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A Chemist in the Senate: Edwin Fremont Ladd, 1921-1925

Alfred C. Melby

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A CHEMIST IN THE SENATE.

EDWIN FREMONT LADD, 1921-1925

by

Alfred C. Melby

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B.S. Ed. in History, University of North Dakota 1964

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Master of Arts

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This thesis submitted by Alfred C. Melby in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

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VITA

Alfred Christian Melby was born November 10, 1942, at Sidney, Montana. He attended grade school and high school at Fairview, Montana, and Alexander, North Dakota, graduating from Alexander High School in 1960. He enrolled at the University of North Dakota in the fall of 1960. He graduated from that university in 1964, receiving a B.S. in Education Degree with a major in History. Since 1964, he has taught high school at Edmore, North Dakota. At present, he is awaiting assignment to the Peace Corps.

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ABSTRACT

Edwin Fremont Ladd, a native of Maine, migrated to North Dakota in 1890 to join the chemistry faculty of the Agricultural College. In the following three decades, his work in the pure-food crusade and in the fight for fair grain grading and reasonable rail rates earned him a reputation for personal courage and devotion to agriculture. His reputation led the Nonpartisan League to endorse him for the United States Senate in 1920. Following his victory over Senator Asle J. Gronna in the Republican primary, Ladd defeated his Democratic opponent in the general election.

From his entry into the Senate in 1921 to his death in 1925, Ladd continued to demonstrate both his courage and his devotion to agriculture. He courageously resisted attempts to suppress the Teapot Dome investigation. He stood firm on his unpopular advocacies of recognition of Soviet Russia and private development of Muscle Shoals. As an advocate of aid to agriculture, Ladd supported high agricultural tariffs, increased appropriations for agricultural research, the building of a St. Lawrence Seaway, and the expansion of agricultural credit. He joined the Farm Bloc and generally supported its attempts to improve agricultural conditions.

Ladd's independence and strength of conviction often brought him to oppose administration policies. He was soon recognized as a rebel and was seldom consulted on appointments. His dissatisfaction with the Republican administrations led him to support Robert M. LaFollette's presidential candidacy in 1924. He was subsequently expelled from the Republican caucus and stripped of his seniority privileges.

CHAPTER I.

LADD TO 1920

It was shortly after 11:00 A.M., Monday, December 7, 1925. With the conclusion of the roll in the Senate chambers, a bold gentleman with the look and manner of a farmer arose to address the Senate. Lynn Frazier, the Senator from North Dakota, gained the floor and made the formal announcement of the passing of his former colleague, Edwin F. Ladd. Frazier then asked for and received a unanimous vote on the following resolution (S. Res 52):

Resolved, that the Senate has heard with deep regret and profound sorrow the announcement of the death of the Hon. Edwin F. Ladd, a late Senator from the State of North Dakota. Resolved, that the Secretary communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.¹

In tribute, the Senate adjourned for the remainder of the day, designating Sunday, May 9, 1926, as the day to be devoted to speeches in memory of Senator Ladd. Thus the Senate paid its formal tribute to the beloved Chemist, educator, and Senator.

¹United States Senate, Memorial Addresses Delivered in the United States Senate in Memory of Edwin F. Ladd (Washington; United States Government Printing Office, 1927) p. 2 (hereinafter cited as Memorial Addresses).

Early Life

Edwin Fremont Ladd was born December 13, 1859, on a farm approximately four miles from Starks, Maine, the son of John and Rosilla (Locke) Ladd. While young Ladd began life in the humble surroundings of rural Maine, he was the product of a lineage which gave him a heritage of adventure and reform. The Ladd line in America could be traced back to 1634. It had yielded an adventurous group of sea captains, merchant princes, philosophers, and social reformers, one of whom was the founder of the American Peace Society.²

Ladd remained in Maine throughout his formative years. He received his high school education at Somerset Academy, and upon graduation in 1880, he entered the University of Maine as a liberal arts student. Having soon found that the curriculum did not suit his tastes, Ladd left the arts to study agriculture and sciences.³

Ladd had made the choice that was to bring him fame, respect, and the Senatorship. While he received no special honors in his undergraduate work, Ladd's scholastic endeavors were considered "above average." He was active in the school as a member of Q.T.V. fraternity and a lieuten-

²Doane Robinson, "Edwin F. Ladd," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, X(1933), 524-25.

³Ralph J. Kane, "Edwin Fremont Ladd North Dakota's Pure-Food Crusader" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of History, University of North Dakota, 1960), p. 35.

ant in the Coburn Cadets.⁴

Upon graduation, Ladd accepted a position as assistant chemist at the New York Experimental Station at Geneva. Here he worked with the noted chemist, Stephen Babcock, inventor of the Babcock test for butterfat. Babcock's choice of Ladd speaks well for the young chemist's work at Maine and his good work continued at Geneva. He was often heralded by his superiors, and in 1887, he became chief chemist when Babcock accepted a position at the University of Wisconsin.⁵

Ladd in North Dakota

In 1890, the restless young chemist chose to cast his lot in the West. He accepted the dual position of teacher of chemistry at North Dakota Agricultural College (now North Dakota State University) and chief chemist at the attached experimental station. While his motives are not clear, Ralph J. Kane takes the position that Ladd's choice to move stemmed from both his restlessness and his memory of the advice given by Babcock.⁶

Ladd's entry into North Dakota coincided with the declaration of the Census Bureau that the frontier was officially closed. Ladd probably would not have agreed.

⁴Ibid., p. 36

⁵Ibid., pp. 37-39.

⁶Ibid., pp. 39-40. Babcock had advised Ladd of the opportunities awaiting him in the West.

He was greeted by a state which was largely an expanse of treeless prairie, by a college which was poorly equipped and homeless,⁷ and by a newspaper which was filled with headlines of Ghost Dances and the death of Sitting Bull. Contrary to the views of the Census Bureau, the frontier in North Dakota was changed rather than closed. Here was the frontier, not of the cowboy or the sod-house farmer, but of the agricultural scientist and the scientific farmer. It needed men who were determined to combat the "Great American Desert" and make of it a productive land. Ladd was such a man. He adopted North Dakota, and North Dakota soon accepted him.

It was while in Fargo that Ladd met and married Rizpah Sprogle of Annapolis, Maryland. The two met while Miss Sprogle was visiting a childhood friend in Fargo. She quickly captured Ladd's affections, and the two were soon married in Annapolis. Ladd was fortunate in his choice. His wife was a charming woman who had "all the qualities that novelists attribute to the antebellum South." Mrs. Ladd's personality often successfully counterbalanced the stern, tactless manner of her husband. When he offended friends with his lack of tact, she often made his

⁷William C. Hunter, Beacon Over the Prairie: North Dakota's Land Grant College (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1961), p. 23. Hunter states that the institution, then in its first year of operation, was located in the first floor and basement of Fargo College.

apologies.⁸ She became a socialite of the campus; and their New England style home became the favorite of many visitors.⁹

The house, at first located near the college and a full half mile from any other residence, was the birthplace of all eight Ladd children: E. Vernon, Culver, D. Milton, Rizpah and Rosilla (twins), Katherine, Virginia and Elizabeth. As each new addition came to the family, a new addition came to the house.¹⁰ Ladd found time, despite his busy schedule, to spend with his family.¹¹ While he often played tennis, and on at least one occasion hunted bison, his favorite pastime was his garden.¹²

But to find time for diversions was an accomplishment. In 1916, Ladd was made president of the North Dakota Agricultural College, a position he held until entering the Senate in 1921.¹³ In addition to his presidential duties, he held the offices of state pure food inspector, state oil inspector, state hotel inspector, chief grain inspector for the state, and during World War I,

⁸Kane, pp. 49-50.

⁹Ibid., pp. 50. See also Hunter, p. 100.

¹⁰Kane, p. 50.

¹¹Memorial Addresses, pp. 7-8.

¹²Kane, p. 51.

¹³Hunter, p. 90. Ladd was appointed on a "temporary basis." When the board was ready to act on a replacement, Ladd suffered a loss of memory of his "temporary" status and refused to leave.

he assumed the additional duty of Federal Food inspector.¹⁴ He was also a member of the price fixing committee which set wheat prices during the war. The following telegram, a tribute to his work in the latter two capacities, was sent by Herbert Hoover in 1920:

I was glad to hear of your nomination. Your able and honest advocacy of the agricultural interests during the war won for you the admiration of all who came in contact with you at Washington. With your real knowledge of agricultural problems, both in their local and their national aspect, your election will be a real contribution to the ability of the Senate to deal constructively with these matters.¹⁵

Briefly, Ladd's work at N.D.A.C. between 1890 and 1920 was that of teacher, administrator, and experimenter. In the first role, he has not been rated very highly by at least one of his colleagues. His high pitched voice was said to detract from his teaching. In addition, he has been criticized for his over-emphasis to students of the analytical aspects of science.¹⁶

Similarly, Ladd's term as an administrator has been attacked as lacking in both tact and organization. Hunter characterizes him as "dogmatic, frequently arbitrary, yet desirous of furthering the welfare of the faculty and that of the college."¹⁷

¹⁴Memorial Addresses, p. 7.

¹⁵W. C. Palmer, Dr. E. F. Ladd, undated political pamphlet apparently distributed in 1920, Orin G. Libby Collection, University of North Dakota.

¹⁶Dr. George Abbott in interview with the author, Grand Forks, April 15, 1964.

¹⁷Hunter, pp. 99-100.

It was in the role of experimenter that Ladd excelled. While his research, too, has been criticized, it brought him national and international recognition in the field of agriculture. His famed "paint fence"¹⁸ became a college landmark, and his leadership in that area was so well accepted that his school remains a leader in the field today. It was the research aspect of his work which led Ladd to become a leader in the pure-food crusade.

The Pure-Food Crusader

While Ladd did not make his initial thrusts at the problem of adulteration in commercial food processing until coming to North Dakota, Ralph J. Kane takes the position that his interest in establishing a research laboratory in New York for food studies, coupled with his work at Geneva, demonstrated his interest in the subject prior to the North Dakota studies.¹⁹

If his concern for the subject of grain grading had not been aroused earlier, Ladd was given cause for concern by Agriculture College President Horace C. Stockbridge. Stockbridge instructed his chief chemist as follows:

Make a thorough and systematic investigation of the composition and physical characteristics of wheat . . . with the hope of establishing a definite and accepted method for the simple and positive determina-

¹⁸Ladd built a demonstration fence and painted each section with a different paint to test resistance to weathering.

¹⁹Kane, pp. 38-39.

tion of the grade in the buying and selling of wheat, the result of which would be the prevention of controversy between the buyer and seller, the protection of the producer against unscrupulous purchasers and of honest dealers against the unfavorable influence of dishonest buyers.²⁰

Ladd soon discovered that discrepancies existed in the grading of wheat. His work in this area was so disturbing to business interests that they sought to bring other influences into the college to end, or at least neutralize, his efforts.²¹ But, when Ladd fulfilled his original mandate, he did not stop to wait for another. While Ladd was not early in his entry into the pure-food fray, his work earned him a good reputation in the field. In addition to his attacks on grain grading, he levied charges against the patent medicine trade, railroad discrimination, the fertilizer industry, the paint industry, and others.²²

Ladd's work in the pure-food crusade was aided by the popularity he had acquired with the people of North Dakota and with the state legislature. He had so gained the confidence of the legislators that they would pass

²⁰H. L. Walster, manuscript (uncompleted at the time of his death), North Dakota State University Library, Fargo. The work was to be a series of biographies of famed scientists who had taught at North Dakota Agricultural College.

²¹Edward C. Blackorby, Prairie Rebel: The Life of William Lemke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 25.

²²For a full discussion of these investigations, see Kane, pp. 74-210.

virtually any piece of legislation he sponsored.²³ A good measure of Ladd's influence was the attempt by Bismarck attorney Reuben Stevens to take the pure-food inspection out of Ladd's hands. Upon Ladd's appearance before the legislature, the bill failed.²⁴

Ladd's reward for such investigations was a place in the heart of the North Dakota farmer and a permanent appointment on the dockets of the courts. His work brought him numerous suits from the paint companies, the millers, and other commercial interests. Ladd claimed on several occasions that he could not have gotten a decent night's sleep unless he had a suit pending.²⁵ He must have slept soundly during the greater portion of his adult life. Yet, in all these cases, Ladd emerged victorious.

Professionally, Ladd maintained memberships in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the Society for the Promotion of Agricultural Science, and the Society of Chemical Industries of London. He also served as president of both the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists and the Association of Dairy Drug and Food Officials.²⁶ His writ-

²³Kane, pp. 107-108.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 98-101.

²⁵Dr. Abbott in an interview with the author, Grand Forks, April 15, 1964.

²⁶"A Chemist in the Senate," Literary Digest, August 5, 1922, p. 28., p. 28.

ings, however, did not appear in the journals of these associations; rather, they were published in the North Dakota Farmer, which he edited and in a series of bulletins which he issued from Fargo. The most famous of these were the Manual of Chemical Analysis (1898) and Mixed Paints (1908).²⁷

Political Background

It was Ladd's work as a pure-food chemist which ultimately brought him into politics. Politically, Ladd considered himself an Independent Republican,²⁸ but his work so coincided with the aims of the infant Nonpartisan League that Ladd and the League became virtually inseparable.²⁹

The Nonpartisan League was organized by a former Socialist, Arthur C. Townley. Townley began his organization in 1915 with only "salesmanship, the promise of action, and a Ford." With these tools, he set out to organize the farmers of North Dakota. After his initial canvassing efforts, he enlisted the help of others. The result was a membership of 40,000 in a period of six months. What Townley wanted was not a third party, but a bloc of votes which could be shifted in support of or in opposition to individual candidates, regardless of political affiliation. His platform called for state-owned terminal eleva-

²⁷Fargo Forum, June 23, 1925.

²⁸Kane, p. 212. Kane cites a letter from E. Vernon Ladd.

²⁹Blackorby, p. 25.

tors, flour mills, packing houses, and storage plants; for state inspection of grain grading practices; for exemption of farm improvements from taxation; for a system of state hail insurance; and for a system of rural-credit banks operated at cost. What Townley offered was not new to the agrarian movement. The Grangers had proposed most of it years before. The distinctive feature of his presentation was his timing. The time was ripe for the North Dakota farmer to revolt.³⁰

Except for the three progressive terms of Governor John Burke (1907-1912), North Dakota had been under the thumb of a political machine headed by Alexander McKenzie. The big Scotsman, with the help of the railroad interests, had controlled the state from his hotel suite in St. Paul. Since North Dakota was a grain producing state, it was especially vulnerable to price fixing by the railroads. To make matters worse, the grain trade was controlled by the all-powerful Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Duluth and Chicago Boards of Trade. Dissatisfied with the excessive railroad rates and the unfair grain grading practices, the North Dakota farmers moved in 1914 to establish state-owned terminal elevators. When a group of the farmers came to present their grievances to the Legislature in 1915, they were told to "go home and slop the hogs."³¹

³⁰Russel B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), pp. 312-314.

³¹Ibid., p. 311.

They went home, but not to "slop the hogs." As Usher L. Burdick expressed it, "the struggle for state-owned terminal elevators upset the apple cart."³²

Thus, Ladd's work in exposing the evils of grain grading publicized the need for state control and the need for a terminal elevator. This in turn brought about the formation of the Nonpartisan League. With this in mind, it does not seem strange that Ladd came to regard the League program as a means to carry out his own crusades. In this capacity, Ladd became linked, though not officially, to the League and its leaders.³³

This relationship was further cemented during Ladd's term as college president. It was at this time that the Agricultural College was becoming a "political football." William Lemke, attorney for the League and for Farmer's Equity, was sympathetic with Ladd's work and used his influence with Governor Lynn J. Frazier to remove the anti-Ladd influence of Extension Director Thomas Cooper.³⁴ Through these circumstances, the betrothal of Ladd to the League had come about in the years following 1914. It remained only for the strange circumstances surrounding the election of 1920 to consummate the marriage.

³²Usher L. Burdick, History of Farmers Political Action in North Dakota (Baltimore: Wirth Brothers, 1944) p. 79.

³³Blackorby, p. 25.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 83-84.

CHAPTER II

THE ELECTION OF 1920

It was a curious turn of political events which led the chemist to the Senate. The political situation in 1920 had been complicated by the rise of the Independent Voters Association, a group dedicated to ending the "reign of Townley."¹ The group, though rejecting the Republican label for reasons of expediency, posed as the voice of the Republican party, though the League controlled the party machinery and the Republicans.² When the three groups held conventions to choose their Presidential electors, delegates to the national convention, and the slates of candidates for state office, the newspapers, depending on the political leanings of their publishers, labeled the proceedings as "false," suspect, or "real."³

The power of the non-League forces was enhanced by Attorney General William Langer's action in bolting

¹William Weiland Phillips, "The Life of Asle J. Gronna" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1958), p. 542. The Independent Voters Association will hereafter be referred to as the IVA or Independents.

²Chester H. Rowell, "Political Cyclone in North Dakota," World's Work, XLVI (July, 1923), 266-267.

