

ARTICLES

“Severing the Connections in a Complex Community”: The Grange, the Patrons of Industry and the Construction/Contestation of a Late 19th-Century Agrarian Identity in Ontario

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ON 2 JUNE 1874, the first meeting held to organize the Dominion Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry occurred in London, Ontario. The assembly not only involved many of the more prominent farmers in the area, but it also attracted interested observers from as far away as Grey County. One of the first enthusiastic supporters of the Grange, William Weld, was also the publisher of Ontario's most prestigious agricultural newspaper, the *Farmers' Advocate*. Acting as the Dominion Grange's first Steward, Weld lauded the new order in *Advocate* editorials for creating unity, harmony, and strength amongst farmers, and for forging new associational ties in the rural population. However, one year later, Weld resigned his office in the Dominion Grange, stating that he preferred to remain an unfettered member. Already sensing some potential problems in the Dominion Grange, Weld believed that in giving up his office he could freely criticize the order if they should “misuse their powers.” By 1880 William Weld came to believe that the business ventures of the Dominion Grange were “petty and selfish,” and based more on pecuniary gain and the elimination of the commercial class than in fostering mutual understanding.

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Commenting that the principle of economic co-operation was a perilous foundation for the Grange to stand upon, Weld accused the Patrons of Husbandry of "severing the connection that should exist in a complex community, making the farmer store-keeper, shipper, speculator, and everything else."¹

Unfortunately William Weld was not the only agricultural critic to abandon the possibilities of late 19th-century agrarian protest in Ontario. The meteoric rise and fall of both the Dominion Grange and the Patrons of Industry indicates that many farmers shared Weld's initial fascination and eventual disillusionment with agrarian movements emphasizing the co-operative principle in agriculture. Even though Ontario farmers often complained about their weak social, political, and economic position in comparison with other classes, co-operation as *the* solution to the dilemmas facing the agricultural population would prove to be both the touchstone and the lodestone of agrarian protest in the late 19th century. Initial enthusiasm for the co-operative principle was well founded, as co-operation could connect farmers in a bond of economic mutualism. Through bulk purchasing and united commercial retailing, the co-operative ventures of the Dominion Grange and Patrons of Industry served to bring buyer and seller into more direct contact. Conversely, co-operation could also alienate farmers accustomed to dealing with established market forces, and also those large-scale commercial farmers unwilling to change their modes of operation. Entrenched ideological differences regarding the merits or shortcomings of the co-operative principle in the Dominion Grange and Patrons of Industry highlighted the tensions and conflicts intrinsic to the varied philosophies of the farmers themselves.²

Historical explanations for farmers' waning interest in both the Grange and the Patrons of Industry range from inter-associational strife to ideological conflicts between farmers and other classes in society. As the rise of both the Grange and the Patrons of Industry occurred during the period of Canada's rapid industrialization in the 19th century, a great deal of early historiography surrounding these two

¹On William Weld's involvement with the Dominion Grange and the first inaugural meeting in London, see Louis Aubrey Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada: The Origins and Development of Agrarian Protest, 1872-1924* (1924; Toronto 1975), 41-46 and 52-55. See also Weld's editorials in the *Farmers' Advocate* (London), July 1873; April 1874; January 1880; March 1880, and July 1880.

²Jeffrey Taylor, in his *Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925* (Regina 1994) argues that there were two rival identities clamouring for farmers' attention; a vision of the farmer as a small businessman and an advocate of commercial market agriculture, and an image of the farmer as a labourer and one who favoured the co-operative system. To Taylor, the agrarian protest movement that viewed farmers as workers broke down when farmers rejected co-operatives outright and fully accepted the capitalistic market system. Bradford Rennie makes similar arguments for Alberta in his *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto 2000); see also Kerry Badgely, *Bringing in the Common Love of Good: The UFO, 1914-26* (Montréal and Kingston 2000), 3-20.

agrarian movements focused on the dynamics of the relationship between farmers and urban labourers. As a result, the failure of both the Patrons of Husbandry and the Patrons of Industry mirrored that of organizations such as the Knights of Labor, as both farmers and the larger community were simply ill prepared for the radical rhetoric of agrarian class-consciousness.³ More recent historiography highlights the palpable conservatism of Ontario's farming population as a justification for rejecting the militant platform of both the Grange and the Patrons of Industry. Mirroring the work done on western prairie farmers by Jeffrey Taylor and Bradford Rennie, historians such as Kerry Badgely asserted that farmers' ideological conflicts over market agriculture and the co-operative system precluded unity and collaboration over larger issues affecting the farming population. While these agrarian protest movements indeed questioned the position of farmers in the larger society, they lacked coherence on how to solve fundamental economic, political, and social concerns of tillers of the soil.⁴

While ideological conflicts and tensions certainly hampered the fortunes of the Grange and Patrons of Industry in Ontario, material inequalities amongst the agricultural population itself by the late 19th century largely accounted for these philosophical differences. The primacy of agriculture as the foundation of economic activity in Ontario was an accomplished fact by mid-century, even though agriculture would undergo a great transition by the latter decades of the 19th century. Not only were the majority of farming families able to reach a fairly enviable level of self-sufficiency by 1860, but they also managed to produce commercially viable market surpluses. Even though these surpluses were not considerable by any means, such "scanty fortunes" provided stability and ensured a decent level of productivity for most family farms in Ontario by 1871.⁵ Even though many farmers relied heavily on the products of their own acreage, the respectability factor inherent in generating commercial surpluses prompted many families to devise alternative

³On the inter-associational strife of the Grange and the Patrons of Industry, see Wood, *Farmers' Movements in Canada*, 63-72 and 115-21. For the Grange and Patrons as expressions of radical class discontent, see Russell Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism: Perspectives on Ontario Agrarian Movements* (Toronto 1975). See also Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900* (Toronto 1983), 388-91; Ramsay Cook, "Tillers and Toilers: The Rise and Fall of Populism in Canada in the 1890s," *Historical Papers* (Guelph 1984), 5-20.

