot of farm women and their families and most other groups of people who were lower in

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Cavanaugh, "The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership," 206.

<sup>111</sup> Marilyn Barber, "Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada," (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991). Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1996), 128-130.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 242-273.

the hierarchies of power than she was. In other words, as Catherine Hall puts it, McNaughton constructed an identity as an agrarian feminist "which drew on, challenged, and constituted hierarchies of power."<sup>113</sup> McNaughton's success as a leader of the farm women's movement was based on her personal experiences as a farm woman and her agrarian feminism which grew out of these experiences. She was in tune with her times and her experiences were often similar to other farm women.

The development and evolution of the McNaughton farm mirrored closely the historical record of agricultural experiences in Western Canada.<sup>114</sup> Agricultural historians differ somewhat in their periodization of prairie agriculture. Three suggested divisions in agricultural history on the prairies offer insights that are helpful in understanding the development of the McNaughton farm, those by Jeffery Taylor, Cecilia Danysk, and Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson. Jeffery Taylor analyses the development

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<sup>113</sup> Hall, White Male and Middle-class, 33.

<sup>114</sup> For a brief overview of prairie agriculture see John Herd Thompson and Ian MacPherson "'How You Gonna Get 'Em Back on the Farm': Writing the Rural/Agricultural History of the Prairie West," an unpublished paper presented at the 1987 Western Canadian Studies Conference in Saskatoon, 10-12. See also Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture - Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of 'Business Methods,' 1880-1950," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 475-479 and Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life," 97-120.

of the prairie agricultural economy in a global context.<sup>115</sup>

He argues that between 1870 and 1930

a world market in wheat emerged and was consolidated, the geographic frontiers of global wheat production expanded, and farm households displaced both capitalistic and peasant enterprises as the primary form of wheat production in all regions of the world market.<sup>116</sup>

In these years the fifty million people who left Europe and Britain, settled in areas such as the Canadian prairies, where wheat farming expanded. From 1905 onward there was significant expansion of wheat production on the Canadian prairies. By 1925, Taylor says, farm people had emerged as a class.<sup>117</sup> By the end of the 1920s "prairie agriculture was firmly established as a household-based economy producing commodities for international and national markets."<sup>118</sup>

Danysk outlines three periods of agricultural development on the prairies: the "beginnings" from the 1870s to 1900, a period of expansion from 1900 to 1918, and a period of consolidation from 1918 to 1930.<sup>119</sup> MacPherson

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<sup>115</sup> Taylor argues that there is a continuum "from peasant subsistence through farming to capitalism." He sees prairie farmers like the McNaughtons as best being described as "simple commodity producers." Taylor, Fashioning Farmers, 6-7.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 6-11.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>119</sup> Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands - Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 25, 46, 112.

and Thompson divide the history of prairie agriculture by using the notions of "the great transformation" in the nineteenth century and "the great disjuncture," which began around 1945, as the divisions.<sup>120</sup> They argue that prairie agriculture was established in the nineteenth century during the great transformation of agriculture in the northern United States and in Canada. During the great transformation there was a move away from the use of hand tools, such as the hoe, the sickle and the rake, and a tendency toward specialization in one or two agricultural activities, and increase in the amount of hired labour, and increasing use of machinery such as the horse-drawn hay rake and mowers or mechanical reapers.<sup>121</sup> By the time the Jacksons and the McNaughtons arrived in the first decade of the twentieth century many prairie farmers had made this transition. Prairie agriculture had passed out of its "infancy," as Danysk puts it.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> MacPherson and Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture," 475-479. Thompson, "Writing About Rural Life," 111. John Shover introduced the notion of "the great disjuncture." The phrase "the great transformation" is taken from Karl Polanyi who analysed the industrial revolution and the social implications of the market economy in Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation - the political and economic origins of our time (1944; rpt. Beacon Hill: Beacon Press, 1957), 3-4. John Shover, First Majority - Last Majority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), xiii-xiv.

<sup>121</sup> MacPherson and Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture," 476-477.

<sup>122</sup> Danysk, Hired Hands, 12.



McNaughton was a leader of the Canadian prairie farmers that Thompson and MacPherson see as having "through their own community institutions developed their own strategies" for influencing the changes that were taking place in prairie agriculture.<sup>123</sup> These community institutions included farm organizations. When McNaughton joined the SGGA, Saskatchewan farmers had been organized for several years. In 1902 farmers in the Assiniboia District of the Northwest Territories had organized the Territorial Grain Growers' Association in an attempt to improve grain transportation and marketing systems. When the province of Saskatchewan came into being the TGGGA became the SGGA. In 1906 prairie farmers formed the Grain Growers' Grain Company to handle their grain. Its newspaper The Grain Growers' Guide was a lively proponent of the Grain Growers' ideas. The farmers then set up co-operative elevator companies which owned elevators. The farm organizations in the three prairie provinces formed the Inter-provincial Council of Grain Growers and Farm Associations to further their mutual interests in 1907. Ontario farmers joined them and the Inter-provincial Council became the Canadian Council of Agriculture in order to give farmers a national voice in

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<sup>123</sup> MacPherson and Thompson, "How You Gonna Get 'Em," 12.

1910.<sup>124</sup>

Thompson and MacPherson hypothesize that

old values were still important, and the rural society ...[the newcomers to the prairies] fashioned between the 1870s and the 1920s became another sort of "traditional" society, made up of isolated relatively self-sufficient farm communities loosely organized into a series of hierarchies spread across the Prairie West.<sup>125</sup>

When McNaughton arrived in the West in 1909 she brought with her both new and old beliefs and values. Her beliefs in the value of co-operation, her own rebelliousness, her admiration for rebels, and new Edwardian beliefs were very important to her but she also brought another set of beliefs. The things she had been taught during her Victorian childhood still affected her and she brought with her the values and traditions of a rural family that had lived in the Kent for countless generations. She also brought a knowledge of Kentish agriculture including the many problems during its great transformation in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, when some of her ancestors were rural

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<sup>124</sup> For an brief history of the evolution of prairie farm organizations and their involvement in national groups see Gary Carlson, Farm Voices: A Brief History and Reference Guide of Prairie Farm Organizations and Their Leaders 1870-1980 (Regina: The Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, 1981). For a discussion of farm organizations in Saskatchewan see Willmot, "The Formal Organizations," 28-41.

<sup>125</sup> Thompson and MacPherson, "How You Gonna Get 'Em," 11.

radicals.<sup>126</sup>

She came to an area of Canada long inhabited by aboriginal peoples but relatively new as an area for large scale agricultural settlement by whites.<sup>127</sup> Although they had chickens, cattle and a garden mainly for their own use, the Jackson and the McNaughton families hoped to make a decent living by commercial grain farming. The McNaughton farm was similar to many others settled in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>128</sup>

Like many other Western homesteaders the McNaughtons were debt ridden. At the onset of World War I, when the federal government urged farmers to produce massive amounts of wheat and to use unsound farming techniques in order to grow the grain that was needed for the war effort, prairie farmers over-extended themselves financially in order to do so. The huge crops of the early war years wreaked havoc

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<sup>126</sup> For details about some of these problems and the changes in the work of women in agriculture in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850 (1930; rpt. London: Virgo, 1981), 7-110.

<sup>127</sup> Olive Dickason, Canada's First Nations - A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 192-201. J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens - A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), 152-207.

<sup>128</sup> Allan R. Turner, "Pioneer Farming Experiences," Saskatchewan History (Spring 1955) 8, 41-55.

with the land, yields plummeted, and debts soared.<sup>129</sup>

During the Great War Violet McNaughton was a farm leader and she participated with great verve in their militant outbursts against the government mishandling of agriculture. The McNaughtons had mortgages on their land from 1909 until 1944 when they sold their two best quarters. Like many prairie farmers, they constantly had to borrow money for operating costs.<sup>130</sup> (See the chart in Appendix # I "The McNaughton Farm.") By 1918 the McNaughton farm, like prairie agriculture as a whole, had developed into a "commercial enterprise."<sup>131</sup>

The end of the war brought depression, polarization, and tremendous unrest in part because of the problems farmers had during the War. Inflation had caused prices to rise by 45%, and farm income had not kept apace. The government used the Wheat Board, which was very popular with farm people, to market the 1919 crop and then did away with the Board. There was drought and a drastic drop in prices which did not recover until 1924. The "farmers' revolt" spread as they organized their own party, the Progressives.

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<sup>129</sup> John Herd Thompson, The Harvests of War - The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).

<sup>130</sup> For a discussion of how crucial credit was to farmers from the beginning of settlement, especially in the establishment stage, see Taylor, Fashioning Farmers, 11. Taylor points out that "over 80 per cent of Saskatchewan farms were mortgaged in 1913." Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Dansyk, Hired Hands, 12.

Their platform, the "New National Policy," promised to do away with the tariff and to make other reforms that Canadian farmers wanted. But try as they might they could not push the federal government into much action on their behalf.<sup>132</sup>

It was in the period just after the Great War that the farm women's movement moved from its initial period in which the major farm women's organizations had been established from 1896 to 1918, to the second stage of their development. In this second period, national groups, which drew together farm women's or rural women's groups from across the country, came into being. In 1919 both Federation of Women's Institutes of Canada and the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women (ICFW), of which McNaughton was the first president, came into being. When the ICFW became Women's Section of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in 1920 McNaughton continued as president, a position she held until 1923. From 1919 to early 1923 she focused on the national farm women's movement and the Progressives.

The farm women's movement made a major shift just after the Great War. Because this thesis focuses on McNaughton's role in the origins of the farm women's movement it deals with farming during the developmental stage of prairie agriculture, from 1905 to 1918, when wheat production

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<sup>132</sup> Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 366-374. Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," in Francis and Palmer, The Prairie West, 561-572. W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1950).

expanded. This expansion parallels her development as an agrarian feminist and her influence on the establishment of the farm women's movement. In other words, the thesis focuses on the period after the great transformation and well before the great disjuncture, which followed the second World War.

Chapter two will begin by looking at the impact McNaughton's life in radical north Kent had on her feminist ideas and her attitudes toward country people, the working class, and the elites. Chapter three examines the way in which pioneering and her operation in 1911 helped to shape her agrarian feminism and her interest in the farm women's movement. Chapter four looks at the way her feminism developed while she and her husband John were organizing the Hillview Grain Growers and she organized the Hillview WGG. Her agrarian feminism was always firmly rooted in her experiences on the farm and her relations with the pioneers in Hillview. It also examines the history of the radical and conservative wings of the SGGGA and looks at the reasons the McNaughtons identified with radicals such as Edward Partridge.

Because forming alliances with other organizations and with key working partners, with whom she shared important integrative principles, was an important aspect of her integrative agrarian feminism, chapters four to seven discuss the alliances that were most important during that

particular aspect of her work in the women's movement. Chapter five focuses on McNaughton's part in the organization of the provincial WGG and the important influence her work in the WGG had on her feminism. It examines how she coped with the opposition of the conservatives in the SGG and how she out strategized them while organizing the WGG. It also examines her part in the organization of the United Farm women in other provinces and how this led to her work at the national level.

Chapters six and seven look at two of the early campaigns McNaughton and the WGG waged, and the way in which her agrarian feminism evolved during these campaigns. Chapter six focuses on her part in the suffrage campaign and her ability to draw different kinds of feminists into an effective alliance. Chapter seven looks at her conviction that farm women and their families needed "medical aid within the reach of all," that is to say they needed it closer and they needed to be able to afford it.<sup>133</sup> The campaign she led for medical aid eventually resulted in the establishment of medicare in Canada.

Chapter eight looks at several groups that were lower than McNaughton was in the hierarchies of power on the prairies and examines whether she included or excluded them

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<sup>133</sup> SPL-LHR, documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2115, pamphlet, Violet McNaughton, "Medical Aid within Reach of All," [September, 1916]. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 23 September 1916.

from the agrarian community. Chapter nine draws some conclusions about the overall impact of her agrarian feminism on the origins of the farm women's movement from 1909 to 1918, looks forward to her future activities, and discusses her identity as a "small but mighty" champion of farm women and their families.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> The Western Producer 8 February 1968.



## CHAPTER TWO

### "A MAID OF KENT":

#### LIVING IN RADICAL NORTH KENT

Violet Jackson, who was later to take pride in referring to herself as "a Maid of Kent," prepared to leave the county of Kent in southeast England in the fall of 1909.<sup>1</sup> She wrote to her father and brother, who were homesteading in Saskatchewan, to tell them about her travel arrangements.<sup>2</sup>

I write in great haste to tell you after some difficulty, that I have got the agent to book me & all luggage directly through to Harris via Saskatoon. I cannot tell you yet what to expect but hope to do so next week.... Dont [ sic] trouble to come farther than

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<sup>1</sup> The Western Producer 24 May 1951. My thanks to Jeanne L'Espérance for pointing out that the term the "Fair Maid of Kent" is usually used to describe Joan, the Countess of Kent (1328-85), who married the Black Prince, the eldest son of King Edward III. The "Fair Maid of Kent" was an independent-minded, rebellious woman. David Harris Willson, A History of England (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press Inc., 1867), 157. Sir Paul Harvey, Oxford Companion to English Literature (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1967), 93.

<sup>2</sup> Since McNaughton took the question of naming seriously, the feminist dilemma about the best names to use when writing about her seems particularly important, especially since I am dealing with both the public and private girl and woman. When referring to her before she married I usually refer to her as "Vi" or "Violet Jackson." In this chapter, to avoid confusion, when I use "Violet" I am usually referring to the mature woman in Canada. In subsequent chapters I usually refer to her as "McNaughton," except in passages where I am discussing both Violet and John McNaughton, or when she is referred to within a quotation from an original source by a different name.

Harris to meet me because you know I am not timid.<sup>3</sup> Thirty year old Vi, as her friends and family in Kent called her, was excited but she was not intimidated by the prospect of a long trip from Liverpool to Harris on her own.<sup>4</sup>

Energetic and adventurous, Vi relished the freedom to move about on her own. Throughout her life she loved travelling, so much so that she cherished the old Spanish proverb "it is better to travel than to arrive."<sup>5</sup> Her love of travel she attributed to her up-bringing in Kent where she lived in the small rural village of Borden until she was twelve years old. (See Map #1 of North Kent.) Borden, she later recalled, was north of the pilgrim's path "along which in the olden days 100,000 pilgrims a year are recorded to have passed on their way to Canterbury" to the shrine of Thomas Becket.<sup>6</sup> Borden was also just south of the Watling Street, the old Roman route from London to Canterbury, to Dover on the coast, and then over to the continent. When she

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<sup>3</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to D.S. and W.D. Jackson, 1 October 1909.

<sup>4</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson, 3 June 1909; Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 22 July 1909. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C2, Violet Jackson, Diary, 18 October 1909 to 4 November 1909.

<sup>5</sup> The Western Producer 4 December 1958, 15 January 1953. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3, Violet Jackson, Diary, 18 October 1909 to 4 November 1909. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D61(2), Violet McNaughton to Wolfe Schwangart 19 November 1933.

<sup>6</sup> The Western Producer 5 July 1951.

was a teenager and a young adult the Jacksons lived in the nearby rural town of Milton and she taught in Sittingbourne which by then had grown so that the two towns had merged. Watling Street passed through the twin towns of Milton and Sittingbourne.<sup>7</sup>

Kentish people believed that "due to its proximity to France" and because it is "the front door of England" Kent was "more European than any part of England."<sup>8</sup> A lifelong admirer of human diversity, Violet later enjoyed the European settlers on the prairies who were like the people from the continent who travelled along 'Watling Street' on their way to and from London. She recalled that

stories of "the King's Highway" and pilgrim paths have always fascinated me. Perhaps, because I spent my childhood in England near a great Roman road and equally famous Pilgrim's Way. I can recall many hair-raising stories of highwaymen and equally interesting stories of packmen, of pedlars, of pilgrims - of all

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<sup>7</sup> The Western Producer 5 July 1951, 6 September 1956. The Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory for 1908 (1908 reprint, Sittingbourne: W.J. Parrett, Ltd., 1980), 4. Peter Brandon and Brian Short, The South East from AD 1000 (London: Longman, 1990), 247, 291, 319. Richard Church, Kent (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1948), 53-54, 56-57, 244, 219, 252. Ronald Jessup, South East England - Ancient People and Places, (Southampton: Thames and Hudson, 1970), 154. S.G. McRae and C.P. Burnham, The Rural Landscape of Kent (Ashford Kent: Wye College, 1973), 147. Graham Nicholson and Jane Fawcett, The Village in England - History and Tradition (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1988), 14-16. Nigel Nicolson, Kent (New York: Harmony Books, 1988), 124-125. William Page, ed. The Victorian History of the Counties - Kent (London: The St. Catherine Press, 1932), 134-135.

<sup>8</sup> Church Kent 3.

kinds of people who travelled these historic ways.<sup>9</sup>

In Kent young Vi "lived on the bicycle for years."<sup>10</sup> A great liberator of late Victorian women, the bicycle had given them the pleasure of rapid motion and so much freedom to move about unaccompanied by chaperons that there was a 'craze' for cycling in the 1890s among the middle class women in England.<sup>11</sup> When women began riding bicycles they were thought to be very daring because cycling challenged the conventional role of women by giving them choices about what they did and where they went. Although this often shocked others, women like Vi found the bicycles practical

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<sup>9</sup> The Western Producer 6 September 1956. See also The Western Producer 5 July 1956. For details about the highwaymen see Carson I.A. Ritchie, "Kentish Highwaymen," Bygone Kent 9(1) (January 1988): 6-11.

<sup>10</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(6), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton 21 April 1937; A1 B2, Frank Anderson to Violet Jackson 18 April 1900, 28 January 1902, 5 August 1904.

<sup>11</sup> David Rubenstein, "Cycling in the 1890s," Victorian Studies (Autumn 1977): 47-71. Gary Allan Tobin, "The Bicycle Boom of the 1890s: The Development of Private Transportation and the Birth of the Modern Tourist," Journal of Popular Culture 7(4) (Spring 1974): 838-849. Jane Lewis, Women in England 1870 - 1950 - Sexual Divisions and Social Change (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), 119 quoting Ray Strachey, The Cause - A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain (1928 reprint, London: Virago, 1978), 387. For the ideas about cycling of a leading member of the women's movement see Frances E. Willard, How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle, Carol O'Hare ed. (1895; reprint, Sunnyvale California: Fair Oaks Publishing, 1991), 17-23; see also the introduction by Edith Mayo "'I Do Everything' the Life and Work of Frances Willard (1839-1898)," Ibid., 1-13.

and convenient.<sup>12</sup>

In the Edwardian period, from 1900 to 1914, the poor and unskilled working class in England still could not afford bicycles, even though with many bicycle factories the price was coming down.<sup>13</sup> If a young person who was semi-skilled managed to buy a bicycle it was a delight. The skilled working class and the lower middle class could afford them at times but they could not afford to own horses and carriages as the upper middle class did. As a result those close to the borderline between the working and middle classes, like Violet Jackson, who had bicycles were very proud of them and regarded them as status symbols. A bicycle could go where public transportation did not go and it was four times as fast as walking so it saved a great deal of time.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Strachey, The Cause, 387. Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies - Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 64-65.

<sup>13</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K1, The Pictorial Record (1899) 2, 13. Queen Victoria, who had ascended to the throne in 1837, died on 22 January 1901 and Edward VII, whose name is used for the period, became the King. He died in 1910, but historians extend the period to the beginning of the Great War on 4 August 1914. Duncan Crow, The Edwardian Woman (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), 11. Paul and Thea Thompson interviewed women and men born between 1872 and 1906 during their research on Edwardians. Paul Thompson, The Edwardians 17 and Thea Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods (Routledge & Hegan Paul, 1981), 2. Gorham, The Victorian Girl, 187.

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, The Edwardians, 45, 49, 115, 144, 150, 155, 157, 177, 284. Brandon and Short, The South East from AD 1000, 338.

As a lower middle-class Edwardian woman, who had very little money, Vi treasured her bicycle.<sup>15</sup> Later in Canada Violet liked recalling her cycling days in Kent just as young Vi had loved riding her precious bicycle, revealing not only what a joy it had been, but also her pride in her athletic prowess and her pride in living life as a free wheeling woman who made choices about her own life. "I'll bet I did 10,000 miles on the bicycle," she later bragged to her husband John.<sup>16</sup> Vi and several young friends were a "cycling group."<sup>17</sup> They peddled throughout the county having fun in Druid ruins, picnicking, and seeing Kent's rich store of historical sites.<sup>18</sup>

Owning a bicycle had been particularly convenient for Vi in the years just prior to emigrating when she was teaching in small remote rural schools, first in Harty Ferry and then in Leysdown, both on the Isle of Sheppey. She boarded near her school during the week but, because she had a bicycle, she was able to leave after school Friday afternoon or early in the evening. She cycled sixteen miles

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<sup>15</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 19 May 1909; A1 C3(3), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson, 3 June 1909, "List of money spent," ca. 1909.

<sup>16</sup> The Western Producer 5 July 1951, 13 December 1951. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(6), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 21 April 1937.

<sup>17</sup> For a picture of the Sittingbourne Cycling Club see Swain, Sittingbourne, 143.

<sup>18</sup> The Western Producer 5 July 1951.

from the school at Leysdown to Milton to spend weekends with her family, her friends, and with Frank Anderson, the brewer who was then her fiancé.<sup>19</sup> Her bicycle made her weekend visit home possible, although the trip meant cycling in the dark across a remote stretch of wet, windy marsh and then along the road from the large naval base at Sheerness, where she might encounter drunken sailors.

Apparently, she did not see her conduct as disreputable nor did she think that she needed male protection, direction, or domination. Then, and throughout her life, the freedom to move about on her own appears to have outweighed her fears of disapproval, disrepute, or danger. She seems to have taken pride in defying restrictions on her freedom of movement and she did not equate the confinement of women with sexual propriety, as did many of her contemporaries.

After spending the weekend in Milton on Monday Vi would arise early and bid goodbye to her family.<sup>20</sup> Back on the island she peddled along "that dreary old road across the marshes"<sup>21</sup> going

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<sup>19</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E89, Violet McNaughton to Mrs. George Lumley, 18 December 1934. Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England (London: Heinemann, 1976), 170-174.

<sup>20</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(4), W.D. Jackson to Violet McNaughton, 23 May 1927. For numerous pictures of Milton and Sittingbourne in Vi's day see Swain, Sittingbourne.

<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), Madge to McNaughton, 7 June 1930.

through gates I used to cuss on a wet windy Monday morning, as I cycled 16 miles to school. Early morning customers at the Eastchurch Inn used to bet whether "the little Welsh cob," as they called me, would get through in such storms but I was never once even late.<sup>22</sup>

Like this energetic "little Welsh cob," turn-of-the-century feminists took pleasure in bicycling because they believed women should see the wider world beyond the home.<sup>23</sup>

However, taken on its own, Vi's love of cycling, travelling, and the freedom to move around does not indicate she was a feminist at this time.<sup>24</sup> It does indicate that she was energetic, determined, independent-minded, and that she had physical stamina. This spirit was part of a lower middle-class femininity at the turn of the century as described by Dina Copelman. Copelman argues that the lower middle-class and those at the top of the working-class in Britain had a different model of gender identity than the one constructed by historians of middle-class gender roles. She claims that, in general, daughters had a higher status in the 'labour

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<sup>22</sup> The Western Producer 13 December 1951. Welsh cobs were sturdy little work ponies. Dictionary of Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 326. The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 450.

<sup>23</sup> Willard, How I Learned to Ride a Bicycle, 74.

<sup>24</sup> In their study of Victorian lady explorers who broke conventions about women's behaviour, during their travels throughout the world, Birkett and Wheelwright found that some of these women held "anti-suffrage" and even "anti-women" views. Dea Birkett and Julie Wheelwright, "'How could she?' Unpalatable Facts and Feminists' Heroines," Gender & History, 2 (1) (Spring 1990), 49-57.



aristocratic' and lower middle-class homes than in middle-class or working-class homes. The lower middle-class did not subscribe to a rigid ideology of separate spheres. Instead, they educated their daughters, like their sons, for respectable, skilled employment and were supportive of girls' achievements and independence.<sup>5</sup>

Violet Jackson's life was affected by her family's class and background, as well as by her own personality and determination. Born in 1879, Violet was the eldest of three children of Sedelia Spittle and William Jackson, who worked together selling groceries in the village of Borden, Kent. The values, skills and lessons Violet learned as a child and later as a young woman teaching school in Kent, helped to prepare her for leadership as an agrarian feminist in Canada. Her ancestors' tradition of radical protest, of participation in co-operatives, and her own knowledge of the problems of poor health and the fear of poverty predisposed her to both recognize rural problems in Canada and to believe reform must be achieved. The freedom she was allowed, the practicality she was taught, and the tolerance of religion and human diversity she acquired, all served as the foundation for her future Canadian activity. Similarly, sympathy with feminist aims in England turned into feminist

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<sup>5</sup> Dina M. Copelman, London's Women Teachers: Gender, class and feminism, 1870-1930. New York: Routledge, 1996), XIV-XVI, 35-43.

activism in Canada.<sup>26</sup>

Violet Jackson grew up hearing stories about the lives of her ancestors in the early nineteenth century when there were numerous protests by the rural poor against their poverty and their working conditions in Kent.<sup>27</sup> The people of Kent had such a reputation for rebelliousness that an old saying spoke of 'Kentish fire'. Kentish people were known for being independent-minded and having a "habit of throwing forward champions of the people." In short young Vi grew up among people who took pride in their 'Kentish fire' and in their people's champions.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, her village of Borden was an 'independent' village without a local squire, with many local craftsmen and tenant farmers on small holdings.<sup>29</sup> Borden was an 'open' parish in which all ratepayers could attend the rowdy vestry meetings, rather than a conservative 'closed' parish

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<sup>26</sup> The Western Producer 24 May 1951.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Charlesworth, ed., An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900 (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 131-163. Barry Reay, "The Last Rising of the Agricultural Labourers: The Battle in Bossenden Wood, 1838," History Workshop, 26 (Autumn 1988), 90. See also K.D.M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter 2, 67-103, and Alun Howkins, "Labour History and the Rural Poor, 1850 - 1980," 1 (1) 116.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60 (Leicester University Press, 1966), 14, 16. Church, Kent, 22.

<sup>29</sup> Helen Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish (Petts Woods, Kent: Synjon Books, 1992), 101.

where there were few tradesmen and craftsmen and only a select few attended the less democratic vestry meetings.<sup>30</sup> Like other 'open' parishes that had rowdy democratic vestries, Borden had a wide dispersal of small land holdings with many tenant farmers, and labourers.<sup>31</sup> 'Open' communities like Borden were more likely to breed people who were politically independent, valued democratic institutions, and more radical than those in conservative 'closed' communities. A contemporary observer found that in 'open' communities of the south people had a "crabbed independence," a life-long trait of Violet Jackson's.<sup>32</sup> In short Borden and north Kent were places that had the potential to create a person like Violet who proudly saw herself as part of "the plain common people" and was to become their "small but mighty" champion in Canada.<sup>33</sup>

Vi was told old family stories that encouraged her identification with rural radicals of the rebellious early Victorian period when there was a great deal of rural

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<sup>30</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 101. Brian Short, "The evolution of contrasting communities within England," in Short, The English rural community, 28-31. For a discussion of the scholarly debate with regard to "open" and "closed" communities see Ibid., 19-43.

<sup>31</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 117-128. Short, "The evolution of contrasting communities within England," 32.

<sup>32</sup> Short, "The evolution of contrasting communities within England," 32-33.

<sup>33</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924, 8 February 1968.

poverty in Borden and elsewhere in Kent.<sup>34</sup> She was particularly interested in the rebellions in which some of her ancestors took an active part.<sup>35</sup> These rebellions were almost certainly the protests and uprisings in North Kent over rural poverty.<sup>36</sup> North Kent was one of the isolated "pockets of radicalism" that endured but did not thrive throughout the more prosperous calm middle years of the nineteenth century, during the so called 'Golden Age of Farming.'<sup>37</sup> It was one of the radical areas of England that flared up again in the 1870s, the decade of Violet Jackson's birth, when 'the Revolt of the Field' began again.<sup>38</sup> In the early twentieth century the area in which the Jacksons lived

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<sup>34</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 98-102.

<sup>35</sup> Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England, 14. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(5), Violet McNaughton to Mrs. E. Burrows, 3 December 1951. Burrows had sent McNaughton a copy of "Chronicles of Milton" by A.H. De Beaufre Apps, Mrs. Burrow's brother. See also The Western Producer 13 December 1951.

<sup>36</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(5), Violet McNaughton to Mrs. E. Burrows, 3 December 1951. See also The Western Producer 13 December 1951. John Lowerson, "Antipoor Law Movements and Rural Trade Unionism in the South-East 1835," in An Atlas of Rural Protest, Charlesworth, ed. 155-158.

<sup>37</sup> For details of "the good years of farming before the agricultural depression" in the Borden parish see Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 117-123.

<sup>38</sup> Pamela Horn, Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976), 118-143. Brandon and Short, The South East from AD 1000, 334.

was a "radical stronghold."<sup>39</sup> In the countryside both the farmers and the labourers were restive and wanted to increase their power. This was the political culture of the people of the Jacksons' class in north Kent, at the time Violet set out for Canada.<sup>40</sup>

The attitude toward rural radicalism in the Jackson and Spittle families dated back, at least, to the 1830s when many people in North Kent had been active in the anti-poor law movement and in agricultural labourers' uprisings. These rebellions were within the memory of the older people in her family when Vi was a child. It was likely from them that she heard the stories about their family's part in the rebellions.<sup>41</sup> Violet later expressed admiration for the rural radicalism of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.<sup>42</sup>

When Vi's father was a child, he and his father were agricultural labourers, on the Isle of Sheppey, who

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<sup>39</sup> Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 71.

<sup>40</sup> Horn, The Changing Countryside, 186-187.

<sup>41</sup> E.J. Hobsbawn and George Rudé, Captain Swing (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), 97-116, 223. Charlesworth, An Atlas of Rural Protest, 151, 153, 155-158. For details of troubles in Borden see chapter 21, "The Agricultural Riots of 1830-31," in Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 98-102.

<sup>42</sup> The Western Producer 8 July 1948. Asa Briggs, A Social History of England (Markham: Penguin Books, 1987), 238. G.D.H. Cole, A Century of Co-operation, (n.p. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1944), 28-29. Horn, Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside, 126. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, 41-42. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, 126, 339, 386.

supplemented their meagre income by working in the brick industry. The Spittles, her mother's family, were a very old agricultural family in the Borden area.<sup>43</sup> The village of Borden was surrounded by cherry orchards and hop "gardens".<sup>44</sup> It was this lush area of Kent that caused travellers along Watling Street to call the county "the Garden of England".<sup>45</sup> Here a living could be made from small holdings when combined with other work.<sup>46</sup> In other words the Spittles were a little above the Jacksons in the hierarchies of power in Kent.

Young Vi also heard stories about ancestors who were active in the co-operative movement before she was born. Given the difficult conditions in which they lived in nineteenth century many English people, including Vi's ancestors, turned to some form of mutual aid, including

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<sup>43</sup> For reports of the doings of the Spittles in Borden throughout the nineteenth century see Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 95, 119, 122, 127.

<sup>44</sup> The Kentish people have had a tradition of calling fields of hops "hop gardens" ever since a 1341 court decision made the tithe on a garden less than that for a field. Church, Kent, 121.

<sup>45</sup> Brandon and Short, The South East from AD 1000, 6. Church, Kent, 14.

<sup>46</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3, Violet McNaughton, "Daily Diaries," SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E89, McNaughton to Mrs. Geo. Lumley 18 December 1934; D1(1), McNaughton to Sir Robert Borden, 23 May 1928. Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 122.

friendly societies and co-operatives.<sup>47</sup> Violet was to observe, in 1940, that

between 1827 and 1834 many local co-operative societies were founded but few lasted very long. I must mention one exception, Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey where a baking society was started in 1816 and a mill added later. Later still a general store was opened. This enterprise, now called the Sheerness and District Economical Society, has had a continuous existence to the present day. I'm very proud to be a descendant of one of the founders and can remember hearing one old lady say to her great grandchild "Eat child eat, and bring up the dividends."<sup>48</sup>

The Sheerness co-operative was indeed a remarkable innovation. Several "dockyardmen," who were living in the squalid dockside town, met in 1816 risking summons for illegal assembly, because they needed good affordable clean water and food for their families.<sup>49</sup> In addition to the

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<sup>47</sup> The Western Producer 4 October 1956. Horn, The Changing Countryside, 182-185. Cole, A Century of Co-operation, 215-256. Beatrice Potter, The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain (1891; reprint, Aldershot: Gower, 1987). Briggs, A Social History of England, 23-40.

<sup>48</sup> The Western Producer 4 October 1956. Potter The Co-operative Movement, 43. Cole A Century of Co-operation, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Sheila M. Judge, "The Saga of Sheppey's Water Supply - Part One," Bygone Kent 9(12) (December 1988): 738. R. K. Webb, Modern England, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 140-141, 151, 174, 290-291. Mee, Kent, 400. Harper, Charles. The Ingoldsby Country - Literary Landmarks of the "Ingoldsby Legends". (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1904), 239. Nicolson, Kent, 91-2. Brett Fairbairn and others, Co-operatives and Community Development: Economics in Social Perspective (Saskatoon: Centre for the Study of Cooperatives, 1991), 20. Brett Fairbairn, "Social Bases of Co-operation: Historical Examples and Contemporary Questions," in Murray E. Fulton, ed., Co-operative Organizations and Canadian Society: Popular Institutions and the Dilemmas of Change (Toronto: University of Toronto

baking society and the mill that Violet remembered, the Sheerness co-operative sunk a well to get clean water. In 1863, when the Sheerness co-operative was officially registered with The Co-operative Movement in England and Wales, it was the oldest society of its kind in existence.<sup>50</sup> Therefore the pride instilled in young Vi about her ancestor's part in the creation of this co-operative stayed with her all her life.<sup>51</sup>

Even in these so called 'golden years' of agriculture, from 1851 to the 1870s, the labourers, like Vi's father and her Grandfather Jackson, did not have much to celebrate.<sup>52</sup> "Granny Spittle," who had a great deal of influence on young Vi, and the Spittle family had their times of difficulty too.<sup>53</sup> Violet later recalled that

as a child I used to sit on a stool at Grandmother's feet while she told me stories of important happenings she remembered, such as the Crimean War. Then she recalled, many things were difficult to get. Tea in particular. She said at times it cost a guinea a pound. For many it became just a Sunday treat. During the week they made

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Press, 1990), 65-68.

<sup>50</sup> Judge, "The Saga of Sheppey's Water Supply," 738.

<sup>51</sup> The Western Producer 27 September 1956, 4 October 1956.

<sup>52</sup> Horn, The Changing Countryside, 13. Briggs, A Social History of England, 269. Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England, 14, 79, 97-98.

<sup>53</sup> For an account of the happenings in Borden in during the good years of farming see Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 119-123.



substitutes...often toast water. This was made by pouring boiling water on well toasted bread and then straining it.<sup>54</sup>

Growing up in a rebellious region of Kent, hearing old family and village stories, and this sort of personal teaching by a Grandmother she knew loved her dearly, made a deep impression on young Vi.<sup>55</sup> It gave her a strong sense of connection with her rural ancestors and a sensitivity not only to the effects of economic and social change on country people, but also to the possible political responses of reformers and rebels to these changes. These sensitivities were to be of great value in Canada.

Her Grandmother was also teaching the girl who sat at her feet that national and international events affected the daily lives of rural people. By telling Vi these stories she was giving her granddaughter the message that girls and women could understand, and should be concerned about, "important happenings" in their local community, the nation, and the world. In other words, Vi was learning radical ideas about gender as well as class.

Violet Jackson was born six years after the beginning of the "Great Depression" in British agriculture that was to

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<sup>54</sup> The Western Producer 7 April 1955. Other details about this story are not available.

<sup>55</sup> The Western Producer 6 December 1951, 7 April 1955, 21 March 1957.

last until 1896. Rural radicalism flourished again.<sup>56</sup> A year before she was born agricultural workers in Kent had their wages reduced and the biggest farmers in Borden and the clergyman, were preaching against men joining the Kent and Sussex Agricultural Labourers Union. Reverend Tuke was proud of preaching against the Union when he found the Church of England in Borden, which the Jacksons attended regularly, crammed with labourers.<sup>57</sup>

In the Edwardian period earnings went up in England and purchasing power increased but compared to workers in industry farm workers' wages were about one half, so much so that there were several studies of poverty in the countryside.<sup>58</sup> This period provided welcome relief for some farmers and landlords but the farm workers and the lower middleclass, like the Jacksons, benefitted little.<sup>59</sup> The economic position of the Jacksons was so bad by 1908-09 that

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<sup>56</sup> Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England, 21, 24, 42-46, 71-73, 75-76, 142, 183, 188. Horn, The Changing Countryside, 1, 3, 10, 31-32, 36, 41, 43, 47, 50, 61-62, 67, 71-73, 76, 98, 99, 120, 140, 142-143, 151, 160, 179, 180, 241-243. Michael Winstanley, Life in Kent at the Turn of the Century (Folkstone, Kent: Dawson, 1978), 17-28. Brandon and Short, The South East from AD 1000, 324-327. Armstrong, "The Countryside," 113-115.

<sup>57</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 125. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D3, Violet McNaughton to Arnold Barclay 5 May 1937. The Western Producer 5 May 1949. Sittingbourne, Milton and District Directory, 168. See a picture of the Borden in Swain, Sittingbourne, 62, 167.

<sup>58</sup> Armstrong, "The countryside," 122.

<sup>59</sup> Horn, The Changing Countryside, 211-242.

her father was almost bankrupt and Violet later recalled that she felt as if she was "being stifled."<sup>60</sup>

The depression in the late Victorian period and the economic conditions in Edwardian Kent meant that Vi grew up and spent her young adulthood in a time of great economic insecurity.<sup>61</sup> This had a profound effect on her life since she hovered just above the poverty in which many of the working class lived. She was fearful of impending destitution, a fear she was later able to harness in Canada for the good of the community.<sup>62</sup>

The life her father, William Delamark Jackson, had lived as a boy was the sort of life she feared. He was born in 1856 on Danley Farm near Minster-in-Sheppey on the sheep island. With the deference expected of rural workers his parents named him after Delamark Banks, the local landowner and farmer.<sup>63</sup> In order to live, labourers in north Kent had often alternated between agricultural labour and work in the

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<sup>60</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A5, Mildred Jackson to D.S. Jackson, 16 November 1908; A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson 19 May 1909. SAB A1 K2, Myrtle Hayes Wright, "Mothering the Prairie," MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926.

<sup>61</sup> For economic conditions in Borden when she was a child see Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 125-128.

<sup>62</sup> Jack London, People of the Abyss (1903) quoted at length in James Laver, Edwardian Promenade (London: Edward Hulton, 1958), 173, 178-180, 184-185.

<sup>63</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I3, The East Kent Gazette 8 August 1939. The Western Producer 5 August 1948.

bricks industry where, as a boy, William had worked. Even though many labourers in the area attempted to balance seasonal work as "North Kent brickies" with agricultural labour or scavenging, most of them found they had to spend time in the workhouse, many of them ending their days there. This bred industrial radicalism.<sup>64</sup> Violet, who had been told stories about her father's childhood, later recalled that

he had such a serious childhood. At 6 years of age he had to lead a horse pulling a...load of bricks 3 miles to the wharf to have them loaded on the London barges....Father was the eldest and earned sixpence a day leading the brick cart horse three miles - riding back to the brickfield but making two round trips a day. So Father never had a chance to go to school. Mother taught him to read and write while they were engaged.<sup>65</sup>

As a young man William moved to Milton and in June of 1878 he married Sedelia Jane Spittle of Borden who was four years older than William. She came from an old agricultural family that had lived for generations in Borden where the young couple settled. The Spittles were small tenant farmers, grocers, butchers, and skilled craftsmen.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Winstanley Life in Kent, 182-186.

<sup>65</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C2, Violet McNaughton, Daily Dairies (January 1963-April 1966), 2 February 1966.

<sup>66</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I3, The East Kent Gazette, 8 August 1939. No more details are known about his move or how her parents met. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A3, "Jennie" to "Uncle" n.d. and "Lydia to "Clara" 19 November 1879; A1 D1(1), Violet McNaughton to Sir Robert Borden 28 May 1923; A1 C2, Violet McNaughton, Daily Diaries (1963 to 1966), 17 September 1965. The Western Producer 13 September 1951. SPL-LHR, Documents, McNaughton Papers LH 2135,

Violet Clara Jackson was born in her parents' home in Wises Lane in Borden on the 11 November 1879<sup>67</sup>. When Vi was four years old her brother Delamark was born, followed by her sister, Mildred, when Vi was seven. The Jacksons were grocers and lived in a "friendly rambling house" in the midst of a garden with cherry trees.<sup>68</sup> Her parents sold groceries in Wises Lane.

Violet experienced the problems of poor health from a very young age. Baby Vi was a bright eyed baby who looked out at the world with curious eyes.<sup>69</sup> However she had rickets as a baby and did not walk until she was over three.<sup>70</sup> Like other children with rickets, her growth was stunted and her bones did not develop properly. Rickets is caused by a deficiency of vitamin D, brought on by inadequate diet or a lack of sunlight. It is not clear exactly why baby Vi had rickets; perhaps her family was

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Autograph Album, newspaper clipping on inside front cover, The Times 19 August 1931. By 1951 one of her Borden cousins and his family owned several farms in Kent. The Western Producer 21 June 1951. Sittingbourne, Milton and District Directory, 167-172. Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England, 54, 56.

<sup>67</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers, C4, birth certificate of Violet Clare Jackson.

<sup>68</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton," 2.

<sup>69</sup> SAB, Photograph S-B 2086, Baby picture of Violet Jackson.

<sup>70</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(1), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 3 January 1936.

short of money when she was born or they did not feed her correctly.<sup>71</sup> In any case she was to suffer from the physical and emotional effects of rickets for the rest of her life. Her family regarded her as frail.<sup>72</sup>

Vi seems to have felt it was essential to live down any insinuation that she was a rickety little girl. As an adolescent she cracked two vertebrae near the top of her neck, causing paralysis in her fingers, but not her thumbs. She spent almost a year in the hospital. She could not do anything for herself and she felt "so helpless." This problem surfaced again for while when she was an elderly woman in part as a result of this old injury. Both of these incidents were likely the result of her childhood rickets.<sup>73</sup> Cracking her spine was very frightening, as were the other encounters she and her loved ones had in England with illness and death.

She learned to deal with her small stature and the tendency of people to discount small people. She was sensitive when she thought she was being teased about her

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<sup>71</sup> Paul Lewis and David Rubenstein, The Human Body (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971), 75.

<sup>72</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(1), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 3 January 1936. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>73</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D 9, McNaughton to Edith Benwell, 22 October 1937 and McNaughton to Dorothy Benwell, 21 February 1951; A1 D1(5), McNaughton to Mrs. Morton, 15 October 1951; A1 D32(5), Violet McNaughton to John Hunter, 22 October 1951.

size and she tried to compensate by pushing to prove her physical stamina and her spirited approach to life.<sup>74</sup> She became very good at proving to others that she was not a weakling. All her life people were to dub her with names, such as "the little Welsh cob," that referred to both her diminutive stature and her indomitable spirit.

In short, at a very young age she seems to have begun constructing an identity as a person who was "small but mighty."<sup>75</sup> This identity eventually was to become an important component of her agrarian feminism. Unfortunately, this determination to overcome created tremendous pressure on her. Throughout her life she pushed herself too hard and, at times, she broke under the pressure, a pattern that seems to have begun in England.

Vi's mother was a practical woman who raised poultry and lived according to a motto her daughter learned well.<sup>76</sup> She believed that

For every evil under the sun  
There's a remedy or there's none,  
If there's one seek and find it,  
If not, then never mind it.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C2, Violet Jackson, Diary, (October 18, 1909 to November 4, 1909), 10.

<sup>75</sup> The Western Producer 8 February 1968.

<sup>76</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I3, The East Kent Gazette 8 August 1903, 7 January 1939.

<sup>77</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E91, McNaughton to Mrs. E.M. Burke, 6 January 1943. See also SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers LH 2135 Autograph Album, Sedelia Jane Jackson's entry 8 December 1896.

The little girl was surrounded by a large extended family that loved and protected her.<sup>78</sup> In Vi's family her grandmother seems to have done most of the childcare, perhaps because her Mother worked in the family business. "Granny Spittle" was a competent, confident country woman and seems to have been a very important influence on young Vi, who was one day to become a Canadian country woman.<sup>79</sup> From her little Vi learned some of the skills that women in rural England had practised for centuries.

Victorian country people seldom called on a doctor; instead they relied on traditional herbal remedies and folk cures. In most English villages and market towns there were herbalists.<sup>80</sup> For the rest of her life Violet respected herbalists and, like many women of her day, she had faith in home remedies.<sup>81</sup> Victorian cottagers often preferred to use home-grown herbs rather than buy them from the herbalist.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> The Western Producer 21 June 1951.

<sup>79</sup> SPL-LHR, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 9823, Photograph of McNaughton's maternal grandmother, with a notation in McNaughton's handwriting referring to her as "Granny Spittle."

<sup>80</sup> Horn, The Changing Countryside, 154. Pamela Horn, The Victorian Country Child (Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1974), 170.

<sup>81</sup> The Western Producer 11 March 1954; 8 April 1948. Rose Ducie Jardine Private Papers, Violet McNaughton to Rose Ducie, 4 May 1948. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>82</sup> Horn The Victorian Country Child, 170-171.



"I remember," Violet wrote in 1957,

Grandmother's herb garden and the stories she told of making simple herbal remedies. As a child I watched in wonder while she made elderflower ointment and filled her pomade jars. I knew later that elder flower was wonderful for cuts and burns and as she claimed "so good for the skin."<sup>83</sup>

From her grandmother, Vi also learned about other skills of agricultural women, which complemented the skill of the men in the parish of Borden.<sup>84</sup>

Like many Victorian country children, Vi was given the freedom to wander about the village and through the countryside.<sup>85</sup> One of her favourite walks was to "Heart's Delight, a wee spot near Borden my birthplace."<sup>86</sup> Heart's Delight was a nature preserve where footpaths had been protected since the time of Doomsday. It was sandy, grassy and uneven with scrubby oaks and many foxes and rabbits, the perfect place for children to have fun even though it was a "considerable walk" from the centre of the village.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The Western Producer 21 March 1957.

<sup>84</sup> The Western Producer 8 February 1951, 13 September 1951; 7 April 1955, 12 February 1959, 2 April 1959.

<sup>85</sup> Horn, The Victorian Country Child, 17, 167. For pictures taken in the village in her day see Swain, Sittingbourne, 62, 63, 144, 157.

<sup>86</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 B4, Violet McNaughton to Ada Love, 25 October 1949. Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 170. Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 118, 136.

<sup>87</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 136. Interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Peter Holdstock, 29 June 1992.

Harvest time was a very exciting time for young Vi and the other children in Borden because they missed school in order to help harvest hops, cherries, and other fruits.<sup>88</sup> When they picked fruit into baskets, she recalled, "we used to pack stinging nettles over the sieves of cherries and plums before the half sticks were put across to hold fruit in."<sup>89</sup> But the best thing about fall was that then her "gypsy and East End friends" who "dearied and duckied" her arrived to harvest hops.<sup>90</sup> Some Kentish people disliked the working-class people from the slums of London, were even more distrustful of the gypsies, and thought both the gypsies and the Londoners were dirty.<sup>91</sup> Vi's parents and her Grandmother Spittle had a much more tolerant attitude toward the pickers.<sup>92</sup> Local pickers included farm labourers' wives who worked on the hops all year along with their husbands, using their own particular skills. The complementary roles played by women and men were an important part of the production of hops and fruit. This was

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<sup>88</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 138.

<sup>89</sup> The Western Producer 11 October 1951.

<sup>90</sup> The Western Producer 20 May 1948.

<sup>91</sup> Church, Kent, 6.

<sup>92</sup> The Western Producer 6 December 1951.  
Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 171.

one of the facets of the knowledge Vi took to Canada.<sup>93</sup>

Violet later recalled that

there were often those colourful folk, the gypsies, who came with their rings and bangles. I used to talk to the gypsies but then I had nothing to lose. I did wonder how often village folk blamed them wrongly for the loss of chicken or rabbits or for other petty robberies. Perhaps I only doubt because I liked these pleasant voiced nomads. The most interesting were the "'oppers" who came down with their pots and pans and bedding and broken-down prams from the East End of London some years by the thousands to camp in the most awful damp, dark huts imaginable.<sup>94</sup>

Violet believed that this was a "real holiday" for the slum dwellers.<sup>95</sup> George Orwell disagreed. He went hopping in the 1930s and reported that with

my hands cut to bits, I went a wreck at the end of it. It was humiliating to see that most of the people there looked on it as a holiday...in fact it is because hopping is regarded as a holiday that the pickers will take starvation wages.<sup>96</sup>

Violet thought that the pickers, most of them women and children, had a holiday attitude to hop picking because slum conditions in London were even worse.<sup>97</sup> Going out to pick

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<sup>93</sup> For a discussion of complementary roles in farm families see Mary Bouquet, Family Servants and Visitors - The Farm Household in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Devon (Norwich: Geo Books, 1985), 207-208.

<sup>94</sup> The Western Producer 20 May 1951.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> George Orwell quoted in Christopher Hibbert, The English - A Social History (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1988), notes with pictures between 594-595.

<sup>97</sup> The Western Producer 6 December 1951. For pictures of women and children 'hopping' in Kent when McNaughton lived there see Swain, Sittingbourne, 80-81.

hops was fun for little Vi but she also was exposed to the life of the urban poor and their fear of destitution.

The only document that has been preserved written by Vi as a child is a letter she wrote to her mother in June 1892, the summer she was twelve. She was visiting her aunt and uncle and their children in Gravesend and she reported on her activities. They had gone to a popular resort, the Rosherville Gardens.<sup>38</sup> She and Phoebe, a friend about her own age, had "had a swing and lost Auntie for about an hour but we found them at last." After looking at the bears and the peacocks and playing some games "Alice, Baby, and I lost the others and couldnt [sic] find them for some time. I enjoyed myself very much all the time and we got home at 7:30." She had earned a bit of money working for her uncle as a cashier one morning and posting letters for another man. She closed the letter with kisses and the message "I hope you are quite well and that Papa and the children are well. With best love to all, your loving Violet." It is clearly the letter of a confident, competent, energetic, adventurous, and affectionate daughter.''

The problem of analyzing the effect of McNaughton's childhood on her agrarian feminism would be easier if there

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<sup>38</sup> Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Isles, 9th ed. (1943 reprint, John Bartholomew & Sons, Ltd., 1973), 592.

<sup>39</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A3, Violet Jackson to Sedelia Jackson, 14 June 1892.

were more sources like this letter. A 1926 biographical article about McNaughton by Myrtle Hayes Wright, a Saskatoon journalist, included a story about Vi as a school girl in Borden, the year before she went to Rosherville Gardens.<sup>100</sup> Wright tells of how an old Kentish school master with twenty-seven students in his class, most of them boys, would have agreed with "the West's impression that Mrs. McNaughton is a radical and an insurgent." The school master was often tempted to send her home. Wright claimed that the climax came one morning in May when

Violet decided that school promised to be insufferably dull. So she mustered the youngsters in a deep hollow out of sight of the schoolhouse and proceeded to organize a mutiny. Her plan was to march into school an hour late, "just to see how the master will look." Solemnly the twenty-seven marched into the room. The master knew his students. "All of you to your seats except Violet Jackson," he ordered. To Violet was meted out punishment of the sin shared by the twenty-six. It was the beginning of the end. The tumultuous Violet whose little body seethed with energy was sent back to her parents with the request that she continue her education elsewhere.<sup>101</sup>

Steer questions whether this story, which McNaughton apparently told Wright, is false or exaggerated. There is no question that in the 1920s and 1930s McNaughton viewed herself as a "radical" and believed that she had always been

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<sup>100</sup> Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 4.

<sup>101</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926.

"a rebel against the established order."<sup>102</sup> Three years after Wright's story was published McNaughton said she was "expelled at the age of eleven, for my ability to lead boys twice my size into mischief."<sup>103</sup>

The village school in Borden was financed by the established church and by fees paid by parents. In the Borden school the children of the village received a good education, relative to other rural children.<sup>104</sup> Most of the pupils were the children of farm labourers and tenant farmers in whom hardiness and a spirit of independence were encouraged.<sup>105</sup> Like many country children, Borden children attended school on an irregular basis because their families needed the income they could earn.<sup>106</sup> Many rural teachers were not very well qualified but Kenelin Edwards, the

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<sup>102</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers, A1 D1(7), McNaughton, notes "Mrs. Violet McNaughton ... British Empire," ca. 1935; A1 A1 (6), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 7 April 1937.

<sup>103</sup> The Western Producer 15 May 1929. McNaughton says in this issue that she was eleven when the incident happened but Wright claimed she was twelve. Likely Wright was mistaken.

<sup>104</sup> See chapter 27, "The Village School, 1848-1900," in Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 136-142. Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 168. See also Felicity Hunt "Introduction" to Lessons for Life - The Schooling of Girls and women 1850-1950, ed. Felicity Hunt, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), xiv, xv.

<sup>105</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 136-142. Horn The Victorian Country Child, xv, 15.

<sup>106</sup> Horn The Victorian Country Child, 56-70. Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 138.

schoolmaster in Borden, was a good but strict teacher.<sup>107</sup>

As a lower middle-class girl who could attend school regularly and had been reading difficult books since she was young it is not surprising that Vi would be regarded as a leader by her restless classmates on a spring day.<sup>108</sup> Nor is it surprising that a girl who soon after was having great fun in Rosherville Gardens, getting lost and separated from the adults, would come up with a plan for the class to hide and come in late. Nor was it surprising that schoolmaster Edwards knew who the ringleader was and was angry at her. He had to maintain discipline because a bad inspector's report could mean that the grant given to the school was reduced. Therefore he was strict about behaviour in and out of school.<sup>109</sup> He was particularly strict about punctuality and Vi would have known this.<sup>110</sup>

What likely made Wright's account of this mischievous behaviour unbelievable to Steer is her use of the label "radical and insurgent" for a schoolgirl, when the schoolmaster likely regarded Vi simply as a troublemaker

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<sup>107</sup> Horn, The Victorian Country Child, 35. Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 137-142.

<sup>108</sup> The Western Producer 22 July 1948, 28 June 1951, 14 April 1960, 31 March 1960.

<sup>109</sup> Allinson, Borden: The History of a Kentish Parish, 138.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 141.

whose absence would help him to control an unruly class.<sup>111</sup> McNaughton, who had been a teacher herself, just saw it as mischief.<sup>112</sup> Wright's use of dramatic words such as "mutiny," "tumultuous," and "seething" increase scepticism. She was writing in the 1920s when there was a significant increase in women's biographical and autobiographical writings, a form that had previously been identified much more closely with men.<sup>113</sup>

Kathryn Dodd argues that women such as Wright, who wrote about women like McNaughton who had remarkable public achievements, were "engaged in political activity and their publications represent a real political gain."<sup>114</sup> In Wright's enthusiasm she used dramatic and romantic language to convey the qualities of McNaughton that she regarded as heroic. Wright, who likely knew and admired McNaughton, even had her dancing out of the house "in the midst of a garden where cherry trees blossomed into scented, white

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 136, 138, 140.

<sup>112</sup> The Western Producer 15 May 1929.

<sup>113</sup> Kathryn Dodd, "Cultural Politics and Women's Historical Writing: The Case of Ray Strachey's The Cause," Women's Studies International Forum, 13 (1/2) (1990): 127-137. For other biographical articles about women by Myrtle Hayes Wright written in a similar style see The Saskatoon Daily Star 24 November 1917, 1 December 1917, 31 December 1917, 12 January 1918, 9 February 1918. I am grateful to Jacqueline Hutchings for telling me about these articles and giving me copies.

<sup>114</sup> Dodd, "Cultural Politics and Women's Historical Writing: The Case of Ray Strachey's The Cause," 128.



clouds of a springtime." Wright fell into two traps, first she used the anachronism of projecting McNaughton's twentieth century feminism back onto a rebellious school girl and, second, she fell into the tendency to romanticize rural life.<sup>115</sup>

When Wright's feminist political purpose in using this approach is understood the story is believable, if we consider not only the Jackson family background and the conditions in the Borden village school, but also the minor importance that the Victorians placed on sex role differentiation in early childhood. They believed that sex differences would emerge "in full bloom" only at puberty so they need not be enforced in young children.<sup>116</sup>

Vi's father had established a mineral water business in Milton when she was ten, a year before this incident at school, but Vi had continued to attend the Borden village school because she was regarded as a frail child and it was thought it would toughen her.<sup>117</sup> The family may also have let her continue in the Borden school because her grandmother was there and her mother was involved in her father's business, because it was less intimidating than the

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<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Horn The Changing Countryside, 3.

<sup>116</sup> Gorham, The Victorian Girl, 80.

<sup>117</sup> Rose (Ducie) Jardine Private Papers, "Violet McNaughton" by Rose Ducie, n.d. ca. mid-1950s. SAB, McNaughton Papers, A1 K1, The Pictorial Record, April 1899; A1 I3, The East Kent Record, 7 January 1939.

larger state school in Milton, and because it was cheaper than a private school.<sup>118</sup>

After Vi was expelled from the Borden school, she attended a private girls' school in Sittingbourne, an industrial town.<sup>119</sup> There are fewer documentary sources for the years between the summer she was eleven and the year that she turned seventeen than for any other period of her life. Apparently the training that the Victorians gave teenage girls was effective since an unruly school girl "settled to her lessons."<sup>120</sup> In the Victorian period the transition from childhood to young "ladyhood" was heralded by a change in dress.<sup>121</sup> Two studio photographs of Vi show this change. A photograph of her when she was twelve shows a girl, with rather wild unkept hair hanging around her shoulders, in a simple dark dress; whereas one taken of her when she was in her late teens shows a young woman with upswept hair in white lacey dress over the corset that was deemed a health and fashion necessity.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 86.

<sup>119</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K1, The Pictorial Record, April (1899). Nicolson, Kent, 146.

<sup>120</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926.

<sup>121</sup> Gorham, The Victorian Girl, 92.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 193. SAB, McNaughton Papers, Photograph S-B 2038, Picture of Violet Jackson around age 12. SPL-LHR, Pictures, Violet McNaughton Papers, PH 88-43, Picture of Violet Jackson around age 17.

Although Vi was "raised, baptised, and confirmed" in the Anglican Church, she "descended from Quaker stock" and she later said she admired Quakers because of their pacific response to war and "the way in which they live their religion from day to day."<sup>123</sup> The Jacksons, their family, and friends, most of whom seemed to have had a tolerant religious outlook, were close to people in other denominations.<sup>124</sup> When she was twelve, on a visit in Gravesend with her aunt and uncle, she reported to her Mother that "on Sunday I went to [the Methodist] chapel and saw Miss Simmonds dipped and I do like Miss Simmonds."<sup>125</sup> It would appear that rather than adhere to the high Anglo Catholicism or to its low Anglican rivals the Jacksons tended more to the Anglican liberal Broad Church Movement. It "aimed at not only modernizing the Church's teaching but embracing diverse opinions." It was "opposed not so much to

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<sup>123</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D3, McNaughton to Arnold Barclay, 5 May 1937; A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Mrs. Frank Wilson, 5 November 1931. The Western Producer 5 May 1949. Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 167-168. Mee, Kent, 54.

<sup>124</sup> SPL-LHR, Documents, McNaughton Papers LH 2135, Autograph Album, Violet Jackson's entry 25 November 1900; The Rev. Richard Edward Harding's entry 11 October 1909; A.L.A.'s entry November 1905; Maud Anderson's entry 19 January 1900; Anna Ham's entry 1909; Hilda Maud Chalmers' entry 19 November 1896; H[enry] T[Tuckey] Maundrell's entry 7 December 1896; E.C.W.'s entry 28 August 1898; M. Crayden's entry 24 November 1904; SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(5), McNaughton to Mrs. E. Burrows, 3 December 1951; A1 A2(4), W.D. Jackson to McNaughton, 3 May 1927.

<sup>125</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A3, Violet Jackson to Sedelia Jackson, 14 June 1892.

High or Low as to Narrow."<sup>126</sup> The Jackson's liberalism in religion likely was linked to the family's political stances since liberal ideas in politics were often found among skilled craftsmen and independent trades people "who tended to be 'decidedly Radical' in their opinions."<sup>127</sup> This religious liberalism was to have an influence on Violet's attitude to the polyglot on the Canadian prairies.

As a fully grown teenager, Vi was "short with unmanageable hair" that "never would behave" and she had "strong features." She was "aware that people thought her sister more attractive, more ladylike."<sup>128</sup> She compensated for this with her attractive personality and by pushing her energy to the limit. Living in a time when extreme femininity was socially constructed and very important, she felt she had to compete with her younger sister who was closer to the feminine ideal than she was. She was proud of the fact that in spite of her sister's good looks and ladylike behaviour she had more boy friends than Mildred.<sup>129</sup> These contradictory demands were exacerbated by

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<sup>126</sup> Webb, Modern England, 406-407.

<sup>127</sup> Mingay, Rural Life in Victorian England, 92.

<sup>128</sup> Rose Jardine Private Papers, notes "Violet Jackson....for a frig." by Rose Ducie, ca. 1950s. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D9, McNaughton to Dorothy Benwell, 1 February 1936.

<sup>129</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

the Jackson's class position. As a lower middle class adolescent Vi was caught in the contradiction of having to work hard and yet being expected to conform to the ideal of the leisured lady.

After Violet was expelled from the Borden village school she went to live with her parents in Milton-next-Sittingbourne. Sedelia, Vi's mother, was an important part of the success of the mineral water business that her father established in Milton; she appears to have done the paper work involved in the business.<sup>130</sup> Sedelia ran the house, cared for her family, worked in the business and raised poultry. She seems to have been more competent than her husband; as long as she was alive the business appears to have been sound but not prosperous.<sup>131</sup> However after she died, in 1903, it went down hill. After Sedelia died, Vi's younger sister, Mildred, appears to have tried to take over the tasks that Sedelia had done. By 1908 the business was so deeply in debt that they had great difficulty paying off the creditors before William sold the business and joined his son on a homestead in Saskatchewan.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K1, The Pictorial Record April 1899; A1 I3, The East Kent Gazette, 8 August 1903.

<sup>131</sup> Shelia [sic] Steer, "Violet McNaughton and the Struggle for the Co-operative Society," in Educating for a Brighter New Day: Women's Organizations as Learning Sites, ed. Michael Welton (Halifax: School of Education Dalhousie University, 1992), 139-159.

<sup>132</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A5, Mildred Jackson to D.S. Jackson, 16 November 1908.

During Vi's teen years the Jacksons had been prosperous enough to send Vi to the Bickerton School in Milton. A small private girls' school, it had boarders and day students. For a day pupil over 12 years of age, Vi's parents had to pay three guineas per year.<sup>133</sup> These fees were modest compared to many girls schools but a substantial outlay for the lower middle-class Jacksons.<sup>134</sup>

In 1896, when Vi was seventeen she and a cousin took over Bickerton School.<sup>135</sup> From then until she left for Canada she was to struggle to earn a living and to be economically independent of her parents. Her desire for economic independence is well-illustrated by the choices she made in contrast the choices of her sister Mildred. Unlike Vi, Mildred seems to have been happy to live her life as a dependent, obedient, daughter. No risk taker, she lived with her parents and, after her Mother died, she continued to live with her Father until he left England. "Milk", as her family nicknamed Mildred, then moved in with the

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<sup>133</sup> SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers LH 2367, "Bickerton School, Milton, Sittingbourne." In contrast the Lynstead Ladies School near Sittingbourne charged 24 guineas. SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers LH 2367, "Lynstead Ladies School."

<sup>134</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Letter of recommendation by Mrs. Pillow, 5 January 1905.

<sup>135</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Margaret Barthwick, 29 August 1932; A1 A3, Invitation from Bickerton School, 20 December 1900. SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2367, Printed program of the Bickerton School and handwritten program of Bickerton School.

Maundrells, a childless pharmacist and his wife, who were long-time friends of the Jacksons.<sup>135</sup> Mildred was fond of the Maundrells, who were of a higher class than the Jacksons, and became their surrogate daughter and Mrs. Maundrell's companion. She was later to nurse them both in their old age, inherit property from them, and then quietly live out her life as a Kentish spinster. She relished the status she had as the surrogate daughter of a middle-class couple and she shied away from the adventures that her older sister undertook.<sup>137</sup>

Vi's career as a teacher, from 1896 to 1909, and her years as a pupil spanned a period in which education in England changed a great deal. Sweeping changes established a nationwide modern state education system.<sup>138</sup> These changes had a profound effect on Vi's ability to earn a living. Violet later recalled that

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<sup>136</sup> The East Kent Gazette 8 August 1939. Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 27.

<sup>137</sup> SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, PH 88-44, notation on back of a picture, Mildred Jackson to Mrs. H.T. Maundrell, n.d. December 1900. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(9), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson, 26 February 1936, and Mildred Jackson to McNaughton, 19 December 1937; A1 B4, McNaughton to Ada Love, 10 June 1952; A1 D1(5), McNaughton to Mrs. E. Burrows, 3 December 1951. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>138</sup> Felicity Hunt, "Introduction," Lessons for Life, xi-xx. Widdowson, Going up into the Next Class, 29-73. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work - Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales 1850-1914 (David & Charles: Newton Abbot, 1973), 33-67.

when I first started to teach I was 17. Took over a private school from my ex-mistress. Needed \$500.00 to start. It was not convenient for father to lend it so I set out to obtain a loan on my I.O.U. Succeeded. With my cousin taught this school for eight years quite successfully, then went into public school teaching. Paid loan back. What a sublime faith or conceit I must have had for I never had any training. And what faith the old gentleman must have had in me? Our children passed good exams too.<sup>139</sup>

Although Miss Jackson had no formal training she was competent and she got along well with her students.<sup>140</sup>

Because she could not afford to take teacher training Violet's opportunities as a young woman were severely limited at a time when both private and state schools were making increasing demands for higher teaching qualifications.<sup>140</sup> The only other occupation open to lower middle-class women with the security and respectability that teaching offered them was the civil service. But it was very difficult to get into the civil service.<sup>141</sup> Vi took two years of training for the civil service, apparently by correspondence, during the years in which she was teaching. When her examiners discovered that she was only four foot

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<sup>139</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Margaret Barthwick, 29 August 1932. She is using the Canadian term "public school", not the British term.

<sup>140</sup> Letter of recommendation from B.A. Owens, 19 October 1909. Rose (Ducie) Jardine Personal Papers, Rose Ducie, "Violet McNaughton," ca. mid-1950s.

<sup>140</sup> Widdowson, Going up into the Next Class, 29-73

<sup>141</sup> Widdowson, Going up into the Next Class, 64. Holcombe, Victorian ladies at Work, 172.



eleven and one-half inches she was told that civil servants must be at least five feet tall.<sup>142</sup>

Teaching in the Bickerton school was especially difficult towards the end.<sup>143</sup> By 1905, when the last entries were made in the Bickerton School record book, state schools had improved enough that many middle class parents were sending their children to these schools. Small private schools, like Bickerton School, were finding it difficult to keep enough students.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps this is why Vi had to find other employment.

Vi applied for recognition as a supplementary teacher by the Kent Education Committee. However it was not until 1908 that the East Kent Education Committee "approved" of her "capacity in teaching" and she was "recognised as a supplementary Teacher," and even this recognition was "subject to revision from time to time."<sup>145</sup>

Supplementary teachers, who were the lowest level of school teachers, faced great difficulties. They usually taught infants and many of them, like Vi, were hired in

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142 SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926.

143 The Western Producer 24 May 1951.

144 SPL-LHR, Documents, LH 2136B, Ledger of Bickerton School. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, 53.

145 SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Letter of Recommendation from John Thompson, 6 February 1905. Fras. W. Croak to Leysdown Church of England School, 31 December 1908.

remote rural areas where it was difficult to attract better qualified teachers. Their pay was very poor, ranging from 20 to 30 pounds a year. The National Union of Teachers, which only represented certified teachers, constantly denounced the supplementary teachers.<sup>146</sup> In 1905, still without recognition from the educational authorities, Vi was looking for a job. For a short time she was at the Lynstead Ladies School, near Sittingbourne, perhaps as a volunteer or as a temporary employee. Although she was highly regarded by people at Lynstead she did not stay there long, likely because they needed certified teachers.<sup>147</sup>

The Kent Education Committee allowed her to go to Harty Ferry on the Isle of Sheppey to teach in the school next to Harty Church.<sup>148</sup> Harty, according to Harold Nicolson, is "most rewarding for its fruitfulness, its birds, its isolation, and its strangeness."<sup>149</sup> Vi then spent her last three years in England as a teacher in the Church of England

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<sup>146</sup> Widdowson, Going up into the Next Class, 58-59. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, 36.

<sup>147</sup> SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2367, Program of the Lynstead Ladies School. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Thosh Ackerman to Violet Jackson, 8 December 1906. SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2135, Autograph Album, Thosh Ackerman's entry, 7 December 1905.

<sup>148</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E89, McNaughton to Mrs. George Lumley, 18 December 1934; A1 C4, Thosh Ackerman to Violet Jackson, 8 December 1906. The Western Producer 13 December 1951. Mee, Kent, 228. Nicolson, Kent, 93.

<sup>149</sup> Nicolson, Kent, 93.

elementary school in nearby village of Leysdown. A "small place," it was on "the most Eastern point of Sheppey." One of the nearby farms was the "loneliest farm in England."<sup>150</sup> Violet was never to lose her love of the countryside, nor her belief that country people were fine people, which she had learned as a child in Borden, so she liked living on the Isle of Sheppey. Unlike her sister Mildred, who did not like remote places, Vi liked the village and the rural people liked her.<sup>151</sup> In 1951 she recalled that "the happiest of my teaching years had been spent in this little 'sheep island' just across the Swale."<sup>152</sup>

When Vi went to Saskatchewan, she was studying and hoping to pass examinations to up-grade her teaching qualifications. She knew that if she stayed, it would be years before she made more than 40 pounds per year, she would never be able to save for her old age, and there was no pension benefit in her job.<sup>153</sup> Experiences similar to hers turned many women school teachers of her generation in

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<sup>150</sup> Mee, Kent, 280-281. The Western Producer 22 April 1948.

<sup>151</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson, 8 December 1908, 12 January 1909.

<sup>152</sup> The Western Producer 22 April 1948; 24 May 1951. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Statement by B.A. Owens, 19 October 1909.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson, 3 June 1909.

England into radicals.<sup>154</sup> Her struggles to earn a living contributed to her radical ideas about both gender and class.

Vi's experiences as a rural woman who came from a Home County close to London gave her important skills. Although she was a country woman she continued to visit London, as she had during her childhood.<sup>155</sup> Kentish people prided themselves in being comfortable in London even late Victorian London, "a City of Dreadful Delight," which attracted and repelled people from all over the world.<sup>156</sup> When she emigrated to Canada she had skill at moving back and forth from country to city and she understood both.

Another important aspect of Vi's experiences in Kent, which was to contribute to her approach to agrarian feminism in Canada, was the question of poor health and the availability of competent medical and hospital care. Vi,

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<sup>154</sup> Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, 44-46.

<sup>155</sup> The Western Producer 12 February 1959, 13 October 1960. Patrick Beaver, The Crystal Palace, 1851-1936: A Portrait of Victorian Enterprise (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1970), 124-125. P. L. Garside, "London and the Home Counties," 472, 503-4. The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, F.L.M. Thompson ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 471-539. Brandon and Short, The South East from AD 1000 342, 345-508. E.M. Forester, Howard's End, (1910; reprint. Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949).

<sup>156</sup> The Western Producer 4 March 1954, 22 July 1948. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D59 (1), McNaughton to Edwin Schwangart, 22 September 1931. Judith R. Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight - Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 5, 35, 193. Brandon and Short The South East from AD 1000 510-12.

members of her family, their friends, and her fiancé Frank Anderson all had health problems of one kind or another. In 1903 her beloved mother, who was a "great sufferer," died after many health problems.<sup>157</sup> Frank Anderson, who came into her life in 1900, quickly fell in love with her and was to be the man in her life until 1909, also died prematurely. Robust and athletic though Frank was when Vi met him, by 1907 his health had begun to fail. At first, his tuberculosis was misdiagnosed as a "poisoned throat." Tuberculosis was still the big killer of their day although it was on the decline in the general population.<sup>158</sup> Vi continued to work in her demanding teaching job, riding her bicycle home to Milton every weekend to be with Frank as he died a terrible death of "galloping consumption."<sup>159</sup>

On the 5th of May 1909, Vi received a telegram at the Leysdown School saying her fiancé had "passed away" that morning. Two weeks later Vi wrote her father and brother in Saskatchewan from "The School" in Leysdown saying

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<sup>157</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A3, Sedelia Jackson to Violet Jackson 12 December 1896, 17 April 1902, 3 September 1902, and Good Friday 1903; A1 C4, Funeral card, 2 August 1903; A1 E91, McNaughton to Mrs. E.M. Burke, 6 January 1943.

<sup>158</sup> Frank Anderson to Violet Jackson 1 October 1907, 8 October 1907, 30 October 1907, 2 March 1909. F.B. Smith, The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850-1950 (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 7-9, 246-247.

<sup>159</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E89, McNaughton to Mrs. Geo. Lumley, 18 December 1934. Georgina M. Taylor, Collection, interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992. Smith, The Retreat of Tuberculosis, 2-3.

Mildred wrote you the sad news of my poor Frank. Whatever becomes of us may we never suffer as he suffered. I never saw anything like it nor borne with such fortitude. He was an example to all who came in contact with him. After all whatever you do, do protect your health. Of what avail money without it.<sup>160</sup>

Having very little money and being pessimistic about her economic prospects in England, Vi was debating about emigrating to Canada.<sup>161</sup> She seems to have pushed herself almost beyond her limit during Frank's illness. Grieving and trying to make a difficult decision about her future was stressful. Shortly after Frank died she fell seriously ill herself. Scarlet fever, which killed many of her contemporaries, forced her into an isolation hospital where she spent over a month. She then had to spend more time recovering in the home of her friend Gertie Bing.<sup>162</sup> This was the first of a number of incidents in which her health broke when she had been pushing herself too hard and when she was facing an important transition in her life.

All of these experiences made her extremely conscious of the importance of good health. In Kent she seems to have taken ambulances, hospitals, medical and nursing care for

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<sup>160</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 19 May 1909.

<sup>161</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to W.D. Jackson, 19 May 1909.

<sup>162</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 22 July 1909; A1 B4, McNaughton to Ada Love, 28 June 1950.

granted since they were readily available.<sup>163</sup> She was to be shocked by the sharp contrast in the conditions she was to find when she arrived in rural Saskatchewan, where few if any medical services were available.

Even though this "Kentish Maid" had radical beliefs as a result of the environment in which she grew up and because of her own experiences, these beliefs did not move her into feminist activism in England. Two women in particular seem to have influenced her ideas about public life. She was very fond of Frank's family, especially his grandparents, the Pennys, who were well known in Sheerness for their involvement in the long-enduring Sheerness co-operative store and in other public activities. Frank and Vi spent a great deal of time with them. Frank's grandmother was particularly important to Vi. Although Vi discussed public questions with the Pennys, admired them greatly, and learned a great deal from them she does not seem to have been active in the co-operative movement, nor in politics, herself.<sup>164</sup> Violet recalled that the youngest woman she ever knew, was a woman of 80 who was surrounded by young people. This woman took a "keen interest in world affairs." The woman to whom

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<sup>163</sup> Sittingbourne, Milton, and District Directory, 12, 13, 21-22, 26.

<sup>164</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 B2, Frank Anderson to Violet Jackson 28 January 1902, 8 August 1905; A1 E (89) McNaughton to Mrs. Geo. Lumley 18 December 1934.

she was referring may have been Frank's grandmother.<sup>165</sup>

Another woman, to whom she may have been referring, was a woman who had influenced her in the 1890s. Violet was later to look back respectfully to this woman who owned "a tiny rat infested cottage" that she turned into "a club for homeless boys" in the slums of "a riverside town," likely Sittingbourne. She drew Vi into the kind of philanthropic work with the poor that attracted many women of her day to public life.<sup>166</sup> Her contact with these poor boys, and the other people she met in the slums, was to broaden her horizons and to have a lasting impact on her. Violet later recalled that some of the most interesting people she ever met were "in the riverside slums of an ancient town - tramps and other flotsam and jetsam of the King's Highway."<sup>167</sup> For two years during her teens she worked three nights a week as a volunteer at the club

helping to entertain and teach these 15-20 year old lads. We tried to teach them to read and to understand something of social life and institutions. It wasn't easy for the only thing they understood was how to try to evade the policeman who frequently came in to seize one of our nicest members, perhaps for theft.

I remember being absolutely floored by their questions as to why people got married. Few of them recalled their mothers and fewer still had any idea of a father and as for God - what had he done for them? Our leader did once persuade a few specially selected members to go to an Anglican

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<sup>165</sup> The Western Producer 29 March 1928.

<sup>166</sup> The Western Producer 2 July 1931.

<sup>167</sup> The Western Producer 22 July 1948.



Church but they took her instructions on behaviour so literally that, to our amazement, they went down on their knees at the entrance and started to crawl up the aisle to the appointed seats.<sup>168</sup>

Vi was a devoted reader of Dickens and his stories of the neglect and abuse suffered by early Victorian children had a profound effect upon her.<sup>169</sup> In Canada Violet later recalled a memorable Christmas Eve spent in the "Hut" in the slums entertaining thirty or so homeless boys. They were of "all degrees of dirtiness, raggedness and ignorance." She and two others spent the evening

keeping them engaged until "turn out" time at the public houses. I asked the boys to visit me the following morning for hot drinks and cake. Next morning they came and hid in the various passages up and down the street, and it took all the coaxing I was capable of to get them into the house. They were not used to entering a decent house except by illegal methods. We had a real good time and I hated to see them go back to their Christmasless dinners, and their worse than doubtful pleasures.<sup>170</sup>

One day Vi asked the woman who ran this club what had made her get involved in her lifelong work in the slums.

Violet recalled that the woman had explained that

during a time of great sorrow a friend had told her to try to "Do Something for Somebody Quick"

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<sup>168</sup> The Western Producer 2 July 1931.

<sup>169</sup> The Western Producer 28 June 1915, 22 July 1948, 17 May 1951, 31 March 1960. For a discussion of Dickens's beliefs about child labour and child neglect see Peter Ackroyd, Dickens (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), 273, 556-7.

<sup>170</sup> Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective Files, Newspaper clipping from Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal, ca. 1920.

and this had led to what became a life long activity in the slums. Later when sorrow came to our home, this lady visited me and on leaving she said, "It will help you to Do Something for Somebody Quick."<sup>171</sup>

This was powerful training for self-sacrifice and social service, a lesson that Vi learned well. In Canada she was to live according to this ideal for decades in her work for farm women and their families. This training also taught her to play down the importance of her own emotional pain, a practice which was to cause her problems in Canada. She was devoted to her family and her Kentish friends but the only other community work in which she seems to have been involved, as a young woman in Kent, was as a Sunday school teacher and a superintendent.<sup>172</sup>

Like the other Edwardian radicals, Vi thrived on the spirit of hopeful debate, a trait that later increased her effectiveness in Canada. She was interested in all of the leading questions of the day, the debates over Boer War, the labour movement, the Irish question, and the women's movement.<sup>173</sup> She had grown up with radical ideas about

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<sup>171</sup> The Western Producer 2 July 1931.

<sup>172</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(1), 1 October 1931, McNaughton to Mary Crozier. SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers LH 2135, Autograph album, 2 October 1899, unsigned entry that is "in memory of our fellowship as Sunday School Teachers."

<sup>173</sup> Priestly, The Edwardians, 36-44, 109-122, 202-225, 263-277. George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, 1910-1914 (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), 139-330. For a fictional account of these debates see E.M. Forester, Howard's End (1910, reprint, Hammondsworth:

women. As a girl she had recited the poem

Jack and Jill have equal will  
 And equal strength of mind,  
 But when it comes to equal rights  
 Poor Jill lags far behind.<sup>174</sup>

Olive Banks' distinction between feminist activists and their feminist sympathisers is very helpful. In England Violet Jackson was a feminist sympathiser.<sup>175</sup> She had feminist ideas and supported the women's movement but, like many lower middle-class women of her day, who had to spend so much time earning a living, she was not able to be an activist. Her family commitments and the time and energy she put into caring for her mother and for Frank when they were sick and dying, were her priorities.

British feminists, with whom Vi sympathized, were caught up in the suffrage campaign as young women and were frustrated because they gained only a partial victory in their campaign for the vote before the Great War.<sup>176</sup> Theirs was a struggle in which she was taking interest in the last few years she was in England. (See article in Appendix #V Violet McNaughton's "Bald Outline of the Granting of the Provincial Suffrage.")

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Penguin, 1969).

<sup>174</sup> Anne Skarsgard, "Violet McNaughton: Saskatchewan's Forgotten Crusader," Chatelaine December 1979.

<sup>175</sup> Olive Banks, Becoming a Feminist - The Social Origins of 'First Wave' Feminism, (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1986), 2.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 5.

Once Vi recovered from scarlet fever she began to make final arrangements to go to Canada. She had tried to persuade Mildred to accompany her, but her cautious sister was not going to take a chance on homesteading in a remote country. Even Leysdown had been too far away from Sittingbourne for Mildred's liking. Instead, Mildred wanted to stay in England to "try and find my Prince," hoping that she would then be able to bring her family back to England.<sup>177</sup>

The passivity and romanticism of her sister were not for Vi, who hoped that in Canada she might be able to improve her economic prospects. Still grieving for Frank, she was restless and seems to have wanted to leave behind her personal sorrows and the trials of being an unqualified teacher in England. As a lower middle class woman, who had little money, had worked very hard, had little time for public service, and had just lost her fiancé, she felt as if she "was being stifled. I had no breathing space. I seemed to be completely out of harmony with my surroundings. Things were so settled. There was nothing to be done."<sup>178</sup> There was plenty to be done to change England, but she did not have the power to do it.

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<sup>177</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2 (1), Violet Jackson to D.S. Jackson, 19 May 1909; A1 A5, Mildred Jackson to D.S. Jackson, 16 November 1908.

<sup>178</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, MacLean's Magazine 1 April 1926.

She booked her passage and arranged to send two crates of "settlers effects." One held the necessities, a few small treasured belongings, and the other her precious piano.<sup>179</sup> Aside from her love of music, her piano seems to have had symbolic significance for her. She had a tenuous hold on lower middle class life hovering above destitution. As long as she had her piano she was not destitute. She could take no other furniture because she had had to sell most of it. She could not afford to ship a few other treasures which she left with friends.

Vi kept a diary on her journey to Canada that provides many details about the actual process she went through when emigrating. The people of Leysdown, her friends, members of her family and their friends wished her well and saw her off from Kent, as she boarded the Liverpool train in London, and as she boarded the ship in Liverpool.<sup>180</sup> Upon arrival in Liverpool the travellers were "hustled into some dirty covered vans" and driven three miles to the "Canada Docks." The first class passengers "proceed up the gangway first and then on we go." On board the S.S. Tunisian there was some

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<sup>179</sup> SPL LHR, documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, Curtis & Sons Limited to Violet Jackson, 13 October 1909. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3(3), Curtis & Sons Limited to Violet Jackson, 30 September 1909; 22 October 1909; 28 October 1909; A1 A2 (1), Violet Jackson to W. D. Jackson and D. S. Jackson, 1 October 1909.

<sup>180</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3(3), R.S.H to Miss Jackson, 1909; Telegram, Mildred Gertz to Violet Jackson, 1909; "Uncle Auntie" to Violet Jackson, 1909; A1 C3, Violet Jackson Diary, 18 October 1909 to 4 November 1909.

confusion about Vi's luggage. She was tired of the inefficiency of travel in England. As she left her homeland she thought "Goodbye England! Shall I ever see you again." Sharing a small cabin with two other women and the little grandson of one of the women, getting acquainted with the others on board, reading the principal news of the week received by Marconi and posted in the dining room, and coping with sea sickness Vi crossed the Atlantic looking forward to her new life on the Canadian prairies.<sup>181</sup>

Why did Violet Jackson leave England? It was not because she wanted to preserve a way of life she felt was vanishing, but rather because she sought a better life. She had had to work hard to earn a living as a low status teacher and it had not been easy. Her future in England looked bleak economically, and she wanted to leave behind many sad memories. It likely also was because she was frustrated with the political situation in England. She, and other Edwardian radicals, "possessed an unshakeable optimism, rooted in a simple faith in the good sense" of the people.<sup>182</sup> Vi had learned to put her faith in "the plain common people" in rural England, rather than the elites.<sup>183</sup> "The mainspring of the radical spirit," their optimism led

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<sup>181</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3, Violet Jackson Diary, 18 October 1909 to 4 November 1909.

<sup>182</sup> Priestly, The Edwardians, 108, 89.

