

## The New Democratic Party of Canada

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY of Canada is less than a year old. It had its formal birth last July in Canada's capital city of Ottawa.

Such a significant political event was of course not without its antecedents. Since the turn of the century socialist groups have been active in Canada. Indeed, in our western-most province of British Columbia a full-blown socialist party was developed in the 90's.

Labor, too, had dabbled politically. Sixty years ago a trade union MP was elected to the Canadian parliament and several provincial members of legislatures were elected from industrial areas.

The post World War I period saw a wave of agrarian radicalism sweep across the nation. In Alberta and in Ontario farmers' governments were elected, in the latter case with labor's participation. In the mid-twenties the Progressive Party won sixty seats and held the balance of power in Canada's 245 seat parliament.

The Progressive Party suffered from the lack of any coherent philosophy. Its members of parliament were gradually seduced by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, a wily politician who knew well the threat to his Liberal Party from a growing third force.

By the mid-thirties only a handful of Progressives were left. They were the genuine socialists and were among the true founders of Canada's first democratic socialist party, the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), born in 1932.

In the meantime, the trade union movement was divided in its political approach. The former Canadian Congress of Labor, counterpart of the American CIO, was politically radical from its inception. In 1942 it endorsed the CCF as labor's political arm. The former Trades and Labor Congress, counterpart of the American Federation of Labor, shunned political action in the tradition of Samuel Gompers. This ambivalence typified the contradictory influence in Canada of the British and American traditions.

Following the merger in 1956 into the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), trade unionists debated for two years the question of labor's political approach. By 1958 those who favored direct political action had won. Among the key arguments was the very convincing one that the Gompers approach was really meaningless in a nation with a parliamentary system of government. Under cabinet government with rigorous party discipline, rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies makes little sense. For the friends and enemies are not individuals but political parties to the philosophies of which the individual party representative has to adhere.

At its convention in 1958 the CLC decided that the only political friend on which it could depend would be its own political party. Thus, that convention called for "the need of a broadly based people's political movement, which embraces the CCF, the labor movement, farm organizations, professional people and other liberal minded persons interested in basic social reform and reconstruction through our parliamentary system of government." At its convention four months later the CCF responded unanimously to the invitation.

THERE IS NO SPACE HERE to go into the details of the multitude of activities involved during the next three years. New Party Clubs developed across the country as a means of enlisting the participation of non-trade

union and non-CCF Canadians. They, together with the CCF'ers and unionists attended literally thousands of schools, meetings and seminars to thrash out drafts of the New Party's program and constitution.

Then, 1800 of them came to Ottawa in July, 1961, to Canada's largest and most colorful political convention. Out of this week-long session came three results which distinguish the New Party on the Canadian political scene.

First, there is the party's philosophy and program, the basics of which can only be sketched here. Most would say it is a democratic socialist philosophy, if one considers (as this writer does) that present day socialist philosophy is exemplified in the programs of such parties as the British Labor Party, the Scandinavian Social Democratic parties and the Israeli Mapai.

But there is no dogma in the New Democratic Party program and little of the revolutionary phraseology of earlier socialist documents.

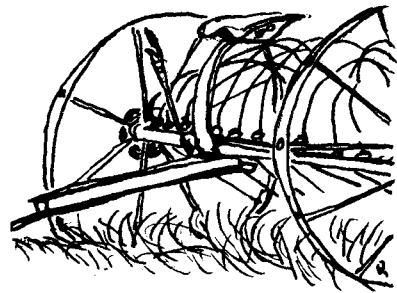
For example, the program calls for full economic planning through government initiative. It points out that Canada's greatest domestic problem is unemployment (up to ten per cent during winter months of recent years) and lack of growth. Canada has, indeed, lost out to Sweden for second place with respect to standard of living among the world's nations.

The party program states clearly that unemployment and economic stagnation can only be rectified through planned investment, massive expansion of the public sector of the economy and the setting up of development funds and councils for depressed areas. Public ownership is given its due as an effective tool under certain circumstances, particularly where monopoly action is required, as in railways or other forms of transport or where private enterprise simply has not provided sufficient initiative, and in the development of electric power.

In the field of social security the New Democratic Party calls for the

immediate implementation of a medical care program and a contributory superannuation plan. Even more important, the party insists upon the need for an integrated welfare program that assures all citizens of an adequate income and security regardless of circumstances.

The New Democratic Party offers a solution to Canada's unique problem of being two nations in one. It calls for co-operation between the provincial and federal governments in planning balanced growth, while at the same time respecting the difference between Canada's two great cultures, English and French.



In the international field the party rejects neutralism and unilateralism and acknowledges the role Canada must play in Western defense. We believe, however, that Canada can make no contribution by accepting nuclear arms. While the party recognizes the value of the nuclear deterrent, it rejects the defense aspect implied by NORAD. Canada's great wealth may best serve the cause of peace in our opinion through a program of massive aid to the underdeveloped territories and through working for a United Nations police force at whose disposal our limited military strength might be put.

katchewan, who led the CCF government in that province for seventeen years. Thus, he has a formidable record for a North American socialist leader of an unbroken series of successes. With this he combines wit, humility and contagious enthusiasm which contrasts with the dourness all too common in recent political leaders.

So the New Democratic Party has striking assets, but it has very substantial hurdles to overcome. Old party traditions and political apathy run deep in the Canadian political scene. Nonetheless, Canadians are aware, if vaguely, of the necessity for a new approach. The New Democratic Party offers that new approach. Its problem is to grasp the opportunity effectively and to make its answers appealing.

Then, perhaps our greatest asset is our dynamic and colorful leader, former Premier T. C. Douglas of Sas-

# Labor's Progress In Australian Elections

Leonard Lambourne

WHATEVER ONE MAY FEEL personally about the recent election campaign and the result, it would not be an understatement to say that it was truly an extraordinary election. The result held the Australian people in suspense for days afterwards. In fact, it was not until the tenth day after the poll that it was clear that the Menzies Government had been returned.

Until then, indications were that the House of Representatives would be deadlocked with each party holding an equal number of seats. Had this happened it would have been the first time in the history of Federation, and constitutional experts spent the week developing various theories about the consequences. As the voting fluctuated in various marginal electorates, public interest in the poll became even greater and the newspapers would have their afternoon placards describing the latest voting trend as they would a major sporting event.



When the campaign started, very few people gave the Australian Labor Party (A.L.P.) much hope for victory. While many were prepared to concede that the Government was unpopular because of its economic policies, they could not see the Labor Party as the alternative because the Party was divided and many independent voters thought that the Party was subject to Communist influence. Furthermore, this was the first campaign for Mr. Arthur A. Calwell, as Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. Previously he had been Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Party for nine years to Dr. H. V. Evatt, now Chief Justice of New South Wales. While Mr. Calwell was well known within the Party, it was Dr. Evatt who overshadowed him during those nine years because of the latter's rather controversial approach to politics and, in particular, foreign policy questions.

Despite these obstacles and doubts, Mr. Calwell campaigned vigorously and well, and his stature, both within the A.L.P. and the community, rose considerably. As the campaign drew to a close, it was clear that he had succeeded in persuading some of the swinging vote to cast their vote for the A.L.P. He had made the A.L.P. respectable. The result was that the Government lost 15 seats and was returned with a majority of two (one, after providing the Speaker) and after June 30th will lose control of the Senate, where two Senators from Tasmania will hold the balance of power (one is a member of the Democratic Labor Party (D.L.P.) and the other an Independent).