⁴On the conservatism of Ontario farmers, see S.J.R. Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers: Ontario Society and Politics* (Toronto 1990), 232-48 and Badgely, *Bringing in the Common Love of Good*, 7-10. See also Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers*, 1-14 and Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 3-8.

⁵Marvin McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860," *Social Science History*, 8 (Winter 1984), 395-424; Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto 1992); Gordon Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes and Rural Middle Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Rural Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review*, 79 (December 1997), 621-59.

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market strategies. The escalation of mixed agriculture by the latter decades of the 19th century, with an increased emphasis on livestock and dairy products, as well as renewed interest in gardening and horticulture illustrates various approaches by farmers to attain an often-elusive “middling” status in rural Ontario. Coupled with the larger commercial farmers, smaller farmers did in fact represent a sizeable stimulus for rural middle-class formation.⁶

While farmers comprised the vanguard of rural middle-class formation in Ontario, recent scholarly work done on agriculture in other regions in Canada demonstrates that agrarian conditions were far from idyllic. A deeply structured “hierarchy of the soil” emerged in studies of rural society in the Maritimes, where widespread poverty and inequality reduced self-sufficiency and restricted opportunities for growth. While the relative prosperity of agriculture in Ontario alleviated to some degree the pressures of economic disparity, other studies reveal a fractured social structure in its rural hinterland. The marginalization of small producers through new — and expensive — agricultural processes, conflicts between family, commercial, and tenant farmers, as well as the dissatisfaction of the agricultural labourer illustrates that the rural populace was indeed highly divided.⁷ The spectre of increasing industrialization and urbanization likewise engendered discord among various ranks of farmers, as those larger commercial farmers who either embraced or reacted with indifference to the coming industrial order found themselves at odds with those who were highly suspicious of urban monopoly capitalism. Although escalating urbanization and industrialization were often a perception issue as Ontario remained largely agricultural by the turn of the century, less fortunate

⁶Ruth Sandwell argues that an emphasis solely on market forces overlooks the complexity of social change in the rural countryside, as family farms employed varying strategies to achieve economic prosperity. See her “Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History,” *Social History/Histoire Sociale*, 27 (May 1994), 1-32. See also Marvin McInnis, “The Changing Structure of Canadian Agriculture, 1867-1897,” *Journal of Economic History*, 42 (March 1982), 191-98; and especially the work of Kenneth Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto 2001).

⁷Rusty Bittermann, “The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton Community,” *Acadiensis*, 18, (1988), 33-55; Rusty Bittermann, Robert Mackinnon, and Graeme Wynn, “Of Inequality and Interdependence in the Nova Scotian Countryside, 1850-1870,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 74 (January 1993), 1-20. See also many of the essays in Daniel Samson, ed., *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950* (Fredericton 1994). For the situation in Ontario, see Terry Crowley, “Rural Labour,” in Paul Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Toronto 1995), 13-104; Darroch, “Scanty Fortunes,” 630-36.

commercial farmers, subsistence farmers, and agricultural labourers reacted with trepidation to the changes in commercial agriculture.⁸

Thus, the two main currents of intellectual thought regarding agriculture, the accommodation of market forces through acceptance of the capitalist system and the rejection of that system through the co-operative approach, appeared to be two fairly irreconcilable positions. Clearly the material circumstances of farmers in late 19th-century Ontario dictated in large measure which ideology would be supported by various members of the farming population. By actively participating in the formation of agricultural societies and exhibitions, farmers who embraced the market system and commercial agriculture represented a new commercial and politically-active class conspiring to create a commonality of interest based on economic prosperity in agriculture. Agricultural associations and agricultural colleges would also buttress the cultural formation of the rural hegemonic order, divided between increasingly commercial farmers, self-employed businessmen, professionals, and retailers.⁹ The participation of farmers in other voluntary associations would also demonstrate their contribution to a rural cultural and social identity. By partaking liberally of associations with a strong cross-class membership, farmers managed to negotiate their own space within an increasingly complex rural social structure. Their presence in rural fraternal organizations like the Oddfellows and other mutual benefit societies, as well as Mechanics' Institutes and temperance societies

⁸On how farmers dealt with the changes associated with urban-industrial capitalism, see Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism*; Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers*, 1-14 and 90-102; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 13-19. On the tensions wrought by commercialism on agriculture by the latter decades of the century see Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto 1988); Kerry Badgely, "'Then I Saw that I had Been Swindled': Frauds and Swindles Perpetrated on Farmers in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 9 (Gananoque 1994), 350-54.

⁹For farmers participating in the construction of a new commercial identity in early to mid-19th-century Canada, see D. Ross Fair, "Gentlemen, Farmers and Gentlemen Half-Farmers: The Development of Agricultural Societies in Upper Canada, 1792-1846," PhD thesis, Queen's University, 1998; Elsbeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto 1999), and J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-creation Before the Railway* (Montréal and Kingston 2000). On the relationship of farmers to the late 19th-century-state and the rural social order see David Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montréal and Kingston 1994); Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes." Jeffrey Taylor argues that the construction of agricultural knowledge often separated farmers; see his *Fashioning Farmers*. See also Tom Nesmith, "The Philosophy of Agriculture: The Promise of the Intellect in Ontario Farming," PhD thesis, Carleton University, 1988; Thomas Irwin, "Government Funding of Agricultural Associations in the Late Nineteenth Century," PhD thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1997.