<sup>183</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924.

them to believe that they could overcome the entrenched privileges of the elites.<sup>184</sup> Unfortunately this was taking a long time in England.

Even though Vi believed that "if we are really British we must be fair", and that to oppose entrenched privilege was "British fair play," in 1909 there was not much a woman of her class could do in England.<sup>185</sup> She had been stirred by the great Edwardian political conflicts, over "fair play," that, Paul Thompson says,

were the manifestations of a deep self-questioning at all levels of society, which shadowed the confidence of Britain as still, seemingly, the world's most powerful nation. Innumerable unknown Edwardians gave their life's enthusiasm to the creation of a better society; a higher proportion, I suspect, than at any other time in Britain.<sup>186</sup>

In England she was one of these "innumerable unknown Edwardians" who wanted to change the world. Idealistic though she was, she also had a good strong practical streak.

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<sup>184</sup> A.J.A. Morris, "Introduction" to Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 2. See J. B. Priestly, "High Society" in Thompson, The Edwardians, 55-71, for a radical analysis, by a writer of lower middle-class North Country origins, of the evils of entrenched Edwardian privilege. See another condemnation of the Edwardian "governing classes" in Sir Charles Petrie, The Edwardians (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1965). To get an interpretation that is more sympathetic to the upper-class see Susan Tweedsmuir's autobiographical book The Edwardian Lady (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1966).

<sup>185</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D22, McNaughton to Mrs. Ted East, 13 August 1940. For a discussion of the "High Victorian concept of fair play" see James Morris, Pax Britannica - The Climax of an Empire (Hammondsforth: Penguin Books, 1968), 516-517.

<sup>186</sup> Thompson, The Edwardians, 15.

She felt stymied because she could not do much about all the problems in England. Because of her class position she had neither the time nor the necessary resources to focus on creating a better society in England.

As she sailed the Atlantic, she took with her Edwardian radical ideas and Edwardian enthusiasm for improving the world. While she was in the process of emigrating, suffragists and their radical supporters were increasingly frustrated by a political impasse in Britain.<sup>187</sup> By 1908 the support for the suffragists was unprecedented. In June between a quarter and a half a million people attended an open air meeting in London in support of women's suffrage. Even though second readings of suffrage bills had passed in 1907 and 1908, Prime Minister Asquith was refusing to see or hear of those involved in the suffrage movement in 1909. It was not until 1910, after Violet was in Canada, that there seemed to be hope that the political impasse could be broken.<sup>188</sup> Vi seems to have hoped that in Canada she would find more openness to the sort of social changes that were being blocked in Britain.

Violet Jackson's life in rural England had given her

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<sup>187</sup> For a discussion of the political situation at the time that Jackson left England see Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-1914, 7-29. For a discussion of the frustrations of feminists at the time see Olive Banks, Faces of Feminism - A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement (Oxford: Martin Robinson, 1981), 126-127.

<sup>188</sup> Strachey, The Cause, 106-110. Banks, Faces of Feminism, 126-127. Evans, The Feminists, 190-191.



the necessary skills and knowledge to become a leader of farm women and a readiness to learn in Canada. England had instilled in her Edwardian enthusiasm and feminist and left-wing radical ideas. It was to be the primitive conditions on the Canadian prairies that would turn this feminist sympathizer into a feminist activist.

## CHAPTER THREE

### "I TOOK TO THE PRAIRIES FROM THE FIRST"

#### PIONEERING IN HILLVIEW

In the fall of 1909 Violet Jackson was quickly pushed through a brief entry process by immigration officials when her ship docked in Canada.<sup>1</sup> She had brief visits in Quebec City and Montreal and then boarded a train to cross the country in a colonist's car.<sup>2</sup> She awoke from a sound sleep on the train from Winnipeg when it arrived in Saskatoon. Disembarking, she found that her beloved brother Delamark had come in from the homestead to meet her.<sup>3</sup> She had not seen Dell, as she and their family called him, since he left England in 1905 to go homesteading in Saskatchewan. The Hillview farm district, where the Jacksons homesteaded, was in the Goose Lake country along the Old Bone Trail. Between 1890 and 1893 the Indians and the Métis had hauled long cartloads of buffalo bones into Saskatoon, to be shipped out to be made into bone meal. The Old Bone Trail had angled southwest from Saskatoon to somewhere on the prairie west of present-day Rosetown. The Goose Lake country had been one of

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<sup>1</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3, Violet Jackson, Diary, 18 October 1909, 7.

<sup>2</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C3, Violet Jackson, Diary, 18 October 1909, 6-10.

<sup>3</sup> The Western Producer 13 February 1958. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), Violet Jackson to D.S. Jackson and W.D. Jackson, 1 October 1909.

the last large tracts of prairies opened for agricultural settlement. Between 1904 and 1906 thousands of settlers had come to Saskatoon on the train, filed land claims, bought supplies in Saskatoon, and flooded out into the Goose Lake country.<sup>4</sup> Portraying the settlers as heroic men and women travelling to a promised land, the Saskatoon Phoenix reported that in those years on the Old Bone Trail

the traffic of incoming settlers was so steady and continuous that it was not an uncommon sight to see an almost unbroken line of wagons and vehicles of all kinds and degrees of richness strung out in a long snakelike caravan many miles in length. At night around every slough the campfires blazed while in the stopping houses brave men and women, weary but full of hope, rested on the way to the land which promised comfort and prosperity.<sup>5</sup>

The paper also noted in 1906 that one farmer reported "that about forty teams a day on an average passed his place on the journey southwest."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> C. Howard Shillington, Historic Land Trails of Saskatchewan (West Vancouver: Evvard Publications, 1985), 142-145. This flood of settlers created a boom in Saskatoon. See Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, Saskatoon: The First Half Century (Edmonton: NeWest, 1982), 52-117, and Georgina M. Taylor, "Grace Fletcher, Women's Rights, Temperance, and 'British Fair Play' in Saskatoon, 1885-1907," Saskatchewan History 46(1) (Spring 1994) 14. Grace Fletcher was a general merchant, and bone dealer, and she made a fortune in the early years of this boom.

<sup>5</sup> Saskatoon Phoenix 1909. Quoted in Shillington, Historic Land Trails, 143. Shillington does not give the day or the month of publication. For a discussion of the image of the west as "the promised land," which prevailed from 1880 to 1920, see R. Douglas Francis, Images of the West - Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 107-123

<sup>6</sup> Saskatoon Phoenix 13 June 1906.

Among the early settlers in the Hillview district were Dell Jackson, John McNaughton, the homesteader Violet was to marry in 1910, and his brother Willie, all of whom began to homestead in the fall of 1905.<sup>7</sup> Heading southwest from Saskatoon on the Old Bone Trail the McNaughton brothers had met John Elder and three of his children on their way back into Saskatoon.<sup>8</sup> The Elders had left Scotland that year and had been one of the first families to settle in Hillview. They told the McNaughtons where they were living, so the McNaughtons went to Hillview to look for land and found two quarters of very good soil.<sup>9</sup> John and Willie liked company so much that they built their sod houses on either side of the dividing line between their homesteads and later discovered they had built too close to the line.<sup>10</sup>

The McNaughton brothers and Dell soon made friends with other new Hillview settlers.<sup>11</sup> In the fall of 1908 a new railway line, the Goose Lake Line of the Canadian Northern

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<sup>7</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior, Lands Branch, Homestead File Nos. 92320A and 93546A.

<sup>8</sup> For the account of a settler who also arrived in 1905 and headed out along the Old Bone Trail see Evan Davies and Aled Vaughan, Beyond the Old Bone Trail (London: Cassel, 1960), 29-36, 42-47.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Margaret Tosh 2 May 1993.

<sup>10</sup> SPL-LHR, Picture LH 2159, Notes by McNaughton on the back of a picture of Willie and John building a sod house.

<sup>11</sup> Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage (Harris: Harris History Book Committee, 1982), 260, 289-291, 376, 474, 624-625.

Railway, had been built from Saskatoon as far as Rosetown. It followed quite closely along the route of the Old Bone Trail.<sup>12</sup> When Violet and Dell caught a train in Saskatoon bound for Harris, 50 miles to the southwest, they were heading out into land that had long been the home of the prairie Indians, who McNaughton later referred to as "the Red Indians," "our brothers and predecessors."<sup>13</sup> By the time she arrived the Métis had been defeated and the Indians had been subjugated. They were on reservations, the closest of which was the Moose Woods Reservation, a small Dakota reservation close to Saskatoon about sixty-five miles from Hillview.<sup>14</sup> From the point of view of the Jacksons and the other new settlers who were flooding into the Goose Lake country it was "a raw new land," as McNaughton described it.

Leaving the train in Harris the young "Maid of Kent"

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<sup>12</sup> Harris Heritage and Homage 9-12, 25, 74. J.H. Richards and K.I. Kung, Atlas of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1969), 19. Shillington, Historic Land Trails, 142-145. John Archer, Saskatchewan A History (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 142-143.

<sup>13</sup> The Western Producer 23 April 1925.

<sup>14</sup> The Western Producer 23 April, 1925. Harris Heritage and History, 1-5. John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," in Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990), 122-147. J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens - A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 172, 187-207. Olive Dickason, Canada's First Nations - A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 282-283. Richards and Kung, Atlas of Saskatchewan, 194.

rode in a democrat across the prairie toward the Hillview farm district.<sup>15</sup> It was in Hillview that McNaughton was to come to see herself as a married woman, "first and foremost a farm woman", as an "ardent feminist", a farmer, and a pioneer.<sup>16</sup> The experiences McNaughton had, between 1909 and the summer of 1911, pushed her into activism and she began to work out the basic principles of her agrarian feminism. This chapter will focus on the impact of pioneering in Hillview, McNaughton's marriage and her critical 1911 operation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Western Producer 13 February 1958 and 24 May 1951.

<sup>16</sup> McNaughton referred to herself as an "ardent feminist" in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D12, McNaughton to Peter Bludoff, 11 April 1942. She said, "I'm first and foremost a farm woman," in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(2) McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 22 September 1938.

<sup>17</sup> For a brief discussion of McNaughton's pioneering, her marriage and her operation see Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 6-9. For the lives of farm people in the rural West during this period see Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 301-338, and Archer, Saskatchewan A History, 133-185. For the stories of some of the other women who moved to the rural prairies in the period in which McNaughton arrived see Nanci Langford, "First Generation and Lasting Impressions: The Gendered Identities of Prairie Homestead Women," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994. Susan Jackel, "Introduction", A Flannel Shirt of Liberty - British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West 1880-1914, ed. Susan Jackel, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982). Sarah Ellen Roberts, Of Us and the Oxen (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1968). Marjorie Wilkins Campbell, The Silent Song of Mary Eleanor (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983). Laura Goodman Salverson, Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter (1939; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). Frances Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause - Ukrainian-Canadian

As the thirty year old Violet Jackson rode along the new rail line, over the bald prairie to the new village of Harris, little did she know that pioneering in the Goose Lake country was to have a profound impact on her life. In the Hillview farm district, 15 miles northeast of Harris, her father, William Jackson who had left Kent the year before, and other settlers homesteading in Hillview awaited her arrival. Many of these pioneers were to be her friends, neighbours and co-workers for decades.<sup>18</sup> She later recalled "the clear cold November day" when she was "a newly arrived immigrant." A "kindly neighbour" met them in Harris with

a team of broncos and a democrat in order to save me from making the trip with oxen and wagon. I remember the exact spot where my feet began to tingle with cold, and later the hot meal and hospitable solution. 'Come right in and put your feet in the oven' (strange words to English ears) and the many subsequent kindnesses costing some effort which I received. I was never given an opportunity to be lonely here.<sup>19</sup>

The first period of life in Hillview had been the era when the aboriginal peoples inhabited and used the land.

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Women and Ethnic Identity 1891-1991 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993). Lorna Rasmussen and others, A Harvest Yet to Reap (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976). Eliane Leslau Silverman, The Last Best West Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930 (Montreal: Eden Press, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1-19). The 980 letters between Violet and John McNaughton in these files make frequent reference to their Hillview friends and neighbours. For examples see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3) John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 17 September 1929; A1 A1(4) John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 30 May 1931; and A1 A1(8) John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 28 May 1938.

<sup>19</sup> The Western Producer 18 April 1929.

Violet arrived late in 1909 as the second era of Hillview history was coming to an end. In this era John and Dell and the other early settlers had just been getting started and were 65 miles from the nearest railway. Although life in Hillview changed after 1909, when the railway arrived in Harris, there was also a great deal of continuity. Having arrived in a transition period, Violet was to be very active in Hillview's third era of development from 1909 to the late twenties. In this period the farmers were practising team haul agriculture with horses and threshing machines, they had to haul grain to the railway in Harris, and there was no electricity. Hillview was still isolated enough that the people had a vibrant community life in their own farm district. In spite of primitive conditions, Violet immediately responded very positively to her new surroundings.<sup>20</sup>

Her brother had written to warn her before she left Kent that he and their father had "nothing except bare

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<sup>20</sup> Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscences" 5, 6, and 10. The McNaughtons continued to farm during Hillview's fourth era of development, from 1928 to 1945, when most of the farmers were still using horses and threshing machines. There was still no electricity, but the Hillview Grain Growers managed to get a railway line through Hillview. In the fifth era, from 1945 onward, modern mechanized agriculture with combines dominated, the farm people had cars and trucks, and they could easily travel in and out of the district. Rural electrification meant farm women could have home electrical appliances. The McNaughtons, who never had electricity, decreased their land holdings in this era and then sold the farm. (See the chart in Appendix # I "The McNaughton Farm.")



boards and just the bare necessities."<sup>21</sup> Arriving at Dell's homestead on November the 6th when it was already cold Violet discovered that, although life was not easy in a small sod house in the middle of the bald prairie, she loved living on the prairies where she did not feel stymied, as she had in Kent. There had been a late harvest that year so Dell and her father had not had time to renovate the sod house.<sup>22</sup> McNaughton recalled that "furniture was not to hand and my own luggage did not arrive for six weeks." Before Violet arrived, her brother and her father had been

wondering how they would provide for her. They would put a partition through their one-roomed house and make a fine room for Violet! They needed a granary. They could not make Violet a room and build a granary at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

So they put up a partition to make a room for her and they stored the grain in her room. McNaughton later "laughingly"

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<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A5(1), Delamark Jackson to Violet Jackson, August 29, 1909.

<sup>22</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, notes "loan of his...artificial conditions," n.d. For details of the tremendous increase in prairie population in the years when the McNaughtons and Jacksons were arriving see Peter W. Ward, "Population Growth in Western Canada, 1901-1971," in The Developing West ed. John E. Foster (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 159-179. For geographical details of the area see Richards and Kung, Atlas of Saskatchewan. There were fewer trees in the Hillview district then than there are now because of the prairie fires that swept through the area.

<sup>23</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 K2, Myrtle Hayes Wright, "Mothering the Prairie," MacLean's Magazine, 1 April 1926. After talking to McNaughton, journalist Myrtle Hayes Wright wrote this laudatory 1926 biographical article about McNaughton. See chapter two for an analysis of this article.

recalled that on the homestead "there was breathing space."  
 "I took to the prairies from the first. I loved the place despite the inconveniences of having my room full of wheat and my nose in a continual state of freezing and thawing."<sup>24</sup>

The people of Hillview had an active community life and Violet was soon part of it. "That first winter most of the travelling was by stone boat," McNaughton recalled. "I joined the local Anthropopsychological Society, where we put in a good time. John McNaughton being one of the leaders." Violet laughed and enjoyed the amusing stories the lively little New Zealander told her about his experiences as a pioneer.<sup>25</sup>

Spring in the Hillview district was, and still is, beautiful. A marvellous view of the district can be seen from the Bear Hills that are still scattered with hundreds of Indian stone features dating back thousands of years.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, Notes "loan of his...artificial conditions," n.d. Hayes, "Mothering the Prairie."

<sup>26</sup> Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1987 (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society, 1988). Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1988 (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society, 1989). Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1989 (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society, 1990). This set of books won the Canadian Historical Association Regional History Certificate of Merit for the best local history book in 1990. I am fortunate to be able to work with these excellent

The Hillview district is made up of flat prairies and hills on the south side of the Bear Hills. Dell Jackson homesteaded on the prairies where he and his father were living in a small sod house. Soon after Violet arrived the Jacksons built a simple wooden house in the side of a hill, on Mr. Jackson's homestead, that overlooked the prairies spreading out far into the distance. Dell and his father were to move into this house in the Bear Hills in May of 1910, the month that Violet was married and began to live with John. Mr. Jackson, Englishman that he was, gave his farm a name, "the Hillview Farm."<sup>27</sup>

John McNaughton was so inexperienced as a farmer that he was regarded by his neighbours, who had more experience

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community historians. They welcomed me into their community and their homes, showed me around Harris, Hillview, and the Bear Hills in all seasons of the year. They continue to work co-operatively with me on projects of mutual interest. Their local history book, Harris Heritage and Homage, is well done and was extremely helpful during my research. On the basis of this experience, I dispute Paul Voisey's negative assessment of community historians who, according to him seldom do "superior local history." Paul Voisey, "Local History and the Prairie West," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings, 2nd ed., ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 497-509. For a more positive assessment of community historians see John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915-Pioneer Adaption and Community Building-An Anthropological History (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior, Lands Branch, Homestead File Nos. 1320811 and 1765180. The house in the side of a hill still stands today looking out over the Hillview District. Mr. Jackson later moved into Harris, and Dell lived alone on this farm for decades. See also "Jackson Homestead Site," in Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills...Results in 1989, 84-90.

farming, as "a green Englishman." But he was an enthusiastic healthy young man at this time who worked so hard that one year he dug a whole acre with a spade.<sup>28</sup> He showed his resourcefulness by breaking forty acres with his cow and her calf yoked together after he lost five of his six oxen.<sup>29</sup> When John's brother Willie fell ill in the summer of 1906 and died of typhoid fever John's parents inherited Willie's homestead. They turned it over to John and he proved up on both Willie's quarter section and on his own quarter. This was more work than was required of a homesteader who only had to prove up on one quarter.<sup>30</sup> John's resourcefulness, tenacity, and hard work were necessary for survival and were

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Joseph Tyson, 5 October 1990. Tyson is the oldest of the Hillview people I interviewed. He adamantly disputed the idea that John McNaughton was not a hard worker. Some of the younger Hillview people remembered him when he could not work as hard as he had in earlier years. "Joe" Tyson, said that they were too young to remember John in his prime. He recalled that his father, John Tyson, who homesteaded close to John McNaughton, had great respect for the McNaughtons. His father told him that John worked very hard as a young man. He illustrated this hard work by saying he once dug a whole acre with a shovel. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), John Tyson to McNaughton, 6 July 1927. In this letter Tyson expresses his admiration for Violet McNaughton. He saw her and "Miss McPhail" as his "champions." The documentary sources bear out Tyson's observations. Harris Heritage and Homage, 588-594. For information about John McNaughton's work habits when he was a young man see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911, 5 June 1911, 11 June 1911, 15 June 1911, 19 June 1911, 21 June 1911, 29 June 1911, 28 June 1911, 10 July 1911.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscences," 8.

<sup>30</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior Lands Branch, Homestead File Nos. 92320A and 93546A.

much admired by the other early settlers. Mabel Wilson, an early settler in the district, who described John as "industrious," recalled that the settlers soon learned that the West was "no place for a loafer or a kicker."<sup>31</sup>

Wilson, a neighbour of the McNaughton's for decades, also noted the importance of co-operation in developing the community:

We had no time for such tales as "we do this or that so much better in the U.S. or back East, or in the old country," but in cases where a helping hand was needed it was always given. One great attraction was the strong bond of common interest which held a community together.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, the people of Hillview soon recognized that co-operation and mutual aid were in their best interests, so for years they continued to be very community-minded.<sup>33</sup>

Sickness in a district far from a hospital caused on-going grief for many Hillview families. Stories about their problems before she arrived were to show Violet how badly the people of Hillview needed medical services. This fuelled her drive to get these services for farm women and their families. When Willie, John McNaughton's brother,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Wilson, "Life on the Prairie." Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 8.

<sup>32</sup> Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 5.

<sup>33</sup> In almost every issue of The Goose Lake Herald, which was published in Harris from 1909 to 1946, there was a report about community functions in Hillview, unlike other less active farm communities in the Harris area. I would like to thank Betty McFarlane, who has read all of the old issues of the paper, for pointing this out to me. Harris Heritage and Homage, 76.

fell ill with typhoid fever in 1906 he had made the week-long trip to the hospital in Saskatoon, where he died in September.<sup>34</sup> George Kyle, a Hillview widower, his six sons and his daughter also contracted typhoid in 1908.<sup>35</sup> Janet Elder, an early settler, believed that the most cooperative effort Hillview ever undertook was to band together to give assistance when all eight members of the Kyle family were stricken with typhoid fever, as the annual typhoid outbreak in Saskatoon spread down the Old Bone Trail.<sup>36</sup>

John McNaughton's sister Kate arrived in Hillview from New Zealand with their mother Agnes McNaughton in 1909 or 1910. Kate became the Kyles' housekeeper after their bout with typhoid and married George in December of 1910.<sup>37</sup> Agnes McNaughton was an elderly woman when she came to Canada and William Jackson, Violet's father, was beyond his prime when he arrived. Both had on-going health problems. Their poor health caused continuing concern and trouble for

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<sup>34</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior Lands Branch, Homestead File No. 93546A.

<sup>35</sup> Harris Heritage and Homage, 400.

<sup>36</sup> Harris Heritage and Homage, 290. Typhoid also spread through the work camps of the men building the Goose Lake Line. Kerr and Hanson, Saskatoon, 63, 87, 91-92, 277.

<sup>37</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior, Lands Branch, Homestead File No. 93546A. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Extract Entry of Birth, 28 April 1876; A1 A8, Nellie McNaughton to McNaughton, 21 August 1910; A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers Minute Book, minutes for the meeting on 24 December 1910.

the Jackson, the McNaughton, and the Kyle families who cared for their parents at home until Agnes died in 1923, when she was close to 100 years old, and William died in 1938.<sup>38</sup>

In short, by visiting with the people of Hillview during her first few months in Canada Violet Jackson learned that, although the "hard-working optimistic" settlers in Hillview had come "full of hope" that they would be able to find "comfort and prosperity" in Saskatchewan, they had found neither as yet.<sup>39</sup> The first National Policy had encouraged immigrants like the Hillview settlers to come to Canada and promoted the railways that took them to Saskatoon. The federal government had set up a system so homesteads could be claimed at land offices, such as the one in Saskatoon. The merchants of Saskatoon, who were delighted with the flood of settlers, charged such exorbitant prices for livestock, equipment and supplies that one settler decided the city should be called "Soak-it-to-em" rather

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<sup>38</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A8, Nellie McNaughton to McNaughton, 21 August 1910; A1 E24(3), Agnes G. to Violet McNaughton, 18 July 1913; A1 C7, Duncan McNaughton to John McNaughton, 28 May 1916; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 3 July 1926; A1 E92(7), M.L. Burbank to McNaughton, 28 April 1923, and Lottie M. Linfoot to McNaughton, 7 May 1923. For details of William Jackson's health problems see his correspondence with Violet from 1904 to 1938, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2.

<sup>39</sup> Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 1. Shillington, Historic Land Trails, 143. For a discussion of the disillusionment of the settlers when they realized how difficult homesteading was on the prairies see Francis, Images of the West, 156-160.

than Saskatoon.<sup>40</sup> However, after the pioneers bound for Hillview left Saskatoon they were on their own, with no local services except the Harris Stopping Place.<sup>41</sup> When they finally made their way to their homesteads they had no shelter, little or no fuel, no school, no hospital, no doctor, and no rail line close to them, nor did they have a village nearby. Even though the Indians were at home on the Canadian plains and had long ago learned how to survive in the harsh northern climate and the semi-arid conditions, for these newly arrived white settlers the prairies were indeed a "raw new land."<sup>42</sup> In order to survive and to begin to feel at home the Hillview settlers, like the plains Indians who had been in the area long before them, had to form a close-knit community that took pride in its co-operative spirit.<sup>43</sup> This spirit lived on after Violet arrived in

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<sup>40</sup> Grant MacEwan, The Sodbusters (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons Limited, 1948), 109. Kerr and Hanson Saskatoon, 37-38; 41-5. Mary Hiemstra, Gully Farm (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1955), 54. Taylor, "Grace Fletcher," 14.

<sup>41</sup> See chapter one for a discussion of the National Policy.

<sup>42</sup> The Western Producer 13 February 1958. For an account of the ancient origins of plains Indians and the way they adapted to the plains see Olive Dickason, "A Historical Reconstruction for the Northwestern Plains," in Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, 3rd ed., ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990), 47-67.

<sup>43</sup> Saskatoon Phoenix 1909, quoted in Shillington, Historic Land Trails, 143. Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence." The Western Producer 13 February 1958. In the historical period the plains Cree and the Assiniboine



Hillview in 1909. She drew on her north Kentish radical heritage and eagerly joined the people of Hillview who continued to find plenty of "ground for common action."<sup>44</sup>

The period after Violet's arrival in Hillview was most conducive to the development of a close community spirit. Life in Hillview changed again with a railway siding at Bents and other developments in the 1920s. The railway meant their mail came by train twice a week and once by mail carrier, they could take the train directly from Hillview, and they could ship cream regularly.<sup>45</sup> In the twenties the number of motor cars increased and the resort at Crystal Beach was much improved after 1924, thus providing the people of the area with commercial entertainment. Reflecting back on community life in Hillview Mabel Wilson concluded that after this "the close community spirit seemed to break" and "things were never the same again."<sup>46</sup>

In Kent, while engaged to Frank, Violet Jackson had

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wintered in the Hillview area. The Blackfoot may also have been that far north. My thanks to J.R. Miller for clarifying this point for me. For the locations of the Indian nations of the area in 1821 see J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, 118. For details of community life among the plains Cree see David G. Mandelbaum, The Plains Cree - An Ethnographic, Historical and Comparative Study (1940; reprint, Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1979).

<sup>44</sup> The Western Producer 9 April 1931.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Albert Longworth, 17 June 1991. Harris Heritage and Homage, 82-85.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 7. Harris Heritage and Homage, 82-85, 56.

assumed that she would live her life as a married woman. When her fiance died, she re-assessed her future and decided to take a chance and immigrate to Canada. In Saskatchewan she met John McNaughton and hence had another opportunity to become a married woman. The question was, should she marry a homesteader, and should she marry this particular homesteader? On May 30, 1910, just seven months after she arrived in Hillview, Violet Jackson did marry John McNaughton. What made her decide to marry John in particular?

Mabel Wilson thought that "Cupid" had been "kind to our industrious swain." John swiftly and deliberately "wooed" Violet.<sup>47</sup> With the competition of many "bachelor neighbours" in the district, an amiable, intelligent, hard working little woman like Violet, who had a brother who was well liked, made it worthwhile for John to be "industrious" in his pursuit.<sup>48</sup> Like other prairie bachelor homesteaders

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<sup>47</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Marriage Certificate, 30 May 1910. Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 12. Wilson, "Life on the Prairie." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 29 June 1911 and 10 July 1911.

<sup>48</sup> Mabel Wilson makes mention of "our bachelor neighbours" in her reminiscences. In her list of the early settlers in Hillview she names ten bachelors. Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence," 2, 7-8. In the rural areas of the prairies there was a greater gender imbalance than in the cities. In the prairie provinces in 1911, 44.4% of the males in the 24 to 34 age group were unmarried, whereas less than 15% of the females in this group and only 6.4 % of those in the age group 35 to 44 were single. Census of the Prairie Provinces - Population and Agriculture - Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta 1916 (Ottawa: Printer to the Kings

he knew the advantages of a good "mixed farming wife."<sup>49</sup> John later looked back and remembered his "prairie beginning with the same old self-imposed isolation, this time common and lasting to many" before Violet's "advent."<sup>50</sup>

Who was this "industrious swain" courting Violet? What made her think that he was the man she wanted to marry? Having the freedom to pursue her own interests and to travel was important to her. She later referred to his "hearty co-operation" which "enabled" her to work in the farm women's movement.<sup>51</sup> Was there anything in his background that made him appear to be a man who would be "hearty" in his support

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Most Excellent Majesty, 1918), xxvi-xxv. For an analysis of census statistics that show the gender imbalance in the West in this period see Peter Ward, "Population Growth in Western Canada, 1901-71," in The Developing West - Essays on Canadian History in Honour of Lewis H. Thomas, ed. John E. Foster (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1983), 155-177. Ward found a "pronounced excess of males over females in the pre-depression West. On the prairies, men aged 20 to 64 outnumbered women of the same age by between 1.3 and 1.7 to one during the first three decades of the century," 163.

<sup>49</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 17 September 1929. The Western Producer 20 November 1952.

<sup>50</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. For a discussion of prairie bachelors in this period see Cecilia Danysk, "'A Bachelor's Paradise': Homesteaders, Hired Hands, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1880-1930," in Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement, ed. Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat (Garamond Press, 1996), 154-185.

<sup>51</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, McNaughton to Mary McCallum, 21 March 1919; see McNaughton Papers A1 A1(5), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 28 May 1951.

of her?<sup>52</sup>

John was born on April 7, 1876 in Crown Street on the 'Red' Clyde in Glasgow, a "stonghold" of "Presbyterian-oriented" working-class radicalism. His father, Duncan McNaughton, was a clerk to the Home Secretary of United Presbyterian Church which had come into being in 1847 because of "a desire for a more flexible or liberal interpretation" of Presbyterian doctrine.<sup>53</sup> John's father proposed to his mother, Agnes Mitchell Knox, by writing a long poem that the family treasured and kept.<sup>54</sup> Agnes was descended from the proud headstrong sixteenth century reformer John Knox, "who influenced the history of Scotland more than any man of his time."<sup>55</sup> Scotland's "trumpet of God," he battled against a "brilliant Renaissance Queen" but he went down in popular Scottish history as a Protestant hero who rebelled against the Catholic monarchs during the Reformation. The family was also proud of one of Agnes's

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<sup>52</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D12, McNaughton to Peter Bludoff, 11 April 1942.

<sup>53</sup> Alec R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution - 1789 to the Present Day, vol. 5 (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 169.

<sup>54</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Extract Entry of Birth, 26 April 1876, and Duncan McNaughton to Agnes Mitchell Knox, 1856. For the background of working class radicalism in Glasgow see James D. Young, The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 83, 109-118, 136-7, 144.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Lynch, Scotland A New History (London: Pimlico, 1992), 181-229.

cousins, Isa Craig, a "gifted" woman poet who won "the Burns' Centenary Prize Ode."<sup>56</sup>

Agnes and Duncan McNaughton had five children: Duncan, Alexander who was called Willie, Robert, a daughter Catherine who was called Kate, and John who was called Jack.<sup>57</sup> Young Duncan became a minister in the Congregationalist Church, "the interdenominational denomination" that broke away from the Anglican Church and put great emphasis on the power of local congregations. It spawned the Unitarian Church which was opposed to dogmatism and became the church John eventually chose to join.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> John Prebble, The Lion in the North (1971; reprint, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), 182-183. Lynch, Scotland A New History, 223. Robert McNaughton, "Gleanings" from Charles Rogers, Genealogical Memoirs of John Knox, and of the Family of Knox (London: Grampian Club, 1879). John A. Hardon, The Protestant Churches of America (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1969), 187. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), Violet McNaughton to Hugh Dudderidge, 21 February 1951.

<sup>57</sup> The only one of the McNaughton offspring to have children was the eldest Duncan, who had two daughters, Ruth and Emily. Notes by Violet McNaughton on a poem by Duncan McNaughton proposing to Agnes Mitchell Knox, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, n.d.; A1 C7, Duncan McNaughton to John McNaughton, 28 May 1928. The Western Producer 13 January 1955, 7 July 1960. Saskatoon Queen's Bench Court, Violet McNaughton Surrogate File 18901: Extract of Death Registration for Helen Jane McNaughton; Affidavit of Elwood Burlingham, 25 January 1969; Affidavit of Identity, 6 November 1968; Certificate of Death for Catherine McNaughton Kyle, 26 September 1968. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A8, Nellie McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 21 August 1910 and 10 January 1912.

<sup>58</sup> Hardon, The Protestant Churches, 241-248. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(16), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 9 June 1957; A1 A1(17), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 4 December 1958 and 12 August 1959.

Duncan served the Congregationalists in Miland Australia and later for many years in Tasmania. Robert, also a clergyman, came to Canada, had several charges, and then served in Moose Jaw where he lived for many years.<sup>48</sup> Jack, Willie, and Kate all moved to Hillview.

John's father had descended from proud rebellious Highlanders who defied the King of Great Britain in the eighteenth century. Glen Lyon, in the Scottish Highlands northwest of Perth, was the ancestral home of John's branch of the McNaughton family.<sup>50</sup> During 'the Forty Five' Rebellion, 14 McNaughton "dirks" left the crofts of Glen Lyon "to fight in the Battle of Culloden."<sup>51</sup> They and other Jacobite rebels lost the Battle in 1746 and the King's troops occupied the Highlands. Although the MacNaughton Clan, which was broken and landless by then, took no organized part in the Rebellion of 1745, individual

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<sup>59</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A8, Nellie McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 21 August 1910, 10 January 1912; A1 D1(5), Violet McNaughton to Kay Mace, 8 February 1952; A1 A6(1-3), the correspondence between Robert McNaughton and Violet and John McNaughton from 1919 to 1951. Hugh Jackson, "Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," The New Zealand Journal of History 17(1) (April 1983): 43-59.

<sup>60</sup> For the location of Glen Lyon, Stanley, Glasgow and Perth see AA Touring Map Great Britain (Basingstoke: Publishing Division of the Automobile Association, n.d.)

<sup>61</sup> The Western Producer 1 November 1951. For details of the defeat of Jacobite Rebellion, the occupation of the Highlands, and its consequences see David Harris Willson, A History of England (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press Inc., 1967), 487-468; Lynch, Scotland A New History, 334-339.

MacNaughtons did join the rebels. John "was a direct descendent of Loyal John, sometimes called Faithful McNaughton, a devoted Jacobite who joined the Rebellion and who went to the scaffold rather than betray his master."<sup>62</sup>

John was also a descendent of the MacGregors. They, too, were animated by a "spirit of defiance," as Violet referred to it.<sup>63</sup> The MacGregors, known as the most rebellious of the clans, were seen by the authorities as "a symbol of barbarism."<sup>64</sup> In the nineteenth century the MacGregors' "spirit of defiance" lived on in rebellious people like John McNaughton's

great-grandfather MacGregor who, forbidden by the ban to wear his tartan, would don the kilt on special holidays and wear it to town, only to find himself in prison before the end of the day, where he waited till some of the family came along to bail him out.<sup>65</sup>

Violet later went on a bus tour of Scotland. She reported that she was

thrilled to learn that we were in or near the heart of the MacGregor country so full of stories of this renounced clan that was finally outlawed. This clan "nameless and landless," flaunting their foes could still boast

"While there's deer in the forest  
And fish in the river,  
MacGregor despite them

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<sup>62</sup> The Western Producer 1 November 1951. James D. Scarlett, The Tartans of the Scottish Clans (London: Collins, 1975), 123.

<sup>63</sup> The Western Producer 22 February 1951.

<sup>64</sup> Lynch, Scotland A New History, 307.

<sup>65</sup> The Western Producer 22 February 1951.

Shall flourish forever."<sup>66</sup>

Violet knew Walter Scott's 1817 novel Rob Roy which romanticized Jacobites like Rob Roy MacGregor, an historical "cattle dealer turned cattle thief."<sup>67</sup> In Scott's novel just prior to the 1715 Jacobite Uprising Rob Roy, embittered by "misfortune and injustice," became a "powerful and dangerous outlaw." A "ruthless opponent of the government's agents" he was also "capable of acts of justice and even generosity."<sup>68</sup> Even though Violet was English herself, the rebel and the romantic in her admired the MacGregors for rebelling against the English authorities who, she thought, had been tyrannical.

In short, John was born in the most radical city in Scotland to a "worthy" literate, proudly rebellious, liberal Presbyterian family. This appealed to Violet, a rebel from radical north Kent who came from a broad-minded stream of Anglicanism and loved reading.

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<sup>66</sup> The Western Producer 22 February 1951. McNaughton was apparently paraphrasing two lines in Walter Scott's poem, "MacGregors' Gathering":

While there's leaves in the forest and foam in the  
river

MacGregor despite them shall flourish forever.

The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse, chosen by Tom MacQueen and Tom Scott (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 436.

<sup>67</sup> The Western Producer 22 February 1951. Lynch, Scotland A New History, xvi, 363-356.

<sup>68</sup> The Oxford Companion to English Literature, edited and compiled by Sir Paul Harvey, fourth edition revised by Dorothy Eagle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 698-699, 735-736.



John was influenced not only by his family's background in Scotland, but also by his formative years in New Zealand where his family moved shortly after he had started school. From 1884 to 1892, as a school boy, John lived in Dunedin, a city on the west coast of the southern island.<sup>69</sup> John's brothers Duncan and Robert went into the ministry but John was a rebel who loved to argue with his brother Robert and was sceptical of other clergymen.<sup>70</sup> One of the things that Violet apparently found very attractive in the feisty little New Zealander was his independent-mindedness which would appear to have come not only from his family's tradition of rebelliousness but also from the influence of Freethinkers in Dunedin, whose central characteristic was "intellectual

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<sup>69</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. The primary sources on John's early life are not as rich as those available on Violet's life in Kent, so many of the details about the different periods of his life that he outlines in this letter are not available. SPL-LHR, Documents, McNaughton Papers-DOC 98-9-3, "Public School Standard Certificate" for John McNaughton.

<sup>70</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 18 April 1923, 16 May 1926, 12 June 1927; A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 17 September 1929; A1 A1(4), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 October 1934; A1 A1(7) Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 25 July 1937; and John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton 3 August 1937; A1 A1(10), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 14 June 1949; A1 A1(18), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 2 October 1962. Interview with Sophia Dixon, 22 June 1987.

independence."<sup>71</sup> Free thought likely fuelled John's life-long passion for debating religion, Darwinism, sociology, economics and politics. Of one of his favourite sparring partners, Cyprian Lenhard, he said "did we have discussions? Some might call them arguments, on everything and anything that mattered or that we thought mattered." Violet recalled that Lenhard and John "had a wonderful time settling the affairs of the nation."<sup>72</sup>

Although Dunedin "had a reputation for strict and dour Presbyterian orthodoxy," it was a city of "sufficient size, cultural diversity, and intellectual diversity to facilitate intense discussion on religious truths." The thriving Freethinkers of Dunedin chose to represent their movement as "the culmination of a intellectual evolution towards a more rational, liberal, individualistic and secular society."

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<sup>71</sup> P.J. Lineham, "Freethinkers in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," The New Zealand Journal of History 19(1) (April 1985): 74. Violet later wrote about a day she spent in the highlands with John exploring the places where his rebellious ancestors had lived. It was, she said, "one of the most perfect days imaginable." The Western Producer 19 August 1948. See also The Western Producer 22 February 1951 and 1 November 1951.

<sup>72</sup> McNaughton, Man Jungle Wise and Otherwise. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(17), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 17 August 1959; A1 A1(16), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 9 June 1957; A1 C2, McNaughton, Daily Diaries, entry for 12 December 1965, The Western Producer 27 August 1959. Lenhard's married name was McGregor. See also Keith Dryden, "Cal McGregor: Tough News Editor, sharp intellect, concern for people," The Western Producer 26 August 1993. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interview with Frank Coburn, 24 January 1990.

They "considered it their duty to denounce religious bigotry, and to weaken the hold of the church on society," and they put a "strong emphasis on self-education and independent thinking but they also aspired to self respect and political significance." These ideas and attitudes appear frequently in John McNaughton's writing.<sup>73</sup>

The preference for the reformist Liberals in the Scotland of his day and freethought in New Zealand likely also shaped John's interest in politics. It was "a form of political radicalism" with many "left-liberals" such as Robert Stout, a member of the movement in Dunedin. One of the country's leading freethinkers and a radical politician who was fiercely opposed to "squattocracy", Stout served his political apprenticeship in the demand for cheap land for small farmers.<sup>74</sup> In the 1880s the old political order in New Zealand, dominated by a conservative oligarchy, was falling apart and the depression was creating two nation-wide classes and producing a popular desire for sweeping change.

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<sup>73</sup> Lineham, "Freethinkers," 63-65, 68, 71, 73. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1, the hundreds of letters in these nineteen files that John McNaughton wrote to Violet, between 1911 and 1963, are full of his intellectual, religious, and political ideas. See also his book, John McNaughton, Man Jungle Wise and Otherwise, and SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, John McNaughton, Letters to the Editor, Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 11 March 1916, 1 April 1916.

<sup>74</sup> Lynch, Scotland A New History, 417. Lineham, "Freethinkers," 62-63, 65, 69. Keith Sinclair, A History of New Zealand (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 171.

The loudest cry was that land be made available for small farmers. Stout, who was the Liberal Premier of New Zealand from 1884 to 1887, remained active in politics until the 1920s. The Stout government tried to push a radical economic program but it lacked support. Nevertheless it was enterprising and innovative, initiating programs for medical and welfare services and a scheme "making land available to men with little capital - a forerunner of later Liberal land policies" which gave them even more access to land.<sup>75</sup> For a time in the 1890s, when the Liberals were back in again, New Zealand was "the most radical state in the world," having passed such measures as the old age pensions and legislations to further women's rights.<sup>76</sup> This enabled New Zealanders, like John, "to regard themselves as a social democracy and a social laboratory."<sup>77</sup>

John was particularly impressed with the changes pushed

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<sup>75</sup> Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 149-164. Michael King, "Between Two Worlds," in The Oxford History of New Zealand, ed. W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1981), 285. Although Stout started out as a radical and a liberal in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s, by the 1920s he "had become an educational and judicial reactionary." P. J. Gibbons, "The Climate of Opinion," in The Oxford History of New Zealand, 315. Raewyn Dalziel, "The Politics of Settlement" in The Oxford History of New Zealand, 109.

<sup>76</sup> Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 169.

<sup>77</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, "Removal from the Wings," a review of James Belick, Making People: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the 19th Century (np.: Allen Lane, 1996), cited in London Review of Books, 20 March 1997, 12.

through by a new class of farmers in the 1890s.<sup>78</sup> They were so assertive that they were dubbed "the cow cockies."<sup>79</sup> They practised "farmer's socialism", and they were non-partisan.<sup>80</sup> They pushed through legislation that John saw as having had "the effect of increasing to a remarkable degree the agricultural productiveness of the comparatively sparse agricultural population." This system he thought would help to end the "vicious system whereby the [Canadian] farmer is being exploited."<sup>81</sup>

As a New Zealander John McNaughton came to the prairies with advanced ideas about agrarian politics and women. His attitude was much like the "cow cockies," whose construction of masculinity was rooted in the idea that those who were low in the hierarchies of power, should stand up and fight for themselves.<sup>82</sup> Stout, the radical politician from the McNaughton's home town, had the support of the Women's

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<sup>78</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, John McNaughton, Letters to the Editor, Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 11 March 1916, 1 April 1916.

<sup>79</sup> N.G. Killek, ed., "History, Government, and International Relations," in New Zealand Official Yearbook 1980, 85th ed. (Wellington: Department of Statistics, 1980), 25. Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 171.

<sup>80</sup> Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 186-187.

<sup>81</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, John McNaughton, Letters to the Editor, Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 11 March 1916, 1 April 1916. These letters were published in 1916, but the minutes of the Hillview Grain Growers indicate he believed this from the time he came to Canada.

<sup>82</sup> Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 171.

Christian Temperance Union, the only national group in New Zealand that was pushing for reforms for women. In 1884, when Stout was the Prime Minister his government passed "an Act to give married women rights over their own property." In 1887 it put forward a bill to give women the vote which was defeated by two votes. John McNaughton was a school boy in Dunedin in these years, finishing school at 16 years of age in 1892, the year before the Liberals who were back in power again pushed through the women's suffrage bill with the enthusiastic support of the Dunedin Women's Franchise League.<sup>33</sup> This milieu doubtless had a profound effect on John McNaughton who was not only sure of his own masculinity but also was pro-feminist.<sup>34</sup> His pro-feminist ideology,

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<sup>33</sup> Dalziel, "The Politics of Settlement," 109. Phillida Bunkle, "The Origins of the Women's Movement in New Zealand: The Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885-1895," in Women in New Zealand Society, ed. Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (Auckland: George Allen & Unwin), 53, 65-66.

<sup>34</sup> I used the term "pro-feminist man" to describe John McNaughton's ideology, because I am convinced by scholars like Rosalind Delmar who argues that it is now practically impossible to speak of 'male feminism'. Feminism is increasingly understood by feminists as a way of thinking created by, for, and on behalf of women, as 'gender specific'. Women are its subjects, its enunciators, the creators of its theory, of its practice and its language.

Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in What is Feminism? ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 27. I also agree with Michael S. Kimmel who argues that "men believe in feminism. But to be a feminist, I believe, requires another ingredient: the felt experience of oppression. And this men cannot feel because men are not oppressed but privileged by sexism." Like Kimmel I believe that "men do feel oppression," but they are not "oppressed as men." Michael S. Kimmel, "Introduction" to Against the

which was later clearly evident in his correspondence with Violet, likely was one of the things that attracted Violet to John.<sup>35</sup>

John recalled spending three "miserable wearing" years "as a drudge" after he finished school.<sup>36</sup> He then went to the Lammerlaw Mountains near Dunedin where he learned valuable pioneering skills such as making effective lamps out of lamb's fat and cloth for a wick. He also was lonely because he lived in "isolation".<sup>37</sup> He later recalled that he then had a "brief but expanding sunset season in Napier" on the north island in New Zealand, followed by "a slice of ordinary workman day[s] in Dunedin with more expansion - of a sort."<sup>38</sup> He moved to South Africa where his life was "divided into three distinct apartments - each a complete

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Tide - Pro-feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990 A Documentary History, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>35</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1-19), the correspondence of the McNaughtons.

<sup>36</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933.

<sup>37</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. The Western Producer 27 August 1931.

<sup>38</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. Hayes, "Mothering the Prairie." For the location of these places in New Zealand see The New International Atlas (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1993), 172.

change of scene and actors."<sup>29</sup> In South Africa he worked in Durban and "other parts," including Johannesburg and the Rand, some of the time in diamond mines supervising black miners.<sup>30</sup>

In March of 1905 he met his older brother Willie in Saskatoon. They looked for land, found good land in Hillview, and they filed on their homesteads. While they waited for their money to arrive from Scotland they worked for wages in Saskatchewan and Manitoba at "carpentering and harvesting." In the late fall they headed out to Hillview to begin their lives as bachelor homesteaders on October the 24th. By the end of November John had invested most of the money he had in his homestead.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. Although this letter outlines the stages in John's life it does not give the dates of these changes in his life, nor many details.

<sup>30</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mr. J.G. Chalmers, 7 January 1949. "D.W." of the Star Phoenix in Saskatoon, on the flyleaf of McNaughton, Man Jungle Wise and Otherwise. Interview with Clarence Longworth, 20 August 1989.

<sup>31</sup> SAB, Canada Department of the Interior Lands Branch, Homestead File Nos. 92320A, 93546A. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933. The records do not show how much money John had, but the Department of the Interior claimed that a single man could "make a fair start" on a homestead with a thousand dollars. "Those Who Will Succeed," in Atlas of Western Canada (Ottawa: Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, 1901). Lyle Dick found in the Abernethy district in Saskatchewan the minimum homesteader's expenditures getting established were between \$291 and \$564, the average homesteader's expenditures were \$590 to \$1,193 and the substantial homesteader's expenditures were between \$2,093 and \$5,873. Lyle Dick, Farmers "Making Good" The



In short, when he met Violet, John was a man from a literate family who loved reading and had grown up in an environment that was politically and intellectually stimulating. He was a 33 year old bachelor farmer who, although he originally came from a middle class background, had earned a living in working class jobs prior to homesteading. In 1909 he had little money but, because he had two quarters of good land and he was hard-working, he seemed to have good economic prospects. (See the chart in Appendix # I "The McNaughton Farm.") Like the Jacksons, most of the members of McNaughton family had come to Canada one after the other in chain migration and settled close to one another.<sup>32</sup> John had had quite enough of the "isolation" on his own farm, so he was pleased with Violet's "advent."

After he met Violet at the Anthropopsychological Society John made frequent trips to the Jackson's home to visit with her. She encouraged him by agreeing to take part in a "famous old curtain raiser," "The Area Bell," that she

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Development of Abernathy District, Saskatchewan 1880-1920  
(Ottawa: National Historic Sites Canadian Parks Service Environment Canada, 1989), 67.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of families and migration in this period see Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians" An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 81-88.

<sup>33</sup> McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933.

and her Kentish friends knew.<sup>94</sup> Shortly after she arrived Hillview, "gave birth to a dramatic society" in which they had fun at rehearsals. Violet played the part of Penelope, the belle, and John was Walker Chalks, the milkman. After rehearsing Walker's "proposal to Penelope for two months John went in for realism off stage."<sup>95</sup> Violet then had to decide if she should accept his proposal.

Ada Love, a Kentish friend in whom Violet confided, gave support from across the sea by writing to Violet that John sounded like "the man of your heart, with the same ideas and tastes." Ada thought that Violet and John "ought to get together" and she asked Violet to give John "my heartiest good wishes & tell him for me that he has won a treasure."<sup>96</sup> Violet took Ada's advice and, turning away from her sorrows in Kent, she decided she did want to marry John. On May 30, 1910, Violet and John were married in St. John's Anglican Church in Saskatoon. The same day, John went to the land office and expanded his property by claiming a pre-emption on a quarter section, with a creek on it, close to his homestead.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Hayes, "Mothering the Prairie." SPL-LHR, Violet McNaughton Papers, Violet Jackson's Autograph Album.

<sup>95</sup> Hayes, "Mothering the Prairie."

<sup>96</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 B4, Ada Love to Violet Jackson, 20 March 1910.

<sup>97</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, Marriage Certificate, 30 May 1910. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets - Churches - St. John's 1, "St. John's Cathedral Tenth Anniversary, 21.

John's experiences in Scotland, New Zealand and South Africa gave him a breadth of experience that complemented Violet's English experiences. Although they were both part of the anglo-celtic majority in Canada, their combined experiences gave them a wide perspective from which to view conditions in Canada. New Zealand had chosen more radical solutions to its problems than had been tried in Canada. The McNaughtons wanted similar programs to be established in Canada, and the New Zealand example was to have an important influence on Violet's perception of pioneer conditions in Saskatchewan. The McNaughtons continued to observe developments in New Zealand very carefully.<sup>88</sup>

Violet was 30 and John was 33 when they married, a mature bride and groom who were both romantic and practical. They believed in the importance of marital love and commitment to one another.<sup>89</sup> Violet later looked back and

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<sup>88</sup> For example at a meeting of the Hillview Grain Growers John McNaughton moved, and Dell Jackson seconded, a motion that they urge the government to establish loans for farmers such as those loans in New Zealand and Australia. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers Minute Book, Minutes for the meeting on 4 January 1913; A1 I9, John McNaughton, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 11 March 1916. Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, 164. For a discussion by McNaughton of the history of women's suffrage, including reference to New Zealand, see The Western Producer 24 November 1955.

<sup>89</sup> For some of McNaughton's many affirmations of marriage and marital love see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D62(2), McNaughton to Mrs. L.C. Shoebridge, 2 July 1937; Mrs. John McNaughton, "The Prairie Women's Greatest Joys," The Regina Leader 20 January 1916. See also the McNaughtons' letters to one another in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1-19).

told an old friend that she had led "such a strenuous life that leisure is an unknown thing to me."<sup>100</sup> When Violet married John, she launched into years of hard work on a debt-ridden farm on which she came to see herself as "first and foremost a farm woman" and as an "ardent" feminist.<sup>101</sup> However, when she had been married a month Violet optimistically wrote to her sister Mildred saying "this is a great country with great prospects...I tell you...things go some here. It is wonderful some of the work which is accomplished....I am having a pretty good time."<sup>102</sup> The McNaughtons, who called one another "Vi" and "Jack," were married for 53 years until his death in 1963. In spite of occasional frustrations with one another, to the end of her life, Violet regarded John as her "friend husband" and she remained his best friend.<sup>103</sup>

The salutations and the closings of their letters to one another are one indication of their mutual regard. Even though he was less romantic than he had been in 1911, in

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<sup>100</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mr. J.G. Chambers, 7 January 1949.

<sup>101</sup> Saskatchewan Land Titles Office, Certificate of Title, #105537, #136C41-2240.D. See chart in Appendix. # I "The McNaughton Farm" for a list of the mortgages they had and the type of land they had. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(2) McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 22 September 1938; A1 D12, McNaughton to Peter Bludoff, 11 April 1942.

<sup>102</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A4(1), McNaughton to Mildred Jackson, 16 June 1910.

<sup>103</sup> The Western Producer 30 July 1925, 27 August 1925, 18 March 1948, 24 December 1952.

later years he almost always opened his letter with "My Dear Girl" and he usually signed his letter "Your loving husband Jack McN XXX." Occasionally he opened with "Dear Vi."<sup>104</sup> Other times he closed with "Good night Lady mine, Jack XXX"; "With regard to all, and love to yourself, Your Sweetheart J. Mc. XXX OOO"; "Your loving husband Jack, X to the nth power"; and another time, when he seemed to have been in a bit of a raunchy playful mood, he signed his letter "Your lover Jack McNaughton, looks suspicious somehow."<sup>105</sup> She usually opened her letters to him with "My dearest Jack" and closed her letters to him with "Your loving wife XXXXXXXXX," although the number of kisses she sent varied and occasionally she used a different closing like "With fondest love and take care of yourself" or "fondest love your ever loving wife."<sup>106</sup> They were reserved about expressing their love in writing if someone else was going to see it. When she had a sore arm and was dictating a letter to John to a secretary she opened with "Dear friend

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<sup>104</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(4), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 9 October 1935; A1 A1(16), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 May 1957; A1 A1(17), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 September 1960.

<sup>105</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 8 January 1920, 16 January 1920, 9 April 1926, 24 May 1926.

<sup>106</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(4), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 4 April 1935; A1 A1(5), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 27 April 1936; A1 A1(15), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 7 May 1953; A1 A1(16), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 5 May 1957.

and husband," rather than her usual "My dearest Jack." When he sent her a post card rather than a letter he opened with "Dear Vi" and closed with "Your aff. friend Jack."<sup>107</sup>

It was very obvious to their friends and neighbours that the McNaughtons were very fond of one another. Their neighbours, who took pride in driving a team of horses that were the same colour with similar markings, thought that the two little McNaughtons were so lively and so well matched that they called them "the Pony Pair."<sup>108</sup> When Erma Stocking, of the Women Grain Growers, was engaged to be married she wrote to Violet saying she then knew why she had "always wanted to be close to Mr. McNaughton. It used to amuse me."<sup>109</sup>

The McNaughtons changed over the years but there was a consistency in their devotion to, and support of, one another. When they were apart John wished she was with him, but as he wrote her in 1918 when she was in Ottawa for the Women's War Conference "it would be news if I were to tell you that I couldn't eat or sleep because you were away; it

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<sup>107</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(13), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 23 November 1944; A1 A1(17), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 September 1960.

<sup>108</sup> Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too: stories of notable western Canadian women (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975), 176.

<sup>109</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), Erma Stocking to McNaughton, 13 March 1920. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

wouldn't be news if I simply stated that I loved you."<sup>110</sup>

In 1926, when John was on a speaking tour of Saskatchewan he wrote to Violet to tell her about the "dandy chairman" in one district. "He of course introduced me as Mrs. McN's husband with the usual comments by me. After my talk he said they would no longer say Mrs. McN's husband, rather a joke the way he put it."<sup>111</sup> This good natured approach to her absences and his confident response to attempts to slur his masculinity because his wife was better known than he was were two of the many ways in which he gave her "hearty co-operation."<sup>112</sup>

From 1910 to 1926 the McNaughtons were together more than they were apart, even though she travelled a great deal during her public work from 1914 onward. In December of 1926 Violet began to work full time at 'The Producer' and from then onward, the McNaughtons appear to have been together about half of the time. This was so unusual for a farm couple in their day that, as neighbour George Tosh put it, "they were a bit of a mystery" to their Hillview neighbours. John was usually at the farm in the summertime, except from 1927 to 1933 when they rented the farm and he focused on

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<sup>110</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 15 October 1926, 28 February 1918.

<sup>111</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 12 October 1926. I have not been able to find out what his "usual comments" were.

<sup>112</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, McNaughton to Mary McCallum, 21 March 1919.

writing. He was in Saskatoon with her during the winter or at the small cottage he built on Vancouver Island in the mid-twenties.<sup>113</sup>

They established a routine of writing to one another twice a week when they were apart, apparently because the mail from Saskatoon was only delivered twice a week in Hillview.<sup>114</sup> Although he enjoyed her company and appreciated the work she did when she came to the farm, he was not dependent upon her presence. If she seemed to feel guilty about not being on the farm he assured her that it is "nonsense about needing you here that much."<sup>115</sup>

The McNaughtons believed in a "home partnership."<sup>116</sup> Violet later wrote a revealing column about "the fifty-fifty

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<sup>113</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 2 August 1923, 25 April 1925, 24 May 1926. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interview with George Tosh, 20 August 1989.

<sup>114</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 30 May 1926. Harris Heritage and Homage, 83.

<sup>115</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(14), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 June 1945. See also the 980 letters between the two of them held by the SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1. Some of these mention other letters that have not been preserved. See for example SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 24 May 1926, 25 May 1926, 4 June 1926, 3 July 1926. There are 145 letters from Violet and 835 from John, apparently because she saved more letters than he did. It would appear that they wrote approximately 2,000 letter to one another. Most of their preserved letters were written between 1926 and 1963, so understanding their relationship is easier in this period.

<sup>116</sup> The Western Producer 6 June 1935.



marriage" in which she discussed a report of a survey of married couples which claimed that "marriages in which the wife is the boss go on the rocks more often than those in which the male dominates." The report claimed that although "partnerships in which the husband and wife are on a 50-50 basis have the best chance," "they are an almost hopelessly unrealized ideal." Violet questioned this, asking why such marriages should be an "almost impossible ideal" since Oliver Schreiner said in Women and Labour that early men and women "wandered free" and laboured "free together." She concluded that

many things have happened to handicap women since those early days (and Olive Schreiner describes them very vividly) but is there any reason why we women of this generation should not catch up with our primitive maternal ancestors as partners in the game of life?"<sup>117</sup>

The McNaughtons, who were as she put it "happy though married," attempted to have a "fifty-fifty" marriage and over all they succeeded.<sup>118</sup>

In short, the McNaughton marriage was a loving partnership of equals who were both unconventional and adaptable. Throughout their marriage they remained very fond of one another. Their marriage gave both Violet and John the

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<sup>117</sup> The Western Producer 30 August 1934. Olive Schreiner, Women and Labour (1911; reprint, London: Virago, 1978). For a discussion of Women and Labour see Ruth First and Ann Scott, Olive Schreiner (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 268-276.

<sup>118</sup> The Western Producer 6 December 1934; 30 August 1934.

security of a committed partnership and at the same time it allowed each of them to be autonomous individuals. This marriage to a pro-feminist man, who had many interests in common with her and was also committed to the farm movement, was one of the most important factors enabling Violet to be a social and political activist, an agrarian feminist, and a leader of the farm women's movement.

After their marriage the McNaughtons pioneered together. They experienced many difficulties which were not unusual for settlers of their class.<sup>119</sup> Violet's success in appealing to farm women, and in organizing them, was firmly rooted in her identity as a pioneer, a married woman, a farm woman and one of the "plain common people."<sup>120</sup> Other farm women accepted and validated this identity. Farm women, such as Alice Butala, respected her because they knew she had experienced hardships similar to those they had lived through.<sup>121</sup> She was not, as Butala put it, "a stout

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<sup>119</sup> For details about other Saskatchewan settlers see Allan R. Turner, "Pioneer Farming Experiences," Saskatchewan History 8(2) (Spring 1955): 41-55.

<sup>120</sup> For McNaughton's identification as one of "the plain common people" see The Western Producer 6 November 1924.

<sup>121</sup> Sharon Butala, a writer who focuses on farm and ranch women and their relationship to nature and considers herself to be part of the modern farm women's movement, is the daughter-in-law of Alice Butala. Interview with Sharon Butala, 4 February 1994. See: Sharon Butala, Luna (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House, 1988). Sharon Butala, The Fourth Angel A Novel (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1992). Sharon Butala, The Perfection of the Morning - An Apprenticeship in Nature (Toronto: Harper

handsome club woman" who lived a comfortable middle-class life in the city and knew nothing of farm life.<sup>122</sup>

McNaughton told Velma Sanders, a young farm woman,

I have lived in a sod shack, and much of the time it leaked in thirteen places, and we started with apple boxes for chairs and home-made beds and not much else. We not only started, but we stayed that way a long time as I was an invalid for quite a few years and couldn't 'do my bit.'<sup>123</sup>

When they were first married they lived in a one room sod "shack." They later added extensions to it which was like homes of many settlers of their class.<sup>124</sup> They lived in it for 14 years altogether.<sup>125</sup> Violet later recalled that the roof

like the shack itself was timber lined, covered with sod. This was when the roof, as the sods rotted, leaked in exceptionally heavy rains. I recall one occasion when rain came through in 13 different places. It took every pot and pan we had of any size to catch the water. I recall going to

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Collins Publishers Ltd., 1994). Sharon Butala, Coyote's Morning Cry - Meditations and Dreams from a Life in Nature (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1995).

<sup>122</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D16, Alice Butala, 12 January 1939.

<sup>123</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(2), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 2 September 1938. For a discussion by McNaughton of sod houses see The Western Producer 26 April 1956.

<sup>124</sup> For details about the houses of other Saskatchewan settlers see Kathleen M. Taggart, "The First Shelter of Early Pioneers," Saskatchewan History 11(3) (Autumn 1958): 81-93.

<sup>125</sup> Hayes "Mothering the Prairie."

bed with an umbrella held slanting over the bed.<sup>126</sup>

Although they were short of money they did enjoy their evenings together. Later Violet recalled that with

the evening chores finished, we covered the table in our little sod shack kitchen with a red bobble-fringed cover. That transformed it into our sitting room, at least around the lamp where we unpacked copies of The Strand, Illustrated London News and other periodicals [from the Lady Aberdeen Society free monthly parcels]. Before the next package came we had read them from cover to cover including the advertisements and passed them on to the neighbours.<sup>127</sup>

Two passionate readers had found one another. One of the many reasons the McNaughtons had a good marriage was because they respected one another intellectually. Violet valued John in part because for her it made a real "difference" to be able "to work with an intellectual partner."<sup>128</sup>

Intellect was also important to John who later said he admired a young woman who was "a thinking girl." She was, he said, someone "I naturally appreciate."<sup>129</sup> They also had books they had brought with them, including a leather bound set of Dickens novels that Violet had bought when she was a girl. They exchanged books with their neighbours and had

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<sup>126</sup> The Western Producer 15 May 1952. See also The Western Producer 21 May 1925.

<sup>127</sup> The Western Producer 20 November 1952 and 9 July 1953.

<sup>128</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D59(1), McNaughton to Erwin Schwangart, 24 October 1933.

<sup>129</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D59(1), John McNaughton to Erwin Schwangart, 30 December 1933.

good talks about the books with them.<sup>130</sup> McNaughton later recalled that "White Fang was the first book I read in Canada back in 1909. I think every person in that pioneer community read it."<sup>131</sup> She also recalled

how East Lynne by Mrs. Henry Wood literally blew into fame in our district - so many read it. Someone persuaded a friend of mine, who had never before read the book, to read it. Starting early one evening he continued so long into the night that he went to sleep by the fire, fell on the fender and broke it. For a long time we joked him about East Lynne.<sup>132</sup>

The McNaughtons enjoyed playing together since Violet had her piano and John had his violin. Their neighbours, the Tosh family, remembered celebrating their first Christmas in Hillview in 1917 at the McNaughtons home and dancing on the dirt floor in the sod house as the McNaughtons played the piano and violin. In the "homesteading days," as Violet put it, "we had to depend on our own resources culturally as well as physically."<sup>133</sup>

The McNaughtons, who also worked very hard, played complementary gender roles, but they were very flexible

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<sup>130</sup> The Western Producer 14 April 1960. Interview with Babs Hall who inherited McNaughton's set of Dickens, 7 November 1991. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(5), Marie Wilson to McNaughton, 8 April 1921 and 6 June 1921. See an account of Wilson's family in Harris Heritage and Homage, 620-622.

<sup>131</sup> The Western Producer 25 October 1956.

<sup>132</sup> The Western Producer 14 April 1960.

<sup>133</sup> Harris Heritage and Homage, 566. The Western Producer 22 September 1955.

about these roles, an approach that worked well once Violet began to travel a great deal when she was active in the farm movement. John usually did the field work and she usually did some of the barnyard chores, raised chickens, kept the books, and did the domestic work even though she said that she "would rather disc than bake any day."<sup>134</sup> She knew that "you cannot work outdoors satisfactorily without a good cook to have meals ready for you." Later she recalled that at times she "helped outdoors in the early days and my mother-in-law looked after the meals."<sup>135</sup> From 1911 when she had surgery, until 1916 she could not do heavy farm work. After that, like many farm women, she worked in the fields if it was necessary. When they had "green help" at harvest time she helped the inexperienced men "harness and hitch up" their teams of horses. She later recalled helping "when eastern lads who didn't know a neckyoke from whiffle-tree came west for harvest."<sup>136</sup> One spring she wrote a friend saying

we have been so delayed with the work on the farm that I have had to do more outdoors work than usual. I can now add to my accomplishments. Last week I had a spell on the farrow with six horses and the cultivator with four. I will soon feel I

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<sup>134</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," [1913.]

<sup>135</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E91, McNaughton to D. Cornell, 19 June 1942.

<sup>136</sup> The Western Producer 29 October 1942.

am entitled to rank as a practical farmer.<sup>137</sup>

Like many farm women she "could handle a six-horse team as skilfully as any man" and she could and did cook for threshing gangs.<sup>138</sup> At the Hillview seed fair in 1914 she was awarded two prizes in "the home baking section" and in 1913 John won a first prize for both his butter and his potatoes.<sup>139</sup> John liked to cook simple meals and over the years they adapted their cooking chores. In the early years of their marriage she did most of the cooking but later, when she lost both her skills as a cook and her desire to cook, John took over more and more of the cooking.<sup>140</sup>

Her housework was not easy in a little sod house in part because all the years they lived on the farm they never did have a good well and so they "suffered" because they were always short of good water.<sup>141</sup> She later recalled that they had good land but

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<sup>137</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D46(1), McNaughton to A.J. McPhail, 28 May 1923.

<sup>138</sup> Kent Messenger 8 June 1951. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, McNaughton to Mary McCallum, 7 October 1918.

<sup>139</sup> The Western Producer 7 May 1953. Harris Museum Files, Prize Cards, 26 March 1913.

<sup>140</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(3), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson, 9 February 1923; A1 A1(5), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 23 May 1936. Jean Hartie, "Intellectual," The Western Producer 28 August 1973. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interviews with Stan Howard, 17 March 1992 and Babs Hall, 7 November 1991.

<sup>141</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E85, McNaughton to Mrs. Morton, 15 October 1951

the well water was brown and very, very hard. We melted snow in the winter, fetched water from the sloughs in a barrel in spring while it lasted; then counted it in pails full through the long hot summer days until snow came again. What a wash day spree we had when the first snow was deep enough to pack so that Mr. Mac could saw it into workmanlike blocks to carry in to the barrel beside the kitchen stove...A washing machine was of no use with only a pail or two of water for washing. When the "wigglers" in the slough got too big we hauled drinking water one or two miles from kind neighbours .... how we husbanded that water - using skim milk instead whenever possible.<sup>142</sup>

Although John usually went to the Tosh farm two miles down the road for water, at times Violet hitched up the horses to the stoneboat and off she went.<sup>143</sup> She would put a "barrel on the stoneboat covered with an opened grain sack held in place by an old tire, or a stave from a discarded barrel" to carry "the precious water" safely over the "hummocky trail." A "small churn was taken along to bring a little extra supply for who knew when a team of horses would be available again when every pound of power was needed on the land."<sup>144</sup> The Tosh family would look out the window and see tiny Violet throwing the pail on a rope down the open well and marvel that she could haul it to the surface without falling

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<sup>142</sup> The Western Producer 15 May 1952.

<sup>143</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(5), McNaughton to John Hunter, 22 October 1951.

<sup>144</sup> The Western Producer 15 May 1952. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E85, McNaughton to Mrs. Morton, 15 October 1951, and McNaughton to E. Graham White, 14 January 1952.



in the well.<sup>145</sup>

In the spring of 1911, when the McNaughtons had been married for a year, Violet had "a very serious operation." By then she was well acquainted with the joys, the rigours, and the disappointments of homesteading.<sup>146</sup> This traumatic brush with death, which left her unable to have children, was one of the most important events in the McNaughtons' lives. If they had had children their lives likely would have been very different but they were forced to adapt to this new reality. On May 28th, two days before their first wedding anniversary, Violet was admitted to the City Hospital in Saskatoon because there was no closer hospital and she needed to be operated on by a surgeon. Her operation was almost certainly a hysterectomy, since she could not have children as a result, she was not well "for about five years" after the operation, and she had some milder on-going problems.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Interview with George Tosh, 20 August 1989.

<sup>146</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4. D. Armitage to Mrs. Kyle, ca. May 1911; A1 C1, McNaughton notes "Loan of his ...artificial conditions," n.d.; A1 E26, McNaughton's speech in the minutes of the 1928 UFC "Women's Convention."

<sup>147</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, City Hospital Bill, 30 June 1911. Wilson Hawthorne, "Reminiscence," 16. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, D. Armitage to Mrs. Kyle, 1911; A1 E26, McNaughton's speech in the minutes of the 1928 UFC "Women's Convention." Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C2, McNaughton's Daily Diaries, entry on December 24, ca. 1962; A1 A1(18), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 24 December 1962. Interview with Carol Anderson, 11 March 1992.

Violet openly discussed having "a serious operation," but she was more reticent about the specific details of the operation and careful about the people with whom she discussed her resulting childlessness. When her friend Irene Parlby had a hysterectomy in 1918, she did not know that Violet had had similar surgery. On the other hand, Violet did discuss her surgery with Lillian and Francis Beynon whom she met in 1913.<sup>148</sup> In later years she discussed it with Emma Ducie, a friend who was very active in the Homemakers, but not with Ducie's daughter Rose, with whom she did discuss things of a sexual nature.<sup>149</sup>

The operation was a traumatic event that helped to push her into activism. By looking carefully at the events during the six weeks she was in the hospital it is possible to understand the pressure on Violet and her family and why her operation was so traumatic. The primary sources are limited but it is still possible to piece together a partial picture

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<sup>148</sup> The Western Producer 11 December 1952.

<sup>149</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E26, McNaughton's speech in the minutes of the 1928 UFC "Women's Convention;" A1 D54(1), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 21 April 1918. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. For examples of McNaughton's way with children see the Young Co-operators' pages of The Western Producer 27 January 1927. See also The Western Producer 28 August 1952 and 27 January 1977. Interviews with Mary (Crozier) Anderson, Maureen Anderson, and Carol Anderson, 11 March 1992.

of the events of that tragic spring.<sup>150</sup>

John was very worried about Violet when she left home, likely accompanied by Alex Howard Armitage, a doctor who practised medicine in Tessier.<sup>151</sup> The day after their first wedding anniversary John wrote to her to say he was relieved to hear that she had "arrived in the hospital alright."<sup>152</sup> She was "not in a fit state" for an operation so Dr. Harry Stewart, considered to be the best surgeon in Saskatoon, did not operate for almost a month in order to try to build up her strength before surgery. John was very worried about her and thought it was "a terror the way the operation" was being "put off." He was so terrified that, although he ordinarily did not mention prayer, he told her he was praying that God would "bless my darling wife and bring her

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<sup>150</sup> The best of these sources are one letter she wrote to her father and brother and nine letters John wrote to Violet while she was in the hospital. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(2), Violet McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 4 June 1911; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911, 5 June 1911, 11 June 1911, 15 June 1911, 19 June 1911, 21 June 1911, 29 June 1911, 28 June 1911, 10 July 1911. She wrote to him in June and July, but her letters were not preserved.

<sup>151</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911. Harris Heritage and Homage, 32. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan: Registry of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

<sup>152</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, D. Armitage to Violet McNaughton, n.d. 1911, and D. Armitage to Mrs. Kyle, n.d. 1911. D. Armitage may have been a relative of Dr. A.H. Armitage, who was reporting for him to the family after Violet's operation.

back to me" safely.<sup>153</sup> On June the 5th John wrote to tell Violet that after such a long period "it was a great pleasure" to get a letter written by her, rather than by someone reporting on her condition. Her letter, he said, would "only be exceeded when I hold you in my arms again."<sup>154</sup> In the future both Violet and John always were very concerned about one another's health. This may have been rooted in the fears they experienced in these two months. A frightening experience like this so early in their marriage may also have been one of the many reasons they were always so devoted to one another.

Violet was also very worried, in part because the operation was going to be "a big expense." She told her father and Dell to tell "Jack" not to come in to see her because it would "worry" her to have Lon, their hired man, alone in charge of the horses.<sup>155</sup> Perhaps she was thinking of the four new beautiful horses Dell had lost when his

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<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911; A1 C4, D. Armitage to Violet McNaughton, n.d. 1911; A1 A2(2), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 4 June 1911; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 June 1911 and 15 June 1911.

<sup>154</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 June 1911.

<sup>155</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(2), Violet McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 4 June 1911.

father's barn was struck by lightning.<sup>156</sup> Violet also said that if Jack came in "on the day of the operation I wouldn't be fit to be seen and it would be a waste." She reassured them that hospitals did not bother her and that she was comfortable and well looked after. She also sent a post card of the hospital reassuring her father that it was a "very nice place" and reminded him that she liked hospitals. Violet did not want Dell to come in because they were so "far from town."<sup>157</sup>

John, who still had painful memories of his brother Willie's fatal stay in a hospital in Saskatoon, was "feeling blue." He was at pains to assure her that she must not

worry in the slightest about expenses. We shall manage somehow. About that part of it I don't consider at all. At present the main thing is for you to just do as you are told and trust that it will all come out right.<sup>158</sup>

Even though he wished he could be with his "darling," and

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<sup>156</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), W.D. Jackson to Mildred Jackson, 3 July 1910; A1 C2, Violet McNaughton, Daily Diaries, entry for 6 February 1965. Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Results in 1989, 89. Dell had bought these horses on time for \$850 and they cost \$900 to replace, a financial loss from which he never fully recovered.

<sup>157</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(2), Violet McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 4 June 1911; A1 A2(3), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson, June 1911. The hospital, which was indeed a grand building, was the first municipally owned and operated hospital in western Canada, the second in the Dominion," SPL-LHR, LH 125, Saskatoon (Saskatoon: Board of Trade, 1913), 45.

<sup>158</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911.

was "in spirit," he had had to "give up the idea of going [to Saskatoon] as it would be such an additional expense." Their worries about money were very real since they owed the bank \$250, a loan which he could only get for three months. By the end of June he had to go talk to the banker but he assured her that "we'll pull thru somehow Dear so don't fret." Like other farmers the McNaughtons had difficulty getting the credit that was crucial for them.<sup>159</sup> Her father, who had been on the verge of bankruptcy when he left England, had lost his barn in the fire the year before, and Dell was badly in debt because of the expensive horses that he had lost in the fire.

In addition to these financial pressures, Dell and John were under pressure with farm work. In order to fulfil government regulations, John was breaking land on the quarter section he had filed on as a pre-emption the year before. (See chart in Appendix # I "The McNaughton Farm.") The pre-emption was about a mile from their house and barn so it took a long time to get there each day. In his first

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<sup>159</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 28 June 1911. For John's ideas about credit see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, John McNaughton, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 11 March 1916; A1 C1, McNaughton notes "Loan of his ...artificial conditions." n.d. Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers - Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), 11. For a discussion of farm credit see W.T. Easterbrook and Hugh G.J. Aitken, Canadian Economic History (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1956), 506-513.

letter to Violet he told her that "the pre-emption is not yet finished. I have done about 9 acres there, but now find out that 50 acres must be plowed within 3 years so that makes about 17 to do every year, so will just keep on there for a bit."<sup>160</sup> Five days later he said he had spent a day "trying to get the worst of the weeds out of that 5 acres of oats." It had been "truly alarming" because there had been weeds everywhere and this would cause serious trouble in the future.<sup>161</sup> He was having problems with their horses, which were so expensive that he had to take good care of them. On June the 11th he reported that "Ginger has his teeth filed, he has been tethered for a few days and seems rather better. Buck is now the one most off her food. I just have to work them short hours. Another day will finish the pre-emption."<sup>162</sup>

Violet's father was very self-centred and did not adjust well to pioneer conditions. He was the member of the family who could have been spared most easily in the spring and early summer rush, but all he ever seems to have done in

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<sup>160</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 31 May 1911.

<sup>161</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 June 1911.

<sup>162</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 11 June 1911. Note that the male horse is called "Ginger" and the female horse is "Buck."

Canada was complain.<sup>163</sup> On June the 5th John sounded annoyed when he told Violet that "Dell says your father always keeps putting off the trip for some...reason or other. It is a pity your name is not Mildred. I guess he would want to stay in Saskatoon then."<sup>164</sup> John was so worried about Violet that he managed to make a trip into the city to see her in the middle of June. Shortly after he returned he wrote to say that a letter had arrived from her "a few days ago. I was glad to know you were feeling mentally better, not so depressed."<sup>165</sup>

His time away had given the horses a rest and they had "picked up." "Ginger was rather fresh for a bit after his long rest but is quite steady on the plow and not quite so frantic." Four days later John told Violet that he had had the horses in Kyle's pasture and it had helped them.<sup>166</sup> A long term pattern in the McNaughton marriage, that is also evident in the many letters he wrote to her from the mid-twenties onward, is clear in these 1911 letters. John was discussing farm work with Violet and consulting her with

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<sup>163</sup> For her father's approach to life in Canada see her correspondence with him SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2.

<sup>164</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 5 June 1911. Mildred was Violet's younger sister and apparently the McNaughtons thought she was Mr. Jackson's favourite daughter.

<sup>165</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 19 June 1911.

<sup>166</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 15 June 1911 and 19 June 1911.



regard to decisions he was making about field work.<sup>167</sup>

John wanted Violet, whose letters were not preserved, to tell him "all that happens however trivial as it all interests me and is [the] next best thing to a visit."<sup>168</sup> In all of his letters John expressed his love for Violet and urged her to take care of herself. He thought she should read a lot and he tried to be witty in order to lift her spirits. In mid-June he told her that "the mosquitoes are getting lively now. They miss you very much," as did all of their family.<sup>169</sup> On June the 21st, when he was "very impatient" to get her next letter "as it will likely be after the operation," his concern about her seemed to peak. Having made a trip into Saskatoon he seems to have known by then that a hysterectomy was possible, since he urged her to

hurry up and come back even if you have to rest for a long time. I want to have you with me anyway and anyhow sweetheart and I'll have to make more of you when I get you back again. I must stop now as it is getting on. God Bless my Darling and bring her back to me safe and sound whatever happens and keep her from worry and anxiety.<sup>170</sup>

Soon after a letter arrived for Kate Kyle from Saskatoon

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<sup>167</sup> See the McNaughtons' correspondence in later years for his frequent discussions with her about farm work. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1.

<sup>168</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 19 June 1911.

<sup>169</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 15 June 1911 and 19 June 1911.

<sup>170</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 21 June 1911.

reporting that

Dr. Stewart operated on Mrs. McNaughton and removed a large cystic growth from the pelvic area. The operation was a rather serious one, but there is nothing in the nature of causes about the growth, although the removal was tedious and slow. Mrs. McNaughton stood the operation well and if nothing new turns up should be alright. It was this gradually increasing growth which gave her all the misplacement.<sup>171</sup>

They were undoubtedly relieved soon after when Violet's father received a letter asking if anyone from Hillview coming to Saskatoon would bring two or three dozen eggs from John because white eggs were on Violet's diet and the shop eggs in Saskatoon were not fresh.<sup>172</sup>

On July the 10th John wrote a letter to Violet to tell her that

it seems hardly possible after so long that you may be back this week. I won't believe it till I see you and get my arms round you, I won't let you go in a hurry again, you may be sure of that, I'm just going to keep you right in my arms forever ....Your Loving husband who remains in expectation of an early wedding with his heart's beloved. Do you know it just seems to me like going thru it all again. I feel quite bashful, sure. I hope you will be good to me and not embarrass me in any way. Jack McNaughton<sup>173</sup>

Jack's determination to make Vi's home-coming a joyful occasion, like a wedding, was in part because they both knew

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<sup>171</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C4, D. Armitage to Mrs. Kyle, n.d. 1911. "Nothing in the nature of causes" apparently meant that the growth was not cancerous.

<sup>172</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(2), Elva Richmond to W.D. Jackson, 26 June 1911.

<sup>173</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 July 1911.

the economic realities of labour intensive prairie farms during the period of team haul agriculture. It was most often the family farms, on which the children worked along with their parents, that thrived. On these farms farm couples, their children, and their descendants farmed together, one generation after the other.<sup>174</sup> Not having children was not only a personal tragedy for a farm couple but also an economic disadvantage. Faced with this economic reality the McNaughtons had to build their marriage to deal with their childlessness.

Violet had been reared to serve others and also to be interested in public life. The shift in McNaughton marriage, from an agrarian marriage with the potential for off-spring, to a marriage in which Violet served and nurtured farm women and their families began while Violet was in the hospital. In 1913 this transition was complete

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<sup>174</sup> SAB, SGGG Papers, B2 III 2, Provincial Secretary of WS-SGGA [Cyprian Lenhard] to Miss Evelyn Cairns, March 1926. For discussions of family farms in Saskatchewan see Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Woman and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan (Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1976) and John Bennett in association with Seena B. Kohl and Geraldine Binion, Of Time and Enterprise - North American Family Farm Management in the Context of Resource Marginality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). See also Sonya Salamon, Prairie Patrimony - Family, Farming & Community in the Midwest (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992). For a discussion of the work of farm children and intergenerational transfer of the farm see John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915-Pioneer Adaption and Community Building-An Anthropological History (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 94-101.

when she threw herself into the organization of the Women Grain Growers. In the two years between 1911 and 1913 the McNaughtons moved from being a "pony pair" on their own farm, to a marriage in which they pulled together farming and organizing Grain Growers locals in the Harris area, and then to a marriage in which she was a provincial leader of the farm women's movement and he was her supportive farmer husband who was involved in the local community.<sup>175</sup>

Later, looking back to her stay in the hospital Violet told a gathering of farm women that

some seventeen years ago I was in the City Hospital here and had a very serious operation which left me an invalid for about five years. During these years I suffered so much from carrying those pails of water which are so much a part of the burden of a country woman that it burned into my mind this water question very deeply. I met so many women afterwards who were suffering from the effects of this same hard work that I have never been able to get away entirely from this question.<sup>176</sup>

The "water question" continued to concern her well on into the 1950s.

While in hospital in Saskatoon, Violet became more acutely aware of the contrast between urban prosperity and the hardships experienced by rural people. In 1911, Saskatoon was in the midst of a spectacular boom with people flooding in and grand buildings were going up at a frantic

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<sup>175</sup> MacEwan, ...and mighty women too, 176.

<sup>176</sup> The Western Producer 21 June 1928.

rate.<sup>177</sup> The city's early settlers, such as Grace Fletcher and her family, had lived in a sleepy village since the mid-1880s. They, and merchants like James Clinkskill who had moved to Saskatoon at an opportune time, were suddenly making fortunes. They were building grand houses, hiring French maids who were required to wear dainty uniforms, and generally having a wonderful time getting rich.<sup>178</sup> The McNaughtons and other settlers, like the fellow who had dubbed the City "Soak-it-to-em," were not amused.<sup>179</sup> Violet later recalled that

in 1911 I was very ill in one of our city hospitals for two months. Echoes of life under real estate boom conditions and its accompanying extravagances, came to me continually from the city without. I had seen no easy money on the prairie. I realized that it was the efforts and sacrifices of the men who had trekked out beyond the city, which had made real estate possible. I had previously become interested through my husband in the G[rain] G[rowers] A[ssociation]. I returned home from the Hospital more than ever interested in the GGA.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> For pictures of these buildings see SPL-LHR, LH 125, Saskatoon (Saskatoon: Board of Trade, 1913). See pictures and a discussion of those buildings built during this boom, that are still in existence, in Local History Staff, Saving Our City - Saskatoon's Protected Heritage Structures (Saskatoon: The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, 1994.)

<sup>178</sup> Taylor, "Grace Fletcher, Women's Rights, Temperance, and 'British Fair Play' in Saskatoon," 3-21. Kerr and Hanson, Saskatoon: The First Half Century, 104-117. Interview with Miriam Fletcher September 1993.

<sup>179</sup> MacEwan, The Sodbusters, 109.