³Phillips, pp. 542-543; Robert Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), pp. 284-286. The progressives were the smallest Republican faction.

the League in 1919. Langer subsequently launched a campaign for the gubernatorial endorsement on the IVA ticket, attacking the corruption of the League leaders as only an ex-insider could. Townley, in an effort to maintain his hold on the League and refute Langer's charges, drove several other Leaguers into the IVA camp by removing them from appointive state offices.⁴

The already chaotic situation was further complicated by rumors that Townley had failed to maintain his grip on the League. According to the rumor, Townley was being forced to abdicate in favor of his lieutenant, William Lemke.⁵ The report was later discovered to have some substance. While Lemke and Townley remained on friendly terms, the control of the League in North Dakota was in Lemke's hands.⁶

The Endorsement

Incumbent Republican Senator from North Dakota, Asle J. Gronna, was definitely a willing candidate to succeed himself in 1920. But the Senator, realizing the danger in the North Dakota political situation, was attempting to avoid the state's political holocaust as long as was possible. He would have been content to maintain his neutrality between the League, the progressives, and the

⁴Phillips, p. 543.

⁵Grand Forks Herald, January 22, 1920.

⁶Blackorby, p. 199.

Independents, but the approach of the endorsing conventions forced him to take a stand. This he would not do. His biographer, William W. Phillips, takes the position that Gronna could not, without sacrificing principle, commit himself to any group. Neither a conservative-controlled Independent program nor a radical control of the League convention would suit his political tastes. Though Gronna was sought by both sides as a candidate, he insisted that the game be played according to his rules--namely, that he not be forced to give an unqualified commitment to either faction.⁷

As early as 1919, rumors were circulating that Townley would oppose Gronna's bid for re-election. These later gave rise to the alternate rumors that, while Townley would not support the Senator's candidacy, he would do nothing to oppose the endorsement. These remained simply rumors until the endorsing conventions met in May, 1920.⁸

The Independent Voters Association convention, meeting in Minot on May 12, was the first to make an endorsement. While they endorsed an almost full slate of candidates, headed by William Langer for governor, they left the Senatorial endorsement open, saying that the can-

⁷Phillips, pp. 544-550. Phillips maintains that Gronna's situation put him in a position to deal with either or both of the factions. There seemed no candidate available who could defeat the Senator and he was hoping for a dual endorsement.

⁸Ibid., pp. 544-545, 550.

didate for this position could "be selected more judiciously at a later date by the anti-Townley Republican State Central Committee."⁹ The IVA had relinquished the first move to the League.

When the League convention met in Fargo on May 14, the endorsement of incumbent Governor Lynn Frazier came quite as expected. The stage was set for probably the greatest surprise of the convention. After Gronna's name had been placed in contention for the Senatorial endorsement, A. C. Townley arose to address the delegates. In the stirring speech which followed, Townley delivered a lengthy tirade against the incumbent, maintaining that Gronna had not "toed the mark." He cited Ladd as an example of a candidate who could do much more than Gronna for the League program. Townley maintained that, while Gronna had failed both the NPL and the farmer, Ladd had performed "yeoman service for the farmer of the state." In the wake of this address, the convention placed Ladd's name on the ballot. In the balloting which followed, the professor defeated Gronna for the endorsement by a vote of 44 to 9.¹⁰

The circumstances surrounding Ladd's endorsement are at best a political mystery. While Ladd's entry was reported in some IVA papers as a means to divert him from

⁹Grand Forks Herald, May 14, 1920.

¹⁰Ibid., May 15, 1920. Also Fargo Forum, May 15, 1920.

the gubernatorial race in favor of Frazier, there seems to be little evidence that this was the case.¹¹ Certainly the events of the day came as a surprise, not only to the general public, but even to the delegates.¹² According to one report, Ladd's endorsement may have been a surprise even to Townley.¹³ Despite charges that Townley "forced" Ladd's endorsement, it would seem that the delegates did not need to be "forced" to nominate Ladd. Since the Gronna endorsement was unacceptable to the Lemke-Townley group, Ladd was the most palatable choice for the delegates.¹⁴

Two persons have been mentioned in connection with Ladd's endorsement. Lemke's biographer, Edward C. Blackorby, claims that, while "there is no evidence that the selection of Ladd was Lemke's exclusive idea, Ladd's endorsement had the Lemke touch." He further substantiates this claim, asserting that "there is no question that, at this time in 1920, it was Lemke who was running the North Dakota Nonpartisan League."¹⁵ The second figure, Gutzon Borglum, a progressive Republican of national stature,

¹¹Grand Forks Herald, May 18 and May 19, 1920.

¹²Phillips, p. 552. Also Grand Forks Herald, May 15, 1920. Phillips terms Ladd "a last moment entry."

¹³Grand Forks Herald, May 15, 1920. Townley claimed that while he mentioned Ladd as a possibility, he had no intention of nominating the professor.

¹⁴Phillips, p. 552.

¹⁵Blackorby, p. 199.

also claimed to have swayed the convention delegates, and may have had a part in persuading Ladd to enter the race.¹⁶

Gronna took a bitter view of the convention proceedings. He felt he had been deprived of the endorsement by a plot conceived in the minds of Townley, Porter J. McCumber, and Alexander McKenzie.¹⁷ According to Gronna, the supposed purpose of his removal was the protection of the "interests." He charged that McKenzie had contributed fifty thousand dollars to the League coffers to accomplish this end. In return, the League would be expected to permit McCumber to run unopposed in 1922. To further insure Gronna's defeat, McKenzie was to encourage former Governor Colonel Frank White to file as an independent candidate. White's candidacy was to be used to attract the vote of people who opposed Gronna's anti-war record.¹⁸

This writer is in agreement with Phillips' analysis of the charge. He terms it "both too pat and too preposterous."¹⁹ Further, he denies that the "interests" could see any advantages in Ladd's candidacy, as "Ladd's

¹⁶Telegram from Borglum to Lemke, March 22, 1927, in William Lemke Papers, University of North Dakota. Borglum was the famed sculptor of the Mount Rushmore Memorial.

¹⁷Fargo Forum, June 7, 1920, quoting from Gronna's speech in Mohall on June 6; Phillips, p. 553.

¹⁸Phillips., pp. 553-554. See also Rowell, "Political Cyclone," pp. 266-267.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 554.

progressive record antedated Gronna's even if it did not excel it."²⁰ He dismisses the charge of an agreement concerning the McCumber candidacy by pointing to the defeat of the McKenzie Senator by the League in 1922. Though he admits that "corporate funds might have been used against Gronna without the League's connivance," he denies the allegation that such was the plan to elect Ladd.²¹

While in agreement with this analysis, the writer must note two significant observations. First, while it has often been said that "politics makes strange bedfellows," it seems inconceivable that such enemies as McKenzie and Townley could occupy the same political bed. Secondly, Gronna's charge seems to the writer simply a transfer device to rebuild the Senator's deflated ego and to gain voter support. The writer can only echo Phillips' observation that "there is not a single scrap of substantial evidence that Ladd's nomination was purchased."²²

In their endorsement of Ladd, the Leaguers had selected perhaps the only man who could have defeated Gronna in 1920.²³ Ladd was well-known and respected by the people of the state.²⁴ Further, since he had not

²⁰Ibid., 555.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 556.

²³Ibid., p. 548.

²⁴Interview with Dr. George Abbott, June 24, 1966. Abbott says that the people of the state reverently referred

been linked officially with the League, the political scandals attached to the accusations of the ex-Leaguers had left him unscathed.²⁵ By remaining aloof from political struggles, Ladd had, perhaps unknowingly, paved the way for his own political career.²⁶

The Primary

On Memorial Day, 1920, Gaston Chevrolet won the famed "Indianapolis 500," with an average speed of 88.16 miles per hour. The North Dakota primary candidates seemed bent on erasing that mark in the following month. Both League and Independent candidates submitted themselves to grueling schedules.²⁷

The Senatorial race saw a parade of candidates. Gronna announced his own independent candidacy late in May, saying that he felt it his duty to become a candidate in order to effect the "redemption of the state from the band of carpetbaggers and socialists who are in control."²⁸ His official entry made the contest a four-cornered affair,

to Ladd as Dr., even before his honorary L.L.D. from the University of Maine.

²⁵Phillips, pp. 547-548.

²⁶Interview with Abbott, June 24, 1966. Abbott speculates that Ladd had his eye set on a political career much earlier.

²⁷See Grand Forks Herald. June 1-29, 1920. While Gronna was a late starter, he contributed over seventy speeches to the campaign.

²⁸Fargo Forum, May 25, 1920.

the other two contestants being Frank White and former congressman P. D. Norton of Mandan. The fourth leg soon left the table as Norton withdrew to become a candidate for the western congressional seat.

On June 9, the field was further reduced by the withdrawal of White. That same afternoon, the Republican State Central Committee (IVA) endorsed Gronna.²⁹ The situation had apparently dictated a gentlemen's agreement between Gronna and White. Both realized that neither could win in a three-way race, and each agreed to accept the decision of the Central Committee.³⁰

The primary campaign was spotted with charges of violence and election irregularities on both sides. The Independents charged the League with the use of "blanket stickers," notably in Sheridan County. The League countered with charges of violent attacks on citizens displaying League emblems.³¹

The campaign was filled with charges of socialism, corruption, and Ku Klux Klanism. The Grand Forks Herald

²⁹Ibid., June 10, 1920. See also Grand Forks Herald, same date.

³⁰Telegram of June 5 from Treadwell Twitchell to White, printed in a political circular "To the Members of the American Legion," Lemke Papers, June 25, 1920. In view of this telegram, and the subsequent events, the probability of a McKenzie deal for White is further diminished.

³¹Letter from William A. Anderson to Lemke, July 17, 1920, Lemke Papers. He wrote regarding an assault made on a man named Alfred Cheil of Glenn Ullin. Cheil was attacked while driving his car on June 29. His car had displayed a Frazier banner.

felt that the choice was clearly between capitalism and socialism.³² A more romanticized view came from a minister from a small town in the Red River Valley who envisioned a modern day crusade when he said: "The fight, men, is between Jesus Christ and Karl Marx."³³

The Senatorial campaign was strangely devoid of the personal attacks which characterized the other races. Both candidates campaigned as though they were more concerned with the outcome of the ticket than with their respective candidacies. Each showed a reluctance to attack the other. Gronna, who had a genuine respect for Ladd, seldom attacked his opponent by name. He seemed content to build a positive stand on his own record, concentrating his attacks on the "Socialist Autocracy" of the League. His biographer feels that this was, from the standpoint of campaign material, probably the poorest campaign of Gronna's career.³⁴ Similarly, Ladd based his campaign upon a positive, though somewhat general program calling for the encouragement of farming, the improvement of schools, and the elimination of profiteering.³⁵

³²The events of June 9 put the Herald in the position of not having a Senatorial candidate to support. The Herald had already repudiated Gronna. When the Grand Forks American told the Herald it should therefore support Ladd, the Herald editor replied with a tirade against Ladd's work as college president, concluding that the paper was "not any more for Ladd than for Senator Gronna."

³³Phillips, p. 558. See also Morlan, p. 293.

³⁴Ibid., p. 559.

³⁵Fargo Forum, June 5, 1920.

The June 29 primary showed close competition for both the Governorship and the Senatorial seat. Early returns showed Langer and Gronna leading.³⁶ Several days later, it became evident that Frazier had beaten Langer, but the Senatorial race remained in doubt, due to slow tabulation of election returns. Finally, the returns from the western counties established the Ladd victory.³⁷ The official returns gave Ladd 54,957 and Gronna 51,142. White, despite his withdrawal, received 5,477. On the Democratic side, H. H. Perry of Ellendale, running unopposed, polled 8,238.³⁸

The causes of Gronna's demise have been the subject of much speculation. Many authors have pointed to Gronna's anti-war record as the chief villain, the assumption being that people who were disillusioned by Gronna's stand during the war were forced to vote for White.³⁹ Phillips, pointing to the small vote garnered by the colonel, feels that this deduction is unwarranted. He claims that the result of White's candidacy was simply to decrease Ladd's margin.⁴⁰

³⁶Ibid., July 1, 1920.

³⁷Ibid., July 2-7, 1920.

³⁸"A Study of Political Figures in North Dakota, 1918-26," n.n., n.d., election files, Orin G. Libby Collection, University of North Dakota.

³⁹Morlan, p. 294; Lewis F. Crawford, History of North Dakota (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1931), Vol I, p. 439. See also Fargo Currier-News, May 5, 1922.

⁴⁰Phillips, p. 563.

This writer, while in agreement with the Phillips analysis, feels that the explanation fails in at least one respect. While White's total seems quite small at first glance, it is more substantial when viewed in the light of the colonel's withdrawal. But, while it seems plausible that White's candidacy played a greater role in Gronna's defeat than Phillips assigns it, the principal reasons for the Ladd victory must be sought elsewhere.

There are at least two more prominent factors, which, in combination, were sufficient to defeat Gronna. Phillips recognizes these as Ladd's personal popularity and his organizational support.⁴¹ First, Ladd was perhaps the most universally popular and respected man in the state. His work as a pure-food crusader had endeared him to the North Dakota voter.⁴² In addition, Ladd seemed to possess both an air of dignity and an ability to do the remembered favor for the small man with the big vote.⁴³

But, Gronna's popularity was also enviable. The writer is inclined to agree with Phillips that the chief determinant was political support.⁴⁴ Ladd possessed more of that commodity than did Gronna. First, the IVA was not as strong an organization as was the NPL, despite its show-

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Blackorby, p. 12.

⁴³ Interview with Dr. Abbott, April 15, 1964.

⁴⁴ Phillips, p. 563.

ing in the primary.⁴⁵ Secondly, Gronna faced opposition from some of the independent press⁴⁶ as well as from the remnants of the McKenzie group.⁴⁷ While Gronna could have used support from the popular Robert LaFollette, the Wisconsin Senator was too ill to campaign in North Dakota.⁴⁸

The General Election

The IVA Republicans, having tasted defeat in six of the primary races, made an alliance with the Democrats for the coming election. With the elimination of Gronna, Ladd's election seemed virtually assured. H. H. Perry could not match the reputation of the scientist in the eyes of North Dakota voters.⁴⁹ The gubernatorial contest loomed as the primary political target for both parties. In that contest, Frazier faced a formidable opponent in J. F. T. O'Connor, a violently anti-League lawyer from Grand Forks.⁵⁰

Ladd's campaign for the November election can be adequately summarized as follows: He campaigned for the

⁴⁵Ibid.; Robert Poole Wilkins, "North Dakota and the European War, 1914-1917" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, West Virginia University, 1954), p. 294.

⁴⁶Grand Forks Herald, June 12, 1920.

⁴⁷Phillips, p. 555.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 561.

⁴⁹This was born out in the election. Perry's inactivity in the campaign leads one to believe that he was merely a filler on the ballot.

⁵⁰For an account of O'Connor's campaign, see Alice Jane Johnson, "The Public Career of J. F. T. O'Connor" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1956).

ticket, devoting little attention to his own candidacy save to keep his own reputation clean. While the national ticket, composed of Ohio Senator Warren Harding and Massachusetts Governor Calvin Coolidge, was progressing to the tune of "Harding, You're the Man for Us," another title became prevalent in North Dakota. It was that of a political pamphlet, "Stringent League Laws Against Immorality." The Independent Voters Association press protested violently against the distribution of this piece of political slander, so frank in its indictment of the morals of the Independent candidates that it was "accompanied by a warning that it must be kept out of the hands of young people." The Forum called upon Ladd to repudiate this type of campaign. This he did, denying any previous knowledge of its publication or contents.⁵¹

The general election of November 2 was hailed as a victory by both the IVA and the League.⁵² While the IVA could justly claim victory in the state legislature, the League controlled many of the key executive positions. One of the points of pride in the League claim was Ladd. In becoming the first League Senator, he compiled a margin of 42,000 votes, running far ahead of the ticket.⁵³

⁵¹Fargo Forum, October 27, 1920. The pamphlet was said to contain the testimony of several prostitutes from the "red light" district of Minneapolis. References are made throughout the month.

⁵²Ibid., November 6, 1920; and Nonpartisan Leader, November and December, 1920.

⁵³Morlan, p. 300; Blackorby, p. 110.

The election of Ladd, probably the first chemist and certainly the first president of a land-grant college to be elected to the upper house, illuminated two significant changes which had come to characterize the agrarian movement. First, it showed that the farmers were developing a confidence in the teachers of agricultural science. Second, it showed that the agrarian movement was making attempts to enhance its prestige by electing spokesmen of professional stature.⁵⁴ The farmer sent the chemist to Washington, confident that he now had a well-informed, eloquent spokesman who was dedicated to combatting the industrial interests.

⁵⁴Nonpartisan Leader, December 13, 1920, quoting an editorial, "From Sockless Simpson to Dr. Ladd," New York Evening Post.

CHAPTER III

LADD AND THE FARMER

When the Sixty-seventh Congress began its deliberations on March 4, 1921, Edwin F. Ladd, escorted by his Senate colleague from North Dakota, Porter J. McCumber, walked to the desk of Vice President Calvin Coolidge. Ladd then spoke the oath of office and returned to his seat.¹ For nearly two months, these were the only words Ladd spoke in the Senate proceedings. And for these two months, this "school principal type"² Senator must have appeared out of place in the company of such fiery orators as Wisconsin's Robert M. LaFollette, Idaho's William E. Borah, and Nebraska's George Norris.

But Ladd had previously announced through the press his desire to represent the farmer. In his press statement following the election, he had announced his intention to strive to enact measures which would protect the farmer and enable him to retain the fruits of his labors. The bearded chemist was ready to come to the defense of the farmer.

¹Congressional Record, 67th Cong., Spec. Sess., LXI, Part 1, p. 4.