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throughout the 19th century indicates that farmers were quite active in assisting with the construction of a rural middle-class cultural identity.¹⁰

Farmers not only reinforced, but they also criticized the rural socio-economic order, as they often expounded a radical, "populist" discourse that exposed the material inequalities inherent in monopoly capitalism. Drawing on populist traditions of castigating corporate, political, and social privilege, this particular strain of radical agrarianism at once embraced and critiqued the concept of producerism, or the labour theory of value. This vision of society held that the producing class, made up of farmers and skilled workers, needed to band together to defeat monopoly and corporate power to retain the fruits of their labour for themselves. Even though this socio-economic outlook encountered many adherents in both the Grange and Patrons of Husbandry, it tended to exhibit a more negative view of other classes in the larger community. Dividing society into either useful producers or slothful and parasitical non-producers, some members of the *Dominion Grange* and the *Patrons of Industry* fostered adversarial sentiments within the less prosperous members of the agricultural population, focusing on issues of their material, political, and even social exclusion. However, what is noteworthy regarding this antagonistic class rhetoric of agrarian protest is that farmers advocating the continuance of market agriculture and those supporting the co-operative system could both maintain hostile relations with those individuals deemed non-producers.¹¹

The significance of the Patrons of Husbandry and the Patrons of Industry lay in their attempts to organize farmers with varying temporal and financial circum-

¹⁰For voluntary associations as a bulwark of cultural hegemony, see Christopher Anstead, "Fraternalism in Victorian Ontario: Secret Societies and Cultural Hegemony," PhD thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1992; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto 1996). For the presence of farmers in Mechanics' Institutes see Donald Akenson's study of the Gananoque Mechanics' Institute in *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montréal and Kingston 1984), 218-22. Farmers often joined fraternal orders in their local town or village; see George and J.C. Herbert Emery, *A Young Man's Benefit: The Independent Order of Oddfellows and Sickness Insurance in the United States and Canada, 1860-1929* (Montréal and Kingston 1999), 31-8.

¹¹Both Hann in his work *Farmers Confront Industrialism* and Ramsay Cook in "Tillers and Toilers" view this ideology as part of a nascent socialist outlook. Jeffrey Taylor in *Fashioning Farmers* separates the views of the "radical" farmers and the "liberal" farmers concerning this adversarial rhetoric. Rennie in *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy* and Badgely in *Bringing in the Common Love of Good* assert that both groups of farmers could participate in censuring the non-producing classes. For information about how a variety of interest groups throughout Ontario's history utilized the rhetoric of populism see Sid Noel, "Early Populist Tendencies in Ontario Political Culture," *Ontario History*, 90 (September 1998), 173-87; Carol Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800-1850* (Toronto 2000); Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto 2000).

stances, as well as divergent ideological strains of social and economic thought. Nonetheless, it would be fairly simplistic to suggest that the more prosperous farmers adhered solely to an economic ideology of market and commercial agriculture, while their less fortunate brethren only reacted with apprehension to the workings of modern industrial capitalism in advocating a co-operative system of market relations. A purely deterministic approach to the complexities of agrarian economic and social ideology simply would be erroneous, as farmers could express preference for either market agriculture or the co-operative system from anywhere in the agricultural economic continuum. What the following evidence does suggest is that the tensions inherent in the differing material circumstances and various representational visions of agriculture made it impossible for the Dominion Grange and the Patrons of Industry to sustain harmony and unity for any length of time within a deeply divided agricultural population. The initial success of both agrarian protest movements in Ontario displayed at least a willingness on the part of farmers to bond together for united action, and would influence a 20th-century agricultural enterprise, the United Farmers of Ontario. However, their cataclysmic collapse into irrelevancy by the turn of the century also revealed the ideological, cultural, social, and economic fissures situated within Ontario's rural populace.

In the late 1860s, a rather minor civil servant in the US Department of Agriculture named Oliver Kelley initiated a new agricultural association to unite farmers, called the Patrons of Husbandry. Drawing on his experiences as the president of an agricultural society and director of an experimental farm, Kelley insisted that his organization was an ideal association to improve agriculture and provide sociability and education to rural inhabitants. Establishing a strong foothold in the United States, the Patrons of Husbandry established a local Grange in Missisquoi, Quebec in 1872. By 1875, the Dominion Grange proudly noted that there were 500 subordinate Granges and well over 20,000 members of the Patrons of Husbandry in Canada.¹² Only recently have historians examined the Grange movement in a larger context, as a continuity of agricultural movements throughout the 19th century. While many historians describe the Grange as a rather hidebound agrarian movement that was highly suspicious of modernity, others view the movement as the culmination of a republican ideology of virtue and liberty. As a result, scholars of the Grange in the United States describe the association as the direct antecedent of the People's Party and the Farmers' Alliance. In Canada, historians link the Dominion Grange with the Patrons of Industry and the Farmers' Institute movement, as well as the United Farmers of Ontario.¹³ What is certain is that the Grange was an orga-

¹²Louis Aubrey Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada* (1924; Toronto 1975), 25-35; *History of The Grange in Canada, With a List of Division and Subordinate Granges and their Executive Officers* (Toronto 1876), 22-32.

¹³For examination of the tensions between the Grange and modernity, see D. Sven Nordin, *Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange, 1867-1900* (Jackson 1974); Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism*, 1-6; Warren Gates, "Modernization as a Function of an Agricultural

nization committed to the unification of farmers by providing commercial, educational, and social opportunities for all of its members.

Consequently, the initial thrust of the Dominion Grange was to provide occasions for farmers to end their isolation by uniting in "friendly intercourse" with other members, and to promote their combined interests. Comparing the Grange to trades unions, guilds, boards of trade, and law societies, the promoters of the Patrons of Husbandry claimed that their association advanced the calling and fortune of the agricultural population. Observing that their interests conflicted less than any other business, the Dominion Grange executive realized that farmers "rarely make their plans in unison, but each man lays out and executes his work by his own light, without advice or council from his neighbours." While recognizing that the establishment of Farmers' clubs and agricultural societies helped remedy this evil, they were only partially successful as they omitted the elements of "union and secrecy" needed to hold such bodies together.¹⁴ The discourse of uniting farmers under one organization would become a rather prominent feature of the Patrons of Husbandry and their early supporters, particularly William Weld and the *Farmers' Advocate*. To Weld, the principle of secrecy and selectiveness inherent in the rituals and function of the Dominion Grange was entirely necessary to create a "bond of honour" among different parties of farmers. Equating the Grange to other voluntary associations such as the Oddfellows, Masons, and Orangemen, Weld argued that each had their private bonds and secrets, and through associational ties came unity, harmony, and strength.¹⁵