<sup>180</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton notes "Loan of his ...artificial conditions."

This account indicates that Violet's operation and her stay in the hospital were very important in helping to push her into activism in the Grain Growers. The operation was significant not only because it ended her ability to have and to nurture children of her own; it was also significant because it helped to raise her consciousness so that she began to nurture farm women by campaigning to improve their lives through her involvement in the farm women's movement. As a member of the WGG put it, she was "the little mother" of the WGG.<sup>181</sup> Myrtle Wright saw her as "mothering" the "prairie."<sup>182</sup>

McNaughton told a 1928 gathering of farm women that she had been "an invalid" after her operation and that this caused her pain when she carried pails of water. She told Velma Sanders that she and John did not have much money after her operation because she was "an invalid for quite a few years and couldn't 'do my bit.'"<sup>183</sup>

The way in which the McNaughton's and the other settlers in Hillview imagined their community meant that they built a community based on the principle of co-operation. They used the principle of co-operation to cope

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<sup>181</sup> SAB, SGGG Papers B2 III 1, Minute Book, WS-SGGG, 4 February 1921.

<sup>182</sup> Hayes, "Mothering the Prairie."

<sup>183</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E26, McNaughton's speech in the minutes of the 1928 UFC "Women's Convention;" A1 D58(2), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 22 September 1938.

with the problems in their community because they were in a "raw new land" that had been shaped, in part, by the first National Policy.

The bonds the McNaughton's built during their brief courtship, during the first year of their marriage, and as they lived through the crucible of her operation made it possible for her to imagine returning to Hillview and working to improve the lives of farm people. The way in which Violet and John imagined their marriage meant that, back again in Hillview, she became one of a "Pony Pair" working to organize Grain Growers' locals in the Harris area.

In short, as a radical from north Kent, who was in sympathy with feminist activists, the experience of pioneering, marrying, and having a hysterectomy in a hospital far from home taught McNaughton that farm people were low in the hierarchies of power in Canada. This helped to make her into an agrarian feminist and pushed her into the activism that would lead to her part in the farm women's movement.

## CHAPTER FOUR

"WHAT CAN WE, THE PLAIN COMMON PEOPLE, DO?"

### ORGANIZING GRAIN GROWERS' LOCALS

In July 1911 Violet McNaughton left the hospital in Saskatoon and returned to the small house in Hillview that John had assured her was "your own home, altho it be a sod one, still your own."<sup>1</sup> There she recuperated from her hysterectomy. In the next two years she and John continued to rebuild their marriage, from one where children had been a possibility, to suit the new reality of their lives, that they would not be having children. If Violet had been able to have children, she would likely have had to restrict her activities in the farm movement, but now she would not be limited by childcare responsibilities. McNaughtons were loved by their family and well liked by many of the other settlers in the Hillview district and therefore the settlers co-operated with "the Pony Pair" as they rebuilt their life together.<sup>2</sup> The McNaughtons refashioned their marriage during 1911 and 1912, first while she was at home recuperating, and then by throwing themselves enthusiastically into organizing a branch of the

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<sup>1</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 15 June 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too: stories of notable western Canadian women (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975), 176.



Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) in Hillview and in several other farm districts nearby.

Violet was proud to be part of "the plain common people" like the other farm people in Hillview. Violet and John organized the Hillview Local of the SGGA, where they and the other Grain Growers explored what "the plain common people" could accomplish by finding "ground for common action" and taking united action.<sup>3</sup>

Violet had come from Kent with feminist ideas, but she had not been active in the women's movement in England. In Canada her feminist approaches to the role of women in the farm movement were first tested through her organizational work in Hillview. It was a valuable training ground for her later work at the provincial and national level. It was also a safe place to learn and to practice her feminist beliefs, because the members of the Hillview Grain Growers and the Hillview Women Grain Growers (WGG) were her family, her friends and her neighbours, most of whom were fond of her and respected her.

Violet and John used an approach in organizing the Hillview Local of the Grain Growers that was to become the basic strategy in her future organizational work. "The Pony Pair" forged an alliance with other farm women and men who joined the Local, based on two integrative principles that

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<sup>3</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924, 9 April 1931.

all of them shared. First, they believed that by organized co-operative efforts they could improve the lives of the settlers in Hillview. Second, they believed that by uniting with others in the SGGGA they could improve the lives of all farm people in the province.

The Hillview Grain Growers also developed subsidiary strategies as they went along, the most important, as far as Violet was concerned, was including women as equals in the mixed Local. What they defined as equality changed as they thought through the issue of equality. This strategy was based on the complementary, but flexible, gender roles that women and men played on their farms. Violet's belief in the involvement of women in both the mixed local of the Grain Growers and the Hillview WGG was also to become a basic component of her agrarian feminism that she honed in Hillview and applied at the provincial and the federal levels.

This chapter focuses on Violet's recovery from her operation, on the McNaughtons' role in Hillview Grain Growers, and on Violet's role in the Hillview Women Grain Growers. It begins by looking at McNaughton's recovery from her operation and the transition in her marriage. It then looks at the conservative and radical wings of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association (TGGA) and the early SGGGA, and at the McNaughtons' role in the Hillview Grain Growers and in organizing other Grain Growers branches in

the Harris area. Finally it looks at Violet's 1913 analysis of the work of farm women and her role in the Hillview Women Grain Growers.

Violet was in very poor health throughout 1911. When she came home she was not only dealing with physical problems, she was also grappling with the emotional turmoil of a 31 year old woman who faced an unexpected future as a childless woman. She seems to have spent most of the next seven months recuperating at home. The minute book of the Hillview Grain Growers records that Violet only attended four meetings and a seed fair early in 1911 before she was admitted to the hospital in May. She did not attend another meeting until February 1912, likely because she was not well enough to leave her home until then.<sup>4</sup>

There are few records of Violet's thoughts or feelings during her first few months back in Hillview. John and their family were undoubtedly very supportive, but she would also have had to draw on her own personal strength during these difficult months.<sup>5</sup> Some of the lessons she had learned as a girl in England, and used during her later life, were likely

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<sup>4</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meetings on 21 January 1911, 4 February 1911, 4 March 1911, and 1 April 1911.

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Christine Nielsen for insightful comments on this period in McNaughton's life. Nielsen spent her childhood on a farm in rural Saskatchewan and was well acquainted with some of the people in McNaughton's circle. Georgina Taylor Private Collection, Christine Nielsen to Georgina Taylor, 5 June 1996.

helpful during her recovery. Her mother, Sedelia Jackson, had taught her a little rhyme, and she had written it in her daughter's autograph album. Violet treasured the autograph album for the rest of her life. She later recalled that her mother, who had coped with bad health for many years before she died in 1903, had suffered a great deal. But she had been a practical woman, so she liked the rhyme,

For every evil under the sun  
There's a remedy or there's none,  
If there's one seek and find it,  
If not, then never mind it.<sup>6</sup>

McNaughton had her mother's practical approach to life. She thought the rhyme made an important "point," and she remembered that her mother had "certainly lived up to it."<sup>7</sup> Perhaps reading the rhyme written in her autograph album in her beloved mother's handwriting and remembering the way her mother coped with sickness gave her strength during the seven months in which she made her initial physical recovery and as she began to come to terms with her inability to have children.

Likely, memories of another important woman she had known during her girlhood also came back to Violet in 1911. Once during a "time of trial and loneliness" in England a

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<sup>6</sup> SPL-LHR Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2135, Violet Jackson's Autograph Album, Sedelia Jane Jackson's entry, 8 December 1896. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E91, McNaughton to Mrs. E.M. Burke, 6 January 1943.

<sup>7</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E91, McNaughton to Mrs. E.M. Burke, 6 January 1943.

woman, who Violet thought was "wise," had told her to "do something for somebody quick." Later in Violet's life she passed this advice and her mother's rhyme on to other people who were sick or having other difficulties.<sup>3</sup> The "wise" woman's advice had been part of her girlhood training to serve others. When she decided to serve farm people, she likely was following this advice. She appears to have linked the wisdom in her mother's rhyme and her girlhood memory about the "wise" woman's advice with a passage about childless women and men that she found in Walter Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis, a book that "rocketed" Rauschenbusch to prominence in 1909.<sup>4</sup> The links between Rauschenbusch's notions about the childless and the two important pieces of wisdom from her girlhood can be seen in a paper that she gave to the local Grain Growers.

The women and men in the Hillview Grain Growers were

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<sup>3</sup> The Western Producer 27 September 1956. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E91, McNaughton to Mrs. E.M. Burke, 6 January 1943.

<sup>4</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," a paper given in 1913. Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (1907; reprint, London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1913), 420. Winthrop S. Hudson, ed. Walter Rauschenbusch - Selected Writings (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 3-4, 164-165. See also Eleanor Flexner, Centuries of Struggle - The Women's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), 209. Rauschenbusch is still read and has a continuing influence mainly because of his emphasis "on human needs and social reform as integral to an adequate theology." Martin Luther King, for example, said that Christianity and the Social Crisis "left an indelible mark on my thinking." Hudson, Walter Rauschenbusch 41.

lively, optimistic settlers who loved reading and discussing ideas. The settlers, who chose as the motto of the their SGGA Local "come let us reason together," took turns at their meetings presenting papers that they had written.<sup>10</sup> In 1913 Violet gave a paper to the Grain Growers of Hillview and Glen Eagle, a neighbouring farm district, titled "The Prairie Woman" about the work of farm women.

Her paper, which focused on the types of work farm women did, also reveals the way she had begun to understand the significance of her childlessness. It helps to explain the way she and John had rebuilt their marriage between 1911 and 1913. Violet argued that, in order to be good parents both men and women should take part in "community life," where they could "gain progressive knowledge."<sup>11</sup>

Violet concluded her paper by quoting Walter Rauschenbusch. The leading social gospel theologian in the United States, Rauschenbusch espoused Christian socialism, wrote several widely read books, and was a leader of the "social awakening" of the social gospel that swept over North America in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> The social gospel was influential among

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<sup>10</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), The 1914 "syllabus" of the Hillview Branch of the SGGA.

<sup>11</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 1-5.

<sup>12</sup> Winthrop S. Hudson, ed., Walter Rauschenbusch - Selected Writings, 156. Flexner, Centuries of Struggle, 209. Richard Allen, The Social Passion - Religion and Social

activists in the prairie farm movement.<sup>13</sup> Violet told the Grain Growers that Rauschenbusch had said that

men and women who are rearing families are making history, and the only way that the childless and the unmarried can make history is by fighting to make the world more habitable for coming generations. Do we, any of us, realize our responsibility towards the future? There is to me a romance in being the first dwellers on this prairie. It is like starting with a clean page in the history of time. Take the present community of Hillview and Glen Eagle. Are we going to leave records of our sojourn here, written in sand; or in indelible ink on the first page of the history of the district? Let us realize our possibilities in this direction, men and women, side by side, and whether our stay be short or long, may our imprint for good be left behind.<sup>14</sup>

Walter Rauschenbusch expounded his ideas about the childless in Christianity and the Social Crisis. He believed that

we shall never abolish suffering. There will always be death and the empty chair and heart. There will always be the agony of unreturned love. Women will long for children and never press baby lips to their breast.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, he argued, "we must seek" a better life. "The

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Reform 1914-28 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1973), 4, 23, 42. Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985), 191.

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of farm people and the social gospel on the Canadian Prairies see Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., The Prairie West - Historical Readings, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), 561-572.

<sup>14</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 6. Her assumption that the Hillview settlers were "the first dwellers on this prairie" will be examined in a subsequent chapter.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, 420.

childless man and woman," he claimed, "will have to do heroic work in the trenches before they can rank on the same level" as the women and men who were feeding their own children. Therefore he argued, "childless people should adopt the whole coming generation of children and fight to make the world more habitable for them as for their own brood." This line of thought appealed to Violet, who was living in a day when motherhood was highly valued, by giving the McNaughtons a "generation of children" to "adopt" for whom they could do battle.<sup>16</sup> In other words she used it to help construct a maternal identity, even though she was childless.

After being discharged from the hospital Violet had come to believe that the way in which she and John, as a childless couple, could make a contribution to coming generations was to make the world a better place, where "a square deal" was "in sight." It was her way of doing "something for somebody quick" in order to deal with her involuntary childlessness. In the Hillview and Glen Eagle districts she and the other settlers had an opportunity, she thought, to shape their community from the beginning. As a budding agrarian feminist she argued that the best way to do

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<sup>16</sup> Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis 419-420. For more of his thought see Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (1912; reprint, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1915); Walter Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917), and Hudson, Walter Rauschenbusch - Selected Writings.



this was for the men and women of the community to work together side by side in public life in order to build their community through participation in groups like the Grain Growers where "progressive" ideas were discussed.<sup>17</sup> In other words she was not espousing separation between women and men. She was espousing the kind of partnership she and John had on their farm.

She had woven Rauschenbusch's notions about the role of childless people together with the wisdom from her childhood, with her feminist ideas about partnerships, and with the ideas of the social gospel. This appears to have helped her deal with the pain of a near fatal operation and her sudden inability to have children. She constructed a mission for herself drawing not only on this web of ideas and the trauma of her operation, but also on her radical north Kentish background, her life as a pioneer woman in Hillview and, her marriage to John. From 1913 onward her mission would be to fight for "a square deal" for farm women and their families.<sup>18</sup> At this 1913 meeting she felt comfortable enough to speak indirectly about her childlessness and to ask the local Grain Growers for comments on her paper. She was speaking to a small, sympathetic group of her contemporaries, who knew her very

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<sup>17</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman", 5.

well at the time of her operation.<sup>19</sup> What happened to McNaughton between February of 1912, when she was well enough to get involved in the Hillview community again, and this 1913 meeting that she could be so open about her childlessness and her mission? To answer this question, we have to backtrack.

McNaughton's role in the farm women's movement grew out of the radical ideas she brought from Kent and discussed with John, who also had brought radical ideas from New Zealand. Their backgrounds put the McNaughtons in the radical wing of the SGGA, a position that they were to retain throughout her work in the SGGA and the WGG. The McNaughtons fit into the SGGA because it included a radical wing.

The history of the TGGA and the SGGA, which replaced it in 1906, has been told as a story about heroic farmers who brought about a "Western farmers' revolt" against the federal government and the first National Policy.<sup>20</sup> The cumulative effect of the farm movement in the prairie West

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<sup>19</sup> McNaughton discussed her childlessness as a result of her 1911 operation with Emma Ducie. Ducie was close to McNaughton's age. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>20</sup> Hopkins Moorhouse, Deep Furrows (Toronto: George J. McLeod Limited, 1918), 281.

was often portrayed as inevitable progress.<sup>21</sup> Recent scholarship questions these assumptions. In Fashioning Farmers, Jeffery Taylor sees the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (MGGA) and the United Farmers of Manitoba (UFM) as being less radical than earlier farm groups and much influenced by conservative ideologues such as the professors at the Manitoba Agricultural College.<sup>22</sup> David Laycock's Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies creates four categories of thought and, focusing on the Liberals who followed W.R. Motherwell as leaders of the SGGA, he fits the SGGA into his "crypto-liberal" category.<sup>23</sup> The problem with this approach is that the SGGA was a mass organization, with many differences among the members and the leaders. Therefore they do not all fit into one neat category. Lyle Dick's Farmers "Making Good" is more helpful in understanding the background of McNaughton's entry into the SGGA because he looks at differences between

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<sup>21</sup> For books that portray inevitable progress see Harold S. Patton, Grain Grower's Cooperation in Western Canada (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928); Hugh Boyd, New Breaking - An Outline of Co-operation Among the Western Farmers of Canada (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Canada Limited, 1938); Louis Aubrey Wood, A History of Farmer's Movements in Canada (1924; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

<sup>22</sup> Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers - Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), 117-119.

<sup>23</sup> David Laycock, Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), 23-68. Laycock is a political scientist.

the early leaders of the SGGA. He links these differences to the economic position of the individual and to the way in which agriculture was structured.<sup>24</sup>

Dick's approach is very helpful because Violet McNaughton's position in the farm movement and her stances with regard to farm women can only be understood in the light of the differences within the SGGA. The economic position of the McNaughtons in relation to the prosperous leaders of the SGGA, such as W.R. Motherwell, and those who were less prosperous, like E.A. Partridge, had a great impact on the way she was to develop her agrarian feminism and the way she influenced the farm women's movement. The WGG was to develop into "the ginger group of SGGA" in part because of her influence.<sup>25</sup>

The struggle with the federal government by western farmers to get better grain handling and storage facilities and better transportation was rooted in their problems with the first National Policy. In the late nineteenth century western Canadian farmers began to fight for necessary

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<sup>24</sup> Lyle Dick, Farmers "Making Good" - The Development of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan 1880-1920 (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Canadian Parks Service Environment Canada, 1989), 165-191.

<sup>25</sup> Ian MacPherson, an historian at the University of Victoria, suggested in a conversation with me that the WGG was the "ginger group" of the SGGA.

reforms, but many problems persisted.<sup>26</sup> In 1901, when there was a large harvest, farmers in the fertile Indian Head and Abernethy area of southeastern Saskatchewan began to protest. In 1902 they organized the Territorial Grain Growers which later became the SGGG.<sup>27</sup> W.R. Motherwell, a prosperous Liberal farmer from the Abernethy area was the first President, and one of the most influential of the early leaders of the TGGG and the SGGG.<sup>28</sup>

Lyle Dick argues convincingly that the changes pushed through by the early leaders of the TGGG with regard to building grain loading platforms by railway tracks, allotting railway cars in the order that they were requested, and penalties for non-compliance helped the "relatively prosperous farmers" like Motherwell.<sup>29</sup> They could grow the 1,000 to 1,500 bushels of grain necessary to ship out a whole car load, thus by-passing the private

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<sup>26</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 186-173. Wood, A History of Farmer's Movements 123-130, 159-168. Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 331-333. C.F. Wilson, A Century of Canadian Grain - Government Policy to 1951 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978), 28-32. Vernon Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 153-157.

<sup>27</sup> Wood, A History of Farmers' Movements, 169-180. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, 157-158. Moorhouse, Deep Furrows, 19-59. Patton, Grain Growers' Co-operation, 30-40. Seymour Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (1950; reprint, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971), 57-61.

<sup>28</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 173-177.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 196.

elevator companies. Dick contends that, once these changes had been pushed through, Motherwell and the other prosperous farmers who led the SGGGA moved to "a more conservative position."<sup>30</sup> However the less prosperous farmers, and those who were still getting established, such as the McNaughtons, had less grain to ship and were therefore at a disadvantage. They had to pay higher storage charges to elevator companies because they did not produce enough wheat to ship out whole car loads, and many, like the McNaughtons, were far from rail lines.<sup>31</sup>

Dick points out that a split developed in the SGGGA when new activists, who were less prosperous, began to push the Association towards more radical action. Edward Partridge and the other new activists were from the Sintaluta area, which was less fertile than the Abernethy and Indian Head area. Dick argues that Motherwell and the other prosperous, "conservative" farmers came from the "upper stratum" of farm owners. As a "privileged elite" they identified with the dominant economic commercial class in Canada.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the "radical" Partridge and the other less prosperous farmers came from "lower socio-economic strata of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 177-180.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 182, 189, 196. For an analysis of "oppositional radicalism," "conservative agrarianism," and "residual radicalism," in the farm movement in Manitoba see Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers, 90-108.

prairie wheat growers," and they identified with working class Canadians, as did the McNaughtons.<sup>33</sup> These radical farmers became more vocal, just as Motherwell and his faction became more conservative and lost touch with the membership.<sup>34</sup>

Partridge and other farmers in the Sintaluta area set up the Grain Growers Grain Company (GGGC), so they did not have to deal with elevator companies which they did not trust, thereby entering a long struggle with established grain companies.<sup>35</sup> In 1904 Partridge began to call for the establishment of a sympathetic farm paper. The GGGC and the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association established a monthly journal called The Grain Grower's Guide. Partridge was appointed the first editor, but he withdrew as editor in

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<sup>33</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 177, 182, 189 196. Murray Knuttila, "That Man Partridge" - E.A. Partridge, His Thoughts and Times (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), 25-28. Harris Museum, Hillview Grain Growers Minute Book, 27 June 1914, 28 January 1921. For details of Violet McNaughton's sympathy with the strikers in Winnipeg in 1919 and with the left see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, Mary McCallam to McNaughton, 23 May 1919; A1 D54(1), McNaughton to Irene Parlby, 1 May 1919; A1 E92(3), Annie Hollis to McNaughton, 24 July 1919; A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Hollis, 21 August 1919, Hollis to McNaughton, 12 August 1919, Hollis to McNaughton, 27 November 1919 and 19 February 1920.

<sup>34</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 182-191.

<sup>35</sup> The grievances the farmers had against the elevator companies included problems with the way the elevators weighed the grain, graded it, priced it, and their practice of giving the farmers inferior grades while taking their superior grain. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism 71.

1907.<sup>36</sup> In 1908 Motherwell, who was in the Liberal provincial cabinet by then, opposed the radicals when Partridge, a visionary and a gifted orator, convinced the SGGA to push for provincial ownership of inland elevators and Dominion ownership of terminal elevators.<sup>37</sup> Motherwell and other conservatives in the SGGA were opposed to government ownership, attacked Partridge and the other radicals espousing "the Partridge Plan" for publicly owned elevators.<sup>38</sup>

The McNaughtons and the other settlers in Hillview read articles in The Grain Grower's Guide about the SGGA and the dispute between Partridge and Motherwell. They also read

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<sup>36</sup> Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 17-30. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, 61-65.

<sup>37</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 182. In the 1920s Partridge was to participate in the formation of the Progressive Party. "He proposed the formation of an independent West, tried to set up a second grain company, was present for the debates over the wheat pools, and was part of an effort to establish a western bank." Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 2. Motherwell took a different route. He was a Saskatchewan Liberal MLA from 1905 to 1919 and a Liberal MP from 1921 to 1940. He was Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan from 1905 to 1918 and the federal Minister of Agriculture between 1921 and 1930. Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970 (Regina and Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1971), 30, 84. Directory of Members of Parliament and Federal Elections for the North-West Territories and Saskatchewan 1887-1966 (Saskatoon and Regina: The Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1967), 23. David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan 1905-1971 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 164, 172. Allan R. Turner, "W.R. Motherwell: The Emergence of a Farm Leader," Saskatchewan History 11(3) (Autumn 1958): 94-103.

<sup>38</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 182-185. Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 30-34.



about the organization of the Canadian Council of Agriculture (CCA) in February 1910 and the farmer's "Siege on Ottawa" in December 1910, organized mainly by the CCA, demanding lower tariffs, reciprocity with the United States, government ownership and operation of terminal elevators, and other reforms. 'The Guide,' also told them about the SGGGA asking the provincial Liberal government to establish a public elevator system, the government in Regina setting up a Royal Commission to investigate, and the Commission recommending an elevator system run by a farmer co-operative, rather than the government ownership espoused by the SGGGA radicals. Legislation incorporating the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company (SCEC) passed in March 1911.<sup>39</sup> Motherwell's faction had won, and Partridge felt betrayed.<sup>40</sup> The radical McNaughtons were to back Partridge.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The Grain Growers Guide 1909 to 1911. Patton, Grain Grower's Co-operation, 137, 387, 416. Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 182-184. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, 161-162. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, 67-69. Knuttila, "That Man Partridge" 30-37. Gary C. Carson, Farm Voices - A Brief History and Reference Guide of Prairie Farm Organizations and Their Leaders 1870 to 1980 (Regina: Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, 1981), 6-7. D.S. Spafford, "The Elevator Issue, the Organized Farmers and the Government, 1908-1911," in Pages From the Past - Essays on Saskatchewan History ed. D.H. Bocking (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979), 170-180. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy, 101-152.

<sup>40</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 183.

<sup>41</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meetings on 24 December 1910 to 10 January 1914.

Lyle Dick argues that the respective political stances that Motherwell and Partridge took with regard to the role of government in the economy was related to their individual positions in the farm economy.<sup>42</sup> The prosperous Motherwell, who believed in using government funds for developmental purposes but leaving the ownership and management to others, was a well-established farmer who had begun to homestead in 1882. He owned five quarter-sections of rich clay soil, "an elegant Victorian house, and an impressive farmstead."<sup>43</sup> The radical Partridge, on the other hand, believed "that competition among farmers only served to erode their economic position" and he envisioned "government's more dynamic participation in the economy and the formal entrenchment of the co-operative principle."<sup>44</sup> Partridge, who was "somewhat lower in the economic stratum," also began to homestead in the 1880s.<sup>45</sup> He owned four quarter-sections of second class, loam soil that were "partly broken up by coulees or creek-beds."<sup>46</sup> In 1910 both Motherwell and Partridge were established farmers who farmed close to rail

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<sup>42</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 177-186.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>46</sup> Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 4.

lines.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time the McNaughtons, who were a generation younger than Partridge and Motherwell, were just getting established. They owned two good quarter-sections of land and had claimed a pre-emption on one poor quarter-section taken up mainly by a meandering creek where their livestock could get water. They were fifteen miles from a railway. (See chart in Appendix # I "The McNaughton Farm.") In other words, Partridge appealed to the McNaughtons from the beginning because he was closer economically, politically, and philosophically to them than was Motherwell and the other conservatives in the SGGA. It was the vision of Partridge and the other radicals that drew the McNaughtons into the Grain Growers. Violet, who came to know both Motherwell and Partridge during the years in which she was active in the SGGA, was an admirer of Partridge. She was to become one of the SGGA radicals who spent years opposing Motherwell and the other conservatives who followed him in the SGGA.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 33. In using Dick's analysis I am not implying that there were only two ideological positions in the SGGA. The positions members took were varied. McNaughtons were close to Partridge, but many members were on a continuum between them and Motherwell. Some were further to the Left than Partridge and the McNaughtons.

<sup>48</sup> Dick, Farmers "Making Good," 182, 185, 189. Dick takes the terms conservative and radical from C.B. Macpherson who argues that prairie farmers responded to economic and political questions with "oscillation between conservatism and radicalism." C.B. Macpherson, Democracy in

The affinity the McNaughtons had for Partridge and his position is evident in many of the motions the Hillview Grain Growers passed from 1910 to 1926, which were similar to Partridge's ideological position, rather than Motherwell's. In 1926, at the request of the McNaughtons, Partridge was to send Dell Jackson, Violet's brother, an autographed copy of his new book A War on Poverty.<sup>49</sup> In a covering letter Partridge told Dell that he enjoyed "the friendship of people of such [a] fine type as the McNaughtons."<sup>50</sup> The McNaughtons admired Partridge too. The camaraderie between Violet and "Ed" Partridge is obvious in a passage she wrote in her diary. She was "very surprised to see a picture of Ed Partridge, who was a household name years ago," in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix in 1966.<sup>51</sup> She recalled being on a speaking tour with him and

one very memorable night stands out in my memory. We were both speaking in the same district and my host was to bring me to the station to catch a train about 2AM. When we got there the waiting room was in darkness with a good fire burning though not throwing out any light.... It had been banked for the night. My host had to leave me but I said I would be fine. He went and after sitting quietly for some time a voice in the darkness said

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Alberta - Social Credit and the Party System (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1953), 226.

<sup>49</sup> Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 59-78.

<sup>50</sup> Harris Museum, Jackson Papers, General Correspondence, E.A. Partridge to D.S. Jackson, 18 December 1926.

<sup>51</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C2, McNaughton, Daily Diaries, entry for 18 April 1966.

"How are you Mrs. McNaughton?" It was Ed Partridge who had been speaking in the other direction. We had a great talk for our train was late but no station agent appeared to put the light on.... Mr. Partridge was a great raconteur & time passed pleasantly but there was no restaurant in the town to get a cup of tea. Finally two trains came in - I went one way - he went the other. Somewhere near 5 AM. I never knew why both trains, east and west, had to be late.<sup>52</sup>

Partridge and Violet were to work together over the decades. For instance from 1924 to 1926 they were the two big names who were trying to persuade the SGGA and the Farmers' Union of Canada to amalgamate.<sup>53</sup>

Violet and John McNaughton were the leaders of the Hillview Grain Growers' Association, a 'local' branch of the SGGA. The Hillview Local was organized initially by John in December 1910. The Local went out of existence on 20th November 1926, when a motion by Violet for the "dissolution of the Hillview Local of the SGGA" passed.<sup>54</sup> Earlier that year she had been instrumental in the amalgamation of the SGGA and the Farmers' Union to form the United Farmers' of Canada (UFC), Saskatchewan Section.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> The Western Producer 11 December 1924, 22 January 1925.

<sup>54</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, from 24 January 1914 to 20 November 1926, meeting 20 November 1926. I would like to thank Betty McFarlane for drawing my attention to the recent acquisition of this Minute Book by the Harris Museum and for arranging for my use of the book.

<sup>55</sup> The SGGA local in Hillview was called the "Hillview GGA" from 1910 to April 1918, when it changed its name to the "Piche GGA." In June 1922 it went back to the

The minute books of the Local, which gives the names of those attending the meetings, indicates how successful the McNaughtons were at keeping the people of the district active in the Local, and how their initial organizational efforts paid off in later years. When there was a surge of activity, the number of Hillview people attending Grain Growers' meetings was higher than when the Local was in the doldrums. In addition to attendance, the number of meetings the Hillview Grain Growers had as it was getting started, during its surges of activity, and when it was in the doldrums, are good indicators of the rise and fall in the interest in the Local over the decades.<sup>56</sup> Overall the Hillview GGA had an average of one meeting per month but these meetings were not spread evenly over the 16 years in which it functioned. (See chart in Appendix # II "Meetings of the Hillview Grain Growers' Association.")<sup>57</sup> However, considering the fact that many locals went out of existence after not functioning for very long, a 16 year span shows

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name "Hillview GGA." Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 2 April 1918, 2 June 1922. For simplicity's sake I refer to it as the "Hillview GGA."

<sup>56</sup> The rise and fall of interest in the Hillview Local was similar to the rise and fall interest in the SGGA in general.

<sup>57</sup> See chart in Appendix # II, "The Meetings of the Hillview Grain Growers' Association," which lists members' meetings, executive meetings, and directors' meetings. The vast majority of the meetings were for all the members and their visitors. They also had numerous social and practical activities not included in this appendix.

that the McNaughtons were successful organizers.

The farm people of Hillview likely decided to organize in the wake of the farmers' "Seige on Ottawa" on the 15th and 16th of December 1910, in which 500 western farmers, 300 Ontario farmers, and a few from Quebec and the Maritimes presented the "Farmer's Platform" to Prime Minister Laurier and his cabinet.<sup>59</sup> There was a surge of activity by the Grain Growers in Hillview from the beginning in 1912, when Violet was well enough that the McNaughtons could throw themselves into organizational work, and when the recession of 1913-14 stimulated the interest of people in farm organizations.<sup>60</sup> This first surge of activity in Hillview lasted until the spring of 1916. After the huge harvest of 1915, the problems of grain growing during the remainder the Great War took an inordinate amount of time and effort.<sup>61</sup> The Local then went into the doldrums and did not pull out of them until the beginning of 1919, when angry farm people all across Canada confronted governments with their long-time grievances against the first National Policy, their

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<sup>59</sup> W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto: 1950), 21. C.F. Wilson, A Century of Canadian Grain (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978), 42. Knuttila, "That Man Partridge," 50-22. Carlson, Farm Voices, 6. Patton, Grain Grower's Co-operation in Western Canada, 387-388.

<sup>60</sup> John Herd Thompson, The Harvests of War - The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 60.

<sup>61</sup> Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, 26. Thompson, The Harvests of War, 59-72.

complaints about the way governments handled agriculture during the War, and their problems during the post-war depression. In the course of debating these issues they created the Progressive Party. From 1919 to the spring of 1923 the Hillview Local was a hive of Progressive activity, when the Canadian Council of Agriculture withdrew its support from the Progressives in December of 1922.<sup>62</sup> The Grain Growers in Hillview then threw themselves into the drive to establish the Wheat Pool, just before the Local drifted into a second, and last, period in the doldrums.<sup>63</sup>

Although Violet McNaughton was active in the Hillview Local from 1911 to 1926, it was during the early years, up to the spring of 1916, she was most active and attended most of the meetings. From 1919 to the end of 1926 she was only able to attend about one-third of the meetings of the Hillview Local. She attended the meetings when she was on the farm, but she was very busy at the national level from 1919 to the end of 1922. She was preoccupied as the leading farm woman in Canada, so John was the main leader of the branch's second surge of activity during these years. She was again very busy provincially from 1923 to 1926. Along with George Edwards and Alexander McPhail she was leading

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<sup>62</sup> Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, 26. Thompson, The Harvests of War, 59-72.

<sup>63</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book Hillview GGA, from 24 December, 1910 to 10 January 1914. Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, from 24 January 1914 to 20 November 1926.



the SGGGA and helping to shape agriculture provincially.<sup>64</sup>

The first meeting of the Hillview Local of the SGGGA, on the 24th of December 1910, took place eight days after the organized farmers of Canada presented the Prime Minister with their platform. Violet did not attend, perhaps because she was ill, but John was chosen as a director on the Local's first executive and as one of a "deputation" which was to ask Isaac Fiddler to be the permanent secretary.<sup>65</sup> The settlers wanted to involve "Mr. Fiddler," who was older and had more experience with co-operative groups than the other settlers.<sup>66</sup> He had been employed as the secretary of the Edgremont Co-operative Society in England for 25 years, he was a chartered accountant, and he knew the correct procedure for conducting meetings.<sup>67</sup> As his son-in-law John Tyson later put it, at Grain Growers' meetings when dealing with parliamentary procedure, Mr. Fiddler "may have been

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<sup>64</sup> McPhail became the first President of the Wheat Pool in 1924.

<sup>65</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 24 December 1910.

<sup>66</sup> In Hillview during McNaughton's day, and today, older people were referred to as "Mr." or "Mrs." as a mark in the rural areas of respect.

<sup>67</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 24 December 1910. Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage (Harris: Harris History Book Committee, 1982), 298.

short or blunt" at times, but he was invariably "right."<sup>68</sup> Mr. Fiddler's knowledge and skills were important because the McNaughtons and the other Grain Growers in Hillview valued democratic traditions and co-operative principles, and they wanted to learn more about them. Even though Mr. Fiddler had more experience in such endeavours and acted as the group's mentor, John was obviously the most enthusiastic of the men. However John's involvement in 1911 was somewhat sporadic, likely because he was busy at home while Violet was not well.<sup>69</sup> At their next meeting in January 1911 John was not present, but they read a paper he had prepared with "several suggestions for the satisfactory workings of such branches as this."<sup>70</sup>

The way the Hillview Local treated women as members, officers, committee members, or as delegates shows that the members saw women as grain growers, that is to say as farmers, in addition to seeing them as farm women and

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<sup>68</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 24 December 1910. Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage (Harris: Harris History Book Committee, 1982), 298. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), John Tyson to McNaughton, 6 July 1927.

<sup>69</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meetings on 7 January 1911, 21 January 1911, 4 February 1911, 15 February 1911, 4 March 1911, 18 March 1911, 1 April 1911, 8 July 1911.

<sup>70</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 7 January 1911.

helpmates. They gradually clarified this from 1911 to 1913.<sup>71</sup> Because the Grain Growers' 'locals' had more autonomy than the 'lodges' of the UFC after 1926, they could make decisions about gender roles at the local level. Although women were not official members of the Hillview branch at the beginning, Violet and other women attended meetings from January 1911 onward as "visitors." They were appointed to committees, albeit the refreshment or the musical committees, but still committees of the branch.<sup>72</sup> Later Violet said that she "joined unofficially in 1911," an apt description of what actually happened.<sup>73</sup>

In January 1912 Violet attended her first meeting after returning from the hospital.<sup>74</sup> The question of the women's involvement came to the forefront at their next meeting when Mr. Fiddler, who had the full respect of the group, proposed, and Violet's father William seconded, a motion

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<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of farm women as helpmates see Carol Fairbanks and Sara Brooks Sunberg, "Farm Women on the Canadian Prairie Frontier: The Helpmate Image," in Carol Fairbanks and Sara Brooks Sunberg, Farm Women on the Prairie Frontier - A Sourcebook for Canada and the United States (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1983), 71-90.

<sup>72</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 4 February 1911, 4 March 1911.

<sup>73</sup> The Western Producer 8 December 1955. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meetings on 21 January 1911, 4 February 1911, 4 March 1911.

<sup>74</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 27 January 1910.

that

the wife, mother, daughter or sister of a member be accepted as honorary members with all the privileges of voting, except when the rules or by-laws are under consideration or when the yeas and nays are called in which cases paid up members can voted [sic].<sup>75</sup>

The motion carried, even though at the provincial level women were not members. Far be it from this independent-minded little group to let mere provincial tradition stand in their way. Although the women had moved from being "visitors" to being "honourary members," their membership was still limited. However, as time went on, the women's role expanded and the branch did things to encourage their participation. Their concerns, such as Violet's concern about the hospital system, were included. The Grain Growers in Hillview also supported women's suffrage. In 1911, their first year as a Local, they had passed a suffrage motion. In December 1912 Mr. Fiddler moved, and Dell Jackson seconded, a motion in favour of women's suffrage which passed. In June 1912 they passed a motion that the women take charge of a meeting and that they present the papers at that meeting.<sup>76</sup> From the spring of 1913 onward the women participated as full members. Women were no longer only on the musical and the refreshment committees, they were

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<sup>75</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers' Association Minute Book, meeting on 10 February 1912.

<sup>76</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting 20 December 1912.

officers of the branch.<sup>77</sup> In November Violet was chosen as one of the Local's delegates to the District Convention of the SGGA in Rosetown.<sup>78</sup> Although not all of the men who belonged to the Hillview Grain Growers were pro-feminist, the group as a whole often took pro-feminist stances. In January 1915 they passed a resolution to be sent to the SGGA provincial convention favouring mandatory inclusion of women on school boards. The Local supported McNaughton's stands on numerous issues, including a midwives act.<sup>79</sup>

The way the Grain Growers in Hillview handled the position of secretary shows the evolution in their thinking about the role of women. In February 1912 John McNaughton took over as the secretary of the Local and wrote the minutes until December 1912, when Violet began to write the minutes. When she did the minutes, she would make a note in the minute book that the "above minutes [were] written by V. McNaughton."<sup>80</sup> John was still referred to as the secretary, even though Violet was recording the minutes most of the

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<sup>77</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 20 May 1913.

<sup>78</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 13 April 1912, 12 June 1912, 15 November 1913.

<sup>79</sup> Harris Museum, Minute Book Hillview GGA, meetings on 20 February 1915, 6 March 1915, 27 December 1915, 16 January 1916.

<sup>80</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 3 February 1912 and 20 December 1912.

time. In January 1913 Mr. Fiddler, the group's respected mentor, moved a motion of "thanks to secretary and Assis. Sec. Resolved that Mrs. McNaughton be appointed Assis. Sec. for coming year."<sup>81</sup> This was a preliminary step in acknowledging that the McNaughtons had really been acting as "joint secretaries." The Grain Growers openly acknowledged this in April 1913, when a committee of women made the arrangements for a special evening in honour of the McNaughtons.<sup>82</sup> Although there is no direct written evidence, it might be that the women on this committee pushed the men to acknowledge that the McNaughtons had indeed been the "joint secretaries," that is to say to acknowledge the equality of the McNaughtons' partnership in the Grain Growers.

An article in The Goose Lake Herald reported that the McNaughtons were surprised, and "both were somewhat taken aback" when, at the meeting on April 12th, the Hillview Grain Growers presented them with "a small but substantial chest of drawers" with a mirror, a "handsome" carriage robe, and a letter of appreciation to "the joint secretaries."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 4 January 1913.

<sup>82</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913.

<sup>83</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 17 April 1913. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913.

The letter of appreciation was published in full in the newspaper. At the meeting John Elder, the President, made a "pithy speech in which he dealt with the labor so cheerfully performed by the secretaries in carrying out the work of the association." Others made "short but pointed speeches" which confirmed what the President had said.<sup>34</sup> The McNaughtons then

each expressed their pleasure that their willing services had been so handsomely appreciated, the continued success of the work and the good results would be their remuneration and they hoped to do their part in furthering such.<sup>35</sup>

The letter of appreciation to the McNaughtons reveals not only a great deal about the way the other settlers regarded the Grain Growers and the McNaughtons' work for the Association, but also why they called the McNaughtons "the Pony Pair."<sup>36</sup> The letter to the McNaughtons noted that since their

appointment 16 months ago as Joint Secretaries of the Hillview Branch...you have devoted much time and labor in furthering the interests of the cause with gratifying results...During your term in office the membership of this Local has largely increased, much of the increase being due to your personal efforts in imbuing individual grain growers with a share of your own enthusiasm and thereby inducing them to become members of this great association of Grain Growers which in its corporate capacity can do, and is doing, good work

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<sup>34</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 17 April 1913.

<sup>35</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 17 April 1913. SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 12 April 1913.

<sup>36</sup> Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too,, 176.

in looking after the interests of its members, in particular, and the farming community in general.<sup>87</sup>

The emphasis on equality in the McNaughtons' partnership was evident not simply in their title as "joint secretaries" but also because they both spoke in response to the "handsome robe and dresser." John did not speak for both of them, as was often the custom when a gift was given to a couple. The publication of the letter and their dual response in the local paper was in effect announcing this equal partnership to its readers in the Goose Lake country.

The letter, written in the name of 29 male and 12 female members whose names were listed at the bottom, then continued using the language of Christians who were proselytizing. It focused on the "missionary efforts" that they had been inspired to pursue by the McNaughtons.

It is a source of much gratification to us that this Local has been, through the enthusiasm of its members, enabled to propound and propagate a knowledge of its principles, objects, and desires amongst our neighbours and we rejoice in the fact that we have, piloted by our energetic officials, and by our missionary efforts, been the means of establishing at least four branches in our neighbourhood, to wit: the "Glen Eagle," "Valley Centre," "Bear Hills," and "Alert," all of which from reports received are in a thoroughly healthy state and full of fight for the right.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. The new branches comprised four districts in a circle around Hillview. These branches were in the Alert district to the north of Hillview, in the Bear Hills district to the northeast, Glen Eagle to the south, and in



The letter closed with personal wishes that reflect the respect, concern, and affection that their family, friends, and neighbours in the Hillview Local had for the McNaughtons. In giving them the gifts they hoped that the McNaughtons would "derive"

comfort and pleasure from their use and that you will be spared many years to continue your work for the amelioration of the lot of the people of which the farming community form such a large percentage. We trust that this term as well as future terms of office will show similar propaganda work and equally substantial results. With all good wishes for your future prosperity and long life and happiness, we subscribe ourselves - Sincerely yours...."

By honouring the McNaughtons in this way and in telling them they hoped they would be "spared many years" to continue their "work for the amelioration of the lot of the people" the settlers were tactfully and lovingly acknowledging the danger which Violet had faced less than two years before.

By focusing on the McNaughtons' partnership, as they did organizational work together in Hillview, it is possible to see an organizational strategy that Violet was to use in her subsequent work in the farm women's movement. John was the first of a series of people in the farm movement with whom Violet worked "for the amelioration of the lot of the people."<sup>30</sup> She formed personal alliances with key

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the hamlet of Valley Centre to the southwest.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

individuals, such as John, and worked with them for the sake of the movement. Her later working partnership with Zoa Haight, when they were organizing the WGG and campaigning for suffrage, was effective and similar in many ways to her partnership with John in the Hillview Grain Growers.<sup>91</sup>

Violet, who worked well as part of a co-operative team dedicated to a cause, was particularly effective when she could work with a confident partner like John. In other words, her early work with John in this "fight for the right" was to set a pattern for later working partnerships.<sup>92</sup>

Violet's co-operative method of working with co-workers is one of the hallmarks of her integrative agrarian feminist ideology.<sup>93</sup> She formed alliances with individuals and groups, such as the Hillview Grain Growers, based on integrative principles they all shared. Like Violet, John and her subsequent working partners were thoroughly dedicated to their mutual cause. They were intelligent and they were more openly assertive than she was. Violet did not mind arguing forcefully for a principle in which she

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<sup>91</sup> She was later to form similar partnerships with Annie Hollis, Irene Parlby, Alexander McPhail, Harris Turner, Pat Waldron, and Rose Ducie.

<sup>92</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913.

<sup>93</sup> Angela Miles, Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s-1990s (New York: Routledge, 1996).

believed, but she was so tactful that she was hesitant to say anything negative about anyone and even more hesitant about putting personal criticism down on paper. Only when she was under extreme pressure would she make a negative statement about another person, and even then it was often English understatement raised to a fine art. Usually at the top of the few letters in which she was critical of an individual she wrote "CONFIDENTIAL."<sup>94</sup> She therefore gained a reputation for not indulging in gossip.<sup>95</sup> Her mildness and her tact were strengths, but they could also be weaknesses. She made up for this by choosing openly assertive partners, who had well developed critical faculties which she valued and made use of in their work. She had exceptional executive skills, but she was cautious. So when she worked with an enthusiastic partner, like John, she was able to overcome her caution.<sup>96</sup> John and her subsequent working partners often relied on her caution to reign in their sometimes overly enthusiastic thrust and on her executive ability to structure the activities they

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<sup>94</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, McNaughton to Mary McCallam, 21 March 1919; SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D53, McNaughton to Dorise Nielsen, 24 October 1943.

<sup>95</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(5), Ida McNeal to McNaughton, 20 April 1921.

<sup>96</sup> For excellent examples of Violet's executive abilities see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Ida McNeal, 12 August 1919; McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Flatt, 13 October 1919; McNaughton to M.L. Burbank, 25 February 1920.

undertook because of the integrative principles they shared. Because of her intelligence, skills, integrity, dedication, and her consideration of others she inspired respect. John and her subsequent partners relied on the respect that others had for her to bring respectability to their mutual undertaking. With John, and, with her subsequent working partners, she formed deeply satisfying, long-lasting friendships that were grounded in their mutual dedication to their cause.

The program of the Hillview Grain Growers shows how "substantial results" were produced by the McNaughtons' "propaganda work," a term that McNaughton and her contemporaries used respectfully meaning what we now refer to as publicity. The Local program also shows what the other Grain Growers in Hillview accomplished when "piloted" by their two "energetic officials." To put this in modern terms, it shows the impact of the McNaughtons' leadership skills.<sup>97</sup> John was the working partner in the McNaughton pair, who showed the initial enthusiasm for the Grain Growers. He was not only enthusiastic, he had a wit that tickled Violet and an infectious imagination that evoked possibilities, some of them feasible.

Isaac Fiddler, the mentor of Hillview Grain Growers,

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<sup>97</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913. The term "propaganda" was discredited by the rise of dictatorships in Europe and the impact of the mass media later in the twentieth century.

presented a paper providing the background of old country co-operatives that complemented Violet's own knowledge of co-operatives in Kent. Hearing an expert apply it to the prairies was very helpful to her and to the other Grain Growers in Hillview early in 1913. The "most dynamic" of the old country co-operatives were not in Europe, but in Britain. Canadian co-operatives in the nineteenth century were not successful in part because Canadians did not know much about co-operative experiments elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> The Hillview Grain Growers were fortunate to have an expert in their midst, and they knew it. Mr. Fiddler's "exhaustive" first paper was "Co-operation as practised in England."

Having been intimately connected with several large co-operative branches in the Old Country [he] was thoroughly qualified to speak with great interest. An animated discussion followed and suggestions were made for this Local to study up the question in a practical way.<sup>99</sup>

Although the Grain Growers liked to "study up" a "question" theoretically and historically, they were practical farm people, and therefore they wanted to be able to apply the co-operative theory they had heard that night to their own situation. So two months later Mr. Fiddler gave his second paper "Co-operation as adapted to the prairie." When he had finished his paper, it "was fully discussed and

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<sup>98</sup> Ian MacPherson, Each for All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1979), 4-9.

<sup>99</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 11 January 1913.

Mr. Fiddler expressed himself as well pleased with the discussion his paper had called forth."<sup>100</sup> This sound training in co-operative principles can be seen repeatedly in the way McNaughton worked as an agrarian feminist.

Led by the McNaughtons, the Hillview Grain Growers had numerous other activities, discussions, "papers and addresses." At the end of 1913, they reported in The Goose Lake Herald that "great interest was evinced especially when the younger members made their debut."<sup>101</sup> The Hillview Local had a small pamphlet published and distributed publicizing the program for 1914. By then Violet was absorbed in the Hillview Women Grain Growers, and formation of the provincial Woman Grain Growers so she was the "Honourary Treasurer" and John was the "Honourary Secretary."<sup>102</sup> John was the secretary or the secretary-treasurer until 1918, but at times Violet did the minutes and in 1918 John became the Vice President.<sup>103</sup>

The most exciting evening in 1914 seems to have been a "hotly contested debate" between the Grain Growers in Hillview and Glen Eagle in which the McNaughtons both

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 18 December 1913.

<sup>102</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), pamphlet of the Hillview Branch of the SGGG, 1914. The title "honourary" indicated that they were not paid for their services.

<sup>103</sup> Harris Museum, Minute Book of the Hillview GGA, meetings from 24 January 1918 to 6 April 1918.

participated.<sup>104</sup> The debate illustrates not only the way in which the Grain Growers welcomed the participation of women, but also how lively and well informed the McNaughtons and the other Grain Growers were. "Home Rule" for Ireland was one of the hotly debated international questions of the day, in which imperialists opposed Ireland being given autonomy from Britain.<sup>105</sup> The Grain Growers capitalized on the interest in the Irish question and linked the term "Home Rule" to western Canadian discontent with domination by the East, debating whether or not they should have "Home Rule for the West." The Glen Eagle team argued that the West should have Home Rule, citing problems with the Canadian tariff, the "non-control of natural resources" by the prairie provinces and high freight rates to support their argument. They also gave "cogent reasons for a more responsible Provincial Administration."

The McNaughtons and the rest of the Hillview team were "kept well on the defensive, the attack being sharp and sustained." The Grain Growers listened "with keen interest" as James Elder led off for Hillview. The Hillview arguments are a clear indication that, like E.A. Partridge and the radicals in the SGGa, these Grain Growers were in sympathy with the working class and were not impressed with

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<sup>104</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers Annual Report for 1914.

<sup>105</sup> R.K. Webb, Modern England (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 477-479.

provincial Liberals, such as W.R. Motherwell. Elder argued that there was a "need for greater co-operation between the workers, instead of increasing differences between the East and the West." But "the strongest argument for the defense was that, until we are capable of controlling our Provincial Administration, it would be unwise to add to our responsibilities as a province." The Goose Lake Herald reported that, "to the surprise of the majority" of those attending the debate, the Hillview team won. Defending federalism was not popular, so the McNaughtons and the other member of the Hillview team had fought an up-hill battle, but in the end the judges declared them the winners.<sup>106</sup> The members of the Hillview Local continued to love debating. In March 1916 they had great fun during a debate in which John good naturedly argued the difficult affirmative position that "the farmer is not deserving of better results for his labor."<sup>107</sup>

The political component of the Hillview program also indicates their radical position. In 1914 they sent a resolution to the provincial Convention of the SGA that "members of the Provincial Legislature be barred from holding office in the GGA." This clearly was an effort to

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<sup>106</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting 10 January 1914. The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 15 January 1914.

<sup>107</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 4 March 1916.



diminish the power of the conservatives in the SGGA, such as Motherwell. They also showed that they identified with the working class when they sent a resolution that the SGGA go "on record as being in sympathy with other organized branches of the producing [classes] as represented in the Trades and Labor Councils."<sup>108</sup>

In 1913 the Grain Growers in Hillview read a letter from Edward Partridge, the radical prophet, and supported his Sintaluta Local.<sup>109</sup> The resolutions they passed, to go to the provincial convention early in 1913 indicate some of their other political and economic concerns. "After a spirited discussion," they "endorsed" resolutions: to attempt putting a stop to the tipping of railway officials; to push Prime Minister Borden to "implement his pledges" about a Hudson's Bay Railway; to call for government using initiative, referendum, and recall; to oppose freight rate discrimination; to support provision of more railway cars and an internal storage elevator; to call for provincial hail insurance and for municipal seed grain purchase provisions; to make the Grain Growers newspaper non-partisan; to make provision for securing money at a lower interest rate; to enable vote by proxy in SGGA; and to

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 8 March 1913. Unfortunately the minutes give no more information about the letter.

compel the railways to accept smaller shipping units.<sup>110</sup> These positions became basic features of Violet's subsequent work in the farm movement.

The McNaughtons worked so hard that by the end of 1914 the Hillview Grain Growers had a "grand total" of 27 male members and 18 female members.<sup>111</sup> They were so enthusiastic about Grain Growerism that they became missionaries, spreading the word beyond their own district.<sup>112</sup> In May 1913 an article appeared in The Grain Growers' Guide titled "How to make a Local Association," based on the Hillview Grain Growers model.<sup>113</sup> In February 1913, when the McNaughtons were organizing the Glen Eagle branch, The Goose Lake Herald reported that the new Local would "be a great boon to farmers living west and south of the district, who find [the] Hillview district to be too far distant to attend meetings."<sup>114</sup>

Having succeeded, by their "missionary efforts," in organizing other new locals of the SGGA, the McNaughtons and the other members of the Hillview Grain Growers continued to

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<sup>110</sup> SAB, A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 3 February 1912.

<sup>111</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers Annual Report for 1914.

<sup>112</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913.

<sup>113</sup> The Grain Growers Guide 14 May 1913.

<sup>114</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 27 February 1913.

promote co-operation between locals.<sup>115</sup> One such event was reported in The Goose Lake Herald in February 1914 when a "contingent" of Hillview Grain Growers "travelled through bad weather" to attend a social gathering organized by the Glen Eagle Grain Growers.<sup>116</sup>

When many Canadians were intolerant of the so-called "enemy aliens," the Hillview Local was open-minded toward European immigrants. In 1917 John was to organize a new Local among the European immigrants who lived close to Valley Centre, about 20 miles from Hillview.<sup>117</sup> At a meeting of the Hillview Local he described "an organizational meeting where he had assisted." He said that the "Local which met in the Bohemian Hall may be termed an international as it was composed of Russian Jews, Germans, Bohemians, and Canadians." The members of the Hillview Local asked him to "write to congratulate [the] new Local."<sup>118</sup>

In 1913 Violet began studying the question of the work of farm women, a topic that was to interest her for the rest

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<sup>115</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Members of the Hillview Grain Growers to Mr. and Mrs. John McNaughton, 12 April 1913. Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 21 March 1914, 13 June 1914, 20 March 1915, 4 March 1916, 6 April 1917.

<sup>116</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 12 February 1914.

<sup>117</sup> Harris Heritage and Homage, 90-93. Interviews with George Tosh, 26 May 1996, 19 June 1996. Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 23 March 1917, 28 January 1921.

<sup>118</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 23 March 1917.

of her life. When she was passionate about a topic, it was often because she had a personal interest in it. In 1913 she was still doing the "daily toil" of domestic work in a cramped little sod house.<sup>119</sup> Although she was still not well enough to do heavy physical work, and would not be for another three years, she was well enough to be active in community work, so work was very much on her mind. Part of her extraordinary dedication to community work seems to have been because she felt it compensated for the heavy work she could not do on the farm.

In order to understand Violet's approach to the farm women's movement at a local level, and the gradual evolution of her agrarian feminist ideology, it is helpful to look at the way in which she analyzed the work of farm women in "The Prairie Woman," the paper that she presented to the Hillview Grain Growers in 1913. She said that the work of farm women was "the subject" she was "trying to study" at that time, and "therefore I ask your kind attention while I speak and your criticism after, for I find the subject a perplexing one."<sup>120</sup> Concerned with the work of farm women "in all its phases," she said that

women's work on the prairie may be divided into two classes. Productive and unproductive labor. Productive labor is that which contributes towards the maintenance of the home: butter-making,

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<sup>119</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," [1913] 2.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

poultry-rearing, gardening and often pig raising is mainly left to her. Unproductive labor is the daily toil, the housework, baking, washing, mending, cooking all perhaps in one room with unbearable heat in summer. <sup>121</sup>

In addition to this, she said, farm women "perhaps" had "wheat to guard against intruding cattle or help to give in the hayfield when labor runs short and added to this the care of one or more babies." She argued that the work of a farm woman should not be limited to work in the home and on the farm, that she should not be "just a domestic machine for keeping the wheels of life going in its narrow sense." She believed that a man who says that "a woman's place is in the home" seems to be placing

his wife on a lower place than himself. I have sometimes asked a man, in the slack season, why his wife does not come out instead for once & he will say "Oh! I never mind the children." This and other remarks give me the impression he has unconsciously placed his wife on a level with his brood mare. <sup>122</sup>

Women should, she argued, also be involved in "community life," bringing their children to meetings if necessary. <sup>123</sup>

Violet's categorization of the work of farm women is similar to the three categories I have found useful in analyzing their work in the past and will continue to use in

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

this study.<sup>124</sup> Farm women did productive, reproductive, and unpaid community work.<sup>125</sup> Marxist and neo-marxist theorists developed the categories of 'productive' and 'reproductive' work.<sup>126</sup> To these two categories I add the category of 'unpaid community work.'<sup>127</sup>

I use 'productive work' to describe work that women do

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<sup>124</sup> For further analysis of these three categories of work by Saskatchewan women see Georgina M. Taylor, Chapter One, "Traditional Roles of Women," in "Equals and Partners? An Examination of How Saskatchewan Women Reconciled Their Political Activities for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation with Traditional Roles for Women," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1983, 8-37.

<sup>125</sup> Other Canadian historians have also looked at women's reproductive, productive and unpaid community work. For example in The New Day Recalled, Strong Boag has chapters on "Working for Pay," "Keeping House," and a chapter in which she looks at the work of women in the community. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled - Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), 41-80, 113-144, 189-208.

<sup>126</sup> The conceptual framework developed for studying the work of women by four Marxist and neo-marxist theorists is particularly helpful. Frederick Engels, August Bebel, Simone De Beauvoir, and Juliet Mitchell contributed to the development of two categories of women's work, the productive and reproductive. See Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State Under Socialism (1884; reprint New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972); August Bebel, Women Under Socialism (1904 reprint; New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972); Simone D Beauvoir, The Second Sex (1952 reprint; New York: Random House, Inc., 1974); Juliet Mitchell, "Four Structures in a Complex Unity," Liberating Women's History, ed., Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 385-399.

<sup>127</sup> Margrit Eichler argues that the "presence or absence of pay is just one way of categorizing work. Perhaps a more meaningful way of categorizing work would be in terms of its social necessity or lack of necessity, or perhaps by its degree of social utility." Margrit Eichler, The Double Standard (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 121.

for wages, profit or exchange or in raising products for the use of their families. Violet also referred to this category of work as "productive work." In this category I include any work that women do which is part of the productive work of the farm such as field work to produce grain. Two of the tasks that Violet mentions, haying and keeping cattle out of the wheat, are in this category. I use the term 'reproductive work' to describe the work women did in caring for their own needs and the needs of their families, that is to say the work done to reproduce the family. Violet used the term "unproductive work" to describe this category of work. In this category I include the care of infants, that Violet mentioned. Violet, who was just beginning to think about the topic in a systematic way in 1913, gave several arguments to justify the involvement of farm women in unpaid community work. First, she argued that in order to be a good mother a farm woman needed to be involved in the community where she could gain "progressive knowledge" to pass on to her children. Second, by being involved in community groups such as the Grain Growers, if a woman was widowed and had to run the farm on her own, she would be better equipped to see that her children would get a "square deal." Third, she argued that women needed to organize, as the men were organized, to find "a more profitable market" for their produce.<sup>126</sup> To illustrate this

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<sup>126</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 3-5.

she gave "the history of 1 pound of butter." First, she said, a farm woman makes the butter, "under trying conditions," that sells at the local store for

25c per lb., when [the] Saskatoon market says 35c cash. In return for said butter, instead of 25c cash she receives between 15c & 20c on her deal. Is it not enough to make any thinking butter-maker organize to alter these conditions. <sup>129</sup>

Violet later included the need for leisure in any discussion of the work of farm women.

On 19th March 1913 Violet McNaughton and Mabel Wilson called a meeting in the school house "for the purpose of organizing a women's auxiliary to [the] local GGA." They used the term "women's auxiliary" in part because McNaughton was still at the initial stage of developing her agrarian feminist ideology and her ideas about the Women Grain Growers. Two minute books for this group have been preserved, and at the top of each there is the name of the group in McNaughton's handwriting. The first book begins with their initial meeting on the 19th of March 1913. On it she wrote "Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA" and at the top of the second one, beginning with their meeting on the 15th of April 1916, she wrote "Hillview W.G.G.A." referring to the Women Grain Growers' Association.<sup>130</sup>

The Hillview group had changed its name by February of

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<sup>129</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 5-6.

<sup>130</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA Minute Book, meeting on 19 March 1913; Hillview WGGGA Minute Book, meeting 15 April 1916.



1915.<sup>131</sup> The two different names are an indication of McNaughton's evolving agrarian feminist ideology and her growing sophistication about how best to organize farm women. In 1913, when she was just beginning to grapple with the question, she perceived of the women's group in Hillview as assisting the general Grain Growers' local and being concerned with the women's needs. The Hillview Grain Growers eagerly took up the idea of an Auxiliary, believing that it had "every prospect of a long and useful career."<sup>132</sup> This likely encouraged her to think in terms of an auxiliary rather than a more autonomous group.<sup>133</sup> Later she came to believe it was best if the women were full members of both the Grain Growers and also the WGG, which was affiliated with the Grain Growers but without the implications of subordination that the term 'auxiliary' implies. In 1916 she believed that

nearly all organizations have women's auxiliaries tacked on to them, but the male mind regards them more as useful appendages, which pay for the privilege of limited association by helping to replenish treasuries, over which they have no control, and undertaking various other forms of work, most of which contain elements of drudgery-

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<sup>131</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 20 February 1915.

<sup>132</sup> The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 18 December 1913.

<sup>133</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 22 March 1913, 12 April 1913, 21 June 1913, 11 October 1913. The Goose Lake Herald, Harris, 17 July 1913, 14 August 1913.

But it's the women's own fault! <sup>134</sup>

Back in July of 1913, a few months after the first women's meeting in Hillview, Violet outlined her ideas about "Forming a Women's Auxiliary," in an article in The Grain Growers Guide. The article, written in the form of advice to a farm woman who wanted to improve her community, reveals a great deal about what Violet thought in the summer of 1913 about organizing farm women's groups.<sup>135</sup> She used the personal approach, speaking from one farm woman to another. This was a very effective way of reaching isolated farm women, who often yearned for a visit with another woman, a technique she was to use in her columns in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm in 1916 and 1917 and later in The Western Producer.

Her advice to the farm woman reading the 1913 column was to begin by accompanying her "husband, father, or brother" to the Grain Growers' local in her district and to join the local because the Grain Growers' Association was "a splendid medium" for making the world a better place. She assured the farm woman that "the Association invites you" to join "if the local does not," apparently to help the women who were in areas where the local male Grain Growers were

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<sup>134</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 10 June 1916.

<sup>135</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 23 July 1913.

not as open-minded as the men in the Hillview Local.<sup>136</sup>

Violet then went on to advise the farm woman to read the article "A Woman's Club in the Making" in the May 21st issue of 'The Guide' and then to "get a few neighbours to help you form an auxiliary." To begin with it was important to "see that each woman in the district gets an invitation to be present at the first meeting of the Auxiliary." She suggested that if, after attending the first meeting, "it does not please you attend the next and give your objections." She then went on to give ideas about how to plan meetings. They include choosing "topics the majority can discuss," studying and using parliamentary rules, discussing articles published in 'The Guide' and other "public questions," sending in resolutions and planning to attend the next "Women's Convention," having a topic and a speaker prepared for each meeting, and suppressing "pettiness. When the meetings become a tea and dress competition it is time to disorganize." She also suggested that the Auxiliary establish "buying and selling-rings" and work to improve their local school and to get a library started in their district.<sup>137</sup> McNaughton made these suggestions because they used them in Hillview and they worked or she planned to use them and was fairly sure they

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<sup>136</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 23 July 1913.

<sup>137</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 23 July 1913.

would work.<sup>138</sup> Women in other districts liked the idea of a women's group and contacted McNaughton. Lula Wilson, for example, wrote to ask if some of the women from Valley Centre could attend a meeting of the Hillview group to learn more about her method of conducting meetings.<sup>139</sup>

At their first meeting the women in Hillview chose Mabel Wilson as their President. Unfortunately later in 1913 Wilson's husband was "run over by a car on a muddy hill" and was an invalid until he died in 1926, so Mabel had to take over the farm operation. As a result, Wilson did not hold office after that but she did attend both the Hillview Grain Growers' and the WGG meetings.<sup>140</sup> Violet was chosen as the WGG secretary, a position she often was to take, in part because she and John had learned how to be the leaders of a group through the work they did as the joint secretaries of the Hillview Grain Growers. Most of the women who attended

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<sup>138</sup> For details about how the women in Hillview did the things McNaughton suggested see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA Minute Book and the Hillview WGG Minute Book for details about these activities.

<sup>139</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(3), Lula Wilson to McNaughton, 4 April 1912. This letter was not written in 1912 although it is dated 1912. It was likely written in 1913 or 1914 rather than 1912.

<sup>140</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Women's Auxiliary GGA, meeting on 18 October 1913; R-E 2991, manuscript, Mabel Wilson Hawthorne, "My Reminiscence of Fifty Years of Prairie Life," 12, 17. The Goose Lake Herald 8 April 1926, 29 April 1926. Harris Heritage and Homage, 625. Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings from 1914 to 1926.

the first meeting either took an office or agreed to be a Director of the group.<sup>141</sup>

Initially the thrust of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary was two-fold, to support the general Grain Growers local and to aid the farm women in their reproductive, productive, and community work. There was so much focus on work that the group functioned in part as a farm women's union, going as far as to call a strike. The women prepared tea and sometimes lunches for their own meetings and for the Grain Growers meetings in the school house. In October 1913 they decided they wanted a cupboard in the school to hold their "crockery" and other equipment and supplies for making tea. If they were doing their part by making the tea, then the men had to do their part by building a cupboard. They passed a resolution that McNaughton, as the Secretary, approach the school trustees asking their permission and co-operation in building a cupboard. They also resolved "that until [the] cupboard was forthcoming a tea strike be proclaimed." McNaughton highlighted the words by underlining them in the minute book.<sup>142</sup>

This tea strike was serious, and McNaughton was dead serious when she pushed farm women to negotiate the

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<sup>141</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary, meeting on 19 March 1913.

<sup>142</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Grain Growers, Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meeting on 18 October 1913.

conditions of their work. In 1915 another example of the women in the Hillview WGG naming the terms of their work occurred when the Local of the SGGGA asked them to provide regular afternoon lunches at their meeting. The WGG refused, saying the women would provide lunches only on special occasions.<sup>143</sup> The settlers in Hillview not only knew that Violet was serious about farm women and their work, but also that she had the support of John, her brother Dell, John Tyson, Isaac Fiddler and other pro-feminist men who belonged to the Hillview Grain Growers.<sup>144</sup> By 1913 she had won their respect through her work in, and her dedication to, the Grain Growers.

However Violet was not popular with all the men in the Grain Growers, or with some of the other men in Hillview. Ivy Page, the daughter of Alice and Richard Clayton, recalled that, when Violet first came to Hillview, Richard liked her. When Violet began to organize the women, though, he changed his mind, despite the fact that he belonged to the Hillview GGA.<sup>145</sup> Richard had a bachelor friend called

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<sup>143</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meetings on 23 May 1913, 21 December 1914, 2 January 1915.

<sup>144</sup> For a study of pro-feminist men see Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller, Against the Tide - Pro-Feminist Men in the United States 1776-1990 (Boston Press, 1992).

<sup>145</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 23 May 1913, 6 February 1920, 27 March 1920, 28 January 1921. Harris Museum, Receipt Book, Piche Grain Growers Association.

Alec Semple, who had been a teacher and had studied law in Kansas. Alec was homesteading near Harris when Alice Clayton first arrived on the homestead. On Alice's first night in Hillview she had been terribly frightened when Alec's 20 mules had surrounded the Clayton shack, "braying and heehawing" in the night. Alec loved to argue politics and make fun of Violet. Alec, who hated women, and Richard, who got along well with women but disliked feminism, both disagreed adamantly with Violet's politics.<sup>146</sup> This made it very difficult for Alice Clayton, who was "of a retiring nature." Ivy recalled that Alice "approved of Mrs. McNaughton, especially when she started the Women Grain Growers."<sup>147</sup>

It was particularly difficult for Alice to attend meetings of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary. One time when Alice's sister, Beatrice Newson, was visiting from Ontario the two sisters went to the school house to hear Violet speak. They were "in favour of everything she said," but unfortunately they had taken "a bronco called Ned" and when he balked they had to walk home. At times Alice went to the women's meeting, in spite of her husband's objections.<sup>148</sup> However the minute books show that, although she is listed

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<sup>146</sup> I would like to thank Mary and Betty McFarlane for clarifying the difference between Alec Semple and Richard Clayton's attitudes toward women and feminists.

<sup>147</sup> Interviews with Ivy Page 20 August 1989 and 21 July 1994. Harris Heritage and Homage, 260-262, 536.

<sup>148</sup> Interviews with Ivy Page 20 August 1989 and 21 July 1994.

as a paid up member, she only managed to attend three meetings between March 1913 and November 1916.<sup>149</sup> In the face of the adamant anti-feminist opposition of her husband and his woman-hating friend, even paying her membership and attending a few meetings was a courageous stand on Alice's part.

Undoubtedly, anti-feminists like Richard Clayton and Alec Semple would not have liked McNaughton's early rhetoric. They would likely have taken offence at her saying that, when a woman did not attend meetings because her husband would not mind the children, he was "unconsciously" placing his wife on same level as "his brood mare."<sup>150</sup> Anti-feminists saw feminists as being unnatural and gender roles as being natural rather than historically constructed. In addition to this, as Michael Kimmel points out in his study of pro-feminist men in the United States,

women's challenges to existing gender arrangements promoted a variety of reactions among American men. But these reactions were not just responses to the women's demands for equal rights; they were also responses to both perceived and real threats to men's sense that their traditional notion of masculinity was being threatened.<sup>151</sup>

If Violet was going to be successful in organizing farm

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<sup>149</sup> These are the years for which the minute books have been preserved. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA and Minute Book of the Hillview WGA.

<sup>150</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 3.

<sup>151</sup> Kimmel, "Introduction" to Kimmel and Mosmiller, Against the Tide.



women, who were dependent on their husbands because the men generally owned the farms and all the other assets, she soon realized she was going to have to take the threat she posed to anti-feminist men seriously.

In 1913 McNaughton was an enthusiastic new activist and she had not, as yet, learned to be the "prudent revolutionary" that she became shortly thereafter. Brian Harrison argues that "feminist ambitions for social change are revolutionary--in some ways more so than the ambitions of many class warriors." He also argues that "moderate tactics by no means indicate lukewarm commitment."<sup>152</sup> Violet's brood mare metaphor was an early rhetorical flourish, and the tea strike was an early tactic, when she was in her first enthusiastic burst of organizational fervour. She was excited about organizing farm women.

Violet soon learned not to hand ammunition to anti-feminists, like Alec Semple and Richard Clayton, and perhaps make it more difficult for supportive women like Alice to attend meetings. She learned to moderate her rhetoric and her tactics. This did not mean her feminist commitment was lukewarm, nor did it mean her ideas were any less radical than they had been before; it simply meant she became one of the many "prudent revolutionaries" who had learned some hard

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<sup>152</sup> Brian Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries - Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1, 19.

lessons in the women's movement.<sup>153</sup> Activists who knew her later, such as Sophia Dixon, found that she was "more radical than she let on." She did not "advertise" her radicalism.<sup>154</sup> As Randi Warne argues, in her book about Nellie McClung, in order to understand the rhetoric and tactics of feminists like McClung and McNaughton, we have to understand the strong opposition they faced.<sup>155</sup>

One of the things that was very difficult for farm women, especially those with young children, was that after they had made the long trip into town they had often had no warm place to rest and take care of their children. Therefore women in the farm women's movement established rest rooms in rural towns. The women in the Hillview WGG worked to establish a rest room in Harris, but they had problems with finding a suitable place as well as with collecting money to set it up.<sup>156</sup> McNaughton later told a friend and co-worker on the provincial executive of the WGG that the women in the Hillview WGG were forced to swallow their pride over the restroom "rather than have the world say women always cause trouble." In the end, the incident

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<sup>153</sup> Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries, 19.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with Sophia Dixon, 1 March 1993.

<sup>155</sup> Randi R. Warne, Literature as Pulpit - The Christian Society Activism of Nellie L. McClung, vol. 2 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1993), 85-135.

<sup>156</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 15 April 1916, 13 May 1916, 10 June 1916.

taught McNaughton another hard but valuable lesson, that "it is a great mistake to maintain friction, if common sense can prevent [it]."<sup>157</sup>

Not all of the lessons McNaughton learned while organizing the women in Hillview were negative. She had always been inclined toward inclusion rather than exclusion, and the experience in the Hillview women's group proved the wisdom of this inclination. At their first meeting in March 1914 the women assumed, with no discussion, that women who were married to farmers could belong to the group. They resolved that the daughters of their members "over sixteen years of age, be made honourary members, with [the] privilege to take part in meetings." By the next meeting they had thought more about who should be included in their membership, and they resolved "that teachers from Hillview, Glen Eagle & Ailsa Craig be invited to become honourary members of the Women's Auxiliary on the same terms as member's daughters."<sup>158</sup> In other words they were opening their membership to virtually all the females in the district over sixteen. Having the membership open to women teachers paid off when Lydia Gruchy, who was teaching at the Hillview School in 1915, became the secretary of the group.

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<sup>157</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Ida McNeal, 12 August 1919.

<sup>158</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 19 March 1913, 17 March 1913.

Later the first woman to be ordained in Canada, she also attended a meeting of the Hillview Grain Growers.<sup>159</sup>

In the Hillview Grain Growers the only women who felt confident enough to present papers or make presentations with men present were Mabel Wilson, Kate Kyle, and McNaughton. In the Women's Auxiliary McNaughton made sure they discussed topics that most of the women felt comfortable discussing.<sup>160</sup> In the Auxiliary, with only women present, several of the women felt confident enough to lead discussions, make presentations, or give demonstrations on poultry raising, "devices for labor, time and money saving," cake and pudding recipes, "doctors on the prairies," co-operation between home and school, travels in other lands, and "our duties as voters."<sup>161</sup>

The most successful practical innovation of the Hillview Auxiliary was a co-operative ordering ring that the women organized. Violet, who was the secretary of the co-operative ring, made arrangements with the Eaton's mail

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<sup>159</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 11 June 1913, 7 April 1915, 29 May 1915, 19 June 1915. Harris Museum, Hillview GGA Minute Book, meeting on 20 March 1915. Mary Hallett, "Nellie McClung and the Fight for the Ordination of Women in the United Church of Canada," Atlantis 4(2) (Spring 1979): 14-15.

<sup>160</sup> The Grain Growers Guide 23 July 1913.

<sup>161</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 19 March 1913, 8 July 1915, 9 August 1913, 18 July 1914, 5 August 1914, 19 June 1915. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), the Minute Book of the Hillview WGGGA, 15 April 1916.

order department in Winnipeg to send grocery catalogues to each woman in the ring. Each woman, or bachelor, turned in an order to McNaughton and she sent all the orders in together. The members of the ring then took turns going to the CNR station in Harris to pick up the order, bringing it back to Hillview for distribution, and then turning over the shipping bills to McNaughton, so she could allot the right amount to each person who had placed an order.<sup>162</sup>

By 1916 McNaughton had sorted out her ideas about women's auxiliaries.<sup>163</sup> She did not want either the Hillview Women Grain Growers or the provincial WGG to be women's auxiliaries. The Hillview WGG was less like an auxiliary than it had been in the beginning and more like the provincial WGG. It was concerned with such issues as suffrage, medical aid, districts nurses, the Harris restroom, the library, a Christmas celebration for the

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<sup>162</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 11 June 1913, 8 July 1915, 9 August 1913, 18 October 1913, 1 November 1913, 22 November 1913, 24 January 1914, 20 June 1914; Hillview WGG Minute Book, meeting on 15 April 1916; Eaton's advertisement on the pamphlet of the Hillview Branch of the SGG, 1914; Notes by McNaughton on an envelope and a card, n.d. but likely the 1950s. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(2), Record book of the Co-operative Ring of the Hillview WGG, 1 August 1913 to the 24 February 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(3), M. I. Long of Eaton's to McNaughton, 3 November 1913.

<sup>163</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers, A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 10 June 1916.

children, the school house and the maternity grant.<sup>164</sup> At their first meeting in 1913 there were ten women present. A year or two later the group had 19 full members, three honorary members, and two affiliate members. Violet continued to belong to the Hillview WGGGA, but she changed offices. She was the secretary from the 19th of March 1913 to 7th of April 1915 and she was chosen as the president on the 15th of April 1916.<sup>165</sup> She likely agreed to this in 1916 because the secretary did the bulk of the monthly work involved in keeping the group going, and she would therefore be free to concentrate on the provincial WGG while still being involved at the local level.

In short, between the summer of 1911 and the end of 1913, when Violet began to focus most of her energy on the provincial WGG, she recovered from her operation, she and John rebuilt their marriage, and she became an activist. She began to fight to "make the world more habitable for coming generations" and to build an identity as a "small but mighty" champion who was fighting for a "square deal" for

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<sup>164</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), the Minute Book of the Hillview WGGGA, 15 April 1916, 13 May 1916, 10 June 1916, 16 September 1916, 27 November 1916.

<sup>165</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book of the Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA, meetings on 19 March 1913, 7 April 1915. The list of members is at the end of this Minute Book but it does not indicate if it is the list for 1914 or 1915. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), the Minute Book of the Hillview WGGGA, 15 April 1916. There is no record of when her term as President ended.

farm women and their families.<sup>166</sup> She worked with John and with the other members of the Hillview Grain Growers to construct an identity for women in Hillview as both farm women and grain growers. They convinced many local people of the value of 'Grain-growerism' by showing that "plain common people" could improve their community through organized co-operative efforts."<sup>167</sup> In the Hillview Grain Growers and in the Women's Auxiliary she began to focus on farm women, and she began thinking through her agrarian feminist ideas. Her organizational work with John gave her valuable training in working co-operatively with a co-worker while forming an alliance with a community group based on shared integrative principles. Her participation in the Hillview Grain Growers and the Women's Auxiliary gave her experience with small local groups, which was to prove very valuable when she began to work at the provincial and national levels. At the beginning of 1914, with the full support of John, the other Hillview Grain Growers, and the women in the Hillview Auxiliary, Violet was ready to throw herself enthusiastically into work at the provincial level.

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<sup>166</sup> McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," 6. The Western Producer 16 July 1925, 8 February 1968.

<sup>167</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### "THERE IS A SPLENDID FIELD BEFORE US"

#### ORGANIZING THE WOMEN GRAIN GROWERS

When Violet McNaughton and her allies brought the Women Grain Growers (WGG) into being in Saskatchewan during 1913 and 1914 they were creating a new stream in the farm women's movement in Canada.<sup>1</sup> This new stream joined the Women's Institutes and the Homemakers Clubs of Saskatchewan which were in the first stream of the movement.

At the beginning of 1913, when McNaughton began to organize farm women at the provincial level, she felt confident as one of the organizers of the Hillview Local of the SGGA but she was unsure of her ability to work at the provincial level. By September of 1914 she was feeling confident enough as the president of the WGG to tell Zoa Haight, her primary working partner in the WGG, "there is a splendid field before us, if we can use our brains."<sup>2</sup> As McNaughton, Haight, and the other farm women in the WGG worked their "splendid field" she continued to develop the

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<sup>1</sup> The WGG was referred to by different names including the Women's Section of the SGGA, the Women Grain Growers' Association, the Women Grain Growers, the Saskatchewan Women Grain Growers, and at times mistakenly as the Women's Auxiliary of the SGGA. Because it was the name used, most often and for consistency's sake, I usually refer to it as the Women Grain Growers or the WGG.

<sup>2</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 4 September 1914.



agrarian feminist ideology that she had begun developing in Hillview. In addition to this, the foundations of her identity as a "small but mighty" champion of farm women and their families were built on her previous identities as "the little Welsh cob" and as one of "the Pony Pair."

McNaughton's provincial work during 1913, during her years as the president of the WGG from 1914 to 1917, and as the honorary secretary of the WGG during 1917 and 1918 was crucial to the development of her agrarian feminist ideology. However, her agrarian feminism remained firmly rooted in her life as a farm woman and a farmer in Hillview and the lessons she learned at the local level. In February 1913 she attended the Women's Congress held in conjunction with the provincial convention of the SGGA. Out of this meeting grew the Women Grain Growers (WGG) and her part as its leader. In the WGG McNaughton did the difficult work necessary to emerge as the most influential woman in the farm women's movement in Canada in 1919 when the movement went into its second phase.

In order to organize the WGG, McNaughton used the strategy she and her husband John were using in their work in the Hillview Grain Growers; she forged alliances based on common integrative principles.<sup>4</sup> While organizing the WGG,

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<sup>3</sup> The Western Producer 8 February 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Angela Miles, Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s -1990s (New York: Routledge, 1996), xii.

she allied with other farm women, radical men in the SGGA, and three feminists who had more experience in North America than she had. Winnipeg agrarian journalists Francis Beynon and her sister Lillian Beynon Thomas and Zoa Haight, a farm woman from Keeler north of Moose Jaw, all had valuable experience McNaughton lacked. Because McNaughton was not very confident working at the provincial level she depended on the Beynon sisters as mentors. They had grown up on a Manitoba farm, taught in rural schools, had worked with farm women and with women's organizations on the prairies, and they had knowledge and influence as agrarian journalists.<sup>5</sup> Zoa Haight, who became McNaughton's primary working partner in the WGG, was a confident feminist from North Dakota who had been a farm woman in a "wheat belt" for years and was familiar with American farm organizations.<sup>6</sup> Beynon, Thomas, and Haight helped to bolster McNaughton's confidence as a provincial leader.

The alliances McNaughton forged with her allies in order to organize the WGG were based on five integrative principles, which were not immediately obvious to McNaughton nor her allies because they were making their way through uncharted territory. However, by the end of the 1913 Women's Congress they had agreed upon some basic principles. The

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<sup>5</sup> Hicks, "Francis Beynon and *The Guide*," 45-47.

<sup>6</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24(2), Zoa Haight to McNaughton, 5 January 1942. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism* 153, 44, 28.

first of the integrative principles upon which McNaughton and her allies agreed was that the cause of farm women in Saskatchewan would be well served by a provincial farm women's organization that would be able to get involved in political campaigns such as the fight for women's suffrage. The second principle was the belief that, although the Homemakers' Clubs could not be involved directly in political questions, they were doing good work for farm women. The third principle, upon which they all agreed, was that farm women needed the vote in order to improve their daily lives. Fourth, they all believed that the National Policy was bad for farm women and their families and agreed with the critique of the Policy by the radicals in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. The fifth integrative principle upon which their alliance was built was the belief that it would be advantageous for farm women to be connected with the influential SGG.

This chapter focuses on McNaughton's part in the formation of the WGG, the way that her agrarian feminism and her leadership skills developed through her organizational work with the WGG, and her role in creating the women's sections of the United Farmers in other provinces.

In Hillview McNaughton read farm papers and learned a great deal about other prairie farm women from their women's pages. She looked forward to Lillian Beynon Thomas' "weekly message" in her column "Home Loving Hearts" in the Weekly

Free Press and Prairie Farmer.<sup>7</sup> She also read Cora Hind's articles and columns. Hind was the commercial and agricultural editor for The Winnipeg Free Press.<sup>8</sup> Hind wrote for other publications, and did free lance writing.<sup>9</sup> In her column for The Western Home Monthly, called "The Women's Quiet Hour," she reported on the Women's Institutes and the formation of the Homemakers' Clubs in Saskatchewan and their activities.<sup>10</sup> Lillian Beynon Thomas, who had helped to bring the Homemakers into existence, also reported on their activities.<sup>11</sup> McNaughton "devoured every report"

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<sup>7</sup> The Western Producer 15 July 1954, 9 July 1936.

<sup>8</sup> The Western Producer 15 July 1954.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth M. Haig, Brave Harvest - Life of Cora Hind (Toronto: Thomas Allen Limited, 1945), 49-107. For Nellie McClung's memories of Cora Hind written for Kenneth Haig see Provincial Archives of British Columbia, McClung Papers, volume 23(4), a manuscript "My recollection of Miss Hind ...."

<sup>10</sup> The Western Home Monthly February 1912, March 1913.