²New York Times, May 21, 1922.

Ladd was prompted to speak in defense of the farmer on May 2, 1921. The speech was the result of an article by Chief Justice William Howard Taft, carried in the Washington Post. In it, the former President had claimed that "the Nonpartisan League, a combination of farmers in North Dakota, is not a patriotic party."³ Ladd defended both the farmer and the League. "The farmers of North Dakota," he said, "are neither free lovers, bolsheviks, or socialists."⁴ In defense of the League, Ladd explained its origins, its purposes, and its achievements.⁵ He dismissed the charge of lack of patriotism by extolling the war record of Governor Lynn J. Frazier and citing North Dakota's willingness to supply men, money and materials for the war effort.⁶

It was in this same speech that Ladd set forth his program for prospective farm legislation. In it, he proposed the following:

Constructive legislation providing for cooperative marketing through the principles of collective buying and selling, . . . tariff legislation necessary to protect the farmer and his products, to extend the benefits of the Federal land bank and rural credits more fully to meet the needs of the farmer . . . to have legislation enacted which would encourage land ownership in place of the rapidly increasing tendency [toward tenant farming] . . . , and the honest

³Congressional Record, 67th Congress, 1st Sess., LXI, Part 1, p. 917.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., pp. 918-919.

⁶Ibid., p. 920.

adjustment of taxes [which means] . . . the defeat of the sales tax.⁷

In concluding, Ladd repeated his stand that the legislation he proposed was a means of obtaining justice for the farmer and ending special privilege. It was not, he said, class legislation.⁸

The Farm Bloc

In his effort to obtain this "justice," Ladd became a member of the bipartisan group of Western and Southern progressives known as the "Farm Bloc." The group, organized in the summer of 1921, was dedicated to the promotion of agricultural legislation. The Senate group included the following: William S. Kenyon, Republican, Iowa, chairman; John B. Kendrick, Democrat, Wyoming; George W. Norris, Republican, Nebraska; Frank M. Gooding, Republican, Idaho; Arthur Capper, Republican, Kansas; Ellison D. Smith, Democrat, South Carolina; Robert M. LaFollette, Republican, Wisconsin; Edwin F. Ladd, Republican, North Dakota; Morris Sheppard, Democrat, Texas; Joseph E. Ransdell, Democrat, Louisiana; and Thomas J. Heflin, Democrat, Alabama.⁹ When Kenyon resigned his seat to accept a fed-

⁷Ibid., p. 922.

⁸Ibid. Ladd had previously stated this view in prefacing his platform. See New York Times, November 28, 1920.

⁹Elmer D. Graper, "The American Farmer Enters Politics," Current History, XIX (February, 1924), 818-819. William W. Borah is also listed in the group by some authors. There was a similar, though less organized, group in the House of Representatives.

eral judgeship, Capper became the chairman.¹⁰ The organization was further strengthened following the 1922 elections with the additions of Hendrik Shipstead, Farmer-Laborite, Minnesota; Colonel Smith W. Brookhart, Republican, Iowa; and Lynn J. Frazier, Republican, North Dakota. The last member, Minnesota Farmer-Laborite Magnus Johnson, won his seat in 1923 following the death of Knute Nelson.¹¹

The Sixty-seventh Congress found the Farm Bloc pressing for agricultural legislation while the Republican "regulars" were proposing tariff revision and tax reform.¹² The Farm Bloc met with moderate success on such questions as the regulation of the packing industry and the maintenance of high surtaxes on large incomes.¹³ The agrarian group successfully sponsored legislation which prohibited interstate commerce in filled milk, gave agriculture representation on the Federal Reserve Board, recognized co-operatives in agriculture, and provided for the expansion of agricultural credits.¹⁴ At the same time, the group successfully blocked passage of the Administration's Ship Subsidy bill.¹⁵

¹⁰Ibid., p. 819.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 822-823.

¹²Ibid., p. 819.

¹³Ibid., pp. 819-821.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 820-822.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 822.

The 1922 elections made the Farm Bloc seem more powerful than before. With the addition of new bloc members and the decrease of the nominal Republican majority, the Farm Bloc held the balance in the Senate.¹⁶ Further, it seemed that the progressive forces were making better efforts to plan their attacks. Early in December, 1922, Robert M. LaFollette, in his capacity as chairman of the People's Legislative Service, called a conference of leading progressives, both in and out of Congress. The group, numbering nearly one hundred, met in Washington to plan for progressive cooperation in the Sixty-eighth Congress.¹⁷

But the predictions of Farm Bloc strength did not materialize. In the Sixty-eighth Congress, the group proved sufficiently strong to halt some legislation, but it could not force passage of the desired farm laws. Other groups, it would seem, took their cue from the agrarians. The Sixty-eighth Congress became a virtual fortress of blocs which left much legislation proposed and little enacted. As the New York Evening Post described it, Congress was a "weak, erratic, sometimes mulish, and often panicky, creature of blocs and factions."¹⁸ Generally speaking, legis-

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Belle C. and Fola LaFollette, Robert M. LaFollette, II, pp. 1066-1067. For the proposed program see "Tentative Plans for the New Congress," Congressional Digest, III (November, 1923), 45.

¹⁸"Unmourned Congress," Literary Digest, May 14, 1925, p. 10.

lation was doomed. In legislative accomplishment the Congress posted a low score--one lowering of the income tax and one soldiers' bonus.¹⁹

Though by no means the leader of the Farm Bloc, Ladd served as an important member. His background had made him an expert in agriculture and chemistry. These qualifications made him a significant figure in agricultural debates. Further, he served well off the Senate floor as an adviser to other Senators and as a witness in committee hearings.²⁰ Also, his position on the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry undoubtedly enhanced his ability to influence agricultural legislation.

The Tariff Question

In May, 1921, Congress passed the Fordney Emergency Tariff. It was, as its name implied, a strictly emergency measure, designed to protect agricultural products from foreign competition. While the measure was not wholly favorable to the Farm Bloc, Ladd acquiesced in its passage. The Senator voiced no opposition to the bill because he felt that it would have a beneficial psychological effect. While he doubted that the measure would bring financial benefit to the farmer, he felt that it would do much to pacify the discontented agrarian populace until further

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰"A Chemist in the Senate," Literary Digest, August 5, 1922, p. 28.

action could be taken. In Ladd's eyes, the temporary nature of the bill made its passage permissible.²¹

Late in 1921, the House initiated a permanent tariff measure. This Fordney Tariff was a comparatively mild measure when it left the House, but it received a thorough revamping in the Senate Finance Committee, headed by North Dakota's Porter J. McCumber.²² In the thirteen months of its prenatal existence the bill grew from a slightly tainted fetus to a tentacled monster.

Ladd's part in the transformation, especially in the agricultural segments, was a large one. He appeared before the Senate Finance Committee on several occasions, and the effect which he had on the agricultural schedule was far from small. On one occasion, he received the following mandate from Senator McCumber:

Senator Ladd, as you have made a special study of every agricultural question as president of an agricultural college in the State of North Dakota, and as you are giving special consideration to the cereal question, the committee has felt that they could rest the matter of the agricultural schedule a great deal on your views without calling for additional evidence, and so I will ask you to be just as extensive as you desire on any part of the subject.²³

²¹Letter from Ladd to Judge Charles F. Amidon, April 14, 1921, Charles F. Amidon Papers, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota.

²²Karl Schriftgiesser, This Was Normalcy (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948) pp. 92-95.

²³Hearings Before the Committee on Finance, United States Senate on the Proposed Tariff Act of 1921 (H. R. 7456), p. 3209, in "Addresses in Congress, Ladd, 1921-23," p. 71. A bound scrapbook volume of Ladd's speeches, Edwin F. Ladd Papers, North Dakota State University Library.

Ladd used his influence to gain increased tariff schedules. While he did not consider himself a strong tariff advocate, he stood ready to demand agricultural protection commensurate with that of other industries. He expressed his view to Judge Charles F. Amidon as follows:

I believe if manufacturers and all others are to have protection as in the past the farmer should ask the same protection as afforded other industries.²⁴

With this view, Senator Ladd set out to give the farmer his portion of the tariff spoils.

One item which Ladd attempted to create through tariff protection was a soya bean industry in the Northwest. He felt that a tariff would put the soya bean into more extensive use, and, at the same time, decrease American dependence on foreign oils. Ladd praised the idea of increasing soya bean production, both from the standpoint of national defense and the beneficial effects which its growth would have on the land.²⁵ In his attempt to triple the tariff rate on soya beans, the Senator was defeated.²⁶ While he succeeded in raising the tariff, he could not prevent the continuation of the drawback for oils imported for nonedible uses such as in soap manufacture. Since there was great difficulty in proving that imported oils would be put to edible uses, the tariff was largely nul-

²⁴Letter from Ladd to Amidon, April 14, 1921, Amidon Papers.

²⁵Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 10, pp. 10122-10124.

²⁶Ibid., p. 10128.

lified.²⁷

Ladd achieved a hollow victory in his fight for a protective wheat tariff. He again received higher protection, despite opposition from the milling interests.²⁸ But while he gained protection for wheat producers, the overall tariff picture was to erase the gain.

In his argument for a protective tariff on flaxseed, Ladd maintained that the previously flourishing flax crop could again provide for domestic needs if it were given protection.²⁹ Further, Ladd insisted that the flaxseed tariff be reinforced by a comparable tariff on linseed oil. In this demand, he was aided by testimony from the representatives of the seed crushers.³⁰ In defending his position, the Senator found opposition strong, but not insurmountable. He effectively countered a charge from Utah's Senator William H. King that flax could not survive except as a frontier crop.³¹ In another instance, he was mildly successful in disposing of an argument from

²⁷Ibid., pp. 10148-50.

²⁸"Hearings Before the Senate Finance Committee," pp. 3074-3065, in Ladd, "Addresses in Congress," pp. 62-63.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 3209-3219, in "Addresses in Congress," pp. 71-81.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 3219-3222, in "Addresses in Congress," pp. 81-84.

³¹Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 10, p. 10125. Ladd cited new wilt-resistant varieties.

the manufacturers of linen thread.³² Again, as in the other attempts, Ladd's gains were hollow. Some substitutes for linseed oil remained duty free.³³

While Ladd obtained minor concessions in the tariff controversy, his efforts could not be termed successful. The modicum of protection which his efforts netted was insufficient. The manufacturers were experts in the art of tariff construction, and the retaliatory tariff walls which Europe raised did much to harm the farmer.³⁴ As the New York Times had prophesied, the manufacturers had framed a tariff which provided "the meat for them, for the protectionist speeder of the plow and car, the shell."³⁵

But while Ladd worked for tariff protection for the farmer, he felt that the farmer's problems demanded other solutions.³⁶ One of these other solutions, Ladd felt, was the elimination of the middlemen who were usurping the farmer's profits.³⁷

³²New York Times, December 14, 1921. The thread manufacturers were represented by Robert Barbour. To his charge that American flax fiber was of lower quality than imported flax fiber, Ladd replied that new varieties could be introduced if a demand were developed.

³³"Hearings Before the Senate Finance Committee," p. 3214 in "Addresses in Congress," p. 76. Two of the oils cited were Chinawood oil and perilla oil.

³⁴Schriftgiesser, pp. 94-95.

³⁵New York Times, May 2, 1922.

³⁶Letter from Ladd to John N. Hagen, February 21, 1922, in John N. Hagen Papers, State Historical Society of North Dakota Library, Bismarck.

³⁷New York Times, November 28, 1920.

Marketing Improvements

In his battle against the middleman, Ladd was insistent on the elimination of corrupt and unfair practices. He was especially interested in eliminating the "speculators." To this end, Ladd advocated strict enforcement of the Grain Futures Act, which was designed to end future speculation. When the first futures legislation was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, Congress promptly passed a new version, eliminating the Supreme Court objections.³⁸ Ladd urged the farmers to fight to maintain this regulation, though the "wily traffickers in the products of the toil and sweat of the nation's producers" were attempting to effect the withdrawal of regulation.³⁹ In his attempts to end corrupt practices, Ladd also initiated successful investigations of the practices of both the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Chicago Board of Trade.⁴⁰ He also introduced resolutions to investigate rail rates and other discrepancies.⁴¹

Ladd was also instrumental in enacting legislation to establish legitimacy for agricultural cooperatives.

³⁸Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., LXIV, Part 6, pp. 5702-5703.

³⁹New York Times, July 22, 1923. Ladd cited the falling of grain prices which began nine days after the new law was sustained by the Supreme Court.

⁴⁰Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., LXV, Part 1, pp. 92, 683.

⁴¹Ibid., 67th Cong., 1st Sess., LXI, Part 5, p. 5040.

After the cooperatives gained recognition, the North Dakota Senator worked to make them effective. He introduced legislation directing the Department of Agriculture to aid the cooperatives by promoting sound business practices and by establishing uniform standards of classification and inspection for the organizations.⁴²

In January, 1923, Ladd further attempted to influence agricultural marketing by introducing another piece of legislation. The Norris Marketing and Export Bill had been introduced in 1922, and had received a favorable report from the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, of which Norris was the chairman. The bill had provided for an independent government agency to be established to purchase surplus farm commodities and sell them abroad. This attempt to achieve better marketing conditions was blocked by Administration intervention.⁴³ At Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon's behest, Minnesota's Senator Frank B. Kellogg introduced a substitute measure which provided for advancements from the War Finance Corporation to be made to agencies engaged in the marketing of agricultural staples. The difference between the Norris and Kellogg bills was reflected in their assignment to committees. Norris' bill was reported by the Senate Agricultural

⁴²Ibid., 68th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXVI, Part 4, pp. 4227-4228.

⁴³Schriftgiesser, pp. 102-104. After a two-day fight on the Senate floor, Norris collapsed and had to be carried from the chamber.

Committee, while Kellogg's was assigned to the House Committee on Banking.⁴⁴

Though Ladd felt that the War Finance Corporation, under Eugene Meyer, had aided the farmer, he felt that something more was needed.⁴⁵ Consequently, his 1923 bill more closely resembled the Norris attempt. In it, Ladd called for the establishment of an American Stabilization Corporation, with \$100,000,000 in government-subscribed capital. The bill would have socialized the marketing of sugar, cotton, wool, and cereals by giving the corporation power to operate warehouses and to prohibit exportation of farm products needed in the domestic market.⁴⁶ The bill (S. bill 2964) came too late for passage in the session, and as related above, the Sixty-eighth Congress was most reluctant to pass any legislation--agricultural or otherwise.

Production Aids

As the result of six bad crops in succession, the farmers of North Dakota and Eastern Montana faced a year of good crop prospects and lacked the necessary seed or the credit to obtain it.⁴⁷ In 1921, Senator Ladd and

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 105; Graper, p. 822.

⁴⁵Fargo Courier-News, June 22, 1922.

⁴⁶New York Times, January 4, 1923.

⁴⁷Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., Part 4, p. 3959.

Representative James H. Sinclair of North Dakota co-sponsored legislation to provide seed loans for drought-stricken farmers. The two North Dakotans succeeded in obtaining seed loans for the farmers for both 1921 and 1922.⁴⁸

Another of Ladd's proposals for aiding farm production was his request for the establishment of a group of intermediate credit agencies to provide the farmer with longer term credit at reasonable cost.⁴⁹ Through the efforts of Ladd and the other Farm Bloc members, Congress passed the Agricultural Credits Act in the last days of the Sixty-seventh Congress. The act established twelve Federal Intermediate Credit Banks, one in each of the Federal Land Banks. These were each to be supplied with \$5,000,000 public capital and were to supply loans to agricultural cooperative marketing associations and to banks. A second feature of the measure expanded credit facilities by providing for National Agricultural Credit Corporations, which were to be organized and financed by private funds but were subject to government supervision.⁵⁰

Ladd also hoped to eradicate the barberry bush, the chief cause of black stem rust in wheat. In April,

⁴⁸Billings County Pioneer, Fryburg, North Dakota, January 26, 1922.

⁴⁹New York Times, November 28, 1921. Ladd explained that the farmer needed intermediate credit because he required a longer period of time to turn over his inventory than did most businessmen.

⁵⁰Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., LXIV, Part 6, pp. 5707-5708.

1922, he made a stirring plea for higher appropriations for this purpose. In it, he cited the efforts of his home state toward eradication of the bush. He blamed the failure of the North Dakota effort on the lack of cooperation from surrounding states.⁵¹ As a result of his efforts, the appropriation for barberry eradication was more than doubled,⁵² and the Fargo Forum was able to announce that in the summer of 1922, there would be two men assigned to each county to "remove or superintend the removal of all possible barberry plants."⁵³ The barberry eradication continued, and in 1925, Ladd was able to report substantial decreases in rust losses, together with great progress in eliminating the cause.⁵⁴

When Henry C. Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture in 1921, he saw the plight of the farmers and attempted to call a National Farm Conference to meet in Washington.⁵⁵ The Conference finally met in January and February, 1922. Ladd had been in favor of the conference for some time, and he often conferred with Wallace on the subject. It

⁵¹Ibid., 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 5, pp. 5387, 5394.

⁵²Billings County Pioneer, May 4, 1922. The House appropriation was \$147,000. The Senate asked \$500,000 and the final figure agreed upon was \$350,000.

⁵³Fargo Currier-News, April 16, 1922.

⁵⁴Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXVI, Part 2, pp. 1088-1090.