Despite this rhetoric of agrarian unanimity, Grange directors firmly believed that they laboured for the general good and not for the advancement of their own interests or "without any regard to the welfare of other classes." Grange members were encouraged not to extol the virtues of their occupation above others, as the Dominion Grange platform was based on broad and liberal principles that treated with respect and acknowledged the necessity of every legitimate profession.¹⁶ The great

Fair: The Great Grangers' Picnic Exhibition at Williams Grove, Pennsylvania, 1873-1916," *Agricultural History*, 58 (July 1984), 262-79. For the Grange as a continuity of agrarian radicalism, see Thomas Woods, *Knights of the Plow: Oliver Kelley and the Origins of the Grange in Republican Ideology* (Ames 1991); L.A. Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements*, 13-155; Badgely, *Bringing in the Common Love of Good*, 5-12.

¹⁴*History of the Grange in Canada*, 3; *Circular to the Deputies of Dominion Granges* (Toronto 1877); *Manual of Subordinate Granges of the Patrons of Husbandry, Adopted by the Dominion Grange* (Welland 1876), 16.

¹⁵*Farmers' Advocate* (London), February 1874; July 1873; April 1874. The unifying bond of associational life along strict gendered lines was particularly true with fraternal societies. See Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism* (Princeton 1989); Mark Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven and London 1989); Emery and Emery, *A Young Man's Benefit*.

¹⁶*History of the Grange*, 18-19; *The Granger* (London), January 1875; *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Second Annual Session* (Toronto 1875), 2-3.

task of the Granger movement was to eliminate the jealousy, envy, and discontent caused by class warfare, and this was to be accomplished through a "proper readjustment" of the classes. Respect apparently was a reciprocal virtue, as Patrons of Husbandry were soundly encouraged to remember that all legitimate trades, the arts and sciences, and various other professions were all parts of a great whole, "weak when taken alone, strong when united in bonds of social brotherhood." The Grand Master address of the fifteenth annual meeting of the Dominion Grange emphasized this point by noting that the "highway of advancement is broad enough for all to run, and our hope of ultimate success depends more on our own progress than the retarding of others." The Dominion Grange also endeavoured to moderate the stance taken by the National Grange in the United States, which stipulated that all their members must be engaged in farming pursuits "because it is not safe to open the Grange to any others, as it is emphatically a Farmers' Institution, and the base must rest on the farmers alone." The Dominion Grange therefore tempered its initiation rules to include not only those directly interested in agricultural pursuits, but also those having no commercial interests conflicting with Granger purposes.¹⁷ What would prompt the executive of an organization solely devoted to the advancement of farmers to be even remotely concerned with the plight of other occupations and classes?

A detailed investigation into the background of those who attended the very first meeting of the Dominion Grange reveals a group of farmers far more attuned to the sentiments of the upper levels of the rural social order than the troubles of subsistence farmers and agricultural labourers. In examining the census records of 19 of the original 25 attendees, 6 of those members were not even listed as farmers. The six initial members included Henry Hanson, a doctor; William Brown, a professor of agriculture at the University of Toronto; Thomas Dyas, a surveyor and engineer and later a journalist; Henry Weld, a grain dealer and son of William Weld; Enos Scott, a pork dealer, and Henry Bruce, who was a retired army officer.¹⁸ Furthermore, the remaining thirteen Grangers who were listed as farmers were noticeably the more wealthy commercial farmers in the province. With only 2 of the 13 listed as tenant farmers in schedule three of the 1871 census, the average acreage was 225 acres of land, well above the average for a large commercial farm. The ag-

¹⁷ *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Fifteenth Annual Session*, (Toronto 1890), 7. See also the *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Sixth Annual Session* (Toronto 1879), 9-10; *The Granger* (London), December 1875; *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange*, 9; A.B. Smedley, *The Patrons Monitor* (Des Moines 1874), 2-3.

¹⁸ With 23 of the original 25 members from the province of Ontario — with those 23 coming from only 6 counties, Grey, Lambton, Middlesex, Welland, Elgin and York — it is also evident that the early Dominion Grange directors were a fairly elite group that concerned themselves in large measure with the problems of agriculture in Ontario. For the information on these six members and the names of the original group see Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada*, 41-61.

ricultural returns also reported an average of roughly five buildings on their land, and also a standard of nine agricultural implements per household.¹⁹ Thus the concern over “classlessness” in the Dominion Grange apparently was an ideological façade that not only masked the economic inequalities of the officers compared with those of the rank and file membership, but that also soothed the sensibilities of the other members of the rural commercial and social order.

And yet certain pronouncements by the Dominion Grange reflected rather negative sentiments regarding other members of the rural middle class. In employing the rhetoric of equal rights and privileges, the Grange maintained that some favoured classes received special treatment while farmers suffered economic, political, and social isolation. While politicians were not new targets for agricultural critics, the Dominion Grange consolidated an adversarial “professional coalition” of politicians, lawyers, and doctors as the prime assassins of class relations within the larger community. Of course *The Granger* was quick to point out that while lawyers, doctors, and other professionals were indeed requisite to the welfare of society, the surplus of professionals — that portion which was not “necessary to the well-being of the community” — caused great distress to farmers and society as a whole.²⁰ According to the Patrons of Husbandry, the greatest disruption to societal relations by the end of the 19th century was the commercial class. The problem itself was not merchants or commercial activities *per se*; what angered the Grange was the “tyranny of monopolies” or big capital. Corporations and large-scale industries oppressed the people by robbing them of their just profit, and ruined the honest farmer while the system “built up Princes, men in idleness, who do nothing, who won’t do anything and who never have done anything ... they have never done a hand’s turn, they never plowed [sic] or sowed, reaped or mowed, nor even teamed a load of produce into any market.” With the opening of the Ontario People’s Salt Company in 1883 near Kincardine, the Dominion Grange refused to sell stock to commercial dealers and businessmen, allowing only Granges and farmers to purchase salt as individuals who suffered the most from monopoly and tyranny.²¹

¹⁹In his *A History of Farmers’ Movements in Canada*, 41-2, Wood provides the town of residence for most of the original attendees to the first Dominion Grange meeting, so it was a fairly effortless task to track these individuals down in the 1871 census records, which are housed in the Archives of Ontario. See the Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), 1871 agricultural returns for Grey County, C-9953 to 9954; for Middlesex, C-9900 and C-9904 to 9905; for Lambton County, C-9895 to 9899 and Welland County, C-9920.