<sup>11</sup> University of Saskatchewan Archives, Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan Papers A 11 b, Retrospect and Prospect 1938, 10. For an excellent account of the "formative years" of the Homemakers from 1911 to 1913 when Beynon was involved, see Strathy "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes" 15-40. SAB, Agricultural Societies File # 120, Hedley Auld to Lillian Beynon, 28 June 1910, and Beynon to Auld, 1 July 1910. Quoted in Strathy, "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes" 18. The Western Producer 11 December 1952. SAB, Agricultural Societies File # 167, Lillian Beynon "Report of Summer's Work Among Homemakers' Clubs Along the CPR Mainline, 4-5. Strathy "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes" 30-33, 40. Michael Hayden, Seeking A Balance - The University of Saskatchewan 1907-1982 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1983), 37, 42. Legacy - A History of Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs and Women's Institutes 1911-1988 (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Women's Clubs and Institutes, 1988), 90.

of the founding convention of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan in 1911.<sup>12</sup> Cora Hind also reported in 1912 on the second "Women's Congress" held in connection with the Dry Farming Congress, an international group that held its annual "Congress" in Lethbridge.<sup>13</sup>

McNaughton also read Francis Beynon's lively women's pages, after she took over as the women's editor of The Grain Growers Guide.<sup>14</sup> Francis, who became the paper's first full-time women's editor in 1912, wrote and conducted "The Country Homemakers" page.<sup>15</sup> In 1912 Francis Beynon pointed out in The Grain Growers' Guide that farm women had to "work out their own salvation."<sup>16</sup> She wrote articles

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<sup>12</sup> The Western Producer 20 September 1951, 9 July 1936, 15 July 1954.

<sup>13</sup> The Western Home Monthly August 1912 and August 1913. The Western Producer 8 December 1955. SPL-LHR, LH 2121 pamphlet file, women # 13, Proceedings of the First International Congress of Farm Women, 17-20 October 1911. This group's first Women's Congress was held in Colorado in 1911, its second in Lethbridge in 1912, and its third in Oklahoma in 1913.

<sup>14</sup> For biographical details about Francis Beynon see Anne Hicks, "Francis Beynon and The Guide" in Kinnear First Days Fighting Days 41-52; Ramsay Cook, "Francis Beynon and the Crisis of Christian Reformism," in The West and the Nation, ed. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), 187-208. For additional details about the end of her career at The Grain Growers' Guide in 1917 see Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War - Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 65-69.

<sup>15</sup> Hicks, "Francis Beynon and The Guide" 48.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in a UFC pamphlet "Mainly for Women" SAB, pamphlet G37.47. The pamphlet was likely written by Annie Hollis around 1929.

advising the farm women to organize in order to better their status. She emphasized the idea that women would never be granted the franchise "unless women themselves organized and worked for it."<sup>17</sup> She was urging farm women to organize within the Grain Growers' organizations but no leader had emerged who could do so.<sup>18</sup> In 1912 McNaughton began to correspond with Beynon and during 1913 and 1914 it became obvious to her that McNaughton was just such a leader.

McNaughton later recalled that Francis Beynon was "mainly responsible for the 1913 conference that proved to be the birth of the Saskatchewan Women Grain Growers."<sup>19</sup> However, it is clear that although Beynon planned the program, because she was asked to do so by F.W. Green, the secretary of the SGGGA, the conference was instigated by both Beynon and McNaughton. McNaughton recalled a few years later that "our local GGA offered to send me to [the 1913 SGGGA] Convention. Nothing was said about women in the constitution. I wrote the late F.W. Green, asking if I might be a delegate."<sup>20</sup> Green replied that

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<sup>17</sup> A WS-SGGGA pamphlet quoting an article by Mary P. McCallum in The Grain Growers' Guide 28 June 1918. SAB pamphlet G 35.15, "The Women's Section Past Present and Future."

<sup>18</sup> The Grain Growers Guide 24 July 1912. Quoted in Marchildon, "The Women's Section," 19.

<sup>19</sup> The Western Producer 15 July 1954.

<sup>20</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, notes "loan of his....artificial conditions." n.d.

there is no sex qualification in our Association so far as I know. It certainly would be interesting to have you appear at our annual Convention as one of the delegates. I should like to know myself what the convention would do with it. It would settle the matter.<sup>21</sup>

McNaughton also recalled that both she and Francis Beynon corresponded with Green about "inviting women to come and attend a women's meeting during the convention."<sup>22</sup>

Prodded by McNaughton and Beynon, Green hurriedly arranged a "Women's Congress" to take place at the same time as the SGGA convention in Saskatoon. He likely referred to the meeting as a "Women's Congress" because he was familiar with the term from reports, such as those by Cora Hind, about the Women's Congresses held in conjunction with the international Dry Farming Congress in 1911 in Colorado and the one held in 1912 in Lethbridge.<sup>23</sup> Beynon published a hasty invitation in the January 22nd issue of The Grain Growers' Guide asking Saskatchewan women if they would like

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<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), F.W. Green to McNaughton, 23 December 1912.

<sup>22</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, notes "loan of his...artificial conditions."

<sup>23</sup> Marchildon, "The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association" 21-22. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913. The "First International Women's Congress" was held in conjunction with the Dry Farming Congress in Colorado in 1911 and the second "Women's Congress" was held at the Dry Farming Congress in Lethbridge in 1913. The Western Home Monthly August 1912 and August 1913. The Western Producer 8 December 1955. SPL-LHR, LH 2121 pamphlet file, women # 13, Proceedings of the First International Congress of Farm Women, 1911.

"to come to a Women Grain Growers' convention."<sup>24</sup> The Hillview Grain Growers chose John McNaughton and William Wilson as their delegates to the SGGA convention in Saskatoon and Violet and her friend Mabel Wilson also went to attend the program arranged for women.<sup>25</sup>

To understand McNaughton's approach to the WGG it is helpful to compare the program of the 1913 convention, which was hurriedly planned by Francis Beynon with some help from her sister Lillian Beynon Thomas, to the program of the 1914 convention, which McNaughton and Beynon planned together. The program of the meeting in February of 1913 featured several speakers and some discussion by the farm women who gathered in Saskatoon. About 100 women were in attendance in Convocation Hall at the University of Saskatchewan to listen to several lectures and speeches given over the three days of the convention.<sup>26</sup> McNaughton later recalled that

most of us were homesteaders' wives or daughters from sod shacks, log cabins, or wind-swept frame

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<sup>24</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 22 January 1913.

<sup>25</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview GGA minute book, meetings on 11 January 1913 and 22 February 1913. It would appear that Mrs. R.J. MacFarlane also went to Saskatoon but she apparently sat in on the general SGGA meeting as a visitor rather than attending the women's meeting. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Hillview Women's Auxiliary GGA minute book, meeting 19 March 1913.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers' Guide 26 February 1913. Although "the general opinion was that there was more than a hundred there" only about 50 women registered because many had left by the time the registration took place. This was one of the indications of hasty organization. Ibid.



houses who had accompanied our men folk to the Grain Growers' convention....Most of us had read and loved "Sowing Seeds in Danny," Mrs. McClung's first book...so full of the milk of human kindness. We were thrilled to think we could hear and meet the author, co-worker with Lillian Laurie of the Winnipeg Free Press and Francis Marion Beynon of The Grain Growers' Guide who were directing the program. Cora Hind was going to speak to us too.<sup>27</sup>

McNaughton said a few years later that the women at this gathering "endeavoured to cover every subject in the universe." They did so because the Beynon sisters, who had such an influence on the program, knew Saskatchewan farm women had a wide variety of interests.<sup>28</sup> The range of subjects covered at the convention which Beynon chaired is one of the indications of the integrative feminism of these farm women and the journalists, rather than a reductionist feminism that reduces their concerns to two simply defined dichotomous categories.<sup>29</sup> At this conference and subsequent WGG conventions there was a mixture of topics of interest.<sup>30</sup>

For the hastily organized 1913 Women's Congress, Beynon relied heavily, although not exclusively, on presswomen. McNaughton later referred to "the pioneer press women" who

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<sup>27</sup> The Western Producer 20 September 1951. Lillian Laurie was Lillian Beynon's pen name.

<sup>28</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Hayden, Seeking A Balance.

<sup>30</sup> SAB, pamphlet 35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914.

spoke at the meeting as "our godmothers."<sup>31</sup> In other words, she saw the women journalists at the gathering not as the mothers of the WGG, who produced succeeding generations of organized farm women, but rather as supportive "godmothers." They worked co-operatively with the farm women to get the farm women's organizations launched and they continued to publicize and promote the organizations once they were established. In short, they were allies of the farm women.

One of the "godmothers" who spoke was Cora Hind, the Manitoba agricultural reporter, who was downtown at the Empire Theatre reporting on the SGGA convention and went up to the University to give the women a paper on the "Dignity of Feeding the Nation." She "spoke of the importance of this part of women's work" and said that "the health and character of a nation depended upon the proper nourishment of the individual." An enthusiastic "godmother" of the WGG, Hind concluded her rousing talk by telling the women that "the mother not only provides her children with nourishment but with a strong shield of happy memories."<sup>32</sup>

Other speakers spoke about labour-saving devices, schooling, children, financial independence for women and girls, rational dress, and suffrage.

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<sup>31</sup> The Western Producer 15 July 1954.

<sup>32</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913. For Hind's glowing report of the 1913 WGG gathering see The Western Home Monthly March 1913.

Nellie McClung spoke twice and had a memorable effect on McNaughton, who was encountering her for the first time. Years later she could still

see the crowd in Convocation Hall in my mind's eye . . . . We almost held our breath in excitement as a beautiful woman wearing a black dress with a single red rose and a picture hat came to the platform. We hadn't seen anyone like her for quite a while - for many of us it was our first trip to the city since going to the homestead.<sup>33</sup>

McNaughton recalled that McClung, who had been raised on a farm, gave a "memorable humorous speech" about the difficult life children had on the farms. She remembered McClung saying that boys left the farm because "they saw nothing but hard work and little reward ahead." The girls, however, "had even more of which to complain. They worked from 14 till they were married and received a cow and a feather bed and everyone thought justice had been done."<sup>34</sup> McNaughton also recalled

how we crowded around Mrs. McClung at the close of the session with the \$64 question, "When would the sequel to "'Sowing Seeds in Danny' be published?" She said it was on the way and chatted to us about Pearl Watson (the heroine) as friendly as though we were dressed as up-to-date as she was.<sup>35</sup>

In other words McNaughton thought that even though McClung dressed with stylish flair she was not a middle-class urban snob who talked down to farm women because of their humble

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<sup>33</sup> The Western Producer 20 September 1951.

<sup>34</sup> The Western Producer 20 September 1951. Hallett and Davies, Firing the Heather, 16-41.

<sup>35</sup> The Western Producer 20 September 1951.

appearance. Because McNaughton's feminism was integrative she got along very well with McClung, who was not an agrarian feminist, and with most other feminists no matter what their brand of feminism was.

McNaughton and McClung were to work co-operatively with one another over the decades.<sup>36</sup> McClung came to regard McNaughton so highly that she later wrote "to my dear Violet" to tell her that "you are always like a breath of sweet morning air and emanate a feeling that all is right with the world, or rather that something is being done to make it right."<sup>37</sup> This comparison between McNaughton and "a breath of sweet morning air" describes very well the feeling that many people seem to have had when they were with her. Usually when I ask someone who knew McNaughton about her they burst into a broad smile. For them she does seem to have emanated a feeling that something was being done to right the world. McClung's comparison captures an important part of the secret of McNaughton's success in organizing farm women.

At the gathering in 1913 Lillian Beynon Thomas spoke about "Club Life for Country Women." She suggested they

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<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of how amiable relations were between Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung and McNaughton, see Catherine Anne Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994, 122-147.

<sup>37</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(2), Nellie McClung to McNaughton, 19 October 1935.

work to establish rest rooms and libraries. She urged them to stay intellectually alive and to "leave time for play." She begged them "not to put off living until tomorrow."<sup>38</sup> McNaughton and some of the other women in the WGG took this message to heart. As McNaughton was to put it when she looked back to this meeting "the pioneer members determined that, on these western prairies, they would learn 'not only to make a living but to live a life.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913.

<sup>39</sup> The Western Producer 22 June 1933. McNaughton's frequent use of the phrase "not only to make a living but to live a life," in reference to farm women, likely originated when she combined Thomas's idea about farm women with the ideas of Josiah Stamp, the British economist and generalist, and perhaps with the ideas of Edward Partridge. The Western Producer April 9, 1925, 3 May 1928, 17 January 1929, 7 March 1929. Sheilagh Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909-1929" M.C.Ed. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 90. Sheila [sic] Steer, "Violet McNaughton and the Struggle for the Co-operative Society" Educating for a Brighter New Day: Women's Organizations as Learning Sites, ed. Michael Welton (Halifax: School of Education, Dalhousie University, 1992), 143. SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913. For a discussion of Partridge's ideas see Murray Knuttila, "That Man Partridge" - E.A. Partridge, His Thoughts and Times (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994). For Stamp's writing with regard to helping people to "live a life" see Sir Josiah Stamp, "Education and the Christian View of the World" the Inaugural Address at the First Annual Meeting of the Institute of Christian Education, at the Twenty-fifth Conference of Educational Associations, in Sir Josiah Stamp, We Live and Learn - Addresses on Education (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1938), 94-95. A. Maxwell Stamp, Josiah Stamp and the Limitations of Economics, the Stamp Memorial Lecture in 1970 at University of London (London: University of London and The Athlone

One of the highlights of this 1913 Women's Congress was the session in which several addresses were given at an evening meeting attended by the delegates to the SGGA convention and the Women's Congress. Lillian Beynon Thomas and Nellie McClung both spoke that evening in support of women's suffrage.<sup>40</sup> In other words talking about political questions was not forbidden at this Congress, as it had been when Lillian was organizing for the Homemakers. Being free to be political in this group of Saskatchewan farm women likely inspired Thomas to be at her best that evening. The reason McClung and the Beynon sisters appealed so much to farm women was not just that they were intelligent, articulate, used "sound logic," and had a fiery, contagious commitment to the women's movement, but also because their farm girlhood and their work as rural school teachers gave them experience in communicating with farm people. That

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Press, 1970), 5-8, 21-23. Sir Josiah Stamp, The Christian Ethnic as an Economic Factor, (London: The Epworth Press J. Alfred Sharp, 1926), 12, 16-17. His Ph.D. Sir Josiah Stamp, "Graduation in Social Judgement," an inaugural lecture at the University College of Wales, Sir Josiah Stamp, We Live and Learn - Addresses on Education (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1938), 3. Stamp, "The Limits of Technical Education", the Presidential Address to the Educational Institutions in Birmingham Ibid., 61-78. The origins of the use of the phrase "to live a life," may have come originally from John Milton's line "to live a life half dead, a living death." John Milton, Sampson Agonistes F.T. Price, ed. (1671; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 26.

<sup>40</sup> Hinks, "Francis Beynon and The Guide" 45-47. Hallett and Davies, Firing the Heather, 16-69. SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914.

evening Thomas and McClung also convinced their audience by their "charm of manner." The audience was so moved that it adopted a unanimous resolution in favour of women's suffrage.<sup>41</sup> This was extremely important because when the SGGA spoke the provincial government often listened.

In addition to the subjects on which the speakers focused, the diversity of the conference can be seen in the discussions, the decisions, and the strategies of the farm women as they made plans about the way they wanted to organize. It seems to have been obvious to the Beynon sisters that McNaughton supported women's suffrage and so they were pleased to co-operate with her. McNaughton later reminded Thomas of

our little secret meeting in your bedroom at the 1913 gathering of women who attended the Grain Growers convention and how we felt that we must form our own organization in order ... to be able to work for the franchise.<sup>42</sup>

They apparently had this "secret meeting" because they were dedicated suffragists and were concerned because the Homemakers' Clubs were prevented by the University from promoting women's suffrage. Lillian Thomas was well aware of this since she had discussed it with men at the University

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<sup>41</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913.

<sup>42</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mrs. A.V. Thomas, 19 July 1950.

when she was helping to organize the Homemakers.<sup>43</sup> It was likely at this "secret meeting" in 1913 that the suffragists planned their strategy. They wanted to convince the farm women at the Women's Congress to take a pro-suffrage stand.

At the Congress

there was great discussion as to whether they should become Homemakers' Clubs or evolve an organization of their own. The preponderance of opinion was that they should become a part of the farm people's organization and so strengthen the hands of all concerned.<sup>44</sup>

Although McNaughton wanted a WGG it was, she wrote,

not from any feeling against the Homemakers' Clubs. They are doing splendid work, but are distinctly a women's organization; also, being under the government or university control, are much restricted in their topics.<sup>45</sup>

McNaughton and her allies who were pushing for the formation of a new group were convinced that a Women's Section of the SGGA, which had a membership of 10,000 and was very powerful, would be effective in bringing about many of the changes they wanted.<sup>46</sup> Women's groups like the

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<sup>43</sup> The Western Producer 11 December 1952. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan Papers A 11 b, Retrospect and Prospect 1938, 10. Strathy, "The Saskatchewan Women's Institutes," 22.

<sup>44</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers G35.15, "The Women's Section - Past Present and Future," a 1923 WGG pamphlet.

<sup>45</sup> Violet McNaughton, "Forming a Women's Auxiliary" The Grain Growers' Guide 23 July 1913.

<sup>46</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mrs. A.V. Thomas, 19 July 1950. Marchildon, "The Women's Section," 63. Annie L. Hollis, "Western Farm Women's Organizations," Canadian Forum April 1930. For a discussion of separation-versus-integration see Veronica Strong-Boag,



Homemakers were often trivialized by male-dominated governments and so the women at the Congress believed the backing of the powerful Grain Growers would give them the strength of union with the men. In addition to this, McNaughton's experiences in Hillview, organizing locals of the SGGGA with John, had convinced her of the value of 'Grain Growerism' and its emphasis on agrarian co-operation. She had a strong commitment to the Grain Growers, especially those in Hillview. Other women who had attended Grain Growers' locals felt the same way.<sup>47</sup>

The farm women at the 1913 Congress passed a motion that they wanted to organize a Women Grain Growers' Association and they passed another motion "that the Grain Growers be asked to pass a by-law allowing the women to have their own local executive" and to be in "charge of their own local funds."<sup>48</sup> Francis Beynon reported in The Grain Growers' Guide that their idea was that in the districts "where the women have other clubs and care to they can meet with the men as they do now, but where they want to discuss things especially interesting to women, they can meet in

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The New Day Recalled - Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), 195-201.

<sup>47</sup> Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913.

<sup>48</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914.

separate rooms."<sup>49</sup> In other words, as integrative feminists, they were leaving the door open for farm women to make choices. Those who wanted to belong to a Homemakers' Club and the Local of the SGGGA could do so or they could join the local WGG club and the Grain Growers. McNaughton later recalled that they decided they

would ask the men in convention downtown to allow us to become a women's section of the Association. It had already endorsed women's suffrage. We sent our request down to them by special messenger. We received no reply. Undaunted we made plans to meet at the next convention.<sup>50</sup>

Although McNaughton and the other women in the WGG did not say so directly, these farm women had implicitly decided that they would rather have farm men make decisions about their organization than the University's middle-class male urban administrators, who made the rules which constrained the Homemakers. They did so because they believed they had the same class interests as the Grain Growers and because they saw the Grain Growers as having demonstrated that they were pro-feminist when they endorsed women's suffrage.

One of the similarities between the women in the Homemakers and the WIs, which were sponsored by governments or universities, and the WGG, which was sponsored by the SGGGA, is that many members of both groups saw the other

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<sup>49</sup> Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913.

<sup>50</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, notes by McNaughton, "How Pioneer Farm Women Sparked the Suffrage Campaign in Saskatchewan and How the Spark Nearly Smothered!"

group as being more constrained by male-dominated institutions than their own group. Some scholars imply that the Farm Women were superior because they were striving for equality and did not have government funding. Such scholars portray McNaughton in a positive light. Others imply that the WIs, because they were an autonomous group, were more independent of men than the Farm Women, who had to toe the line of the general malestream farm organization of which they were a section. Such scholars portray McNaughton in a negative light.<sup>51</sup>

If one looks closely at the way Canadian agriculture is structured it is clear that it is one of many patriarchal institutions in Canada. It is also clear that all farm women's groups were constrained by the male-dominated institutions that sponsored them, whether those institutions were male-dominated farm organizations, governments,

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<sup>51</sup> For a negative portrayal of McNaughton see Louise Carbert, "Agrarian Feminism: The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women," Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1991, 93-96. When Carbert was revising this dissertation for publication she did more research and she had many discussions with me. Her portrayal of McNaughton in her book is no longer negative. Louise Carbert, Agrarian Feminism - The Politics of Ontario Farm Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), vii, 10-13, 26, 119, 212-216. For a positive portrayal of McNaughton see Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 123-130. For a positive picture of the United Farm Women of Ontario which McNaughton helped found see Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women," in Beyond the Vote - Canadian Women and Politics ed. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (University of Toronto Press, 1989), 309-332.

universities and colleges, or the church. All these patriarchal institutions attempted to control farm women in one way or another, so the important question is not which group had more autonomy or valued equality more, and hence was superior to the other group. A more important, and more intriguing, question is how farm women, working within the constraints that were placed upon them by all of these patriarchal organizations, co-operated with other groups of farm women to overcome these constraints and to improve their lives. An excellent example of the constraints on each group and their co-operation can be seen in the campaign of McNaughton and the WGG for "medical aid within the reach of all" and their co-operation with the Homemakers. The cooperation during this campaign will be discussed in the chapter seven.

McNaughton and the other farm women at the 1913 Congress decided that they would adopt the constitution of the SGGA. They also decided they would use three new clauses of their own as a working basis for the next year and that they would ask the SGGA to put these three clauses in its constitution. The three clauses McNaughton and the other farm women devised were:

To establish libraries, literary societies, reading rooms, arrange lectures and to further extend the knowledge of the members and their families along economic and social lines, with the view of elevating the standard of living in rural communities.

To encourage members to provide suitable halls or meeting places and properly equip and

furnish the same for social and educational benefits of the members.

To foster and encourage the co-operative method of distribution of farm products and the supplying of staple commodities.<sup>52</sup>

All three of these clauses were remarkably similar to what the Hillview Grain Growers were doing under the guidance of the McNaughtons. These clauses remained an important part of the goals that McNaughton and the WGG pursued but they were never added to the SGGA constitution.

The farm women at the gathering also set up a standing committee to carry on the work through the next year and to organize a meeting to be held in conjunction with the next SGGA annual convention. Lillian Beynon Thomas was chosen as the convenor, and the others were Saskatchewan farm women. They decided to set up the WGG in the same way that the SGGA was structured. Therefore they attempted to get a woman from each of the 15 districts of the SGGA to sit on the committee as a district director but in 1913 they could not find a woman for every district.<sup>53</sup> McNaughton was chosen to represent her district. It would seem that some of the women

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<sup>52</sup> Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913. For more details about the 1913 Women's Congress see Marchildon, "The Women's Section" 19-33.

<sup>53</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.15, "SWGGA - Its History, Constitution and Platform," 1914. Francis Marion Beynon, "Women Grain Growers in Convention," The Grain Growers Guide 26 February 1913. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E 72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman." SPL-LHR Pamphlets, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association 2, "The Fifteenth Annual Convention," 1916.

were put on the committee, not because they had much commitment to the WGG or much organizational skill but, because their husbands were well known in the SGGA or because of their geographical location.<sup>54</sup> McNaughton and Haight appear to have been the only members of the standing committee who were active in the next year except for a Mrs. Lefebvre who wrote one report. This was likely the result of the decision to try to put women on the committee from each of the SGGA districts rather than choosing the most enthusiastic women at the Women's Congress. Thereafter, although they did try to get a director from each of the districts, McNaughton was committed to the idea of officers and directors being chosen on the basis of "merit" and commitment to the WGG.<sup>55</sup>

When McNaughton returned to Hillview after the Congress she helped to set up the Hillview Auxiliary to the GGA, continued to be very active in the Hillview Grain Growers, and she began to think seriously about the WGG by preparing and presenting the paper "The Prairie Woman" about the work

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<sup>54</sup> Marchildon hypothesized that some of the women were on the committee because they had husbands who were active in the SGGA. It may also have been that they had gone to Saskatoon with their husbands and were the only women at the Women's Congress from their district and so they were put on the committee. Marchildon, "The Women's Section," 35-36.

<sup>55</sup> SAB Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913, 19 February 1914. Soon thereafter the SGGA divided the province into 16 districts. SAB Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 4 October 1914, 14 September 1915, 2 February 1916.

of farm women, which was discussed in the last chapter. She also wrote an article in The Grain Growers' Guide about forming a "women's auxiliary."<sup>56</sup> McNaughton's use of the term 'auxiliary' in 1913 and 1914 to describe the WGG may have come from her familiarity with church auxiliaries, but it may also owe something to suggestions by Zoa Haight, who may have known about the National Women's Auxiliary to the American Society of Equity, an American farm women's group.<sup>57</sup> In 1913 McNaughton had not thought through the implications of female subordination in the use of the term 'women's auxiliary.' This was to change. By 1915, when the SGGGA added new clauses to its constitution about the role of women in the SGGGA and the WGG, McNaughton had ceased to think of the WGG as a woman's auxiliary. It was not subordinate to the SGGGA; the women were full members of both the SGGGA and the WGG. By then McNaughton regarded women's auxiliaries as groups, in which the women had "no real control" but were allowed to assist male organizations by refurbishing their treasuries by fund-raising and doing other "drudgery."<sup>58</sup> The SGGGA gave a grant to the WGG rather than the women fundraising for the male dominated

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<sup>56</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, a speech, "The Prairie Woman," ca. 1913. The Grain Growers' Guide 23 July 1913.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, The Farmers' Movement 377-378.

<sup>58</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 10 June 1916.

organization.

Of all the farm women McNaughton met at the Women's Congress it was to be Zoa Haight who was to become her closest working partner in the WGG during its formative years. In 1913 and 1914, Beynon, Thomas, and Haight were McNaughton's main working partners in attempting to establish the WGG. Once it was established, McNaughton continued to work very closely with Haight to keep it going, with support from feminist journalists who worked for the agrarian press, like the Beynon sisters.

Like John McNaughton, Haight's strengths and weaknesses complemented Violet's. The two women soon discovered that they worked very well together and they became life-long, loving friends. They were to correspond with one another for five decades.<sup>59</sup> Her friendship was typical of the way McNaughton breached the public/private dichotomy to make friends with the people with whom she worked. Less than a year after meeting Haight she felt so close to her that she was opening her letters to Haight with "My dear Mrs. Haight," a salutation she used for people who were dear to her. By the 14th of September in 1915 she felt so close to Haight that she signed her letter "with love in haste V. McNaughton." Over the decades Haight gave "lots of love" in

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<sup>59</sup> See their correspondence in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24, A1 E92, and Haight Papers A5 2.



return to her "Dear" friend "Mrs. Mc."

In the year before the next WGG provincial gathering McNaughton was, as she told Haight, "deeply interested in this work and anxious for its success" but still she was not very confident about her own ability to be a leader at the provincial level.<sup>61</sup> Zoa Haight was a big, confident, competent farm woman who was four years older than Violet. Irene Parlby of Alberta, who came from a privileged background, later was to tell McNaughton that Haight was "too exuberant."<sup>62</sup> McNaughton, perhaps in part because she was lower in the class hierarchy than Parlby, viewed Haight's exuberance more positively. She saw Haight as having "a greater capacity for a 'wonderful' time than any woman I know." Equally important, McNaughton learned that Haight was "a good kind soul" and that "you can't kill her with misfortune. She simply won't be beaten."<sup>63</sup> In other words she was the sort of person McNaughton liked and needed

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<sup>60</sup> SAB Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 23 January 1914, 14 September 1915, 14 June 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(7), Haight to McNaughton, 22 May 1923.

<sup>61</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 19 February 1914.

<sup>62</sup> Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life," 12-32. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(1), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 7 August 1918.

<sup>63</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(1), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 7 August 1918. The Western Producer 18 March 1926. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Haight, 20 December 1914. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58, McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 6 October 1937.

as a working partner. She quickly recognized Haight as a kindred spirit and "a brick" upon whom she could depend.<sup>64</sup>

Haight's North American experience was helpful to McNaughton. Haight, who was born and went to elementary school in Salem, Minnesota, had gone "across the road" to go to high school in Rochester. She had moved to Crystal, North Dakota to keep house for her brother in 1893 and there, three years later, she married Samuel (Sam) V. Haight. The Haight's had moved to St. Thomas-Milton in North Dakota and had three daughters and a son. Zoa had moved to a homestead in Saskatchewan in 1909 to join Sam who had been homesteading for three years near Keeler, northwest of Moose Jaw.<sup>65</sup> Their son died and in 1918 they adopted another boy. McNaughton's enthusiasm for Haight was likely based in part on her agricultural and political background in North Dakota, a state which had "a similar history and social and economic structure" to Saskatchewan. It was "the stronghold of American agrarianism" and "the heart of the wheat wheatbelt."<sup>66</sup> Haight's confidence likely also came from

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<sup>64</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, 2 November 1916.

<sup>65</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24(2), Zoa Haight to McNaughton, 5 January 1942. They were to live on their farm near Keeler for 40 years and then retire to White Rock, British Columbia. Zoa was an avid gardener all her life and, at Violet's request, for 13 years she was to write the garden column on the "Mainly for Women" pages of The Western Producer. The Western Producer 29 April 1954, 3 March 1955, 6 December 1986.

<sup>66</sup> Lipset, Agrarian Socialism 153, 44, 28.

her experience as a North Dakota farm woman. North Dakota women were "loyal members" of the Farmers' Union, as they had been in the Grange. "The Sisters of the Grange" had developed a "rural feminism" in the late nineteenth century. Haight likely was familiar with the role of women in both the Farmers' Union and the Grange.<sup>67</sup> She and McNaughton may also have known that in 1908 a National Women's Auxiliary to the American Society of Equity, a Wisconsin farm organization, was established. Although it was short lived and confined mainly to Wisconsin, it was a lively group by 1911 and its "motives" and resolutions bear some similarity to the WGG.<sup>68</sup> McNaughton and Haight both were committed to a non-partisan approach to politics, an important ingredient of their agrarian feminism.<sup>69</sup>

In Haight McNaughton found an ally who had ideas similar to her own.<sup>70</sup> In March 1914 she told Haight that

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<sup>67</sup> Taylor, The Farmer's Movement 349. Donald B. Marti, "Sisters of the Grange: Rural Feminism in the Late Nineteenth Century," Agricultural History 58(3) (July 1984) 247-261. Donald B. Marti, "Woman's Work in the Grange: Mary Ann Mayo of Michigan, 1882-1903," Agricultural History 56(2) (April 1982) 439-452.

<sup>68</sup> Taylor, The Farmers' Movement 377-378.

<sup>69</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview Grain Growers' Minute Book, 1914-1926. The Western Producer 3 March 1955. Archer, Saskatchewan A History, 181. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Haight 2 November 1916. SAB, Haight Papers A5 13(f), Newspaper clipping titled "Women's Section Now Making Good Headway Among Grain Growers."

<sup>70</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 4 September 1914.

she had "just the right conception of [the] WGGGA."<sup>71</sup> Haight believed that

just as our happiest homes are where men and women work together the best schools & municipalities are where men and women work together for the good of all. And the same will hold true in [the] province and the world. We [Women Grain Growers'] don't want a man made world. We don't want a woman made world. We want co-operation in the home and outside it.<sup>72</sup>

This was the kind of co-operation between women and men that the McNaughtons had on their farm, in the Hillview Grain Growers and, in the Hillview WGG. It was the sort of co-operation McNaughton wanted between the men in the SGGGA and the women in the WGG. Later, after one of her many visits with Haight, she reported that

we talked of many adventures we had shared through the years. They started at the University of Saskatchewan in 1913 when a conference of farm women decided that they wanted to become part of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers ... Mrs. Haight and I and several others were appointed [to] a committee to see what could be done about it. A year later at the Grain Growers annual convention in Moose Jaw, the Women's Section was born. As president and vice-president of the baby organization there was never a dull moment for either of us during its formative years.<sup>73</sup>

Late in 1913 it looked as if "the baby organization" might be stillborn. Fred Green, the provincial secretary of the SGGGA, was sympathetic to women but he did not favour a

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<sup>71</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 30 March 1914.

<sup>72</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 7, Zoa Haight, an undated speech "The Women's Grain Growers' Association."

<sup>73</sup> The Western Producer 29 April 1954.

provincial organization.<sup>74</sup> Lillian Beynon Thomas, the convenor of the standing committee, was in Winnipeg and had a demanding job. McNaughton wrote the SGGA sub-directors throughout the province trying to contact interested women but she was not able to rouse any interest.<sup>75</sup> In December, with the 1914 SGGA convention looming ahead in February, McNaughton wrote to Zoa Haight. Her letter shows how busy she was and how short of money the McNaughtons were. She was so pressed that what she really wanted to do was

to come down and talk things over with you before Convention but finances are strained this year. I hardly see how the money is coming to get to Moose Jaw even at the pooled rate. There is much distress around and the bailiff is the busiest person alive. I do hope you understand this.<sup>76</sup>

McNaughton, who was writing in a rush, told Haight "I am pretty sick and fearfully busy, but I feel we shall lose ground unless we do something this Convention."<sup>77</sup> She reported to Haight that she had talked to Fred Green who said he was preparing for 200 women at the convention. She had also had "a long talk" with J.A. Maharg, the President of the SGGA. Unfortunately Maharg, one of the SGGA conservatives, had shown his colours. McNaughton told Haight

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<sup>74</sup> Marchildon, "The Women's Section," 10-13.

<sup>75</sup> Marchildon, "The Women's Section," 36-37. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton," 78.

<sup>76</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

"he had the wrong idea of women. Too much courtesy & too little recognition as workers."<sup>78</sup>

Bringing to life new organizations and new structures that will benefit women is seldom ever easy. McNaughton was developing a new stream of the farm women's movement and she knew that she needed co-workers with whom she could share the task. She asked Haight

as a member of that committee, what is your idea of the next Convention? Who is going to take it in hand? Dont you think we should have some say in arranging same. Mrs. Thomas is convener but will not Miss [Francis] Beynon have most to do with same? Dont you think more time should be given to an informal meeting of the women? Dont you think we should have a few informal speeches by the Women Grain Growers - say Mrs. S.V. Haight etc. Don't you think members of that Committee should give some report of their work, etc. Dont you think we should get down to organizing on a proper basis this time? I would much like your opinion on these questions.<sup>79</sup>

She was to continue to urge Haight and the women in the WGG to be involved in the creation of new or improved structures.<sup>80</sup> She went on to tell Haight that

my own idea is to draft a scheme for the Convention, or rather get each member of the Committee to write their ideas on the subject and sent to Mrs. Thomas, then as Convenor she could pick out the best suggestions and form the Convention plan and submit to Miss Beynon & Mr. Green. I do want to get down to business, dont you. Do you know how many members have been active? I can only see report of yourself & Mrs. Lefevre [sic] beside your humble. **We need a live committee so let's see that**

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 14 September 1915.

**we elect same.**<sup>31</sup> [My emphasis is added.]

Erma Stocking, the daughter of a homesteader, whom McNaughton saw as "another enterprising American," belonged to the Woodlawn WGGGA and was a prospective member for the "live" committee McNaughton wanted. She too had attended their SGGA district meeting. McNaughton and the lively Stocking had

buttonholed F.W. Green to know where the resolution re WGGGA had gone to and why no recognition of same. Also to ask what arrangements he was making for the Convention. We also asked him to prepare a by-law to have incorporated in the GGA Constitution recognizing the Wom's Aux. We also asked the Directors in charge of this District 13 to provide their scheme for next year, assistance in the formation and recognition of the Women's Aux.<sup>32</sup>

Obviously the provincial officers of the SGGA were being courtly and condescending to the women whilst they were doing next to nothing to guarantee that "the baby organization" would be born alive.<sup>33</sup> McNaughton did have some good news for Haight. She thought Erma Stocking was going to be "an excellent co-worker and all being well, will be at the Convention." At the District Convention McNaughton had taken "a pretty active part" and "I dont think I did the Women's Cause any harm." Erma Stocking had also done "well" when she "backed me up." She closed by

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<sup>31</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

telling Haight she was depending upon her for so much and was "hoping to hear" from her soon. "I am yours for the cause. Violet McNaughton." Clearly the life of "the baby organization" was in the hands of McNaughton, her two "co-workers" Haight and Stocking, assisted by Francis Beynon.<sup>34</sup> Haight replied to McNaughton's letter with some thoughts that McNaughton told her were "splendid."

McNaughton's emotional dependence on Haight became obvious when Haight's husband, Sam, wrote to McNaughton to say that Zoa had had to rush away to care for her sick mother. McNaughton recognized her need for Haight's support when she received Sam's letter. "My heart went into my boots," she told Zoa, "for real bright strong women are so scarce." None of the rest of the committee had done anything while Haight was away but McNaughton had been in touch with Beynon and had sent her Haight's letter.<sup>35</sup>

However McNaughton was not so dependent on Haight that she stopped organizing. By the time Haight had returned home from her mother's, the SGGA Secretary Fred Green had recognized how interested McNaughton was. He likely did not want to be "buttonholed" again by McNaughton much less by the McNaughton and Stocking team. He had originally suggested that Nellie McClung and Lillian Beynon Thomas be

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> SAB, Haight Paper A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 23 January 1914.



in charge of the 1914 convention. But pushed by McNaughton's ally, Francis Beynon, he had admitted that "perhaps as you say Mrs. McNaughton is the one who has the greatest interest in this work and is the one who should be the boss at the Convention." So he had asked McNaughton to assist Beynon in organizing the convention. He obviously had more faith in the agricultural journalists than in the little up-start farm woman from Hillview.<sup>36</sup>

Writing to Haight in January about the plans she and Beynon were making, McNaughton said Beynon had agreed with her that at this convention the farm women should "take hold in earnest," in contrast to the 1913 convention. They wanted Haight to give an address about some problem of farm life and Beynon had suggested the title be "Getting the Best of Farm Life." McNaughton told Haight she thought the topic sounded "just like you." McNaughton was going to give "a short address on 'The Aims and Possibilities of [the] WGGA.' I am not a public speaker, but thought it would encourage others to do better." McNaughton had enjoyed her allies, the "godmother" journalists, at the 1913 convention but this time she was determined farm women would take charge instead of spending most of the convention passively listening to urban journalists. Therefore she put a little pressure on

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<sup>36</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1) Francis Beynon to McNaughton 7 January 1914, F.W. Green to Francis Beynon 7 January 1914. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight 23 January 1914, 30 March 1914.

her "bright strong" "co-worker," saying "now, Mrs. Haight, I trust you will see your way clear to give this address. I do want farm women to the fore."<sup>37</sup>

She was pressuring Haight for the sake of the WGG but she was so fearful about having agreed to make a speech herself that she needed support. Presenting a paper to the little group of friends and kin in the Hillview Grain Growers was one thing; making her first speech to a provincial convention was quite another thing.<sup>38</sup> She was "panic stricken" but she knew that "I couldn't let the Women Grain Growers-to-be down," so "in desperation" she wrote her ally Lillian Beynon Thomas, who was well known for her helpfulness. Thomas replied with some simple "old" advice that four decades later McNaughton still considered to be good advice "for any timid club member." Thomas went over some basic technical rules such as "thinking carefully over what you wish to say," making some notes, not memorizing the speech, and "if you have difficulty being heard in a large hall....you could practice on the prairie, speaking to your husband at a distance without perceptibly raising your voice."<sup>39</sup>

Lillian then went on to deal more personally with

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<sup>37</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 23 January 1914.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The Western Producer 11 December 1952.

Violet's fears about public speaking. Violet had apparently told Lillian about her operation, her involuntary childlessness, and her understanding of Rauschenbusch's idea that the childless should take care of all the world's children. Lillian concluded by telling Violet to "trust" herself because she had "a message." Lillian reassured her that she had

been deprived of some of the things that make life a joy for others, but you still have the power to help make the world a brighter and better place for others and that is something to be thankful for.<sup>90</sup>

This reinforcement of Violet's mission by a respected, sensitive agrarian journalist contributed to her confidence as an agrarian feminist. For Violet, who was a relatively new activist, the affirmation by an experienced, confident feminist mentor that she trusted was extremely important.

While she was planning the program for the 1914 convention Francis Beynon, McNaughton's other feminist ally and mentor, also had some advice for McNaughton. She suggested there should be something on the program of interest to mothers and something about social problems. "I know you won't approve quite of the first but you must know that you are far too radical for the things that interest you to interest the great majority of women either in the

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<sup>90</sup>

The Western Producer 11 December 1952.

city or the country."<sup>91</sup> In calling McNaughton "radical," Beynon appears to have been referring to McNaughton's left-wing radicalism and her radical idea that women should be concerned about other issues rather than focusing solely on maternal issues. She may also have been referring to McNaughton's pacifism. Building the WGG was so important to McNaughton that she took this advice to heart. McNaughton pushed Haight and other farm women to speak at this convention in part because they were mothers and interested in maternal issues.<sup>92</sup> Even though McNaughton was personally more "radical" than most women she was accepted because she was also a co-operator who wanted to co-operate with women who were more conservative than she was. This attitude meant that most women felt comfortable with her.

In 1914 in addition to Haight and McNaughton's addresses another Saskatchewan farm woman, Mrs. C.E. Flatt, who was to be active in the WGG for many years, read a paper on "The Influence of Home Environment in the Creation of National Ideals in Our Boys and Girls." They also heard from

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<sup>91</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92, Francis M. Beynon to McNaughton, 15 January 1914.

<sup>92</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92, Francis Beynon to McNaughton 15 January 1914. SPL-LHR Pamphlets, SGGA, 2, "Convention Program of SGGA 1916." Zoa Haight, "Work of the Women Grain Growers in its Relation to Child Life" given to the WGG annual convention in 1916. At that convention Mrs. F.G. Sparling also spoke about "The Prairie Mother." SAB Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight 8 May 1915 and 23 July 1914. See all of the letters in this file for McNaughton's encouragement of Haight. See SAB A5 7, for other speeches by Haight for her ideas about motherhood.

a Miss Armstrong on "The Work of the Homemakers' Clubs," J.S. Woodsworth on "Learning to Live Together," Miss Curry and Miss Mylatt of the YWCA on "The Promotion of Health and Happiness," and Francis Beynon "closed with a persuasive address on 'Woman Suffrage.'" There was more discussion among the farm women at this 1914 convention than there had been in 1913. By involving the farm women more than they had been the previous years, McNaughton was empowering them. On the first day of the 1914 convention they chose a committee made up of Francis Beynon and five Saskatchewan women all of whom were wives or daughters of Saskatchewan homesteaders. Violet McNaughton, Zoa Haight, Erma Stocking, Irene Thompson, and Mrs. M. Hicks all continued to take an active part in the WGG over the subsequent years. This group was the kind of a committee that McNaughton wanted, a "live" committee chosen on the basis of their interest in, and commitment to, the WGG. It was asked to devise a plan for a permanent organization. When the committee reported to the convention the next day "the meeting adopted their suggestions."

The WGG then had to deal with the SGGGA and they had to deal with the problem of funding. Therefore Beynon and three farm women, McNaughton, Haight and Irene Thompson of Netherhill, were delegated to speak to the SGGGA convention that was in progress at the same time. As McNaughton later recalled, Thompson was nursing her baby so they took the

baby with them and away they went. McNaughton also recalled that in 1914 they "took no chances" of being ignored by the men running the SGGGA convention, as they had been the previous year.<sup>33</sup> She recalled that they had their "men friends" at the SGGGA convention ready to back them up, that is to say the pro-feminist men such as John. Their male allies were privy to their plans and were ready for their visit. The women had to deal with the SGGGA conservatives who wanted to maintain the status quo and were in control of the convention so, as McNaughton recalled,

we cut through the red tape by asking, "Could we bring the men a message from the women?" Probably expecting a simple fraternal greeting, they agreed, "Yes, we could come to the platform right away. Without frills, we presented our former request and asked for a grant of \$500 to complete our organization. Amidst the applause a delegate shouted, "Make it a thousand." The unsuspecting GGA secretary [Fred Green] gasped. More applause... but we said "no" five hundred would be enough. Another delegate threw \$1 upon the platform to start a shower for us. We said "no" \$500 was sufficient."<sup>34</sup>

McNaughton recalled that "some of us had briefed our men friends in the [SGGA] convention to see that constitutional changes were put through to suit our wishes."

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<sup>33</sup> A WS-SGGA pamphlet quoting an article by Mary P. McCallum in The Grain Growers' Guide 28 June 1918. SAB pamphlet G 35.15, "The Women's Section Past Present and Future." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton notes "How Pioneer Farm women Sparked the Suffrage Campaign in Saskatchewan, And How the Spark was Nearly Smothered!"

<sup>34</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton notes "How Pioneer Farm women Sparked the Suffrage Campaign in Saskatchewan, And How the Spark was Nearly Smothered!"

The WGG was not to be a woman's auxiliary. The women would be granted full membership in the SGGA, the right to organize a Women's Section of the SGGA, and the right to form local women's clubs.<sup>95</sup> McNaughton recalled that she, Beynon, Haight and Thompson went "back to our women's gathering walking on air." With the help of their male allies, the radicals in the SGGA who wanted many changes in the Canadian political economy and were pro-feminist, they had out-strategized the SGGA conservatives. The men in the SGGA who supported McNaughton and the other women did so because they believed that it was democratic to include the women.<sup>96</sup> The conservatives wanted to maintain their power in the SGGA and in the provincial government and, unlike the radicals, they were not pushing for substantial changes in the political economy. McNaughton and the WGG were to continue to be more radical than the conservatives who controlled the SGGA and to struggle with them until 1922, when McNaughton and the SGGA 'Ginger Group' ousted the

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<sup>95</sup> SAB pamphlet G 35.15, a WS-SGGA pamphlet quoting an article by Mary P. McCallum in The Grain Growers' Guide 28 June 1918, "The Women's Section Past Present and Future." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton notes "How Pioneer Farm women Sparked the Suffrage Campaign in Saskatchewan, And How the Spark was Nearly Smothered!" SAB, G35.1 booklet, Saskatchewan WGG, 1915.

<sup>96</sup> It is important to note that because men were on left did not necessarily mean the they were pro-feminist. For example in the mid-twenties although the Farmers' Union was further to the left than the SGGA, women had full membership in the SGGA and were subordinate in the Farmer's Union. The Western Producer 27 August 1925.

conservatives and took control of the SGGA.

In 1914 McNaughton and the other farm women had delivered "the baby organization" with the help of the WGG "godmothers," the presswomen who were essential allies during the formation of the WGG. The WGG elected a Board of Directors and the Board had a meeting to choose a "working executive" at the end of the convention. They knew the executive had to live close enough to meet with relative ease because none of them had much time or money, the WGG funds were limited, and travel was difficult. They chose McNaughton as the president and two women who lived fairly close to Harris to sit on the executive. Erma Stocking of Delisle was to be the secretary-treasurer and Mrs. John Ames of Hanley was to be the third member. Their inexperience showed when they forgot to choose a vice president and so the executive later added Zoa Haight to the executive as the Vice President. This likely was McNaughton's idea since she respected Haight and wanted to work closely with a "bright strong" woman like her.<sup>97</sup>

Mary McCallum of The Grain Growers Guide later was to give a succinct assessment of this second convention. It was, she said, "larger and better in every way" than the 1913 gathering. The farm women

had more definite ideas along lines of organization. There were over 80 women

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<sup>97</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 23 January 1914 and 19 February 1914.



registered. Being partly conducted and addressed by farm women, its success was proof of their ability to accomplish and carry on the work of organization of a provincial association."

McNaughton had been the most enthusiastic of the farm women on the standing committee, the moving force behind this "larger better" convention, and the organizer who had the skills to create a provincial farm women's organization with the help of other farm women and their families.

McNaughton and the WGG continued to cope with their constant problems with the conservative SGGA leadership by calling upon their pro-feminist male allies in the SGGA and other grassroots men, who were not as conservative as the SGGA leaders, to support the WGG. McNaughton's political acumen can be seen behind the question of the clauses in the SGGA constitution with regard to women. In order to entrench a role for women in the SGGA the WGG had to make more changes, a year later, at the 1915 WGG annual convention. Their conventions were always held at the same time as the SGGA convention. At times the SGGA and the WGG met separately; other times they would have a big general session of the SGGA, which the WGG would also attend as a members of the SGGA. The women of the WGG had a special meeting at their 1915 convention, prior to the general SGGA session, to discuss the clauses, that had been discussed

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<sup>98</sup> A WS-SGGA pamphlet quoting an article by Mary P. McCallum in The Grain Growers' Guide 28 June 1918. SAB pamphlet G 35.15, "The Women's Section Past Present and Future."

when the delegation made up of McNaughton, Haight, Thompson and Francis Beynon had gone downtown to the 1914 SGGA convention. The clauses, as drafted, were now to be debated formally and voted upon at the SGGA convention, before they could be inserted into the new constitution. One of the clauses was worded in such a way that all of the women at the special meeting were unhappy with it. They were dissatisfied with the phrase which read "women may form themselves into locals, from membership in which men may be excluded." They were worried that if men could be excluded from their WGG locals clubs this might be used as an excuse for excluding women from the SGGA locals. Believing that "men and women should work together and bring out the idea of co-operation to its fullest meaning" they wanted the clauses "to convey the idea that women must first join the [SGGA] local before organizing a women's section." Therefore they worked out new wording that they preferred.<sup>99</sup>

The women from the WGG convention then attended a big general session at the SGGA convention which was in progress. There Mrs. O. Cooper of the WGG moved that the four new clauses relating to women, which the women had just amended during their special meeting, be added to the new SGGA constitution.<sup>100</sup> The clauses were:

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<sup>99</sup> SAB pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

1. Women shall have the same standing in the Association as men.
2. It shall be competent for any five or more women who are members of a local to form themselves into a Women's Section of that local, for the purpose of discussing ways and means for dealings with women's questions and work. Such section, when formed shall be termed a Women's Section and shall be governed by the Constitution and By-laws of the Association.
3. At the annual Convention women delegates may meet in the general meeting or separately, as they see fit. In separate meetings they may discuss any question or matter not inconsistent with the objects of the association as set forth in section 3 hereof, but it shall not be competent for them to petition parliament or the legislature on any matter independently of central.
4. Such separate meeting may be called the Women's Section, and it shall have the power to elect a board composed of such officers as it may see fit. The board shall have especial charge of such branches of the association's work as relate especially to women and children.<sup>101</sup>

McNaughton seconded the motion, saying that the women wanted "to preserve the entirety of the Association." When the motion passed unanimously, the place that McNaughton and the other women in the WGG had created for themselves was entrenched in the SGGA Constitution.<sup>102</sup> Later, in 1919, McNaughton and the WGG also entrenched another clause in the SGGA constitution that gave the Board of Directors of the WGG the power to nominate three of its members "who, upon approval by the Annual Convention of the Association, shall be Women Directors of the Association."<sup>103</sup> In other words

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> SAB booklet, G34.1, SGGA "Constitution and Bylaws" 1919.

the women then could have at least three WGG members on the Board of Directors of the SGGA.

All five of these clauses in the SGGA constitution were to have an important impact on the SGGA. The 1919 clause was eventually to help in increasing McNaughton's power in the SGGA because the WGG was behind McNaughton. As McNaughton pointed out, the 1913 changes made women more powerful in the SGGA than they were in the churches. She also noted that they made women voting members in the SGGA of Saskatchewan, then the third most populous province in Canada, before they could vote in the any provincial legislature in Canada or in the federal parliament. Being voting members of "the Farmer's Parliament," as the SGGA was called, gave them far more power and influence than they would have had in a women's auxiliary, which would have functioned only in a supportive role.<sup>104</sup> In short, McNaughton and the WGG profited by having as their allies, members of the SGGA as a whole, who were less conservative than the leadership. McNaughton and the farm women had carved out a place for themselves in one of the two most influential organizations in Saskatchewan.

McNaughton was the president of the WGG for four years from early in 1914 until early in 1918. These years were not only the formative years of the WGG but they were also

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<sup>104</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, McNaughton, "President's Address," Women's section SGGA Yearbook 1915. Census of Canada 1921.

war years when the farm people of Canada were under great pressure to produce and encountering tremendous difficulties, including a shortage of labour.<sup>105</sup> In 1914 Saskatchewan farm people were coping with war, the southwest of the province was so dry there was almost a total crop failure, and further north in early August there was a killing frost.<sup>106</sup> While McNaughton was the president she was assisted by Zoa Haight, the vice president who succeeded her as president, and Erma Stocking as the secretary-treasurer. Part way through 1917, when Stocking's health was so poor she had to resign, McNaughton took over as the unpaid honorary secretary of the WGG, a position she was to hold for almost two years. Thus, for several months in 1917, McNaughton was both the president and the secretary.<sup>107</sup>

The relationship between the WGG and the SGGA helped to shape McNaughton's feminism and her impact on the farm women's movement. The battle McNaughton and the WGG had with the SGGA conservatives, who wanted to freeze out male

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<sup>105</sup> John Herd Thompson, The Harvests of War - The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 27-45. SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 14 June 1916.

<sup>106</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 4 September 1914. Archer, Saskatchewan A History 170.

<sup>107</sup> SAB A35(1) pamphlets, WGGGA Year Book 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to the Executive of the SGGA, 3 May 1919; McNaughton to the Secretary of the SGGA, 12 June 1919; McNaughton to Mrs. Frith, 3 August 1919.

radicals and feminists, continued until 1922. Scholars argue about the conservatism of the leaders of the SGGA against whom McNaughton found herself pitted. Seymour Lipset argues that it was conservatism.<sup>108</sup> David Smith, who is very sympathetic to the Liberals, argues that it was not conservatism at all.<sup>109</sup> Lyle Dick argues that the conservatism of an earlier generation of leaders, led by W.R. Motherwell, and the radicalism of their opponents, led by E.A. Partridge, were based on their position in the agricultural economy, that is to say on their class position.<sup>110</sup> When assessing the impact of these SGGA leaders on McNaughton and the WGG, Dick's argument is more convincing than Smith's idea. The conservative response to McNaughton and the WGG was based on class and gender.

McNaughton's political skills meant that she and the WGG were often able to out-manoeuver the SGGA conservatives. The roots of this struggle date back to 1913 and 1914. The indifference and the condescension of the SGGA leadership in 1913 and early 1914 towards McNaughton and the WGG began to change shortly after the 1914 WGG convention because Fred Green's poor health prevented him from working. When J. B.

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<sup>108</sup> Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, 84.

<sup>109</sup> Smith, Prairie Liberalism, 81.

<sup>110</sup> Lyle Dick, Farmers "Making Good" The Development of Abernathy District, Saskatchewan 1880-1920 (Ottawa: National Historic Sites Canadian Parks Service Environment Canada, 1989), 185-190.

Musselman took over Green's tasks, indifference turned to outright hostility. Green died and Musselman officially replaced him as SGGA secretary in 1915. He remained until 1922. McNaughton constantly found herself pitted against Musselman.

Early in 1914 the warning signs of this long struggle between the SGGA conservative leadership and McNaughton and the WGG were already there. McNaughton told Haight that

my hubby is feeling a bit disheartened over the GGA. He thinks the political pull [of the Liberals] is too strong at Headquarters, especially now Mr. Green is out of it. What do you people think?<sup>111</sup>

Green, a socialist from Lancashire in England, had been a counter-weight to the pull of the Liberals.<sup>112</sup> In order to cope with opposition from the central office and the men who were antagonists on the executive, McNaughton followed Francis Beynon's advice. Beynon knew who McNaughton's critics were and advised her that it would be best to go to the whole provincial convention for support.<sup>113</sup> She also tried to get women to attend the SGGA district conventions, held prior to the provincial convention, in an attempt to increase their exposure and their support from grassroots SGGA male members who would be voting in the provincial

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<sup>111</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Haight, 19 February 1914.

<sup>112</sup> Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, 43, 100.

<sup>113</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, Francis Beynon to McNaughton, 27 July 1914.

convention. However, this was difficult because the WGG relied on the central office to notify them ahead of time when each district convention was going to be held. In November of 1914 McNaughton reported to Haight that there was "trouble with a misunderstanding with Central (not our fault) and are now only just in possession of facts concerning the district conventions which we should have had at least a month ago."<sup>114</sup> Early in December McNaughton told Haight that

Mr. Musselman promised to let me know his convention plans just as soon as complete. I never heard a word until too late to do any good. If we had known that they would pay the lady director's...[expenses] to her own [district] convention, we could have advertised & got more women to go. I feel put out, but we must make the best use of it. Will you write up the Regina convention to the Guide. It will help.<sup>115</sup>

Late in December McNaughton wrote to Haight and reported how bad the working relations between the SGGA central office and the WGG were. She believed the WGG had to advertise so much that they were "beyond the point of being suppressed. The Gov't does not like us."<sup>116</sup> In 1915 the WGG executive put out the first of the WGG yearbooks "at the request of the Board of Directors, in order to help the

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<sup>114</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 12 November 1914.

<sup>115</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914, n.d.

<sup>116</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 20 December 1914.



local clubs, to advertise the work of the WGG, and to help prevent their suppression.<sup>117</sup> They also tried to keep one another posted about up-coming events because whenever possible the central SGGA office, which was run by Musselman, left them "completely in the dark."<sup>118</sup> Musselman seems to have been putting every stumbling block he could in front of the WGG, especially after their funds from the SGGA were raised.<sup>119</sup> After the WGG grant from the SGGA was raised, McNaughton told Haight in the fall of 1915 that Musselman "thinks we are too expensive an asset now with our \$1,000 grant."<sup>120</sup> McNaughton soon learned she had to be careful what she said in public although she was honest with Zoa Haight about the constant problems with Musselman.<sup>121</sup> A picture taken of the board of directors of the SGGA early in 1916 tells a great deal about the relationship between McNaughton and Musselman. McNaughton, the only woman on the

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<sup>117</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>118</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914, n.d.

<sup>119</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 8 May 1915.

<sup>120</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914, no day on the letter. For examples of the financial status of the WGG see SAB, pamphlets G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1917, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1918.

<sup>121</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), Francis Beynon to McNaughton, 10 March 1915. SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1916.

board, is squeezed in the front row next to Musselman. She looks very stiff, leery, and unhappy.<sup>122</sup>

McNaughton and the WGG constantly tried to improve their position by increasing the number of women attending SGGA mixed locals and local WGG clubs. Although the WGG had only five local clubs early in 1914, a year later it had 60. By 1916 it had 100 clubs, with a total provincial membership of approximately 1,600 members, and by 1917 it had 115 clubs.<sup>123</sup> By May of 1919 there were, McNaughton estimated, 6,000 women members in the SGGA locals and in the WGG and this was "a conservative estimate."<sup>124</sup> Women formed "a large proportion" of the SGGA membership.<sup>125</sup> There were 1,300 SGGA locals in 1916 and 28,000 members of the SGGA when there were 104,000 farmers in Saskatchewan. In 1919 there were 36,000 members.<sup>126</sup> In other words by 1919 approximately one-sixth of the members of the SGGA were women.

Increasing the membership at this rate during the Great

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<sup>122</sup> See the picture in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farmer, 26 February 1916.

<sup>123</sup> SAB, pamphlets G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915, Yearbook 1916, Yearbook 1917. The Grain Grower's Guide, 17 February 1915.

<sup>124</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to the Executive of the SGGA, 3 May 1919.

<sup>125</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to the Executive of the WGG, 23 April 1919.

<sup>126</sup> Lipset, Agrarian Socialism, 73, 79.

War would not have been possible if it had not been for McNaughton's attitude toward the patriotic work done by many WGG clubs during the War. It is an excellent example of the co-operative approach she took with the other women in the WGG. Although a pacifist, who promoted peace both during war and during peace, she was not critical of patriotic work done by WGG women.<sup>127</sup> Barbara Roberts points out that promoting peace during war "is radical, certainly unpatriotic, and perhaps subversive or treasonous."<sup>128</sup> McNaughton believed in national and international harmony and in humanitarian work during war. Because she was opposed to imperialism and militarism, she would not promote recruitment or other militaristic or pro-imperialist activities, as did groups like the Imperial Order of the Daughter of the Empire.<sup>129</sup> The Order was "a Canadian patriotic organization born and bred to serve the British

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<sup>127</sup> Barbara Roberts differentiates between peace activists who are "fair weather or peacetime pacifists" and pacifists who promote peace during war and she names McNaughton as a pacifist. Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," in Beyond the Vote - Canadian Women and Politics ed. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (University of Toronto Press, 1989), 276, 287.

<sup>128</sup> Roberts "Women's Peace Activism" 276.

<sup>129</sup> Nadine Small, "The 'Lady Imperialists' and the Great War: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Saskatchewan, 1914-1918," in David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt, "Other Voices" Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre University of Regina, 1995), 76-93. See also Nadine Small, "'Stand by the Union Jack': The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War, 1914-1918," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988.

Empire during war" and had urban middle class women of British descent as members.<sup>130</sup> Nadine Small found that in Saskatchewan, as elsewhere in Canada, "the Order was motivated primarily by its imperialism, which consisted of two major components: patriotism and militarism" and was a "keen supporter of both manpower registration and eventually conscription."<sup>131</sup>

When Laura Hughes and Alice Chown brought the Women's Peace Party to Canada, Hughes wrote to McNaughton as a potential member of the Party. McNaughton joined in 1916.<sup>132</sup> In 1919 it was renamed the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).<sup>133</sup> Ironically, while McNaughton was diplomatic and low key about her pacifist beliefs, her feminist mentor Francis Beynon, who had warned McNaughton to be cautious in the farm movement, lost her job

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<sup>130</sup> Small, "The Lady Imperialists," 76.

<sup>131</sup> Small, "The Lady Imperialists," 92, 84.

<sup>132</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E52(1), McNaughton to Laura Hughes, 12 August 1916. Hughes to McNaughton 25 August 1916, 2 October 1916. Hughes privately admitted WILPF was a "stop the war" movement. Socknat, Witness Against War, 56.

<sup>133</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E52(1), Laura Hughes to McNaughton, 12 July 1916. Thomas P. Socknatt, Witness Against War - Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), 55-56. Roberts "Women's Peace Activism," 280. Diana Chown, "Introduction" to Alice A. Chown, The Stairway (1921; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), xiiv-xiv. For details of McNaughton's high regard for Alice Chown see McNaughton to Nellie McCay, 10 September 1943, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D43(2). See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E52(1), McNaughton to Alice Chown, 11 December 1931.

with The Grain Growers' Guide over her membership. Beynon was so outspoken about her pacifist beliefs that she made statements in 'The Guide' that were regarded as treasonous; she was driven into exile in the United States.<sup>134</sup>

McNaughton appears to have shared many same ideas about peace and militarism with Beynon, but her strategy was not to be as confrontational as Beynon's.<sup>135</sup> Yet, while McNaughton appears to have felt more comfortable with women like Gertrude Richardson, who stoutly hung onto her pacifism, she did not reject women such as Nellie McClung, who, under extreme pressure, made the decision to support the war.<sup>136</sup>

The West was very supportive of the war, in part because there were so many British settlers on the prairies. Thousands of Saskatchewan men were killed in the Great War. In Saskatchewan military units there were 17,594 casualties, 4,385 of them deaths.<sup>137</sup> In the South Saskatchewan Regiment

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<sup>134</sup> Cook, "Francis Marion Beynon" 197-201. Hicks, "Francis Beynon and The Guide" 48. See also Beynon's pages in The Grain Growers' Guide from 1914 to 1917.

<sup>135</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 15 July 1916, 19 August 1916, 21 October 1916, 20 January 1917.

<sup>136</sup> Barbara Roberts, A Reconstructed World - A Feminist Biography of Gertrude Richardson (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), ix, 125, 189, 210-211, 245, 284. R.R. Warne, "Nellie McClung and Peace," in Up and Doing - Canadian Women and Peace, ed. Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham (Toronto: Women's Press, 1989), 35-47.

<sup>137</sup> Archer, Saskatchewan, A History, 170.

91.5% of the men were casualties, 1,433 were killed. Of the 5,374 men who served in this "Suicide Battalion," only 457 were not hit.<sup>138</sup> With casualties mounting, McNaughton did not want to hurt her family or her friends nor did she want to cause division within the farm movement. She did not want the many farm women who had lost family and friends during the Great War to be alienated from the farm women's movement so she was tactful about her pacifist beliefs.

McNaughton's approach to the War and the WGG's patriotic work can be seen in the way she handled the War in her president's reports to the annual WGG convention. In 1915, a few months after the War began, McNaughton told the WGG that she could not

close without reference to this awful war. It demonstrates the fact that we, of the twentieth century, are still slaves of a system, which allows a handful of men in each country to manipulate wires which can cause armies to rise at a given word and kill those against whom they have no quarrel. And who pays? We women can do a noble work if we can, in the slightest degree, help to bring about a universal realization of this fact.<sup>139</sup>

Early in the War she was open in her condemnation of the war, using a class analysis that separated the elites from the non-elites, and suggesting that women should work to

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<sup>138</sup> James L. McWilliams and R. James Street, The Suicide Battalion (St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing, 1990), 204.

<sup>139</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGG Yearbook 1915. Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon - Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919 (Toronto: Lester & Orphen Dennys, 1989), 1-31.

educate people about being "slaves" in an imperialistic and militaristic "system."

By the time McNaughton gave her 1916 report recruitment had increased and "shaming" tactics and trickery were used to push "lily-livered" men into enlisting.<sup>140</sup> McNaughton accepted the patriotic work of the clubs when she said

we know that, while the war lasts, our members will continue the efforts in Red Cross and Patriotic work. To this must be added our duty to the returned soldiers. We cannot do too much for them. If we could only divert for their use the money that some of our citizens are grafting out of the war loans! Does the horror of the "graft" game strike us sufficiently?<sup>141</sup>

In 1916 she stressed humanitarian work for the victims of war, the returned soldiers, and again focused on the misdeeds of the elites.

Early in 1917, the year that the conscription crisis sorely divided Canada, McNaughton again chose not to stress her pacifist beliefs.<sup>142</sup> Instead, she focused on the agricultural economy and the importance of the SGGA and the WGG. In Saskatchewan, even in Hillview, the wartime effort

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<sup>140</sup> Morton and Granatstein Marching to Armageddon 31. Small "The Lady Imperialists" 84.

<sup>141</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section Yearbook 1916.

<sup>142</sup> Morton and Granatstein Marching to Armageddon 144-145. Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad with Veronica Strong-Boag, History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1993), 296-268. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, The Dream of Nation - A Social and Intellectual History of Quebec (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), 207-214.

to produce more grain was diverting many people from the farm movement.<sup>143</sup> She cautioned the women that "the horrors of war will last long after peace is declared." Warning them of the problems she foresaw for farm people in the post-war period, she said the high wheat prices in

the last two years have been abnormal. We have forgotten that wheat at a normal price gave us a bare existence and sometimes not that; we have forgotten that when the war is over it has to be paid for; we forget that in all probability, as farmers, our markets will be the first to fall. We shall need our organization in the future.<sup>144</sup>

A year later, in early 1918, as the War dragged on and the casualties mounted, McNaughton again stressed humanitarian work, saying that

in common with the other organized bodies of women throughout the Dominion, our WGG efforts have been mainly along Patriotic lines. Large sums have been raised for the Red Cross, Belgian Relief, Military YMCA Soldier Comforts, and Halifax Disaster Funds. Sums as high as \$502 and \$370 have been raised in one evening. Additional patriotic work has been done in raising funds to purchase, as a special WGG gift, an ambulance for the front, which will carry the emblem of our Association.<sup>145</sup>

In short, when speaking at the annual convention of the WGG, McNaughton did not encourage militarism or imperialism, but after 1914, neither did she give rousing condemnations

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<sup>143</sup> See Appendix # II, "The Meetings of the Hillview Grain Growers' Association" for the decline in activity in these years.

<sup>144</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGGA Yearbook 1917.

<sup>145</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGGA Yearbook 1918.



of the War nor did she condemn the WGG's patriotic work. Instead, she highlighted the effect of the War on farm people as a class and the humanitarian work that the women in WGG were doing to relieve the suffering of soldiers and other victims of war. In 1914, as they worked together to launch the WGG, Francis Beynon had cautioned McNaughton that she was "far too radical" for most women and she had advised her to be cautious.<sup>146</sup> As the war ground to halt, it was McNaughton who proved to be a "prudent revolutionary" while Beynon had become a passionate pacifist living in exile.<sup>147</sup> As a co-operative agrarian feminist who believed in a radical democratic approach to leadership that stressed listening to and responding to grassroots members, McNaughton had moderated her anti-war rhetoric in order to maintain unity within the farm women's movement.

Although McNaughton was very influential within the WGG, it and its goals were not "the product of a single mind, or even a few minds, but of a large number of farm women....They were gradually evolved by farm women who

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<sup>146</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), Frances M. Beynon to McNaughton, 15 January 1914.

<sup>147</sup> Brian Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries - Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1-3. Anne Hicks, "Introduction" to Francis Beynon, Aleta Dey (1919; reprint, London: Virago Press, 1988), xiv. Aleta Dey, an autobiographical novel about Beynon's experiences during the War, clearly conveys Beynon's passionate commitment to pacifism.

wished to help themselves."<sup>148</sup> McNaughton did not like to impose her ideas on other women; instead, she wanted to cooperate with them to find "ground for common action" and to work out a set of goals on which they could agree.<sup>149</sup> The WGG did achieve a number of its goals. A list of achievements of the WGG and the United Farm Women which appeared in The Western Producer in May of 1928 is a good summary of the achievements of the WGG, likely written by long-time WGG activist Annie Hollis and from her point of view.<sup>150</sup> (See Appendix #I, Summary of the Achievements of the WGG and the United Farm Women to 1928.) The establishment of municipal nurses, doctors and hospitals should be added to this and any list of WGG achievements.<sup>151</sup>

News of the WGG spread quickly across the prairies through reports in The Grain Growers' Guide and other farm

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<sup>148</sup> SAB Pamphlet G35.15, "The Women's Section - Past Present and Future," a 1923 WGG pamphlet.

<sup>149</sup> The Western Producer 9 April 1931.

<sup>150</sup> The Western Producer 31 May 1928.

<sup>151</sup> The list appeared, when Hollis was the Woman President of the United Farmers of Canada, on the UFC page of The Western Producer 31 May 1928. SAB Pamphlet G37.47,1 "Mainly for Women." See also Marchildon's "The Women's Section" and Rudolph George Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913-1920," in Building Beyond the Homestead - Rural History of the Prairies ed. David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 89-109. Annie Hollis did not join the WGG until 1917 so she missed McNaughton's initial push for "medical aid within the reach of all."

papers. McNaughton, the other farm women in the WGG, and their allies had brought a new kind of farm women's organization into being during in 1913, 1914 and 1915. In so doing, they made a substantial contribution to the origins of the farm women's movement in Canada. All her life McNaughton was to look back with pride at her part in the creation of the WGG, the first organization of its kind in Canada.<sup>152</sup> The women's sections of the United Farmers in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario were all patterned on the WGG. McNaughton was asked to assist in the establishment of the United Farm Women in all of these provinces.

In Alberta, the head office of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), having heard of the WGG, began to promote the idea of a similar group in Alberta and organized a women's meeting in conjunction with the 1914 UFA annual provincial convention but it was poorly attended.<sup>153</sup> In January 1915, the founding convention of the Alberta Farm Women was held in Edmonton.<sup>154</sup> McNaughton attended and reported to the WGG

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<sup>152</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, Notes "loan of his....artificial conditions." SAB pamphlet, G35.15, A WS-SGGA pamphlet quoting an article by Mary P. McCallum in The Grain Growers' Guide 28 June 1918, "The Women's Section Past Present and Future." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton notes "How Pioneer Farm Women Sparked the Suffrage Campaign in Saskatchewan, And How the Spark was Nearly Smothered!" 29 The Western Producer 1954.

<sup>153</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta, ACC. 69.193 /2b, Mrs. R.W. Barritt, "History of United Farm Women."

<sup>154</sup> For more details about the formation of the UFWA see Nanci Langford, manuscript, Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars: 75 Years of Organized Farm Women in Alberta

that

last month I was invited to the United Farmers of Alberta Women's Convention at Edmonton, where I met a splendid gathering of women and experienced the great pleasure of seeing them organize along similar lines to ours.<sup>155</sup>

With the Women's Auxiliary of the UFA only a month old, McNaughton was already dreaming of the day when the Alberta farm women and the WGG would be part of a national network of farm women. She explained this to the WGG saying,

I believe this action on their part will be very helpful to us, for we are all women of the West, and many of our problems are interprovincial. I look forward to the day when the women members of the farmers' organizations will increase in such numbers that a women's representative from each province will be elected to sit in the Canadian Council of Agriculture.<sup>156</sup>

The following year McNaughton attended the convention of the "sister organization" in Alberta again. She brought greetings from the WGG and explained, "in a very interesting manner," what the WGG was doing.<sup>157</sup> At this meeting, the Alberta women reorganized, rejecting the idea of functioning as a women's auxiliary, and became the United Farm Women of

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(Edmonton: Women of Uniform History Book Committee, 1996), 1-16 of chapter one. Publication pending by Detselig.

<sup>155</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>156</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>157</sup> Glenbow Archives, M-146 Reel #1, UFA Papers, Minutes of the second annual convention of the Women's Auxiliary of the UFA, 19 January 1916.

Alberta with Irene Parlby as their new president.<sup>158</sup> For Parlby this was "a gigantic and terrifying task," but fortunately she had met a mentor she respected and soon trusted, the "small but mighty" Violet McNaughton.<sup>159</sup> Parlby was never very confident about public life and, even though she was older and of a higher class than McNaughton, she looked to McNaughton for guidance about dealing with public life. From then until Parlby died in 1965 she and McNaughton were good friends. This meant that, for many years, there was a close connection between the work the two women did in the farm women's movement.<sup>160</sup>

There were also more links between the UFWA and the WGG than between the WGG and the other women's sections of the farm organizations, in part because farming in the two provinces developed at a similar time and pace, and there were many political, economic, and social links. Nanci

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<sup>158</sup> Langford, manuscript, Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars, 10-11 of chapter one.

<sup>159</sup> Glenbow Museum, Irene Parlby Papers, Microfilm A.C., Irene Parlby, speech, "A While Ago and To-day!" n.d. The Western Producer, 8 February 1968.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Beatrice Parlby, 28 July 1988. For Parlby and McNaughton's correspondence see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(1-3). In the 1950s the balance in their friendship changed when McNaughton was going through a difficult post-retirement period. Then Parlby was the strong one to whom McNaughton looked for support. For more details of McNaughton and Parlby's friendship see Catherine Anne Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994, 122-147. Cavanaugh and I have discussed Parlby and McNaughton's friendship at length.

Langford found that McNaughton and the other members of the WGG provided "invaluable support" to the executive members of the new Alberta group.<sup>161</sup> However, they were still two different groups. Alvin Finkel argues that the "UFWA could have fought better for its aims had it not been forced to mute its activities so as not to offend the patriarchal UFA."<sup>162</sup> In Saskatchewan, the WGG managed to subvert the conservative leadership quite often, and thereby get around the patriarchs in the SGGA who tried to control McNaughton and the WGG in this period.

In 1916 McNaughton was hoping the women in the WGG would soon have "the same pleasant friendship with our Manitoba sisters" as they had with the UFWA but it was not until 1918 that the Women's Section of the Manitoba Grain Grower's Association was organized. McNaughton attended and addressed the founding convention.<sup>163</sup> She also attended their second annual convention in 1919 as a "fraternal delegate" and continued to be interested in the "Manitoba

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<sup>161</sup> Langford, manuscript, Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars, 8 of chapter one.

<sup>162</sup> Alvin Finkel, "Populism and Gender: The UFA and Social Credit Experiences," Journal of Canadian Studies 27, 4 (Winter 1992-1993), 76-97; reprinted in Canadian Women A Reader ed. Wendy Mitchinson and others (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company Canada, 1996), 315.

<sup>163</sup> Public Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba Papers MG10 E1 Box 15, Program of the Annual Convention - Women's Section, 10 January 1918.

sisters."<sup>164</sup> Later renamed the United Farm Women of Manitoba, like the general male-dominated farm organization in Manitoba, it was always more conservative than the WGG and the UFWA.<sup>165</sup> This, and early misinterpretations of McNaughton's beliefs by men in the MGGGA, made her somewhat cautious of Manitoba. She therefore had less contact with the "Manitoba sisters" than she did with the women in the UFWA.<sup>166</sup>

When McNaughton agreed to attend and help the United Farm Women of Ontario (UFWO) organize in 1918 her "visit was awaited with much anticipation."<sup>167</sup> Margaret Kechnie argues that McNaughton's

endorsement was important to the new group. Not only would it lend them the respectability they sought but the leadership could profit from her experience as the leader of one of the most successful women's groups in Canada."<sup>168</sup>

At this meeting McNaughton met Emma Greisbach, one of the

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<sup>164</sup> Public Archives of Manitoba, United Farmers of Manitoba Papers MG10 E1 Box 15, Manitoba Grain Growers' Year Book 1919 8,9,10 January 1919.

<sup>165</sup> Jeffery Taylor, Fashioning Farmers - Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre University of Regina, 1994), 108-116.

<sup>166</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), Francis Beynon to McNaughton, 10 March 1915.

<sup>167</sup> Margaret Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness," Ontario History LXXVII(4) (December 1985), 268.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 267.

founding members of the UFWO, who admired McNaughton and the farm movements of the West. She admired them because, as Kechnie puts it, they had "produced some of the most politicized women in Canada, as well as some of the most widely respected feminists and activists."<sup>169</sup> Greisbach was particularly impressed with McNaughton and seems to have trusted her, even though she seems to have lacked McNaughton's good sense.<sup>170</sup> Mrs. G.A. Brodie became the first president, of the UFWO.<sup>171</sup> McNaughton later visited Brodie at New Market and had her only "intimate glimpse" of rural Ontario. Brodie and McNaughton later worked together in the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and formed a lasting friendship.<sup>172</sup>

This organizational work in other provinces boosted McNaughton's confidence and made it possible for her to move into a position of leadership at a national level in

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 271-277. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E81, Emma Griesbach to McNaughton, 25 April 1919, McNaughton to Griesbach 29 May 1919; A1 E23, Mary McCallum to McNaughton, 20 March 1920.

<sup>171</sup> Archives Collection University of Guelph Library, Leonard Harman/United Co-operatives of Ontario Collection, Xa1 MS A126005, Minutes of the UFWO Meetings, 18-19 December 1918. Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario," 275.

<sup>172</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E81, McNaughton to Mrs. G.A. Brodie; A1 D1(1), Brodie to McNaughton, 30 March 1926; A1 D1(2), McNaughton to Brodie, 17 August 1939.



1919.<sup>173</sup> Although McNaughton was growing more confident about her ability to organize and about her feminist ideas in the years from 1914 to 1918, she never was as bold about making public statements about feminism as were the Beynons sisters. They openly used the term 'feminist' in public and enthusiastically applauded "the feminist movement." At the 1915 WGG convention Francis Beynon gave an "instructive address" reminding the farm women that "the feminist movement" was world-wide. Lillian Beynon Thomas also arrived unexpectedly at the convention and spoke about

the feminist movement, saying that this is one of the most critical times in its history. Every action and word should be weighed. She complimented the Women Grain Growers saying that the movement had been started in this province through their efforts. [She told them that] the chief thing when fighting in a common cause is for women to remain loyal to women.<sup>174</sup>

McNaughton was more cautious than this about the use of the term 'feminist' in public.<sup>175</sup> Even though McNaughton admired the Beynons and usually agreed with them, only

<sup>173</sup> McNaughton was also asked to help organize a United Farm Women's group in New Brunswick. She was willing to help but because they did not pursue forming a group she did not do so. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E80, C.A. King to Louise Burbank, 18 June 1919; Burbank to King, 25 June 1919; King to Burbank 23 July 1919.

<sup>174</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGG Yearbook 1915.

<sup>175</sup> After she became Women's Editor of The Western Producer she occasionally used the term 'feminist' on the 'Mainly for Women' pages. However even though the pages are full of feminist ideas she did not refer to herself as a feminist directly. The Western Producer 3 May 1928, 15 August, 12 July 1945.

occasionally did she identify herself as "a feminist" or "an ardent feminist" in her private correspondence, and she appears not to have done so in public.<sup>176</sup> This likely was because she did not want to offend people and push them away from the farm movement. Nevertheless, everyone who knew her, knew that the cause of women was extremely important to her, and the people who knew her well, knew she was a feminist.<sup>177</sup>

McNaughton agreed with Thomas that women fighting for the cause of women should remain loyal to women, but her loyalties were contradictory at times because she also believed in solidarity among farm people in the face of their "foes."<sup>178</sup> Therefore she was treading the fine line between her desire to help women fight the patriarchy and wanting to fight the forces allied against farm people. In other words, at times her gender and class loyalties were in conflict. What she said frankly and privately to her co-workers in the WGG, such as Zoa Haight, was at times somewhat different in emphasis from what she said in public. However the women with whom she worked for years in the WGG were ready to call her to task if any of them thought she

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<sup>176</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E33, McNaughton to Andrew Sibbald 27 September 1934. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D12, McNaughton to Peter Bludoff, 11 April 1942.

<sup>177</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992.

<sup>178</sup> The Western Producer, 22 January 1933.

erred. Because she and her working partners in the WGG built up a solid bond of trust over the years, she listened carefully to them.<sup>179</sup> As she put it when writing to Annie Hollis, who was always eager to discuss and to debate principles without resorting to personal slights, "I'm always glad to see your writing on an envelope, for I know there is something interesting inside, even if we don't always agree."<sup>180</sup>

Although many of the WGG achievements were important in looking back on these years, McNaughton thought some of the most important things she and the WGG accomplished were results of their campaign for women's suffrage and their campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all." She poured a tremendous amount of energy into these two campaigns, both of which took place when she was the president of the WGG.<sup>181</sup> The way in which she campaigned for suffrage and medical aid arose out of her agrarian feminist ideology that sought "ground for common

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<sup>179</sup> See the correspondence between McNaughton and the women in the WGG from 1912 to 1926 for their on-going discussions, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1-9).

<sup>180</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(8), McNaughton to Annie Hollis, 25 March 1925. For an example of the way in which Hollis chose to present her position on one point of principle on which she was disagreeing with McNaughton see "Extract From Letter from Mrs. Hollis, May 14th," to the Executive of the Women's Section - SGGGA, 1923, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(7).

<sup>181</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1D1(3), McNaughton to Mrs. Ray Paul, 23 February 1942.

action."<sup>182</sup>

McNaughton had played a vital role in the farm women's movement in Saskatchewan during its formative years. By early 1918, when she resigned as president of the WGG, both the Homemakers and the WGG were well-established groups which co-operated in as many areas as possible. By looking at McNaughton's part in the suffrage campaign and the campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all," the next two chapters will focus on the connections between these two streams of the farm women's movement in Saskatchewan and the way in which McNaughton's agrarian feminism fostered co-operation within the farm women's movement and the broader women's movement and farm movement.

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<sup>182</sup>

The Western Producer 9 April 1931.

## CHAPTER SIX

## COMING

## "TOGETHER ON COMMON GROUND FOR COMMON GOOD"

## DURING THE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN

Violet McNaughton's religious-like devotion to the ideal of co-operation was so important to her that she attempted to live by her co-operative philosophy in all areas of her life. This was one of the main features of her agrarian feminism. She applied it during her campaigns, in the groups to which she belonged, and to her working relationships with individuals. The suffrage campaign shows clearly how McNaughton applied her belief in co-operation to relations between the WGG and other suffragists. In other words it reveals the great emphasis she placed on her style of co-operative integrative agrarian feminism. She used her co-operative feminism to bring together women who were divided by class, ethnicity, religion, and region, and to bring farm women together with women from villages, towns, and cities. McNaughton formed an alliance with Zoa Haight. The two farm women were friends and had an effective working partnership during the formation of the WGG and the suffrage campaign, somewhat like the partnership Violet had with John McNaughton in Hillview Grain Growers.

McNaughton fought for "the suffragette cause," she was later to say, on the grounds that the franchise was "our

inalienable right as human beings."<sup>1</sup> She also argued that by having the vote women would be able to improve the daily lives of women, especially farm women and their families, by increasing their power to push for reforms such as "medical aid within the reach of all."<sup>2</sup>

There were five steps in McNaughton's suffrage campaign in Saskatchewan. First, at the local level she won the support of her husband, her brother, her father and other radical women and men in the Hillview Grain Growers, by imagining with them a community in which women would have equal political rights with men and by taking steps to create this sort of a community in Hillview. Second, at the provincial level, with the support of feminist presswomen and radical men in the SGGG, she and other farm women organized the Women Grain Growers in part to fight for suffrage. They were opposed by the powerful conservative men in the Grain Growers. These steps were discussed in previous chapters. The third step in McNaughton's campaign was to work with the WGG organizing a letter campaign and collecting petitions to send to the Premier. They could not

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<sup>1</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Mrs. Ray Paul, 23 February 1942.

<sup>2</sup> SPL-LHR, documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2115, pamphlet, Violet McNaughton, "Medical Aid within the Reach of All," [September, 1916]. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 23 September 1916. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Medical Aid."

collect enough signatures on their own, and again she was facing opposition from the conservative leaders of the Grain Growers, so she took a fourth step. She formed an alliance between the WGG and other suffragists in the province to push for the vote by organizing a Provincial Equal Franchise Board (PEFB). Fifth, after the provincial vote was granted she revamped the suffrage alliance hoping to be able to campaign for the federal, municipal, and school franchise.