⁵⁵Schriftgiesser, pp. 99-100.

was under his recommendation that John N. Hagen was named to the North Dakota delegation.⁵⁶ The group met and expressed their views. While little came of the conference recommendations, the group served to encourage the efforts of the Farm Bloc.⁵⁷

Finally, Ladd did much campaigning to increase the effectiveness of agricultural research. His background in both North Dakota and New York had led him to believe strongly in the value of agricultural experiment stations. Ladd often extolled the efforts of agricultural researchers,⁵⁸ and he sponsored several bills to increase their budgets.⁵⁹

Ladd's efforts for the improvement of agriculture can be summarized in two words--protection and cooperation. The chemist-legislator sought protection for the farmer from his various economic enemies. Further, he sought cooperation between government and farmer, between farmer and farmer, and between researcher and farmer.

In the opinion of the writer, Ladd's agricultural

⁵⁶Hagen Papers. Letter from Ladd to Hagen, February 21, 1922; Billings County Pioneer, February 2, 1922. The other members of the North Dakota delegation were Dr. J. L. Coulter, president of North Dakota Agricultural College and Hans Georgensen, president of the North Dakota Farm Bureau Federation.

⁵⁷Ibid. The surprise of the conference was the group's endorsement of the Farm Bloc. This came shortly after President Warren G. Harding had "condemned all combinations in Congress."

⁵⁸Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXVI, Part 2, pp. 1088-1090.

⁵⁹Ibid., 68th Cong., 1st Sess., LXV, Part 1, p. 84; Part 10, p. 9249.

policy was simply one designed to help the farmer as much as was possible. He unsuccessfully attempted to gain for the farmer the same tariff protection as was enjoyed by the manufacturer. Realizing that the tariff alone would not save the farmer, Ladd worked to protect the agricultural industry from both the power of the agricultural interests and the deviltries of nature. While he did much to expand agricultural credit facilities and promote cooperative marketing, he was not the leader in these areas. Ladd's major accomplishments in agricultural legislation lie in his efforts to increase the effectiveness of agricultural research.

CHAPTER IV

SIX NATIONAL ISSUES

As an experimenter and educator, Edwin F. Ladd had not been noted for a compromising attitude. In fact, the first yearbook of North Dakota Agricultural College carried under his picture the slogan, "I won't budge an inch!"¹ Years later the chemist's policy on national issues continued to reflect this reluctance to "budge."

More Pure-Food

As was noted above, Ladd had been among the national leaders in the pure-food crusades of the early twentieth century. His work in this area did not end with his election to the Senate. Though his accomplishments in pure-food legislation during his short Senate term were not as spectacular as his earlier career had been, he definitely sustained his interest in the topic.

Perhaps the most notable item of pure-food legislation passed by the Sixty-seventh Congress was the Filled Milk Bill. The bill attempted to end the sale of filled milk (milk in which the butterfat had been replaced with

¹P. Olaf Sigarseth, "Pure Food Legislation of 1906" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1936), p. 29.

vegetable oils) which was labeled as whole milk.² This bit of legislation received a great deal of publicity because it was closely linked with a political battle. In February, 1923, President Warren G. Harding was encouraging the passage of the Ship Subsidy Bill. As in many other cases in the Sixty-seventh Congress, Harding was unsuccessful in his attempt to gain passage for the ship subsidy. On February 28, largely due the efforts of the Farm Bloc, the ship subsidy was laid aside to make room for the filled milk legislation on the Senate calendar.³

In an impassioned speech, Ladd had attempted to call up the Filled Milk Bill on February 19.⁴ While he failed, his arguments indicated that Ladd had retained his concern for pure-food legislation.

Ladd enumerated three reasons for his concern that the bill be passed. First, he cited the widespread use of filled milk in baby bottles. The milk, almost invariably sold as evaporated milk, was not providing adequate food value for babies. While he admitted that the product was not especially harmful to adults, the Senator noted that the very nature of the primary consumer was

²Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 4, p. 3949.

³Graper, pp. 809-820.

⁴Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 4, p. 3949.

cause for demanding an adequate product.⁵ Secondly, Ladd contended that the consumer had a right to know what he was buying. He cited several cases of mislabeling of milk, especially in New York City, as evidence that the buyer was being cheated.⁶ Finally, Ladd argued for the protection of the American dairy industry. He contended that the inferior product was displacing the production of 40,000 cows and would soon do irreparable damage to the industry.⁷ This last proposition was seriously challenged by other Senators. They maintained that the superior product, if really superior, should have been able to compete favorably.⁸

Ladd's arguments did not cause the passage of the anti-filled milk legislation. The bill would have passed the Senate with little debate eventually. The significance of Ladd's speech lay in two points of his argument. Ladd included in his address several letters and telegrams from individuals and organizations in many areas of the country. These communications urged him to work for the passage of the bill and praised his previous endeavors, thus indicating Ladd's reputation as a Senatorial advocate of pure-

⁵Ibid., pp. 3950-3951.

⁶Ibid., pp. 3951-3952.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

food legislation.⁹ Also, Ladd illuminated his pure-food philosophy in his second argument by openly repudiating the dictum, caveat emptor.

Two of Ladd's other efforts for pure-food legislation also dealt with the protection of the consumer from misbranded articles. In Senate bill 3521, he initiated an attempt to prohibit the transportation and sale of mislabeled field seeds.¹⁰ He followed the seed measure with Senate bill 3517, a general measure prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or transportation of "imitated or misbranded articles of commerce."¹¹

From the limited congressional debate on pure-food legislation, it is difficult to assign Ladd's role in the pure-food legislation of the period. While his communications on the filled milk measure give some indication of his influence, perhaps the best indicators were his committee assignments. All pure-food measures before the Senate were assigned to either the Commerce Committee or the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. Ladd held memberships on both committees.¹²

In the second of Ladd's national issues, he addressed

⁹Ibid., pp. 3949-3950.

¹⁰Ibid., 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 6, p. 6041.

¹¹Ibid., 68th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXVI, Part 1, p. 20.

¹²Ibid., 68th Cong., 1st Sess., LXV, Part 1, p. 156.

himself to the old issue of railroad rates. This time, however, he attempted to remove the railroad as a major factor in the cost of marketing North Dakota wheat.

The St. Lawrence Seaway

Over a luncheon table in a Chicago club two manufacturers were comparing notes. One man was from central Ohio, the other from western Wisconsin. The former was explaining that goods from his Ohio factory destined for California or Oregon were shipped to the Pacific Coast by way of Philadelphia or Baltimore. "That's nothing," said the Wisconsin man. "I'm lots nearer to the Pacific Coast than you are. But the other day when I wanted to go make a car lot shipment to Portland, Oregon, I found that the cheapest way to do it was not by railroad direct but by rail to Baltimore and to Portland by ship through the Panama Canal."¹³

In the preceding anecdote, Gregory Mason aptly portrayed the transportation situation of the American interior in the 1920's. It was cheaper to ship canned goods from the state of Washington to New York City by water than to ship the same goods from Iowa to Oregon by land.¹⁴ The central United States suffered from high shipping rates when Edwin F. Ladd won his Senate seat, and the North Dakota farmers were no exception to the rule.

One of Ladd's platform proposals in 1920 was to decrease the transportation problem by linking the St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes.¹⁵ But to credit Ladd

¹³Gregory Mason, "Moving the Corn Belt to the Sea," World's Work, LV (January, 1928), 308.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 309.

¹⁵New York Times, November 28, 1920.

with the idea would be absurd. The dream of extending the coast of North America into the interior was as old as the search for the Northwest Passage. In fact, by 1920, the idea had become more than a dream. In the summer of that year, the United States and Canada Joint Waterways Commission held hearings in Grand Forks on the subject of a St. Lawrence Seaway.¹⁶

While the project had a great number of supporters in North Dakota and throughout the Midwest in 1920,¹⁷ there were two areas which opposed the project. One, New York, was opposed because the state feared a loss of commerce.¹⁸ This was reinforced in 1920 by Canadian opposition.¹⁹ Despite the strength of the opposing forces, supporters of the project seemed quite confident. The Council of Eighteen States of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Association, meeting in Chicago in 1922, pledged to the public that groundbreaking ceremonies would be held for the project in 1923.²⁰

Throughout the 1920's, the New York and Canadian opponents seemed to alternate in building strength to delay the project. In the early years of the decade, the

¹⁶Grand Forks Herald, May 19, 1920.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸"Will the Atlantic be Moved to the Mississippi Valley?" World's Work, XIVL (August, 1922), 356.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Billings County Pioneer, February 16, 1922.

Canadian opposition kept the project from materializing. The objections voiced in the Winnipeg hearings of the Joint Commission in 1920 were first, that the commercial gains would not justify the expenditure needed; and second, that the Canadian government was not then in a financial position to pay its share of the cost of the project.²¹ Two years later, the port cities of Montreal and Quebec had built enough opposition to again delay it.²² By 1923, New York had departed from her weak, obviously destructive arguments against the proposal and had offered two substitute solutions, both of which involved the building of a canal between Lake Ontario and the Hudson River. The difference between the two proposals was simply that one provided for the use of the Canadian-built Welland Canal, while the other, the "All-American" route, called for the construction of a new canal to be built around Niagara Falls through American territory.²³

Ladd's first recorded mention of the Seaway in the Senate came in 1921 when he presented a concurrent resolution of the North Dakota State Legislature. The resolution praised the efforts of the Tidewater Association and urged the United States to participate in the project

²¹Grand Forks Herald, May 16, 1920. The objection to the cost rested on the fact that Canada was at that time enlarging the Welland Canal.

²²"Will the Atlantic be Moved to the Mississippi Valley?" p. 356.

²³Mason, pp. 315-316.

"for the economic freedom of a landlocked continent."²⁴
Ladd did not refer to the project again until his final year in office.

Ladd attacked the problem again on February 14, 1925. In beginning his address, he cited the plight of the North Dakota farmer--that of "competing with other wheat raising countries upon the longest rail haul in the world." He maintained that the "long haul" was taking too much of the farmer's rightful return for labor. He bemoaned the possibility that, if the condition persisted, North Dakota might be required to relinquish its position as America's second greatest wheat-producing state.²⁵

Next, Ladd shifted his argument from transportation facilities to fertilizer production. He declared that the fertility of the North Dakota soil could be assured only through the use of cheap fertilizer. He envisioned the growth of a great fertilizer industry in the tidewater area, chiefly utilizing native phosphate rock and cheap potash from Germany.²⁶

To finance the project, Ladd proposed the granting of a long-term lease to private power companies, giving them rights to a dam site near Cornwall, New York. To

²⁴Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., LXI, Part 1, p. 183.

²⁵Ibid., 68th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXVI, Part 4, p. 3726.

²⁶Ibid., p. 3727.

this proposal he added the stipulation that the power companies be required to construct plants for the production of fertilizers.²⁷

Two weeks later, the Senator rose again to comment on the project. First, he introduced the following amendment to the River and Harbor Bill:

Providing said Board of Engineers shall make use, so far as applicable, of existing data and shall make its report on or before November 15, 1925.²⁸

Senator Ladd was losing his patience. In a well-documented speech, he charged that while the President and the people of the West expressedly favored the proposal, their efforts had been "strenuously opposed by a powerful group in the East made up of railroad interests and the big financial interests of New York." He claimed that the New York proposals were concocted simply "for the purpose of delaying or preventing the construction of the St. Lawrence ship channel project."²⁹

In presenting and documenting his views, Ladd carefully wove a net of evidence with which to discredit the New York proposals. He cited statements from various engineers that the New York route would not be a good one

²⁷Ibid. The cost estimated for such a project varied from approximately \$250,000,000 to \$100,000,000, depending upon the depth of the channel.

²⁸Ibid., Part 5, p. 4988.

²⁹Ibid.

for ocean-going ships³⁰ and reinforced the same contention by citing reports from New York officials who had studied the subject.³¹ Further, he used evidence from Governor Alfred Smith's speeches to indicate that the state of New York was in fact attempting to "unload the white elephant" New York barge canal on the American public.³²

In an attempt to convince Western and Northwestern Senators to band together to hurry the construction of the seaway project, Ladd presented data on the projected effect the reduced freight rates would have on North Dakota. The data, as supplied by North Dakota Agricultural College Professor Alva H. Benton, estimated that the total saving for North Dakota farmers would be \$11,501,000 in a five-year period.³³

Apparently Ladd's argument was not sufficiently convincing to still the opposition. The conflict between the Western advocates and the Eastern opponents continued,³⁴ as did the Canadian opposition.³⁵ It remained for Ladd's

³⁰Ibid., pp. 4988, 4991.

³¹Ibid., p. 4988.

³²Ibid., p. 4994.

³³Ibid., p. 4990.

³⁴Mason, pp. 316-317.

³⁵Bernard Keble Sandwell, "St. Lawrence Canal: America's Demands," Current History, XXVIII (August, 1928), 751-756. Sandwell related Canada's reasons for not wanting to negotiate new treaties for waterway cooperation.

mid-century successors to complete the project linking the Midwest with the world.

Ladd and Muscle Shoals

Ladd requested the establishment of a fertilizer plant in his plan for the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway. This request was the result of the failure of his previous attempt to establish fertilizer facilities at the proposed Muscle Shoals project.

The Muscle Shoals project grew out of the supply problem resulting from World War I. During the war, the United States found that activities of European belligerents could seriously retard the importation of strategic materials. One of the items for which the United States was dependent on imports was Chilean nitrates. Since nitrates were essential in the production of explosives, government officials began searching for a domestic source of fixed nitrogen.

Ladd, however, was more interested in finding a domestic source of fixed nitrogen for fertilizer manufacture. In this line, too, there was a great need for domestic nitrates. While farmers had a great need for fertilizers, the Chilean export duties and the enormous handling costs combined to form a formidable price barrier which retarded the use of fertilizers.³⁶

³⁶Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 10, 10098.

After World War I, the United States had attempted to alleviate the situation by constructing two nitrate plants on the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals. The plants, however, did not meet America's needs. Part of the problem lay in the manufacturing process which was then in use. The Haber process was neither safe nor efficient.³⁷

In 1922, Henry Ford offered the United States government a solution. In his offer, the automobile magnate proposed to establish a private corporation for the development of the Muscle Shoals dams and nitrate plants. In exchange for a one hundred-year lease on the government property, Ford agreed to pay \$46,000 per year into a "sinking fund" to amortize the government investment and \$55,000 per year for maintenance and repairs on the government facility. Also included in the Ford offer was an agreement to produce nitrates in the No. 1 plant and maintain the No. 2 plant for reactivation on a five-day notice in the event of war. Ford also agreed to submit to a board regulation of his fertilizer prices.³⁸

The Ford proposal passed the House easily but was blocked in the Senate. The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry gave an unfavorable report on the

³⁷Ibid., 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 3, pp. 3247-3251.

³⁸The plan is referred to on several occasions in the Congressional Record. For the most complete account see Report 831, Part II, Senate Reports, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 2, pp. 3-5.

bill.³⁹ In its place, Senator George W. Norris, chairman of the committee, advanced a substitute plan. Norris proposed that a government corporation be constituted to carry the Muscle Shoals development to completion. His plan called for a corporation, using government funds and under the control of three government directors, to produce nitrates for the manufacture of explosives. There was no stipulation concerning the manufacture of fertilizers.⁴⁰

In the Agriculture Committee's majority report, Norris expressed several objections to the Ford offer. He warned that the acceptance of the Ford offer would mean defeat in "the fight for the preservation of the natural resources of the country." He further cautioned against the establishing of a precedent that would "take from the control of the people the greatest resources that have ever been given to man by an all-wise Creator." Norris denied that Ford had guaranteed to reduce fertilizer costs or to produce electricity for public consumption. He charged that the acceptance of the Ford proposal would be a gift from the American people to Henry Ford. He cited the value of the property and low interest rate involved as evidence that Ford was attempting to

³⁹George Norris, "Senate Committee Report Opposing Ford Offer," Congressional Digest, II (October, 1922), 10.

⁴⁰Report 831, Part II, Senate Reports, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 2, pp. 8-9.

milk the American public.⁴¹

Other opposition to the automobile manufacturer's proposal emulated from the press and from other members of the Senate. Senator William B. McKinley of Illinois charged that Ford, with his lengthy lease, would create "a new Detroit" at Muscle Shoals. Further, he charged that the government would have no control over Ford's power rates.⁴² The New York Herald, too, attacked the proposal, terming it "a crazy business." In citing statements by Secretary of War John Weeks, the paper discounted Ford's offer to produce fertilizers.⁴³ The St. Louis Times also echoed the view that the proposal was "a good business proposition for Mr. Ford" and repudiated the notion that Ford's willingness and ability to finance the project gave "a patriotic aspect to his attitude."⁴⁴

The Ford offer also had a small following in the press and the Senate. Kansas Senator Arthur Capper defended the lease period as normal and lauded Ford's plan to carry out research on a commercial scale.⁴⁵ The Philadelphia Public Ledger praised the offer of cheap

⁴¹Norris, p. 10.

⁴²"Senators Discuss Ford Offer," Congressional Digest, II(October, 1922), 14.