²⁰*The Granger* (London), December 1875; *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Twelfth Annual Session* (Toronto 1886), 44; Simcoe County Archives (hereafter SCA), the Knock Grange fonds (hereafter KG), Acc. 987-16, E7, miscellaneous papers, Dominion Grange circular, 13 June 1884.

²¹SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, E4, miscellaneous papers, Ontario People’s Salt Co. circular, 1883. See also Robert Bradford, *Address Delivered by Robert Bradford to the Grange at Agincourt: An able exposition of the cause of the hard times, the Banks, Loan Companies*

Obviously this discourse and practice of exclusion was the antithesis of harmonious class relations in the rural hinterland, and contradictory to the original pronouncements of class concord preached in the early years of the Dominion Grange. In explaining this phenomenon, undoubtedly the proclamations of large commercial farmers situated in one section of the province began to wear increasingly thin with an escalating number — and subsequently a stronger influence — of subordinate Granges by the end of the 1870s. An investigation into the background of ten members of the first executive of the Knock Grange in Simcoe County is revealing in this regard. Admittedly, the first officers of the Knock Grange were from the most prominent agricultural families in the region and were not subsistence farmers. However, the agricultural returns of the 1871 census illustrate that 20 per cent of the directors were tenant farmers, with all farmers reporting an average acreage of just over 100 acres, roughly 3 buildings per lot, and 5 agricultural implements per household.²² And yet on the surface, the executive of the Knock Grange was just as interested in maintaining the social order of the rural community as the officers in the Dominion Grange. In 1875, the Knock Grange suspended the initiation of labourers and labourers' wives until the Dominion Grange ruled on the possibility of allowing non-farmers equal privileges as members. Not only did such a practice expose the divisiveness within the agricultural population, it also demonstrates the desire of Knock farmers to achieve "respectability" by denying that status to others. Similarly, in an address to the Acadia Grange, the Grand Master informed the audience that the Grange demanded respect and equal consideration from the other members of the community, to escape the "odium of being considered mere workers, the 'mud-sills'."²³

and Importing merchants chiefly to blame (Toronto 1878), 5, 10. See also the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange*, 4.

²²Unfortunately, rank and file membership lists of subordinate Granges in Ontario are simply non-existent, while records of the executive are extremely rare and incomplete. To obtain information about the Knock Grange, I consulted Janet Arnett, *The Grange at Knock* (Stroud 1984), 5-6. This information was then cross-referenced with the agricultural returns in the 1871 census in the AO, Simcoe County, C-9961. While clearly not representative of the considerable wealth of the Dominion Grange officers, the recorded acreage corresponded well with the rubric of a medium size farm reported by over 50 per cent of Ontario's farmers. See Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes," 626-31.

²³In distancing themselves from being "mere workers," it appears that Ontario farmers not only felt part of the rural middle class, they also accepted scientific husbandry. See Tom Nesmith, "The Philosophy of Agriculture." For the themes of agricultural respectability, see Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes," 636-42. Terry Crowley, in "Rural Labour," 50-1 argues that the Grange often caused a chasm to open up between agricultural labourers and farmers in the Grange, which is a fairly accurate assessment. In the Dufferin County Archives, see particularly the P.J. Van Wagoner fonds, Acc. 3456-998, speech of Van Wagoner to the Acadia Grange, n.d, and in the SCA, the Knock Grange fonds (hereafter KG), Acc. 987-16, minute book, 1875-77, 16 June 1875.

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To maintain their standards of prosperity, farmers in the Knock Grange and other subordinate Granges enthusiastically supported the co-operative system in their locales. While the more affluent members of the Dominion Grange could use the ideology of classlessness to camouflage material inequalities, smaller subordinate Granges could likewise utilize the co-operative system to affect a comparable smokescreen of blaming the commercial classes for their economic misfortune. One of the primary functions of the co-operative system accepted by the Grange was to bring producers and consumers, as well as farmers and manufacturers, into more direct working relationships. Unfortunately, to accomplish this task required the elimination of the middleman as a class, despite rather animated protests to the contrary by Granger supporters that they sought only the eradication of surplus commercial retailers. *The Granger* attempted to reassure merchants and manufacturers that farmers did not want to usurp established rules of trade, or make all other interests subservient to their own. This was no declared war on middlemen, as Grangers recognized the necessity of the commercial class by assisting the creation of their businesses and helping mercantile retailers succeed. And yet Grangers also condemned the majority of retailers for their excessive salaries, high rates of credit and interest, and elevated rates of profit. If the commercial class proved unable to enact the changes required by farmers in Canada, then farmers needed to unite and restrain the reins of government, rail monopolies, the courts, banks, and the entire mercantile system of capital.²⁴

Supporters, allies, and officers of the early Dominion Grange movement soon recognized that this ideology was rather exclusive, and would soon erode the rural social order and commercial bonds forged through interclass co-operation. William Weld offered a word of caution to the Grange as early as 1875, stating that it was not a "judicious policy" to array class against class in the business activities of the Grange, or to attack manufacturers or merchants for making a living. By 1880, convinced that the Grange not only singled out the "patent right men, tree agents, notion agents, and shoddy agents" for censure, but the entire mercantile sector, Weld distanced himself completely from the Dominion Grange. In calling for the Patrons of Husbandry to end their crusade against the retailers, Weld was not only safeguarding his own business and the advertising revenue received from commercial ventures, but he also upheld the vision of classlessness preached by the original

²⁴Bradford, *Address to the Grange at Agincourt*, 20-2; *The Granger* (London), November 1875; January 1876, April 1876. See also *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange*, 4-5. These were not new arguments that appeared suddenly among farmers in the 1870s, as such radical "populist" rhetoric can be found throughout Ontario's history; see J.M.S. Careless, "The Toronto Globe and Agrarian Radicalism, 1850-67," *Canadian Historical Review*, 29 (March 1948), 14-39; Ken Dewar, "Charles Clarke's *Reformer*: Early Victorian Radicalism in Upper Canada," *Ontario History*, 78 (September 1986), 233-52.