Elizabeth Kalmakoff's thesis "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan" is the best analysis of the suffrage campaign in Saskatchewan.<sup>3</sup> She disagrees with Carol Bacchi and Carole Bryant about ethnicity. Bacchi claims that the farm women wanted the vote for several reasons including a desire to "strengthen the Protestant Anglo-Saxon clique to which they belonged." Bryant followed Bacchi's lead and argued that suffrage was passed in order to control European immigrants.<sup>4</sup> Kalmakoff found that "the idea that either the

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Ann Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1993. See also Elizabeth Kalmakoff, "Naturally Divided: Woman in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919," Saskatchewan History 46(2) (Fall 1994): 3-18.

<sup>4</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 8-9. Carole Y. Bryant, "'To the Fairmindedness of Men': Female Suffrage in Saskatchewan, 1912-1916," M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1988. Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 123. Kalmakoff was careful in this analysis, in part because she is herself of British and eastern European descent. For a similar argument with regard to American feminists see Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City 1800-1860 (New York: Oxford

government or the reformers were primarily motivated by a desire to control the immigrants does not stand up to scrutiny."<sup>5</sup> My research confirms Kalmakoff's conclusion. There were some individual women in the WGG who were anglo-bigots, such as Mrs. O. Cooper of Aquadell in the southwest corner of the province, the most conservative part of Saskatchewan. However McNaughton and most of the women in the WGG were not anglo-bigots. They wanted European farm women to join the WGG.<sup>6</sup>

Kalmakoff argues that the Liberal government granted women the vote pragmatically in order to "maximize support for the Liberal party" and that feminists like McNaughton who participated in the campaign used "egalitarian as well as maternalist arguments." They believed, she says, that

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University Press, 1978}, 269, cited in Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 18.

<sup>5</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> For example see Mrs. Cooper's position compared to McNaughton's position, discussed in chapter eight. Also see the reports of the district directors in SAB, pamphlet G35.1 Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1916. For other discussions of the suffrage campaigns by McNaughton and other Saskatchewan suffragists see: Bacchi, Liberation Deferred, 117-132. Catherine L. Cieverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (1950; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1974). Christine MacDonal, "How Saskatchewan Women Got the Vote," Saskatchewan History 1(3) (Autumn 1948): 1-8. June Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," in Politics in Saskatchewan, ed. Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills: Longman, 1968), 78-92. Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 81-88. Rudolph George Marchildon, "The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1981, 57-87.



they were "striving to create a more democratic and virtuous society," that they were active in a larger reform movement, that they were "aware of the economic, legal, and political disabilities of their sex," and that they "advocated reform of the laws affecting women's property rights, proposed various measures to protect women, and claimed the right to vote."<sup>7</sup>

Kalmakoff's dating of the divide in the movement is the same as Nancy Cott's periodization, even though she did not use Cott's The Grounding of Modern Feminism. Cott found that in the United States the 1910s "signalled a new phase in the debate and agitation about women's rights and freedoms that had flared for hundreds of years."<sup>8</sup> In this twentieth century phase of debate and agitation the term 'feminist' first came into use in North America. Kalmakoff's reading of the original sources led her to the conclusion that in Saskatchewan there was a division in the women's movement in 1912. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) took the lead before 1912.<sup>9</sup> Women in the WCTU, such as Grace Fletcher, discussed women's suffrage sporadically, but temperance and the property questions were their primary

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<sup>7</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," i.

<sup>8</sup> Nancy F. Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 32-68.

focus rather than suffrage.<sup>10</sup> From the fall of 1912 onward Saskatchewan women began to actively campaign for suffrage.<sup>11</sup> Kalmakoff found that

the entrance of the Women Grain Growers Association into the field marked the beginning of a concerted campaign for woman suffrage which united urban and rural women and focused their attention on the necessity for women to have the vote in order to attain their various legislative goals.<sup>12</sup>

She also argued that the group which united urban and rural women was the Provincial Equal Franchise Board (PEFB) and that "Violet McNaughton was clearly the moving force behind the organization."<sup>13</sup>

When Cott and Kalmakoff's ideas about periodization are used together it means that McNaughton and the Women Grain Growers moved Saskatchewan women into the twentieth century phase of the women's movement in which suffragists used the term 'feminist'. McNaughton and the WGG persuaded different groups of women to co-operate in order to attain suffrage. After they pushed through provincial suffrage they began to

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<sup>10</sup> Georgina M. Taylor, "Grace Fletcher, Women's Rights, Temperance, and 'British Fair Play' in Saskatoon, 1885-1907" Saskatchewan History (46)1 (Spring 1994): 3-21. See also Georgina M. Taylor, "Grace Sarah Hall Thompson (Fletcher)," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIII, 1901 To 1910 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 1025-1026.

<sup>11</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 69-110.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 94.

deal with the question of women and property.

McNaughton's primary loyalty was to farm women and their families. Her loyalty to the farm community and her ideas about the unity of farm people showed similarities with the ideas of other women for whom there were, and are, barriers to universal sisterhood. There is a parallel between her loyalties to the farm women and the farm community and the loyalty of Afro-American slave women. Nancy A. Hewitt argues that in the United States the Afro-American slave experience created "strong bonds among women [that] strengthened the community as a whole, providing support for interests of slave men and a defense against domination by white men and women."<sup>14</sup> Hewitt also argues that American farm women had similar experiences. Both slave women and farm women, she says, "had the support of male kin and neighbours; and together, the men and women of each class segment sought to channel social change in the direction of their own material and social interests."<sup>15</sup>

McNaughton also believed that the "busy dirt-farm women," on whom she focused, had areas of mutual interest with city women, and therefore "they should get together on

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<sup>14</sup> Nancy A. Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood," in Unequal Sisters - A Multicultural Reader In U.S. Women's History, 2nd ed., ed. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz (New York: Routledge, 1990), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 9. For more on the way in which strong bonds between Afro-American women strengthened community see Gloria Jean Wade-Gayles, Pushed Back to Strength - A Black Woman's Journey Home (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

common ground for the common good."<sup>16</sup> In other words she was espousing the beliefs of an "integrative" agrarian feminist. She was an agrarian feminist wanting to co-operate with other feminists and reformers, who might be very different from the feminists in the WGG but shared important "integrative principles" with the WGG and had some of the same goals. Since McNaughton's feminism was integrative, rather than separatist, she did not want to isolate the WGG from other feminists.<sup>17</sup> McNaughton recognized that in addition to the WGG there were other feminists in the province who believed in the principle of equal suffrage for women. Like her, they wanted to use constitutional methods rather than militant strategies.<sup>18</sup> Therefore she went about organizing a united front so they could co-operate to achieve a common goal, the vote for women. As feminists today would phrase it, she set about creating a suffrage network and an umbrella organization.

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<sup>16</sup> The Western Producer 3 June 1943. SAB, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "our Welfare Page," Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915.

<sup>17</sup> Angela Miles, Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s -1990s (New York: Routledge, 1996), x.

<sup>18</sup> See Catherine Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage. For McNaughton's discussion about the militants with Nellie McClung and Lillian (Beynon) Thomas, following the publication of Cleverdon's book see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), Catherine Cleverdon to McNaughton, 15 October 1943; McNaughton to Cleverdon, 17 November 194; A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Thomas, 19 July 1950; Nellie McClung to McNaughton, n.d. ca. 24 July 1950 - 1 August 1950, McNaughton to McClung 1 August 1950.

Finding "ground for common action," McNaughton organized the Provincial Equal Franchise Board. She believed the suffragists of Saskatchewan could then work "together on common ground for the common good," thereby taking advantage of the "increased effectiveness of united action," even if their basic feminist ideologies were quite different.<sup>19</sup> She was an agrarian feminist, but she was prepared to form an alliance with other types of feminists.<sup>20</sup>

From 1912 onward suffragists in the SGG received support from the radical men in the Association, like McNaughton's husband John and Edward Partridge. However there was no such support from the conservative Grain Growers, like W.R. Motherwell, who was the Minister of Agriculture in the Liberal government, and George Langley, who was the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In spite of their own rhetoric about equality for farmers, Motherwell and Langley stalled and put roadblocks in front of the suffragists. In 1912 Motherwell believed that women did not really want the vote because "they endure no wrongs which are not removed under the present system." Langley believed that until a "fair minority" of women asked for the vote it

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<sup>19</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925, reproduced here in Appendix # V "Violet McNaughton's 'Bald Outline of the Granting of the Provincial Suffrage.'"

<sup>20</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925, 9 April 1931. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915.

should not be given to them.<sup>21</sup> Both were familiar excuses for doing nothing.

In December 1913, when McNaughton and Zoa Haight were on the committee set up to establish the WGG, she wrote to Haight saying

I think after the way the men declared for "Votes for Women" at the Saskatoon Convention that the GGA should see to it, that the women are encouraged to come forward & take their place & prepare to be able to use the vote.<sup>22</sup>

In assessing the situation McNaughton realized that, during the drive for the vote, she could build on the foundations established by the WCTU, the Beynon sisters, and Barbara Wiley's 1912 visit to Saskatchewan. Although Kalmakoff found that the WCTU in Saskatchewan had talked about suffrage but had not taken much action to bring about suffrage, McNaughton believed that the WCTU was "the pioneer organization" that had put "a great deal of effort" into educating the public about the need for women's suffrage. Therefore she thought it was important for the WGG to ally with them. She also knew that she could tap into the good will that the Beynon sisters had created in promoting "the rural club movement" because they were "two of the most understanding women we ever knew." In addition she wanted to take advantage of British feminist Barbara Wiley's visit to

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<sup>21</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 75.

<sup>22</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913.

Saskatchewan in the fall of 1912 which had helped the franchise "question" to take "root" in the province.<sup>23</sup>

The third stage of McNaughton's suffrage campaign was organizing a letter campaign and the collection of suffrage petitions by the WGG. The WGG put a great deal of effort into taking up suffrage petitions between May and December 1913. Premier Scott received hundreds of letters and petitions from the rural areas of the province; the majority of the petitioners were farm women or women who owned farms. SGGA secretary Fred Green also presented a mass petition on their behalf to the Premier.<sup>24</sup> However these petitions and the letters were never made public.

McNaughton would not let the Premier get away with this secrecy. She wrote a letter that was published in the Grain Growers' Guide in February 1914 saying that, when she and a delegation from the WGG visited the Legislature in December, her husband John had gone with them and he talked to some of the MLAs. They told him that the WGG, which was not as sophisticated about the use of the political system as it would be later, had made a mistake in sending them to the Premier. Instead they should have sent the petitions though

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<sup>23</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925, 11 December 1952. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 30 March 1914. SAB, pamphlets G35.1, SWGGA Its History, Constitution and Platform 1914. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mrs. A.V. Thomas, 19 July 1950.

<sup>24</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 83, 86-87.

their own Members, who would have presented them in the Legislature, thereby making them public.<sup>25</sup> John, a pro-feminist man, was giving his wife his full support as usual.

W. R. Motherwell, the SGGA pioneer who was the Liberal Minister of Agriculture in 1913, was of no assistance to the suffragists. Stalwart Liberal loyalist that he was, he simply reiterated the government's position in the Legislature. He claimed that "there could be no doubt as to the right of women to the franchise. The question was whether there was any real demand for the vote," the same old excuse for inaction.<sup>26</sup> The government's attitude to the suffragists and its stalling tactics had been graphically illustrated in a cartoon in the Grain Growers' Guide early in 1913. It depicted Premier Scott saying "Speak!" as he held a card labelled "Votes for Women" above the head of a woman kneeling like a dog begging for food."<sup>27</sup> (See the cartoon in Appendix # IV "Speak!") McNaughton did not like begging. In her letter to the Guide a year after the cartoon was published, McNaughton told the editor and the readers of the paper that the Premier's handling of the petitions had caused the farm women a great deal of "useless trouble."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide, 11 February 1914. Quoted in Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 87.

<sup>26</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 87.

<sup>27</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 26 February 1913.

<sup>28</sup> The Grain Grower's Guide, 11 February 1914.



Historians, who make interprovincial comparisons of different provincial suffrage campaigns, tend to be somewhat dismissive with regard to the Saskatchewan campaign because they see it as being shorter and therefore easier than the campaigns in the other provinces.<sup>29</sup> McNaughton did not think of the campaign as easy. Later she looked back and said that

in Saskatchewan the WCTU, the Women Grain Growers (a rural movement of which I was president) and several Equal Franchise Leagues were the groups that conducted the campaign for the franchise in Saskatchewan. This work was quite difficult because there were few cars and almost as few telephones owned by prairie people, but we persisted and won.<sup>30</sup>

Correspondence between her and Haight during the campaign shows clearly that it was a great struggle for her.<sup>31</sup> Nor did she remember it as having been easy. She pointed out that gathering signatures on petitions was "tiring and difficult work." It was, she emphasized, "very slow work, handicapped as it was by a good deal of prejudice and

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<sup>29</sup> Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 46-71. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 99-103.

<sup>30</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Catherine Cleverdon, 17 November 1943.

<sup>31</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913, 30 March 1914, December 1914, 20 December 1914, 4 March 1915, 8 May 1915, 22 May 1915, 14 September 1915, 4 October 1915, 21 February 1916, 13 March 1916, 24 April 1916, 14 June 1916.

apathy, and without material reward."<sup>32</sup> (See the article in Appendix # V Violet McNaughton's "Bald Outline of the Granting of the Provincial Suffrage.") McNaughton and the other women in the WGG were not only busy getting their own organization established and dealing with other WGG business, they were also constrained because many of the women who collected the petitions were living in conditions just as difficult as those in which McNaughton lived herself and, like her, were badly overworked.<sup>33</sup> When Premier Scott ignored all this hard work and stalled, she knew she needed a new approach.<sup>34</sup>

McNaughton wrote away to get as much information as she could about campaigning for suffrage. She wrote to Isabelle Scott, the secretary of the Montreal Suffrage Association, asking about strategies she could use in her campaign, and

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<sup>32</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Catherine Cleverdon, 17 November 1943. For the sorts of prejudice that they faced see discussions of anti-feminism in Randi R. Warne, Literature as Pulpit - The Christian Society Activism of Nellie L. McClung, vol. 2 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1993), 85-135. See also an article by Veronica Strong-Boag about anti-feminism of Goldwin Smith to Betty Steele in an up-coming issue of Histoire sociale/social History.

<sup>33</sup> For a description of the conditions in which farm women were living and their workload see Nanci Langford, "First Generation and Lasting Impressions: The Gendered Identities of Prairie Homestead Women," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 87-89.

Scott replied with suggestions.<sup>35</sup> She later recalled that

awed with the responsibility of finding suitable material for the Women Grain Growers suffrage campaign in desperation I wrote to J.S. Woodsworth for help. Back came a collection of pamphlets and leaflets telling what suffrage groups were doing in England, Australia and the USA, and a few other parts of the world interested and all of it was helpfully indexed for us. I still have most of it out at the farm. I recall one report of the First International Congress of Farm Women held at Colorado Springs in 1911. It did not give us much franchise information but lots of foundation bricks on which to build a campaign.<sup>36</sup>

It was obvious to McNaughton that the WGG did not have the resources to fight the suffrage campaign alone. She turned to both male allies, like Woodsworth, and to other feminist allies.

The fourth step in McNaughton's suffrage campaign was to organize a feminist suffrage alliance with the WCTU and

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<sup>35</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers, A1 E72, "How the Social Lives of Farm Women can be Improved," ca. 1914-1915; A1 E18, M. Green Ellis to McNaughton, 15 December 1914; Mrs. D.J. Rose to McNaughton 2 January ca. 1915; E.C. Stores to McNaughton, 11 May 1914; McNaughton to Mrs. D.J. Rose, 2 January ca. 1915; McNaughton to M. Green Ellis, 15 December 1914.

<sup>36</sup> The Western Producer 8 December 1955. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Women, 13, LH 2121, "Official Proceedings of the First International Congress of Farm Women" 17-20 October 1911. From her notations on pamphlets it would appear that the subjects McNaughton found most interesting or helpful were the discussions of the need for labour saving devices and water supply and sewage disposal in farm homes, a discussion of public health and the aims of the Congress, and the fact that Mrs. W. R. Motherwell was at the Congress. The papers to which McNaughton refers are now in the SAB and SPL-LHR collections. For correspondence between McNaughton and J.S. Woodsworth see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D69. See also Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics - A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 80, 94-5, 158, 207, 212.

other Saskatchewan suffragists. Her agrarian feminism, which focused on farm women and the political economy, was different from the "evangelical feminists" in the WCTU and the equal rights feminists who formed the Political Equality Leagues.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless she believed that the evangelical feminists in the WCTU, who "tried to monitor their own domestic and social behaviours so that positive habits would be cultivated and a virtuous example provided for others," and the equal rights feminists in the Political Equality Leagues in Saskatchewan, who focused on equality of women with men, were potential allies.<sup>38</sup>

In forging an alliance with the evangelical feminists and the equal rights feminists McNaughton focused on two important integrative principles. First, all the suffragists of the province believed in an equal franchise for women, and second, they believed in using constitutional

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<sup>37</sup> For a definition of "evangelical feminists" and their role in the WCTU in Ontario see Sharon Anne Cook, "'Sowing Seed for the Master': The Ontario WCTU and Evangelical Feminism 1874-1930," Journal of Canadian Studies 30(3) (Fall 1995): 175-194.

<sup>38</sup> Cook, "Sowing Seed for the Master," 184. Cook points out that in the ideology of the twentieth century the provincial leadership of the national WCTU diverged from the grassroots members in Ontario local unions when the provincial and national leaders began to seek environmental explanations for societal vice. The WCTU in Saskatchewan would appear to have been like the local women in Ontario. For information on the ideology of one Saskatchewan member of the WCTU see Taylor, "Grace Fletcher," 3-21. See also Taylor, "Grace Sarah Hall Thompson (Fletcher)," 1025-1026.

methods.<sup>39</sup> McNaughton believed that farm women should "aim high" and "go slow."<sup>40</sup> She was a "prudent revolutionary," to use Brian Harrison's apt term, rather than a militant suffragette.<sup>41</sup> A third principle, the belief in the importance of temperance and a commitment to attempt bringing about prohibition, was a potential integrative principle. However suffragists were not all in agreement upon this principle. In the midst of the wartime enthusiasm for prohibition many Saskatchewan women supported it, some opposed it, and some like McNaughton herself were indifferent about it. McNaughton also knew how important temperance was to the women in the WCTU. However the lack of unanimity on prohibition among the suffragists meant that it was not as easy to use an integrative principle as were two principles upon which there was general agreement.

In March 1914, knowing she had to have more feminist allies in the suffrage campaign, McNaughton began to make the initial contacts necessary to create a suffrage alliance

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<sup>39</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 15 December 1913.

<sup>40</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(1), McNaughton to Irene Parlby, 14 April 1920. McNaughton, "Forming a Woman's Auxiliary," The Grain Growers' Guide 27 June 1913.

<sup>41</sup> The Western Producer 16 April 1925, 28 May 1925. Brian Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries - Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1-3. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D 54(1), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 17 November 1919 and McNaughton to Irene Parlby, 14 April 1920; A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Flatt, 15 March 1920. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E23, Mary McCallum to McNaughton, 15 March 1920.

but she was faced with apathy in the cities of the province.<sup>42</sup> The WCTU, which had many members in small communities, was a potential ally.<sup>43</sup> In her study of the WCTU in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Nancy Sheehan found that, unlike the WCTU in Alberta, the Saskatchewan Unions were not as active in reform. In Saskatchewan the Unions were more concerned with charitable and benevolent activities than they were with activities such as prohibition, female suffrage, and temperance education.<sup>44</sup> The Saskatchewan WCTU had publicized the need for women's suffrage, but as an organization it had not taken action to gain the vote.<sup>45</sup> In other words most women in the WCTU in Saskatchewan appear to have been more like the grass roots women in Ontario, rather than the leaders of the Ontario provincial Union and the national union.<sup>45</sup>

Whether or not a person supported temperance was dependent, in large part, upon the church to which they belonged. Personally McNaughton thought that women's

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<sup>42</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 93. See also Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," 84, 87-88.

<sup>43</sup> Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1996), 202.

<sup>44</sup> Nancy Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies, 1886-1930: An Alberta-Saskatchewan Comparison" Prairie Forum 6 (1) (1981): 17-33.

<sup>45</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 82.

<sup>45</sup> Cook, "Sowing Seed for the Master," 175-194.

suffrage, the need for services in the rural areas, and problems with the agrarian political economy were far more important than temperance. In hop-growing, beer-brewing Kent she had enjoyed romancing for nine years with Frank Anderson, a brewer who liked going to the pub. She remembered all the fun she had had at parties in England, especially on New Year's Eve during the last ten years she was in the old country.<sup>47</sup> Many of her family were Quakers, but she was raised an Anglican. She appears to have been raised in the liberal, broad church tradition of Anglicanism which was, not so much high church and catholic or low church and evangelical, as it was broad-minded.

The rivalries between the low and high church traditions, that originated in 19th century evangelistic and tractarian revivals in Britain, were brought to the Canadian prairies by Church of England clergymen from Ontario and Britain.<sup>48</sup> Although some low church evangelical clergymen

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<sup>47</sup> SAB, A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 23 September 1916. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page." McNaughton Papers A1 B2, Frank Anderson to Violet Jackson, 14 April 1903, 8 January 1904, 1 October 1907.

<sup>48</sup> For details about the low church and high church traditions in the Church of England on the prairies see: Marilyn Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," in The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970, ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), 156. L. G. Thomas, "Secular History and Church History: An Introduction," in *ibid.*, 18-21; Trevor Powell, "The Church of England and the Immigrants in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle," in *ibid.*, 145-148.

of the Church of England, such as George Exton Lloyd, were interested in the temperance movement, most of the clergy and lay members of the Church of England were not interested because temperance advocates strongly disapproved of the wine it used in communion services.<sup>49</sup>

McNaughton and the WCTU had different ideas about churches. McNaughton was often critical of them and clergymen because she saw them as discriminating against women, and she thought they caused needless divisions in rural communities.<sup>50</sup> However the women in the WCTU were deeply religious evangelical women who supported the churches.<sup>51</sup> The WCTU had an "evangelical feminist" ideology with a distinct code of behaviour based on

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<sup>49</sup> Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," 156. Powell, "The Church of England and the Immigrants," 146-148. Christopher James Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop: George Exton Lloyd and the Immigration Debate," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996, 31-32. Wendy Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in A Not Unreasonable Claim - Women and Social Reform 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), 116.

<sup>50</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 3 June 1916, 10 June 1916. SAB, Pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1917.

<sup>51</sup> Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land' 164-166. Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 2nd ed., 192. In contrast to the positive interpretations of the WCTU given by these two readings see John Herd Thompson, "The Beginning of Our Regeneration: The Great War and Western Canadian Reform Movements," in Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada, ed. Samuel D. Clark and others (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1975), 87-104.



Christian morals and setting a good example.<sup>52</sup> While McNaughton stressed problems in the agrarian political economy, the women in the Unions were most concerned about the spiritual welfare of people and wanted to bring the Gospel to them so they would convert to evangelical Protestantism.<sup>53</sup> In other words theirs was "evangelical feminism," not agrarian feminism. McNaughton wanted people to change, but in this period she was a nominal Anglican who attended interdenominational services in the school house, and she was interested in the social gospel which stressed the temporal needs of life rather than saving souls for eternity.<sup>54</sup>

In 1916 McNaughton began to work with "The Rural Religious Movement," a group of lay people and clergymen who believed the 19 different church bodies in Saskatchewan created a "curse of denominational rivalry" and therefore

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<sup>52</sup> Cook, "Sowing Seed for the Master," 175. See also Beverly Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines? The National Council of Women, Nursing, and 'Women's Work' in Late Victorian Canada" in Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada, ed. Dianne Dodd and Deborah Gorham (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 17-47.

<sup>53</sup> Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land,'" 165.

<sup>54</sup> For details of the relationship between the social gospel and farm people like McNaughton see Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings, 2nd ed. ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), 561-572.

wanted church union.<sup>55</sup> She was appointed to a standing committee to carry on the work. Delegated to talk to the Anglicans, she ran into a brick wall, or as she tactfully put it "the work is proceeding but ecclesiastical machinery is naturally slow."<sup>56</sup> Because clergy like the Reverend G.E. Lloyd appeared to believe, as one of the Barr colonists put it, that "progress was entirely with his Church," she had little success in convincing them that church union would be a good thing.<sup>57</sup> In short she was not an evangelical feminist, and she seems to have been personally indifferent about temperance itself.

McNaughton was broad-minded and therefore she could get along well with most women, no matter what they thought about temperance. As a friend later said of her, "she saw both sides of the argument, and would present her points in a gracious manner."<sup>58</sup> Some of the members of the WGG did not believe in prohibition, but many prairie women were very passionate about it and saw prohibition as a solution to many of the problems that plagued society. Drinking seemed

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<sup>55</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," June 1916. SAB, Pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1917.

<sup>56</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E62(1), J.B. Musselman to McNaughton; "An Appeal to the Anglican Synod of Saskatchewan," June 1916.

<sup>57</sup> Helen Evans Reid, All Silent, All Damned: The Search for Isaac Barr (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1969), 142-143, quoted in Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop," 14.

<sup>58</sup> The Western Producer 25 April 1973.

to be a terrible waste amidst austerity and suffering, particularly in wartime.<sup>59</sup>

McNaughton dealt with this dilemma in the way that she often was to deal with other situations in which there was a wide range of ideas on a topic.<sup>60</sup> She had a co-operative style of leadership which grew out of her belief in the importance of grassroots democracy. She stressed the links between "personal acquaintanceship," "self-government," and "a great many needed reforms".<sup>61</sup> In other words she was a radical democrat who wanted as many people as possible involved in the decision-making of governments and organizations. As the president of the WGG and as a member of the executive, she believed that the officers should not "run the show."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, since prohibition was very important to many farm women during the suffrage campaign in Saskatchewan, even though she was President and had limited personal interest in prohibition, it was included in the

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<sup>59</sup> Morning Leader, Regina, 12 June 1914. For a discussion of how the Great War affected the push for prohibition on the prairies see Thompson, "The Beginning of Our Regeneration," 90-96.

<sup>60</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 17 June 1916.

<sup>61</sup> McNaughton therefore asked her readers "why should we not, men and women seek to develop the municipal unit," which provided possibilities "unthought of at the present." McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 27 May 1916.

<sup>62</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914; McNaughton to Haight, 15 December 1913; 14 June 1916; 14 September 1915.

policy of the WGG.<sup>53</sup> At its convention early in 1914 the WGG adopted a constitution that aimed

first and foremost to further those causes they were advocating, making such causes planks in the platform of the Women Grain Growers' Association, namely the Banish the Bar Movement, Woman's Franchise, Policy of Peace, Rural Education, Co-operation and [the] Establishment of Social Centres; and secondly, to help and strengthen the men's organization.<sup>54</sup>

The enthusiasm of many of the grassroots members of the WGG and the SGGA for prohibition was well illustrated in a cartoon in The Grain Growers' Guide in 1916, when the prohibition plebiscite passed in Saskatchewan. Premier Scott and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, George Langley, were chasing "Booze" away while the Grain Growers and WGG cheered Scott and Langley. (See the cartoon in Appendix # VI "Booze.")

Early in 1915 McNaughton told the WGG that

we Grain Growers strongly endorse the Banish the Bar policy. Many of our clubs are working on this question. At both the Qu'Appelle District and Saskatoon provincial WCTU conventions, I found a very sympathetic attitude towards the Women Grain Growers. We have many points in common, and I think that we cannot do better in temperance work than to support the efforts of the WCTU.<sup>55</sup>

That is to say, McNaughton was stating WGG policy and she

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<sup>53</sup> SAB, pamphlets G35.15, SWGGA Its History, Constitution and Platform 1914. Morning Leader, Regina, 12 June 1914.

<sup>54</sup> SAB, pamphlets G35.15, SWGGA Its History, Constitution and Platform 1914.

<sup>55</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

was determined to build an alliance with the WCTU, even if the Unions were made up of evangelical feminists who stressed morality and the need for conversions. Although she wanted to forge a suffrage alliance with the WCTU, she preferred that the WGG not focus too much on temperance. Instead she seems to have been indicating that she would prefer that the WGG leave temperance to the WCTU and be supportive of the Unions while the WGG concentrated on other issues.<sup>66</sup> As was so often the case with McNaughton, what she did not say was as important as what she said explicitly. She was particularly careful when her words were going down in print for public consumption.<sup>67</sup>

In March 1914 McNaughton seems to have known very little about the "Banish the Bar Movement." She even mistakenly thought it was called the "Abolish the Bar Movement."<sup>68</sup> She asked Haight, who lived close to Moose Jaw, if her local WGG club would help in the

"Abolish the Bar" movement? Can you get some Moose Jaw City women to form [a] Suffrage Society. What shall we do about suffrage. We can't accomplish much without the cities. I have tried Saskatoon and the Editor gave me an interview in the Phoenix on the subject. I interviewed Principal Lloyd & we arranged a plan whereby the WGG could help the

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> This may have been in part as a result of her usage of debatable infant mortality rates which will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>68</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 30 March 1914. Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," 85. See also Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop," 20, 31-32.

"Abolish the Bar Crusade." Do please excuse the scribble, I'm dead tired. Shall soon have writers cramp. Hoping to hear from you. Yours affectionately Violet McNaughton.<sup>69</sup>

Even though she was overworked, "dead tired," and still in poor health after her hysterectomy, McNaughton had arranged the interview with the formidable Principal G.E. Lloyd, of the Anglican college at the University of Saskatchewan, because she and the WGG saw temperance advocates as potential allies.<sup>70</sup> Lloyd had fought against the Métis in the Northwest Uprising of 1885, he had taken over the leadership of the Barr Colonists when Isaac Barr deserted them, and he had forged a place of influence for himself in Saskatchewan. An energetic, dictatorial, evangelical low churchman "who could not bear any opinion but his own," Lloyd had a life-long hatred of liquor.<sup>71</sup> He

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<sup>69</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 30 March 1914.

<sup>70</sup> President Walter Murray of the University of Saskatchewan, and his wife Christina were later friends of McNaughton's. Walter Murray was an ally of hers in fighting Lloyd's ideas about immigrants. While establishing the University, President Murray had many problems with Lloyd when he was the Principal of Emmanuel College. McNaughton worked well with Christina Murray in the National and Provincial Council of Women. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E41(1), McNaughton to Mrs. W.C. Murray, 19 September 1918; A1 E41(2), McNaughton to Mrs. W.C. Murray, 6 March 1919; Murray to McNaughton, 10 March 1919; A1 E13(7), Biographical sketch of McNaughton; McNaughton to Dr. Black, 30 December 1930. Michael Hayden, Seeking A Balance - The University of Saskatchewan 1907-1982 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1983), 8, 12, 15, 45, 53-54, 156.

<sup>71</sup> This was the opinion of one of his contemporaries. Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop," 26.

hated Americans and European immigrants, and he wanted a British West.<sup>72</sup> He was President of the Banish the Bar Movement in Saskatchewan that had been launched at a convention of the Temperance and Moral Reform Association the previous November.<sup>73</sup>

It soon became evident to McNaughton that Lloyd and the Banish the Bar Movement would be of no assistance to her and the other suffragists. Lloyd and the other clergymen who dominated it had no interest in an equal provincial franchise for women. They simply wanted the women to be able to vote in a temperance petition.<sup>74</sup> In other words, unlike her husband and the other pro-feminist men who were her allies in the Grain Growers, Lloyd and the clergymen who were allied with him in the temperance movement were anti-feminists.<sup>75</sup> They wanted to use women voters for their own purposes and did not support them in their quest for an equal provincial franchise.

During the Saskatchewan suffrage campaign Lloyd and the

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<sup>72</sup> Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," 156. Powell, "The Church of England and the Immigrants in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle," 148. Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land,'" 146. Kitzen, "The Fighting Bishop," 16, 19, 26 31-161.

<sup>73</sup> Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," 85. See also Kitzen, "The Fighting Bishop," 20, 31-32.

<sup>74</sup> Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," 85.

<sup>75</sup> Lloyd was prepared to extend women's activities in the church and to accept them as frontier workers, under his direction, but the freedom to vote as they liked was something else.

other clergymen in the Banish the Bar Movement inadvertently helped McNaughton by infuriating the women in the WCTU.<sup>76</sup> The WCTU wanted a provincial franchise equal to the male franchise law. The women in the Union soon realized that Lloyd and the Banish the Bar clergymen just wanted their votes in order to force through prohibition. Rather than continue passively supporting women's suffrage in principle as they had been doing, the women in the WCTU were so angered by this that they were ready to take an active part in the campaign for a "provincial equal franchise."<sup>77</sup> This created a superb opportunity for McNaughton in her efforts to create a provincial women's suffrage alliance.

In April 1914, soon after her meeting with Lloyd, McNaughton's integrative agrarian feminist strategy of finding "ground for common action" and forming alliances based on important integrative principles led her to accept an invitation to attend the WCTU district convention in Qu'Appelle, where she took part in a debate arguing in favour of women's suffrage.<sup>78</sup> At the Qu'Appelle convention McNaughton made important steps in forming an alliance with the WCTU based on their common belief in a provincial equal

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<sup>76</sup> Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop," 31.

<sup>77</sup> Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan Women," 85-88.

<sup>78</sup> The Western Producer 8 April 1931. SAB, McNaughton Papers Al E18, Mrs. H.E. Armstrong to McNaughton, April 1914. Morning Leader, Regina, 12 June 1914. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 91-92.



franchise. As an integrative feminists who stressed the importance of co-operation, she was pushing to bring together two disparate types of feminists, agrarian feminists and evangelical feminists, who might not otherwise have been working together.

As much as McNaughton wanted their co-operation, she wanted to be honest with these evangelical feminists. Therefore she was careful to explain her reservations about another potential integrative principle. She told the convention that, although temperance was part of the WGG policy, some individual members did not believe in the principle.<sup>79</sup> In other words McNaughton was making it clear to them that suffrage was a more important integrative principle than temperance. She knew that temperance was important to many farm women, but her own personal reservations about the importance of temperance motivated her to be quite clear about this. At this convention McNaughton met several of the WCTU women, who were to work very hard with her and the WGG in a suffrage alliance.<sup>80</sup>

McNaughton's contacts with urban suffragists had begun to bear fruit earlier in 1914 when formation of Equal Franchise Leagues began in small towns and cities. The first three were formed in Moosomin, North Battleford, and Prince

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<sup>79</sup> Morning Leader, Regina, 12 June 1914.

<sup>80</sup> Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 79-80. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 92. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 22 May 1915.

Albert, although the North Battleford League soon disappeared.<sup>31</sup> These suffragists were equal rights feminists who focused on the equality of women with men.

In June 1914 the WGG executive voted to form a woman's suffrage federation of representatives from the WGG, the WCTU, and the Provincial Equal Franchise Leagues. It also decided that, if a federation did materialize, McNaughton would be the WGG representative.<sup>32</sup> In December of 1914 McNaughton wrote to Haight to report that the WGG was "lining up with [the] WCTU on suffrage and white slave work, also the Political Equality Leagues."<sup>33</sup>

McNaughton saw suffrage and equality as integrative principles on which the WGG could unite with the feminists in the Political Equality Leagues. She saw suffrage and "white slave work" as integrative principles that the WCTU and the WGG women had in common. The WCTU was by then enthusiastic about campaigning for a provincial equal franchise, but it was much more concerned with sexual issues and "white slave work" than were McNaughton and the WGG as a

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<sup>31</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 89-91.

<sup>32</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E93, Minutes of the WGG Executive, 25 June 1914. SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>33</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914.

group.<sup>34</sup> In short McNaughton was bringing together three different types of feminism based on common integrative principles.

The issue of "white slave work" is a good illustration of McNaughton's eagerness to forge alliances in order to push for suffrage.<sup>35</sup> The "white slave work" was based on the belief that innocent girls and young women were being seized, transported, and lured into prostitution. In the Canadian West the dangers of seduction and prostitution were linked with alcoholism, drug addiction, and male Chinese immigrants who often had no wives in Canada because of racist immigration policies.<sup>36</sup> These solitary Chinese men were perceived to be opium addicts and seducers of innocent white girls.<sup>37</sup> Scholars agree that there was widespread

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<sup>34</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914. Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 167, 192-4.

<sup>35</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914.

<sup>36</sup> B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li, Racial Oppression in Canada (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1985), 82-104. Peter Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese in Canada, 1885-1971," Canadian Ethnic Studies 12(1) (1980): 58-73. Peter Li, "A Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada, 1858-1930," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 16(3) (1979): 320-332.

<sup>37</sup> Ruth Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood - Prostitution in America, 1900-1918 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 116. Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), 95. Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 167. For a discussion of drug addiction and the drug trade and her analysis of the role of the Chinese by Emily Murphy of

concern about "white slavery,"<sup>38</sup> which peaked when the prairies were filling with new immigrants. With more men than women in the West, single immigrant women were considered to be in danger.<sup>39</sup> Saskatchewan suffragists, like as Johan Wilson of Prince Albert, believed that women

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Edmonton, whom McNaughton later knew through the Canadian Women's Press Club, see Emily F. Murphy, The Black Candle (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 1922). For a discussion of the results of these racist beliefs in Saskatchewan see Constance Backhouse, "White Female Help and Chinese-Canadian Employers: Race, Class, Gender, and Law in the Case of Yee Clun, 1924," in Canadian Women A Reader, ed. Wendy Mitchinson and others (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company Canada, 1996), 280-299.

<sup>38</sup> For discussions of the white slave trade, seductions, and reformers see Rosen, The Lost Sisterhood, 112-135; Judith R. Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 81-134; Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water 77-103. Karen Dubinsky, "'Maidenly Girls' or 'Designing Women'? The Crime of Seduction in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," in Gender Conflicts - New Essays in Women's History, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 27-66; Diana Pederson, "Providing a Women's Conscience: The YWCA, Female Evangelism, and the Girl in the City, 1870-1930," in Canadian Women A Reader, ed. Wendy Mitchinson and others (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company Canada, 1996), 194-210. Frances Swyripa, "Negotiating Sex and Gender in the Ukrainian Bloc Settlement: East-Central Alberta Between the Wars," Prairie Forum 20(2) (Fall 1995), 149-174. For the sexual memoir of one Victorian seducer see Anonymous, My Secret Life, (n.d.; reprint, Blue Moon Books Inc., 1988).

<sup>39</sup> Mariana Valverde refers to these peaks of concern as a "the white slavery panic." A "panic" is an acceptable sociological category, but in the plain style English of historians it is too strong to describe what was going on in Saskatchewan. Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water 77, 84-86, 92. Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 167.

required the vote "for the moral welfare of their children."<sup>30</sup> Wilson had told a PEFB meeting that "in Christian lands," "as in heathen lands,"

women had to gather their children around them to keep them protected from the world. We boast of our civilization and yet it was strange that we allowed these monsters of iniquity, intemperance and white slavery to trail through our land.<sup>31</sup>

McNaughton, who was at the meeting, had too much faith in the common people, she was sympathetic toward China, and she was too practical to put much stock in rhetoric that defamed immigrants from so-called "heathen lands" such as China. For example, her sympathies in a discussion of the Opium Wars in the nineteenth century were with the Chinese not the British.<sup>32</sup> McNaughton, Haight and the other women in the WGG were very interested in children but they voiced their concern in different terms. Haight, for example, used the metaphor of grain to describe raising children in her 1915 address to the WGG as its Vice-president. "Our children," she said

are our best crop, they are our real wealth. Now is the growing season and now we must do our cultivating and pruning and prepare them for the

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<sup>30</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 94, 108.

<sup>31</sup> Prairie Home and Farmer 17 February 1915.

<sup>32</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 15 July 1916. David Harris Willson and Stuart E. Prall, A History of England, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), 525-526. R. K. Webb, Modern England, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 310-311.

harvest when they shall take their place in the world as refined grain. Will they be No. 1 hard, free from blight chaff or smut?<sup>33</sup>

McNaughton and the other women in the WGG focused on the poor conditions and economic problems in the farm districts. They believed that getting the vote was important in order to improve the lives of farm women. Personally McNaughton thought these problems were far more important than the concern about 'white slave work.'

McNaughton's personal lack of interest in "white slave work" is revealed in the hand-written letter in which she mentioned that the WGG was "lining up with the WCTU on suffrage & white slave work." Writing in haste she focused on suffrage and other WGG work and forgot to mention the "white slave work" which so concerned the WCTU. She then remembered it and squeezed in the words "white slave work" above and at the end of a line in the letter. Discussing "white slave work" with the WCTU appears to have been mainly an attempt, on McNaughton's part, to accommodate the WCTU.<sup>34</sup> It is an indication of how eager she was, as an integrative agrarian feminist, to form an alliance between the WGG and the WCTU. She was willing to play down the differences between the two organizations and emphasize any

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<sup>33</sup> The Grain Growers' Guide 17 February 1915. "No.1 hard" was the best grade of wheat. If it was blighted or had smut or chaff in it, it was graded lower by the elevator agent and therefore the farmer was paid less for it.

<sup>34</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, December 1914.

similarities.

Weary after an exciting year of hard work during 1914 organizing the WGG and leading the provincial suffrage campaign, McNaughton sat down at the table in her one room sod shack on the farm and wrote to Haight saying

you know that I am very busy forming a woman suffrage federation between all bodies in favour thereof. The Prince Albert Political Equality League are [sic] going in with us and the Dominion Suffrage organ is "Woman's Century" [sic] which is also the organ of the National Council of Women. Could you subscribe for it. \$1 per year and write up something. I am writing up the WGG. We must advertise ourselves beyond the point of suppression. The Gov't does not like us. I am very tired tonight so must close with best wishes for "A Happy Xmas" to you all.<sup>95</sup>

With these and many other pots simmering on the back of the stove, McNaughton went to Regina for the WGG annual provincial convention in February 1915. In her first presidential address to the WGG, she summed up the year's suffrage work. She reported that,

acting at the request of a number of our locals to make definite plans regarding suffrage work, your executive passed a resolution asking the other organizations in the province working for woman's franchise, to co-operate with us in this matter. Your president was delegated to attend to this. In October I was invited to the WCTU provincial convention at Saskatoon, where I presented a resolution which carried. I also had the pleasure of addressing the Prince Albert Equal Franchise League, which also endorsed the resolution. In brief, I have placed the matter before all the societies I could discover, with the result that the first meeting of the Women's Suffrage Board will be held in Regina at the close of this

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<sup>95</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 20 December 1914.

convention.<sup>36</sup>

As usual she was relying on the ideal of co-operation, the most important guiding principle of her agrarian feminism.

Kalmakoff argues that the result of all these contacts by McNaughton was to make the founding meeting of the Provincial Equal Franchise Board (PEFB) possible. McNaughton, with her usual attention to organizational details, went to the meeting having thought out a workable plan for structuring the Board. At the meeting there were representatives of the WGG, the WCTU, the Regina Council of Women, and political equality leagues from Yorkton, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Moosomin.<sup>37</sup> Kalmakoff argues convincingly that "Violet McNaughton was clearly the moving force behind the organization. She nominated the chairperson, Mrs. W.W. Andrews, and made all the motions establishing a structure for the group."<sup>38</sup> An executive was chosen with Alice Lawton, whom McNaughton had met at the Qu'Appelle WCTU convention, as President. Each group that belonged to the Board had a representative on the Executive. The women at the meeting chose to call the suffrage alliance the Provincial Equal Franchise Board because it stated their most important integrative principle, that in provincial

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<sup>36</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGA Yearbook 1915.

<sup>37</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 93-94.

<sup>38</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 94.



elections women should have a franchise equal to the male franchise. Kalmakoff argues that the most important thing this meeting accomplished was to bring together the suffragists who were most interested in the suffrage campaign.<sup>99</sup> Thereafter the Board co-ordinated gathering the petitions to be submitted to the government, and it organized the rest of the suffrage campaign.

With the suffrage alliance in place, McNaughton did not have to spend as much time on suffrage work as she had while forging the alliance. Zoa Haight became representative for the WGG on the small PEFB executive, although McNaughton continued to be involved in the larger Board. In March 1915 McNaughton wrote Haight, who had apparently missed the evening session of the Board, to turn over the suffrage reins. McNaughton reported that during the evening session the Board had

decided to compile a Prov. list of speakers on suffrage. You will get a full copy of the minutes of this meeting from Mrs. Misenheimer. Now, my dear lady, you are an officer on this Board whilst I am not, so will you get all the names you possibly can as soon as you possibly can and send to Miss Van Alstyen, Moosomin. You see you are the only one of the WGG on the Sub Executive of the Equal Franchise Board. I am very glad too, for you are a better suffrage speaker than I am, and Miss S[tocking, the WGG Secretary,] & I have more than got our hands full with WGG work.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 95. Prairie Home and Farm, 17 February 1915.

<sup>100</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 4 March 1915.

McNaughton told Haight in May, when representatives of the Board were going to meet with the Premier, "I worked so hard last year to get the Board formed that I am doubly anxious to see that its first effort is a success." She wanted Haight to attend and to speak on behalf of the WGG because she believed that Haight could speak "with more eloquence" than she could. "I am too matter of fact," she told her co-worker.<sup>101</sup> She later gave Haight some ideas about what to say. Summarizing her basic agrarian feminist arguments for the vote, she told her friend to

put it up as a square deal for the asset the farm women are. Keep to the justice, [do] not plead too much. It is owing us, only we must ask nicely. Bring in the temperance vote and what it means to farm women.<sup>102</sup>

In other words, she was arguing that farm women were an asset to agriculture and the nation, and therefore they should have the vote. She was advising Haight to use the argument that farm men used with regard to the political economy, that they should be given "a square deal." She was also arguing that women had a right to the vote.

A delegation of McNaughton and other suffragists

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<sup>101</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 8 May 1915. Haight, who had come from North Dakota, may well have honed her rhetorical skills while listening to the debate on women's suffrage in North Dakota in which Elizabeth Preston Anderson played such a prominent part. Linda Johnson Wurtz, "Elizabeth Preston Anderson - A Rhetorical Legacy," North Dakota History 63(2 & 3) (Spring/Summer 1996): 49-58.

<sup>102</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 22 May 1915.

personally submitted a petition with thousands of women's signatures to the Legislative Assembly.<sup>103</sup> In her next report to the WGG, McNaughton discussed this meeting. "In May," she said

I was chosen to be a member of the delegation arranged by the ... [Provincial Equal Franchise] Board, to approach Premier Scott regarding the extension of the franchise to women. Our Association was unique in that it was represented by both men and women, for our central secretary, Mr. Musselman and Mrs. S.V. Haight, our own vice president, made equally strong appeals. I wish that all our members could have heard them. This memorable visit will go down into history; it is mentioned in the speech from the throne at the opening of parliament this session. As I sat in the House amidst the large and influential gathering, it came to me that, were it not for our Association the country-women would have been unrepresented that day.<sup>104</sup>

This was a reference to the Homemakers' Clubs which had not been able to work for suffrage because of the constraints placed upon them by their University affiliation. McNaughton knew that individual members of the Homemakers, such as Emma Ducie, had supported women's suffrage, but as a group the Homemakers had not campaigned

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<sup>103</sup> There is some confusion about how many signatures were presented. The Leader (Regina) 30 April 1915, 25 and 28 May 1915. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 95. Candace Savage, Foremothers: Personalities and Issues in the History of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: printed privately, c. 1975), 64. McNaughton's figures are likely correct. She said there were 21,000 signatures in total in all of the petitions. The Western Producer 28 May 1925. (See Appendix # V "Violet McNaughton's 'Bald Outline of the Granting of the Provincial Suffrage.'")

<sup>104</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1916.

for the franchise.<sup>105</sup> McNaughton was later to remind Lillian Beynon Thomas of

our little secret meeting in your bedroom at the 1913 gathering of women who attend[ed] the Grain Growers Convention and how we felt that we must form our own suffrage organization in order ... to be able to work for the franchise.<sup>106</sup>

That May McNaughton told Haight she was worried that, if the Board did not meet soon, "it will all die, and it was never more needed." She had written to the PEFB secretary to suggest the Board meet at the end of the month.<sup>107</sup> A month later McNaughton was also concerned about what was happening within the Board. She told Haight that she had the minutes of the Board meeting and she was "not satisfied with any of it." She said that she wanted "to have a good talk" with Haight about it because she realized that there were going to be difficulties ahead.<sup>108</sup> She calmed troubled waters by

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<sup>105</sup> For details about the admiration and respect Ducie, and the other members of the Homemakers in Ducie's district, had for McNaughton see The Western Producer 11 October 1928.

<sup>106</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), McNaughton to Mrs. A. V. Thomas, 19 July 1950. McNaughton wrote this letter to Thomas after she read the original edition of Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada. She disagreed with Cleverdon, who said that the Homemakers were "hives of suffrage activity." Ibid., 75. Cleverdon was confusing the WGG locals with Homemakers' Clubs. She also thought the WIs in Alberta and Manitoba were Homemakers. Ibid., 76.

<sup>107</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 22 May 1915.

<sup>108</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 14 June 1916.

having "a good talk" in private with one of her co-workers. Such heart-to-heart talks not only helped to keep the farm and women's movements functioning but they also created the life-long bonds of affection and friendship that wove together the large circle of feminists and reformers who came to be McNaughton's friends.<sup>109</sup>

Feeling pressured by legislation programs in Alberta and Manitoba and by the WGG and the PEFB, the Saskatchewan government passed the Homestead Act in 1915 to protect farm wives and widows from having the home quarter section of a farm sold without their consent. The Act gave women limited voting rights in municipal elections. Even more petitions for suffrage followed.<sup>110</sup> The Alberta and Manitoba governments were both promising women's suffrage, so the Liberal government in Saskatchewan, wanting to appear progressive, stopped stalling.<sup>111</sup> The 1916 Speech from the

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<sup>109</sup> For example see McNaughton's correspondence in the McNaughton Papers, with Sophia Dixon (A1 D19), Rose Ducie (A1 D20), L. Dunn (A1 D21), Annie Hollis (A1 D27), Laura Jamieson (A1 D34), Carlyle King (A1 D36), Louise Lucas (A1 D41), Alexander McPhail (A1 D46), Margaret McWilliams (A1 D48), Dorise Nielsen (A1 D53), Irene Parbly (A1 D54), Charlotte Whitton (A1 D68), J.S. Woodworth (A1 D69). There is also personal correspondence with reformers, such as Henry Wise Wood, Alice Chown, and Nellie McClung (A1 D1) and in many of the subject files (A1 E1 to E98).

<sup>110</sup> The Leader (Regina) 27 May 1915. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 96-97.

<sup>111</sup> The Leader (Regina) 19 January 1916.

Throne announced that women would get the vote.<sup>112</sup> When the suffragists went to the Legislative Building on Valentine's Day, the Premier told the women from the PEFB that he was committing the government to passing an equal franchise law.<sup>113</sup>

Kalmakoff concluded that, even though Alice Lawton, the President of the PEFB, "fluttered her handkerchief facetiously and trilled 'This is so sudden,' the event was in fact an anti-climax."<sup>114</sup> Lawton was apparently a bit of a romantic. McNaughton saw the day quite differently. Having worked so hard for the equal provincial franchise for women, she experienced the day as neither romantic nor anti-climactic. For her it was an important "historic occasion," a day of triumph.<sup>115</sup>

In February McNaughton received a letter from the Premier providing written confirmation of his promise to grant the equal franchise.<sup>116</sup> The amendment to the

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<sup>112</sup> The Leader (Regina) 18 January 1916; 19 January 1916.

<sup>113</sup> The Leader (Regina) 10, 12, 14, 15, and 16 February 1916. For McNaughton's version of this day see The Western Producer 28 May 1925.

<sup>114</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 98. Morning Leader, Regina, 15 February 1916.

<sup>115</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925, reproduced here in Appendix # V Violet McNaughton's "Bald Outline of the Granting of the Provincial Suffrage."

<sup>116</sup> SAB, Scott Papers M1 IV 159, Walter Scott to McNaughton, 16 February 1916; J.W. McLeod to Scott, 8 February 1916; McNaughton to Scott, 16 February 1916. See

Saskatchewan Election Act, which gave women an equal provincial franchise, received royal assent on the 14th of March 1916 and came into effect on the first of April.<sup>117</sup> An equal municipal and school franchise was granted in Saskatchewan in 1917.<sup>118</sup>

With McNaughton's leadership the Saskatchewan suffragists had formed an alliance based on the integrative principle of an equal provincial franchise for women. While focusing on this goal the PEFB was, as McNaughton put it, "an unqualified success," functioning with "complete harmony amongst the representatives." The corresponding secretary had urged the Board to unite "into one harmonious whole" during their second annual meeting, and they had. This harmony owed something to McNaughton's diplomacy and to her belief that such harmonious relations "increased the effectiveness of united action."<sup>119</sup>

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also Prairie Farm and Home, 1 March 1916.

<sup>117</sup> Section 49, "The Act to Amend the Statute Laws, chapter 37, Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1916, (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1916. For a summary of the Saskatchewan legislation with regard to women voting in provincial, municipal and school trustee election see SPL-LHR, pamphlet files - Women #6, Some Saskatchewan Legislation Affecting Women and Children (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1924), 5-8.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> The Western Producer 28 May 1925. SAB Haight Papers A5 13(c), newspaper clipping "Equal Franchise League of Province in Convention Here," and newspaper clipping "Equal Suffrage Delegates Against Liquor Importing" from The Daily News, Moose Jaw, 16 March 1917.

Once suffrage was attained McNaughton renegotiated the suffrage alliance. The PEFB, was to continue to function working to improve the municipal vote for women, to attempt to create a national group to work for the federal franchise, to educate women for the responsibilities of citizenship, and to work for other reforms.<sup>120</sup> However the same month that provincial equal franchise was granted problems within the PEFB began to be of concern to both McNaughton and Zoa Haight. In March of 1916 McNaughton wrote Haight, who was still on the executive of the Board, to clarify who the WGG representatives were on the Board. She did not know whether she was still on the Board or not. She thought that the Regina Local Council of Women seemed to be

out at elbows with [the] Equal Franchise Board & talk of running a rival League. Can you put me right on this matter, as you are the Vice Pres. it does not look well for me to write about it to the Pres. or Sec. We must try and prevent a split ... now at any cost. <sup>121</sup>

When Haight replied to McNaughton's letter she was angry at the Executive of the PEFB. There had been a move, Haight said, to push her out as the Vice President of the

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<sup>120</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917. McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 1 July 1916, 29 July 1916. SAB, Haight Papers, A5 .2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 14 October 1916. The Daily News, Moose Jaw, 16 March 1917. Prairie Farm and Home, 5 July 1916. The Canadian Thresherman and Farmer, November 1916. The Western Producer 8 December 1955. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 83.

<sup>121</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Haight, 13 March 1916.



Board. "I tell you," she said, "they don't want Farm Women at the head of these things."<sup>122</sup> This was an important principle for McNaughton, Haight and other members of the WGG, who were very conscious of the need to "train our country women" to hold office and not be intimidated by urban middle class women.<sup>123</sup> Haight had told the executive that it had been the Women Grain Growers that had "made the strong fight for suffrage" and that McNaughton was "really responsible for the Board in the first place." Haight told McNaughton that she thought the PEFB was not "a necessity anymore" since they now had the provincial franchise. She saw the Political Equality Leagues, which were part of the PEFB, as being partisan since many of the suffragists in the Leagues were Liberals.<sup>124</sup>

McNaughton, Haight, and many of the women on the board of directors and the executive of the WGG had no loyalty to the Liberal Party whatsoever and stoutly espoused a non-partisan position.<sup>125</sup> Along with many other Saskatchewan critics, they thought it was time to be rid of "the

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<sup>122</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), Zoa Haight to McNaughton, 3 April 1916.

<sup>123</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), Ida McNeal to McNaughton, 20 April 1921.

<sup>124</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(1), Zoa Haight to McNaughton, 3 April 1916. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 10. Kalmakoff, "Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919," 6-9.

<sup>125</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917.

privilege-ridden, party-blind, office-hunting Grit and Tory parties that make their headquarters at Ottawa."<sup>126</sup>

Important provincial and federal elections were looming, so the question of platforms was urgent.<sup>127</sup> When McNaughton replied to Haight, she said that there was "certainly something funny about that Board" and that she was "dying to see the PEL platform." Unlike Haight she thought the Board was still a useful group, however she did acknowledge that "we cannot as women of the Province unite any more than all classes of men."<sup>128</sup> She also told Haight that she rather doubted that the Board was "quite along the right lines," and she suggested that

each organization should retain its own platform, that the Board should be kept as a clearing house, where all women's organizations can know exactly what each is doing and what we have in common to unite in."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> C.A. Dunning in 1916 quoted in W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1950), 43.

<sup>127</sup> For details of relevance to the 1917 Saskatchewan provincial election and the 1917 federal election that year see Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 353. Archer, Saskatchewan A History, 180-181. Finkel and Conrad with Strong-Boag, History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present 296-297. Paul F. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), 91-97. W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, 1950), 42-60. Seymour Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (1950; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 28-32.

<sup>128</sup> SAB Haight Papers A2 5, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 April 1916.

<sup>129</sup> SAB Haight Papers A2 5, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 April 1916.

She went on to say that she knew that "town and country will conflict and the 'party' is bound to split us."<sup>130</sup> In other words McNaughton, as an integrative agrarian feminist, wanted each group to develop its own set of feminist principles, and then she thought that the different groups in the PEFB could unite on the integrative principles that they had in common.

It had been helpful to have women who had well known connections with the Liberal party in the suffrage alliance when they were trying to get the vote.<sup>131</sup> However, for McNaughton, once the provincial equal franchise was attained, being connected with the Board was not important enough to sacrifice the principle of non-partisanship and to be pushed into supporting the Liberals during the up-coming elections. After their private talk, when McNaughton attended a meeting of the Board along with Haight, the Board was able to work out a twelve-point plan for social and political reforms, including the commitment to work toward the federal franchise.<sup>132</sup> This likely was due in large part

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<sup>130</sup> SAB Haight Papers A2 5, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 April 1916. See Lillian Beynon Thomas's reports of similar developments in Manitoba and her arguments against supporting the Liberals or Conservatives and for a non-partisan position, published the month before McNaughton wrote Haight, in The Canadian Thresherman and Farmer March 1916.

<sup>131</sup> Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 98.

<sup>132</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGG Yearbook 1917. McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 3 June 1916: A1 E18, "Equal Franchise

to McNaughton's skills as a peacemaker and the respect of the women on the Board for McNaughton. She also had the skills necessary to keep groups, such as the PEFB, working together harmoniously. Her faith in the ability of common people gave them feeling that something could be done to make the world a better place.<sup>133</sup> This optimism inspired her co-workers who wanted to believe, as passionately as she did, that progress was possible through co-operative effort. In short, ideally McNaughton wanted women to be united and to work together harmoniously. She saw the PEFB, however, as an alliance that originally had a specific goal, based on the integrative principle of an equal provincial franchise. That goal had now been achieved, so it was time, in her view, to renegotiate the alliance and come up with a new set of goals.

During the 1917 provincial election the divisions within the PEFB were clear for all to see. Many of its leading women supported the Liberals. On the other hand McNaughton, Haight and the other women who were on the WGG Executive were committed to the principle of non-partisanship and refused to acquiesce to the Liberals. McNaughton saw both the Liberals and the Conservatives as

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League Plan of Work," n.d. The other reforms included improved property rights, mother's pensions, prison reform, and educational reform.

<sup>133</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1, Nellie McClung to McNaughton, 19 October 1935.

corrupt robbers of the public purse. She wanted political leaders who were morally up-standing and more loyal to higher principles than they were to a partisan party.<sup>134</sup>

Zoa Haight's family had come from North Dakota where, in 1916, the Nonpartisan Party swept to victory.<sup>135</sup> The League "invaded Canada" when her father-in-law, S.E. Haight, returned to Saskatoon from a visit to North Dakota in the summer of 1916.<sup>136</sup> Mr. Haight worked with the League while in the United States, and when he returned he spread his ideas of the Nonpartisan League so effectively that, by February 1917, 5,000 farm people in southern Saskatchewan had joined the League.<sup>137</sup> The McNaughtons and Zoa Haight had always liked a non-partisan approach, so the ideas of the Nonpartisan League made a great deal of sense to them. McNaughton's columns in the Saturday Press and Prairie Farm in 1916 and 1917 are full of ideas that the Nonpartisan

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<sup>134</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 23 September 1916.

<sup>135</sup> Carl C. Taylor, The Farmer's Movement 1620-1920 (New York: American Book Company, 1953), 436-443. For a discussion of a Non-partisan League woman who was elected to the North Dakota legislature in 1923 see Maren K. Claus, "Minnie D. Craig: Gender and Politics in North Dakota," North Dakota History 63(2 & 3) (Spring/Summer 1996): 28-41.

<sup>136</sup> Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt, 77. S.E. Haight was the father of Zoa's husband Samuel V. Haight. Zoa and Samuel lived at Keeler, Saskatchewan for 40 years and then retired to the west Coast. The Western Producer 3 March 1955, 3 December 1956, 29 April 1964. The Keeler History Book Committee, Our Heritage - a History of the Keeler Community, n.d., n.p., 199-200, 328.

<sup>137</sup> Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt, 77-78.

League espoused.<sup>133</sup> In June of 1917 she quoted a woman, who said trying to reform a political party from within was like marrying "a drunkard" in the hopes of reforming him.<sup>135</sup>

Zoa Haight, the first woman to be nominated for election to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, ran as a candidate for the Nonpartisan League in the 1917 provincial election with McNaughton's full support.<sup>140</sup> On June 23rd, three days before the election, in her regular column in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, McNaughton condemned "the party system" and she advised "country women" to go to

all the political meetings possible; note what the various candidates say; study the platform of each party and make your judgement without party sentiment. Make it clear that which ever way you vote this time, you are not committed to that party for all time.<sup>141</sup>

Even though Haight lost the election she did much better than the seven men who also ran for the Non-partisan League.<sup>142</sup> After the election Haight and McNaughton remained true to the principle of non-partisanship, they continued to be devoted friends, and as usual they remained

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<sup>138</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 29 April 1916 to 9 June 1917. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt, 77-103.

<sup>139</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 23 June 1917.

<sup>140</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," June 1917. The Western Producer 3 March 1955. Kalmakoff, "Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919," 6-9. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt, 92.

<sup>141</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 23 June 1917.

<sup>142</sup> Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt, 92.

loyal co-workers. <sup>143</sup> In spite of the split in the PEFB during the election campaign, McNaughton continued to support the Board until July of 1918, when it decided to disband and to continue its work through the member organizations and the Department of Education. <sup>144</sup>

The campaign for national suffrage was dominated by central Canadian women, many of whom McNaughton met at the Women's War Conference in Ottawa in February of 1918, just prior to the speech from the throne announcing that a women's suffrage bill would be passed. <sup>145</sup> However it only gave a limited franchise based on provincial

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<sup>143</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Haight 2 November 1916. The Western Producer 29 April 1964, 3 March 1955, 3 December 1956. Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970 (Regina and Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1971), 148.

<sup>144</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E18, Minutes of the PEFB, 12 February 1918; R. Archibald to McNaughton, 1 July 1918. As Kalmakoff points out, one of the many points which Bacchi has wrong is when she asserts that McNaughton left the Board before its demise. Bacchi's Liberation Deferred? 117-132. Kalmakoff, "Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919," 11. Kalmakoff, on the other hand did not make use of the correspondence between McNaughton and Haight and apparently was unaware of the problems which the two of them had been discussing in private.

<sup>145</sup> Catherine L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (1950; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1974), 131. NAC, Robert Borden Papers, C-4336, 105, MG26H1(a), "Report of the Women's War Conference, February 28 to March 2, 1918, 3-4. The Western Home Monthly, April 1918. SAB, Haight Papers A3 13(f), Newspaper clipping, January 1939. SPL-LHR, Biography, McNaughton, Newspaper clipping Women's Century, special number. The Western Producer 20 September 1951.

qualifications.<sup>145</sup> McNaughton's most notable contribution was to keep the WGG, which had affiliated with the NCWC in 1917, in the Council until after the Dominion Franchise Act was passed in 1920 giving a uniform women's federal franchise across the country.<sup>147</sup>

Many farm women in the WGG, the women's sections of the United Farmers, the WIs, and the Homemakers were feeling alienated from the NCWC and McNaughton thought the "some surgical operation was necessary to make the National think."<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless she thought it was a good idea to keep their affiliations in order to present a united front by women.<sup>149</sup> Many farm women agreed with Irene Parlby who could see no advantage in belonging to the NCWC.<sup>150</sup> Once the Dominion Elections Act had passed in 1920 a united front was no longer necessary.<sup>151</sup> One Saskatchewan woman was so hostile toward the eastern women who dominated the Council

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>148</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Flatt, 13 October 1919.

<sup>149</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E42, McNaughton to R.F. Williams, 9 December 1918.

<sup>150</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(1), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 2 June 1918. Glenbow Archive, UFA Papers, Minutes of meeting of UFWA Board of Directors, 24 January 1920.

<sup>151</sup> Catherine L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (1950; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1974), 138-139.



that after attending a NCWC meeting she told McNaughton that Augusta Stowe-Gullen was not very smart and she looked like a frog.<sup>152</sup> Setting aside such personal insults McNaughton continued to believe the WGG should stay with the NCWC because she thought, in principle, that a women's national umbrella organization was a good idea.<sup>153</sup>

Previous literature has dealt with two of McNaughton's objections to activities by Council women, the Women's Party and the Council's support of the Made-in-Canada campaign in support of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association who lobbied to establish the tariff in place. The stances by Council women on both of these issues ignored the different class interests of the farm women and McNaughton's action has quite rightly have been interpreted as maintaining class solidarity with farm men.<sup>154</sup>

The handling of another important issue by the Council affected not only farm women as a group but also McNaughton's friend Irene Parlby as an individual. The NCWC

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<sup>152</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(5), M.L. Burbank to McNaughton, 19 June 1921.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E41(2), McNaughton to Mabel Finch, 30 April 1919. NAC, NCWC Papers, MG28 I25, 58, 6, "Reports of Federated Association," McNaughton, "Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association- Women's Section," 1920.

<sup>154</sup> Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 125-130.. Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1929 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), 337-339, 353-4, 365-366, 384, 390-392, 420.

had an agriculture committee chaired by Constance Hamilton, the Toronto social worker and local politician who was active in the Women's Party.<sup>155</sup> She presented herself as an expert on agriculture in speeches to the NCWC and in its paper, the Women's Century. The urban slant of a hobby fruit grower in her columns was insulting in face of the hard labour of farm women in Canada.<sup>156</sup> However, because she owned an orchard in the Niagara Peninsula had been interested in "getting women to go out on the land" before the War, and loved to hold forth about women and agriculture, she convinced the other power brokers in the NCWC that she was indeed an agricultural expert.<sup>157</sup>

An urban woman, who neither worked on a farm nor showed any real understanding of the lives of thousands of farm women in Canada, was not an expert on agriculture in the eyes of farm women. Therefore McNaughton, Irene Parlbly, and Cora Hind were all nominated to replace Hamilton as the head the committee. McNaughton and Hind withdrew in favour of Parlbly. Even though Parlbly was a farm woman the Council

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<sup>155</sup> The Western Producer 12 July 1945. Archives of Ontario, Microfilm of Biographical Scrapbooks of Mrs. C. A. Hamilton in the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.

<sup>156</sup> For an example of one of her columns see Women's Century, October 1915.

<sup>157</sup> The Western Home Monthly, April 1918. Archives of Ontario, Microfilm of Biographical Scrapbooks of Mrs. C. A. Hamilton in the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.

chose Hamilton over Parlby.<sup>158</sup> This was insulting not only because the central Canadian urban middle class women who dominated the Council were refusing to acknowledge class differences, but also because farm women regarded Parlby and McNaughton as real experts on agriculture.<sup>159</sup> Even in her own area of expertise a farm woman had been rejected in favour of a Toronto woman who was part of the inner circle.

In an attempt to reform the NCWC and to make it "truly national" McNaughton formed an alliance with two middle class urban women from western Canada, who understood farm women and sympathized with them.<sup>160</sup> Margaret McWilliams of Winnipeg and McNaughton united in an attempt to revamp the constitution of the NCWC. McWilliams, who regarded McNaughton as a "radical," chaired the constitutional committee.<sup>161</sup> McWilliams and McNaughton worked hard to make changes that would restructure the Council so that western women and farm women would have more power.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> NAC, NCWC Papers, Nominations of Officers and Conveners of the NCWC, 1918; "Ballot" for officers for NCWC.

<sup>159</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E41(1), Cora Hind to McNaughton, 31 May 1918; Alice Vincent Massey to McNaughton, 26 June 1918.

<sup>160</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E41(2), McNaughton to Mabel Finch, 30 April 1919.

<sup>161</sup> Mary Kinnear, Margaret McWilliams - An Interwar Feminist (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 65.

<sup>162</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E53(2), McNaughton to Mrs. R.F. McWilliams, 6 March 1919, A1 E42, Draft Constitution: Draft By-laws; A1 E41(1), McNaughton to

Their suggestions were rejected in 1920 and the Winnipeg Council withdrew from the NCWC.

McNaughton felt that the "only hope" for the WGG being able to continue an affiliation with was a Provincial Council.<sup>153</sup> She turned to Christina Murray, of the Saskatoon Council of Women, who had suggested to the NCWC in 1918 that there should be Provincial Councils of Women to coordinate the work of the Local Councils.<sup>154</sup> On the first of April 1919 Murray called a meeting which McNaughton attended. They formed a Provincial Council of Women (PCW) with Murray as President. When McNaughton moved that the Regina members form a committee to draft a constitution for a meeting in June, it passed and she was added to the committee.<sup>155</sup> Thus began the Saskatchewan PCW. Once was it organized the WGG and the Homemakers affiliated with it.

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McWilliams, 18 July 1918, 12 August 1918; McNaughton to McWilliams, 30 April 1919. Kinnear, Margaret McWilliams, 65-66.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E42, McNaughton to Mrs. R.F. Williams, 7 March 1919. Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women 390-391.

<sup>154</sup> Margaret A. Rose, Harriet E. Turnbull, and Marguerite E. Robinson, publication committee, The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan - Provincial Council History, 1919-1984 (Saskatchewan Provincial Council of Women, 1984), iv.

<sup>155</sup> Rose, Turnbull, and Robinson, publication committee, The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan, 2.

McNaughton kept in close touch with Murray.<sup>156</sup> The WGG, the Saskatchewan PCW, and the Homemakers' Clubs all withdrew from the NCWC.<sup>157</sup> In the Saskatchewan PCW urban women were more sympathetic to farm women than were the women who held power in the NCWC.<sup>158</sup>

In short McNaughton wanted to support the NCWC but the refusal of the central Canadian urban women to look at their place in the hierarchies of power in Canada and to make the NCWC truly representative finally made affiliation impossible. In other words, as the farm women saw it, the NCWC refused to be "truly national." McNaughton was happy to co-operate with urban middle class women, such as McWilliams and Murray, whose regional understanding of the impact of the National Policy on farm women made them sympathetic to farm women.<sup>159</sup> Because they understood and respected

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<sup>156</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E41(1), E.M. Murray to McNaughton, 15 May 1918; McNaughton to Murray, 6 March 1919; McNaughton to Murray, 19 September 1918; McNaughton to Murray, 6 March 1919; Murray to McNaughton, 10 March 1919; McNaughton to Murray, 14 March 1919; Murray to McNaughton, 18 May 1919.

<sup>157</sup> SAB, SGGA Papers B2 III 1, Minute Book of WS-SGGA, 13 February 1920, 17 February 1922. SAB, pamphlet G34.3, SGGA Annual Convention Handbook, 1923. Kinnear, Margaret McWilliams, 66. Griffiths, The Splendid Vision, 162-163.

<sup>158</sup> Some of the women she met in the PCW, such as Jean Hartie and Louise Dunn were to be friends of McNaughton's for years. Rose, Turnbull, and Robinson, publication committee, The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan, 7-11. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D21, correspondence between McNaughton and Louise Dunn, 1943-1965. The Western Producer 23 August 1973.

<sup>159</sup> Kinnear, Margaret McWilliams, 64-65.

McNaughton they were willing to co-operate with her and to work for changes that acknowledged the reality of the lives of farm women. In other words, like McNaughton, they wanted a National Council that was inclusive not exclusive.

After the suffrage campaigns McNaughton continued to work with many urban suffragists in other contexts. For instance she respected Alice Chown, the Ontario radical, who apparently never joined the NCWC. She likely knew Chown through their work in the peace movement. She later told a friend that the person to get to know in Toronto was Alice Chown.<sup>170</sup> The demise of the PEFB in Saskatchewan did not mean that McNaughton turned her back on the urban feminists she had come to know and respect through the PEFB. For instance Effie Storer and Mariam Green Ellis, who were both in the suffrage alliance, also worked with her in the Canadian Women's Press Club (CWPC) for decades. McNaughton joined the Press Club in this period as an affiliate of the national organization rather than as a member of a specific club.<sup>171</sup> In the CWPC McNaughton, Storer, and Green Ellis

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<sup>170</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D43(2), McNaughton to Nellie McCay, 10 December 1943. Diana Chown, "Introduction" to Alice A. Chown, The Stairway (1921; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988), xxviii.

<sup>171</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Catherine Cleverdon, 17 November 1943. The Leader (Regina) 16 February 1916. SPL-LHR, Saskatoon CWPC Scrapbook. Kalmakoff, "Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan," 94, 108. Susan Jackel, "First Days, Fighting Days: Prairie Presswomen and Suffrage Activism, 1906-16," in First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center University of Regina, 1987), 54, 60.

continued to share the feminist spirit that had brought them together in the PEFB. Cyprian Lenhard, a member of the Saskatoon Press Club which was established in 1926, was later to playfully capture this spirit when she wrote to Storer saying that,

the McNaughton has been gadding about again, speaking on this and that. Wonder that woman doesn't stay at home and do the dishes. Can't understand these women that want to do man's work. Getting up and saying women should have rights as citizens because they pay taxes! Tut, Tut. Women's place is in the home. I've heard that so often I believe it - almost.<sup>172</sup>

McNaughton was to continue to be active in the CWPC until her death in 1968.<sup>173</sup> The women in the WGG, the suffrage alliance, and in the CWPC were part of a large complex network of feminists and reformers that McNaughton was getting to know. Once she was a part of this circle she continued to widen it. Eventually this was to mean that, as Garry Fairburn puts it, she was corresponding with "virtually every prominent figure in prairie social reform" and with numerous national and international reformers.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> SAB, Effie Laurie Storer Papers I. 1., Cyprian Lenhard, alias Dora Dib, to Effie Storer, 17 December 1936. SPL-LHR, Saskatoon CWPC Scrapbook. For a biographical article on Lenhard see Keith Dryden, "Cal McGregor: Tough news editor, sharp intellect, concern for people," The Western Producer 26 August 1993.

<sup>173</sup> SPL-LHR, Saskatoon CWPC Scrapbook. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>174</sup> Jackel, "First Days, Fighting Days," 54. Garry Fairburn, From Prairie Roots: The Remarkable Story of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool (Saskatoon: Western Producer

One of the many pots McNaughton had simmering in 1916 and 1917 was her first regular foray as a journalist.<sup>175</sup> She had written pieces for various publications prior to 1916 but during 1916 and 1917 she wrote a regular column in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, in part to publicize the SGGa, the WGG, their activities and programs, which included many of her agrarian feminist goals.<sup>176</sup> She was using her column to appeal to farm people to support her goals and the goals of the WGG. That is to say, she was using it as a strategy to mobilize public opinion. She chose to call her column "Our Welfare Page" because, as she stated at the beginning of each column,

this page is intended for description of the various agencies which are working throughout the Province for "Our Welfare" and for letters from individuals (men and women), who are willing to spare a few minutes for the same purpose. All letters should be addressed to Mrs. John McNaughton, Piche P.O., Saskatchewan.<sup>177</sup>

Written on the McNaughton farm, these columns reveal many of her agrarian feminist ideas during 1916 and 1917, including her beliefs that countrywomen and men had to work together

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Prairie Books, 1984), 127. See McNaughton's voluminous correspondence with various reformers in the McNaughton Papers in the SAB.

<sup>175</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, McNaughton, Notes "In 1916 I first entered regular newspaper work....outlying districts."

<sup>176</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page." SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 April 1916.

<sup>177</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 13 May 1916.



for the welfare of all and that, through mutual aid, they could improve their lot and the lives of others.

At the top of each column McNaughton stated that it was "conducted by Mrs. John McNaughton," rather than using the term 'edited by,' a practice that she was later to continue in The Western Producer.<sup>178</sup> Her use of the term "conducted by" indicated that, although she "conducted" the column somewhat like the conductor of an orchestra, it was not her ideas alone that made up the column; rather it was a symphony of ideas from many people who played under her guiding hand. This was one of her countless affirmations of the worth and wisdom of common people. She believed, as she said in one column, that

never in the history of the world was it so necessary that we should individually and collectively take time to think and to play our part as citizens. So as one means will you send me a letter pertaining to "Our Welfare."<sup>179</sup>

In other words, her column reflected not only the co-operative nature of her feminism, but also its radical democratic component which involved as many grassroots people as possible. At the top of the column she also used the quotation "the welfare of all is the concern of all,"

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<sup>178</sup> For a discussion of her pages in The Western Producer during the 1930s see Christa L. Scowby, "'Divine Discontent': Women, Identity and The Western Producer," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996. I worked closely with Scowby while she was doing her research and we shared many ideas.

<sup>179</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 22 July 1916.

yet another important tenet of her agrarian feminism.<sup>180</sup>

Because she was passionately committed to this idea while she was working very hard organizing the WGG, for numerous other reforms, and for suffrage, she was also involved in the campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all."<sup>181</sup>

During the suffrage campaign McNaughton learned several valuable lessons that she was never to forget. She learned that she could use the same strategy as she and John had used in Hillview when she organized the WGG. She could focus on important integrative principles in order to forge an alliance made up of feminists whose feminism was different from her own agrarian feminism. She learned how to continue focusing on the needs of farm women while taking part in a broader alliance, and she learned how to play down the differences within the alliance and how to emphasize the shared integrative principles. The campaign also taught her how to lobby governments effectively. One of the most important things she learned was that, although she was an integrative feminist rather than a separatist, there were some principles that were so important to her that she would not sacrifice them in order to keep an alliance together. She also learned how to renegotiate and revamp an alliance

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<sup>180</sup> This is likely a quotation from E.A. Partridge. R. Douglas Francis, Images of the West - Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 115.

<sup>181</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid." SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), Mrs. Ray Paul, 23 February 1942.

when its goals had changed or to move to another alliance. Finally, she learned how to mould public opinion and to mobilize support for the WGG and for her agrarian feminist goals by writing for newspapers.<sup>182</sup>

The suffrage alliance gave McNaughton contacts with like-minded urban reformers and feminists, with whom she would maintain contact, and it helped her to hone her leadership skills. She, and the people who knew her, recognized that the suffrage campaign had been waged while she was coping with the severe constraints many women faced on prairie homesteads. The other suffragists in Saskatchewan had been buoyed up by her enthusiasm for, and belief in, the possibility of progress through united action. Therefore, with her leadership, they had been able to come "together on common ground for common good."<sup>183</sup>

The suffrage campaign contributed to her reputation, and her own belief in herself, as a "small but mighty" champion of farm women and their families. Her next

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<sup>182</sup> For an example of McNaughton teaching a younger woman how to use the strategies she had learned first during the suffrage campaign, and then in numerous subsequent campaigns, see her correspondence with Mary (Hartel) Sisetsky, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D25, 1943-1946. Sisetsky, who was crippled with arthritis, was organizing the Handicapped Civilians Association, now the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. Lorraine Blashill and E.T. 'Pete' Russell, Steps to Freedom - The History of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council (Regina: Saskatchewan Abilities Council, 1987), 2-3.

<sup>183</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915.

campaign, the fight for "medical aid within the reach of all," would also contribute to her confidence and her reputation as a "mighty mite."<sup>134</sup> It was already under way in 1916 when McNaughton and her feminist allies won the provincial equal franchise.

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<sup>134</sup> Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too: stories of notable western Canadian women (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975), 175.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### "MEDICAL AID WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL"

#### CAMPAIGNING FOR MEDICAL AID

For Violet McNaughton, who knew a great deal about the suffering of other isolated settlers and had herself suffered from a life-threatening illness far from a hospital, the campaign for women's suffrage, the campaign for medical aid, and the ideal of co-operation were all linked and all were very important. Suffrage and medical aid were so important to her that they were strong motivating factors in her organization of the Women Grain Growers (WGG). They were the first campaigns on which she focused during her years as the first President of the WGG from 1914 to 1918.

As an integrative agrarian feminist McNaughton forged alliances with other feminists and reformers in order to organize the WGG and to push through women's suffrage. During the campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all" McNaughton forged more alliances, including an alliance with the Homemakers' Clubs.<sup>1</sup> Her alliance with the Homemakers was based on two integrative principles shared by

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<sup>1</sup> SPL-LHR, documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2115, pamphlet, Violet McNaughton, "Medical Aid within Reach of All," [September 1916.] SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 23 September 1916. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Medical Aid."

the WGG and the Homemakers, first the belief that farm mothers, their babies, and their families needed better medical aid and, second, that by united action the WGG and the Homemakers could help to provide some of this medical aid for farm people.

The campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all" was an all encompassing campaign for more mid-wives, nurses, doctors and hospitals in the rural districts of Saskatchewan that were "within the reach" of all farm women and their families.<sup>2</sup> McNaughton's use of the phrase "medical aid within the reach of all" was a revealing choice. It is a particularly apt phrase to describe her campaign because it has a double meaning that encompasses two of her most important goals during the campaign. First, she wanted medical aid in close proximity to all farm women so they and their families could reach it, or it could reach them, when they needed it. Second, she wanted medical aid to be within the reach of all people financially. In other words, she wanted affordable medical aid close to all farm people.

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<sup>2</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid." I would like to thank C. Stuart Houston generously lending me some original sources for this chapter and for reading an earlier draft and making some helpful suggestions. He has not only done research and writing himself in the field of medical history, but because he and his parents were doctors he brings the personal knowledge of two generations of Saskatchewan doctors to the subject. See C. Stuart Houston, "Life in Yorkton before medicare came along," Canadian Medical Association Journal 140 (15 May 1989): 1199, 1202; and C. Stuart Houston, "Dare Saskatchewan close its one-doctor hospitals?," Canadian Medical Association Journal 142(5) (1990): 467-468.

McNaughton's agrarian feminism shaped her campaign for medical aid. She focused on the rural areas and on farm women because she was very concerned about them but also because the farm women in remote areas had the greatest need for better services. This was the focus of her feminist campaign because with so many young pregnant married women in Saskatchewan their health was most at risk. Health care had traditionally been a women's realm, although health care professionals were contesting this at the time of her campaign. Therefore, the care of farm families was also part of her agrarian feminist concern.

McNaughton stressed the importance of local control of medical aid and government funding. As an agrarian feminist and as a radical democrat she wanted local control of health care. As a radical from North Kent where there were better medical services than there were in Saskatchewan, and as the wife of a New Zealander who knew about that country's government funding of medical services, she wanted government funding. Many farms in Saskatchewan were just getting established so too much reliance on municipal land tax would overburden farm families. She was a co-operator but she also had socialist ideas.

McNaughton and succeeding generations of women in the farm women's movement focused on health and medical issues, rather than the men in the farm movement focusing on it, because the gender division of labour in farm families

delegated the care of family health and caring for the sick and the dying to the women.<sup>3</sup> For decades the women spearheaded this campaign and the radical men in the movement backed them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the cities this attitude appears to have even more prevalent than in the rural areas. Maureen K. Lux points out that, in Saskatoon during the 1918 flu epidemic, "patient care was hampered by the prevalent assumption that women were innately suited to be care-givers and men were not." Therefore when men volunteered to care for patients, they were turned down. Maureen K. Lux, "'The Bitter Flats': The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan History 49(1) (Spring 1997), 5. On the other hand in Hillview, when George Kyle and his family had typhoid Ivan Tinkness, the school teacher, helped nurse them. George later married John McNaughton's sister, Kate. Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage (Harris: Harris History Book Committee, 1982), 290, 400.

<sup>4</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report to the WS-CCA, ca. 1918-1920. Georgina M. Taylor, "Equals and Partners? An Examination of How Saskatchewan Women Reconciled Their Political Activities for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation with Traditional Roles for Women," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1983, 10-11, 38-42, 44-45, 49-50, 163-164. Elaine Orvedahl Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987, 20-37, 76-82. Nanci Langford, manuscript Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars: 75 Years of Organized Farm Women in Alberta (Edmonton: Women of Uniform History Book Committee, 1996, publication pending by Detselig), Chapter III, 1-14; and documents reproduced, "Farm Women's Union of Alberta 1964 Program," following p. 29 of Chapter III: F Bateman to Mrs. Geo. G. Hobbs, 8 April 1929; Mrs. V.C. Flint to all UFA, UFWA, and Jr, UFA's in South Peace River, 11 May 1946; "Brief presented June 7th, 1949 by the FWUA Executive to the Alberta Health Survey Committee;" FWUA to the Premier of Alberta and Members of the Executive Council, January 9th, 1959; "Submission to the Prime Minister of Canada and Members of the Cabinet on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women by the Women of Uniform, March 10, 1972." Alfred P. Gleave, United We Stand - Prairie Farmers 1901-1975 (Toronto: Lugus, 1991), 55, 119, 121, 158. Keith Dryden and Tom Melville-Ness, Salute to Saskatchewan Farm Leaders (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame, 1995), 24, 47, 74, 123.