⁴³"Editorial Views on the Ford Offer," Congressional Digest, II(October, 1922), 22.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵"Senators Discuss Ford Offer," p. 14.

fertilizers as "a mighty encouragement to the man between the plow handles" and blamed the fertilizer manufacturers for the opposition to the measure.⁴⁶

Ladd was perhaps the leading proponent of the Ford proposal. He presented the Agriculture Committee's minority report favoring the measure,⁴⁷ and he continued his advocacy of the offer, even after Ford had withdrawn it.⁴⁸

Ladd's first point in favoring the proposal was his lack of confidence in the government's ability to develop the project successfully. He felt that the needed research could best be done by private enterprise.⁴⁹ The Senator believed that the finest personnel available should be employed. He contended that a private concern which was not faced with Civil Service wage ceilings could better obtain the needed researchers.⁵⁰ While Norris proposed a \$2,000,000 appropriation for improving

⁴⁶"Editorial Views on the Ford Offer," p. 22.

⁴⁷Edwin F. Ladd, "Senate Committee Report Favoring the Ford Offer," Congressional Digest, II (October, 1922), 11.

⁴⁸Edwin F. Ladd, "Why I Am for Henry Ford's Offer for Muscle Shoals," Saturday Evening Post, November 29, 1924, pp. 30ff.

⁴⁹Edwin F. Ladd, "What do we Radicals Want?" as told to Theodore H. Knappen (clipping), December 9, 1922, no magazine title, Ladd Collection. Ladd said he favored Ford's proposal because "both the old parties were too rotten to entrust such a government job to."

⁵⁰Report 831, Part II, Senate Reports, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 2, p. 3.

the Haber process, Ladd discounted such research as a waste of time and money.⁵¹

Ladd refuted several of the charges against the Ford offer. While Norris had viewed the building material at Muscle Shoals as a gift to Ford, Ladd charged that the material was leased government property and could not be sold.⁵² Moreover, he termed the resale value of the material "practically nil." While Norris, John Weeks, and others had charged a lack of government control over the project, Ladd denied the charge. He stated that fertilizer prices were to be controlled by a board and that the sale of public power, should Ford enter the field, would be subject to the same controls as were other public utilities.⁵³ In further defense of the proposal, Ladd pointed to the concessions given the dye industry during and after World War I. "Why the difference?" he asked. He answered as follows:

In the case of the dye industry Congress has heard and promptly responded to the voice of big business, while in the case of the Ford offer, Congress has failed to answer the appeals of the farmers for a decision.⁵⁴

Ladd praised the Ford offer, claiming that, while it did not present all of the answers, it was a better

⁵¹ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 4, p. 3247.

⁵² Ladd, "Why I Am For Henry Ford's Offer for Muscle Shoals," p. 66.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

proposal than others which had been offered.⁵⁵ He speculated that the "roads of by-product production" on which Mr. Ford's research program would lead him might open new chemical frontiers.⁵⁶ Finally, Ladd expressed the feeling that the development of Muscle Shoals might, through increasing America's deterrent fire power, prevent a war.⁵⁷

Ladd's decision to embrace the Ford offer illustrated his courage to stand for his beliefs. His study of the situation had convinced him that government development was not the answer. While his Nonpartisan League background had instilled in him a reverence for the doctrine of government ownership, he felt that rapid, efficient development was the solution to the fertilizer problem. He maintained his arguments though his stand was not popular either with the state press⁵⁸ or with his associates in the state party.⁵⁹

In 1924 Henry Ford withdrew his offer as a result of the rebukes of popular opinion and the lack of coopera-

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 68.

⁵⁶Ladd, "Why I Am for Henry Ford's Offer for Muscle Shoals," p. 73.

⁵⁷Ibid. Ladd referred to an article which claimed that war with Japan was inevitable.

⁵⁸Grand Forks Herald, June 27, 1922. The Fargo Currier-News, a pro-League paper, made no mention of Ladd's stand.

⁵⁹Letter from W. D. Skeels of Senator Lynn J. Frazier's office to John N. Hagen, December 19, 1924, Hagen Papers.

tion from government officials.⁶⁰ Again as in the case of the St. Lawrence Seaway, Ladd did not live to see the culmination of the project.⁶¹

Teapot Dome

Senator Ladd had been assigned to the committee on Public Lands and Surveys in 1921. The main work of the committee was concerned with the Northern Pacific Railroad land grants, transfers of national park lands, bridge construction, and surveys of Indian reservations. While an occasional issue drew some public attention, the committee assignment would not seem to the writer a likely place to gain publicity.

The event which gave a great amount of publicity to the committee was Robert M. LaFollette's resolution of April 28, 1922. The document instructed the Public Lands and Surveys Committee to investigate the "entire subject of leases upon naval oil reserves" and "to report its findings and recommendations to the Senate."⁶² It was this resolution which linked Edwin F. Ladd to one of the most explosive governmental scandals in history--the Teapot

⁶⁰Ladd, "Why I Am for Henry Ford's Offer for Muscle Shoals," p. 30.

⁶¹Frank Freidel, America in the Twentieth Century (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1960), pp. 324-325. The government development was instituted under the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933.

⁶²Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., LXII, Part 6, p. 6041.

Dome Scandal.

Prior to its adjournment in 1921, the committee succeeded in uncovering a scandal which soiled the Harding Administration as no administration since Grant's had been soiled. The inquiry, led by Democratic Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana, discovered that two cabinet members had been involved in a conspiracy to place the Naval Reserve Oil lands in the hands of private interests. The first step in the process was an executive order on May 31, 1921, transferring the administration of the reserves from the Navy Department to the Department of the Interior; the transfer gave control of those lands to the anti-conservationist Secretary of the Interior, Albert B. Fall. Fall and Edward Demby, Secretary of the Navy, then leased the greater portion of certain reserve lands to Edward L. Doheny, who was acting for the Sinclair Oil Company. Harry Sinclair, the owner of the company, received special consideration in the bidding. It was this disclosure, coupled with the discovery that Fall had received a \$100,000 "loan" from the oil interests, which caused so much embarrassment to the Republican Administration.⁶³

The hero of the investigations, or in some reports the villain, was Thomas J. Walsh. When LaFollette first introduced his resolution, he requested Walsh to take charge of the prosecution. The Montanan's background in consti-

⁶³Thomas J. Walsh, "What the Oil Inquiry Developed," Outlook, May 21, 1924, pp. 96-98.

tutional law prompted the request. While Walsh was at that time holding more committee assignments than any other Senator, he consented to take the lead "at LaFollette's insistence."⁶⁴ In the investigation, Walsh was characterized as being "not very impressive looking" but having a quiet assurance and an excellent command of his subject. It was undoubtedly his "determination and drive"⁶⁵ which sustained the investigations.

Edwin Ladd's part in the work of the committee has seldom received more than a small mention, but the writer feels that he was a significant factor in the investigations. Ladd's presence on the committee was one of the reasons why LaFollette framed his resolution so that the Public Lands Committee had charge of the investigation. The Wisconsin Senator felt that the committee membership would ensure a thorough probe of the situation. Though LaFollette recognized that Chairman Reed Smoot and Wisconsin's Irvin Lenroot would be hostile, he felt that Ladd, together with Republicans George Norris and Peter Norbeck, and Democrats Walsh and John B. Kendrick would favor a thorough investigation.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Belle C. and Fola LaFollette, Robert M. LaFollette, II (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), 1051-1052.

⁶⁵Bruce Bliven, "Wheeler's Way and Walsh's," New Republic, April 2, 1924, p. 140.

⁶⁶Belle C. and Fola LaFollette, Robert M. LaFollette, II, 1050-1052.

In the first months of the investigation, Walsh was a "lonely prosecutor." As LaFollette had predicted, Smoot and Lenroot were "if not hostile, absolutely unprepared to investigate."⁶⁷ The Republican majority was at best apathetic, and with the exception of the encouragement of George Norris, the best help Walsh could get was a "not unfriendly" attitude from Ladd and Norbeck.⁶⁸ Later, however, the record showed Ladd to be voting with Walsh on several questions in which the Republican leaders were attempting to impede the investigation.⁶⁹

In March, 1924, Ladd was appointed chairman of the committee and he presided over its deliberations for the ensuing months. During Ladd's chairmanship the main concern of the committee was the establishing of relationships between the oil interests and the Republican nominating convention of 1920. Ladd sat "looking like a wise elderly college president, with his little blond goatee now turning gray"⁷⁰ and directed the proceedings as former train robber Al Jennings testified that oil man Jake Hamon had told him "that Harding would be nominated . . . , and it

⁶⁷Burl Noggle, Teapot Dome: Oil and Politics in the 1920's (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), p. 66.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., Part 2, pp. 1689-1690. Also Ibid., Part 3, p. 2245. On February 21, 1924, Ladd was one of only ten Republicans to vote for a motion asking Navy Secretary Demby to resign.

⁷⁰Bliven, "Wheeler's Way and Walsh's," p. 150.

had cost him a million dollars."⁷¹ Though the charge was denied by Republican National Chairman Will H. Hays, the committee spent some time questioning witnesses before the issue was discarded.⁷² Another witness on the question of political affiliations with the oil interests in 1920 was Harry Sinclair. When Sinclair refused to answer ten of the committee's questions, Ladd brought him to court. Sinclair had the distinction of receiving the first contempt-of-the-Senate conviction in thirty years.⁷³

When the committee began to question geologists again in April, 1924, public interest dropped. On May 2, 1924, Frances E. Warren, chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, reported to the Senate that the cost of the investigation had risen to \$32,808. At Walsh's suggestion, Ladd adjourned the committee, subject to his call, on May 14.⁷⁴

At the risk of over emphasis of Ladd's role, the writer feels compelled to point to several pertinent points concerning Ladd's chairmanship. First, the concern of the committee in attempting to establish connections between the oil swindle and the Republican National Convention left Ladd open to criticism and intimidation. While evidence is fragmentary on this point, it appears that Ladd's and

⁷¹Noggle, Teapot Dome, p. 142-143.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 145.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 144.

the committee's treatment by party leaders was less than cooperative.⁷⁵ Further, it appears that Ladd did suffer intimidation⁷⁶ and even threats on his life.⁷⁷

Ladd and the Banks

Edwin F. Ladd was a chemist, educator, researcher, and legislator. He was not an economist. While his views on the banking situation and his efforts to change banking policy did not meet with the approval of economists, Ladd spoke more often on the banking question than he did on most other issues.

In 1921, Ladd sponsored two bills, both entitled "A bill to establish an honest money system" They gave an indication of Ladd's intense hatred and distrust of the American banking system. In both, he expressed a concern that ownership of homes was being discouraged and that the money system was simply being used for the benefit of the bankers.⁷⁸ In the first bill Ladd proposed that the banks should be controlled by the postmasters ra-

⁷⁵Bliven, "Wheeler's Way and Walsh's," p. 150. The committee was displaced from its room and moved to a less desirable location because some Senate ladies wanted a tea party.

⁷⁶Memorial Addresses, p. 31.

⁷⁷Clipping (undated) in Ladd collection, North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, Fargo. The clipping mentioned an investigation of threats on Ladd's life. The origin of the threats was thought to be the West Coast.

⁷⁸Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., Part 5, 4572 and Part 6, p. 6471.

ther than by the bankers. His presentation of the bill was jeered by the press. Editors asked him if he wanted to question why bridgebuilders controlled the building of bridges or why farmers controlled the farms, or even why Senators controlled the Senate.⁷⁹

While Ladd departed from his advocacy of postmaster-banking later in his Senatorial career, he continued to point to bankers as the villains in the melodrama of farm life in the 1920's. He deplored the lack of farm credit, which he often referred to as "drastic deflation." One example of Ladd's tactics in creating the picture of banker villainy was his citation of the Hazzard Circular of 1862, issued by a solicitor for the English Banker's Association.⁸⁰ In a speech before the Political Study Club of Washington in 1924, Ladd carried his accusations against the bankers even farther, charging that the bankers were involved in a plot which, if allowed to succeed, would "chain the world into lock step for centuries."⁸¹

Ladd had a tendency to carry his attacks on the bankers into almost every issue on which he spoke. One example of this was his speech on the Veteran's Compensation Bill. Speaking at Holyoke, Massachusetts, in June, 1922, Ladd offered an amendment to the veteran's bonus, calling

⁷⁹New York Times, September 12, 1921.

⁸⁰Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 10, p. 9092.

⁸¹Ibid.

for the banks to be taxed to defray the expense of the soldier's bonus.⁸² Ladd asserted that, while the American soldiers were sacrificing themselves in the war, the bankers had been accumulating profits. He bemoaned the failure of the United States Government to "reach into the gold laden coffers of these profiteers and compel them to divide, in an equitable manner, their outrageous profits."⁸³

If the bankers were villains in Ladd's eyes, the Federal Reserve System was the devil. The Senator made repeated reference to the System as a conspiracy to manipulate finances for the benefit of the financial interests. In his Holyoke address, Ladd attacked the Federal Reserve as the cause of the unemployment problem in the United States. He blamed the unemployment figure of five million largely on the "constriction of credits" brought about by Federal Reserve policy. In turn, he blamed the unemployment as a cause of America's surpluses, estimating that it had removed \$20 million per day from the purchasing power of the American economy. Further, he claimed that the deflation which had caused a further spread between United States and foreign exchanges was part of the scheme to hold up the value of European war securities. Basically Ladd could not understand, he said, why the banks under the Federal Reserve System should be allowed to make money

⁸²Fargo Currier-News, June 22, 1922.

⁸³Quoted in Ibid.

through "bookkeeping tricks." He cited the comparative figures for 1914 and 1920 of both cash in vaults and debts due to banks. While the former figure had dropped by one-third, the latter had doubled.⁸⁴

In still another attack on the Federal Reserve, Ladd in 1923 cited as evidence a report from the Manufacturer's Record which described a sinister meeting of the Federal Reserve Board and other financiers in which the group supposedly conspired to constrict the credit in the United States.⁸⁵ In the same speech, Ladd summed up his assessment of the work of the Federal Reserve: "For defeating the very purpose its sponsors proudly claimed for it, it cannot be matched."⁸⁶

Ladd's continued distrust of the banks and the Federal Reserve System was probably partially resultant from his rural background and the experiences he and others around him had had with banks. Also, the agricultural depression of the 1920's probably had a great effect on his position. The third factor in producing Ladd's militancy toward banking and bankers may have been his political background. He was closely affiliated with the Nonpartisan League, the instigator of America's only state-owned bank. Whatever the cause or combination of causes of Ladd's at-

⁸⁴Ibid., April 18, 1922.

⁸⁵Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXIV, Part 10, p. 9092.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 9096.

titude, there is not any doubt that he was sincere in his belief that "there is not one big and important question before our people today that is inseparable from the money question."⁸⁷

The Supreme Court

A conservative group of judges dominated the Supreme Court in the early 1920's, and Chief Justice William Howard Taft used his influence with President Warren G. Harding to secure more conservative justices for the bench.⁸⁸

The high court had especially angered progressive forces with two 5-to-4 decisions in which it declared 1) that the Federal Child Labor Law was unconstitutional, and 2) that the labor unions were subject to anti-trust regulations and were liable for damages resulting from labor disputes.⁸⁹

The result of these and other decisions was a movement in 1922 to amend the Constitution to limit the Court's power to nullify acts of Congress. On June 14, 1922, Robert M. LaFollette opened his attack at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Cincinnati. His attack on the "judicial oligarchy" was well received, and the Federation later called on Congress to submit an amendment to curb judicial power.⁹⁰ The proposal also found a place

⁸⁷Fargo Courier-News, April 18, 1922.

⁸⁸Donald R. McCoy, Calvin Coolidge: the Quiet President (New York: the Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 172.

⁸⁹Belle C. and Fola LaFollette, p. 1055.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 1056-1057. LaFollette's program also

on the program of the progressive conference in Washington in December of 1922.⁹¹

Ladd's position on the Supreme Court limitation question appears to have been a combination of radical and conservative elements. While the Senator felt a need for limitation, he did not embrace the radical program of La-Follette. He did not see the need for an amendment to rectify the situation. Ladd believed that the high court would uphold a law which limited its powers. Speaking in Los Angeles in 1923, he proposed legislation declaring that "no act of Congress should be declared unconstitutional unless by a vote of eight members of the court, and no act of any sovereign State Legislature should be declared unconstitutional by a vote of less than seven members."⁹²

In defending his proposal, Ladd demonstrated his conservative view. He expressed concern that America was approaching "that point of public discontent aroused by assumed abuses of usurped power." He advocated action of a less radical nature lest the popular opinion "swing the pendulum too far in the other direction."⁹³

Ladd's concern for the problem probably came from

included provision for Congress to override a review by the Supreme Court.

⁹¹"Tentative Plans for Political Programs in the New Congress," Congressional Digest, III (November, 1923), 45.

⁹²New York Times, May 23, 1923.

⁹³Ibid.

several decisions in which the Supreme Court had obstructed farm legislation. In 1920 and 1921, the farm loan program had experienced difficulty due to a long fight in the court over the constitutionality of the Farm Loan Act.⁹⁴ And in 1922, the court declared the first Grain Futures Act unconstitutional, thus causing a delay in enforcement and requiring Congressional revisions of the act (see Chapter iii).

One common denominator of the six issues above seems to be their connection with Ladd's oft sung theme, the fight against the interests. In each case, the Senator fought what he felt were the predators of mankind. On the pure-food question, he battled the manufacturers. In his fight for the Ford proposal and in the Teapot Dome affair, he engaged the forces of the fertilizer manufacturers and the oil interests. His unsuccessful battle for easy credit found him facing the financial concerns. And in his attempt to limit the power of the judiciary, he combatted the general conservatism of the interests as embodied in the Supreme Court.