Dominion Grange.²⁵ In a remarkably candid retrospective on the Patrons of Husbandry offered by the Grand Secretary during the twenty-third annual meeting of the Dominion Grange in 1898, many of the outlined mistakes of the early Grangers resulted from discord over the exclusivity of its business practices. Noting that the whole country was aroused in opposition to the new movement out of surprise and alarm for its power and influence among farmers, class antagonism also transpired when early Grangers attracted "a class so sordid and selfish that money was all they looked for." These individuals were plainly uninterested in the pleasures of social intercourse or the advantages of meeting together to discuss their noble calling. Rather, they focused exclusively on furthering their own pecuniary interests.²⁶ While tensions inherent in conflicts over agrarian ideology could traverse material boundaries, they also precluded unity over economic issues within various parties of farmers throughout the history of the Dominion Grange.

Initially the Grange adhered strongly to the practice of purging their association from the effects of sectarianism and political partyism. One of the central tenets of their ideology stated that no Granger "in keeping true to his obligations" could discuss political or religious questions, call political conventions, nominate candidates, or discuss the merits of any political contestant. Prohibiting party politics from the Grange would unify farmers divided along party lines, yet whose overall interests were identical. It was no crime to have a variance of beliefs among Grangers, for the "progress of truth is made by difference of opinion," while disharmony resulted through the bitterness of political controversy. By the end of the century, the executive of the Dominion Grange bemoaned the "utter extinction" of independence from the political parties while simultaneously lauding the stability of the Grange, a situation arising from the exclusion of sectarian and political turmoil.²⁷ As the Grange established a tentative hold on the imaginations of Canadian farmers, William Weld and the *Farmers' Advocate* trumpeted the need for a Farmers' party to listen to their concerns. The Dominion Grange agreed with this assessment, and while they did not form a "Farmers' Party," they encouraged members to take an active role in the politics of the country:

²⁵Weld clearly appreciated the diversity of the bourgeois social order in the countryside, while some subordinate Granges consciously attempted to alter these cultural relationships. See Badgely, "'Then I Saw that I had Been Swindled'," 350-54; *Farmers' Advocate* (London), February 1875; March 1875, March 1880.

²⁶*Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Twenty-Third Annual Session* (Blenheim 1898), 16-17; Badgely, "'Then I Saw that I had Been Swindled,'" 354. Market agriculture also won out over the co-operative system in the Prairies; see Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers*; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*.

²⁷*Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Twenty-Third Annual Session* (Blenheim 1898), 10; see also the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange*, 5-6; *History of the Grange*, 21-2; *Manual of the Grange*, 69-70; *The Granger* (London), November 1875; *Canadian Granger* (London), September 1876.

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The principles we teach underlie all true politics, all true statesmanship, and, if properly carried out, will tend to purify the whole political atmosphere of our country.... It is his duty [the Granger] to do all he can in his own party to put down bribery, corruption, and trickery; and see that none but competent, faithful, and honest men, who will unflinchingly stand by our interests, are nominated for all positions of trust; and to have carried out the principle which should always characterize every Grange member, that THE OFFICE SHOULD SEEK THE MAN, AND NOT THE MAN THE OFFICE.²⁸

As with the philosophy of classlessness, eliminating party politics in the Dominion Grange was an attempt to amalgamate a group of farmers under the hegemonic influence of the Grange executive. This prohibitive policy would prove to be as ineffective as similar doctrines of class harmony within the Grange's membership.

Complications arose when the Grange, prompted by the influence of subordinate Granges, attempted to purify the political process with political methods, rather than following outlined notions of party independence. Initial forays by the Dominion Grange into the political realm occurred as early as 1875, when the Canadian Parliament consulted the Grange on the possibility of raising duties on agricultural products. Experiences such as this led several prominent Grangers such as Worthy Grand Master Squire Hill, W.M. Blair, and Charles Drury to join the Mowat Liberals in provincial politics. The defection of prominent Dominion Grange officers to the ultimate party politician proved detrimental to the integrity of the movement.²⁹ Thus the impact of the more politicized Patrons of Industry on the Dominion Grange by the 1890s offered yet another solution to the problems of farmers in politics. Offering the Patrons of Industry the "right hand of fellowship and goodwill," the Grange debated the merits of joint action between the two associations on several political issues, noting that partyism would be abolished with the implementation of the Patron platform. Subordinate Granges such as the Knock Grange illustrated the divergence of opinion between the Dominion Grange and its underlings over political action, as the Knock executive contemplated the necessity of taking up the political banner. Debating the merits of cumulative voting and referenda, the Knock Grange's desire to be more involved in the political sphere became more acute when they shared their lodgings with a local chapter of the Patrons of Industry.³⁰

²⁸ *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange, 5; Farmers' Advocate* (London), January 1874; March 1874; April 1874.

²⁹ *The Granger* (London), April 1876 and Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada*, 90-99. S.J.R. Noel postulates that a solid constituency of farmers — and Grangers — in Ontario followed the Mowat Liberals as a result of his masterful clientelism, which is a compelling argument. See his *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, 232-48.

³⁰ SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, minute book, 1887-1901, 30 June 1891; 17 February 1894; 5 October 1896. See also *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Seventeenth Annual Session* (Toronto 1892), 10; *Proceedings of the Grange, Eighteenth Annual Session* (Toronto 1893), 6-9; *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, Nineteenth Annual Session* (Toronto 1894), 10.