McNaughton put a great deal of energy into the medical aid campaign. She had a personal concern, from talking to other farm women and men, but she also knew how badly better medical services were needed. She had also spent time reading about medical aid. Many of the farm papers carried stories about problems with medical aid. With the knowledge she had from her discussions and her reading she was able to see how important the principle of "medical aid within the reach of all" was to farm women and their families. Because she linked this knowledge with her private experiences, McNaughton became an extremely effective campaigner for medical aid.

McNaughton's passionate concern about the lack of medical services in rural Saskatchewan arose out of her memories of watching her Kentish fiancé suffer as he died of tuberculosis, as well as her own suffering, and that of her family and their neighbours in Hillview. It aptly illustrates the links between public and private. When she launched the medical aid campaign she was still suffering the severe after-effects of her hysterectomy and she had heard a great deal of what she referred to as "the sufferings of our prairie mothers."<sup>5</sup> She believed that

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<sup>5</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 1 November 1916. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page."

nothing was more important than good health.<sup>5</sup>

McNaughton, who read co-operative literature, likely came up with the phrase "medical aid within the reach of all" and some of her ideas for the medical aid campaign when she read Maternity - Letters From Working Women edited by Margaret Llewelyn Davies, the General Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild in England.<sup>7</sup> Maternity focuses on working class women in Britain and their problems with lack of maternity services. It espouses ideas very similar to McNaughton's, using phrases such as "medical aid available where it is needed" and "medical supervision and treatment within reach," and suggests that medical aid should be "at a charge within their reach."<sup>8</sup> McNaughton appears to have read Maternity and re-fashioned its language to come up with her phrase and re-framed some of its ideas so that they fit the situation in Saskatchewan.

Maternity was part of the Guild's influential campaign, for improved national maternity services and for better care

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<sup>5</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(1), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 19 May 1909. The Western Producer 22 September 1927.

<sup>7</sup> Golden Dallas, "New Introduction," to Margaret Llewelyn Davies, Maternity - Letters From Working Women (1915; reprinted, London: Virago, 1978), the first page of the new introduction. For McNaughton's later coverage focusing on Margaret Llewelyn Davies and her part in the British Co-operative Women's Guild see The Western Producer 28 January 1937. See also Emmy Freundlich's account of working with Llewelyn Davies in The Western Producer 26 August 1937.

<sup>8</sup> Davies, Maternity, 3, 16, 210.

for children and mothers.<sup>9</sup> The British Guild's approach to its campaign was similar to McNaughton's campaign for medical aid. It seems almost certain that McNaughton read Maternity as a result of the attention it received when it was published in October of 1915.<sup>10</sup> That fall McNaughton was still doing research while she travelled and spoke during her campaign for medical aid.

Back in 1914, at its founding provincial convention, the WGG began to look at the medical aid question. At that time "the different delegates related local circumstances and local needs" for medical aid. The Executive was asked to work on the question, which launched McNaughton on one of her most passionate campaigns.<sup>11</sup> The campaign peaked between 1914 and 1920 but the lack of medical services in the rural areas was to continue to concern her for decades. At the 1915 convention McNaughton asked

for a show of hands from nearly two hundred delegates and visitors as to how many districts were provided with a trained nurse, and only eight hands were held up. A great many spoke also of the

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<sup>9</sup> G.D.H. Cole, A Century of Co-operation (n.p. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1944), 225.

<sup>10</sup> Dallas, "New Introduction," to Davies, Maternity, the second and third page of the new introduction.

<sup>11</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," ca. 1916, a brief presented to the Canadian Association of Graduate Nurses. For a description of these circumstances see Nanci Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies 1880-1930," Journal of Historical Sociology 8(3) (September 1995): 278-302.

impossibility of procuring a doctor.<sup>12</sup>

For McNaughton this was an excellent illustration of "the seriousness of conditions."<sup>13</sup> Therefore she made a motion that

whereas in many rural localities there is great need for a district nurse, therefore be it resolved - that the Women's Section of the Local Associations take up the matter of co-operating with their municipality officers in procuring a district-nurse for their community.<sup>14</sup>

The motion carried. As she did research on the medical aid question after the 1915 convention, and as she travelled the province speaking and hearing about conditions in various farm districts, she became even more concerned than she had been at the convention.<sup>15</sup> By March of 1916 she was so enthusiastic about the campaign that she told Zoa Haight

I am going right after this medical aid question. I am going to make it my subject. I have found out some most awful things. Race suicide and I dont know what on the prairie. Birth and death registration just shameful. I found in one place in five minutes five children one to 5 not registered and one or two babies deaths. And this

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<sup>12</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R. J. McDonald, 20 May 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGG Yearbook 1915.

<sup>15</sup> For examples of McNaughton's ongoing research and interest in the question of medical aid see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, Dr. Arthur Wilson to McNaughton, 12 April 1917, and a pamphlet about infant mortality from the Alberta Social Services. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, pamphlet "School for Midwives," New York, 1912, and the Program of the Bellevue Hospital Training School for Midwives in the City of New York.

in one little spot. I am going right after it.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, by 1916 McNaughton's campaign for medical aid had become a campaign on which she intended to put her own personal stamp.

McNaughton's use of the term "race suicide" in her 1916 letter to Haight raises the question of what she meant by the term.<sup>17</sup> When she used the term in 1916 and 1917 she was using a popular phrase of the day and she was giving it her own meaning.<sup>18</sup> She was reported to have said in a public speech that "women in the rural municipalities are committing race suicide because of lack of medical attendance."<sup>19</sup> She was outraged that

in my prairie trips I am constantly crossing the tracks of dead babies and dead mothers, who never ought to have died. It is nothing more or less than National Murder. The State guards and protects our hogs and our forests and allows our

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<sup>16</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

<sup>17</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916. Discussions of the term can be found in chapter 7 of Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America (1974; revised, New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 136-158; Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), 104-114; Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900 to 1918 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), 100-101, 114-116.

<sup>18</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, An official of the Saskatchewan Department of Health to J.B. Musselman, n.d. 1917.

<sup>19</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, An official of the Saskatchewan Department of Health to J.B. Musselman, ca. 1917.

children to die.<sup>20</sup>

In Saskatchewan during 1914 and 1915 a conservative estimate of infant mortality put the number of babies who died before one year of age at 3,266.<sup>21</sup> McNaughton was a sympathetic woman who listened carefully and respectfully to other women, and she was especially concerned about farm women.<sup>22</sup> The stories of women and babies who died, or came near to death, and of the children who were left motherless in the settlement period, made a deep impression on her.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," ca. 1916, a brief presented to the Canadian Graduate Nurses Association.

<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, An official of the Saskatchewan Department of Health to J.B. Musselman, ca. 1917. These official figures were based only on the reported deaths. For higher figures given by Dr. John A. Rose, of the Regina Department of Public Health, see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, Dr. John A. Rose, "Infant Mortality in Saskatchewan," 1915. For a discussion of the implications of Rose's figures see: Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies," 278-302. For discussions of the concern of Canadian feminists with infant and maternal mortality see Suzann Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives? Efforts to Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality," in A Not Unreasonable Claim - Women and Social Reform 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), 131-149, 222-225. Dianne Dodd, "Helen MacMurchy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," in Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada, ed. Dianne Dodd and Deborah Gorham (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 135-161.

<sup>22</sup> For hundreds of letters in McNaughton's voluminous correspondence with farm women who found she was sympathetic and supportive, see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D(1-71), A1 E92(1-9), A1 E89 and scattered throughout other files in the McNaughton Papers.

<sup>23</sup> For examples of the sort of accounts that McNaughton was hearing see Nanci Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies, 1880-1930," Journal of Historical

In using the phrase "race suicide" she was referring to threats to the human race in general rather than to the supposed threats to anglo-celts. When she used the term she was not referring to birth control or to specific ethnic and racial groups; rather, she was referring to the ghastly conditions in which too many farm women were giving birth.

McNaughton's passionate avowal that she was "going right after this medical aid question" and that she was "going to make it my subject," was spurred both by her own experiences and by the fact that no matter where she went in rural Saskatchewan she encountered young mothers, babies, and young children.<sup>24</sup> With many young married women settlers on homesteads, Saskatchewan had recorded 550 births for every thousand women in the province in 1901. This was the highest provincial birth rate recorded on Henripin's "famous" table of fertility rates in Canada between 1831 and 1965. In 1911 Saskatchewan had had a birthrate of 229 for every thousand women in the province, the highest rate of any province in Canada that year. In other words, in the year that McNaughton had her hysterectomy, over one-quarter of the women in Saskatchewan had a baby whose birth was registered and many births and infant deaths were not

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Sociology 8(3) (September 1995): 278-302.

<sup>24</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

registered.<sup>25</sup>

Because over 80% of the province's 492,432 people were rural the vast majority of these babies were born in rural Saskatchewan. The rural population remained high throughout McNaughton's years in the WGG. In Saskatchewan the rural population was 84.8% in 1916, 83.2% in 1921, and 82.8% in 1926. In 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941 Saskatchewan was the third most populous province in Canada.<sup>26</sup> In 1914, the year before McNaughton launched her campaign, the Saskatchewan Bureau of Public Health reported that there were 16,489 registered births in the province. Of these births 58% were attended by a physician, 4% by midwives, and 37% were unattended by either. According to the Bureau, that year children under five years of age accounted for 44% of deaths

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<sup>25</sup> Marie Lavigne, "Feminist Reflections on the Fertility of Women in Québec," in The Politics of Diversity ed. Roberta Hamilton and Michèle Barrett (Montreal: Book Centre Inc., 1986). See Henripin, chart on 305. Lavigne points out that in Quebec many women were nuns and did not marry. In Saskatchewan in 1901 and 1911 there were many women who were young immigrants, whereas Quebec had an older population. However, in Saskatchewan many of the women were on labour intensive family farms where the labour of children was important. Ibid., 307, 315-6, 320-1. See also Jacques Henripin, Tendances et facteurs de la fécondité au Canada (Ottawa: Bureau of Federal Statistics, 1968), 21. SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

<sup>26</sup> John H. Archer, Saskatchewan A History (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 360. J.L. Finlay and D.N. Sprague, The Structure of Canadian History, 3rd ed. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1989), 474.



in the province.<sup>27</sup> However the accuracy of these statistics was dependent upon busy farmers getting into town to register births and infant deaths, a task that was often neglected. Therefore, McNaughton was convinced that official provincial statistics badly under-estimated the extent of the problems with medical aid in rural Saskatchewan.<sup>28</sup>

McNaughton also knew that the conditions in which many farm women were living and giving birth were extremely difficult.<sup>29</sup> As she put it

the West is developing a type of woman that is not in keeping with her offer of progress. At first sight you place her age as 50, a second glance you think 45, and finally when you examine her closely you realize that she is not more than 35.<sup>30</sup>

McNaughton described these women as "faded, physically overtaxed, mentally fatigued, working almost automatically."<sup>31</sup> Pregnant women also risked miscarriages. In this period, before blood transfusions and antibiotics were available, a miscarriage was more dangerous than a natural birth. In Britain, for example, it was estimated that every woman who had children had likely had at least

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<sup>27</sup> Saskatchewan Bureau of Public Health, Annual Report (Regina: King's Printer, 1915), 48, 79, 95.

<sup>28</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

<sup>29</sup> Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies."

<sup>30</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 13 May 1916.

<sup>31</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 13 May 1916.

one miscarriage.<sup>32</sup>

During the medical aid campaign McNaughton used several arguments and strategies. She believed that medical aid should be controlled at the local level but it should be financed by the three levels of government. She reported that she and the WGG became "impatient with the government because we thought it did not give the same attention to this matter as to more material things."<sup>33</sup> One of her strategies was to contrast human concerns with what she saw as an inordinate emphasis on the economy by the governments and on agricultural production by farm men. As she told one gathering "the greatest educational work today is to educate public opinion into considering the real value and care of human [life] in equal degree to that of property."<sup>34</sup> Women and children should be of more value to farm men than their livestock and grain production. Therefore when she made speeches she argued that

one of the most pressing needs today is better means of obtaining medical aid & nursing attention. It has been said that every baby born in the province is worth \$1000 to the state. Since 1905 more than 50,000 babies have been born in Saskatchewan. This represents an asset of \$50,000,000. During the same time [the] accumulated public debt [was] \$22,000,000. Yet

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<sup>32</sup> Pat Jalland, Women, Marriage and Politics 1860-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 160-170.

<sup>33</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920.

<sup>34</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, speech "Municipal Nurses," ca. 1916.

until recently the question of medical aid on the prairie has received no attention. Both medical aid and district nurse[s] should be municipal questions.<sup>35</sup>

In another speech McNaughton pointed out that "our public buildings are second to none in any country, considering our age," and "our public works, our roads, our bridges are second to none" but "out on the prairies our mothers are allowed to die for lack of medical attention."<sup>36</sup> She was using these arguments to convince the people of Saskatchewan not only that hospitals, nurses, doctors, and mid-wives should be paid for by the provincial and federal governments and by property taxes at the local level, but also that they should be controlled by people in the municipalities.<sup>37</sup> In other words, McNaughton wanted decisions about medical aid made by local people rather than by distant politicians and bureaucrats. She believed that attracting new immigrants helped only the commercial class and did nothing for farm people. She told one audience that medical services needed

fostering by paternal governments. We need for

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<sup>35</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, speech "How the social lives of farmers' wives can be improved," ca. 1914-1915.

<sup>36</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton, "Medical Aid," a speech delivered to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>37</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, speech "How the social lives of farmers wives can be improved," ca. 1914-1915.

this work large provincial grants; we need large federal grants. Why not? A new baby is an asset of \$1000 to the country. If the country paid \$50 to ensure a healthy start in life for each of its coming citizens, it would not be too much. The Dominion Government spend huge sums of money on its immigration policy, surely it can spend sums sufficient to enable its people receiving treatment equal to that given in less civilized countries.<sup>38</sup>

These problems were rooted in the first National Policy. McNaughton later was to realize that the WGG campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all," had "laid the foundation" for the Saskatchewan hospital and medical system that was in 1946 "the most advanced in Canada."<sup>39</sup> Many Canadian historians have recognized that Saskatchewan was the province that pioneered the implementation of medicare and that the federal medicare program was patterned on the Saskatchewan plan but they ignore the role of Saskatchewan farm women in the foundations of medicare.<sup>40</sup> Several scholars have linked the

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<sup>38</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA, Yearbook 1917. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915.

<sup>39</sup> The Western Producer 31 October 1946.

<sup>40</sup> J.L. Granatstein, "Medicare: Saskatchewan Moves the Nation," chapter 7 in Canada 1957-1967 - The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 169-197. Ivan Avakumovic, Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 184-186. R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald R. Smith Destinies - Canadian History Since Confederation (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1988), 390, 440. Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad with Veronica Strong-Boag, History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1993), 378. McLeod and

Saskatchewan plan with earlier programs in the province.<sup>41</sup> However Joan Feather and Vincent Matthews' article, "Early Medical Care in Saskatchewan," and two unpublished papers that I have given are the only sources that trace medicare back to the campaign of McNaughton and the WGG.<sup>42</sup>

The campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all" was an important early step on the long road to the system of hospital care and an extensive public health care system

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McLeod, Tommy Douglas - The Road to Jerusalem, 145-155, 194-204, 238-239.

<sup>41</sup> Joan Feather, "Horse-Trading and Health Insurance: Saskatchewan and Dominion-Provincial Relations, 1937-1947," Saskatchewan History 39(3) (Autumn 1986): 94-106. Joan Feather and Vincent L. Matthews, "Early Medical Care in Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan History 37(2) (Spring 1984): 41-54. Vincent L. Matthews and Joan Feather, "Steps Along the Way - Evolution of Health Insurance in Saskatchewan," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, in Vancouver, 8 June 1983. Malcolm Taylor, Health Insurance and Canadian Public Policy (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 68-71, 432. Duane John Mombourquette, "A Government and Health Care: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, 1944-1964," M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1990, 1-51. Robin F. Badgley and Samuel Wolfe, Doctor's Strike - Medicare and Conflict in Saskatchewan (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1967), 3-30. C. Stuart Houston, R.G. Ferguson - Crusader Against Tuberculosis (Toronto and Oxford: Hannah Institute & Dundurn Press, 1991).

<sup>42</sup> Feather and Matthews, "Early Medical Care in Saskatchewan." Georgina M. Taylor, "Farm Women, the Co-operative Commonwealth and the Campaign for Health Care Services in Saskatchewan, 1910-1967," unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1987. Georgina M. Taylor, "'A Splendid Field Before Us' Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909-1926," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1993. Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1996), 219, 239.

in Saskatchewan.<sup>43</sup> It was also the first step on the road to medicare in Canada, a program now highly valued by most Canadians. In other words, the campaign is an excellent early example of the development of an important plank in the second National Policy which eventually helped to redistribute wealth across Canada. McNaughton and other agrarian activists helped to construct the second National Policy as a replacement for the first National Policy, which they loathed because they saw it as causing untold hardship among farm people, including the lack of medical aid.

In order to get action on medical aid, McNaughton formed an alliance with the radical grassroots men in the SGGGA. By getting the support of the grassroots men at the district conventions that preceded the provincial convention, she hoped to force the provincial SGGGA to pass a medical aid motion. The provincial Liberal government might act once the SGGGA and the Saskatchewan Association of Municipalities spoke out on the issue.

A good example of the speeches McNaughton made to convince the district conventions in late 1915, was the speech she made to the annual provincial convention of District No. 9 of the SGGGA in Wynyard in December. McNaughton needed to impress the farm people who attended district conventions, most of whom were farm men, about the

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<sup>43</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid."

importance of the medical aid campaign because more farmers from the SGGAs locals attended district conventions than attended provincial conventions. The grassroots men were more radical than the leadership of the provincial SGGAs; if she could get the district conventions behind her this was a wise strategy.

A reporter from The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm reported that at Wynyard she gave "an address that was listened to with the greatest attention and interest." It provoked "a very animated discussion."<sup>44</sup> This was exactly what she wanted to happen when she spoke. Like the convention at Wynyard, all of the 15 other district conventions of the SGGAs passed motions endorsing McNaughton's ideas about medical aid after she spoke to them.<sup>45</sup> She was well received because all over the province there were pregnant women with no doctors or nurses nearby. The need was especially great in newly settled districts.<sup>46</sup>

At times the WGG met with the SGGAs in a general session to discuss questions that were of interest to both groups. During 1915 and 1916 many hours were spent on the medical aid question in the WGG conventions, in big general sessions

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<sup>44</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915.

<sup>45</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 2 December 1916.

<sup>46</sup> See a letter from a woman in a new district describing the conditions in McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 6 January 1917.

of the SGGG with both the male Grain Growers and the women of the WGG in attendance, and in Locals of SGGG and WGG in numerous farm districts.<sup>47</sup> In 1916 McNaughton gave an "address before the full convention," in other words to the large general male and female session. Her speech focussed on medical aid.<sup>48</sup> The full convention then passed a motion for "compulsory medical facilities" that had all the marks of McNaughton's guiding hand. It resolved that

whereas through the scattered nature of settlements in new districts and the poverty of many new settlers, many lives are lost annually through the lack of proper medical and nursing attention, therefore, be it resolved, that this Convention deems it advisable that the Provincial Government should take up the matter of providing adequate nursing and compulsory medical facilities for rural districts at public expense.<sup>49</sup>

When this motion passed the SGGG had committed itself to supporting the demands of WGG and McNaughton for "compulsory" medical aid in the rural areas.

McNaughton then went about forming an alliance with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) to

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<sup>47</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech delivered to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>48</sup> SPL-LHR, pamphlets, Saskatchewan Grain Growers 2, the program of "The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, The Fifteenth Annual Convention" held in "Saskatoon 15th to 17th, 1916."

<sup>49</sup> SAB, SGGG Papers B2 I 3, Minutes of the SGGG Annual Convention, 15-18 February 1916. SPL-LHR, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 26 February 1916.



deal with the medical aid question.<sup>50</sup> SARM was, as The Saskatoon Daily Star put it, "an important factor in framing the legislative program in Saskatchewan."<sup>51</sup> It was to the advantage of the municipalities to ally themselves with McNaughton and the WGG on the medical aid question because they, rather than the provinces, were responsible for paying for the medical care of indigents. This was getting "very expensive" for some municipalities with the rate of taxation that was allowed by provincial law.<sup>52</sup> McNaughton wanted to convince SARM that the municipalities should be able to raise taxes specifically for medical aid rather than having it come out of their general revenue fund. She also argued that the provincial and federal governments should be funding medical aid.<sup>53</sup>

She later recalled that when the WGG was "wrestling" with the medical aid question she was

delegated to ask whether I could address the Rural Municipalities convention on the subject, and was told by one of the executive later that my request was hotly debated, as one of them said that a woman had never appeared before the Rural

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<sup>50</sup> Stuart Houston's research also showed that Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) was an important factor. He found that when the SARM spoke about health care the Liberals acted quickly. C. Stuart Houston, R.G. Ferguson.

<sup>51</sup> The Saskatoon Daily Star 8 March 1918.

<sup>52</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Resolutions of the SARM Convention in Regina, 8-10 March 1916.

<sup>53</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGG Yearbook 1917.

Municipalities and that would be establishing a precedent.<sup>54</sup>

When, after its heated debate, SARM decided it would extend an invitation to McNaughton she wrote to Haight quite pleased with herself.<sup>55</sup> In discussing medical aid she said "I am to speak on this question on Mar. 8 to the Rural Municipal Convention. What do you think of that?"<sup>56</sup>

At the SARM convention McNaughton spoke for 30 minutes to "a very sympathetic audience of over 600 delegates and visitors" about "Medical Aid on the Prairie."<sup>57</sup> The Saskatoon Daily Star reported that

Mrs. McNaughton, the President of the WGGA, then favoured the convention with one of the very best addresses she has ever made. She dealt with the medical aid question for rural municipalities.... She made a great plea for serious consideration by all delegates of the question of medical aid for rural districts and hoped that concerted effort would result in obtaining for these districts a reasonable assistance from the [provincial] government through legislative machinery and financial guarantee.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Mrs. Ray Paul, 23 February 1942. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, E.B. Hingley to McNaughton, 5 January 1916.

<sup>55</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, E.B. Hingley to McNaughton, 5 January 1916.

<sup>56</sup> SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 2 February 1916.

<sup>57</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, E.B. Hingley to McNaughton, 5 January 1916. SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917. SPL-LHR, pamphlet, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities 3, "Programme of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities," 1916.

<sup>58</sup> The Saskatoon Daily Star 9 March 1916.

She also told them that there was a particular need for maternity care. The Dominion government, she said, "spends huge sums on the conservation of natural resources. They issue a vast amount of literature on the subject, but no word concerning the greatest natural resource, our children."<sup>59</sup> Then, speaking like the dedicated pacifist that she was, she told the delegates and visitors that the answer given

to all our requests for medical aid has invariably been "no funds." When needed money can be found, as evidenced by our Patriotic and Red Cross work. Previous to the war had the medical aid question been put up in the same manner the same reply would have been obtained, "no funds." Had we asked the government at the beginning of this session for \$50,000 dollars we should have met with the same reply. Yet \$50,000 has easily been found for the expenses of the Royal Commission in 1914. In 1914 the average cost per capita approximately for educating the rural school child was \$59.22. What sum was spent per capita that same year on saving or attempting to save 1,637 children who died.<sup>60</sup>

Following her address SARM had passed a resolution calling for municipal hospitals throughout the province, in which several municipalities would co-operate by building a 'union' hospital.<sup>61</sup> After the convention, McNaughton was flooded with "heavy correspondence with many municipal officers and others in which I was able to exchange a great

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<sup>59</sup> SPL-LHR, biography file for McNaughton, undated newspaper clipping "Evening Session...may present," likely a Regina paper, ca. the week of the 9th of March 1916.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Resolutions of the SARM Convention in Regina, 8-10 March 1916.

deal of information."<sup>62</sup> A few days after the SARM convention McNaughton jubilantly wrote Haight to tell her "I went to [the] Municipal Convention and I believe I did more good than I've ever done in one meeting."<sup>63</sup> Enclosing the article from The Saskatoon Daily Star about the convention, she went on to discuss the medical aid campaign with great enthusiasm.<sup>64</sup> Because SARM had agreed in principle that something needed to be done about medical aid, McNaughton told Haight that the response of SARM to her speech had given "the biggest boost" to the WGG.<sup>65</sup>

McNaughton was pleased because, with motions on the books by both the SGGA and SARM, she and the WGG had cemented alliances with the two most powerful organizations in province. They were then standing resolutely behind the WGG demand for improved medical aid so that the provincial government had to listen to them.<sup>66</sup> The provincial

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<sup>62</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917.

<sup>63</sup> SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. The Saskatoon Daily Star 9 March 1916. For another newspaper article about this speech see Prairie Farm and Home 26 April 1916.

<sup>65</sup> SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916.

<sup>66</sup> SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 21 February 1916. For information on SARM see Geo. F. Dawson and Ross Evans, The SARM Story - Sixty Years of Progress (Regina: The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, 1980).

government was now under a great deal of pressure.

The WGG had a membership of only 1,600 but, by forming alliances with two powerful groups, McNaughton and the WGG forced the provincial government to act, if it wanted to stay in power.<sup>67</sup> The government therefore amended the Rural Municipalities Act later in 1916. McNaughton caught the kernel of the changes when she explained that

very important changes had been made in the Rural Municipalities Act. One change provides that the services of a municipal doctor may be secured and his salary guaranteed by the Municipality up to \$1500 per annum. Another change is the Rural Municipalities Hospital Act, which allows three or more contiguous municipalities to establish a union hospital.... Another change in the Municipal Act states "the municipalities now have additional powers in providing for the appointment of a nurse for the municipality" or "granting aid to an organized society for securing services of such a nurse."<sup>68</sup>

The provincial government also made grants available for hospitalization. McNaughton believed that these were "great steps towards overcoming the financial side of the

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<sup>67</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920. SAB, Haight Papers A5 13(f), Newspaper clipping, [1916].

<sup>68</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian Graduate Nurses Association," ca. 1916. See also "An Act to Amend the Rural Municipalities Act," Statutes of Saskatchewan 1916 (Regina, King's Printer: 1916), 357-358. For another of McNaughton's explanation of these clauses see SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech given to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

question."<sup>69</sup>

Having persuaded the provincial government to pass this legislation McNaughton and the WGG moved on to the next step in their campaign for medical aid. They were attempting to push a midwives act through the Legislature, and the women in the farm women's movement now had to persuade local taxpayers in the various municipalities to spend money on doctors and nurses and to build union hospitals. In order to do so, the women in the farm women's movement and men in the rural community had to learn the skills necessary to mount concerted campaigns to convince local taxpayers in various municipalities to vote to spend the necessary money. Learning these skills and mounting all the campaigns took years of dedicated work by McNaughton and the other women in the farm movement and by the radical men who backed them. In 1916 McNaughton found that many local women were more hesitant to get involved in local campaigns than were the men because they did not yet have the right to vote municipally. She was sympathetic to them because she knew that "it is not a pleasant experience to wait on a local council with a proposition, and feel one has only a moral right to do so."<sup>70</sup> McNaughton and the WGG were campaigning

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<sup>69</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian Graduate Nurses Association," ca. 1916.

<sup>70</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 27 May 1916.

for the municipal vote in part to increase the confidence of local-women.

McNaughton's columns during 1916 and 1917 in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm show how she went about what she regarded as the necessary "educational work" on medical aid. In order to educate the rural community she did two things; first, she educated farm people to take advantage of the new legislation and, second, she encouraged them to push for even better services and better legislation. For decades McNaughton was to help farm women take advantage of the services that were available and she continued to push for better medical aid.<sup>71</sup>

She focused first on educating farm people in order that they would understand the new enabling legislation. In June of 1916, just after the government passed the new laws with regard to medical aid, she told her readers that she had a favour to ask.

Will you make time to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest," the following recent rural municipal enactments. Those referring to medical aid and district nurses should be noted by every club in the province.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The Western Producer 15 September 1927, 15 March 1928, 16 August 1928, 23 October 1930, 8 June 1933, 23 March 1939, 29 May 1947.

<sup>72</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 24 June 1916. McNaughton was satirically equating the new legislation to scripture by quoting from the "Collect" for the second Sunday in Advent in The Book of Common Prayer. It reads "Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them...."

Linking medical aid with women's suffrage and the need for local power, she told them that

all these amendments go to prove what I am constantly repeating. That we have it within our own hands to develop the Municipal Unit to a degree of perfection. Let us remember we are now citizens and let us not ignore our duties as such.<sup>73</sup>

Pulling out all the stops she then quoted Walter Raushenbusch, the well-known social gospel theologian, and she went on to outline the new legislation including the provisions in the Hospital Act and the Rural Municipalities Act for better medical aid.<sup>74</sup>

She continued to keep her readers posted about new developments, including the decision in August of 1916 by the executive of the WGG "to print a circular containing the information generally required" for work at the local level in order to establish union hospitals.<sup>75</sup> They had received so many letters and requests for information that they saw this pamphlet as very important.<sup>76</sup>

In September McNaughton printed the complete text of the pamphlet which, she said, could be obtained at a nominal

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The Book of Common Prayer (Toronto: Oxford University Press, n.d.), 71.

<sup>73</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 24 June 1916.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 5 August 1916. See also McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 26 August 1916.

<sup>76</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 5 August 1916.



cost from the secretary of the WGG. (See the pamphlet in Appendix # VII "Medical Aid within the Reach of All.") It was, she said, "suitable for distribution" throughout municipalities where the hospital by-laws were to be voted on that fall.<sup>77</sup> To set up a union hospital for three or more municipalities organizers had to get approval of a hospital by-law by a majority of the ratepayers in order that taxes could be raised to build and maintain the hospital. The pamphlet gave the arguments for building a hospital, the arguments for taxation for a hospital, a plea for justice for "women and children, the sick and the needy," and it concluded with an appeal to provincial pride by suggesting they make Saskatchewan the province that "places Medical Aid within reach of all?"<sup>78</sup>

McNaughton was well known throughout the province by the fall of 1916. She had vowed to make medical aid her own special campaign and she had done that. She wrote the pamphlet and, because she had put so much of herself into the campaign, she uncharacteristically allowed her own name to be printed on the first page. This pamphlet not only gave local activists supportive arguments for their campaigns but lent the influence of her name to their campaign.<sup>79</sup> By doing so, she was using her place in the hierarchies of

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<sup>77</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page" 23 September 1916.

<sup>78</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid."

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

power in Saskatchewan to help rural people build hospitals. The WGG continued to get requests for the pamphlet, including a request for the pamphlet printed in German for Austrians. In November McNaughton reported that "from all points of the compass come reports showing that this question has taken a hold on public interest which will not be lost."<sup>30</sup>

In 1917, 1918 and 1919 there was progress in the medical aid campaign. In 1917 McNaughton summarized the work she had done in the last year on medical aid for the provincial convention of the WGG. She also said she had "spoken in a number of municipalities" that were considering building union hospitals.<sup>31</sup> There were, she said,

splendid men and women engaged in promoting the scheme, but a great deal of educational work remains to be done before it is popular. The country is new; physical features, railway positions; the idea of extra taxes, and local jealousy over the hospital site, too often militate against the success of the scheme.<sup>32</sup>

She concluded the section of her report on medical aid by challenging the delegates by asking them if every WGG local club was "prepared to assist in an aggressive campaign which will place some form of medical aid or a district nurse in

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<sup>30</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 11 November 1916.

<sup>31</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1917.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

every district of the province?"<sup>33</sup>

In 1918 she reported that the WGG continued to be active in pursuing

the "Medical Aid" question, covering "Rural Medical Inspections in Schools," "The Municipal Hospital Scheme" and the "District Nurse." Much correspondence has been received and much literature distributed on this subject. Grain Growers' children are at least equal in importance to Grain Growers' hogs and our Women's Sections are demonstrating this fact. It is up to our Association to see to it that adequate Medical and Nursing Facilities are placed within the reach of all.<sup>34</sup>

She then reiterated the basic assumption that underlay all her work in the farm women's movement and in the medical aid campaign, that "only by organization and education can this be done."<sup>35</sup> She was convinced that if farm people truly understood the situation they would organize by taking united action in order to convince local ratepayers to approve the taxes so that municipal hospitals, doctors, and nurses could be established.

During the war, the farm women had great difficulty finding nurses and doctors for rural Saskatchewan. "The Plan of Work" that the WGG published in 1919 set out its plan for the post-war period. "Now that the war is over," it said,

and there may be some available doctors and nurses, the Women's Section hopes to extend its

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Women's Section SGGG Yearbook 1918.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

work in regard to Municipal Hospitals, Doctors, and Nurses, and also in District Nurses, Medical Inspection of Schools, etc.<sup>36</sup>

The WGG was also

co-operating with the St. John Ambulance Association in the formation of rural classes in First Aid and Home Nursing. Literature along these lines will be supplied to the clubs upon application.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the alliances with SGGA and SARM, McNaughton and the WGG also forged an alliance with the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan during the second stage of the campaign. As an integrative agrarian feminist McNaughton could see that once the WGG had done the political work to push through legislation enabling the establishment of municipal hospitals, nurses and doctors, it would be helpful for the WGG to ally more closely with the Homemakers. They had not been able to do the political work because of the limitations the University placed on them. The WGG and the Homemakers shared an important integrative principle; both groups wanted to improve life for farm women, their babies, and their families.

One reason why McNaughton was successful in forging an alliance with the Homemakers, which was to last throughout her life, was that she did not see them as opponents of the WGG; rather, she treated them as worthy allies and as

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<sup>36</sup> SAB, pamphlet G35.1, Plan of Work 1919.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

partners. To her they were "fellow workers" and "organized women" in a "movement" to improve the lives of farm people.<sup>38</sup> Although the Homemakers generally stressed homemaking and the WGG usually emphasized economics and politics, McNaughton was always very respectful of "the farm woman" who she saw as

a very complex character. In common with women of almost every other class she performs the functions of her sex. She is wife, mother, housekeeper and citizen. And in addition to all her duties as such, the average farm woman is a member of the great producing class.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, she regarded both farm women and farm men not simply as one of the "producing" classes, but as "the great producing class." Even though she personally preferred politics and field work to housework and cooking, homemaking was essential for her, and the Homemakers were doing "splendid" work.<sup>40</sup>

Carol Bacchi asserted that in Canada there was a great

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<sup>38</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers' Clubs, 4, McNaughton, "Medical Aid," a speech given to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>39</sup> The Torch February 1923. For more about the respect McNaughton had for the reproductive, productive and community work of farm women see also McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 22 July 1916, 19 August 1916; and SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, a speech "The Prairie Woman," ca. 1913.

<sup>40</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, a speech "The Prairie Woman," ca. 1913. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton, "Medical Aid," a speech given to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

deal of conflict between the Farm Women and the Women's Institutes (WIs) or the Homemakers' Clubs in Saskatchewan. She constructed a false dichotomy and she over-generalized by not analyzing the way in which relations between the two groups varied from one province to another and the way they changed over time. She mistakenly assumed that the conflict, which was later to arise between Irene Parlby and some women in the WIs in Alberta during the polarization of the post-war period, was a universal antipathy between the women in the WIs and the women in the women's sections of the farmer's organizations.<sup>31</sup> This has led to a skewed version of McNaughton's feminism and the relations between the WGG and the Homemakers' Clubs in Saskatchewan.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Bacchi claims that "Violet McNaughton called the Homemakers' Clubs 'an appendage of the Provincial Liberal Party,' designed to compete with and to help suppress the politically dangerous farm women's associations." Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 129. But McNaughton's letter which Bacchi cites as evidence mentions neither the Homemakers nor the Liberals. SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight 23 July 1914. In other letters in this file from McNaughton she mentions the Homemakers, but she is not critical of them. On 20 December 1914 she did tell Haight that the Liberal government "does not like us," but she does not link the Liberals and the Homemakers. SAB, Haight Papers, A5 2. Bacchi was over generalizing from the situation in Alberta during the post-war period to that in Saskatchewan.

<sup>32</sup> For example, in her dissertation Louise Carbert repeated Bacchi's error, which she later changed in the book that came out of her dissertation. She had lengthy conversations with me and she had done more research. Louise Carbert, "Agrarian Feminism: The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women," Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1991. Louise Carbert, Agrarian Feminism - The Politics of Ontario

McNaughton did not like conflict. She was a practical idealist who sought ways to avoid conflict whenever possible. She believed that "it is a great mistake to maintain friction, if common sense can prevent it."<sup>33</sup> In a 1915 report on "Rural Saskatchewan" in Women's Century, the paper of the National Council of Women, McNaughton said the Homemakers and the WGG had "many features in common," that "Saskatchewan women through inter-club work have a fair provincial acquaintanceship," and that women's organizations "throughout the Dominion should know what each is doing - for Canada."<sup>34</sup> She told the WGG she had been invited, in May of 1916,

as a fraternal delegate to the Homemakers Convention, where I was enabled to understand from the reports of the numerous delegates what great factors in the life of the Province the two great country women's clubs are becoming.<sup>35</sup>

A close look at a "talk" on "medical aid," McNaughton was invited to give to the annual provincial convention of the Homemaker's Clubs in 1916, not only shows how important

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Farm Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). For another interpretation of the situation in Alberta between Nellie McClung who belonged to the WIs and Irene Parlby who belonged to the UFWA see Catherine Anne Cavanaugh, "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marryat Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1994, 122-147.

<sup>33</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Ida McNeal, 12 August 1919. Quoted in Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Women's Century October 1915.

<sup>35</sup> SAB pamphlet A35(1), WGG 1916 Annual Report.

the medical question was to McNaughton; it also illustrates the co-operative relations between the Homemakers and the WGG.<sup>36</sup> When she spoke to them she acknowledged the Homemakers' work with the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). Their expertise on the subject of the VON was so great that she hoped, during their convention, to "learn a lot more" from them about the VON.<sup>37</sup> In 1914 the Homemakers had passed a resolution urging the provincial government to give a grant of \$25.00 to every needy mother who gave birth in the province, \$15.00 of which was to go to the doctor who delivered the baby. McNaughton told the Homemakers that she thought the fact that the government had acted upon the Homemakers suggestion was a "great thing, but it only touches on the question."<sup>38</sup> McNaughton continued to acknowledge the Homemakers part in the establishment of the

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<sup>36</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Abigail DeLury to McNaughton, 3 May 1916. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>37</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916. See also SPL-LHR, pamphlets, "The Need of Nurses in the Prairie Districts" in The Imperial Colonist September 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Abigail DeLury to McNaughton, 3 May 1916.

<sup>38</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, R.J. Chin to Mrs Riley and the Homemakers, 24 June 1915, and Abigail DeLury to McNaughton, 15 November 1915.



grants. She had been publicizing them since the Homemakers' Executive Secretary Abigail DeLury had asked her to do so in 1915 and she was to continue publicizing the existence of these maternity grants over the decades so that any farm woman who needed a grant was aware that they were available.<sup>99</sup>

In her 1916 speech to the Homemakers she went on to tell them that, as a result of the work of the WGG in 1915 and 1916, the provincial government had recently passed ground-breaking legislation on medical aid. In 1916 the union hospital and the municipal doctor programs needed "organized women, including the Homemakers, to educate public opinion" in each local area before they could actually come into effect in any given rural area.<sup>100</sup> McNaughton gave the women at the Homemakers Convention the basic information they needed in order to get these services and, because this could greatly improve their daily lives, she urged them to do so. McNaughton also urged them to "take

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<sup>99</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, R.J. Chin to Mrs. Riley and the Homemakers, 24 June 1915; Abigail Delury to McNaughton, 15 November 1915; Mrs. H.W. Hutchinson to McNaughton, 26 August 1916. The Western Producer 17 April 1928, 23 October 1930, 30 April 1931, 4 December 1931, 14 January 1932, 3 December 1936. The publicity about the maternity grant did help. Seventeen mothers received the grant in 1920, 125 in 1921, 252 in 1922, 286 in 1923, 427 in 1924. Maurice MacDonal[d] Seymour, "Public Health in Saskatchewan," Canadian Medical Association Journal (1925): 274.

<sup>100</sup> SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

up the question of a Midwife Act" in the province, so that the hard-working unpaid Saskatchewan midwives could be certified and paid for their services.

She concluded by telling the Homemakers that she would be at their convention

until tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock, and I will be very glad to talk to any delegate here who is interested in these questions, or who would like to read some of the information that I have more fully: and, what would be helpful to me, if there are any difficulties you can bring to me - difficulties or successes - or information as to the progress that is being made in your communities, or any one of these question in the interest of the movement, I shall be deeply grateful.<sup>101</sup>

By telling them this, she was revealing several important aspects of her agrarian feminism. First, as a radical democrat, she operated in a democratic way by sharing information rather than setting herself up as the expert. Second, when she referred to "the movement" the Homemakers could have taken it in different ways; she may have been referring to the women's movement, the farm movement, or the 'movement' to get better medical services. In any case she clearly saw both the WGG and the Homemakers as part of "the movement." Third, by asking the Homemakers to talk to her after her public "talk" she was encouraging the kind of one-to-one personal and private contact that was so important in her feminism.

McNaughton revealed a fourth, and very important,

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

aspect of her feminism in this passage. Her use of the terms "progress" and "difficulties or successes" show that her thinking was not that of current feminists and scholars who look back on the accomplishments of earlier feminists and label them as 'successes' or 'failures.' McNaughton was a modernist who had great faith in the inevitability of "progress" so she thought in terms of "difficulties" rather than possible failure. The "successes" might be a long time in coming but, because "progress" was inevitable, eventually the "difficulties" would be overcome by 'progressive' movements and they would succeed. This belief was to sustain her feminist activism through succeeding decades. Periodically she was discouraged, but only in the early 1950s did these beliefs seem to waiver for a time. During her years in the WGG her ability to convey her belief in progress helped to inspire others, such as the Homemaker's who responded positively to her 1916 "talk."<sup>102</sup>

McNaughton gave the Homemakers full credit for the work they did. She recognized their work for indigent mothers and in getting nurses. She was very proud of the work the WGG had done in the campaign for equal political rights for women and for better medical aid. Knowing that women were different from men, in that they gave birth and mothered

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<sup>102</sup> McNaughton's depression or 'burn out' in the early 1950s was during her post-retirement years, when she was coping with the revelations of the second World War horror and the atomic bomb.

children, she waged an astute political campaign for better health care services so that they might give birth and raise their families in better circumstances. She did not see the women's campaign for "equality" as being the opposite of their "difference" from men.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to this, beginning with her years as the president of the WGG, McNaughton had very good working relations and highly valued personal friendships with numerous members of the Homemakers, some of which endured for decades.<sup>104</sup> Emma Ducie, a leader of the Saskatchewan Homemakers, and her two daughters were lifelong friends and associates of McNaughton. The Ducie family was to have a long association with both the Homemakers and the WIs that lasted over 90 years. McNaughton's working relationship and her friendship with the Ducies are symbolic of the close connection between McNaughton and "the two great countrywomen's clubs," as she referred to the WGG and the Homemakers.<sup>105</sup> Emma Ducie, who shared an abiding interest in the peace movement with McNaughton, organized the Coates

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<sup>103</sup> Angela Miles, Integrative Feminisms - Building Global Visions 1960s -1990s (New York: Routledge, 1996), 33.

<sup>104</sup> For an example of the many letters from grassroots women in the Homemakers with whom McNaughton cooperated see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(8), Mrs. Arthur Booker to McNaughton, 3 January 1924 and 26 January 1924.

<sup>105</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers' Clubs, 4, McNaughton, "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

Homemakers' Club in 1913, was active at a local level for 37 years, was provincial president of the Homemakers from 1926 to 1929 and passed her enthusiasm for the farm women's movement on to her daughters.<sup>106</sup>

In Saskatchewan, a province in which many people valued co-operation, McNaughton's approach as an integrative agrarian feminist made sense to many people during the campaign for medical aid. It also contributed to good

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<sup>106</sup> The Western Producer 25 June 1931, 5 March 1931, 5 November 1931. From 1937 onward Emma Ducie's eldest daughter Rose was to be McNaughton's assistant at The Western Producer. McNaughton was a frequent visitor to the Ducie home, and McNaughton's connection with the Ducie family was to endure for decades. Rose Ducie was McNaughton's assistant to the end of 1950, and she worked closely with her for another ten years during the time that McNaughton wrote her column, "Jottings by the Way" for The Western Producer. Rose and Violet grew to love one another so much that, in her final years, the only person Violet trusted to handle her financial affairs was Rose. It was Rose who worked with the lawyer to settle McNaughton's estate.

Ducie's younger daughter, Emmie Oddie, was active in the Homemakers and the WIs at a local, district, and national level, and she was involved in the Associated Countrywomen of the World. She was the President of the SWI, 1973-1975, on the Board of Directors of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC), 1973-1976, on the FWIC Executive, 1976-1985, and as President, 1979-1982. She enjoyed it, but sometimes thought that the central Canadian women treated the women from Saskatchewan as if they came from "behind the Wheat Straw Curtain." McNaughton arranged for Emmie to begin writing a regular column of advice on homemaking in The Western Producer, which she is still writing. Although the three Ducies and McNaughton did not always see eye to eye they were lifelong friends and co-operative co-workers who respected one another, as did numerous women who belonged to the Homemakers and the Farm Women in Saskatchewan. Legacy 47, 88, 89, 138, 154, 158. Emmie Oddie, "Federated Women's Institutes of Canada 1970-1988," an unpublished manuscript held by the FWIC, pp. 13, 19, 26, 33. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interview with Emmie Oddie, 27 October 1992.

working relations overall between the women in the Homemakers, and later the WIs, and the women who belonged to the WGG and subsequent groups.<sup>107</sup> As a result of this co-operation over the decades, not only were numerous Saskatchewan women involved in both the Homemakers and then the WIs and in the WGG and its successors, they also continued to work co-operatively to improve medical aid.<sup>108</sup> Although the women in these Saskatchewan groups did not

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<sup>107</sup> Subsequently the women in the Homemakers and later the WIs in Saskatchewan co-operated with the women of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), then the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union, and now the National Farmers Union. The SGGA joined with the Farmers' Union of Canada to become the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) in 1926. The UFC became the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union in 1949. The SFU and other provincial farm unions formed the National Farmers Union in 1969. Gary Carlson, Farm Voices: A Brief History and Reference Guide of Prairie Farm Organizations and Their Leaders 1870-1980 (Regina: The Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, 1981), 60-61. For a malestream interpretation of these farm organizations by a Saskatchewan farm activist see Gleave, United We Stand.

<sup>108</sup> When McNaughton was Women's Editor of The Western Producer she attended Farm Women's University Week, Homemakers' Week, and Farm Girls' Week at the University of Saskatchewan. She was very popular with those who attended all three of these weeks. Some of the Homemakers came especially to see her. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(5) Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 25 June 1936. This co-operative tradition endures to the present with some women still involved in the WIs and the National Farmers Union and the Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network (SWAN). Interviews with Chris Banman 18 November 1993, Calla Olson 2 October 1924, Emmie Oddie 27 October 1992, Ruby Miller 1 August 1995, Liz Delahey 30 January 1994, Nettie Wiebe 9 March 1991, 18 February 1992, 15 March 1994. Interview with Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes: Kathleen Strangeland, Nina Burnell, Alison Wilson, Gwenyth Borsheim, Mary Eva, Katherine Anderson, Grace Attridge, Doreen Holden, Lorena Bartel, Doris Pattison, Yvonne Wildman, Colleen Soule), 12 January 1992.

always agree, nor did they always have the same priorities, from McNaughton's day until the present they continued to co-operate whenever possible for the good of farm women and their families.<sup>109</sup> The two groups had many interests in common in addition to better medical aid. They both wanted better libraries, better schools, restrooms, and other services in the rural areas of the province and they often co-operated to get them.

McNaughton, the WGG, and their allies agreed that there needed to be better medical aid in Saskatchewan but the opposition they encountered limited the success of their campaign. To assess their successes and difficulties it is helpful to look at the way they dealt with attempting to get more midwives, nurses, hospitals, and doctors.

For a woman who did not like strife, the campaign caused McNaughton a great deal of anxiety. At one time or another during the campaign she was to find herself at odds with the provincial government, the Canadian Association of

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<sup>109</sup> Some women who belong to the NFU are also members of the WIs. But, with the farm crisis of the 1980s and the early 1990s, the number of women who have the time or the energy to belong to organizations was in decline. Interviews with: the Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan WIs, 12 January 1991; Nettie Wiebe, who was Woman President of the NFU at the time, 18 February 1993 and 28 May 1993; Liz Delahey, Women's Editor and Family Life Editor of The Western Producer from 1975 to 1988, 10 February 1992; Elizabeth Chizek, long time grassroots member of the WIs, 18 January 1993; Nancy Adams, President of SWI 1948-51, President of the Federated Women's Institutes 1953-58, and Area Vice President of the ACWW, 10 August 1991. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

Graduate Nurses, and the medical profession, all of whom were vying for power in the field of health care.<sup>110</sup>

Because McNaughton and the WGG wanted to do something quickly to help women who were giving birth, early in the campaign they focused on the question of getting a midwives act passed because, as McNaughton put it "it appeared to provide for similar needs in England."<sup>111</sup> England had passed a midwives act in 1902 providing that either a doctor or a midwife could deliver babies and that the Medical Officer of Health for county councils would supervise the midwives.<sup>112</sup> McNaughton believed that the best and quickest solution for the problems in Saskatchewan was qualified midwives.<sup>113</sup>

A "Plan to Secure Midwives for Sparsely Settled Districts," almost certainly written by McNaughton about 1916, highlighted the the view that midwives should be trained and assured adequate pay by government funding. The

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<sup>110</sup> "Graduate Nurse" indicated that a nurse had successfully completed a three-year apprenticeship. "Registered Nurse" indicated that the province had a legislated definition of a "Registered Nurse." McPherson points out that this was an indication of the nurse's status in the health-care hierarchy. Kathryn McPherson, Bedside Matters: The Transformation of Canadian Nursing, 1900-1990 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 20.

<sup>111</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920. SAB, Haight Papers A5 13(f), Newspaper clipping, [1916].

<sup>112</sup> Davies, Maternity, 200-208.

<sup>113</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Dowager Countess Grey, 6 January 1919.



seven points of the plan were:

- (1) The Need - The need is as great as it was twenty years ago.
- (2) What will fill the Need - Strong women who are trained midwives and can also take charge of the household.
- (3) Sources for Financing the Plan
  - (1) Federal aid for provinces who have not control of their natural resources. [The prairie provinces.]
  - (2) Provincial aid for those that do control their resources.
  - (3) Municipal aid,
  - (4) Membership fees.
  - (5) Nurses charges.
- (4) Remuneration for Nurse - A minimum of \$\_\_\_ a month, board, uniform and laundry.
- (5) Accommodation for Nurse - Probably the same as Teachers of Rural Schools.
- (6) Immediate Supply - Until we have the means of training our Canadian Women the supply can be secured from Great Britain.
- (7) Proposal for Training Canadian Women - Hospitals in the City where cases shall be treated free. These should be supported by the Government, as training schools for the care of child and Mother just as Agricultural Colleges are supported to train those who care for stock.<sup>114</sup>

The emphasis on trained midwives was, in part, because McNaughton, like many of her contemporaries, was convinced of the necessity of using Lister's antiseptic system. As an

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<sup>114</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, "Plan to Secure Midwives for Sparsely Settled Districts," ca. 1916. McNaughton and many of her contemporaries believed that, if the prairie provinces controlled natural resources such as prairie lands, rather than the federal government, the provincial financial position would be substantially improved. Although Saskatchewan gained control of natural resources in 1930, it was not until the early sixties, when federal funds were transferred to the province, that it was able to finance medicare. Archer, Saskatchewan A History, 133, 135, 209, 213, 299, 306-310. Joan Feather, "Horse-Trading and Health Insurance: Saskatchewan and Dominion-Provincial Relations, 1937-1947," Saskatchewan History 39(3) (Autumn 1986): 94-106.

article she titled "Lord Lister A Hero of Peace" and reproduced on the Mainly for Women pages of The Western Producer stated "it is difficult to realize the misery, despair and suffering in the world in the pre-Lister days."<sup>15</sup> Her ideas about training schools for midwives were likely also influenced by printed matter she had about the Bellevue [sic] Hospital Training School for Midwives in New York and the information it gave not only about the School but also about the whole question of midwives in several counties.<sup>16</sup>

McNaughton's 'difficulty,' as she would have phrased it, was that in Canada in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century nurses were in the process of professionalization, departments of public health across the country were getting established, and the medical profession in Canada was crowded so many doctors were establishing practices in the West. Although some doctors and nurses

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<sup>15</sup> The Western Producer 25 August 1927. Kathryn McPherson, "Science and Technique: Nurses' Work in a Canadian Hospital, 1920-1939," in Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada, ed. Diane Dodd and Deborah Gorham (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994) 71-101. McPherson, Bedside Matters, 85-86. For another account of Lister, written in McNaughton's day in the "Great Man" tradition, see M.E.M. Walker, Pioneers of Public Health - The Story of Some Benefactors of the Human Race (1930; reprint, Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), 154-165.

<sup>16</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, pamphlet "School for Midwives," New York, 1912, and the Program of the Bellevue [sic] Hospital Training School for Midwives in the City of New York. The spelling "Bellevue" is taken from these documents.

favoured midwives and worked with them, the medical and nursing professionals as a whole were opposed to midwives.<sup>117</sup> While organized medical men in Canada did not have an organized campaign against midwives, collectively they did use their influence to get rid of midwives.<sup>118</sup> By

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<sup>117</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, Dr. John A. Rose, "Infantile Mortality in Saskatchewan," 1915. Veronica Strong-Boag's, "Introduction" to Elizabeth Smith, Woman with a Purpose - The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith 1872-1884, edited and introduced by Veronica Strong-Boag (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1980), xvi. Lesley Biggs, "'The Case of the Missing Midwives': A History of Midwifery in Ontario from 1795-1900," in Delivering Motherhood - Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries, ed. Katherine Arnup, Andrée Lévesque and Ruth Roach Pierson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 20-35. Hélène Laforce, "The Different Stages of the Elimination of Midwives in Quebec," in *Ibid.*; 36-50. Beverly Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines? The National Council of Women, Nursing, and 'Women's Work' in Late Victorian Canada" in Caring and Curing, 17-47. Meryn Stuart, "Shifting Professional Boundaries: Gender Conflict in Public Health, 1920-1925," in *Ibid.*, 49-70. J.T.H. Connor, "'Larger Fish to Catch Here than Midwives': Midwifery and the Medical Profession in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in *Ibid.*, 103-134. Dianne Dodd, "Helen MacMurphy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," in *Ibid.*, 135-161. Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood - Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 27. R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, "The Reorientation of Medical Education in Late Nineteenth-Century Ontario: The Proprietary Medical Schools and the Founding of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto," Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 49(1) (January 1994): 63. For details of several doctors who established practices in the West in this period see Carlotta Hacker, The Indomitable Lady Doctors (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1974), 190-205; Henri Catenay, The Country Doctors (Red Deer: Mattris Press, 1980); Stuart Houston, R.G. Ferguson. C.J. Houston and C. Stuart Houston, compilers, Pioneer of Vision - The Reminiscences of T.A. Patrick (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980).

<sup>118</sup> Connor, "'Larger Fish to Catch Here than Midwives,'" 127. Gorham, "No Longer an Invisible Minority," 184.

fostering an image of midwives as dirty, ignorant and dangerous they portrayed doctors as the health care workers best fit to deliver babies.<sup>119</sup>

McNaughton soon was interacting with Maurice Seymour, the Commissioner of Public Health in Saskatchewan.<sup>120</sup> He was one of the few medical doctors in Canada who had done post-graduate work in public health. An Ontarian who had come to the West in 1881, worked as a CPR doctor, and established a private practice at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1882. He was appointed as the first Provincial Health Officer for Saskatchewan in 1905.<sup>121</sup> When Violet first encountered him, he was in the process of increasing the size and influence of the Bureau of Public Health, by then under the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, George Langley, a conservative Grain Grower. Seymour's expertise in public health had been recognized when he had been elected the president of the Public Health Association, an international association dominated by Americans.<sup>122</sup> Eventually, in 1923 the Bureau became the Department of

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<sup>119</sup> Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines," 34. For a succinct discussion of the male monopoly of medicine and the position of male doctors with regard to midwives and female doctors delivering babies see Strong-Boag, "Introduction" to A Woman with a Purpose, xiv-xxiv.

<sup>120</sup> I am grateful to Stuart Houston for sharing his research on, and his insights into, Seymour.

<sup>121</sup> Houston, R.G. Ferguson, 90-91.

<sup>122</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, M.M. Seymour to McNaughton, 25 March 1916.

Public Health and Seymour became the Deputy Minister of Public Health.<sup>123</sup> Although Seymour's father had been a dedicated Liberal, Seymour himself had turned down all offers to enter the political field. However his political sympathies were likely with the Liberal government.<sup>124</sup> McNaughton hoped for Seymour's support to achieve government recognition of midwives but received instead the non-committal response that lightly veiled the opposition of the professional bureaucrat and doctor.<sup>125</sup> After the 1915 WGG provincial convention McNaughton had J.B. Musselman, the SGGA secretary, send Seymour a WGG resolution that "the Government be asked to pass legislation whereby women can qualify in midwifery, without undergoing hospital training."<sup>126</sup> Seymour replied in an evasive way saying that the question of "providing assistance in maternity cases" was being considered and it was "hoped that a plan will be

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<sup>123</sup> The Western Producer 21 June 1928, 9 August 1928. Mombourquette, "A Government and Health Care," 16. Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970 (Regina and Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1971), 8-10. Houston, R.G. Ferguson, 95.

<sup>124</sup> J. B. Ritchie Private Papers, manuscript, "Maurice MacDonald Seymour, M.D., C.M., D.P.H."

<sup>125</sup> Connor, "'Larger Fish to Catch Here than Midwives'," 127. Gorham, "No Longer an Invisible Minority," 184.

<sup>126</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, M.M. Seymour to J.B. Musselman, 12 June 1915; Musselman to McNaughton, 19 June 1915.

worked out in the near future."<sup>127</sup> Similarly in 1916 Seymour made no direct comment regarding his position when he told McNaughton that he had passed her letter regarding recognition of midwives on to the Medical Council of Saskatchewan, which he told her had "the control of the practice of medicine which includes midwifery."<sup>128</sup> He did not mention that he had organized the Council.<sup>129</sup>

McNaughton was encountering what Vincent Matthews and Joan Feather aptly refer to as "the medical profession in Saskatchewan...as a professional self-interest group."<sup>130</sup> Although there was a shortage of doctors in remote rural areas in Saskatchewan, by the early twentieth century in Canada as a whole there was a surplus of doctors who were increasingly competitive.<sup>131</sup> This meant that the medical profession was dedicated to maintaining its position at the top of the health care workers hierarchy.

In 1917 McNaughton learned more about the methods Seymour would use in order to control health care in

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<sup>127</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, M.M. Seymour to J.B. Musselman, 12 June 1915.

<sup>128</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, M.M. Seymour to McNaughton, 5 April 1916.

<sup>129</sup> The Canadian Medical Association Journal, 20 (February 1929): 212-213.

<sup>130</sup> Joan Feather and Vincent L. Matthews, "Steps Along the Way," 4.

<sup>131</sup> Hélène Laforce, "The Different Stages of the Elimination of Midwives in Quebec," 47. Gidney and Millar, "The Reorientation of Medical Education," 63.

Saskatchewan. Eager to reinforce her argument for midwives, McNaughton had in her speeches taken statistics on the high rate of infant mortality in Saskatchewan from an article favouring midwives in Saskatchewan by John Rose, a medical doctor employed by the Health Department of City of Regina.<sup>132</sup> A Scottish doctor who was far more enthusiastic about midwives than Canadian doctors, Rose had previously written an article espousing the delivery of babies by handywomen, a term used to describe local untrained midwives in rural Saskatchewan.<sup>133</sup>

In response, acting in the "professional self-interest" of his department, and of doctors who opposed mid-wives, Seymour, or one of his staff, wrote to J.B. Musselman claiming that McNaughton had been "making statements which gave a false impression as to the infant mortality and the deaths of mother in rural sections a[t] time of childbirth

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<sup>132</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, Dr. John A. Rose, "Infantile Mortality in Saskatchewan," 1915. See also SAB, Haight Papers A5 2, McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 13 March 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915; A1 E72, McNaughton speech, "Municipal Nurses;" McNaughton, a submission to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses, "The Need for Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," ca. 1916. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton, "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>133</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E31, Dr. John A. Rose, "Infantile Mortality in Saskatchewan," 1915. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan: unpublished registry of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

in the Province."<sup>134</sup> The letter did not mention John Rose, but it did include a chart of statistics about infant mortality in Saskatchewan during 1914, 1915 and 1916 and quoted further statistics at length. It claimed that the statistics proved that McNaughton was making statements that would "cause erroneous deductions concerning life in our Province." Musselman did not send the letter and its enclosure to McNaughton but someone in the SGGGA office did so.<sup>135</sup> Seymour, or his staff member, was going over McNaughton's head when he wrote to Musselman rather than writing directly to McNaughton. It was a high-handed power play in which the bureaucrat, likely Seymour, was attempting to get the SGGGA to rein in McNaughton. The Department was claiming to be a higher authority than Rose with regard to provincial statistics and at the same time seizing the opportunity to attack McNaughton's credibility in the farm movement. However, by 1917, McNaughton was very popular with grassroots Grain Growers and with farm women. She had a reputation not only in Saskatchewan but across the prairies

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<sup>134</sup> Matthews and Feather, "Steps Along the Way," 4. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, two pages plus a one-page enclosure of an undated letter from an unknown bureaucrat, very likely M.M. Seymour, to J.B. Musselman, with a note pencilled in at the bottom by H.N., likely a secretary at the SGGGA office.

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as a force to be reckoned with and a person of integrity; therefore she quite easily survived the reprimand, embarrassing though it was.<sup>136</sup>

However McNaughton's campaign for trained midwives did not succeed in part because Seymour's response was indicative of the antipathy of the organized medical profession to midwives. Although individual nurses often cooperated with local untrained volunteer midwives, the Canadian Graduate Nurses' Association opposed the certification of midwives because it did not want midwives doing what it regarded as nurses' work. McNaughton believed "the greatest stumbling block" the WGG faced in attempting to establish a system of certified midwives was the Nurses' Association which she saw as standing for "full class protection, and (to the poor farmer) impossible rates."<sup>137</sup> McNaughton and the WGG were "not opposed to trained nurses" but they believed that many of the farm women who needed

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<sup>136</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(8), A. Hollis to McNaughton, 19 November 1925. John Rose, who had graduated in Aberdeen in 1894, was not as fortunate as McNaughton. In 1924, after ten years as a licensed practitioner in Saskatchewan, he was suspended by order of the Council of Physicians and Surgeons. He died in 1934, never having practised again in the province. College of Physicians and Surgeons, an unpublished Registry of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan. The reason for Rose's suspension is not stated in the Registry. I would like to thank Stuart Houston for this information from the Registry and for his insights into what it might mean.

<sup>137</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Dowager Countess Grey, 6 January 1919.

them "could not pay the fees."<sup>138</sup> They did a great deal of work to dissuade both the provincial and national Nurses' Associations but they would not budge. McNaughton saw the Associations as being "much inclined only to see the professional and protected side" of the question. With this opposition from the Nurses Association the provincial government refused to legalize midwifery. It was to be over eight decades before midwifery was legalized in Saskatchewan.<sup>139</sup>

Conservative provincial leaders also rejected an offer to place trained British midwives temporarily in the province. The Colonial Nursing Association in England placed nurses in the "Overseas Dominions." Between 1912 and 1913 it had sent 32 nurses to Canada. In 1916 Lady Mabel Piggott, the founder of the Association, wrote to the SGGGA and the letter was passed on to McNaughton. The Association, Piggott said, believed that because the Empire was experiencing so much loss of life during the War "great importance" should

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<sup>138</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon), 3 April 1991 and 27 March 1997. Midwifery was not to be legalized in Saskatchewan until 1997, after pressure from modern women, including women in the farm women's movement who were alarmed about declining services in the rural areas. See interviews listed in footnote 108. For a discussion of the current midwifery movement see Brian Burtch, "Medical Dominance and State Policies: The Midwifery Movement in Canada," in eds. Women, Medicine and Health, ed. B. Singh Bolaria and Rosemary Bolaria (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing and Saskatoon: Social Research Unit, Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan, 1994), 142-155.

be placed on infant life.<sup>140</sup> They also believed that to ignore the needs of mothers and their babies in Alberta and Saskatchewan "would be against the spirit of our race."<sup>141</sup> They were therefore suggesting a scheme whereby "suitable women whose homes have been broken up by the war," especially widows or married women, "might be trained as midwives, who in return for such training would undertake...a two years tour of service in any part of the Empire where their services are needed."<sup>142</sup>

McNaughton thought it was "gratifying to receive such an offer" and printed it in her column in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm.<sup>143</sup> However this sensible scheme came to naught because there was no legislation permitting midwives and because George Langley, the powerful conservative Grain Grower who was the Minister of Municipal Affairs, opposed it. Langley's supercilious letters to McNaughton, in which he took delight in correcting what he contemptuously referred to as her "misapprehension" of the law with regard

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<sup>140</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 23 September 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.B. Musselman to McNaughton, 8 September 1916.

<sup>141</sup> SPL-LHR, pamphlets, "The Need of Nurses in the Prairie Districts" in The Imperial Colonist, December 1916.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 23 September 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Margaret F. Robinson to McNaughton, 29 January 1917.

to medical aid, reveal his contempt for her.<sup>144</sup>

Langley enlisted the support of J.B. Musselman, the conservative Secretary of the SGGA, in order to use the Central Office of the SGGA to control McNaughton and the WGG. Langley explained to Musselman, that he did not want the Colonial Nursing Association sending any women to Saskatchewan. He said he had had trouble with the VON, who "refused to submit to any authority" figure in Saskatchewan "claiming that their headquarters were in Eastern Canada and the head of the Order located there was the only party from whom they would take instructions."<sup>145</sup> In other words, Langley would rather see the women of the province go without nurses than have nurses who would not submit to the control of the provincial government and Seymour, the head of the Bureau of Public Health. Because the British proposition was meeting such stiff opposition from Langley, or "the powers that be," as McNaughton referred to him, his allies, and Seymour, the WGG "dropped this idea" and left the matter to Seymour's Bureau of Health. This is yet another example of the conservative male leadership of the SGGA in league with the Liberal government and its

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<sup>144</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, George Langley to McNaughton, 5 September 1916, 18 October 1916, 27 March 1919.

<sup>145</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.B. Musselman to McNaughton, 8 September 1916; George Langley to J.B. Musselman, 13 September 1916; J.B. Musselman to McNaughton, 14 September 1916.

bureaucrats working against McNaughton and the WGG, so much so that the women were always wary of them.<sup>146</sup>

McNaughton summed up the question of midwives when she observed that "the law will not allow midwives to be acknowledged, but allows any woman, with or without experience, to practice with or without charging." Therefore many rural districts had to continue to "depend on the services of the Good Samaritan in the person" of a kind-hearted local woman.<sup>147</sup> In short, the opposition of the Nurses Associations, the provincial government, conservative Grain Growers, and the medical profession left many farm women without medical aid in McNaughton's period and in the long run contributed to the medicalization of childbirth in Saskatchewan. McNaughton had to adjust her perspective because she was not high enough in the hierarchies of power in Saskatchewan or in Canada to get midwifery legalized. As Deborah Findlay and Leslie Miller point out, women such as McNaughton, "like other relatively low-power groups in society," came to "see that if they cannot change the system that privileges the medical perspective" of doctors and nurses, "they can at least borrow some of its benefits for

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<sup>146</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920.

<sup>147</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Municipal Nurses," a speech, ca. 1916. For details of some of the difficulties encountered by one of these women see McNaughton's correspondence with Mrs. L.C. Shoebridge in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D62.

themselves."<sup>148</sup>

McNaughton was of a generation that had also learned to respect the expertise and value of nurses.<sup>149</sup> When McNaughton realized that it was likely going to be difficult to get a midwifery act passed, she began to focus more on the provision of municipal nurses. She told the Canadian Graduate Nurses Association that "the greatest difficulty facing prairie workers today is that of obtaining nurses." In wartime there was a scarcity of nurses, and the life of a district nurse in rural Saskatchewan did not fit the professional standards that Canadian nursing associations were trying to achieve. Indeed, working conditions for nurses were so bad in remote areas that McNaughton had to cloak an appeal to the Canadian Graduate Nurses Associations in the idealistic evangelical language of service. She urged the nurses to take an "interest in this very vital problem." She appealed to their imperial pride and asked them to be self-sacrificing. She wanted them to serve "the pioneer women of these Western Prairies, these lonely Daughters of the Empire." What they needed, she said, were "nurses, practical women filled with missionary zeal, women of vision," in other words women who were prepared to work in very difficult conditions. Not many nurses had that much

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<sup>148</sup> Findlay and Miller, "Medical Power and Women's Bodies," 134.

<sup>149</sup> McPherson, Bedside Matters, 19.

"missionary zeal" in the midst of a war that demanded so much of them.<sup>150</sup> In short, McNaughton was desperate enough that, although she seldom resorted to evangelical or imperialist rhetoric, she was using both in order to appeal to the nurses.<sup>151</sup>

McNaughton believed that there were serious problems trying to finance district nurses in the rural areas where they were supported by voluntary funds. As she told her readers "we do not seek to maintain rural telephones, beef rings, creameries etc. by 'voluntary service' so why a restroom or a district nurse?" She thought that women were "conservative" when they relied on voluntary fund raising, that they were doing it from "the 'ladies aid' view-point only."<sup>152</sup> The money then had to come, she said, from women who put on picnics or fowl suppers, "grants from women's clubs and sometimes a small grant from the municipality."<sup>153</sup> She also pointed out that raising money by voluntary efforts meant that

a self-sacrificing body of women must make this

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<sup>150</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian Graduate Nurses Association, ca. 1916.

<sup>151</sup> McPherson, Bedside Matters, 61-62.

<sup>152</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 14 October 1916. For a discussion of the impact of this volunteer work on nurses see McPherson, Bedside Matters, 62.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Municipal Nurses," a speech, ca. 1916.

work a constant study and responsibility. And that is why we do not have more nurses, because every community does not contain this body of women.<sup>154</sup>

McNaughton's assertion about "self-sacrificing" women was borne out by Sarah Dracas, the president of the committee that employed a VON nurse in the village of Paynton, and by other rural women who were involved in similar arrangements. Dracas sent McNaughton a summary of the work their nurse did and the committee's budget which McNaughton published in her column in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm. The funds to pay the nurse, rent a room for her, and to pay the expenses of running such a service came from membership fees, a Homemakers' Club grant, fees from patients, a VON grant, and from raising funds at a bake sale, a concert, and a picnic.<sup>155</sup> Therefore McNaughton wanted to teach people that they needed to pay taxes for a "self-sustaining rather than expect a semi-voluntary system."<sup>156</sup> She thought that rural people really needed a "complete system" financed by the provincial and federal

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 10 June 1916, 24 June 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Abigail DeLury to McNaughton, 3 May 1916, Mrs. Sarah Dracus to McNaughton, 3 May 1916.

<sup>156</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Municipal Nurses," a speech, ca. 1916.



government and with municipal grants.<sup>157</sup>

In 1916 the Rural Municipalities Act was amended to provide for "the appointment of nurses for the municipality, or granting aid to an organized society for the purpose of securing the services of nurses."<sup>158</sup> The municipalities in Saskatchewan, however did not rush out and hire municipal nurses. In a speech about "Municipal Nurses," made shortly after the legislative changes were made, McNaughton said she knew of only one municipality that had done so. Municipal councils had limited funds and often had other priorities. Therefore, until federal and provincial governments began to help pay for nurses, McNaughton personally believed that "greater benefits will be derived at present by [municipal] councils granting aid to a society organized specially for the work of maintaining a nurse." She thought that municipal councils had enough to do attending "the road-making, weed problems, and all the matters which now occupy them" without paying attention to "all the details and problems connected with installing and maintaining a district nurse." Municipal councils were made up of men because women did not yet have

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid. For another discussion of "the need for nursing and help" being greatest where "the ability to pay" was the "smallest," see E. Cora Hind, "The Women's Quiet Hour," The Western Home Monthly May 1912.

<sup>158</sup> "An Act to Amend the Rural Municipalities Act," 357-358. For McNaughton's explanation of these clauses see SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan 21 June 1916.

the municipal vote, and McNaughton likely suggested this in part so that women could run the society that maintained the nurse.<sup>159</sup> Many districts, often the districts where the need was greatest, were not in a financial position to hire a nurse.<sup>160</sup>

Although McNaughton believed that the leaders of the Nurses' Associations were acting in their own class interest in opposing midwives, she did not see herself, the WGG, or the other women's sections of the Grain Growers Associations as being pitted against the local nurses who worked in the rural districts. Indeed, her agrarian feminism included concern for the conditions of the districts nurses along with concern for the farm families who needed medical aid. "Our Women's Sections of the Grain Growers' Associations," she told the Duchess of Devonshire,

are prepared to do everything in their power to provide suitable and comfortable accommodation for the district nurse. I might also add that efforts are being made in the West to improve the conditions under which both rural teachers and nurses labor.<sup>161</sup>

McNaughton's sympathy for the nurses who were working in bad conditions was very evident in her presentation to a subcommittee of the Canadian National Association of

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<sup>159</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Municipal Nurses," a speech, ca. 1916.

<sup>160</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to the Duchess of Devonshire, 5 March 1918.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

Graduate Nurses and in a letter to Lady Piggott, the founder of the Colonial Nursing Association in London.<sup>152</sup> Piggott had suggested the Association send English nurses to the prairies. As an integrative agrarian feminist, who wanted the WGG to work in co-operation with other feminists and women, McNaughton did not want to mislead nurses who were thinking about coming to the prairies.

McNaughton outlined "some of the difficulties in connection with maternity nursing on the prairie," in a letter to Lady Piggott which was published in The Imperial Colonist the periodical of the British Women's Emigration Association.<sup>153</sup> In the article McNaughton revealed a great deal about the conditions in isolated districts that pushed her to work so hard on behalf of Saskatchewan mothers. Her depiction of the hardships also showed that in spite of the dire need, she would not deceive prospective British immigrants and rural workers. McNaughton told Lady Piggott and the readers of The Imperial Colonist that

too often the house consists of one room; if the

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<sup>152</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses," ca. 1916; and A1 E37, McNaughton, "Some of the Difficulties in Connection with Maternity Nursing on the Prairie," n.d.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916. SPL-LHR, pamphlets, The Imperial Colonist, June 1917. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses," ca. 1916.

weather is severe the new baby must be born practically in the presence of the rest of the family.

Too often [there is] no soft water. Sometimes both mother and child have to wait whilst efforts are made to procure soft water. Too often, if the nurse cannot do the maternity washing, it must wait until the mother is able. Probably she cannot change again until the washing is done. Too often it is impossible to get anyone to look after the rest of the family. The cooking etc. must all be done in the one room with the patient.

Too often the nurse has to contend with peculiar and unsanitary prejudices on the part of the patient and friends, particularly amongst the non-English speaking. Too often no doctor can be obtained. Too often [there are] no suitable utensils for nurses to use.<sup>164</sup>

Although such honesty was unlikely to attract many nurses McNaughton continued painting "a picture" that she insisted "was not overdrawn."<sup>165</sup>

Added to these and other difficulties are journeys by ox wagon, stoneboat and every description of vehicle, in every kind of weather. In one case that I know personally, the husband drove 40 miles, and in returning with the nurse found the river had risen. They were obliged to camp under the wagon, on the river bank for twenty four hours

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<sup>164</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916. SPL-LHR, pamphlets, The Imperial Colonist, June 1917. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses," ca. 1916; and A1 E37, McNaughton, "Some of the Difficulties in Connection with Maternity Nursing on the Prairie," n.d.

<sup>165</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916. Stuart Houston recalls that when his father, C.J. Houston, was delivering babies in the Yorkton area he encountered conditions that were worse than those McNaughton described. At times even the pigs and the chickens were in the house. C.J. Houston and C. Stuart Houston, compilers, Pioneer of Vision - The Reminiscences of T.A. Patrick (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 64.

and when they reached their destination they found the mother very sick, with a dead infant beside her.

When I first came, I heard a man extolling the virtues of a nurse they always had, because if necessary she would "muck the barn out," i.e. clean the stable. That of course is an uncommon quality, but many strange conditions must be faced by a prairie nurse.<sup>156</sup>

As an agrarian feminist McNaughton was attempting to be honest about the conditions in which nurses in remote areas had to work and the testimony of others on the rural prairies show that she was being accurate.<sup>157</sup> In this situation her loyalty to farm women and her commitment to being honest with women who had to earn a living put her in a contradictory position. Although in most situations she put farm women first, in this instance her sympathy for women seeking employment on the prairies appears to have

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<sup>156</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916. SPL-LHR, pamphlets, The Imperial Colonist, June 1917. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses," ca. 1916.

<sup>157</sup> Both M. Nye, a trained nurse who had worked in Saskatchewan and was returning after the war, and a nurse who had worked in rural Alberta in 1913 painted pictures similar to that of McNaughton in letters to the Colonial Nursing Association. SPL-LHR, pamphlets, M. Nye to the Editor, The Imperial Colonist June 1917 and British Women's Emigration Association Report, 1913. See also SPL-LHR, pamphlets, E. Edwards to Mrs. Robinson The Imperial Colonist, June 1917. Edwards said that "most nurses complain of too little leisure and too much work," but she tried to show "the brighter side of life in the West as well as the hardships." The copies of The Imperial Colonist and the British Women's Emigration Association Report, 1913 that SPL-LHR holds were acquired from McNaughton's collection of papers after she died. See also Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies 1880-1930."

been very important to her. She was caught in this contradictory situation in part because, although she was an agrarian feminist, she was also "an Englishwoman" who had emigrated to Canada. She was identifying with nurses who might come from England to the ethnically diverse prairies and find, as she had, "that it takes two years to become accustomed to prairie life, and [to] be able to understand the peculiarities of this very mixed Western Canada."<sup>168</sup>

Kathryn McPherson argues that the structure of prairie society defined "woman...as farm wife," so nurses were in a marginal position in rural society. In addition, the gendered relations within rural society were very important and they had an important impact upon the lives of single women in the countryside.<sup>169</sup> McPherson also argues that feminists, such as those in the NCWC, backed nurses organizations.<sup>170</sup> McNaughton, an agrarian feminist who realized there were class conflicts between the nurses organizations and farm women who wanted midwives, was supportive of 'ordinary' nurses and maintained good

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<sup>168</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916.

<sup>169</sup> Kathryn McPherson, "'The Country is a Stern Nurse': Rural Women, Urban Hospitals and the Creation of Western Canadian Nursing Work Force, 1920-1940," Prairie Forum 20(2) (Fall 1995): 195, 199.

<sup>170</sup> McPherson, Bedside Matters, 71. See also Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines?"

relations with the nurses in the VON.<sup>171</sup> She was also on good terms with the nurses in the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, in spite of their opposition to her plan for midwives. Although McPherson argues that nurses were marginal in rural communities, McNaughton did not regard them as such. As a radical member of the SGGA she was more sympathetic to nurses and other wage workers than were the conservative Grain Growers. For instance, after visiting Saskatchewan in 1919 it was obvious to J.C. Hanington, the Chief Superintendent of VON, that the WGG was in sympathy with the "the labour party" in Britain.<sup>172</sup>

McNaughton's problems with getting nurses for rural Saskatchewan were complicated by the conflicting interests of a number of parties involved. The determination of government officials to have authority over developments they considered to be within their jurisdiction, conflicted with the conviction of the women directing national nursing organizations that they had a right and a responsibility to supervise their members. The powerful and arrogant Minister of Municipal Affairs, George Langley, wanted to control what was going on in rural Saskatchewan and did not want women outside Saskatchewan who supervised staff for the VON or the

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<sup>171</sup> McPherson differentiates between "ordinary" nurses and those higher in the nursing hierarchy. McPherson, Bedside Matters 24, 32, 38-9.

<sup>172</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.C. Hanington to McNaughton, 24 June 1918; Alice Grey to Violet McNaughton, 7 March 1919.

Overseas Nursing Association. Ambitious Maurice Seymour, the Commissioner in charge of the Saskatchewan Bureau of Public Health was in Langley's department. He was in the process of building the bureau into a large department and he wanted to control medical aid in the province. The VON had nurses working in Saskatchewan and wanted to have a say with regard to their work. In addition there was conflict among women's organizations. The VON, which as part of its mandate sent nurses into rural districts, had difficulty obtaining support from the national Nurses' Association which was immersed in the professionalization of nursing in Canada and saw VON activity as a threat to improved standards. The conflict was also illustrated by National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), which was also interested in professional equality for women. It sided with the Nurses' Association against the VON and the WGG. These complicated dynamics were well illustrated by the situation that faced McNaughton in 1918 and 1919.

During the last year of the Great War the VON had only three nurses in Saskatchewan, although they had requests for nurses from 12 districts and from two small rural hospitals.<sup>173</sup> Charlotte Hanington, the new chief superintendent of the VON, was going to be in Saskatchewan

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<sup>173</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Annual General Report of the Chief Superintendent of the VON, 1918; Alice Grey to McNaughton, 7 March 1919; I.C. Hanington to McNaughton, 24 June 1919.



and who had "plenty of backbone," was to become a champion of better medical aid for prairie women.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless her ability to respond to the problems in Saskatchewan was limited. She told McNaughton that, although the VON was getting calls for more nurses from rural districts and that Seymour's bureau was "most sympathetic" to the VON and wanted nurses, the Great War had created "a time of great national stress" and the VON was "utterly unable to cope" with the calls for nurses.<sup>175</sup> She also had not been able to enlist the co-operation of the Canadian Nurses Association.<sup>176</sup> She told McNaughton she had been at a meeting of the Association and she had not found "a sympathetic audience when I appealed on behalf of Western women."<sup>177</sup> She said that individual nurses had "rendered magnificent services" but the Association did not seem to be willing to do so because it spent "all the time discussing keeping up standards and what they are going to get".<sup>178</sup> There was also a problem with the NCWC, in Hanington's view, because it had done away with its committee on nursing when

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<sup>174</sup> Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives," 146-147.

<sup>175</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.C. Hanington to McNaughton, 24 June 1918.

<sup>176</sup> For an outline of the formation of nursing associations in Canada see McPherson, Bedside Matters, 63-71.

<sup>177</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.C. Hanington to McNaughton, 24 June 1918.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

it accepted "the findings" of the Nurses Association "as final."<sup>179</sup> In other words, the Association was putting higher priority on professionalization than on Hanington's idea of service. Although Hanington pointed out that this was regarded by some as "trade unionism of the worst type," McNaughton would not make such a condemnation. She believed in trade unions and supported women who tried to organize to improve their working conditions.<sup>180</sup>

McNaughton diplomatically attempted to deal with this division by making a plea to the Canadian Nurses Association on behalf of prairie farm women.<sup>181</sup> Her diplomatic skills also meant that the Saskatchewan Graduate Nurses' Association, which like the Canadian Association had not cooperated with her over midwives, trusted her. An instance of this trust was evident in 1918 when the Secretary Treasurer of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association wrote to McNaughton about a nursing scheme that they were discussing for rural Saskatchewan and asked her what salary she would

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. For a discussion of the ideas of the women in the NCWC about the work of nursing and nursing as service See Boutilier, "Helpers or Heroines," 25-31.

<sup>180</sup> McPherson, Bedside Matters, 63.

<sup>181</sup> See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Need of Nursing Care for Women on the Prairies," a brief presented to the Canadian National Association of Graduate Nurses," ca. 1916; and A1 E37, McNaughton, "Some of the Difficulties in Connection with Maternity Nursing on the Prairie," n.d.

suggest for nurses in the rural areas.<sup>182</sup> This trust kept open the lines of communication but it was not sufficient in itself to overcome the basic difficulties.

After visiting the prairies, Hanington tried to get trained midwives or nurse attendants.<sup>183</sup> She was not successful in convincing the Canadian Nurses Association about the need for trained midwives. Although she did manage to convince some of the women in the NCWC, when she made a last plea to the NCWC for trained mid-wives in 1924 she was forced to resign. Elizabeth Smith Shortt, an influential doctor from Ontario, was one of the women doctors on the Executive of the NCWC opposed to mid-wifery and to Hanington.<sup>184</sup> She represented a central Canadian, urban, middle class perspective typical of the other influential Council women who could not understand the dilemmas of prairie farm women.<sup>185</sup> When Hanington was pushed out as the

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<sup>182</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Nora Armstrong to McNaughton, 25 February 1918. The Association had recently changed its name from the Saskatchewan Graduate Nurses' Association to the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. This was part of the professionalization of nursing. McPherson, Bedside Matters, 20.