A second common denominator of five of the six issues seems to be their connection with Ladd's agricultural policy. Ladd's concern with the pure-food question was partly a concern for the welfare of agriculture. In advocating the Seaway and the Ford proposal, he worked for

⁹⁴New York Times, October 15, 1921.

better conditions for agricultural marketing and production. In his arguments for banking reform, he attempted to improve agricultural credit; and in his proposal to limit the Supreme Court, he tried to remove the judicial obstacles to agricultural legislation.

Thirdly, all six of the issues are characterized by Ladd's lack of success in promoting his stand. The only bright spot in his fight for pure-food legislation was the filled milk measure. While Ladd was a leader in its advocacy, it would be injudicious to credit him with its enactment. After all, a declaration in favor of the measure seemed almost like a declaration for motherhood, the Salk vaccine, or the five-cent cup of coffee. Ladd achieved less satisfaction in his advocacies of the Ford proposal, the St. Lawrence Seaway, the reform of the Federal Reserve, and the limitation of judiciary power. When the Muscle Shoals development was undertaken under government auspices, few recalled Ladd's arguments for earlier development. It is doubtful that anyone present at the St. Lawrence Seaway dedication could recall Ladd's work. The monetary system has, if anything, gone further from Ladd's ideals. Nor has the Supreme Court been limited in its review powers. Even on the Teapot Dome question, Ladd did not live to see the completion of his investigations.

CHAPTER V

LADD ON THE FOREIGN SCENE

In his first venture into the field of foreign affairs, Ladd demonstrated that the World War I isolationism of his state was not dead. He must have seemed to be the isolationist protege of Asle J. Gronna in 1921 as he introduced the following resolution (S. Res 116):

Resolved, that it is the sense of the Senate that no declaration of war by Congress and no act of war by the executive branch [should be made]. . . . except to suppress insurgence or repel invasion until the question at issue shall be submitted to the voters of the United States.¹

In discussing the resolution, Ladd showed a distrust toward diplomatic legerdemain and the people who performed it. He felt that the question of war was one of "transcendent importance" to the nation and that Congress should be accurately informed of the views of the American people before taking military action. He touted his resolution as a device to end the "spectacle of a few irresponsible and unscrupulous diplomats conspiring behind closed doors to make pawns of peaceable people in order to gratify their

¹ Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., LXI, Part 5, 4237.

commercial, material, and political ambitions."²

The scientist-legislator's foreign policy views remained, for the most part, in the isolationist vein. Ladd was quite concerned that the United States not become entangled in the affairs of other nations without good reason. He especially feared that American commercial interests abroad might cause such entanglements. Perhaps the best expression of his attitude is found in a resolution (Senate Concurrent Resolution 22) which he submitted in the last months of 1924. It directed the various government departments and boards to refrain from the following actions, except by Congressional order:

(1) Directly or indirectly engaging the Government of the United States, or otherwise on its behalf, to supervise the fulfillment of financial arrangements between citizens of the United States and sovereign Governments of political subdivisions thereof, whether or not recognized de jure or de facto by the United States Government, or (2) In any manner whatsoever giving official recognition to any arrangement which may commit the Government of the United States to any form of military intervention in order to compel the alleged obligations of sovereign or subordinate authority, or of any corporations or individuals, or to deal with any such arrangement except to secure the settlement of claims of the United States, or of United States citizens through ordinary channels of law provided therefor in the respective foreign jurisdictions, or through duly authorized and accepted agencies.³

Even in his foreign policy proposals, Ladd continued to attack the commercial interests.

²Billings County Pioneer, Fryburg (North Dakota), August 12, 1921.

³Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 3rd Sess., LXVI, Part 1, p. 32. Ladd had some supporters speaking in favor of this resolution. The New York Times, February

As previously shown, Ladd's concern with domestic questions was more than sufficient to occupy his attentions. This factor, coupled with the Senator's relative lack of preparation in foreign affairs, probably explains the infrequency of his foreign policy statements. There were, however, three foreign policy issues on which the North Dakota solon expressed his opinions--namely, the funding of the British war debt, the recognition of the Obregon government in Mexico, and the recognition of the Soviet government in Russia.

The British War Debt

In 1922, the United States and Great Britain agreed to negotiate a formula for the repayment of World War I loans. The five-man American Debt Commission, headed by Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, was assigned to confer with a similar group led by British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Baldwin.⁴ The final agreement of the two commissions was announced by President Warren G. Harding in early February. Harding felt satisfied with the result of the negotiations and asked the Senate for early ratification.⁵

26, 1925, mentioned several. Among them were John Dewey, the noted educator; Lewis B. Gannett, associate editor of the Nation; and James Weldon Johnson, former ambassador to Nicaragua.

⁴"The Cancellation Controversy," Congressional Digest, II (December, 1922), 77.

⁵New York Times, February 8, 1923.

Exactly one week after the announcement, Edwin F. Ladd registered his protest. In his speech on February 14, Ladd spoke at great length in disputing both the legality of the document and the injustice of its terms. In questioning the legality of the agreement, Ladd first cited the law which had created the commission. He charged that the group had exceeded its authority both by extending the time limit for repayment and by establishing an interest rate which fell far below the minimum set by Congress.⁶ Ladd denounced the commission for being duped by the arguments of Baldwin into accepting a low rate of interest and a long repayment period. The Senator claimed that the plan represented a rate of interest which was unrealistic when compared with the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent paid on United States bonds. As such, he said, it was "a subsidy to the British taxpayers at the expense of the American taxpayers."⁷

Ladd showed extreme bitterness toward Baldwin in his address. He pictured the British statesman as a knave who had used his ability to "talk with a poor mouth" to convince the American negotiators that Britain could not meet higher rates of interest or more rapid rates of re-

⁶Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., LXIV, Part 4, p. 3609. The law had forbidden the following items: 1) extending the maturity of the debt bonds past June 15, 1947, 2) fixing the interest at a rate less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, 3) exchanging the bonds of one country for those of another, 4) cancelling any part of the debt.

⁷Ibid., p. 3614.

payment.⁸ Ladd pointed to Baldwin's efforts to quell British objections to the agreement as evidence that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was satisfied with the results of his pauper impersonations.⁹

But while Ladd suspected a "British swindle," he was not ready to call for immediate repudiation of the agreement. What he did advocate was a more thorough investigation of the question. The investigation, he said, should explore the ability of Britain to repay, the cost of such favorable terms if projected to include the other debtor nations of Europe, and effects that such low rate bonds might have on the American government securities market.¹⁰

In searching for causes for Ladd's attack, this writer feels that two elements must be considered. First, Ladd's agricultural program, as presented above (see Chapter ii), was partly designed to provide low cost agricultural credit. It must therefore have seemed quite unfair in Ladd's mind that a foreign government should so readily obtain more favorable credit terms than were available to the American farmer. Secondly, Ladd was probably attempting to defend his own position. The North Dakotan was proud of both his Senate seat and his agricultural background, and Baldwin had indiscreetly insulted both.¹¹ Ladd's

⁸Ibid., p. 3610.

⁹Ibid., p. 3613.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 3614.

¹¹New York Times, January 29, 1923. Baldwin criti-

mention of the "bad taste"¹² of Baldwin's remarks and his unflattering characterizations of the British commissioner lead the writer to feel that the latter explanation for Ladd's tirade is most apt.

Ladd's objections to the funding agreement went unheeded. But while he did not succeed in defeating the Harding Administration's wishes in this issue, his proposals for a more cordial relationship with America's neighbor to the South seemed more successful.

Recognition of Mexico

On July 19, 1922, Senator Ladd took advantage of a lull in the tariff debate to address the Senate on the subject of recognition of the Mexican government under President Alvaro Obregon. His ninety-minute discourse set off a chain of events which resurrected the issue from the grave in which the Harding Administration had buried it.

The Mexican government had been controlled by Obregon and his associates since the murder of former dictator Venustiano Carranza in 1920. Obregon had needed United States recognition and assistance in his rebuilding

cized the Senate saying that the group did not understand international finance and was dominated by rural influence. Several Senators had previously expressed their disapproval.

¹²Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., LXIV, Part 4, p. 3610. Ladd referred to Baldwin's statements with the following retort: "Even the farmer of the West understands that interest runs along at a predetermined rate which is not subject to reduction on a hard luck plea."

program, but such was not forthcoming. Further, as if on cue from the United States, France and England had also withheld their recognition and support.¹³ The issue of recognition was brought forward in 1921, but a strong expression of Administration disapproval apparently squelched the attempt.¹⁴

Briefly, Ladd's argument hinged on a disarming of the Administration's statements opposing recognition. The Senator first cited the stability of the Obregon regime, calling it "the most stable since the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz in 1911."¹⁵ He also cited the Mexican advances in both education and land distribution as further evidence of the virtue of the Obregon government.¹⁶ In answer to the Administration's charge that Obregon had made no provision for settlement of boundary disputes and personal claims, Ladd cited the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and Obregon's open invitations to all countries to submit claims.¹⁷

The chief contention of Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes was yet to be attacked. Hughes had anchored

¹³Ernest Gruening, "Will Mexico Be Recognized," The Nation, May 23, 1923, p. 589.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 2nd Sess., Part 10, p. 10417.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 10419.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 10421.

his argument on the refusal of Mexico to change two sections of her constitution of 1917.¹⁸ Ladd first asserted that the two sections in question were not a serious threat to the United States citizens who remained within the law.¹⁹ Secondly, he turned his defense of Mexico into an attack on Hughes. The Senator maintained that Hughes, not Obregon, was unreasonable. Ladd pointed to the absurdity of Hughes' asking the Mexican leaders to "bind themselves by treaty to a preconceived interpretation of the fundamental law of their land."²⁰

In his speech the Senator made an explosive point when he referred to America's "dollar diplomacy," charging that, in view of the State Department's recent policies in Latin America, it seemed that "an apparent holy alliance between certain powerful financial interests and our Department of State, in the minds of many, already has reduced more than one heretofore independent Republic to the status of a Wall Street Protectorate."²¹

This was the statement which caused a small riot in the State Department. The Department hurriedly issued

¹⁸Ibid., p. 10423. One of the sections in question reads as follows: "The executive shall have the exclusive right to expel from the Republic forthwith, and without judicial powers, any foreigner whose presence he may deem inexpedient."

¹⁹Ibid., p. 10422.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., p. 10426.

a strong policy statement toward Mexico saying that recognition was not forthcoming. This, in turn, brought about an expression of concern by Mexico's Minister of Finance, Adolfo de la Huerta. The issue cooled a bit when the State Department assured Mexico that the original message had become "garbled in transmission or translation" and that our government's only concern was for financial considerations for confiscated land.²²

To claim that Ladd's action brought about the recognition of the Obregon government would be to over-emphasize the Senator's role. The Ladd speech must be viewed as simply a link in the chain of events which forced the negotiation of a recognition settlement in August of 1923.²³

In searching for motives for Ladd's action, one must go back to the first months of 1922. The junior Senator was at that time corresponding with William Lemke. In March, Lemke urged Ladd to work toward the recognition of Mexico. He emphasized that he had "never found Mexico in a more peaceful condition than it is at the present."²⁴ Ladd replied that he was conferring with Vice President

²²New York Times, July 20 and 27, 1922. The reason Obregon did not reply was that he had been confined to his bed for nine days.

²³Gruening, p. 589. Two American commissioners met with two Mexican commissioners from May until August, 1923. The New York Times, September 1, 1923, noted the final recognition.

²⁴Letter from Lemke to Ladd, March 4, 1922, Lemke Papers. Ladd had previously asked for Lemke's views.

Calvin Coolidge on the subject,²⁵ and by April, Ladd was writing optimistic letters to Lemke on his progress in the matter.²⁶

In view of the foregoing correspondence, the writer tends to view the July oratory as the result of Ladd's apparently frustrated negotiations earlier in the year. What these negotiations were and whether or not they included officials in addition to Coolidge can not be ascertained in the available correspondence. The writer feels that Ladd must have made further attempts along this line.

The writer also recognizes the effect that Lemke had on the Senator's efforts. That Ladd had the utmost confidence in Lemke's knowledge of Mexican affairs is witnessed by the Senator's attempt to secure Lemke's appointment as ambassador to Mexico in 1923.²⁷ While Lemke probably did not plant the recognition idea in Ladd's mind, the Fargo attorney most certainly fostered it.

Russian Recognition

The "Red Scare" immediately following World War I reflected the suspicion that the American people felt toward the infant Soviet regime in Russia with its doctrine of world revolution. To preach in favor of recognition of this outlaw government was a heresy of the first order.

²⁵Ladd to Lemke, March 10, 1922, Lemke Papers.

²⁶Ladd to Lemke, April 4, 1922, Lemke Papers.

²⁷Coolidge to Ladd, November 2, 1923, Lemke Papers.

Edwin F. Ladd was such a heretic.

Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes stated the view of the Harding Administration in March, 1921. He claimed that there was no possibility of resuming trade with Russia unless production should come about. In his view, production meant the abandonment of some of the principles of communism.²⁸ Three months later, the Administration re-emphasized this view by condemning Senator William Borah's resolution favoring recognition.²⁹

While Ladd had supported the Borah resolution, he did not issue public statements on the question until 1923. His first mention of the Russian situation came in a speech condemning the proposed ship subsidy legislation. On that occasion, he confined his remarks to a glowing report of Russia's potential as a customer for American industry.³⁰

In the summer of 1923, Ladd became a prominent figure in the controversy when he was chosen to head a congressional delegation to Europe. The group, which included Ladd, Senator William H. King of Utah, and Wiscon-

²⁸"Question of Recognizing Russia," New Republic, March 8, 1922, p. 33. Hughes had said that no possibility of trade with Russia existed unless production should come about in Russia and "production is conditioned upon safety of life, the recognition by firm guarantees of private property, the sanctity of the contract and the rights of free labor."

²⁹Billings County Pioneer, June 29, 1922.

³⁰Congressional Record, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., Part 5, p. 4376. Ladd estimated that Russia would buy tools and agricultural equipment in addition to \$30,000,000 in foodstuffs and \$50,000,000 in textiles.

sin's Congressman James A. Freear, was to study conditions in Europe, placing particular emphasis on Russian development.³¹ The party first visited Denmark, where Ladd studied co-operatives as agricultural organizations.³² The group then spent seven weeks in Russia, traveling first westward by car, then eastward via the Trans-Siberian Railroad.³³

Ladd's delegation returned from Soviet Russia with reports of a trend toward economic recovery. Ladd was especially impressed by the Russian advances in developing education through selection.³⁴ While the group favored trade negotiations and recognition, it did not present a workable proposal whereby relations could be re-established.³⁵

Though the North Dakota Senator followed his Russian trip with a request for further information,³⁶ he did not take his fight to the press until 1924. Ladd then

³¹Fargo Forum, July 24, 1923.

³²New York Times, July 14, 1923.

³³Fargo Forum, July 24, 1923. It was reported that the group took with them eight hundred pounds of food, several weights of clothing, and an ample supply of "cootie powder."

³⁴Congressional Record, 69th Cong., 1st Sess., LXVII, Part 9, p. 9306.

³⁵New York Times, October 9, 1923.

³⁶Congressional Record, 68th Cong., 1st Sess., LXV, Part 1, p. 422. Ladd asked for information on both government and private debts due from Russia. He also wanted evidence of Russian propoganda in the United States and a description of any agreements between the United States and other countries to prohibit, restrict, or retard Russian trade.

wrote several articles on the subject, claiming that Russia was "one of the most attractive fields in the world for the extension of markets and the development of trade."³⁷ He warned that the United States would lose much of her trade advantage if she did not act soon. Further, he urged that the United States recognize Russia as a move toward world peace. He lauded the European nations which had extended recognition. He felt that "Europe and the world can never be tranquil so long as Russia is treated as an outlaw nation."³⁸

Apparently, Ladd had been plagued with inquiries on the possibility that Russian consulates might serve as headquarters for the dissemination of communist propaganda. The Senator countered this charge with three points. First, he maintained that international courtesy would prescribe the recall of subversive diplomats. Second, Ladd maintained that the American "Red Scare" had no foundation. He cited the numerous failures of communist experiments as proof that no such experiment could "overthrow the fundamental principles of Americanism." Finally, Ladd said that exposure would bring a swifter death to the movement

³⁷Edwin F. Ladd, "Our Failure to Recognize Russia Keeps the Door Closed to a Vast Domain of Natural Wealth" (clipping), no magazine title (March 29, 1924), Ladd collection, North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, Fargo.

³⁸Ibid.

than would suppression.³⁹

Ladd's trip to Russia had given him a genuine sympathy for the problems of the Russian people. While the Senator did not agree with the Soviet government, he had a desire to end the isolation of the Russian people. He summarized his view as follows:

They [the Russian people] are entitled to fair treatment and friendly help by the rest of the world, regardless of their government; but they can be approached only through their government. The world needs them as much as they need the world, and that is much.⁴⁰

Ladd was not the first, nor was he the last, to advocate recognition of Soviet Russia. Since the recognition did not come about until the following decade, it would be facetious to claim any measureable results for his endeavors. Ladd was simply ten years ahead of the American public.

Any evaluation of Ladd's foreign policy views must note his infrequency of expression in the area. But while the Senator was not a leader in the field, he did make three significant stands. These three ventures indicate to the writer two significant aspects of the Senator's career. First, they re-emphasize Ladd's willingness to search for information. Second, they demonstrate again that Ladd did not fear the consequences of a minority stand. Not until late 1924 did he find that his anti-administra-

³⁹The Farmer Provost, no date (clipping), Ladd Collection, North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, Fargo.