The Dominion Grange's vision regarding the science of political economy was likewise exceedingly complex, as farmers from various material circumstances could find a theoretical home anywhere along an ideological continuum. Those farmers sustaining commercial agriculture and its preservation of market forces could discover in the Grange a popular version of classic liberalism that worshipped the ethos of honest industry, adhering strongly to the philosophy of the mid-19th-century producer ideology. The glorification of the hardworking and independent farmer illustrates participation in an ideology that not only fostered social cohesion, but also buttressed the rural hegemonic social order. The early Dominion Grange did appreciate the importance of individual diligence, honest industry, and self-reliance, as evidenced by their motto "Put your shoulder to the wheel; fortune helps those who help themselves." The vast majority of Granger songs from *God Speed the Plow*, *Work*, and *Sowing and Reaping* underscored the significance of honest labour for the husbandman, as a liberal harvest would only be secured through toil and exertion. As the Granger song *Dignity of Labor* chanted:

'Tis toil that over nature, gives man his proud control;
 And purifies and hallows, the temple of his soul.
 It startles foul diseases, with all their ghastly train;
 Puts iron in the muscle, and crystal in the brain.
 The Grand Almighty Builder, who fashioned out the earth,
 Hath stamped his seal of honor on labor from her birth.³¹

While some historians conclude that the majority of farmers within the Grange favoured protection, many Grange publications were either ambivalent or fully supportive of freer trade. Patrons of Husbandry were far more concerned with ensuring equality of opportunity within the community when it came to trade practices, than in advocating a particular economic position. To the editors of *The Granger*, the tenor of the Granger petition on the tariff question in 1875 was not about support for a nascent National Policy. Their outlook on tariffs was all about equal rights for farmers, and thus they demanded protection for agricultural products or unrestricted free trade. A subtle defence of free trade was then offered in *The*

³¹ *Songs of the Grange, Patrons of Husbandry* (London 1874), 20-24, 44-46. See also *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange*, 1; *Manual of the Grange*, 6-13, 46-8. On the producer ideology in industrial Ontario, see Bryan Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montréal and Kingston 1979), 97-122; Gregory Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto 1980), 124-50. For late 19th-century changes in industrial Ontario, see Craig Heron, "Factory Workers," in Craven, *Labouring Lives*, 480-515. David Burley in *A Particular Condition in Life* argues that small producers and self-employed entrepreneurs formed the backbone of the late Victorian economy, utilizing the producer ideology for their own purposes.

Granger, as they noted that “all any government can do for the farmer, as a class, is to merely let them alone, and to give no undue advantage to other classes ... not that we believe that any such assumed advantages by protection or taxation can, in the end, benefit any class of the community, as has been pretty conclusively shown by the experience of the late depression.” The *Canadian Granger* echoed these sentiments by proclaiming that protection, or any “trade or commerce that prevents the continuance of the demand for labour” injured every class in the community, from the workers and the farmers to the commercial sector.³² The stand taken by the Dominion Grange once again exemplifies the divided nature of farmers within the



³²*Canadian Granger* (London), September 1876 and November 1876; *The Granger* (London), March 1876 and April 1876; *Proceedings of the Dominion Grange, First Annual Session*, (Toronto 1874), 8; *Sixth Annual Session*, (Toronto, 1879), 9-10. See also Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada*, 91-95. For a discussion on the free trade position see Ben Forster, *A Conjunction of Interests: Business, Politics and Tariffs, 1825-1879* (Toronto 1986), 30-67.

Grange, as the executive could not offend any member of their constituency by advocating one economic position over another.

However, the development of monopoly capitalism in the latter decades of the 19th century revealed intrinsic tensions within the agricultural community. While large-scale commercial farmers and those devoted to market principles utilized producerism and debates over tariffs to mask economic disparity, still other "middling" tillers of the soil could accentuate the co-operative system to highlight the evils of capitalism in their own desire for respectability. It is therefore no contradiction that some historians view Granger disdain for monopoly and capital as a radical departure from established ideas of 19th-century popular political economy.³³ While some farmers attempted to exploit the co-operative system in order to uphold the tenets of the producer ideology, the manifestation of industrial capitalism perplexed still other members of the Patrons of Husbandry to such a degree that they unmasked producerism as a fraud perpetuated upon the farming populace. The more radical members of the Grange therefore employed co-operation as an all-out assault on monopoly capitalism. The failure of the Dominion Grange in its co-operative efforts simply came as a result of the divergence of both liberal and radical views on the principle, and the steadfast rejection of co-operation by market-driven farmers.

The Dominion Grange gradually introduced the co-operative system in the mid-1870s as a form of mutual aid in the commercial sphere that would enhance the dependence of capital upon labour and ensure "harmony and confidence" between both labourers and employers. The systematic application of commercial association would promote the well-being of the community, as the truest principles of co-operation included brotherly kindness and the inculcation of peace between nations, the answer to most of the "practical problems appertaining to human life." As these commercial principles would tend to protect and succour the weak and keep the strong in check, co-operation was a logical extension of Victorian popular liberalism, which eschewed commercial conflict and lauded independence, self-help, and individual industriousness:

It [co-operation] touches no man's fortune; seeks no plunder; causes no disturbance in society; gives no trouble to statesmen; needs no trade union to protect its interests; contemplates no violence; subverts no order; accepts no gifts, nor asks any favour; keeps no terms with the

³³On the Grange and Patrons of Industry joining industrial workers in supporting a more radical political economy see Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism*; Palmer and Kealey, *Dreaming of What Might Be*, 388-91; Christina Burr, *Spreading the Light: Work and Labour Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto* (Toronto 1999), 14-55; Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers*, 1-14; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 8-12.

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idle, and breaks no faith with the industrious; it means self-help, self-independence, and such share in the common competence as labour can earn, and thought can win.³⁴

Even though those of a more liberal stripe could also embrace the co-operative principle, in many respects the radical element in the Dominion Grange consolidated the co-operative system by the 1880s in order to resist the perils of monopoly capitalism.