<sup>183</sup> Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives," 146-147.

<sup>184</sup> Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives," 146-147. N.E.S. Griffiths, The Splendid Vision - Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1993 (Canada: Carleton University Press, 1993), 89, 121-2. Dodd, "Helen MacMurchy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," 141. For details about Elizabeth Smith Shortt's involvement in the NCWC see Strong-Boag's "Introduction" to Smith, Woman with a Purpose, xxx-xxxiii.

<sup>185</sup> Hacker, The indomitable lady doctors, 55-70.

VON chief superintendent, McNaughton and the WGG lost a staunch ally.<sup>136</sup>

In 1919 there was still no regular system of public health nursing in Saskatchewan but a number of municipalities had appointed municipal nurses and there were a few rural school nurses operating out of the Department of Education.<sup>137</sup> Although there had been a great shortage of nurses and doctors during the War, this eased up after the War. In March of 1919 the Overseas Nursing Association (ONA) in London cabled McNaughton that it had three maternity nurses available and that if the WGG could place them the ONA would pay the additional expenses not covered by their earnings.<sup>138</sup> McNaughton eagerly telegraphed members of the WGG executive. They approved of the plan and she wrote to the ONA.<sup>139</sup> There was, McNaughton knew, "still a great shortage of nurses," so much so that she was concerned about

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<sup>136</sup> Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives," 147. Dodd, "Helen MacMurphy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," 141. Hélène Laforce, "The Different Stages of the Elimination of Midwives in Quebec," 46.

<sup>137</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, M.M. Seymour to McNaughton, 7 February 1919.

<sup>138</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Telegram from a representative of the Overseas Colonial Nursing Association to McNaughton, 6 March 1919.

<sup>139</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Dowager Countess Grey, 6 March 1919; McNaughton to Executive Members, March 1919; McNaughton to Executive Members, 6 March 1919; Telegrams from Mrs. W.H. Firth to McNaughton 7 March 1919, Zoa Haight to McNaughton 8 March 1919, Ida McNeil to McNaughton 9 March 1919.

the week that it took to get a reply even when using telegrams.<sup>190</sup> The nurses did not arrive because, as McNaughton put it, "the proposition was not agreeable to the powers that be," and because with the War over, "distinct progress was being made by the Department of Health."<sup>191</sup> "The powers that be" included McNaughton's powerful foe George Langley, who wanted control, and the Canadian Nurses' Association which opposed plans to bring in British nurses.<sup>192</sup> Nurses were more likely to agree to work in hospitals in Saskatchewan than as district nurses because working conditions were better in hospitals than in homesteader's shacks and houses.

The amendments to the Rural Municipalities in 1916 stated that

three or more contiguous municipalities (excepting cities) may establish a union hospital; they may elect a board composed of representatives from each of the municipalities, (that board is a body corporate); make its own by-laws, assume its own name, and be maintained by a levied tax.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Executive Members, 6 March 1919.

<sup>191</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton to Mrs. R.J. McDonald, 20 May 1920.

<sup>192</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, J.B. Musselman to McNaughton, 8 September 1916; George Langley to J.B. Musselman, 13 September 1916; J.B. Musselman to McNaughton, 14 September 1916. Buckley, "Ladies and Midwives," 144-145.

<sup>193</sup> This is a paraphrase of this section of the Act by McNaughton. SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

In 1917 "an Act respecting Union Hospitals" was passed and so the new hospitals built jointly by several municipalities were called "union hospitals."<sup>194</sup>

McNaughton believed that, as "a purely rural organization," the WGG suffered "the disadvantages of these wide prairies."<sup>195</sup> These disadvantages meant that only with an increase in the number of small rural hospitals, scattered throughout the rural municipalities, would the number of nurses in rural Saskatchewan increase markedly.<sup>196</sup> McNaughton believed that for mothers who were giving birth in remote areas of Saskatchewan, for their babies, for their families, and for their nurses small local hospitals needed to be built and that they needed outside support.<sup>197</sup> McNaughton and the WGG had pushed the Liberal Government to come up with legislation on medical aid in 1916.<sup>198</sup> Once it was in place McNaughton and the WGG put a

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<sup>194</sup> "An Act respecting Union Hospitals." Statutes of Saskatchewan, (Regina: King's Printer, 1917), chapter 9, 1917.

<sup>195</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Dowager Countess Grey, 6 March 1919

<sup>196</sup> SPL-LHR, pamphlets, The Imperial Colonist, June 1917.

<sup>197</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to the Duchess of Devonshire, 5 March 1918.

<sup>198</sup> Maurice Seymour may have drafted the legislation. More research needs to be done to make certain of this. The Saskatchewan Medical Quarterly says he was "instrumental in having the Union Hospital Act passed in 1916." It actually passed in 1917, the year after the initial legislation. The Saskatchewan Medical Quarterly 8(4) (December 1944): 45.

great deal of effort into getting municipal hospitals established. In 1920 Irene Parlby observed that Saskatchewan was ahead of Alberta and Manitoba with regard to municipal hospitals. It was, she said, "the pioneer province in the rural hospital movement."<sup>199</sup> By 1935 rural hospitals in Saskatchewan employed 369 nurses, or 66 percent of the nurses who worked in Saskatchewan institutions, a larger percentage of rural nurses than were employed in rural districts elsewhere on the prairies.<sup>200</sup> Historians debate about the reasons for the decline in maternal mortality and attribute it to a combination of factors, such as prenatal care with complete medical examinations of expectant mothers. McNaughton, Parlby and other women in the farm women's movement believed that one of the things that would lead to a decline in maternal mortality was more hospital births.<sup>201</sup> Even though there were other contributing

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<sup>199</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report to WS-CCA for the year ending 31 March 1920. The first municipal hospital built under the Municipal Hospital Act was not completed until the fall of 1919. The Western Independent (Calgary), 1 October 1919.

<sup>200</sup> McPherson, "The Country is a Stern Nurse," 189.

<sup>201</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report to WS-CCA for the year ending 31 March 1920. Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 57-58. Strong-Boag and McPherson found that "there was no necessary causal relationship between hospitalization and mothers' survival rate in Vancouver" in the interwar years, Strong-Boag and McPherson, "The Confinement of Women," in Arnup, Lévesque, and Pierson, Delivering Motherhood, 78. Oppenheimer found that in Ontario the decline in maternal mortality rate in the late 1930s was "the result of changes in birthing techniques," not whether the child was born at home or in

factors, maternal mortality rates did decline in Saskatchewan as the number of nurses and the number of rural hospitals increased. In 1926 in Saskatchewan there were 7.1 maternal deaths per thousand live births, the highest provincial rate in Canada. McNaughton knew that maternal mortality was a complex problem and so she told her readers every women's club and every woman should be paying attention to maternal mortality. By 1935 the rate had dropped to 4.1, the second lowest rate in Canada.<sup>202</sup> Given that conditions were much different in Saskatchewan from conditions in Ontario or Vancouver the question of the Saskatchewan decline needs further study. Perhaps hospitalization did help pioneer women in Saskatchewan. At least they had a clean environment and were free from their ever present family duties.

Although McNaughton did not specifically articulate her ideas about gender and the health care hierarchy, it is clear that she put far more energy into increasing the number of midwives, nurses, and hospitals in rural

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the hospital. Oppenheimer, "Childbirth in Ontario," in *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>202</sup> The Western Producer 23 August 1928. See also The Western Producer 19 April 1928, 5 July 1928, 16 July 1928, 5 July 1928, 6 September 1928, 13 September 1928, 20 September 1928, 22 November 1928. Strong-Boag and McPherson, "The Confinement of Women," 77. Only Prince Edward Island had a lower rate in 1935, with 4.0 per thousand. *Ibid.*, 77. These statistics do not include deaths from miscarriages. For a discussion of the complex question of why maternal death rates dropped see *Ibid.*, 76-78.



Saskatchewan than she put into increasing the number of doctors. Her enthusiasm was in part because, unlike the male-dominated medical profession, midwifery and nursing were seen as female work.<sup>203</sup> Although doctors were at the top of the hierarchy of health-care workers, and had a great deal to say about what went on in hospitals, it was nurses who were the matrons in charge of hospitals and most of the workers in hospitals were women.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Strong-Boag and McPherson, "The Confinement of Women," 78-79. Lykke de la Cour and Rose Sheinin, "The Ontario Medical College for Women, 1883-1906: Lessons From Gender-separatism in Medical Education," in Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History, ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991), 206-208. Mary Beacock Fryer, Emily Stowe: Doctor and Suffragist (Toronto: Hannah Institute and Dundurn Press, 1990). Margaret Gillett, "The Heart of the Matter: Maude Abbot, M.D., 1869-1940," in Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science, ed. Marianne Gosztoni Ainley (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1990), 179-194. Deborah Gorham, "'No Longer an Invisible Minority': Women Physicians and Medical Practice in Late Twentieth-Century North America," in Dodd and Gorham, eds. Caring and Curing, 183-211. Jo-Anne Kirk, "Gender Inequality and Medical Education," in Bolaria and Bolaria, eds., Women, Medicine and Health, 91-113. Ruth Matheson Buck, The Doctor Road Sidesaddle (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974).

<sup>204</sup> For example of disputes between doctors and nurses about authority in rural hospitals in Saskatchewan see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Edith Frith to McNaughton, 5 July 1919, and Houston and Houston, compilers, Pioneer of Vision - The Reminiscences of T.A. Patrick, 50. For discussions about the health care hierarchy see McPherson, Bedside Matters, 13-14, 48, 57, 72, 75. Meryn Stuart, "Shifting Professional Boundaries: Gender Conflict in Public Health, 1920-1925," in Dodd and Gorham, eds. Caring and Curing, 49-70. Gorham, "'No Longer an Invisible Minority,'" in Dodd and Gorham, eds. Caring and Curing, 183-184. Frances M. Gregor, "Nurses' Educative Work: Constructing the Medical Hierarchy," in Bolaria and Bolaria, eds., Women, Medicine and Health, 219-229.

McNaughton's positive attitude toward hospitals run by women was clear in an article that she reprinted in her column, in The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, recounting the story of a hospital in France during the Great War, run by the Scottish Women's Hospital Association. The hospital was in an old Abbey and "entirely managed by women; the surgeons, the nurses, the orderlies, the chauffeurs operating the motor ambulances are all women." The women who ran the hospital "had a real sense of the artistic as well as the philanthropic" and so they had chosen to use "a beautiful Gothic hall" in the hospital as the Canadian wing. In this hospital soldiers were "brought back to life and health by the skill and tender mercy" of women.<sup>205</sup>

McNaughton, who said she "liked hospitals," agreed with the implication in the article that such a hospital was an excellent institution.<sup>206</sup>

McNaughton's radical democratic ideas also meant that she liked institutions that were organized and run by local people. There were several hospitals in Saskatchewan, but at the beginning of the campaign by McNaughton and the WGG there were not enough in the rural areas, especially the

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<sup>205</sup> N.K. Rowell, "A Hospital Managed by Women," on McNaughton's "Our Welfare Page," 6 January 1917.

<sup>206</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A2(2), McNaughton to W.D. Jackson and D.S. Jackson, 4 June 1911.

outlying areas.<sup>207</sup> Therefore McNaughton threw herself with great enthusiasm into helping farm people attempt to organize municipal hospitals throughout the province. After the enabling legislations was passed in 1916, members of local WGG clubs and other farm people who were working to convince local people to build municipal hospitals frequently wrote McNaughton for information or asked her to speak in their districts.<sup>208</sup> In the fall of 1916 when the pamphlet "Medical Aid Within the Reach of All," written by McNaughton, was distributed, it was an important boost to local campaigns.<sup>209</sup> (See the article in Appendix # VII "Medical Aid within the Reach of All.") That fall McNaughton reported that

many rural municipalities will submit to their taxpayers a by-law authorizing the establishment

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<sup>207</sup> For example in Yorkton the VON had established a small cottage hospital. Houston and Houston, compilers, Pioneer of Vision - The Reminiscences of T.A. Patrick 38-45. In 1912, before McNaughton's campaign, there had been 21 hospitals in Saskatchewan, but most were in towns, cities and densely populated areas. Feather and Matthews, "Early Medical Care in Saskatchewan," 44.

<sup>208</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Mrs. O. Cooper to McNaughton, 18 March 1915; Mrs. William Meyer to McNaughton, 26 August 1916; Charles Craig to McNaughton, 7 April 1916; Frances E. Jones to McNaughton, 31 July 1916; John Steele to McNaughton, 8 August 1916; Paul Winter to McNaughton, 20 August 1916 and 31 August 1916.

<sup>209</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid." See also "An Appeal" with regard to medical aid "prepared" by McNaughton, apparently printed for distribution, perhaps in the Municipality of Monet, prior to the publication of the pamphlet. Its wording is almost identical to the pamphlet. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, McNaughton, "Medical Aid Within the Reach of All."

of municipal hospitals, in order to bring hospital treatment within the reach of all. I am called on from all parts of the province, and expect to travel hundreds of miles to address meetings in districts where this vote is to be taken.<sup>210</sup>

Because the campaign for medical aid was well reported in the press and was seen as McNaughton's campaign, her correspondence about hospitals remained very "heavy."<sup>211</sup> If a local farm person, a municipal official, or a member of a hospital committee needed specific information, wanted a person higher in the hierarchies of power in Saskatchewan to intercede on behalf of their district with the government, or needed support in coping with local difficulties it was often McNaughton to whom they turned.<sup>212</sup> When she made speeches about municipal hospitals, rather than indulging in idealistic rhetoric she gave "strong" and "practical"

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<sup>210</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916.

<sup>211</sup> SAB, SGGG Papers B2 I 3, Report of the 1917 WGG Annual Provincial Convention. In addition to The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm reports of McNaughton's campaign were carried in other papers such as The Grain Growers' Guide 21 May 1916 and 1 November 1916.

<sup>212</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, T.G. Carlton to McNaughton, 16 August 1916. For information about the procedure local people had to go through to organize a municipal hospital see SAB, Haight Papers A1 A5 13(b), Newspaper clipping "Explains New Hospital Act," ca. 1917. See also SAB, G37.53, Oversize sheet, Research Department, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Municipal Hospitals." For some of the difficulties that arose at the local level see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Paul Winter to McNaughton, 28 October 1916.

messages that were helpful to local organizers.<sup>213</sup> They were able to use her information and her support in their local campaigns.<sup>214</sup>

During McNaughton's campaign although farm people wanted more municipal hospitals, and the ratepayers approved the necessary by-laws, at times they were not able to build the hospitals because the municipalities could not agree upon the location of the hospital.<sup>215</sup> By the end of the twenties, in order to overcome "local jealousies," the law had been changed so the Lieutenant-Governor could decide upon the location in some instances.<sup>216</sup> Over the decades, under pressure from McNaughton and other rural activists, the government made other amendments to hospital legislation to make it easier for local people to establish union hospitals.<sup>217</sup> In spite of the early obstacles her campaign "eventually led to the establishment" of "municipal

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<sup>213</sup> SAB, Haight Papers A5 13(c), The Daily Press (Moose Jaw) 16 March 1917.

<sup>214</sup> For an informational sheet on "The Hospital By-Law," likely prepared by T.G. Carlton or others in the Municipality of Monet after consulting McNaughton, see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers, A1 E37, T.G. Carlton to McNaughton, 16 August 1916.

<sup>215</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, M.M. Seymour to McNaughton, 7 February 1919.

<sup>216</sup> SAB, G37.53, Oversize sheet, Research Department of the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Municipal Hospitals."

<sup>217</sup> Mombourquette, "A Government and Health Care," 20.

hospitals at many points."<sup>218</sup> Local people who were attempting to organize union hospitals appreciated McNaughton's "efforts in pioneering the movement" for hospitals.<sup>219</sup> Their gratitude to her "was expressed in invitations to open five of the first seven [municipal] hospitals established" in Saskatchewan.<sup>220</sup> By 1920 there were 10 union hospitals in operation, two more were almost complete and activists were attempting to organize 20 other hospitals.<sup>221</sup> (See Chart in Appendix # VIII "Hospitals, Municipal Doctors & Births in Rural Saskatchewan.") With more hospitals came more nurses and the doctors were more inclined to be satisfied with practices in rural areas.<sup>222</sup> For McNaughton the new union hospitals were the most gratifying immediate result of her campaign.

The work that McNaughton and the WGG did to get hospitals and nurses in the rural areas left an important

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<sup>218</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(7), McNaughton, Notes "Mrs. Violet McNaughton .... British Empire," ca. 1935.

<sup>219</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Paul Winter to McNaughton, 28 October 1916.

<sup>220</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 C1, Untitled notes by McNaughton. See also SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, Charles Craig to McNaughton, 7 April 1916.

<sup>221</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report to the WS-CCA for the year ending 31 March 1920.

<sup>222</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, J.R. Kniffel to McNaughton, 11 March 1916. Houston and Houston, compilers, Pioneer of Vision - The Reminiscences of T.A. Patrick, 63-66.

legacy in Saskatchewan. They also influenced health care at the national level by joining other women's groups that successfully lobbied for the establishment of a federal bureau of health. A WGG member was appointed to the Dominion Council of Health in 1923. However, it is clear that the most influential long-term national consequence of the campaign for medical aid by McNaughton and the WGG was the establishment of the ground-breaking municipal doctor program, the precursor of the Saskatchewan medicare program that was to form the pattern for the federal program, both of which came into being in the 1960s.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> McNaughton, "Medical Aid." Georgina M. Taylor, "[The History of the CCF-NDP in] Saskatchewan," in Our Canada, ed. Leo Heaps (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Publishers, 1991), 117-126. Granatstein, "Medicare: Saskatchewan Moves the Nation," 169-197. Joan Feather, "From Concept to Reality: Formation of Swift Current Health Region," Prairie Forum 16(1) (Spring 1991): 59-80. Joan Feather, "The Impact of the Swift Current Health Region: Experiment or Model," Prairie Forum 16(2) (Fall 1991): 225-248. Joan Feather, "Horse-Trading and Health Insurance," 94-106. Joan Feather, "Hospitals in Saskatchewan in Territorial Days," Saskatchewan History 40(2) (Spring 1987): 60-71. Joan Feather and Vincent L. Matthews, "Early Medical Care in Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan History 37(2) (Spring 1984): 41-54. Joan Feather and Vincent L. Matthews, "Steps Along the Way - Evolution of Health Insurance in Saskatchewan," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine in Vancouver on June 8, 1983. Malcolm Taylor, "The Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan: The Policy Decision to Go It Alone," chapter 2 of Health Insurance and Canadian Public Policy - the Seven Decisions that Created The Canadian Health Insurance System (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 68-71. C. Stuart Houston, "Saskatchewan's municipal doctors: a forerunner of the medicare system that developed 50 years later," Canadian Medical Association Journal 151(11) (December 1994): 1642-1644.

The Rural Municipalities Act had been amended in 1916 to allow the municipalities to make

an annual or other grant to a duly licensed medical practitioner to reside and practise his profession within the municipality, or guaranteeing the income or a portion of the income of such a practitioner in consideration of his residing or practising his profession within the municipality, the guarantee in no case to exceed the amount required to bring such income up to fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500) per year.<sup>224</sup>

Once the Act was amended, McNaughton and the WGG turned to an attempt to implement these provisions. In this phase she had to continue dealing with Maurice Seymour, the doctor who was head of the provincial Bureau of Health. McNaughton's dealings with Seymour over the question of mid-wives appears to been one of the factors that coloured her attitude toward male doctors and made her cautious when dealing with them.

Despite the incident over McNaughton's use of Rose's statistics, Seymour and McNaughton worked out a modus vivendi. Both recognized the other as a formidable opponent who had different spheres of influence in the province.<sup>225</sup> As a supporter of the public health movement, McNaughton

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<sup>224</sup> "An Act to Amend the Rural Municipalities Act," Statutes of Saskatchewan 1916 (Regina: King's Printer, 1916), 357-358. For McNaughton's explanation of these clauses see SPL-LHR, Pamphlets, Homemakers Clubs, 4, McNaughton "Medical Aid," a speech to the Annual Convention of the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, 21 June 1916.

<sup>225</sup> For example Seymour organized the Anti-tuberculosis League which the WGG supported. Houston, R.G. Ferguson, 23-28. SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis.



continued to correspond with Seymour when necessary and to publish information about his department or articles by him, in which he discussed his ideas about public health. Nevertheless, she was very cautious with him in part because his Bureau of Health was in George Langley's Department of Municipal Affairs.<sup>226</sup>

In spite of Seymour's position as the top public health bureaucrat in Saskatchewan, McNaughton did not respect him as much as she respected Helen MacMurchy, a prominent doctor in Canadian public health who belonged to the National Council of Women and worked closely with public health reformers in women's organizations.<sup>227</sup> In 1923 MacMurchy became the Chief of the Department of Child Welfare Division in the new federal Department of Health, for which the WGG had lobbied.<sup>228</sup> MacMurchy was the author of The Canadian Mother's Book and a series of other Little Blue Books which gave advice to mothers on child care. McNaughton, who loved children and believed they should be well cared for, made frequent references to MacMurchy's books on her "Mainly for

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<sup>226</sup> The Western Producer 21 June 1928.

<sup>227</sup> Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 26. I would like to thank Dianne Dodd for discussing her insights into Helen MacMurchy and her interest in the mentally retarded.

<sup>228</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis. Dodd, "Helen MacMurchy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," 135-136. Kathleen McConnachie, "Methodology in the Study of Women's History: A Case Study of Helen MacMurchy, M.D.," in Ontario History, 55 (1) (1983): 61-70.

Women" pages in The Western Producer.<sup>229</sup> It is not clear whether or not McNaughton read MacMurphy's special 1923 "Supplement" to The Canadian Mother's Book which was "ostensibly a manual of advice on 'what to do if baby arrives before the doctor does'" but "was in reality a 'popular midwifery guide'."<sup>230</sup> Likely she did read it because she was interested in midwives and she respected MacMurphy. All this is not to say that McNaughton saw eye to eye with MacMurphy on every subject.<sup>231</sup>

McNaughton's caution with Seymour and her respect for women doctors, like MacMurphy, was rooted in her feminist belief that there were "ancient prejudices" against women doctors as there were against other women.<sup>232</sup> She was

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<sup>229</sup> The Western Producer 5 March 1931. See also The Western Producer 18 September 1930, 30 April 1931, 23 July 1931.

<sup>230</sup> Dodd, "Helen MacMurphy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women," 136.

<sup>231</sup> For example MacMurphy espoused the sterilization of the mentally retarded and she was a Conservative and anti-socialist, positions with which McNaughton did not agree. Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 25.

<sup>232</sup> The Western Producer 19 July 1928. Not everyone was as cautious of him as McNaughton. For laudatory articles about Seymour see John Hawkes, "Maurice MacDonald Seymour, MD, CM, DPH," in Saskatchewan and Its People, vo. 3 (Chicago and Regina: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924), 1940-1942; The Canadian Medical Association Journal 17, (1927): 1368-1369. See also M.M. Seymour, "The Seymour Plan," The Public Health Journal 17 (1926): 593-596; Maurice MacDonald Seymour, "Health Work in Saskatchewan," The Public Health Journal 16 (April 1925): 151-163; Maurice MacDonal[d] Seymour, "Public Health Work in Saskatchewan," The Canadian Medical Association Journal 15 (1925): 271-284.

conscious that Seymour, like most other doctors, wanted to maintain the place of doctors at "the pinnacle of the health care pyramid".<sup>233</sup> Although MacMurphy did too, she was more sympathetic to women than Seymour was, and MacMurphy's studies of infant and maternal mortality were closer to McNaughton's perceptions than they were to Seymour's analysis of the situation.<sup>234</sup>

The crisis caused by the 1918 flu epidemic and its consequences illustrates the way McNaughton pushed Seymour to provide more services for farm people. His bureau attempted to delegate most of the responsibility for the flu epidemic to the people in the rural municipalities, who were already over-burdened.<sup>235</sup> Farm people had a dreadful time during the epidemic with 89% of the population of the province in the rural areas and just eight union hospitals serving only 34% of the population. People in the country were dying at twice the rate of the province as a whole. Afraid to die alone on their farms, country people flocked into the towns. Many towns responded by imposing quarantines to try to keep the country people out of the towns and were angered when Seymour tried to override the quarantines in

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<sup>233</sup> Gorham, "No Longer an Invisible Minority," 203.

<sup>234</sup> Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 20-26, 57-62.

<sup>235</sup> Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 4. For details of how the flu was handled elsewhere in Canada see Eileen Pettigrew, The Silent Enemy - Canada and the Deadly Flu of 1918 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983.)

order to help the farm people. There were charges that Seymour was an autocrat preventing effective control of the flu.<sup>236</sup>

In 1920 Seymour was still responding to a threatened flu epidemic by trying to shift responsibility onto the people in the rural municipalities.<sup>237</sup> McNaughton reported that the epidemic of influenza

which ravaged the country for many months, proved how tragically inadequate were the medical facilities in country districts, and our Association [the WGG] is now co-operating with the Department of Public Health, as well as the St. John's Ambulance Association, in putting on courses in First Aid and Home Nursing, as some slight alleviation of existing conditions in rural communities.<sup>238</sup>

Seymour had set up the courses in response to the demands that McNaughton, the WGG, and other rural women had made. Two nurses were touring the province giving classes on home nursing and short courses for nurses' aides.<sup>239</sup> The local women in the WGG, the Homemakers, and other women's

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<sup>236</sup> Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 7-9.

<sup>237</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38, M.M. Seymour to all [R.M.] Secretary-Treasurers, 26 January 1920, 5.

<sup>238</sup> NAC, NCWC Papers MG28 I25, Vol. 58, File 6, McNaughton, "Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Women's Section," Reports of the Federated Associations 1920, 74. See also SAB, pamphlets G35.1, Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association Plan of Work 1919. Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 11.

<sup>239</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis. Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 11.

organizations made the arrangements for the nursing classes in their own districts.<sup>240</sup> The WGG believed that the nurses' aides would be able to "return to their own districts when the course is over and make use of their knowledge among the neighbours."<sup>241</sup>

This crisis spurred the province to change the municipal doctor legislation so that municipal doctors could be paid up to \$5,000 per year by the municipalities employing them.<sup>242</sup> Rural municipalities and villages, such as the Municipality of Hillsburgh and the villages of Brock and Netherhill, found that their overworked and underpaid doctors were threatening to leave and so, seeing "the doctor as a hired hand," they guaranteed their doctors would get paid by signing a contract with them.<sup>243</sup> These contracts

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<sup>240</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis. Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 11.

<sup>241</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report to the WS-CCA, 31 March 1920.

<sup>242</sup> Lux, "The Bitter Flats," 11. Malcom Taylor, Health Insurance and Canadian Public Policy - the Seven Decisions that Created The Canadian Health Insurance System (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 68. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E27, F.C. Middleton (Deputy Minister of Health, Saskatchewan), "The Municipal Doctor Scheme in Saskatchewan," 1933. SAB, pamphlet G37.52. United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, Research and Publicity Department, "The Municipal Doctor," 1930. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Amy J. Roe, "The Doctor as Hired Man," 15 November 1926. Roe worked for The Grain Growers' Guide.

<sup>243</sup> For a report on "the practical way" the municipal doctor plan worked in Hillsburgh, Brock and Netherhill see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Amy J. Roe, "The Doctor as Hired Man," 15 November 1926.

varied a great deal. Some of the municipal doctors worked full-time for the municipality; others just supplied specific services and the amount they were paid depended on the services they agreed to give.<sup>244</sup> When Amy Roe, of The Grain Growers' Guide, asked a leader of the local WGG in Netherhill what she thought of the municipal doctor plan she said she could not "speak too highly of our plan of engaging a municipal doctor." She thought that

it has been the greatest boon to mothers. Half the worry of illness is removed when a mother knows she can call the doctor should one of her children be taken ill. She does not then lie awake torn between anxiety for the sick one and the fear of adding additional expense.<sup>245</sup>

In summary, McNaughton was caught in a contradictory situation. She wanted better medical aid to be within the reach of all farm women and their families but she did not want men dominating the field of medical aid. When hiring a municipal doctor the negotiations were between the reeves on municipal councils and individual doctors. The vast majority

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<sup>244</sup> For a list of the municipal doctors employed in 1928, the municipalities that employed them, their salaries, and the terms of their contracts see SAB pamphlet G 37.52, The Municipal Doctor (Saskatoon: United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, May 1930.) In 1928, for example, the amount paid to the doctors varied from \$700 to \$5,000. For a full, and favourable, assessment of the municipal doctor system in Saskatchewan by an American scholar who visited the province during the summers of 1929 and 1930 see C. Rufus Rorem, The "Municipal Doctor" System in Rural Saskatchewan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931).

<sup>245</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, Amy J. Roe, "The Doctor as Hired Man," 15 November 1926.

of reeves and doctors were male.<sup>245</sup> In effect, this made the recruitment and hiring of doctors a male activity that seldom included women, unlike the recruitment of nurses who were female, the committees that dealt with local nurses, and the local campaigns for union hospitals. With regard to municipal doctors usually all the women could do was to use their influence to persuade the municipal councils to sign contracts with doctors.

Women in the farm movement, such as McNaughton and her protege Sophia Dixon, were thereby left out of the process for the most part. Dixon, an adamant supporter of state medicine, grappled with the gender discrimination in the process of negotiating and signing contracts with municipal doctors.<sup>247</sup> Dixon, who was extremely bright, and the other ratepayers in the Round Valley Municipality found the contract signed by municipal officials, who appear to have been incompetent, was far from satisfactory. In negotiating the contract the doctor had apparently outsmarted the

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<sup>246</sup> For details of what the municipal councils did when signing contracts with doctors see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E27, F.C. Middleton, "The Municipal Doctor Scheme in Saskatchewan," 1933. See another article by Middleton, who was then the Deputy Minister of Health in Saskatchewan, which McNaughton published and highlighted in order to give her readers "ammunition" when pushing for a municipal doctor in their districts. The Western Producer 23 October 1930.

<sup>247</sup> Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," 76-82.

officials.<sup>248</sup> Although the local Homemakers' Club and Dixon, as a spokesperson for the Ratepayers' Association, put up a tremendous fight to have the contract changed the men on the municipal council refused.<sup>249</sup>

In spite of this gender discrimination McNaughton and the WGG knew that they had been "instrumental in procuring legislation to establish Municipal Hospitals, Municipal Doctors and Municipal Nurses."<sup>250</sup> They were proud of this; they needed doctors, therefore they continued to promote and support the municipal doctor program.

When McNaughton's and the WGG's campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all" pushed the provincial government into passing the 1916 legislation for municipal hospitals, doctors, and nurses they started Saskatchewan on the road that led to a comprehensive health care system in Saskatchewan and then in Canada. The agrarian feminist Violet McNaughton and the WGG "laid the foundation" for the future national health care system.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," 76-82. See also Georgina Taylor, "Sophia Dixon: 'Progressive Always - Indifferent Never'" Saskatoon History 1 (1980): 25-31.

<sup>249</sup> Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," 76-82.

<sup>250</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis.

<sup>251</sup> The Western Producer 31 October 1946.



CHAPTER EIGHT  
"UNFETTERED BY RACE OR CREED"  
MCNAUGHTON'S INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS  
FROM THE AGRARIAN COMMUNITY

McNaughton was an integrative agrarian feminist who stressed the importance of co-operation and community. She focused on farm women and alliances with other feminists and reformers based on shared integrative principles. When she understood people, and she believed that they had "ground for common action" with her or the WGG, she co-operated with them.<sup>1</sup> McNaughton's faith in common people led her to believe that when they were personally acquainted and understood one another it would then be possible for them to co-operate for their common good.<sup>2</sup>

In most areas of McNaughton's life she succeeded in living up to these co-operative ideals but some of her behaviour and her beliefs were contradictory. She co-operated with women and men in the farm movement, other groups of agrarian people, other feminists, and with other reformers. She was willing to include most people who lived on farms or worked in agriculture in the agrarian community and she included most women in the women's movement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Western Producer 9 April 1931.

<sup>2</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 18 December 1915. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page." The Western Producer 6 May 1925.

However there were some peoples that McNaughton excluded. Her exclusions and inclusions can be seen in her attitudes toward hired women and men, European and French Canadian settlers, and prairie Indians.<sup>3</sup> McNaughton's attitudes toward these groups of people in rural community are particularly revealing. This chapter focuses on her inclusions and exclusions within the agrarian community by looking at her attitudes toward hired women and men, then European and French Canadian settlers, and finally it examines her attitudes toward prairie Indians.

A poem McNaughton printed on the "Mainly for Women" pages of The Western Producer in 1925 shows her sympathy for those at the bottom of the hierarchies of power in Canada and her understanding of some of the complex ways in which the hierarchies of race, gender, class, and age intersected. Tucked at the bottom of the page her readers saw

A LADY I KNOW  
 She thinks that even up in heaven  
     Her class lies late and snores  
 While poor little black cherubs rise at seven  
     To do celestial chores.  
     Countee Cullen (Negro Poet)<sup>4</sup>

This was fine sentiment but her use of the poem raises questions. As an agrarian feminist, did she live up to these

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<sup>3</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G35.3 and SPL-LHR, Documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2115, McNaughton, "Medical Aid within Reach of All," pamphlet, September, 1916. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm 23 September 1916. Hereafter referred to as McNaughton, "Medical Aid."

<sup>4</sup> The Western Producer 21 May 1925.

ideals herself? In practice could she apply her theoretical knowledge of these hierarchies of power to her relations with those who were lower in the hierarchies of power in the agrarian West than she was?

Reared on stories of the hardships her father suffered as a child labourer on a farm and in the brick industry in north Kent, McNaughton was sympathetic to hired workers but she and her husband owned a farm and her work in the farm women's movement with overworked farm women and their families made her sensitive to their needs too. Farming during the period in which the McNaughtons farmed was labour intensive and they had no children to help them. From 1911 onward Violet's health ruled out much hard outside work and from 1926 onward John had health problems too. Therefore the McNaughtons frequently employed hired women and men. They had hired men more often than they had hired women because if Violet was away John would cook and do household chores. This help was usually hired on a seasonal basis in the spring for seeding and in the fall for harvesting.<sup>5</sup>

Their workers were mainly people from the local area

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<sup>5</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1, John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton 1909; A1 D24(2) 17 September 1941, 8 January 1942. Interviews with George Tosh, 21 August 1989 and William David Gregory 21 June 1994. Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage (Harris: Harris History Book Committee, 1982), 330-332. The two exceptions were from 1927 to 1933, when they were renting the farm, and from 1935 to 1941, when they had a married couple who could not get work elsewhere and so they stayed on the McNaughton farm all year round.

but they also employed some of the harvesters who came from the East or Britain on harvest excursions.<sup>6</sup> McNaughton understood the complications that arose with the excursion harvesters from first hand experience and from the stories of other farm people.<sup>7</sup> Although communication was difficult when the harvesters only spoke French and McNaughton spoke very little French she did manage to communicate. She even managed to teach young unilingual French Canadians the complicated task of harnessing horses, when they did not know how to do so, and she thoroughly enjoyed the men from Quebec dancing and singing at the end of the day.<sup>8</sup>

McNaughton also understood that there were a variety of ways of dealing with the need for additional farm labour, that not all people could get started farming, or retain their land if they did get started, and that conditions for farm workers changed over the decades.<sup>9</sup> In one speech she told her audience that

great changes have taken place in Saskatchewan.  
Years ago every other person was a homesteader.  
Neighbour traded work with neighbour. Today we  
have thousands of landless people on our prairies.

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<sup>6</sup> The Western Producer 29 October 1942.

<sup>7</sup> The Western Producer 22 September 1927, 27 September 1928.

<sup>8</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(6), McNaughton to M.L. Burbank, 9 May 1922. The Western Producer 5 December 1929.

<sup>9</sup> Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands - Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995).

Hired men, hired girls, hired couples, and renters.<sup>10</sup>

It was clear to her that these "landless people" were often "without means."<sup>11</sup> She gave as an illustration the story

the wife of a hired man was unable to obtain proper treatment at maternity. Through this, some months later the ... [woman] had to undergo a serious operation, the hospital charges and doctors fee amounting to \$250. As the couple were without means the municipality had to pay the bill and ... [it is] not likely to recover the money.<sup>12</sup>

McNaughton knew that overworked farm women needed "domestic help in the worst possible way" but she was also very conscious of hired women as workers who should be treated well and have good conditions in which to work. In 1916 she wondered if farm women were "prepared to make work as attractive as possible by providing the necessary labour saving devices."<sup>13</sup> McNaughton also knew that it was particularly important to find hired women who would be an asset to rural communities because unlike urban domestics hired women on farms often married the sons of the families in the community.<sup>14</sup> She did a great deal of work to try to get more "domestic help" for farm women but she also took

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<sup>10</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "Municipal Nurses" a speech, ca. 1916.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 29 July 1916.

<sup>14</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E27(1), McNaughton to Jean S. Robson, 30 April 1930.

into consideration the point of view of the hired women. She said that most hired woman wanted permanent employment and

yet hundreds of farm women need help in the busy season and cannot afford it the year round. But we [farm women] must consider what is to become of the girls during the winter, if we endeavour to obtain numbers large enough to supply those requiring seasonal help.<sup>15</sup>

McNaughton was careful to tell the farm women that they had to treat their hired women well. She told the WGG that from the point of view of domestic workers working on farms was more difficult than in the city and therefore they did not stay in one place for very long. They left before the farm women wanted them to leave for numerous reasons. In outlining these reasons she said they left because their status was so low, for instance farm people called them by their Christian names rather than using 'Miss' and their last name. They also left because the employment was seasonal, the hours were too long, there were not enough labour saving devices in farm homes, they had to do extra work on Sundays because farm families often had company on Sunday, and because farm people did not have adequate places for them to sleep. Hired women, she said, also found that farm employers did not understand domestic work, they were indefinite about the work they wanted done, and they were inefficient because they had no domestic training themselves. Hired women often found the work was detrimental

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<sup>15</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E27(2), McNaughton, "Report of Convener of Immigration WS-CCA," 1920.

to their health and their farm employers had difficulty adapting.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately there is no personal correspondence between the McNaughtons and the women they hired to work on the farm so it's difficult to assess her personal relationships with these hired women.

However the relationship the McNaughtons and her family had with two young men that they hired, with whom they corresponded for years, helps to shed light on their personal relations with their hired help. In 1919 John Hunter, a bright young fellow, came to the Hillview district apparently to stay with a relative. He began to attend meetings of the Hillview Grain Growers in which the McNaughtons were so involved.<sup>17</sup> Young John took happily to farm politics and soon he and his older brother Alexander (Alec) were working for the McNaughtons in the summer time and then getting other work or going back to their parents home in the park belt near St. Walburg.<sup>18</sup> They were to continue to do so until 1926 when the Hunters rented the

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<sup>16</sup> SAB, SGGG Papers B2 III, WS-SGGG Minute Book, 2 February 1921.

<sup>17</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview Grain Growers Minute Book, 1914 to 1926.

<sup>18</sup> Harris Museum, Hillview Grain Growers Minute Book, 1914 to 1926. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton 24 November 1921, 11 December 1921, 14 February 1923, 17 February 1925; A1 D32, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 29 March 1925; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 2 August 1923.

land because John McNaughton's health was bad.<sup>19</sup> In the fall of 1933 it was so dry that they had no crop and the Hunters had to leave.<sup>20</sup> Alec, who was not very skilful at writing without his brother's help, continued writing to the McNaughtons for awhile but John corresponded with the McNaughtons and the Jacksons for over twenty years and continued to visit with them.<sup>21</sup>

Relations between the Hunters and the McNaughtons soon came to be more than that of employers and employees. Violet's decision soon after her 1911 operation to deal with her yearnings to be a mother through her work in the farm movement had helped her deal with her childlessness but she still yearned for individual children of her own. So since they were receptive young John and Alec, in effect, became the chosen sons of the McNaughtons. Alec wrote her in December of 1925 to say "I will always appreciate your friendship very highly. I realized what a difference it has

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<sup>19</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton to John Hunter, 16 December 1929; A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 10 February 1927, 27 November 1927; John McNaughton to Alex Hunter, 9 March 1930; Landlord and tenant agreement between John McNaughton and Alex Hunter, 10 March 1933; A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton 9 May 1926, 19 June 1926.

<sup>20</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(3), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 10 October 1933.

<sup>21</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, n.d., and all the other correspondence in the file up to 1938; A1 D32(1), Correspondence between John Hunter and McNaughton, 1933 to 1951. Harris Museum, Jackson Papers, the correspondence between John Hunter and D.S. Jackson, 21 July 1941 to 13 November 1955.



made to me to have known both you and Mr. McNaughton."<sup>22</sup>  
 Gradually Violet came to love them, they came to love  
 her.<sup>23</sup> As young John told Violet in June of 1927 "I think  
 of you as Mother."<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between the McNaughtons and their  
 chosen sons was complicated, as are all parent-child  
 relationships, but in the twenties and the thirties, it  
 seems to have fulfilled emotional and economic needs that  
 all of them had. Husband John enjoyed "the boys," as he  
 called them when he wrote Violet to report on the activities  
 on the farm. He especially enjoyed telling her about their  
 romances with the young women hired at harvest time and with  
 other young women.<sup>25</sup> In August of 1923 he told her that

the boys and Lena, [the hired woman,] seem to be  
 in a fair humour. They, the boys dont act the same  
 towards Lena. While Aleck is thoughtful and nice  
 to her he doesn't 'play' with her a[s] John does  
 or take [her] out walking, as for instance John  
 did on Sunday. I have come to the conclusion  
 (considered) that she has more notion of Aleck. In  
 fact I'm sure of it, in spite of the fact that

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<sup>22</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to  
 McNaughton, 29 March 1925.

<sup>23</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to  
 McNaughton, 27 November 1927, 10 July 1928; A1 D32(1), John  
 Hunter to McNaughton, 23 February 1927, 26 June 1927,  
 McNaughton to John Hunter 16 December 1929.

<sup>24</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(1), John Hunter to  
 McNaughton, 26 June 1927.

<sup>25</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton  
 to Violet McNaughton, 2 August 1923, 3 July 1926, 12 August  
 1929.

Aleck is always 'joking her up.'<sup>26</sup>

In the summer of 1926 Violet wrote to "Alec" and with messages for her husband John. She closed with "kind regards to 'Dad' and love to yourself."<sup>27</sup> The bond between Violet and young John was particularly close, because their work as farm activists brought them together, but the whole family, including Violet's father and brother, and the McNaughton's friends welcomed the Hunters into their circle.<sup>28</sup>

There were other important indications of the familial bond between the McNaughtons and the Hunters, which went well beyond the usual relations between employees and their employers. The McNaughtons lent them money so that they could hold onto land close to St. Walburg that they were going to lose. In other words the McNaughtons were attempting to help set their "boys" up as independent farmers. This dream was to fade during the depression of the thirties, and the Hunters were to go to the west coast to find work after trying to farm on their own, but in the twenties they were all optimistic about the possibility of

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<sup>26</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 2 August 1923.

<sup>27</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, McNaughton to Alex Hunter, 26 June 1926.

<sup>28</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton, 14 February 1923, 6 January 1932; A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton 9 February 1928, 22 December 1929, McNaughton to Alex Hunter, 26 June 1926, 10 July 1928. Harris Museum, Jackson Papers, the correspondence between John Hunter and D.S. Jackson, 21 July 1941 to 13 November 1955.

the Hunters being able to farm on their own some day.<sup>29</sup>

Both Violet's desire to include the Hunters in the agrarian community and her desire to affirm the importance of Alec's expertise as a hired man, who had worked for several employers, was clear in an incident that particularly delighted Alec. Violet wrote to Alec when she, her husband and Alec were planning on attending a short course on economics at the University of Saskatchewan during the winter.<sup>30</sup> Alec replied saying he was

looking forward to having a splendid time. You ask if I will try and speak on the Subject of Farm Labour in Sask. Oh my! (fools full stop) but I go on. Yes I think I will. It will be an attempt at least and who knows after two or three I might manage to say something. I don't think I have changed my views on the subject.<sup>31</sup>

He continued with an outline of some of the things he planned to discuss including wages, overtime, "the

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<sup>29</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton, 17 July 1925, 25 November 1935; A1 A1(5), Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton 23 July 1936; A1 A1(6) Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 19 August 1936, Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 24 October 1938. Harris Museum, Jackson Papers, correspondence between John Hunter and D.S. Jackson, 6 August 1951, 7 September 1952, 28 September 1952, 13 November 1955. Interview with George Tosh, 20 August 1989, 4 July 1996.

<sup>30</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 17 February 1926. The McNaughtons were very interested in the ideas of Dr. W.W. Swanson, who taught at the University of Saskatchewan and gave short courses in economics for farm people. The Western Producer 8 January 1925, 26 February 1925, 19 March 1925, 10 December 1931, 14 January 1932.

<sup>31</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 17 February 1926.

dissatisfaction among hired men," the time allowed to eat meals being to give the horses necessary rest rather than for the benefit of the hired men, and the lack of recreation. Alex was so pleased with her suggestion that he speak about farm labour, during the short course, that rather than signing with his nickname he signed this letter "**Alexander** yes and then some."<sup>32</sup>

Affirmation went both ways. The McNaughtons discussed the issues that were important to them with the Hunters. They were all dedicated Progressives. McNaughton told them about her work at 'The Producer' and they encouraged her when she was feeling inadequate as a journalist.<sup>33</sup> As Alec put it

the Producer is getting better all the time....The beauty of it is it contains new ideas to most people or old ideas up to date. Where most of the other papers could have been read by Noah without a blush.<sup>34</sup>

She was open with her chosen sons about another important problem. As she told Alec "it is rotten, this sex discrimination."<sup>35</sup> Like her husband, father, and brother

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<sup>32</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 17 February 1926.

<sup>33</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 8 March 1927; A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton, 11 December 1921, 17 July 1925, 22 October 1951.

<sup>34</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 8 March 1927.

<sup>35</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, McNaughton to Alex Hunter, 10 July 1928.

the Hunters were supportive of her agrarian feminism and gloried in her triumphs.<sup>36</sup> In the early thirties the McNaughtons also were to take into their family three more young people chosen as their children. Mary Crozier came from England, and Wolfgang and Erwin Schwangart were young immigrants from Germany who were working as hired help on other Saskatchewan farms.<sup>37</sup>

In short, not only did McNaughton have a familial relationship with the Hunters that went far beyond that of an employer and her employees, she also included farm workers as an important part of the agrarian community. Their conditions of work and their ability to improve their lives were important to her.

McNaughton's early years in Canada were years of massive immigration and, as Jean Burnet and Howard Palmer point out, it was generally accepted that "ethnic and racial groups varied greatly in intellectual ability and character" and many found in the sciences of the day and in social darwinism descriptions of ethnic and racial groups that now

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<sup>36</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D31, Alex Hunter to McNaughton, 8 March 1927; A1 D32(1), John Hunter to McNaughton, 17 July 1925, 22 October 1951.

<sup>37</sup> See the correspondence between McNaughton and Mary (Crozier) Anderson in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(1-9). Also see her correspondence with the Schwangart brothers and their mother, who lived in Dresden, Germany, A1 D59(1-4), A1 D61(1-5), and A1 D60.

are regarded as ethno-centric and racist.<sup>38</sup> In this period when many western Canadians of the anglo-Canadian majority discriminated against French Canadian and European settlers where did McNaughton stand?<sup>39</sup> Did she want to include them or exclude them from the agrarian community?

Saskatchewan was an ethnic polyglot and in the years between 1900 and 1930 ethnic identity was unmistakable.<sup>40</sup> In the Census of Canada in 1911, 1916, 1921 and 1926 a little over half of the population of Saskatchewan was of British descent and between 40.3% and 44.9% were of German, French, Scandinavian, Russian, or Ukrainian descent or they came from other eastern European countries.<sup>41</sup> In the Harris district, the balance appears to have been about fifty

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<sup>38</sup> Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians" An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 32. For an anthropological analysis of the science of the day and social darwinism see Edward Staski and Jonathan Marks, Evolutionary Anthropology - An Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), 85-107.

<sup>39</sup> Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 242-273. See also Marilyn Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," in The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970 ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), 154-166; and Christopher James Kitzen, "The Fighting Bishop: George Exton Lloyd and the Immigration Debate," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996.

<sup>40</sup> Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History, 272.

<sup>41</sup> John H. Archer, Saskatchewan A History (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 358.

fifty.<sup>42</sup> It was, as McNaughton put it, a 'mixed locality.'

By the time McNaughton had been in Canada for around two years she felt comfortable with "the peculiarities of this very mixed Western Canada."<sup>43</sup> For McNaughton personal contact was the best way to learn to understand others and so her contact with the people from different European countries in the Harris area was extremely important. The largest community of Czechoslovakians in Saskatchewan lived about 12 miles from the McNaughton farm.<sup>44</sup> Later she often discussed immigrants with her reader and friend Velma Sanders, and articulated beliefs that were already evident in these early years.<sup>45</sup> As she was to tell Sanders "I'm really very fond of the Czechs who live near our farm.... They are fine people" who lived for many years under Austrian domination and therefore did not develop a high culture. Nevertheless they were "good farmers" and

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<sup>42</sup> Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage, 195-631.

<sup>43</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E37, McNaughton to Lady Piggott, 14 October 1916. For McNaughton's correspondence with, Mrs. Ted East, a woman of British descent who never did get used to the ethnic mixture on the prairies see A1 D22.

<sup>44</sup> Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage, 90-93, 398-400, 396-397. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58, McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 5 May 1940.

<sup>45</sup> See McNaughton's correspondence with Velma Sanders, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(1-5). In particular see: A1 D58(2), McNaughton to Sanders, 9 January 1939, 20 January 1939, 1 March 1940, 16 December 1940.

"artisans."<sup>45</sup> McNaughton also told Sanders that if a group of immigrants was not appealing the reasons could be found in such things as "living a hard life" or "suffering persecution."<sup>47</sup> In other words their traits as a people came from their environment not from their heredity.<sup>48</sup>

In 1916, when wartime hatred of 'foreigners' or 'enemy aliens' was raging, McNaughton told her readers that one of a "prairie woman's greatest joys" was

the pleasure of planning your more than busy life in order to get to your club meeting, where, side by side with Canadian, English, American, Bohemian, German, or French neighbour[s], free from the fetters of fashion, creed, or party, you help build up the community life and reach out to the world beyond.<sup>49</sup>

In other words although many westerners of the anglo-

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<sup>45</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(2), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 3 May 1940. McNaughton also told Sanders that she admired the Czechs "for their work in co-operation" which she was able to see in 1929 when, to her delight, she was able to visit Czechoslovakia. See also: A1 D58(5), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 23 May 1947. The Western Producer 12 September 1929, 19 September 1929, 21 November 1929, 23 January 1930. McNaughton later recalled that Czechoslovakia was then "in full flush of her national independence" when she visited in 1929. The Western Producer 25 March 1948.

<sup>47</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58, McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 22 September 1938.

<sup>48</sup> For the way in which McNaughton believed environment had shaped the people of Hungary see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Bela Bacski Payerie, 24 December 1929, 5 March 1930.

<sup>49</sup> The Regina Leader, 20 January 1916. There were people of all these nationalities, and more, living close to the McNaughton farm. Harris History Book Committee, Harris Heritage and Homage, 195-631.



majority shunned foreign immigrants in wartime McNaughton was espousing the pleasures of all groups working together to build a better community.<sup>50</sup> She saw the wartime frenzy against immigrants from the German side as one of the many "fetters of fashion" and she was determined to shake free of the 'old line parties' and establish a non-partisan approach. Like many westerners she also saw French Canadians as part of the ethnic mix on the prairies rather than as one of 'the founding peoples'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Howard Palmer argues that the attitude of Anglo-Canadians toward immigrants in the twentieth century can be divided into four periods: first, the period up to 1920 which he sees as "the settlement period and the predominance of anglo-conformity, second, the 1920s and the emergence of "melting pot" ideas, third, the thirties, and the period after the second World War in which the idea of multiculturalism emerged. Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian View of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in eds. Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith, 4th ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1994), 143-161.

<sup>51</sup> Karen Dubinsky and Franca Iacovetta have raised the question of McNaughton's attitude toward Angelina Napolitano, an Italian immigrant woman who was found guilty of murdering her brutal husband. When she was sentenced to hang militant British and American feminists took up her cause and demanded her release. Some Canadian feminists, such as the radical Flora McDonald Denison, favoured her immediate release. Dubinsky and Iacovetta claim that when the NCWC discussed her release in June 1911 "Violet McNaughton advised against unnecessarily antagonizing the Canadian government." Karen Dubinsky and Franca Iacovetta, "Murder, Womanly Virtue, and Motherhood: The Case of Angelina Napolitano, 1911-1922," Canadian Historical Association, 4 (1991): 505-531. In June 1911 Violet McNaughton was very ill in hospital in Saskatoon. It was six years before the WGG became affiliated with the NCWC. The McNaughton who was at the 1911 meeting may have been a Mrs. McNaughton from Montreal who was involved in the NCWC from 1895 to 1913. NAC, NCWC Papers MG28 I25 151 11,

McNaughton was adamant about the way in which "creed" divided Canadians. Having encountered extremist attitudes toward European immigrants among clergymen, such as the Reverend George E. Lloyd, she said she wished

that 70% of our bishops, priests and deacons could be prevailed upon to homestead in mixed localities long enough to learn the lesson they teach! Would that they could see the vision of life as some thinking prairie women see it; then might the joys of the few be shared with the many.<sup>52</sup>

In May of 1916 she told her readers that "the finest meeting I attended last year was a Municipal Rally " at which 13 different nationalities were represented, all bound by a common tie - the taxes."<sup>53</sup> That is to say, they were farm or village people who owned farm land or property in villages. In other words, she believed that living in a "mixed locality" helped people from various ethnic origins to learn to get along with others based on their common experiences as rural people.

McNaughton wanted to entice as many farm people as possible into the SGGGA and the WGG. She was a practical person and she realized that people of European descent made up a large proportion of the potential membership in Saskatchewan. She and her husband were both pleased when he was able to organize a Grain Growers' Local close to

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Handbook of the National Council of Women of Canada, January 1914.

<sup>52</sup> The Regina Leader 20 January 1916.

<sup>53</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 27 May 1916.

Hillview composed of "Russians, Jews, Germans, Bohemians and Canadian born."<sup>54</sup> Disliking the use of the term "foreigners," to describe European settlers, she told the WGG in 1918 that she wanted to "speak on behalf of our Non-English speaking settlers." "They want," she said, "to become 'good Canadians' and will do so under sympathetic treatment." She also thought that the WGG should encourage young people's work in their Association. This was their "finest opportunity" to work with those who were "unfettered by race or creed."<sup>55</sup>

The majority of delegates to the 1916 SGGA provincial convention saw the people from "alien belligerent nations" as "undesirable" and unassimilable" and some WGG members agreed. However McNaughton and the WGG, as a group, took a different stand.<sup>56</sup> McNaughton believed that they had "a part to play in our duty to the so-called 'foreign' women who, like ourselves, are now 'citizens.'"<sup>57</sup> The WGG therefore set up a committee to encourage women of European descent to join the WGG. Although some of the WGG members

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<sup>54</sup> Harris Museum, Minute Book of the Hillview Grain Growers, entry for 23 March 1917.

<sup>55</sup> SAB, pamphlets G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1918. Like many of her contemporaries she referred to the different British and European nationalities as races.

<sup>56</sup> SPL-LHR, The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 19 February 1916, 26 February 1916. SAB, pamphlets G35.1, Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1916.

<sup>57</sup> McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," 1 July 1916.

referred to them as "foreigners," McNaughton and most members of the Executive usually chose to use the terms "the non-English" until December of 1920, when they learned that immigrants preferred to be called "new Canadians," so they then used the term the immigrants preferred.<sup>58</sup> They also believed that this work with European immigrants and French Canadians was so important that they were going to ask the SGGA to set up a joint committee with them to encourage the participation of farm people who did not speak English.<sup>59</sup>

Women who had immigrated from Europe often did not join organizations such as the WGG, in part, because they did not speak English. Therefore the WGG encouraged them to learn English. Many immigrant women were isolated on their farms and therefore often the last members of their families to learn English, so the WGG co-operated with efforts to organize night schools to teach immigrants English.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> SAB, SGGA Papers, B2 III 1, WS-WGGA Minute Books, 13 February 1920 to 13 June 1922. Note in particular the meeting held on 4 December 1920. SAB, pamphlets, G35.1 pamphlets Women's Section, SGGA Yearbook 1916.

<sup>59</sup> SAB, SGGA Papers, B2 III 1, WS-WGGA Minute Books, the meeting held on 4 December 1920.

<sup>60</sup> SAB, SGGA Papers, B2 III 1, WS-WGGA Minute Books, 13 February 1920 to 13 June 1922. SAB, pamphlets, G35.1 Women's Section, SGGA Year Book, 1920, 16. Hryniuk and McDonald found that Ukrainian immigrants in Manitoba who did not speak English wanted to learn English but not at the expense of losing their own language. Stella M. Hryniuk and Neil G. McDonald, "The Schooling Experience of Ukrainians in Manitoba, 1886-1916," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings, ed, R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 292.

McNaughton listened carefully to what European immigrants had to say. For instance she corresponded with Emma Bielschowsky who told her about Grain Growers activities from the point of view of German and Russian immigrants who were offended by the 'anglo-bigots' in the SGGA. At Dilke, Bielschowsky said, the Germans had set up a separate local as a result.<sup>61</sup> McNaughton also opposed the federal War Times Elections Act which gave the vote to some Canadian women but disenfranchised conscientious objectors and immigrants who had arrived since 1902 from the nations at war with Canada and her allies.<sup>62</sup>

In sum, even during the war hysteria against European immigrants McNaughton was a voice of reason speaking out for ethnic harmony. She took this stand, in part, because she was a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in which there were, what she was later to call, "brilliant world-wise women."<sup>63</sup> She believed that as members of the WILPF she and other Canadian women could form

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<sup>61</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(2), Emma Bielschowsky to McNaughton, 17 April 1918, 15 April 1918.

<sup>62</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Minutes of the ICFW in Winnipeg, April 1,2,3 [1919.] Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad with Veronica Strong-Boag, History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1993), 297. For the reaction of other women's group to the Act Alison Prentice and others, Canadian Women - A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 234-235; and R.R. Warne, "Nellie McClung and Peace," in Up and Doing-Canadian Women and Peace, ed. Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham (Toronto: Women's Press, 1989), 35-47.

<sup>63</sup> The Western Producer 13 May 1926.

"links around the world." After the Great War they could even be linked with women who opposed war in countries that had been at war with Canada and her allies, such as Emmy Freundlich in Austria and Ellie Schwangart in Germany with whom McNaughton later corresponded.<sup>54</sup>

Women who had immigrated from Europe as adults or as children often did not feel comfortable joining organizations, such as the WGG. For instance a few of the Jewish farm women from eastern Europe in Saskatchewan, that Anna Feldman studied, joined the Homemakers but most of them focused on creating and maintaining a Jewish community environment.<sup>55</sup> Frances Swyripa's work has shown that Ukrainian women preferred to join organizations, such as the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada, whose goal was "to politicize their sex, rallying women behind either the national or the class struggle and instructing them in their roles and responsibilities in aid of the cause."<sup>56</sup> In the early years McNaughton would have been pleased to have more

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<sup>54</sup> See their correspondences in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 59; and A1 E32. See also The Western Producer 10 October 1929.

<sup>55</sup> Anna Feldman, "'A Woman of Valour Who Can Find?': Jewish-Saskatchewan Women in Two Rural Settings, 1882-1939," in "Other Voices" Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women, eds. David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 60-75.

<sup>56</sup> Frances Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause - Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity 1891-1991 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 17.

Ukranian and Jewish women in the WGG.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless McNaughton's approach had begun to reap a harvest by 1930, when there were more women from European countries or descended from European immigrants speaking English, joining the United Farmers of Canada, or reading The Western Producer.<sup>68</sup>

In short, in the years up to 1930 McNaughton knew and respected French Canadians and European settlers and their descendants who farmed in "mixed localities" on the prairies. She included them in the agrarian community, just as she did Euro-Canadians and immigrants who worked as midwives, nurses, doctors, or hired help on farms, or who were in groups with whom she had formed alliances during the WGG campaigns for suffrage and medical aid. This was an integral part of her egalitarian agrarian feminist ideology in this period. Concerned about the rise of nativist feeling in Saskatchewan in the late twenties, and stimulated by her trip to Eastern Europe in 1929, she was to travel thousands of miles to ethnic communities in Saskatchewan in the early

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<sup>67</sup> For her attitude toward Jewish and Ukranian women and their crafts see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(2), McNaughton to Dr. J.S. Thompson, 18 January 1939; Constance Hayward to McNaughton, 7 June 1940; A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Mrs. Vincent Massey, 11 March 1932.

<sup>68</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D60, McNaughton to Ellie Schwangart, 12 July 1930. For McNaughton's correspondence with two such women, Sophia (Rossander) Dixon and Louise (Nachtweih) Lucas, see A1 D19 and A1 D41. See also A1 D1(1), McNaughton to Bela Bacskai Payerle, 5 March 1930.

thirties.<sup>69</sup> This not only increased her contact with women of ethnic minorities in the province it also heightened her interest in them and their families.<sup>70</sup>

McNaughton believed that racism was wrong and that she was anti-racist.<sup>71</sup> As she told her readers "'In the realm of the mind there are no frontiers.' Every nationality and colour will feel at home" contributing to the 'Mainly for Women' pages of 'The Producer.'<sup>72</sup> However her attitudes toward prairie Indians in the years up to the mid-thirties were in contradiction to these ideas. They were her blind spot.

McNaughton's attitude toward prairie Indians and other racialized people in the period up to the mid-thirties was

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<sup>69</sup> The Western Producer 12 September 1929, 19 September 1929, 10 October 1929, 21 November 1929, 28 November 1929, 5 December 1929, 23 January 1930. Martin Robin, Shades of Right - Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada 1920-1940 (University of Toronto: 1992), 82. Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop."

<sup>70</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E13(7), A biographical sketch of McNaughton and McNaughton to Annie Stanley, 9 October 1930; A1 E13(1), McNaughton to W.J. Black, 20 December 1930 and McNaughton to Annie Stanley, 9 October 1930. See also the other documents in A1 E13(1-7).

<sup>71</sup> The Western Producer 22 April 1926, 20 May 1926. In this chapter I am using Syd Pauls' definition of racism. "Racism...is a belief in the innate superiority of one race or culture over another." Syd Pauls, "Racism and Native Schooling: A Historical Perspective," in Racism in Canadian Schools ed. M. Ibrahim Alladin (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, 1996), 22-41. I would like to thank Nayyar Javed for discussing the ideas in this section with me and clarifying my ideas on several points.

<sup>72</sup> The Western Producer 9 December 1926.



shaped by several basic principles some of them contradictory. She believed that there was "no superior race" and that "race prejudice" was an ugly thing.<sup>73</sup> She regarded Chinese and the people of India as civilized because she saw them as having they had advanced civilizations that went back centuries.<sup>74</sup> McNaughton published so many stories about China that her readers objected. She justified her coverage by pointing out she wanted the pages to include stories of the world that went beyond their own field.<sup>75</sup>

As a pacifist and an anti-imperialist, McNaughton was a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and the women and men who were working with him. His doctrine of non-violent resistance and his campaign against British imperial authorities for Indian independence were very appealing to a woman who was constructing an identity as a "small but mighty" champion of farm women and the "plain common people."<sup>76</sup> When she read Gandhi's autobiography, she told

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<sup>73</sup> The Western Producer 22 April 1926, 20 May 1926.

<sup>74</sup> The Western Producer 9 April 1931. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(2), McNaughton to Irene Parlby, 1 December 1933, 4 January 1935.

<sup>75</sup> The Western Producer 25 August 1927.

<sup>76</sup> The Western Producer 6 November 1924, 11 March 1926, 9 April 1931, 3 September 1931, 17 September 1931, 24 September, 1921, 2 April 1931, 9 April 1931, 23 April 1931, 8 October 1931. February 1968. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D54(2), Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 25 May 1956. R. K. Webb, Modern England, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 506. Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War -

her readers that "the more one reads of the great people of less familiar lands, the more our boasted Nordic superiority seems to shrink. And how much more wonderful this old world becomes!"<sup>77</sup> She idealized Ghandi so much that her husband John could not resist teasing her about him. "Saint Ghandi protect us!" John exclaimed and then he went on to tell her that Ghandi had made a "vow" to abstain from sex but he had not asked his wife's opinion.<sup>78</sup>

McNaughton had a different attitude toward the North American Indians. They did have some admirable qualities, according to her. In the first issue of The Western Producer in which she "conducted" the "Mainly for Women" pages, she quoted the "words of 'Gitche Manitou, the Mighty'" who said that "All your strength is in your union; All your danger is in discord."<sup>79</sup> At the same time the pseudo-scientific racist thought that was used to justify and legitimate British and European imperial expansion had a profound impact on her.<sup>80</sup> Several of McNaughton's basic assumptions

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Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 18, 116, 186. Louise Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Ghandi (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 103-403.

<sup>77</sup> The Western Producer 17 June 1926.

<sup>78</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 19 June 1927.

<sup>79</sup> The Western Producer 2 April 1925.

<sup>80</sup> For a discussions of how ideas were applied to Canadian Indians see Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests" Prairie Indian Reserves Farmers and Government Policy (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 3-23; J.R. Miller,

about Indians showed in 1925 when she urged farm women to join the Egg and Poultry Pool rather than trading eggs and poultry for goods at local stores. When she discussed with them "a savage survival" she began by asking them

did you ever see pictures of savages bringing in their products to exchange with traders for the things they desired or needed? Today this method has almost disappeared among primitive peoples. Saskatchewan farm women are about the only class of producer left who perpetuate this primitive custom of "trade" or "barter." And they do not even get the thrill or excitement that their predecessors did in "driving the bargain."<sup>31</sup>

In a similar plea she told them that

for too long we have followed a system which is about the only custom or habit of our brothers and predecessors - the Red Indians - that we have retained. And we women alone sustain the custom! A custom that neither benefits ourselves nor the merchants we deal with.<sup>32</sup>

In other words she saw "the Red Indians" as "savages," as "primitive peoples," unlike the Indians from India. "The Red Indians" had been thrilled when "driving the bargain" during

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Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens - A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), 96-98. For Canadian ideas about expansion into the West see Doug Owsram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West - 1856-1900, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). For the way English racist thought, with regard to racialized people in British colonies, developed see Catherine Hall, "Competing masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre," White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History (New York: Routledge, 1992), 255-295; Catherine Hall, "Missionary Stories: Gender and Ethnicity in England in the 1830s and the 1840s," *Ibid.*, 205-254.

<sup>31</sup> The Western Producer 5 August 1925.

<sup>32</sup> The Western Producer 23 April 1925.

the fur trade. In the twenties even these "predecessors" of farm women had "almost" abandoned "'trade' or 'barter.'"<sup>33</sup> She was shaming the women for being stagnant and traditional, like the "primitive" "Red Indians" of old. She wanted the women to catch up with Euro-Canadian farm men, who she implied were progressive and innovative because they were marketing wheat through the Wheat Pool.

Behind these pleas was her belief that, as the "predecessors" of farm people, the way of life of "the Red Indians" had "vanished," and they were so stagnant and traditional that they were incapable of farming.<sup>34</sup> Thinking that they were incapable of farming was very important since, like many farm people she saw farming and country life as the most important way of life in Canada.<sup>35</sup>

McNaughton and her husband John were interested in evolutionary thought.<sup>36</sup> Proponents of evolution in the late

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<sup>33</sup> The Western Producer 5 August 1925, 25 August 1925.

<sup>34</sup> The Western Producer 5 August 1925, 15 January 1931.

<sup>35</sup> David C. Jones, "'There Is Some Power About the Land' The Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, 2nd ed. (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 456.

<sup>36</sup> John was more interested in Darwin's biological theory of evolution and in its applicability to human culture than Violet was in part because he liked theories more than she did. Likely his interests had been aroused as a young man in New Zealand. See John McNaughton, Man Jungle Wise and Otherwise (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1948).

nineteenth century often saw human beings as having developed progressively through set stages from the stage of savagery, to the stage of barbarism, and finally to the stage of civilization. The Indians were seen as being many stages removed from the 'civilized' people of Britain and Europe.<sup>37</sup> While the McNaughtons believed the theory of evolution applied to human culture, they did question these stages. Although Violet saw the "the Red Indians" as "savages" she and John also believed that "primitive peoples" were no more "savage" than so-called civilized people who used capital punishment, used modern methods of warfare, or insisted on the right to carry guns.<sup>38</sup> In a satirical burst they suggested several mottos to hang on the walls of the homes of Americans who insisted on the right to carry guns, including "A Gunless Home is Worse than a Cowless Barn."<sup>39</sup>

Generally speaking though, in the years up to the mid-thirties Violet seems to have believed in three of the myths that aboriginal scholar James (sákéj) Youngblood Henderson

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<sup>37</sup> For Carter's explanation of how Hayter Reed applied evolutionary thought to Canadian Indians see Carter, Lost Harvests, 212-213.

<sup>38</sup> The Western Producer 5 August 1925, 23 April 1925, 9 December 1926, 1 September 1927. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(2), John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 7 May 1928.

<sup>39</sup> The Western Producer 9 December 1926. This is one of the articles that the McNaughtons occasionally wrote together.

argues were the basis for Canadian colonial expansion.<sup>30</sup> First she believed "the myth of the savage," the belief that the Indians were "savages" and that they were "unchanging, traditional, and backward" "primitive wanderers."<sup>31</sup> Second she believed "the myth of European destiny," the myth that it was the destiny of Europeans to bring the technology of civilization to the wilderness.<sup>32</sup> Therefore the Indians, who were what McNaughton referred to as "the predecessors" of the Europeans, were their inferiors whose day had passed.<sup>33</sup>

Although there had been Indians in the Harris area for hundreds of years, in 1913 McNaughton told the Hillview Grain Growers that they were "the first prairie dwellers."<sup>34</sup> That is to say she believed a third myth that

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<sup>30</sup> James (sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, "Post-Colonial Ghost Dancing," an unpublished manuscript, University of Saskatchewan, 1995, 49. I would like to thank Youngblood Henderson, who is the Director of the Native Law Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, for discussing his paper with me and for clarifying some my ideas about prairie Indians and Canadian colonialism.

<sup>31</sup> Henderson, "Post-Colonial Ghost Dancing," 50-51.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>33</sup> The Western Producer 5 August 1926.

<sup>34</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," ca. 1913. Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1987, (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society, 1988). Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1988, (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society, 1989). Marilyn Gilchrist and others, Bents Bear Hills Project - Surveying and Recording Results in 1989, (Harris: Eagle Creek Historical Society,

Henderson identifies, "the myth of emptiness," the belief of the North American continent was almost empty and "patiently awaiting European progress and innovation."<sup>35</sup> McNaughton believed that the Canadian West had been virtually empty of "stone age" people and therefore Euro-Canadians were justified in opening it for settlement by their own people and by immigrants.<sup>36</sup>

The Canadian prairies had not been empty. By the time McNaughton and the other settlers arrived in Hillview the Indians who had lived in the area had been subjugated, they had signed Treaty Six, and they were living on small reservations.<sup>37</sup> The closest reservation to Hillview was the Moose Woods Reserve, over sixty miles away and, as Edward Ahenakew a Saskatchewan Cree put it, the Indians were

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<sup>35</sup> Henderson, "Post-Colonial Ghost Dancing," 49.

<sup>36</sup> The Western Producer 11 January 1953. For the history of the Indians who inhabited the North American West see Olive Dickason, "A Historical Reconstruction for the Northwestern Plains," in Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, 3rd ed., ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990), 47-67.

<sup>37</sup> Friesen, The Canadian Prairies A History 143-145, 156-159. John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," in Readings in Canadian History - Post-confederation, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990) 122-147.

"hobbled like horses" and "limited to our reserves."<sup>98</sup> The bureaucrats in the Department of Indian Affairs, the Indian Act, and the reserve system kept the Indians on the reservations and created barriers between them and the other people of Saskatchewan.<sup>99</sup> As a result McNaughton and the other Hillview settlers had very little contact with Indians.<sup>100</sup>

The work of Sarah Carter on reserve farming in Saskatchewan during the late nineteenth century and Helen Buckley on prairie reserves in the twentieth century has revealed the almost insurmountable barriers that prairie Indians faced in attempting to get established as commercial farmers.<sup>101</sup> The Indian Act, Indian Affairs bureaucrats, and

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<sup>98</sup> J.H. Richards and K.I. Kung, Atlas of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan), 62, 194. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, 118, 166, 180. Ahenakew, Voices of the Plains Cree, 72.

<sup>99</sup> Sarah Carter, "First Nations Women of Prairie Canada in Early Reserve Years, the 1870s to the 1920s: A Preliminary Inquiry," in Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength ed. Christine Miller and Patricia Chuckryk (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 56, 64, 68, 71.

<sup>100</sup> The aboriginal people of the prairies included treaty Indians, non-status Indians and the Metis. For brevity's sake in this section I will deal only with the life of treaty Indians living on reserves.

<sup>101</sup> Carter, Lost Harvests. Sarah Carter, "'We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live': The Plains Cree and Agriculture to 1900," in Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), 444-470. Helen Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare - Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).



successive federal governments systematically undermined and atrophied agricultural development on prairie reserves and eroded the economic viability of the reserves. Using such policies as the peasant farming policy and the permit system they destroyed the opportunity prairie Indians had to get established as commercial farmers specializing in the production of grain.<sup>102</sup> According to Carter, the plains Cree were not able to become commercial farmers because "Euro-Canadian observers consistently insisted on seeing Plains people as hunters, gatherers, and warriors incapable of adopting agriculture." The reason therefore was "government policy and intent," not "Aboriginal choice and ability."<sup>103</sup>

In spite of these impediments, in the years in which McNaughton and her husband were farming, many men and women on reserves in Saskatchewan practised subsistence farming and provided for their families by combining farming with hunting and gathering and working off the reserve as hired

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<sup>102</sup> Carter, "We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live" Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare 16-17, 22, 26, 39, 45, 51-8, 61-66. For a discussion of similar developments in Indian agriculture in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see R. Douglas Hurt, Indian Agriculture in America - Prehistory to the Present (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Nebraska, 1987), 136-173.

<sup>103</sup> Carter, "We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live," 445, 450.

help for local farmers.<sup>104</sup> Some of the Indians in the twenties and the thirties "gained reputations as good farmers."<sup>105</sup> Edward Ahenakew, McNaughton's contemporary, had worked for a year with his father farming on the Atakakoop reserve after he finished high school.<sup>106</sup> He was also familiar with many other Indians farming on Saskatchewan reserves.<sup>107</sup> In the early twenties he was the President of the League of Indians of Canada which was protesting against the pass system because it limited the

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<sup>104</sup> Stan Cuthand, "The Native Peoples of the Prairie Provinces in the 1920s and 1930s," in Sweet Promises - A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada, ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare 381-392. 56-58, 67-70. For a discussions of the role of Indian women and men in farming on a Saskatchewan reserves between 1909 to 1926 see Carter, "First Nations Women," 58-63. Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, John Tootoosis (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984), 82-93, 105-127, 137-151. For the recollections of Indian women about this way of life see Eleanor Brass, I Walk In Two Worlds (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1987), 5-19, 31-38; Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart, editors and translators, Our Grandmothers' Lives As Told in Their Own Words (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992), 271-349; Sylvia Vicq, and others, eds., Stories of Kohkom (Saskatoon: READ Saskatoon and Saskatoon Community Clinic, 1995).

<sup>105</sup> Cuthand, "The Native Peoples," 388.

<sup>106</sup> W. Bleasdel Cameron, "A Militant Churchman - The Story of an Indian Who Overcame Great Handicaps to Rise High in a White Man's World." The Western Producer 30 March 1950.

<sup>107</sup> Ahenakew, Voices of the Plains Cree. See also Stan Cuthand, "Introduction to the 1995 Edition," in *Ibid.*, x-xix.

ability of reserve Indians to farm.<sup>108</sup> In 1923 he observed that

farming in those first days of [white] settlement was indeed hard labour, under conditions that could drive even the white settler to desperation. But it was possible for him to escape to another way of life. We were hobbled like horses, limited to our reserves and quite unfitted for any life outside.<sup>109</sup>

On the reserves their efforts at farming were severely hampered not only by the hard labour and difficult conditions that faced all prairie farmers but also by the seemingly endless rules that reserve Indians had to follow. Ahenakew observed that

for myself, I think that I would rather starve than go to beg [the Indian Agent] for such a trifling thing as a permit to sell one load of hay, while I am trying to make every hour of good weather count. To sell ten loads might be different. But who on earth wants this when he is busy, in a hurry, and needs to get food for himself.<sup>110</sup>

McNaughton was apparently unaware of such impediments to Indian farming in the years up to the mid-thirties.

McNaughton seldom mentioned Indians in these years and when she did she was talking about a people with whom she had very little personal contact. When she did mention them she was giving a prairie settler's image of the Indians.

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<sup>108</sup> Ahenakew, Voices of the Plains Cree, 84. See also Stan Cuthand, "Introduction to the 1995 Edition," in *Ibid.*, x-xix. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens 217-218.

<sup>109</sup> Ahenakew, Voices of the Plains Cree, 72.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

Like many Canadians, she believed in what Daniel Francis refers to as "an Imaginary Indian."<sup>111</sup> McNaughton believed in more than one of the "images" that Francis identifies. He argues that "white Canadians manufactured, believed in, feared, despised, admired," and "taught their children" these images.<sup>112</sup>

Like many other Canadians McNaughton believed in an image of "the vanishing Indian."<sup>113</sup> Mortality rates among the Indians of Saskatchewan had been high in the nineteenth century. Indians and the Metis had declined from 19.4% of the population in 1901 to 2.4% in 1911 to 1.6% in 1926, so there was some basis for believing this image.<sup>114</sup> However McNaughton believed that the Indians were vanishing, not only because she saw few of them, but also because she believed in evolutionary progress. She believed the new settlers were the "first prairie dwellers" that counted.<sup>115</sup> The prairies had inevitably progressed to the point where they were inhabited by people "of European stock" who were

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<sup>111</sup> Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian - The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>113</sup> The Western Producer 15 January 1931. Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 16-43.

<sup>114</sup> Carter, "First Nations Women," 57. Archer, Saskatchewan A History 358.

<sup>115</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie woman," ca. 1913.

agriculturalists, a higher pursuit than hunting and gathering.<sup>116</sup>

McNaughton's ideas fit well with another image of Indians that Daniel Francis identifies, "the Official Indian." This image was fostered by Indian Affairs officials, such as Duncan Campbell Scott who was the senior bureaucrat in charge of Indian policy from 1913 to 1932. These bureaucrats wanted Indians to disappear through a process of assimilation.<sup>117</sup> In order to assimilate the Indians they tried to change them into "property-owning, voting, hard-working, Christian farmers."<sup>118</sup> When they failed to achieve this goal the bureaucrats encouraged Euro-Canadians to view the Indians as "different and inferior" who were not holding up "their end" of the "bargain."<sup>119</sup> The policy of the bureaucrats was to encourage "the public to see Indians as incapable of occupying any but the lowest

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<sup>116</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E72, McNaughton, "The Prairie Woman," ca. 1913. The Western Producer 23 December 1926. For the role Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Thomas Malthus, and Lewis Henry Morgan played in the development of this line of thought see Staski and Marks, Evolutionary Anthropology, 87-98.

<sup>117</sup> Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 96-218. Olive Dickason, Canada's First Nations - A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 327.

<sup>118</sup> Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 96-218. See also Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, 189-207.

<sup>119</sup> Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 216.

place in society."<sup>120</sup>

McNaughton believed this version of history devised by Canadian elites even though she was usually sympathetic to people low in the hierarchies of power and generally believed them rather than the people who attempted to subordinate them. Why did McNaughton see North American Indians in this way, when at the same time she believed that there was "no superior race" and that "race prejudice" was an ugly thing?<sup>121</sup>

Part of the answer appears to lie in the position Grain Growers and Progressives, like McNaughton, took with regard to the large land surrenders that the Indians were pushed into making between 1901 and 1928.<sup>122</sup> At times Indians were pushed to surrender land in conditions that "bordered on fraud."<sup>123</sup> Carter found that "the major preoccupation of Indian Affairs administrators" in this period was to induce Indians to "surrender substantial portions of their

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>121</sup> The Western Producer 22 April 1926, 20 May 1926.

<sup>122</sup> W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1950), 304-306. Stewart Raby, "Indian Land Surrenders in Southern Saskatchewan," Canadian Geographer XVII(1) (Spring 1973): 36. Raby estimates that in the southern Saskatchewan portion of Treaty Four a quarter of a million acres, or about half of the land in the reserves, had been legally transferred out of the Indians hands by 1928. Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>123</sup> Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heaven, 203.

reserves."<sup>124</sup> They had decided by then that Indians could not be made into farmers, despite a great deal of evidence to the contrary, so amendments were made to the Indian Act in 1906 and 1911 that facilitated these transfers.<sup>125</sup> There was "widespread" support for this from the SGGA, other "farmers, townspeople, merchants, railroad executives, newspapermen, and speculators."<sup>126</sup>

The pressure on the Indians to make land surrenders increased during the Great War. Indian land was appropriated or leased without the Indians' permission in order to increase production.<sup>127</sup> There was more pressure as soldiers from the Great War returned, most them with grievances that they felt needed to be addressed.<sup>128</sup> A Soldier Settlement Board was established by the federal government and it was given control of almost all of the land that the Indians surrendered, "sixty thousand acres in Saskatchewan alone."<sup>129</sup> The Soldier Settlement Act empowered the Board

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<sup>124</sup> Carter, Lost Harvest 244.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 244-45. Dickason, Canada's First Nation, 323.

<sup>126</sup> SAB, Pamphlets G34.11, "Some Ways in Which the SGGA Has Helped the Farmer," 1924. Carter, Lost Harvest, 245.

<sup>127</sup> Dickason, Canada's First Nation, 326.

<sup>128</sup> Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon - Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919 (Toronto: Lester & Orphen Dennys, 1989), 254.

<sup>129</sup> Carter, Lost Harvest, 251-252.

to take agricultural land by means of "compulsory purchase" for the benefit of veterans in areas where "lands remain undeveloped and agriculture is being retarded."<sup>130</sup> This included the land on Indian reserves.

The offer of farm land was not especially attractive during the post-war depression but in 1918 the Board of Directors of the SGGA, on which McNaughton sat, "co-operated with the Soldier Settlement Board" with regard to the "settlement of returned soldiers on land."<sup>131</sup> The Progressives, in which McNaughton was active, also championed the returning soldiers who were trying to get land and to keep it.<sup>132</sup> The Progressives were using the Farmers' Platform of the Canadian Council of Agriculture which was brought up to date in 1921, when McNaughton was an active leader of the CCA at the federal level.<sup>133</sup> The revised platform called for a land settlement scheme for returning soldiers where "owners of idle areas should be obliged to file a selling price on their lands, that price

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<sup>130</sup> The Soldier Settlement Act, quoted in Carter, Lost Harvests, 252.

<sup>131</sup> SAB, Pamphlets G34.11, "Some Ways in Which the SGGA Has Helped the Farmer," 1924.

<sup>132</sup> Morton and Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon, 272. Morton, The Progressive Party, 304-306.

<sup>133</sup> Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10E2 Box 1, Minute Book of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1918 to 1923; MG 10E2 Box 2, Minute Book of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1918-1923, January 1917 to February 1929.



also to be regarded as an assessable value for purposes of taxation."<sup>134</sup>

McNaughton was a dedicated Progressive and she campaigned very hard for the Progressives during the 1921 election. They were trying to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters, including the many veterans who could vote.<sup>135</sup> Sixty four Progressive MPs were elected, much to McNaughton's delight, and they took up "the case of the soldier settler."<sup>136</sup> The position of Progressives, such as McNaughton, with regard to soldier settlers in 1925 was outlined by Alfred Speakman, the Progressive MP from Red Deer, in The Western Producer.<sup>137</sup> In 1922 the prices for farm products dropped so low that many soldier settlers could not pay their loans. The Progressives pushed the Government to reduce the soldier settlers' payments but, Speakman said, the Government did not want to spend the money to do so. There were 25,000 men on land with loans in 1925, land values had fallen, and 20% of the soldier

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<sup>134</sup> Morton, The Progressive Party 305.

<sup>135</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E53(1), Minutes of the executive of the New National Party Political Organization, 11 March 1920; A1 E53(2), McNaughton, notes for speech "Women and the New Political Group," ca. 1919-1920 and McNaughton to Donald McLeod 15 September 1921. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(6), Annie Hollis to McNaughton, 11 September 1921.

<sup>136</sup> The Western Producer 7 May 1925.