⁴⁰Ladd, "Failure to Recognize Russia."

tion tactics would no longer be tolerated by the Republican party.

CHAPTER VI

LADD AND THE EXPULSION OF THE INSURGENTS

Like Absalom, who tried to dethrone his father David, Robert M. LaFollette marshalled his band of Congressional followers in 1924 in an attempt to displace the authority which he had formerly called his kindred. And like Absalom, he led his small band to defeat and subsequent execution.

The Republican party's indictment of LaFollette and his followers, Ladd, Brookhart, and Frazier, was based on the contention that this group had left the Republican camp in the 1924 campaign. But this insurgent group was not new to the political scene in 1924. As shown above, the Farm Bloc in Congress had been in operation for some time. Even as early as 1922, observers had felt that the progressives would appear with a LaFollette banner in 1924.¹ Was it then a great surprise to the political world that LaFollette and Burton K. Wheeler should head an attempt to unseat the two major political parties? Probably not. Nor was this action a reversal of tactics, for the group had long made a practice of annoying administrations.²

¹George Creel, "What Do These Senators Want?" Collier's, March 10, 1923, p. 9.

²Ibid., pp. 9-10.

The Campaign of 1924³

Briefly, LaFollette's campaign in 1924 was one designed to obtain progressive legislation by giving publicity to progressive demands and by causing the presidential election to be thrown into the House of Representatives. The candidacy came only after LaFollette had received thousands of petitions urging him to run, and only after it became evident that he could not stand with the presidential nominee of either of the major parties.⁴

LaFollette ran as an "Independent Progressive" in 1924 because, in his estimation, his independent candidacy would serve to fuse some of the diverging elements of the progressive movement. He maintained that "permanent political parties have been born in this country, after and not before national campaigns, and they have come from the people, not from the proclamations of individual leaders." Thus he wrote:

I am a candidate upon the basis of my public record as a member of the House of Representatives, as Governor of Wisconsin, and as a member of the United States Senate. I shall stand upon that record exactly as it is written, and shall give my support to only such progressive principles as are in harmony with it.

LaFollette's running mate was found soon after the Democratic convention had nominated John W. Davis.

³Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is taken from Belle and Fola LaFollette, II, pp. 1107-1148.

⁴Robert F. St. Clair, "Progressives in North Dakota, 1924" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1960), p. 82.

A disillusioned Democratic Senator, Burton K. Wheeler said of the Davis nomination: "When the Democratic party goes to Wall Street for its candidate, I must refuse to go with it." Wheeler and LaFollette had cooperated in a special committee which had been created to investigate Attorney General Daugherty and the corruption in his department. Wheeler's courage in the face of threats against his life and vilification of his reputation had impressed LaFollette. The Wisconsin progressive made the choice and Wheeler promptly accepted.

The two insurgents carried on a fiery campaign with the backing of several progressive organizations. The Socialists, as well as the Committee on Progressive Political Action endorsed their candidacy. In an unusual move, the executive committee of the American Federation of Labor also endorsed them. These, coupled with endorsements by groups of educators, ministers and the Scripps-Howard newspapers, made the nucleus of the LaFollette support.

During the campaign, LaFollette endeavored to keep state political contests separate from his own. He feared that, while such might have helped his campaign, the link might also have brought about the defeat of some progressive legislators. While he continued to endorse Senators on a nonpartisan basis, they were usually not seeking reelection in 1924.

Despite a strong effort, LaFollette and Wheeler

failed in their bid to deadlock the election. The official election returns gave Coolidge 15,718,783, Davis 8,378,962, and LaFollette 4,822,319. LaFollette carried only Wisconsin. In North Dakota, he received the second highest vote (see Appendix B).

The Expulsion

Several Senators and Congressmen had supported LaFollette, but on the national level, it seemed to be the view that Republican Senators to remain Republican must have been loyal throughout the campaign. The point of party loyalty and how it was to be enforced became a favorite topic for the press. Much of the press favored action.⁵ Though the Republican Senators were receiving editorial pressure, party pressure,⁶ and constituent pressure,⁷ there seemed little chance that the Senate party caucus of November 28, 1924, would take action of the sort taken by the House caucus.⁸

The sun shone through the windows of the caucus

⁵Grand Forks Herald, November 12, 1925. See also New York Times, November 12-21, 1925.

⁶New York Times, November 19, 1924.

⁷Congressional Record, LXVI, 68th Cong., 3rd Sess., Part 2, p. 1289.

⁸New York Times, November 21, 1925. Representative Treadway, of Massachusetts introduced a censure resolution against fifteen House radicals. Press comment in the New York Times, November 27, 1925, and the Fargo Forum, November 27, 1925, said that the matter would not be acted upon until the next Congress convened.

room that morning,⁹ but its beams were not to fall on Ladd. Even as the meeting began, New Jersey's Senator Walter Edge tried vainly to gain the floor to start expulsion proceedings.¹⁰ When the action was finally presented, it came in the form of a resolution from Pennsylvania's Thomas Reed which declared it "the sense of this conference that Senators LaFollette, Ladd, Brookhart, Frazier, all of whom were conspicuous in the third party movement or otherwise hostile to Coolidge, be not invited to future Republican conferences, and be not named to fill any vacancies on Senate committees."¹¹ Despite attempts by J. W. Herreld of Oklahoma and Selden Spencer of Missouri to modify the resolution, it was passed unamended by the vote of 32 of the 51 members present.¹²

Press reaction to the censure was mixed. The Fargo Forum acclaimed the action.¹³ While the New York Times favored some action, it did not feel that the severe punishment should be carried out.¹⁴ The Dearborn

⁹Congressional Record, LXVI, 68th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 1285.

¹⁰New York Times, November 29, 1925. Edge was ruled out of order until the election of Senator Curtis of Kansas as Senate Majority Leader.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Fargo Forum, December 1, 1924.

¹⁴New York Times, November 29, 1924. The editorials had been opposed to a harsh policy for the "Bad Boys" on the grounds that they had already been made to look foolish, and that further punishment would only serve to make

(Michigan) Independent took a dim view of the action, commenting that it "made an impression of queerness on the public mind,"¹⁵ while the Columbus Ohio State Journal termed the view of the Republican caucus "a rather dangerous one."¹⁶

There was also a lack of unanimity among Republican Senate leaders concerning the issue. Utah's powerful Reed Smoot, together with Reed, Edge, and others, had been in favor of strong action for some time.¹⁷ While not alone in his opposition view, Nebraska's George Norris was the most expressive of distaste.¹⁸

In December, Ladd received the first fruits of the resolution. First, he was dropped from the steering committee.¹⁹ The insult was compounded on December 22, when President Calvin Coolidge announced that he would no longer consult Ladd, Frazier, or Brookhart with respect to political the Republicans look just as foolish.

¹⁵As quoted in Congressional Record, LXVI, Part 2, p. 1289.

¹⁶"G.O.P. Rebels Shown the Door," Literary Digest, December 13, 1924, p. 10.

¹⁷New York Times, November 12, 1924.

¹⁸Ibid., December 1, 1924. The editor quoted Norris: "It is a silly thing when any set of men without any sort of authority set themselves up to judge the political conduct of their equals."

¹⁹Ibid., December 5, 1924. The committee was termed "the most stand pat organization in either House since Taft was President."

cal appointments.²⁰

While suffering these setbacks in other areas, the outlawed Senators still maintained a chance to retain their committee posts. The resolution was a means of instruction to rather than a binding obligation on the committee on committees. For a time, it was felt that the removal would not take place.²¹ Not until February 20 did the Senate leaders announce their intent to carry out the terms of the resolution.²²

The decision to evict the four insurgent Senators from their committee posts had the greatest effects on Ladd and LaFollette. Though all four insurgents were relegated to the foot of their respective committees, these two would suffer the loss of chairmanships. LaFollette was to lose his standing in both the Finance Committee and the Interstate Commerce Committee, in addition to his chairmanship of the Committee on Manufactures. Similarly, Ladd faced the loss of his standing on the Agriculture Committee, as well as his chairmanship of the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys.²³

²⁰Ibid., December 23, 1924. Coolidge had previously declared that he would not consult the Wisconsin re

²¹Fargo Forum, January 18, 1925.

²²New York Times, February 21, 1925. The Republicans called a caucus for February 23 to present a slate of committees.

²³Ibid., March 6, 1925.

Perhaps those in command thought that the decision to demote these four would end the opposition. If so, they underestimated the will of Borah and Norris. These two tried to obstruct the action by contesting the election of the committees. They received the aid of other Republicans and Democrats on the first few ballots. The Democrats later changed their votes to accept the committees and pave the way for what they felt was a Republican mistake.²⁴

Ladd, who had reacted most vehemently in earlier stages of the conflict, was now silent. He had aired his views in the Senate on January 6, 1925. On that occasion, he declared that he was, and always would be, a Republican, despite the efforts of others to say that he was not.²⁵ He reaffirmed his earlier contention that he owed allegiance to the people of North Dakota rather than to the Republicans of any other state.²⁶ He attacked not the party, but the "blackguard" of the party which, in his opinion, were holding back party progress.²⁷ While denying his own political death as a result of the censure, he contended that the conservative policies of the "blackguard" who engineered his expulsion would soon place them "in their

²⁴Ibid., March 9, 1925.

²⁵Congressional Record, LXVI, 68th Cong., 3rd Sess., Part 2, p. 1286.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 1287.

death agonies, politically speaking."²⁸ He further tried to justify his position in the light of the procedure followed in the case of the Roosevelt followers of 1912 who were not punished and also the fact that another of his colleagues, no less disloyal than he, had escaped the censure.²⁹ Ladd continued by attacking some of the recent party actions. He claimed that he could not remain a mere observer of these policies and still call himself a man. If being a good Republican required such apathetic traits, he said, "I can not qualify."³⁰

Ladd here exhibited a different attitude from that of other members of the insurgent group. He considered himself a Republican. His declaration at this juncture was merely an affirmation of the impression he had given during the 1924 campaign. While siding with LaFollette in verbal statements and in written declarations of support,³¹ he had maintained that his "position as a Republican Senator" would not allow him to actively participate in the campaign.³² He had assumed a less active role in the

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 1293. He referred to Michigan's Senator James Couzens. Couzens had refused to support either the Republican platform or its candidates.

³⁰Ibid., 1288.

³¹Grand Forks Herald, August 9, 1924. The declaration of support was for LaFollette, and not for a third party.

³²Fargo Forum, November 29, 1924.

campaign than had his fellow insurgents. While LaFollette, Frazier, and Brookhart campaigned actively and made violent attacks on the Republican party,³³ Ladd seemingly confined his campaigning to a few local statements and assumed the role of consultant for the LaFollette campaign.³⁴ Ladd further demonstrated that he considered himself a Republican when he appeared at the November 28 caucus.³⁵

If he still called himself a Republican, why then was Ladd "read out" of his party? First, Ladd had run counter to the policies of his party by refusing to support its candidates and platform. While he had not campaigned actively against Coolidge, he had declared verbally for LaFollette³⁶ and had joined his Nonpartisan League colleagues in a declaration of support for the Wisconsin Senator.³⁷ This was enough to incriminate him. By his half-hearted action, Ladd took himself "off the Republican reservation."³⁸

³³New York Times, October 15, 1924. See also issues for October 4, 1924 and November 9, 1924. Frazier campaigned for LaFollette on the East Coast. Brookhart attacked Charles Dawes and Coolidge as a "pea-wit candidate" and the candidate of "the Nonpartisan League of Wall Street." LaFollette attacked both parties.

³⁴Letter from Lenke to Harrison Martin, August 6, 1924, Lenke Papers.

³⁵New York Times, November 29, 1924 and Fargo Forum, December 1, 1924. Ladd was the only insurgent who attended the meeting.

³⁶Fargo Forum, November 29, 1924.

³⁷Grand Forks Herald, August 9, 1924.

³⁸Fargo Forum, December 1, 1924.

Secondly, Ladd, together with LaFollette, was in a position to be dangerous to the commercial interests which backed the Republican party. As committee chairmen, these two could exert a marked influence on legislation. Ladd charged that this fear caused the commercial interests to exert pressure upon Reed.³⁹ While this influence had previously been exerted by Ladd and LaFollette in their chairmanships,⁴⁰ there was even more to be lost if the anti-tariff LaFollette were to ascend to the chair of the Finance Committee.⁴¹

A third reason for dropping Ladd was his practice of differing with the Coolidge administration. The progressive group had aligned itself with the Democrats in the preceding Congressional session,⁴² and Ladd, unlike Borah, could not continue to disagree and remain on good terms with the President.⁴³

Fourth, and corollary to the reasons above, the action concerning Ladd could have been a move to increase

³⁹Congressional Record, LXVI, Part 2, p. 1285.

⁴⁰Ibid., 1289. Ladd tells of pressure to cover the findings of the committee.

⁴¹Fargo Forum, November 27, 1924. "If LaFollette's standing is not changed, a good many persons, politicians and others affected by the tariff, will probably feel like taking out a heavy insurance policy on Mr. Smoot's continued life, good health, and tenure of office."

⁴²New York Times, November 22, 1924.

⁴³Letter from Lemke to Samuel Peterson, November 24, 1924, Lemke Papers.

the power of the Coolidge forces in North Dakota. Louis B. Hanna, Coolidge's state campaign manager and leader of the pro-Coolidge entourage in the state, was to have opposed Ladd in the 1926 primary.⁴⁴ The expulsion, by reducing Ladd's effectiveness in the Senate and discrediting him at home, could have been a factor in the 1926 contest.

Inversely, there were several grounds on which the expulsion could be opposed. The first lay in the fact that the action was unprecedented and inequitable. The action did not correspond to the feeling of the party toward the insurgent Bull Moosers of 1912, nor was it consistent with the action concerning these same four insurgents during their earlier party irregularity. Further, the action was not taken against all insurgent Senators. The three most prominent exceptions were Norris, Borah, and James Couzens, of Michigan. Couzens had openly announced that, in defiance of the "party bosses," he would support neither the Coolidge ticket nor the Republican platform.⁴⁵ Norris, who refused to endorse Coolidge and sat on the sidelines during the campaign, later expressed sorrow that "our leader" had done so poorly in the election.⁴⁶ Borah sounded even less like a party regular as he denounced the Republican Senate leaders as "men who while crying,

⁴⁴Lenke to D. H. McArthur, June 28, 1925, Lenke Papers.

⁴⁵New York Times, June 10, 1924.

⁴⁶Ibid., November 8, 1924, and June 24, 1925.

'Lord, Lord', have trampled under foot and blasphemed every great principle upon which the party was founded."⁴⁷

While fear was a partial cause of the expulsion, it was also an argument against the action. The New York Times felt that the action would shift the "ridiculous" label from the insurgents to the party leaders.⁴⁸ Then too, there was the possibility of losing 2,000,000 voters in the West, unless these voters were willing to repudiate their elected representatives.⁴⁹ The action of the caucus was also opposed because it was feared that the Senate majority would become even more unworkable. The Senate membership included 56 Republicans, 39 Democrats and 1 Farmer-Laborite. Observers felt that the administration would have trouble controlling this supposedly Republican-dominated group due to the uncertainty of a majority, even if the party "regulars" were to remain regular.⁵⁰

Perhaps the most widespread criticism of the expulsion lay in the belief that such action disenfranchised the hundreds of thousands of voters who had elected these Senators. The proponents of this view felt that it was up to the constituents, and not the party, to repudiate

⁴⁷Quoted in Congressional Record, LXVI, Part 2, pp. 1292-1293.

⁴⁸New York Times, November 24, 1924.

⁴⁹Fargo Forum, November 27, 1924.

⁵⁰Ibid., November 11, 1924.

these men.⁵¹ Later developments showed that the repudiation was not to come. Brookhart, probably the least secure of the four, was returned to the Senate by a larger majority after his election had been contested.⁵²

As is related above, Ladd attempted to justify his action on the ground that he was in harmony with the wishes of the Republicans of North Dakota. Proof of this contention must rest on the dual thesis that 1) Ladd could reasonably have assumed that his constituents supported LaFollette, and 2) Coolidge's victory in North Dakota was not a Republican triumph. The first assumption was definitely true. The pollsters conceded the North Dakota electoral votes to LaFollette.⁵³ Before the election, William Lemke expressed confidence, predicting that the voters would "find his name, even if it were on the back of the ballot."⁵⁴ While the second point is more difficult to prove, it seems evident that Coolidge did win with the help of the Democrats.⁵⁵

⁵¹New York Times, November 24, 1924 and December 1, 1924.

⁵²"The Brookhart Victory," Nation, June 16, 1926, p. 657.

⁵³Fargo Forum, November 7, 1924.

⁵⁴Letter from Lemke to Ladd, September 28, 1924, Lemke Papers. See also J. H. Bloom to Lemke, n. d. (October, 1924), Lemke Papers. Bloom expressed confidence that the N.P.L. candidates could gain from the LaFollette bandwagon. He said the bandwagon was "moving like a stud horse at the county fair."

⁵⁵Fargo Forum, November 11, 1924. See also Appendix A for statistics of the election.

Further justification of Ladd's position in the 1924 campaign rests on one question--What commands loyalty? Did the Senator owe allegiance to a man with whom he could not agree? Was he obligated to support an executive who had refused him the courtesies dictated by their relationship?⁵⁶ Could he, with a clear conscience, support a man who stood with the forces attempting to defeat progressive candidates in North Dakota?⁵⁷ Ladd's answer was "no."