<sup>137</sup> The Western Producer 7 May 1925. Ernest J. Chambers, ed. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide (Ottawa: Ernest John Chambers, 1925), 197.

settlers had abandoned their land. He expected more would leave, however as he saw it, it was fortunate for them that there were so many Progressive MPs who were farmers themselves who understood the situation.

Clearly the SGGGA and Progressives backed the soldier settlers, not the Indians who were losing their land. McNaughton apparently believed the version of history given by Indian Affairs bureaucrats about prairie Indians because it accorded with her assumptions regarding evolutionary progress and because, as a Director of the SGGGA and as a Progressive in post-war Canada, it was also in her political interests. She was too involved in this situation to see the parallels between the on-going subjugation of prairie Indians, by various means including intense pressure to surrender reserve lands, and the British Imperial subjugation that her hero Ghandi was fighting in India.<sup>138</sup>

Another way to analyze McNaughton's part in the subjugation of prairie Indians is to use Albert Memmi's concept of the "colonizer and the colonized," an analytical concept used by aboriginal scholars who are dealing with the impact of the colonization of Canada on the aboriginal peoples.<sup>139</sup> Using Memmi's analysis they see the aboriginal

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<sup>138</sup> Carter, Lost Harvests, 244-253.

<sup>139</sup> Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized translated by Howard Greenfeld (1957; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967). Emma LaRocque, "The Colonization of a Native Woman Scholar," in Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength ed. Christine Miller and

peoples on the Canadian prairies as "the colonized." They see politicians, bureaucrats, and the people who made huge profits through the subjugation of the aboriginal people as "the colonizers."<sup>140</sup> McNaughton was, Memmi would argue, a "small colonizer," who suffered herself from the way the West was structured, but at the same time closed her eyes to the treatment of the aboriginal peoples, and was "seriously fooled" by her own naivety and "blinded by history."<sup>141</sup> Using Memmi's concept she and other Euro-Canadians and immigrants in the Hillview area occupied land that had been taken from the Cree. In other words they had profited by the subjugation of the prairie Indians. As Memmi puts it "to different degrees every colonizer is privileged, at least comparatively so, ultimately to the detriment of the colonized."<sup>142</sup>

McNaughton could not and would not face her complicity as a colonizer in the years up to the mid-thirties. In principle she believed in racial equality but she used a racist idea, that Indians could not farm and she and other

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Patricia Chuchryk (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 11-18. Henderson, "Post-Colonial Ghost Dancing," 1-77. Patricia Monture-Angus, "Alienation and Isolation: Patterns of Colonialism in Canada's Education System," in Thunder in my Soul- A Mohawk Woman Speaks (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1995), 77-89.

<sup>140</sup> Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized 3-10.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

Euro-Canadians and immigrants could farm, to rationalize her part in the subjugation of the Indians. As Syd Pauls puts it "in situations of colonization, the colonizers often resort to racist arguments to justify their occupation" of the land.<sup>143</sup> In other words she did not see that her place in the racial hierarchy in Canada had enabled her and other Euro-Canadians and immigrants to acquire and keep farm land.

In the early thirties McNaughton began to learn a little about the Indians of Saskatchewan second-hand from her chosen daughter, Mary Crozier. Mary had come to Canada with the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf to become a teacher.<sup>144</sup> Her father, a controversial ex-general who was active in the English peace movement, knew McNaughton.<sup>145</sup> When he asked her to act as Mary's guardian McNaughton agreed.<sup>146</sup> Tiny, lively, witty, and red-headed Mary was a very appealing motherless 19 year old. She immediately appealed to the McNaughtons, who took her as their

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<sup>143</sup> Pauls, "Racism and Native Schooling," 24.

<sup>144</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(9), McNaughton to Brigadier General Crozier, 21 August 1930; General Crozier to McNaughton, ca. August 1930; Rev. P.J. Andrews to General Crozier, 6 August 1930.

<sup>145</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(9), Newspaper Clipping from magazine article on peace, n.d.; McNaughton to Rev. A.S. Dewdney, 12 April 1935. Interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992. Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," 154-166.

<sup>146</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(9), Brigadier General Crozier to McNaughton, ca. August 1930; McNaughton to General Crozier, 21 August 1930.

unofficial chosen daughter.<sup>147</sup>

Mary took teacher training and then she went north to teach at the Anglican Indian Residential School in Lac La Ronge. Mary sent back exciting letters about her adventures with the Indians.<sup>148</sup> In the mid-thirties, in spite of McNaughton's opposition, Mary married Harold Anderson, a Metis man. He had had tuberculosis twice, he was unemployed and, according to McNaughton, "a half breed with the Indian half most in evidence" and therefore not the person Mary should marry.<sup>149</sup> Mary, Harold, and their family had a very difficult time surviving, as did many aboriginal families. McNaughton loved Mary and her five children dearly, and she came to respect Harold for his good qualities. She was forced to face the daily hardships of an aboriginal family

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<sup>147</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(1), McNaughton to Mary Crozier, 1 October 1931. McNaughton to Station Manager, 14 December 1931; A1 D2(2) Mary Crozier to McNaughton, 13 November 1934, 5 March 1939. Interviews with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992, and Clarence Longworth, 20 August 1989.

<sup>148</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D60, McNaughton to Ellie Schwangart, 13 August 1933; A1 D2(1), McNaughton to Mary Crozier; A1 D2(9), McNaughton to General Crozier, 24 April 1934. McNaughton published an edited version of Mary Crozier's letters to her from Lac La Ronge in The Western Producer 15 October 1959, 22 October 1959, 29 October 1959, 5 November 1959. Interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992.

<sup>149</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(9), McNaughton to General Crozier, 26 February 1935, 8 April 1935; A1 D2(2), McNaughton to Mary Crozier, ca. 1935; A1 D2(8), McNaughton to Rev. A.S. Dewdney, 12 April 1935; A1 A1(4) Violet McNaughton to John McNaughton, 4 April 1935. Interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992.

that she loved.<sup>150</sup>

In the thirties McNaughton began a long difficult process of making a fundamental shift in her world view. She began learning about the Indians who lived on prairie reserves and began to get to know them personally.<sup>151</sup> She learned a great deal from Indian people such as James Gladstone and Harriet Blue Eyes, and the young Indians going to University in Saskatoon whom she regularly invited to her apartment.<sup>152</sup> Her consciousness of racism was raised as she watched, and opposed, the persecution of Japanese Canadians during the second World War.<sup>153</sup> She also learned about racism as she watched, and resisted, the "rising tide of anti-refugee and anti-Jewish sentiment" in Canada. She

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<sup>150</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D2(4), Mary Anderson to McNaughton, 10 August 1938; A1 D2(8), McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Medland, 2 March 1940; A1 D2(8), McNaughton to Dr. H.C. Boughton, 1 May 1941; A1 D2(4), Anderson to McNaughton, 12 November 1941, McNaughton to Anderson, 15 November 1941; A1 D2(8), Mary Anderson to Mrs. Medland, 17 February 1940; McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Medland, 2 March 1940. Interview with Mary Anderson, 11 March 1992.

<sup>151</sup> For more information about her activities with Indians see the documents in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E30.

<sup>152</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24(2), McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 August 1943. The Western Producer 9 September 1954. Dickason, Canada's First Nation, 329. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>153</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58(3), McNaughton to Velma Sanders, 1 April 1942, 10 March 1942, 14 May 1942, 4 June 1942, 19 June 1942; A1 D58(4), McNaughton to Sanders, 15 March 1944; A1 D58(5), McNaughton to Sanders, 25 May 1947; A1 D42(2), McNaughton to Nellie McCay, 31 July 1942. The Western Producer 26 June 1947.

joined the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution, a group of Canadian Jews and their gentile supporters who were being blocked in their efforts to get persecuted European Jews away from the Nazis and into Canada.<sup>154</sup>

By the early forties McNaughton no longer believed in "an Imaginary Indian." She had become an adamant supporter of the Metis and Indian rights movements, she was calling for "fair play for Indians, and she was referring to Indians as "our first Canadians."<sup>155</sup> By the early fifties she had done a complete about face with regard to Indians and agriculture. Not only were they farmers, they were "good" farmers who had much in common with the farm people who read 'The Producer.'<sup>156</sup> She was no longer cut off from the Indian farm women that the Indian Affairs bureaucrats had abused and painted so negatively for public consumption.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D27, McNaughton to Annie Hollis, 12 April 1938; A1 D62 McNaughton to Mrs. L.C. Shoebridge, 24 November 1939; A1 D1(2), McNaughton to Dr. J.S. Thompson, 18 January 1939, Constance Hayward to McNaughton, 7 June 1940. Irving Abella and Harold Roper, None Is Too Many (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1983), 45-46, 50-51, 64-65, 78-79, 101-102, 140, 158-161, 211, 215, 229, 284-286.

<sup>155</sup> The Western Producer 14 January 1942, 27 April 1944, 9 November 1944, 14 December 1944. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24(2), McNaughton to Zoa Haight, 24 August 1943, 21 September 1943, 31 August 1943; A1 D2(2), McNaughton to Nellie McCay, 4 August 1939, 1 February 1944.

<sup>156</sup> The Western Producer 16 July 1953, 23 July 1953, 30 July 1953, 6 August 1953.

<sup>157</sup> Carter, "First Nations Women," 53-55, 64-66, 70.

She believed that they could no longer be excluded from the farm women's movement.<sup>158</sup>

McNaughton's ideas about Indians and farming is one area where there was a significant change in her agrarian feminist principles. During the years on which this study focuses racist discrimination against prairie Indians was an integral part of her agrarian feminism.<sup>159</sup> She later believed that she and other women should "admit our failings" as well as looking at "those of our brothers, many of which we have in common."<sup>160</sup> Later as she moved towards a clearer understanding of the political and social position of the Indian people, her sympathy for them and her commitment to promoting their interests increased. Therefore by the forties and fifties she had discarded many of her earlier racist ideas about Indians. Her agrarian feminist

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<sup>158</sup> The Western Producer 26 August 1954, 2 September 1954, 9 September 1954, 16 September 1954.

<sup>159</sup> For convincing arguments that the current women's movement in Canada is also marred by racism see Patricia Monture-Okanee, "The Violence We Women Do: A First Nations View," in Challenging Times - The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States ed. Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 193-204, and Glenda Simms, "Beyond the White Veil," *Ibid.*, 175-181. Patricia Monture-Angus, "A First Journey in Decolonized Thought: Aboriginal Women and the Application of the Canadian Charter," Thunder in my Soul - A Mohawk Woman Speaks (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1995), 131-151. Patricia Monture-Angus, "Organizing Against Oppression: Aboriginal Women, Law and Feminism," *Ibid.*, 169-188. Between 1992 and 1995 Patricia Monture-Angus changed her name.

<sup>160</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(3), McNaughton to Mrs. Ray Paul, 23 February 1942.



ideology then included seeing Indian farm women as the equals of Euro-Canadian women in the farm women's movement.

In short, the people McNaughton included in the agrarian community from 1914, when she became the President of the WGG, to 1926, when the WGG went out of existence, were more extensive than those she excluded. She included Euro-Canadian and immigrant farm people and their hired women and men. In this period the only group she excluded when she imagined the agrarian community were prairie Indians. With the exception of Indians her vision of the agrarian community was broad and inclusive rather than narrow and exclusive. This broad outlook was an integral part of her agrarian feminism.

## CHAPTER NINE

## THE CONCLUSION

The first four years Violet McNaughton lived in Canada had such a profound impact on her that she was to carry the lessons she learned between 1909 and 1913 into all her future work.<sup>1</sup> Her agrarian feminism was to remain rooted in the McNaughton farm and what she had learned about the

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about McNaughton's agrarian feminism, her involvement in the farm women's movement and the general farm movement, and the groups with which she was associated after 1918 see Georgina M. Taylor, "'A Splendid Field Before Us' Violet McNaughton and the Development of Agrarian Feminism in Canada, 1909-1926," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1993. Georgina M. Taylor, "Violet McNaughton - History of a remarkable woman," a ten-part biographical series in "Western People," the magazine supplement of The Western Producer, January 3, 1991 to March 7, 1991. Georgina M. Taylor, "'Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?' The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation 1910-1967," in Women Isolation and Bonding - The Ecology of Gender, ed. Kathleen Storrie (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 79-100. Sheilagh L. Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909 - 1929," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979. Sheila [sic] Steer, "Violet McNaughton and the Struggle for the Co-operative Society," in Educating for a Brighter New Day: Women's Organizations as Learning Sites ed. Michael Welton (Halifax: School of Education Dalhousie University, 1992), 139-159. Rudolph George Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913-1920," in Building Beyond the Homestead - Rural History of the Prairies ed. David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 89-109. Rudolph George Marchildon, "The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism," M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1981.

reproductive, productive, and community work of farm women through her own work on the farm and by carefully observing and listening to other farm women and the "plain common people."<sup>2</sup> In Hillview the value of rural radicalism and the co-operative beliefs she brought from England was confirmed.

McNaughton's commitment to improve the lives of farm women and their families had many thrusts, but they all centred on the idea that the work of farm women was essential to the nation. Therefore, farm women should have a say in the nation's business and they should have decent conditions in which to give birth and to raise their families. As a radical democrat she did not trust the elites; her experiences as a farm woman told her she was right to trust the "plain common people." As thinking political beings farm women should be the people who made the decisions about their own lives. They should be able to "live a life" with some leisure in addition to earning a living and raising their families.

While Violet and John were organizing the Hillview Grain Growers and other Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) locals in their area, her agrarian feminism developed some of the features that were to remain constant thereafter. Based on the flexible complementary

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<sup>2</sup> SAB, G125, McNaughton, "The Woman on the Farm," The Torch February 1923.

gender roles on their farms, the Hillview Grain Growers was a mixed gender local in which the members gradually developed an equal role for women. McNaughton also organized a Hillview Women Grain Growers (WGG) in which women dealt with issues that were particularly important to them. They also decided how they were going to negotiate the conditions of their work with the men. McNaughton thought of herself as a farm woman and as a farmer. This dual identity led to her helping to design a dual structure in the Grain Growers, with mixed gender locals and women's locals. This was to remain an important aspect of her agrarian feminist approach.<sup>3</sup> At the provincial and federal levels she made sure that the women had the right to equal membership in the mixed gender group and they also had a women's group where they were in control.

McNaughton's feminism developed and enabled her and the farm women she worked with to create a new kind of farm women's organization when she threw herself into work at the provincial level. Even though she did not advertise the fact that she was a feminist, her resolute feminist convictions and her radical democratic ideas meant that farm women, the radical men in the SGGA, and people in other radical groups trusted her. Although her co-operative ideals informed all of her activities, she also believed that, for the good of

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<sup>3</sup> SAB, SGGA Papers B2 III 2, [C. Lenhard], Provincial Secretary WS-SGGA, March 1926.

the people, governments had to finance some institutions and programs.

Women's membership in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA), the organization of the WGG, the campaign for women's suffrage, and the campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all" were all linked. They were all important parts of the way in which McNaughton hoped to bring about the many changes that would right the wrongs the first National Policy had inflicted upon farm women and their families. As a result the formation of the WGG was crucial to her. "It would require little organization," she explained,

to get the majority of women to hold up their hands in favour of various measures of social and economic reform, but it takes a live organization to encourage its members to get out and help put those reforms into effect, and to see that they are properly administered.<sup>4</sup>

As McNaughton and the women of the WGG developed their "live organization," they worked together on "the splendid field" before them. Their "live organization" enabled them to see that women's suffrage passed. Then, as citizens with equal political rights, they could campaign for numerous reforms that would improve the daily lives of farm women, their families, and others low in the hierarchies of power in Canada. Women were different from men in that they gave birth, therefore they needed to have guarantees that they

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<sup>4</sup> William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics (1920; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1920), 128.

could make choices and that they, and their families, could lead decent lives. McNaughton's agrarian feminism was so effective that she and the WGG were able to achieve many reforms, to lay the foundations for Canada's health care system, and to see that some of the other social programs they needed were established. These programs were early programs in what would become the second National Policy.

The clauses about the participation of women in the SGGA constitution that McNaughton and the WGG designed, reflect her feminism. Women were full members of the SGGA with all the rights and privileges of full membership. They had their own women's section, the WGG, which evolved as McNaughton moved away from her early muddled idea of a women's auxiliary to a clear understanding that the WGG was not, and should not be, a women's auxiliary.

The way McNaughton went about organizing the WGG, and its campaigns for suffrage and medical aid, reveal the features that became basic components of her agrarian feminism. Based on the co-operative ideals she brought from north Kent, and the agrarian co-operation the settlers in Hillview were using, her feminism always centred on the idea of co-operation. She developed an agrarian feminist approach to leadership and a basic strategy, using the idea that through co-operation and "united action" farm women could bring about more of the necessary changes for themselves and their families, than they could if they worked individually.

Because of her co-operative approach to leadership she moved slowly, co-operating and consulting with other members of the WGG at every step. She aimed high by sticking to this co-operative type of leadership even when dealing with an issue on which she and many of the grassroots members differed. Her approach to leadership was tested when she personally retained her pacifist convictions and at the same time worked co-operatively with WGG locals that chose to do patriotic work during the Great War.

Her co-operative ideals also led to her primary organizational strategy. She sought "ground for common action" among potential allies and then she and the WGG formed alliances, with individuals and groups, based on common integrative principles. Once an alliance had been forged, McNaughton and the WGG co-operated with their allies to reach the goals upon which they had agreed. Using this strategy she organized the WGG, by forming alliances with other farm women, feminist journalists, and radical men in the SGGA. "Coming together on common ground for common good" during the suffrage campaign she, and the other agrarian feminists in WGG, forged an alliance with radical men in the SGGA, with evangelical feminists in the WCTU, and equal rights feminists in the Political Equality Leagues. During the medical aid campaign they formed alliances with radical men in the SGGA, with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and with the Homemakers' Clubs. Through this

"united action" they made Saskatchewan the province that eventually made "medical aid within the reach of all" a reality.

McNaughton's co-workers in the WGG and their allies in the suffrage and medical aid campaigns were Euro-Canadians or immigrants from Britain, the United States and some Europeans mainly from northern Europe. In the period up to 1918, when the groups in the farm women's movement were getting established, McNaughton had broader ideas about the people who should be included in the agrarian community than many of her contemporaries. Her ideas were broad because she believed that the farm movement would be most effective if it was "unfettered by race or creed" and inclusive. Therefore even though they were lower in the agricultural hierarchy of power, unlike many of her contemporaries, she included hired women and hired men and all European settlers in her ideas about those who were a worthy a part of the agrarian community.

McNaughton usually questioned the ideas of the elites before she accepted them but ideas about prairie Indians were her blind spot. She accepted the dominant discourse that claimed that Indians were primitive people who were incapable of farming. Later she discarded these ideas, came to understand that Indians could be good farmers, and supported the Indian rights movement. However during the Great War and in the post-war period she condoned the idea



of pushing Indians to give up even more of their land.

The co-operative approach taken by McNaughton, the WGG, and the Homemakers in Saskatchewan was very effective.<sup>5</sup> They worked together for numerous reforms, including the campaign for "medical aid within the reach of all." More research needs to be done comparing the United Farm Women with the Women's Institutes in other provinces and at the national level. If the reductionist categories of feminism, which were popular among scholars in the 1980s, are examined carefully, we may find that Saskatchewan was not the only province in which women from the two major streams of the farm women's movement co-operated for the good of all farm people.

One of the problems with the past historical research comparing the WGG and the United Farm Women with the Homemakers and Women's Institutes is it focuses on the period immediately following the Great War when Canada polarized. The Grain Growers' Guide cartoon "Nothing working but the horn" captures the hysteria of the Red Scare and the polarization in this period. (See the cartoon in Appendix # IX.) The so-called antipathy between the farm women in the women's sections of the Grain Growers and the women in the Women's Institutes has been based on documents from the post-war period when feelings were running high. Although

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<sup>5</sup> Kerrie A. Strachey, "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes - The Rural Women's University," M.C.Ed. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987.

practical farm women like McNaughton tried to keep clear heads during the hysteria of post-war polarization and the Red Scare it was difficult to do so.<sup>5</sup> Some of them said things in this period that they would not ordinarily say. Therefore, more work needs to be done which includes earlier and later periods and more comparative works need to be done on the interaction between different groups in the farm women's movement in various provinces.

As the Great War came to an end, the problems caused by the War and the post-war depression made Canadian farm people increasingly restless and angry. The post-war unrest created an atmosphere for political, economic, and social change in which McNaughton was urged to expand her sphere of influence. Although she was reluctant to assume a national leadership role she was recognized across Canada as one of the country's most dynamic farm women. When the Great War came to an end McNaughton was called on to lead in the formation of a national farm women's group and to help to bring the Progressives to power in Ottawa.

McNaughton had been pushing herself mercilessly for too long. She did not like conflict and the mounting tension was too much for her. Early in 1919 she had what was then called

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<sup>5</sup> For a study of farm women in North Dakota and Red-Baiting see Kim E. Nielsen, "'We All Leaguers By Our House': Women, Suffrage, and Red-Baiting in the National Nonpartisan League," Journal of Women's History 6(1) (Spring 1994): 31-50.

"a nervous breakdown."<sup>7</sup> Apparently it was a period of what we now refer to as 'burn out.' She did not like moving too fast, but the post-war crisis in the agricultural political economy would not let her move slowly. Although her health was poor in 1919, she was soon back at work. That year the McNaughtons had a total crop failure.<sup>8</sup> In a by-election in October McNaughton, and the other Progressives who campaigned against W.R. Motherwell, the influential SGGA conservative, defeated him much to their delight.<sup>9</sup>

In July of 1919, McNaughton and other agrarian feminists organized the Inter-provincial Council of Farm Women (ICFW) made up of the WGG, the United Farm Women from Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario and the women's editor of The Grain Growers' Guide. As the women's editor of 'The Guide' put it "the big little woman in the farm organizations, of course, is Mrs. McNaughton." Because she was recognized as "the big little woman" in the farm movement she became president of the second national farm women's group to be established that year, the ICFW. The Federated Women's

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<sup>7</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(4), Assistant Provincial Secretary of the WGG to Mrs. Geo. Watt, 3 March 1919; McNaughton to Mrs. Walter Murray, 6 March 1919; A1 E92(3), McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Flatt, 1 May 1919; McNaughton to Mrs. Frith, 3 August 1919.

<sup>8</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to Mrs. C.E. Flatt, 22 July 1919; A1 E92(4), McNaughton to Annie Hollis, 21 August 1919.

<sup>9</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E38(1), McNaughton to Mrs. Jean Robson, 15 October 1919.

Institutes of Canada, which had many farm women as members, had come into being in February, with Emily Murphy of Edmonton as its president.<sup>10</sup> The second period of the farm women's movement in Canada had begun. McNaughton's work during the origins of the farm women's movement had made her the most influential farm woman in Canada.

In 1920 the ICFW became the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture (WS-CCA) with McNaughton as the president. McNaughton was active in both the WS-CCA and the general CCA.<sup>11</sup> The WS-CCA was "the national executive" of the mass provincial organizations and it was intended to deal with issues that had to be dealt with at a national level.<sup>12</sup> There were, McNaughton said, 20,000 farm women in the provincial farm organizations, 6,000 of them in Saskatchewan.<sup>13</sup> It was according to her "the great farm

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<sup>10</sup> Murphy was the president from 1919 to 1921. Elizabeth Rand, "Federated Women's Institutes of Canada," (Ottawa: Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, 1961, 3-5. Catherine C. Cole and Judy Larmour, unpublished manuscript, "Many and Remarkable: The Story of the Alberta Women's Institutes," Edmonton/Rimbey, February 1997, publication pending, 6-7, 35-36, 62, 83, 105-106, 157-158, 170, 190-192..

<sup>11</sup> Aileen Catherine Moffatt, "'where the emphasis on sex was less" - The Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Provincial Archives of Ontario, The Farmer's Sun 7 April 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(3), McNaughton to the Executive of the SGGA, 3 May 1919.

women's movement," an agrarian class-based women's group.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of the WS-CCA was, she said, to work "to put into effect the platform of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, otherwise called the New National Policy."<sup>15</sup>

McNaughton was critical of the first National Policy and she wanted a new one. She worked very hard for the WS-CCA, the CCA and the Progressives. She travelled around speaking and campaigning with Thomas Crerar, the leader of the federal Progressives.<sup>16</sup> McNaughton later recalled that in October 1919 she was at a Grain Growers' convention when the news arrived that the United Farmers in Ontario had won a landslide victory. She and the others at the convention "shouted" their "heads off with joy."<sup>17</sup> The voters sent 65 Progressive MPs to Ottawa in 1921, the first federal third party. McNaughton was disappointed when the Progressives in the House of Commons fell apart at the end of 1922. The CCA

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<sup>14</sup> Provincial Archives of Ontario, The Farmer's Sun, 7 April 1920. SAB, G125, McNaughton, "The Woman on the Farm," The Torch February 1923.

<sup>15</sup> Provincial Archives of Ontario, The Farmer's Sun, 7 April 1920.

<sup>16</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1, Irene Parlby to McNaughton, 7 August 1918, 23 November 1919; A1 E92(6), Annie Hollis to McNaughton, 11 September 1921; McNaughton to Donald MacLeod, 15 September 1921 and McNaughton to Mrs. Mary Falk, 24 September 1921.

<sup>17</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E88, McNaughton to J.T. Hull, 20 June 1944. McNaughton, who was pleased when a third party ousted a Conservative or Liberal government, told Hull that the 1944 landslide by the CCF took her back to the Ontario landslide.

withdrew its support from the Party. McNaughton wound up her activities at the national level, resigning as the President of the WS-CCA in 1923. The "Progressive outburst" had passed.<sup>13</sup> It was clear to her that westerners were not going to be able to push a new National Policy through Parliament and she was busy in Saskatchewan working to get a wheat pool established. From then on McNaughton focused on building institutions in the West that would help farm women and their families improve their daily lives and teach them how to be so effective economically, politically, and socially that they could have national influence. The historical literature on the farm movement in Saskatchewan has not recognized how important McNaughton and the WGG were in the establishment of the Wheat Pool and the restructuring of the farm movement in the mid-twenties. McNaughton, who had been active in the SGGA from 1911 onward, was a member of its Board of Directors in various capacities for ten years. She was elected to the Board of Directors as a director-at-large by the annual convention in 1922 and she was the first woman on the executive. During the Wheat Pool drive her power increased because many grassroots members, who were very enthusiastic about pooling, supported her. (See Appendix # 10 "Clearing the Way" for the feeling about pooling.) McNaughton, who had built a power base in the WGG

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<sup>13</sup> Ian MacPherson, "The Co-operative Movement on the Prairies, 1900-1955," (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1979, 8.

and among grassroots Grain Growers, was strong enough by the mid-twenties that she was one of the most powerful persons in the SGGG.<sup>19</sup> McNaughton, George Edwards, and Alexander MacPhail, the leaders of the SGGG Ginger Group, had ousted her long-time enemies, the SGGG conservatives. In order to support the drive for the Wheat Pool, McNaughton helped establish the paper that later was called The Western Producer. She was on the SGGG committee that helped to get the paper started.<sup>20</sup>

During the pool drive, a break-away group, the Farmers' Union of Canada, was the SGGG's socialist rival. A divided provincial farm movement was a travesty, as far McNaughton was concerned. The left-right spectrum in the farm movement shifted in the mid-1920s and McNaughton and others, such as Annie Hollis, McNaughton's long-time co-worker in the WGG, who had been considered SGGG radicals found themselves in the middle between the Farmers' Union and the SGGG as a whole.<sup>21</sup> McNaughton and Annie Hollis, were on the amalgamation committee that brought the two groups together in 1926. Because there was so much conflict in the committee between George Edwards of the SGGG and J.A. Stonemen of the

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<sup>19</sup> The Western Producer 2 February 1925.

<sup>20</sup> Garry Fairburn, From Prairie Roots: The Remarkable Story of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> The Western Producer 11 December 1924, 22 January 1925.

Farmers' Union, who were struggling for power in the new organization, McNaughton became the peacemaker who brought about the settlement that persuaded the men to be more reasonable.<sup>22</sup> The peace made it possible to create the new United Farmers of Canada - Saskatchewan Section (UFC).<sup>23</sup>

Hollis and McNaughton came up with a new arrangement for the participation of women. They wanted to do away with the WGG and have the women become part of the new mixed gender organization, the UFC.<sup>24</sup> They designed clauses for the new constitution with a co-presidency. There was a 'President,' who, in theory, could have been either a woman or a man, and a 'Woman President.'<sup>25</sup> In practice, until 1993, the president was always a man.<sup>26</sup> There were also two

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<sup>22</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E63, McNaughton to Colin Burnell, 7 February 1926; Burnell to McNaughton, 16 April 1926; McNaughton to W.M. Thrasher, July 1926; George Edwards to McNaughton, 17 April 1926; A1 53(2), Ida McNeal to McNaughton 2 June 1930; McNaughton to McNeal 10 June 1930. SAB, SGA Papers B2 V.2, Minutes of Joint Amalgamation Committee, 1 February 1926.

<sup>23</sup> For more details about McNaughton's part in the amalgamation see the correspondence in SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E63, and the letters between McNaughton and other members of the WGG, especially Annie Hollis, from 1924 to 1926 in A1 E93. The Hollis-McNaughton correspondence in these files also has details about the Wheat Pool drive.

<sup>24</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E92(8), Annie Hollis to McNaughton, 12 January 1926, 27 April 1926, 27 July 1926.

<sup>25</sup> For details about these clauses and the office of Woman President see the correspondence between Annie Hollis and Sophia Dixon in the Sophia Dixon Private Papers.

<sup>26</sup> In 1993 Nettie Wiebe was elected the President of the National Farmers' Union. Georgina M. Taylor, "Women have long NFU history," The Western Producer, 16 February 1993.



women directors on the Board of Directors of the UFC.<sup>27</sup> This basic structure endures to this day in the National Farmers' Union.<sup>28</sup> In other words, they had a form of affirmative action. Hollis became the first Woman President of the UFC and she and McNaughton worked together to help restructure the role of women. From 1926 until 1930 there was a United Farm Women's Section but it was gradually replaced with a yearly United Farm Women's Week at the University.<sup>29</sup> (See Appendix # III - Summary of the Achievements of the WGG and the United Farm Women to 1928.) From 1930 onward there was no Women's Section and, many Saskatchewan farm women belonged to both a local Homemakers' Club and to the UFC lodge because the UFC did not have local women's groups.<sup>30</sup> In 1925 McNaughton used her pen to try to persuade farm women to vote for the Progressives in the 1925 federal election. She was hoping the Progressives would hold onto as many of the seats as possible. Her "bald outline of the granting of the provincial suffrage" was

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The Star-Phoenix, 1 February 1995.

<sup>28</sup> Nettie Wiebe, Weaving New Ways (Saskatoon: National Farmers Union, 1987), 8-12.

<sup>29</sup> Annie Hollis, "Western Farm Women's Organizations," The Canadian Forum April 1930. A.L. Hollis, "Women's Organizations in Saskatchewan," Farm and Ranch Review 1 May 1930.

<sup>30</sup> Georgina M. Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?"

written as an election plea, that used historical obligations to the suffragists as an argument for voting. (See Appendix # V.) However the Progressives only won 24 seats. In 1925 she resigned from the Board of the SGGA. She began to edit the 'Mainly for Women' pages of The Western Producer on a voluntary part-time basis, writing them on her kitchen table on the farm. She and the WGG organized the Saskatchewan Egg and Poultry Pool, a producers' co-operative by women for women. Late in 1926, after the UFC came into being, McNaughton conducted the meeting that wound up the Hillview Grain Growers and she turned the reins over to her chosen son, John Hunter, who was renting the McNaughton farm and was to be active in the UFC Lodge in the Harris area until 1933. (See Appendix # II - The Meetings of the Hillview Grain Growers' Association.)

Violet became a farm woman who worked off the farm in December of 1926. With the farm rented to the Hunters, the McNaughtons moved into an apartment in Saskatoon. She became a full-time member of the editorial team of 'The Producer' and John, who was not well, alternated between Saskatoon and Vancouver Island, where he built a small cottage, and he did some writing. In 1929 Violet went to Europe to attend a conference of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Prague and to visit the League of Nations.

McNaughton continued to take an active interest in medical aid after the peak of the WGG medical aid campaign

in 1920.<sup>31</sup> Her last big push for medical aid, using an organization as a vehicle, came between 1927 and 1929, although she was to continue to promote medical aid as a journalist after 1929. She and John launched a campaign for the establishment of a consultative and diagnostic clinic with medical specialists in Saskatchewan in 1927. In the twenties both of them went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota because there were no medical specialists on the prairies.<sup>32</sup> The McNaughtons spurred the United Farmers of Canada to begin a campaign for the establishment of "a free consultative clinic" for western Canadians by the government of Saskatchewan.<sup>33</sup> The "main object of the clinic," the UFC

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<sup>31</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D62, McNaughton to Mrs. L.C. Shoebridge, 6 January 1937, 2 July 1937; The Western Producer 13 November 1924, 15 January 1925, 25 April 1925, 8 August 1929, 11 September 1930, 18 September 1930, 23 October 1930, 30 October 1930, 5 March 1931, 30 April 1931, 7 January 1932.

<sup>32</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E55, Mary McCallum to McNaughton, March 4, 1919; A1 D54(1) McNaughton to Irene Parlby 20 December 1919, Parlby to McNaughton, March 1920. There is no day on this letter but a notation by McNaughton says that she replied on March the 10th; A1 A1(1) John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 16 January 1920; A1 A1(2) John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, 3 May 1928, 7 May 1928, 21 May 1928, 26 May 1928. Leon L. Bram and Norma H. Dickey, eds. Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, vol. 17 (Clifton New Jersey: Funk and Wagnalls, Inc. 1992), 125.

<sup>33</sup> The Western Producer 7 November 1927, 23 August 1928. Vincent L. Matthews and Joan Feather, "Steps Along the Way - Evolution of Health Insurance in Saskatchewan," an unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, 1983, 10-11. The Western Producer 24 May 1928. This issue included the entire text of a presentation on a radio broadcast explaining the UFC proposal at length.

said, was to bring "the best medical skill within the reach of all."<sup>34</sup>

The Liberal government and Maurice Seymour, of the Department of Public Health, refused to take the idea seriously and instead pushed for a health district scheme, which would not include diagnostic and treatment services. Ignoring an earlier failure it established an experimental health district in the Gravelbourg area.<sup>35</sup> McNaughton pointed out that the health district, the first in the province, was going to "attempt to give public health services to people in eight municipalities." However she would not endorse the government's plans if it meant discarding the idea of a consultative clinic. Therefore she warned her readers that

this does not mean we should slacken our efforts to establish the consultative clinic. No local agency can perform the work of a thoroughly equipped clinic - anyone who has "cliniced" at the Mayo Brothers or say the London Hospital, England, will agree, but two systems could be well co-ordinated.<sup>36</sup>

A great believer in preventative health care, she went on to tell them that

we, each and everyone of us pay a considerable sum

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<sup>34</sup> SAB, pamphlet G 37.1, UFC(SS) Annual Convention Yearbook 1928.

<sup>35</sup> The Western Producer, 16 May 1929, 21 June 1928. Joan Feather, "From Concept to Reality: Formation of Swift Current Health Region," Prairie Forum 16(1) (Spring 1991): 60-62.

<sup>36</sup> The Western Producer 16 May 1929.

every year to help sick people get well so why not spend some of that money more wisely in keeping them well. Every man and woman individually and collectively may profitably follow the developments of the Gravelbourg Health District and try to determine whether this is the best scheme yet. If so, let's make it general as soon as possible.<sup>37</sup>

In other words she wanted farm women and their families to have a say in whether they needed, and wanted to help finance, a clinic, a health unit, or both. In 1932 the Gravelbourg Health district was terminated. It failed because, unlike McNaughton, most people did not understand the importance of preventive health care and because the local people were required to pay a much higher proportion of the cost than similar health units elsewhere in Canada. The government did not build the clinic that was first suggested by the McNaughtons. However as a result of their suggestion and the ensuing UFC campaign, in which farm women were active, there was a debate which helped to educate the public.<sup>38</sup>

In 1937, as a journalist, McNaughton conveyed the spirit of her on-going campaign for medical aid when she asked her readers why "any mother or babies" should

die in Saskatchewan for lack of adequate medical aid? If a criminal killed a mother in childbirth it would be headline news, and he would pay for his crime with his life. If the state allows any

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<sup>37</sup> The Western Producer 16 May 1929.

<sup>38</sup> SAB, pamphlet, G37.47, United Farmers of Canada, "Mainly for Women," ca. 1929, likely written by Annie Hollis. Matthews and Feather, "Steps Along the Way," 11.

needy mother to die for lack of Medical Care it is criminally responsible.

The Municipal Hospital and Doctor schemes already in operation in Western Canada are doing wonderful work and in many cases carrying on under tremendous handicaps, but there are still large areas without adequate medical aid.<sup>39</sup>

With persuasive advocacy such as this, and the dire conditions during the depression pushing them, more and more people in Saskatchewan were convinced that they needed to take "united action" and therefore the number of municipal doctors and union hospitals increased more quickly than they had before.<sup>40</sup> (See Appendix # VIII - Hospitals, Municipal Doctors & Births in Rural Saskatchewan.)

Women such as Sophia Dixon, Louise Lucas, and Beatrice Trew, who were active in the farm women's movement in Saskatchewan after the peak of McNaughton's campaign, built on the foundations laid by McNaughton and the other pioneers in the campaign for medical aid in Saskatchewan.<sup>41</sup> They took the campaign into the CCF, an agrarian socialist party elected in 1944. It was the first government to make a

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<sup>39</sup> The Western Producer 7 January 1937.

<sup>40</sup> For the positive response of one of McNaughton's readers, after having read McNaughton's call to action in on January the 7th, see The Western Producer 4 February 1937.

<sup>41</sup> Georgina M. Taylor, "Equals and Partners? An Examination of How Saskatchewan Women Reconciled Their Political Activities for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation with Traditional Roles for Women," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1983, 10-11, 38-42, 44-45, 47, 49-50, 163-164, 204.

commitment to implement comprehensive health care services.<sup>42</sup> By 1950 rural Saskatchewan had as many hospital services as the urban areas.<sup>43</sup> In the early sixties Saskatchewan was to be the only province in which numerous municipal doctors had been employed for decades.<sup>44</sup> (See Appendix # VIII - Hospitals, Municipal Doctors & Births in

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<sup>42</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview with T.C. Douglas, 15 June 1982. Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?" Joan Feather, "Horse-Trading and Health Insurance: Saskatchewan and Dominion-Provincial Relations, 1937-1947," Saskatchewan History 39(3) (Autumn 1986): 59-80. Feather, "The Impact of the of Swift Current Health Region," 225-248. Feather, "Horse-Trading and Health Insurance," 94-106. Edwin Tollefson, "The Medicare Dispute," in Politics in Saskatchewan, ed. Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills: Longman, 1968), 238-279. J.L. Granatstein, "Medicare: Saskatchewan Moves the Nation," chapter 7 in Canada 1957-1967 - The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 169-197.

<sup>43</sup> SAB, Co-operative Commonwealth Women Collection, R-5827 to R-5874, R-8130 to R-8166, taped interviews by Georgina M. Taylor. Many of the interviews in this collection mention McNaughton and all of them discuss the campaign for medical aid by CCF women. See in particular the interviews with Sophia Dixon, Edna Meakes, Eloise Metherall, Christine Nielsen, Gladys Strum, Margaret Thomas and Thora Wiggins. Stuart Houston points out that ironically the equal availability of hospital services came when the population of rural Saskatchewan went into a marked decline. C. Stuart Houston, "Dare Saskatchewan close its one-doctor hospitals?" Canadian Medical Association Journal 142(5) (1990): 467-8.

<sup>44</sup> There were a few municipal doctor programs in Alberta, Manitoba and later Newfoundland had some municipal doctors. Donald Kerr and Deryck W. Holdsworth eds. Historical Atlas of Canada - Volume III - Addressing the Twentieth Century - 1891-1961 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Plate 63 and p. 195. Bernard R. Blishen, Doctors and Doctrines - The Ideology of Medical Care in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 110-112. C. Rufus Rorem, The "Municipal Doctor" System in Rural Saskatchewan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 10-11.

Rural Saskatchewan.) McNaughton knew that the campaign for medical aid by the WGG had laid the foundations for the changes in the health care system the CCF made when it came to power. Eventually the earlier programs were one of the things that made it possible for the CCF to introduce medicare.<sup>45</sup>

Back in 1933, when the McNaughtons land had dried out and their renters left, John had returned to the farm and Violet visited him every other weekend in the summer and she went out to work during harvest or other busy times. In the winter John moved into the city or went to the coast. During the 1930s life was very difficult and they would have lost their land and been on relief if she had not had a job. One of the few bright spots was when Violet was given the Order of the British Empire in 1934 for her work in the farm movement and for rural women. Her work on the 'Mainly for Women' pages during the 1930s, is well portrayed by Christa Scowby. During McNaughton's years with the paper she

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<sup>45</sup> The Western Producer 29 May 1947. It was not until the 1970s that they had a full range of medical, nursing, dental and pharmacare services. From the '80s onward these services began to decline and rural people, including the women in the modern farm women's movement, began to fight to retain services. Interviews with Margaret Cline 25 March 1994; Noreen Johns 8 February 1994; Jill Turner 5 March 1994; Christine Banman 24 January 1994; Nettie Wiebe 9 March 1991, 18 February 1992, 28 May 1993; Ruby Miller 1 August 1995; the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes Executive: Kathleen Strangeland, Nina Burnell, Alison Wilson, Gwenyth Borsheim, Mary Eva, Katherine Anderson, Grace Attridge, Doreen Holden, Lorna Bartel, Doris Pattison, Yvonne Wildman, Colleen Soule, 12 January 1992.



continued to promote the farm women's movement, giving equal coverage to the Homemakers and the United Farm Women. On the pages, she continued her agrarian feminist focus on the three aspects of farm women's work, the productive, the reproductive, and the community work.<sup>46</sup> McNaughton continued to push numerous reforms and she continued to promote the political participation of women. She encouraged farm women to participate in reform parties, such as agrarian socialists like Sophia Dixon and Louise Lucas in the CCF and Dorise Neilsen, the Communist woman from northern Saskatchewan who was elected to the House of Commons in 1940 with the help of the McNaughtons.<sup>47</sup>

After the second World War rural society on the Canadian prairies passed

through what John Shover has termed for the United States "the great disjuncture" of rural life after 1945. "Scientific agriculture;" technological changes in tillage, harvesting, and transportation; integrated production systems; these and the enormous increase in capital investment that they required began to break farming communities up into individualistic, entrepreneurial societies in many ways indistinguishable

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<sup>46</sup> Christa L. Scowby, "'Divine Discontent': Women, Identity and The Western Producer," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996. See also Christa L. Scowby, "'I am a Worker, not a Drone': Farm Women, Reproductive Work and the Western Producer, 1930-1939," 3-15; Taylor, "Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?"

<sup>47</sup> For McNaughton's correspondence with Dixon, Lucas and Nielsen see SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D19, A1 D41, A1 D53. Taylor, "Equals and Partners?" Faith Johnston, "Dorise Nielsen, The Life and Ideas of a Canadian Woman in Politics," M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1989. Elaine Orvedahl Hamm, "The Ideas of Sophia Dixon," M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987.

from mainstream North American urban culture.<sup>48</sup> McNaughton, other farm women, and their families went through major adjustments during the great disjuncture. She retired at the end of 1950 but continued to write a column in 'The Producer' until 1960.<sup>49</sup> In 1944 the McNaughtons sold their two best quarters and at last were able to pay off their mortgages. In 1956, with prairie agriculture in the rapid transition of the great disjuncture, the McNaughtons rented their remaining land and in 1959, the year that Violet turned 80, they sold it.<sup>50</sup> (See Appendix # I - The McNaughton Farm.) In the years after they sold their

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<sup>48</sup> John Herd Thompson and Ian MacPherson, "'How You Gonna Get 'Em Back on the Farm': Writing the Rural/Agricultural History of the Prairie West," an unpublished paper presented at the 1987 Western Canadian Studies Conference in Saskatoon, 12. See also John Herd Thompson and Ian MacPherson, "The Business of Agriculture - Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of 'Business Methods,' 1880-1950," in The Prairie West - Historical Readings ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 476-477. See also John Shover, First Majority - Last Majority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), xiii-xiv. Royden K. Loewen, "Rurality, Ethnicity, and Gender Patterns of Cultural Continuity during the "Great Disjuncture" in the R.M. of Hanover, 1945-1961," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Ottawa 1993: 161-182.

<sup>49</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D1(5), McNaughton to Mrs. E. Burrows, 3 December 1951. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>50</sup> Saskatchewan Land Titles Office, Saskatchewan Certificate of Title # 9K54. Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "An Orderly Reconstruction: Agriculture in World War Two," in Canadian Papers in Rural History, ed. D.H. Akenson, (Gananoque Ontario: Langdale Press, 1984), 28. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

land, agriculture on the Canadian prairies continued to experience the changes of the great disjuncture. After John died in 1965 Violet had a difficult time but her young friends in the Canadian Women's Press Club looked out for her. When she died in 1968 they saw that she had a funeral that honoured a "small but mighty" champion of farm women, their families and other "plain common people" in Canada.<sup>51</sup>

After McNaughton died her social identity as a "small but mighty" champion took on a life of its own.<sup>52</sup> She had constructed this identity over the decades when she proudly told stories such as her story about the villagers in Kent calling her "the Little Welsh Cob." In Hillview she and John were identified as "the Pony Pair" by their neighbours.<sup>53</sup> In subsequent years her friends and co-workers were to dub her with such names as "the Mighty Mite" and "the Mighty Atom". Even as an elderly woman she was seen as a perky "Little Jenny Wren" with "a mighty spirit".<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> SPL-LHR, Saskatoon Canadian Women's Press Club scrapbook. Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991. Interview, Babs Hall, 18 October 1988.

<sup>52</sup> The Western Producer 8 February 1968.

<sup>53</sup> Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too: stories of notable western Canadian women (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975), 176.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Babs Hall, 18 October 1989. The term "Jenny Wren" comes from England where "Jenny" was used to indicate the female of a species. When applied to wrens it sometimes meant both male and female. The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1505.

When I interviewed people who had known McNaughton at some point many of them paused, smiled, and asked if I knew how small she was. They would laugh happily as they recalled that even though she was small, she was also a real fighter with great strength of character. Her identity as a small, but powerful champion was obviously one of the reasons they loved and admired her. Their repetition of the stories about her size and her fighting spirit are part of the continuing construction of her identity.

Rose (Ducie) Jardine, McNaughton's long-time assistant at 'The Producer,' her friend, and her confidant, was an exception. She knew McNaughton very well from the 1930s onward and she knew she was a complex woman with strengths and weaknesses. McNaughton had been very hard on Jardine, at times, but Jardine realized that McNaughton was regarded by many people as heroic. She was hesitant when I asked her for an interview because she wanted to tell the truth, as she saw it, and she did not want to disturb anyone who regarded McNaughton as heroic. Jardine's hesitation indicated that she was not sure that she wanted to contribute to the deconstruction of an identity treasured by many prairie people. McNaughton's identity as a small but powerful champion was effective because most people did not notice that they were embracing and ascribing a political identity. Jardine did notice what the others were doing and she

usually resisted it herself.<sup>55</sup>

The respect many of McNaughton's friends and co-workers had for her and the construction of her identity as a small but powerful champion, is very much in evidence in Grant MacEwan's chapter "Violet McNaughton: The Mighty Mite" in ...and mighty women too.<sup>56</sup> MacEwan knew McNaughton through his long association with The Western Producer, dating back to 1929 and he worked with her at 'The Producer' in the 1950s.<sup>57</sup> He did not do much research in preparation for his skimpy, inaccurate sketch of McNaughton's life, but his personal impressions of McNaughton are very revealing. His sketch of McNaughton is best viewed as a primary source, a reminiscence, rather than as a reliable secondary source. His intuitive grasp of the importance of her identity as a small champion is particularly revealing, because he does not recognize it as an ascribed political identity. He recalls that someone once said of her "she's little but she's wise; she's a terror for her size."<sup>58</sup> Although she was small he says,

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<sup>55</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>56</sup> MacEwan, ...and mighty women too, 175-180.

<sup>57</sup> R.H. Macdonald, Grant MacEwan: No Ordinary Man, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979), 97-188. Donna Von Hauff, Everyone's Grandfather: The Life and Times of Grant MacEwan (n.p. Grant MacEwan Community College Foundation / Quon Editions, 1994), 87-88.

<sup>58</sup> MacEwan, ...and mighty women too, 175-80.

it wasn't necessary to be big and muscular to be an effective fighter and crusader, and again and again this dedicated little woman, like a mounted knight pursuing dragons and tyrants, carried her campaigns on behalf of farm women out across the Prairies and beyond. [Emphasis mine.]<sup>59</sup>

Her pages in 'The Producer', he says, "bristled with vitality".<sup>60</sup> McNaughton obviously had impressed MacEwan as a small, energetic, brave champion, akin to the mythical heroes of old, who used her power to further the cause of farm women. He fully embraced her identity as a small champion and, in ascribing it, he took it to new romantic heights. She had become a Saint George of the prairies.<sup>61</sup>

MacEwan catches the spirit of a historically constructed political identity that had been ascribed decades before he knew McNaughton. It dated back to her feelings as a child who had stunted growth from rickets. In Canada she built on the personal identity she developed in north Kent, as a "plucky" active little Edwardian woman, to create a social identity as a small but powerful champion of people who were low in the hierarchies of power in her new

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>61</sup> Although they did not paint her as a St. George some of the accounts of McNaughton written in the 1970s did portray her as heroic. See Candace Savage, Foremothers: Personalities and Issues in the History of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon: printed privately, ca. 1975), 30-32; Lorna Rasmussen and others, A Harvest Yet to Reap (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), 9, 22, 89, 225. Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective, Herstory 1974 (Toronto: Women's Press, 1973), 102.

country. This is not to say that McNaughton was artificial, deceitful, or calculating. She was, however, a great admirer of women who had "pluck."<sup>62</sup> Therefore she was proud to tell stories such as the story she told, in 1929 in "The Producer," about the Borden Village School "from which I was expelled at the age of eleven, for my ability to lead boys twice my own size into mischief."<sup>63</sup> Stories like this were part of the on-going construction of her identity as a small leader of men and women.

At times, McNaughton played down the private doubts she had about her own strength, but she does not appear to have done this for self-glorification.<sup>64</sup> What she was doing, in effect, was giving farm women a model of female courage and leadership. She took her small stature, which could have been a liability, and built a positive political identity from it. McNaughton and those who knew, and admired, her made her small stature significant by repeatedly coupling it with her fighting spirit.

Grant MacEwan also touches on another attribute of her

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<sup>62</sup> McNaughton to Velma Sanders, October 5, 1937; May 5, 1940; and August 29, 1942, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D58. Three of the women that McNaughton admired because they had what she referred to as "pluck" and "spunk" were Zoa Haight, Dorise Nielsen, and Velma Sanders. See her correspondence with them, SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D24, D53 and D58.

<sup>63</sup> The Western Producer May 15, 1929.

<sup>64</sup> Many of her private doubts were expressed in her correspondence with her husband John. See SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 A1(1-19).

physical identity, her plain features. She also used her plainness for the benefit of farm women and as a political asset. In the 1970s he remembered McNaughton as,

a bright-eyed little lady, plainly dressed, often too busy to stop for dinner, making no effort to attract attention, but friendly and sympathetic and filled with that brand of determined resolve which kept Saskatchewan people on their homesteads though years of drought and adversity.<sup>55</sup>

In other words, McNaughton struck him as being like many other prairie farm women of her generation. McNaughton's political identity as a champion of the people could have set her apart from other farm women. One of the ways in which she dealt with this possibility was by balancing this political identity with her plain features and her simple manner of dress.

Her identity as a plain looking woman dated back to England where she grew up aware that she was not as pretty as her sister.<sup>56</sup> Like other turn-of-the-century feminists McNaughton did not want to support the fashion industry, and she deliberately dressed in a simple fashion.<sup>57</sup> She drew

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<sup>55</sup> MacEwan, ...mighty women too, 180.

<sup>56</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>57</sup> The Western Producer 12 June 1930. Christine Bolt, The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain from 1790s to the 1920s (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 173. Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond - The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman (New York: Penguin, 1990) 57, 59, 64, 285.



upon her plain features to construct an identity as a plain, unassuming, frugal, hard-working farm woman who aged naturally. This image suited her well because she really did not like spending money on new clothes or fussing with her appearance.<sup>68</sup> And there was the added bonus of appealing to the farm people of her day because, according to many of them, city women placed far too much emphasis on their appearance.<sup>69</sup> McNaughton's attitude toward her appearance showed when Annie Hollis wrote her to say she had seen McNaughton's picture in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix.<sup>70</sup> Hollis wondered why McNaughton looked ten years older than she had when they met shortly before.<sup>71</sup> McNaughton replied,

yes the picture looks a little older than my former one but I am so tired of seeing the way city women fake up to get a picture that is at least ten years younger than themselves that I don't really mind. As a matter of fact the picture is the result of some re-making. The photographer took out all kinds of lines and I objected so he undertook to put them back and the result was not quite satisfactory but it did not show until the cut was made. I am hoping people may think it is an oil painting that is being photographed.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection, taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

<sup>69</sup> The Western Producer June 12, 1930.

<sup>70</sup> Saskatoon Star Phoenix February 19, 1938.

<sup>71</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D27, Annie Hollis to McNaughton, 3 March 1938.

<sup>72</sup> SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 D27, McNaughton to Annie Hollis, March 8, 1938.

This reply also illustrates McNaughton's attitude toward city women. She saw them as contriving an artificial appearance that disguised their real age. In her day this attitude, which was common among country people, marked her as a down-to-earth farm woman. By balancing her small stature with her plain features McNaughton was able to use two aspects of her physical identity to champion farm women and their families and at the same time to remain a down-to-earth farm woman who was part of the agrarian community. McNaughton's construction of an identity as a "small but mighty" champion and as a down-to-earth farm women was part of her ability to use her agrarian feminist convictions to further the cause of farm women.

Violet McNaughton made a significant contribution to the farm women's movement in Canada in the period up to 1918, while the groups in the two streams of the movement were getting established. She did so by acting upon her co-operative agrarian feminist convictions. In subsequent decades she worked to maintain and extend the movement using the qualities of "zeal, tact, and tolerance" and by encouraging them in others.<sup>73</sup> McNaughton's impact on the origins of the movement was rooted in her work as a farm woman, in her ability to find "ground for common action," and her ability to convince other farm women and their allies to come "together on common ground for common good."

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<sup>73</sup> The Western Producer, 29 July 1926.

**APPENDIX #1**  
**THE MCNAUGHTON FARM**

Land Description	Acquired	Mortgages	Rented or Sold	Buildings	Soil and Use
SW-23-13-W3 John's Homestead 162 Acres	October, 1903	5 April 1909 for \$600.00 Discharged 13 February 1913 2 January 1917 Lien \$304.50 Discharged 17 October 1917 13 January 1913 for \$1,600.00 Discharged 14 November 1917 26 March 1926 for \$2,000.00 Discharged 20 November 1944	Sold to Toth in January of 1945	Sod house with extensions and original farm buildings.  John lived here full-time in 1905-1906 & 1908-10. John here 6 months both in 1907 & 1908.  John and Violet lived here from 1910 to 1924.	Good Brown Soil  Broken and Cropped  This quarter and Millie's quarter given the highest land assessment in Hillview.
SW-23-13-W3 Brother William's Homestead 1905 162 Acres	Inherited in 1906 when William died.	22 June 1910 for \$1000.00 Discharged 6 December 1926	Sold to Toth in January of 1945	Sod house & stable. John here 6 months/year 1907 & 1908.	Good Brown Soil Broken and Cropped
SE-34-32-13-W3 John's Pre-emption 162 Acres	May, 1910		Rented 1956 & sold Dec. 1959 to Longworth		Poor sandy soil. Some broken initially. Later was pasture. Meandering creek in most of quarter.
SW-33-32-13-W3 Purchased 162 Acres	March, 1923	26 March 1926 for \$2,000.00 Discharged 19 November 1944	Rented 1956 & sold Dec. 1959 to Longworth	Wooden frame house built 1924. Farm buildings.	3/4 good brown soil 1/4 poor sandy soil All broken initially Later: 3/4 cropped and 1/4 pasture.
NE-34-32-13-W3 Purchased 162 Acres	May, 1929		Rented 1956 & sold Dec. 1959 to Longworth		Poor sandy soil. Some initially broken and cropped. Later pasture

## APPENDIX # II

## THE MEETINGS OF THE HILLVIEW GRAIN GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

## GETTING STARTED {14 MEETINGS}

- 1910: 24 December; 31 December<sup>1</sup> {2}
- 1911: 7 January, 21 January, 4 February, 15 February, {12}  
18 February, 1 March, 4 March, 8 March, 17 March,  
18 March, 1 April, 8 July

## THE FIRST SURGE {85 meetings}

- 1912: 27 January, 3 February, 10 February, 17 February, {16}  
16 March, 30 March, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June,  
29 June, 27 July, 10 August, 28 September,  
26 October, 30 November, 20 December
- 1913: 4 January, 11 January, 20 January, 25 January, {21}  
8 February, n.d. February, 22 February, 8 March,  
22 March, 12 April, 26 April, 24 May, 21 June,  
19 July, 16 August, 11 October, 25 October,  
15 November, 29 November, 13 December, 27 December
- 1914: 10 January, 24 January, 7 February, 21 February, {19}  
7 March, 21 March, 4 April, 18 April, 2 May,  
23 May, 13 June, 27 June, 25 July, 13 October,  
31 October, 23 November, 2 December, 12 December,  
21 December
- 1915: 2 January, 16 January, 30 January, 20 February, {23}  
6 March, 20 March, 3 April, 27 November,  
29 November, 11 December, 27 December,  
31 December
- 1916: 22 January, 4 February, 26 February, 4 March, {6}  
18 March, 1 April

## THE FIRST PERIOD IN THE DOLDRUMS {6 meetings}

- 1917: 6 January, 8 February, 2 March, 23 March {4}

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<sup>1</sup> The Farmers' "Seige on Ottawa" on the 15th and 16th of December 1910, in which 800 farmers met and presented the "Farmer's Platform" to Prime Minister Laurier and his cabinet. C.F. Wilson, A Century of Canadian Grain (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978), 42.

1918: 4 February, 6 April {2}

THE SECOND SURGE {61 meetings}

1919: 25 January, 31 January, 31 May, 21 June, 5 July, {10}  
19 July, 30 August, 4 October, 1 November,  
20 December

1920: 10 January, 24 January, 27 January, 6 February, {12}  
13 March, 27 March, 30 June, 30 July, 3 December,  
11 December, 17 December, 29 December

1921: 3 January, 8 January, 17 January, 28 January, {12}  
7 February, 19 February, 8 November, 26 November,  
3 December, 10 December, 16 December, 30 December

1922: 4 January, 13 January, 27 January, 10 February, {21}  
24 February, 3 March, 17 March, 21 March,  
24 March, 7 April, 14 April, 5 May, 2 June,  
30 June, 4 August, 6 October, 20 October,  
10 November, 17 November, 1 December, 15 December

1923: 5 January, 9 February, 16 February, 2 March, {5}  
6 April

THE SECOND PERIOD IN THE DOLDRUMS {11 meetings}

1924: 28 February, 8 March, 30 May, 27 June, 18 July {5}

1925: No meetings

1926: 18 January, 19 March, 2 April, 25 June, {6}  
3 August, 20 November.

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Source: SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E24(1), Minute Book  
Hillview GGA, from 24 December 1910 to 10 January  
1914. Harris Museum, Minute Book Hillview GGA, from  
24 January 1914 to 20 November 1926.

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<sup>2</sup> The Amalgamation Convention in July 1926 brought together the SGGG and the Farmers' Union together to form the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section).

## Appendix # III

SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WGG AND THE UNITED FARM  
WOMEN TO 1928

## "Why Women Organize

Has the co-operation of women in the organized farm movement been justified by the results obtained? Let us see.

Since the Women's Section of the movement was organized in the year 1914, it has:

- (1) Secured the Provincial franchise for women.
- (2) Secured the establishment of Travelling Libraries.
- (3) Carried on much investigational work re Home Economics. Proposals are at present under consideration with a view to the appointment of a specialist in Home Economics in the Department of Education and to making the subject compulsory for the insurance of a teacher's certificate.
- (4) Undertaken much investigational work re District Nurses and Medical and Hospital accommodation.
- (5) Secured the publication of the booklet "Laws Affecting Women and Children."
- (6) Secured the Dominion franchise for women and the Laurier Referendum of 1916.
- (7) Raised around \$150,000 for Patriotic and Relief Work, in addition to what has been done locally.
- (8) Secured the passage of the Dower Law, which requires the signature of a wife before the husband can dispose of the homestead.
- (9) Obtained the concession of the Open Shelf Library.
- (10) Secured the establishment of the Teachers' Bureau.
- (11) Secured the establishment of a women's department in the Bureau of Labor.
- (12) Secured a constitution for a Junior Organization in 1917.
- (13) Assisted in the building of Community Halls, the establishment of Rest Rooms, and in securing the appointment of District Nurses.
- (14) Co-operated with Dr. J.M.T. Anderson re the Canadianizing of the non-English.
- (15) Secured the formation of the Canadian Council of Immigration for Women for Household Service.
- (16) Co-operated in the formation of a National Council of Education in 1919.
- (17) Co-operated with the Bureau of Public Health re lectures on Home Nursing, and short courses for Nurses' Aids, in 1919.
- (18) Assisted in the formation of a Federal Bureau of Health in 1919.
- (19) Assisted in securing a survey of abnormal mental

conditions in Canada in 1920.

(20) Presented to the Red Cross Society, a six cylinder, seven passenger McLaughlin car, at a cost of \$2,175, in 1920 for the use of sick and disabled soldiers.

(21) Assisted in securing Mothers' Pensions.

(22) Secured a Public Speaking Course for women at the University of Saskatchewan, and a Short Course for Rural Girls at Regina College, in 1922.

(23) Took up the question of the marketing of the by-products of the farm in 1922.

(24) Recommended the raising of the marriage age of girls to 16, in 1923.

(25) Opposed military training in schools; cadet training to be replaced by physical training for both boys and girls.

(26) Demanded the examination of all immigrants by mental experts at point of embarkation instead of the place of landing.

(27) Secured compulsory provisions for grading and marketing of eggs in 1923.

(28) Co-operated with the Anti-Tuberculosis Society in 1923 for the care of tubercular mothers.

(29) Agitated for the personal naturalization of women, and for the retention of British nationality by British women who marry foreigners. Personal naturalization of unmarried women, widows and divorced women has now been secured.

(30) Organized a relief fund in 1924, with the support of the Regina Leader and Post, when approximately 16 tons of clothing was supplied to about 2,600 persons in the province.

(31) Secured the equalization of the Divorce Laws as between women and men in 1925.

(32) Agitated for training courses for teachers.

(33) Urged the establishment of larger school units.

(34) Agitated for the appointment of the Official Guardian as an official of the government. The advisability of this step is now under investigation by the Government.

(35) Secured the establishment of the Egg and Poultry Pool.

(36) Carried on an agitation for the reduction in the cost of the administration of small estates, and a reduction in Succession Duties. Estates passing to near relatives are now exempt up to \$15,000.00.

(37) Advocated the Joint Ownership of property by husband and wife, which saves trouble, delay and expense in Probate Fees.

(38) Co-operated with the general section of the U.F.C. in the endeavour to have a Free Clinic established by the Provincial Government.

(39) Carried on much investigational and educational work re Legislation, Education, Marketing, Public Health and

other subjects.

(40) Secured an amendment to the Homestead Act in 1927, which requires a wife's signature before land can be sold which has at any time been the homestead.

(41) Arranged with the University of Saskatchewan for a Farm Women's Week in 1928.

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Source: The United Farmers' page of The Western Producer 31 May 1928.



## APPENDIX # IV

"SPEAK!"



Source: Grain Growers' Guide, 26 February 1913.

## APPENDIX # V

VIOLET McNAUGHTON'S 1925 CHARGE TO WOMEN VOTERS AND HER  
"BALD OUTLINE OF THE GRANTING OF THE PROVINCIAL SUFFRAGE"

"COMMENT

- By V.M. -

## USE YOUR VOTE

Of course every reader of The Western Producer who is qualified , intends to get out and vote on June 2, and to help his or her neighbours to do the same. The issues may not interest us very particularly nor the candidates either, but that is beside the point. As citizens we have a serious obligation to discharge on polling day. We did not just 'happen' to become citizens. Our citizenship was won for us by life-long efforts, in some cases by suffering and martyrdom.

## PIONEERS IN THE STRUGGLE

The story for the struggle for equal rights is an absorbing one. Ever since creation women have been an influence in politics, but until recently it was an indirect personal influence. It is said that Eve won the first political debate when she persuaded Adam to partake of the apple.

Space does not allow one to more than name a few of the outstanding women who were pioneers in the fight for woman suffrage - woman such as Anne Hutchinson, Mary Dyer, Francis B. Willard, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Ward Howe, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Mrs. Stuart Mill; or of women of a more recent period, such as Jane Addams, Carrie Chapman Catt, Mrs. Raymond Robbins, Mary Fels, Senator Helen Ring Robinson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the Pankhurst family, Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence, Mrs. Philip Snowden, Red Rosa of Luxemburg, [sic] and others whose names are generally familiar.

\* \* \*

## FRANCHISE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Coming down to the immediate story of our Saskatchewan franchise, it might be interesting to review the events that led to our becoming citizens of this fair province.

It was in 1911 that the question took root in Saskatchewan following a visit to the Province by Miss

Barbara Wylie, a well known English suffragette. [Sic. It was in 1912.] The WETU [sic - WCTU] was the pioneer organization that put a great deal of effort into propoganda for the cause, but as far as farm women were concerned there were two outstanding women who did a great deal of work arousing interest in the question. Hundreds of readers will remember with affection Mrs. A.V. Thomas (better known as Lilian [sic] Laurie) and Francis Beynon, not only as suffrage workers but as promoters of the rural club movement. Will the names of these two sisters be found in the history of women's activities in Saskatchewan. The greatest compliment that can be paid to them is to say that they were two of the most *understanding* women we ever knew.

\* \* \*

#### ORGANIZED EFFORT

Following this preliminary work, the Women Grain Growers concentrated their efforts from 1913 to 1915 on a suffrage campaign, doing both educational and practical work, while various political leagues and the WCTU worked amongst the city and town women. In February 1915, these various bodies, at the suggestion of the WGGGA, formed the Provincial Equal Suffrage Board, a board composed of representatives from the Political Equality Leagues, WGGGA and WCTU.

This board was an unqualified success, both as to the complete harmony which prevailed amongst the representatives, and to the increased effectiveness of united action.

The Political Equal Franchise Board presented petitions to the Saskatchewan government, but were told that these petitions were not sufficiently representative. However, in February 1916, a large delegation, organized by the PFEB, and headed by Mrs. F. W. Lawton of Yorkton the president of the Board, waited on the government in the assembly chamber. A petition containing 10,000 names was presented, 11,000 names already being on file with the government.

\* \* \*

#### PREMIER SCOTT PROMISES

It was an interesting occasion, an historic occasion one might say. The large number of Saskatchewan's best known women, a fair sprinkling of men, including representatives of the Trades and Labor Council. The comfortable and well appointed assembly chamber; the attendance of most of the ministers and members; the crowded galleries of the house; and one must mention the venerable

Sargeant-at-Arms, who seated the delegation in the 'Seats of the Mighty.'

After the various speakers on behalf of the delegation had made representation, Premier Scott replied to the effect that he was enjoying the unique experience of being able, after listening to the delegation, to say 'yes' to their request, and that before the session closed the franchise law would be changed to make it an equal right and privilege and responsibility to every adult in the province on the same terms.

Such is the bald outline of the granting of the provincial franchise. But back of this outline was perhaps the greatest work of all.

\* \* \*

#### THE PETITIONERS

I allude to the tiring and difficult work performed by the public spirited women who circulated those petitions. Telephones were not in such general use as now, neither were automobiles. It was very slow work, handicapped as it was with a good deal of prejudice and apathy, and without material reward.

How many readers of The Western Producers [sic] are amongst the 21,000 'petitioners who ever pray' whose names are on file in the government archives in Regina?

"For Home and Country" let us get busy and see that a record [vote is] polled on June 2 next. - V.M. "

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Source: The Western Producer 28 May 1925.

APPENDIX # VI

"BOOZE"




Source: Grain Growers' Guide, 26 May 1915.

## APPENDIX # VII

## "MEDICAL AID WITHIN REACH OF ALL"

*Medical Aid*  
within  
*Reach of All*



—by—  
MRS. JOHN McNAUGHTAN  
—WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY  
—OUR COMMONS APPROVED

**Where You Live is Urgent Need  
of Medical Aid?****Some Reasons Why this Question  
Should be Dealt With at Once****Answer**

Statistics show that infant mortality in Saskatchewan is twice as high as it would be. (Saskatchewan has no towns with their squares and fifty no underground buildings there is very little industrial employment of women—conditions which contribute to infant mortality. The chief cause is lack of proper sanitation during pregnancy.)

**Answer**

Hospital statistics of 1914 show that one woman in every three in Saskatchewan is mortally injured or maimed through lack of medical attention.

**Answer**

Wherever medical inspection has taken place in schools, a large percentage of children improved show the need of immediate treatment at the local hospital.

**Answer**

We agree with the government and insurance who claim that the present cost of the war is more population. (We can pay our own population, were the means provided to take care of what we have.)

**Why Do We Object to the Hospital Tax?****Reply**

We pay taxes for the free education of our children. (In 1914 the average cost per capita for educating the fam-

ily in Saskatchewan rural school child was \$59.22. What cost was spent per capita in saving or compensating to over the 1617 children (small) who died that year?)

**Reply**

We pay taxes for the equipment of road inspectors as well as what we already have.

**Reply**

We pay taxes to help on the construction of pipelines and other plans.

**Reply**

We pay taxes for the upkeep of our roads. (To better the road conditions in our municipality, the same action to help keep the roads in repair.)

**Why Do We Object to Pay a Hospital Tax?****Reply**

We pay indirect taxes in subsidies (to the extent of millions of dollars) railways, corporations, etc., grant special privileges to other insurance and allow governments to profit, waste and consume our money right royally, and we never register a complaint.

It is fair to the women and children, the sick and the needy to do all these things and others to do our part in helping to be able to have Saskatchewan as the Province which plans Medical Aid within reach of all.

SOURCE: SPL-LHR, documents, Violet McNaughton Papers, LH 2115, pamphlet, Violet McNaughton, "Medical Aid within Reach of All," [September, 1916]. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 I9, McNaughton, "Our Welfare Page," The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 23 September 1916.

APPENDIX # VIII  
HOSPITALS, MUNICIPAL DOCTORS, & BIRTHS IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN

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UNION HOSPITALS IN SASKATCHEWAN

1918	8 union hospitals with 34% of the hospital beds in the province they served 89% of the population
1920	10 union hospitals in operation: Davidson, Edam, Eston, Kerrobert, Kindersley, Lloydminster, Lampman, Rosetown, Shaunavon, Wadena 2 more almost completed 20 other hospital districts had machinery set in motion for establishment of a union hospital
1928	17 union hospitals with 410 beds in total
1950	99 union hospitals provided 30% of the hospital beds & served 1/3 of the province's population

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SMALL HOSPITALS AND MATERNITY CARE

YEAR CASES	HOSPITALS	PATIENTS	BEDS	MATERNITY
1916	28	18,043	1,438	1,6804
1917	34	23,098	1,680	2,451

---

BIRTHS AND HOSPITAL CARE IN SASKATCHEWAN

YEAR	PROPORTION OF HOSPITAL BIRTHS
1915	1 out of every 13 had hospital care
1916	1 " " " 11 " " "
1917	1 " " " 8 " " "
1929	1 " " " 4 born in state-aided hospital

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MUNICIPAL DOCTORS

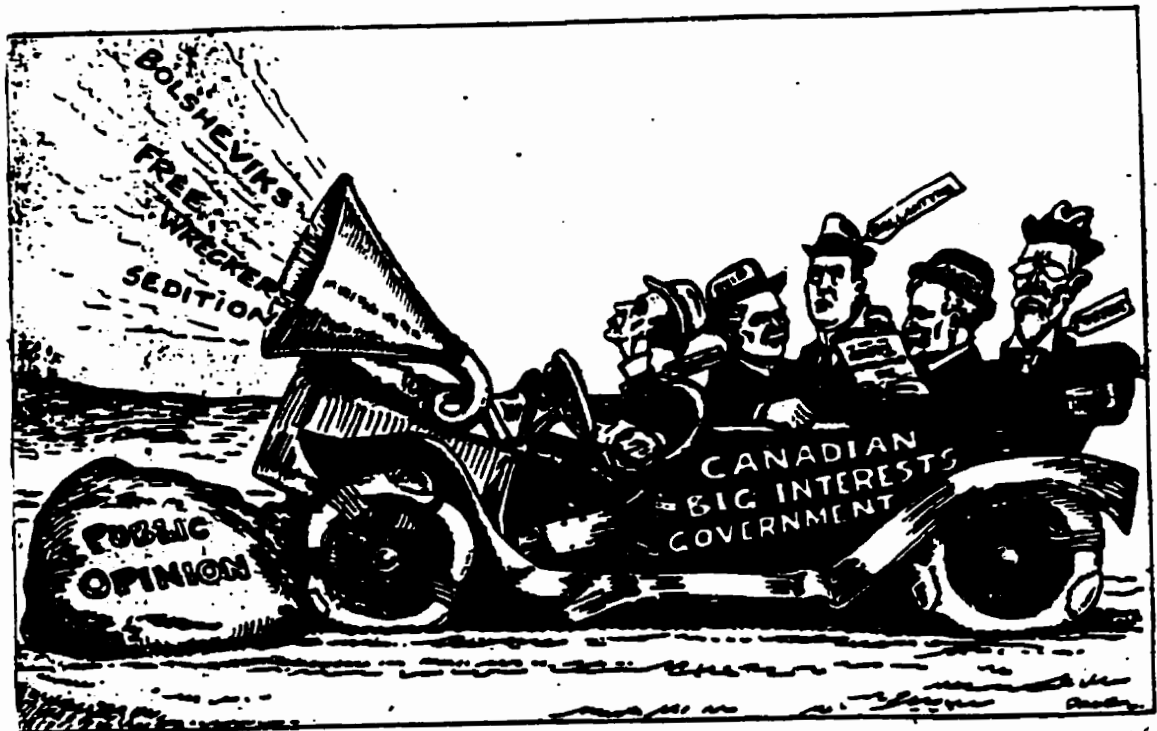
1927	12 municipalities had municipal doctors
1929	26 " " " " "
1933	45 " " " " "
1950	173 " " " " "

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Source: SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E10, Irene Parlby, "Public Health," a report for the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1920. SAB, McNaughton Papers A1 E27, F.C. Middleton (the Deputy Minister of Health, Saskatchewan), "The Municipal Doctor Scheme in Saskatchewan," 1933. Saskatchewan Bureau of Health Annual Report, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1928. C. Rufus Rorem, The "Municipal Doctor" System in Rural Saskatchewan Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 25.

APPENDIX # IX

"NOTHING WORKING BUT THE HORN"



Nothing Working but the Horn

Source: Grain Growers' Guide, 22 December 1920.



APPENDIX # X

"CLEARING THE RIGHT OF WAY"



Clearing the Right of Way

Source: Grain Growers' Guide, 12 January 1921.

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United Farmers of Manitoba Papers

Rural Municipality of Marriott  
Map of the Rural Municipality of Marriott No. 317,  
w. of 3rd

Saskatchewan Archives Board:

Haight Papers  
McNaughton Papers  
Scott Papers  
SGGA Papers  
Effie Laurie Storer  
Photograph Collection  
Pamphlet Collection  
Mrs. Mabel Wilson Hawthorne. "My Reminiscence of Fifty  
Years of Prairie Life."  
Call Number: R-E 2991

Co-operative Commonwealth Women Collection  
Interviewer: Georgina Taylor  
Call Numbers: R-5827 to R-5874; R-8130 to R-8166.  
There are 32 interviews in this collection. See the  
interviews with Margaret Benson, Pearl Buchanan, Sophia  
Dixon, Elsie Gorius, Elsie Hart, Rose Jardine,  
Winnifred Lee, Bertha Loehr, Edna Meakes, Eloise  
Metheral, Eline Morrow, Betsy Naylor, Christine  
Nielsen, I.C. Nollet, Gladys Strum, Margaret Thomas,  
Olive Wells, Thora Wiggins, Margery Williams.

Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room:  
Violet McNaughton Papers  
Document Collection  
Pamphlet Collection  
Photograph Collection

Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective Files

University of Saskatchewan Archives:  
Saskatchewan Homemakers' Club and the Saskatchewan  
Women's Institute Papers

#### IV Private Collections

Christine Banman Private Papers

Sophia Dixon Private Papers

Peter Holdstock Private Papers

Rose Jardine Private Papers

J.R. Ritchie Private Papers

Georgina M. Taylor Private Collection:

Documents

Taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with Rose (Ducie) Jardine, July 1991.

Taped interview by Georgina M. Taylor with T.C. Douglas, 15 June 1982.

## VI. Interviews

Adams, Anne	17 March 1993
Adams, Nancy	10 August 1991; 11 October 1989
Allen, Alice	28 October 1989
Anderson Carol	11 March 1992
Anderson, Maureen	11 March 1992
Atamanenko, Luba	22 March 1995
Banman, Chris	24 January 1994
Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan Women's Institute	12 January 1992
Bocking, Doug	28 November 1989
Buckert, Char	15 November 1991
Burlingham, Rand	17 July 1989
Butala, Sharon	4 February 1994
Campbell, Allan & Violet	17 October 1991
Chizek, Elizabeth	18 January 1993
Clayton, Sam O.	17 October 1991
Cline, Margaret	25 March 1994
Coburn, Frank	24 January 1990
Dallas, Zoe	10 July 1989; 30 November 1993
Delaney, Liz	30 January 1994; 25 March 1994
de Moissac, Marybeth	30 September 1991
Dixon, Sophia	16-17 April 1988; 22 July 1989; 30 July 1989; 25 February 1991; 7 March 1991; 27 March 1991; 20 April 1991; 20 August 1990; 24 August 1990; 30 December 1991; 10 June 1992; 24 June 1992; 1 March 1993
Dryden, Keith	25 October 1989; 1 November 1989; 28 November 1989; March 14 1990; 12 April 1990; January 1993; 30 November 1993; 22 October 1995
Ducie, Emma	July 1991
Ducie, Rose	July 1991
Dudderidge, Renee	December 1993
Eamer, Arlene	17 March 1993

Ferguson, Judy	25 November 1993
Gabert, Ernest	6 November 1992
Garner, Alf	22 June 1994
Gregory, William David	21 June 1994
Guild, Betty	30 November 1993
Hall, Babs	18 October 1989; 3 November 1989; 7 November 1991
Hearn, Mrs. F.D.	30 November 1993
Herman, Deanna	25 November 1993
Holdstock, Peter	16 December 1991; 29 June 1992
Howard, Stan	17 May 1992
Irvine, May	21 June 1991
Johns, Noreen	8 February 1994
Kaiser, Jim	20 September 1991
Lake, Wanda	2 May 1994
Longworth, Nora	13 June 1992
Longworth, Clarence & Margaret	20 August 1989
Longworth, Margaret	20 September 1991
Lund, Margaret	6 September 1989
Matthewson, Lena	3 December 1992
McNaughton, Janet	13 January 1993
Merritt, Alva & Victor	20 August 1989
Miller, Ruby	30 September 1991; 1 August 1995
Millhouse, Rosemary	27 October 1989
Morton, Jenny	25 November 1993
Nichnolodoff, Olive	28 March 1995
Nielsen, Christine	5 June 1996
Oddie, Emmie	27 October 1992
Olson, Calla	2 October 1994
Page, Ivy	20 August 1989; 21 July 1994
Peat, Elsie	17 May 1992
Rose, Gladys	4 November 1992
Silverside, Gordon & Alice	4 November 1992
Shein, Elaine	25 November 1993
Tosh, Margaret & George	20 August 1989; 30 September 1991; 29 May 1992; 26 May 1994; 23 July 1995; 19 June 1996; 4 July 1996
Trask, Pat & Neil	16 July 1989
Turner, Jill	5 March 1994
Tyson, Joe & Mary	5 October 1990
Watson, Ruth	19 October 1995
Wenhardt, Jean	4 November 1992
Wiebe, Nettie	9 March 1991; 18 February 1992; 28 March 1993; 15 March 1994
Wolfe, Vera-Marie	6 December 1992
Wladyka, Margaret	30 September 1991
Zirkwitz, Cynthia	October 1991



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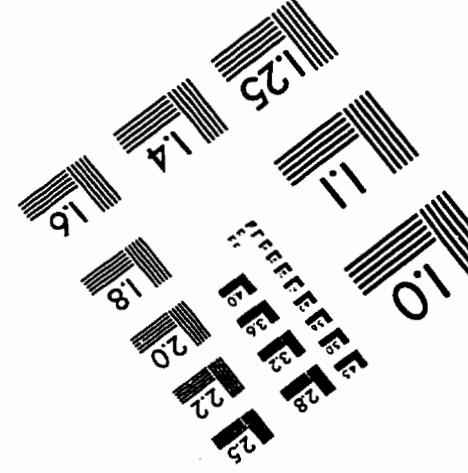
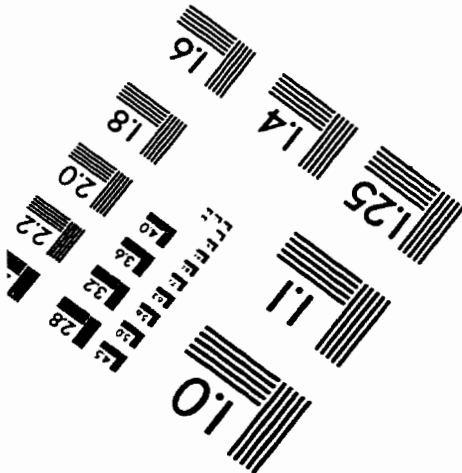
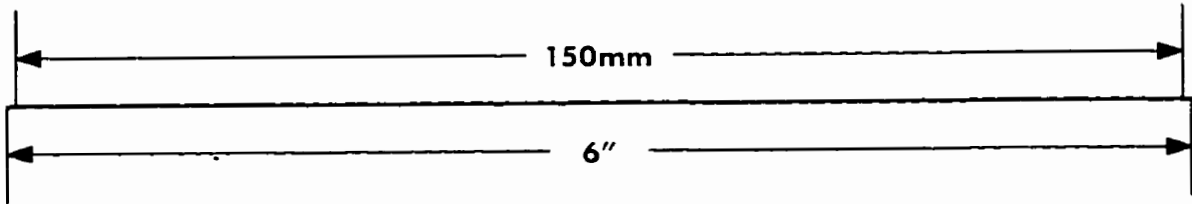
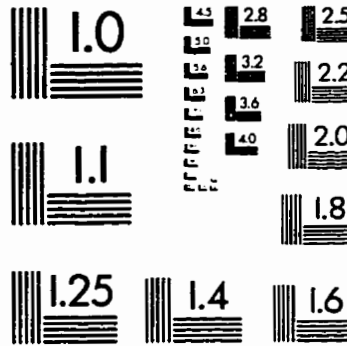
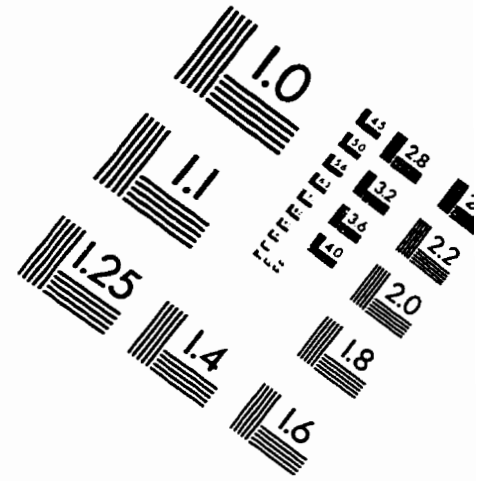
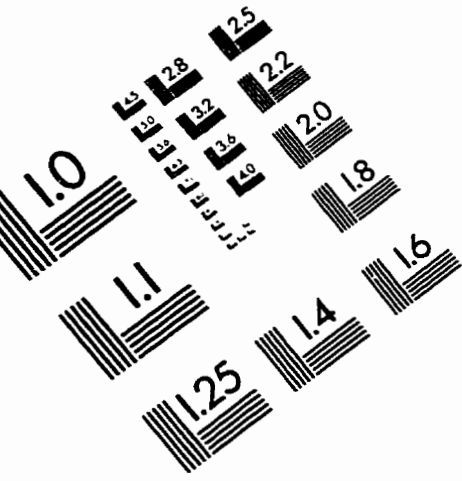
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