The Aftermath

Regardless of the justice or injustice of the expulsion, it must be evaluated in view of its effects. The effect on the Senate was as predicted. Fearing that the Republican majority would become unworkable, the Coolidge administration attempted to de-emphasize the controversial legislation in the lame duck special session in favor of immediate appropriation needs.⁵⁸ The maneuver was logical, but it failed to achieve the desired result. The party "regulars" suddenly became quite irregular. Administration measures fell with regularity. Edge had his cries for party loyalty thrown back in his face, after he and others

⁵⁶ Lemke to J. Wittmayer, August 12, 1924, Lemke Papers. Lemke said that Ladd had not been given Senatorial courtesy with regard to appointments.

⁵⁷ Ibid., February 21, 1925. The National Republican Committee contributed \$10,000 to the Democratic campaign of J. F. T. O'Connor in an attempt to defeat Frazier in 1922.

⁵⁸ New York Times, December 1, 1924.

had joined the Democrats to defeat the Postal Pay Bill.⁵⁹

The question in Washington was "who is regular now, and what is regularity, anyhow?"⁶⁰ The predicted ridicule of the Republicans had become a reality.

The effect of the expulsion on the Progressive movement cannot be clearly ascertained. As the New York Times commented: "Several political doctors at Washington, called to consider the case of the Radical Party, have gravely pronounced the patient dead."⁶¹ The difficulty in assessing the effect of the expulsion lies in the fact that the movement would have been weak, even without caucus action. Two of the four insurgent Senators, Ladd and LaFollette, died shortly after the expulsion.⁶² A third, Brookhart, was uncertain, due to his contested election.⁶³

The loss of leadership was not the only problem of the Progressives. The idea of a Progressive party had failed in 1924 with the loss of key farm states and the

⁵⁹Fargo Forum, January 7, 1925. Borah asked Edge: "Well, what's the use of supporting a candidate to get him elected if you are going to defeat him after you get him in?"

⁶⁰David Lawrence, Ibid., January 9, 1924.

⁶¹New York Times, June 29, 1925.

⁶²Ibid., June 20-13, 1925.

⁶³Ibid., June 20, 1925. See also Fargo Forum, November 12, 1924. Brookhart's majority was only 540. Some votes for his opponent had been thrown out because a scratch mark was used instead of an x.

last-minute desertion of labor.⁶⁴ Though the noises of protest continued, attempts at reorganization under both LaFollette and William D. Johnston, head of the International Order of Machinists, had failed.⁶⁵

The action also had a profound effect on Ladd. The aging Senator refused to let the political door be slammed in his face. His first defensive move, other than a short press statement on November 28,⁶⁶ was his Senate speech of January 6, 1925. As usual, his sincere style and his large body of factual ammunition enlisted a favorable reaction in North Dakota.⁶⁷

Far from dampening his political ardor, the expulsion heightened his desire to use every means of self-advertisement at his disposal to take his case to the people. If, as his son contended,⁶⁸ the action hastened Ladd's death, it must have been the result of overwork and self-neglect. Ladd threw himself into the fray without regard for the consequences.⁶⁹ As he realized that his 1926 campaign could no longer go through normal Republican channels,

⁶⁴Fargo Forum, November 9, 1924.

⁶⁵New York Times, June 20, 1925.

⁶⁶Fargo Forum, November 29, 1925.

⁶⁷Letter from D. H. McArthur to Lemke, January 23, 1925, Lemke Papers.

⁶⁸Kane, "Pure-Food Crusader," p. 215.

⁶⁹Letter from Lemke to Ladd, n. d., Lemke Papers. Lemke warned that Ladd was moving too fast.

he began to diversify his techniques.⁷⁰ Early in 1925, he concocted a two-part publicity scheme. The attempt involved 1) the establishment of an essay contest in which the winners were to receive trips to Washington, and 2) the circulation of a pledge of participation in the primaries.⁷¹

This political zeal probably contributed to Ladd's death. While he was on a spring campaign trip to his home state, his car became stalled in the floodwaters of the Missouri River. The sixty-four-year old Senator then walked some distance in his wet clothes. As a result, Ladd suffered periodic attacks of neuritis and rheumatism during the ensuing months, but he refused to limit his activities or submit to proper treatment.⁷²

The Senator left Washington by car on May 31 to conduct another campaign tour of North Dakota.⁷³ A neuritis attack forced him to turn back at Cleveland. He entered Johns Hopkins Hospital but was later transferred to Church Home Infirmary, where he died on June 22, the

⁷⁰Letter from D. H. McArthur to Lemke, January 23, 1925, Lemke Papers.

⁷¹Ibid. For proposals see Lemke Papers, n. d. (February, 1925).

⁷²New York Times, June 23, 1925.

⁷³Letter from Ladd to Lemke, May 29, 1925, Lemke Papers. Ladd said he was going. He would stop to visit his children.

victim of neuritis, rheumatism, and bad teeth.⁷⁴

Ladd's death left North Dakota open to a political scramble. Governor Arthur G. Sorlie seemed bent on making the appointment of a successor, despite a dispute over the legality of such an act.⁷⁵ After a meeting of League leaders at the McKenzie Hotel in Bismarck, on November 13, Sorlie announced his intentions privately,⁷⁶ and on November 24, 1925, he made the appointment of Gerald P. Nye.⁷⁷

The writer can only conclude from the evidence presented above that the expulsion of the Republican Senators in 1924-1925 was the result of a need for party discipline. While there were undoubtedly other considerations involved, any attempt to assign a value to each would exceed both the scope of this work and the strength of the evidence. Similarly, any attempt to ascertain the justice of the expulsion would necessarily involve a judgment of

⁷⁴Letter from Frazier to Lemke, June 12, 1925, Lemke Papers. The doctors were claiming that the cause was five bad teeth. New York Times, June 23, 1925, tells of Ladd's neuritis and rheumatism.

⁷⁵Minot (North Dakota) Daily News, June 25, 1925, (clipping). Among those mentioned for the appointment were Congressman James Sinclair, Judge H. R. Bronson and Lieutenant Governor Walter Maddock. Several letters in the Lemke Papers advocated the appointment of Lemke. He told Covington Hall (June 28, 1925) that he would run if needed, but "for financial reasons I prefer not to become a candidate, as I am still broke."

⁷⁶Blackorby, pp. 166-167.

⁷⁷New York Times, November 11, 1925.

the relative worth of party discipline. It is interesting to note that the Democrats took no similar action against Button K. Wheeler. Can one then conclude that party discipline is a much easier matter to act upon when the party is in power? Another consideration is the impetus of public opinion. Opinion within the party favored action, but as shown above, there was little agreement within the party as to the adviseability of the action taken.

The writer can see two clear-cut effects of the expulsion upon party politics. First, the cries of regularity brought ridicule to the Republican party. Secondly, the action broadened the gulf between the progressive and conservative elements of the party. These two effects combined to make the Congress quite unmanageable.

Ladd had been shocked by the action of his colleagues. He had been informed that he was no longer welcomed by his party. Still, he refused to disavow the party or repent of his actions. In the Senate speech of January 6, he supported his position with a quotation from Charles Evans Hughes:

Party loyalty and patriotism should coincide. But if they are antagonistic, patriotism must ever be supreme. The party is not the Nation or State. When the attitude of the party threatens the interest of the community, when ill-chosen policy invites general disaster, when party success means the debasement of standards of honor and decency, the party man should recognize the superior obligations of his citizenship.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Congressional Record, LXVI, Part 2, pp. 1294-1295.

The expelled Senator attempted to prove that the people of North Dakota shared his view, but he did not live to meet the test of the electorate.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

In his career as an educator, experimenter, and pure-food crusader, Edwin Fremont Ladd gained a reputation for honesty, courage, and strength of convictions. It was his reputation which gained him a Senate seat in 1920. While Ladd's endorsement was a surprise to most North Dakotans, it was not an unpleasant one. The endorsement was certainly not "forced." In the primary, the chemist's popularity, combined with Nonpartisan League support, defeated the seemingly invincible Asle J. Gronna. In the general election, Ladd further demonstrated his popular appeal by running far ahead of the remainder of the League ticket.

Ladd's major concern in the Senate was the farm problem. He attempted to both increase the farmer's total production and provide better marketing conditions for agricultural products. He worked to expand agricultural credit to provide the capital needed to maximize production. He attempted to gain larger appropriations for research and to further interstate cooperation to eradicate causes of low farm production. He tried to provide a source of cheap fertilizers, first at Muscle Shoals, and later

in conjunction with the St. Lawrence Seaway project. Among Ladd's attempts to better the marketing conditions for agriculture were his advocacy of filled milk legislation and the high protective tariff. He also attempted to better marketing conditions through his support of legislation to combat speculation and to establish cooperative marketing associations. He attempted to strengthen the farmer's overseas markets through his advocacy of government subsidy and through his support of the St. Lawrence Seaway Proposal. In his argument for recognition of Russia, he attempted to open a new foreign market for agricultural products.

Another of Ladd's themes in the Senate was the constant struggle against financial and commercial interests. In his battle against the interests, Ladd campaigned against profiteering by the banks and urged the passage of truth-in-labeling legislation. He stood firm in his own committee's investigation of corruption in the oil scandals, and he initiated investigations of various enterprises, both at home and abroad.

Ladd's view of foreign policy was oriented toward means of keeping the United States from becoming involved in war. His advocacies of reapproachments with Russia and Mexico were at least partially attempts to remove possible causes for war. His bill to prevent American business interests from entangling the United States in internal conflicts in other countries was also an attempt to promote peace. Finally, he attempted to forestall United

States involvement in overseas struggle by asking for a referendum on declarations of war.

In all three of his major undertakings, Ladd failed to achieve his goals. While the Senator saw advances in some phases of his agricultural program, the changes failed to alleviate the depressed condition of agriculture. He failed both in his attempts to secure a cheap source of fertilizers and in his attempts to improve the farmer's position in the world market. Similarly, his minor successes in combatting the interests were dwarfed by his failures. While his truth-in-labeling legislation was favorably received, he failed to end "profiteering," speculation in grain markets, and favorable tariff situation for business. His attempts to promote world peace were also insignificant. In the one policy which might have altered the course of military affairs, the recognition of Russia, he also failed to achieve his goal. In short, one can search in vain for momentous accomplishments in the Senate career of Edwin Fremont Ladd.

Ladd's significance in the Senate hinged partly on his scientific background. He was the only certified chemist in the Senate. Though his Senate speeches were well prepared, they were few in number. Ladd's main influence seems to have been in his position as chemical and agricultural advisor to individual Senators and committees.

The Senator was also notable for his political

independence. On the official records of the Senate, he was designated a "Nonpartisan Republican."¹ Few senators could better fit the title. From his opposition to the ship subsidy to his stand for vigorous prosecution of the Teapot Dome Scandal, Ladd repeatedly ignored the wishes of the Harding and Coolidge Administrations and of the Republican leadership in Congress. While he was a member of the Farm Bloc, he stood in opposition to the Norris proposal for Muscle Shoals. Nor did Ladd demonstrate political loyalty to the Nonpartisan League. He demonstrated little desire to campaign for League candidates or to concern himself with the affairs of the League.

In his Senate career, Ladd remained loyal to his convictions, rather than to the policies of any group. While this characteristic had brought him fame prior to his entry into the Senate, it sometimes brought him press ridicule and it caused his dismissal from the Republican Party. Whether or not Ladd's independence would have resulted in his defeat for re-election in 1926 is purely a matter of conjecture, but evidence indicated that the Senator feared the weakness of his political fences in 1925.

¹U.S. House of Representatives, Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961, House Doc. 442, 85th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1961, p. 1183.

APPENDIX A

LADD'S PLATFORM¹

1. Farmers and consumers the right to legally combine for co-operative selling and buying with no less protection and with no more privileges than are now afforded corporations or monopolies.
2. I want to see enacted a commodity law that requires truthful labeling on every article, whether it be clothes, paper, shoes or sausage.
3. I want to see a law enacted that will furnish loans to the farmers at the same rate as the Government makes loans to the banker and at actual cost.
4. I want to see a law enacted that will discourage farm tenancy and encourage farm ownership and rural development.
5. I want to see a law enacted that will encourage home-building and discourage tenancy and landlordism: a law as good as the Home Builders Law of North Dakota.
6. I want to see a law enacted that will put a stop to all forms of profiteering and make profiteering a penal offense, and I recognize that profiteering is not a cause, but the result from existing conditions and improper laws.
7. I want to see a law enacted putting a stop to all forms of gambling and speculation in the essential commodities of life, like wheat, flour, clothing, without in any way destroying the effectiveness of trade conditions.
8. I want a law enacted and honestly enforced that will extend the benefits of the Federal Land Banks more fully to the needs of our farmers.
9. I want to see laws continued or enacted that will pro-

¹New York Times, Nov. 28, 1920.

tect labor as fully as capital is protected, and with proper tribunals to safeguard their interests and lives.

10. I want to see a law enacted that shall establish a league of nations, an international tribunal or an organization that will tend for world peace and disarmament on sea and land without embroiling the United States in petty European affairs.
11. I want to see a law enacted and enforced that shall at all times protect the right of free press, free speech, and free assembly, with every individual held responsible for his words and actions, and that shall free all those now held for political offenses, and which shall never again permit of the abuses that have been tolerated and encouraged during the last four years.
12. I want to see a law enacted that will make members of corporations or monopolies acting as an executive or administrative board amenable to the laws of our land just as fully as we individuals or members of firms, and on conviction sent to prison as are individuals or firm members. In other words, to put a soul into a corporation that can be reached. When the President or executive members of certain boards face the penitentiary they will become more reasonable and respectful.
13. I want to see a law enacted that will put all systems of transportation fully under Government control and operated in the interests of all our people and not for the financial benefits of a privileged few.
14. I want to see a law enacted that will make, with the co-operation of Canada, possible a waterway from the head of the Great Lakes to the ocean for ocean-going vessels.
15. I want to see a law enacted that will put quacks and charlatans of all kinds out of business and give them an opportunity to earn an honest living in place of fleecing innocent victims under sanction of law.
16. I want to see a law enacted to conserve our natural resources, a law that will effectively do so, and to have these resources as public utilities developed under Governmental or State control of ownership.

APPENDIX B

Presidential Vote Comparison¹

County	1920		1924		
	Harding	Cox	Coolidge	LaFollette	Davis
Adams	1377	347	276	1045	106
Barnes	5150	1101	3207	2665	346
Benson	3540	680	1879	2048	243
Billings	787	61	404	417	24
Bottineau	3487	971	1346	2611	223
Bowman	1192	324	776	876	69
Burke	1911	456	991	1312	128
Burleigh	4300	943	3171	2328	381
Cass	10,735	817	9965	3776	1851
Cavalier	3936	991	2338	1473	546
Dickey	2887	766	1635	1793	352
Dunn	2102	457	980	1117	190
Eddy	1525	577	881	1241	101
Emmons	2900	238	1198	1693	123
Foster	1583	371	922	833	287
Golden Valley	1177	286	624	628	140
Grand Forks	7646	2527	6590	3009	953
Grant	2184	296	1100	1610	120
Griggs	1739	530	767	1369	116
Hettinger	1849	327	936	1291	234
Kidder	1355	336	844	1187	110
LaMoure	1010	643	1505	1870	202
Logan	1590	154	787	994	28
McHenry	2534	842	1698	2609	280
McIntosh	1782	79	637	1172	39
McKenzie	2497	511	1113	1651	134
McLean	3724	748	1656	2717	194
Mercer	1706	172	526	1409	69
Morton	4618	632	2979	2716	265
Mountrail	1980	678	1369	2009	129
Nelson	3127	501	1697	1571	177
Oliver	1165	111	366	745	31
Pembina	3925	1405	2991	1352	500
Pierce	2102	294	1160	1156	155
Ramsey	3996	937	3100	1919	303
Ransom	3010	802	1187	1919	303

¹Fargo Forum, November 14, 1924.

Renville	1987	581	649	1278	121
Richland	5483	1339	3245	2612	269
Rollette	2139	535	869	1655	235
Sheridan	1776	135	594	1096	49
Sioux	776	163	777	417	58
Slope	1143	235	616	893	37
Stark	3527	532	2201	1704	260
Steele	2222	337	1267	989	91
Stutsman	5531	1394	3952	2552	465
Towner	2192	476	1173	1027	241
Trail	3666	523	2592	1751	334
Walsh	4581	2047	2837	2009	897
Ward	6160	2291	4164	3784	713
Wells	3202	556	1671	1932	138
Williams	<u>3769</u>	<u>1331</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>2853</u>	<u>308</u>
Totals	160,072	37,413	94,816	89,733	13,830

APPENDIX C

A Primary Pledge¹

Being a qualified elector of the voting precinct of _____ county, North Dakota, I promise to attend all primaries to nominate candidates for state and national offices unless unavoidably prevented and to use my influence to secure a clear, honest and straight-forward declaration of the voters' position on every question upon which the people of the state desire to speak, and I hereby certify that I have not or will not sign more than one pledge in the campaign to secure signatures to create an interest in primary elections.

I hereby understand that this pledge will not interfere with me casting my vote for any person I wish to, or to vote on any issue as I please.

Signed _____

Post Office _____

Street _____

County _____

Voting Precinct _____

Ward _____

¹Lemke Papers, n. d. [February, 1925].

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