Campaigns to introduce co-operative doctrines into the Knock Grange began as early as 1875, when speeches to the Grange on the benefits of co-operation were met with enthusiasm. From this initial fervour, the Knock Grange would purchase bulk items from various retailers — from farm books to gypsum, from carriages to scales — and then offer reduced prices on those items to its membership.³⁵ In supporting the Grange's wholesale retail operations, its insurance ventures, and most importantly the Ontario People's Salt Company, Knock Grange directors were fairly explicit in explaining that its patronage of the commercial activities of the Dominion Grange came from a hatred for monopoly capitalism. In 1887, the Knock Grange "condemned in the strongest terms" the salt manufacturers of Ontario, for offences ranging from price fixing, price gouging, and particularly the practice of selling lightweight barrels to unwary farmers. In resolving never to patronize a manufacturer or salt dealer that engaged in defrauding their members, the directors determined to purchase their salt from the Grange's Salt Company, organized to protect farmers from the grinding effects of the Salt ring. This was a drastic measure, but a necessary one, for "at first it was thought by some that a little agitation would be enough to open the eyes of the monopolists and induce them to meet us on equitable grounds, but experience has shown us otherwise, and the longer matters go on so, the firmer becomes the compact and less liable to dismemberment; it is now next to impossible to purchase salt except through a secretary of the ring, by whom the price and all conditions of sale are fixed, and the supplying of orders apportioned to the different wells in proportion to their capacity." Further evidence to illustrate the fact that this manoeuvre aimed squarely at monopoly capitalism came as the Ontario People's Company denied their stock to dealers and businessmen,

³⁴*The Granger* (London), December 1875 and November 1875. See also the *Canadian Co-operator and Patron* (Owen Sound), July 1886; *Circular of the Dominion Grange*, 22 June 1877.

³⁵For a description of the Knock Grange's passion for co-operative ventures see Arnett, *The Grange at Knock*, 46-53. See also the SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, file E1, minute book, 1875-77, 16 February 1875. As smaller commercial farmers, Knock farmers would feel the pinch of monopoly and the effects of industrial capitalism more than those involved in large-scale agricultural operations.

leaving it solely in the hands of the Dominion Grange, subordinate Granges and farmers themselves.³⁶

Unfortunately, agricultural critics and even supposed allies found the principles of co-operation to be a hazardous underpinning for the Dominion Grange to build upon. William Weld, the spokesman for those farmers advocating free market agriculture, agreed that co-operation indeed was the foundation of society as a whole. However, he also was fairly clear that the Grange misapplied the principle, as mutuality between various classes should occur only in social relationships and not economic ones. To Weld, the Patrons of Husbandry violated not only accepted market relations, but also the laws of political economy:

The snag upon which the boat has sunk is summed up in one word, co-operation. This, taken in one sense, is essential to the welfare of society — indeed, it is the foundation of society — but then, if co-operation is so essential, is not division equally so? Could society exist without co-operation in social relations and division in regard to labour? But the co-operation of the Grange included moral, social, commercial and everything else. Thus, whilst the aims of the society were good, in inducing farmers to meet together in their social relations, it was likewise violating a known law in political economy, that civilized society had to exist through a division of labour.³⁷

Of course, William Weld's business and advertising revenue depended on the goodwill of all occupations, which in large measure shaped his thinking on co-operation. However, many farmers shared his influential views, leading to tension between the advocates of the co-operative principle and farmers who preferred the existing market system.

Some of Weld's prophecies about co-operation did come true in the organization of Dominion Grange commercial ventures, as economic conflict often erupted between Grangers and the officers of co-operative institutions. Commenting upon his relations with the Grange, D.S. McKinnon of the Co-op Sewing Machine Company noted that he should receive "thanks instead of abuse" for selling his machine to the Grange at a lower price. Calling on the Grange to remember their principles of bringing manufacturers and farmers into more direct contact, McKinnon asked the Grange to send in their orders to "show the Dominion Grange is a reality, and not a myth." Similarly, the Grange Wholesale Company demanded prompt payment from the Secretaries of individual Granges, as cash payments were a "plank in the Grange platform." The problems of debt amongst various Granges was so great, that unless they agreed to payments in advance the Grange Wholesale Com-

³⁶SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, file E4, Ontario People's Salt Company circulars, 1883 and 1886 and the minute book, 1887-1901, 3 March 1887; 6 March 1889.

³⁷*Farmers' Advocate* (London), January 1880; March 1880; July 1880. Weld also accused the Grange of lacking independence within their membership as the "shirker" could receive equal benefits as hardworking members, another contravention of popular political economy. See the *Farmers' Advocate* (London), January 1880.

pany would decline filling orders as it would “surely be disastrous to yourselves as well as us to continue under the present system.” Even the most enthusiastic supporters of co-operation, most notably the Knock Grange, experienced difficulty with the co-operative principle. Orders from the Knock Grange to the Ontario People’s Salt Company often remained unfilled, or exceedingly behind schedule, leading to comparable frustration with the Grange’s salt company as the Knock directors experienced with the salt monopolists.³⁸

Two features of the Dominion Grange that were highly successful in creating an aura of inclusiveness and agricultural cohesion came in the way they treated women members, and in how they cultivated harmony and unity in their leisure activities. The participation of women was a significant factor in the rise of the Dominion Grange, as the Patrons of Husbandry attempted to create both a higher manhood and womanhood within society. The alliance of the Grange with early American suffrage movements and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union as part of an increased presence of women in the public sphere is well-noted by many historians. However, the Grange also reinforced women’s domestic roles within society, which tempered the quest for mutuality and sisterhood within the Patrons of Husbandry.³⁹ One of the more notable achievements of the Grange was to incorporate women into its rituals, necessitating the presence of women at Grange meetings. Creating the offices of Pomona, Flora, and Ceres to represent Faith, Hope and Charity — the hallmarks of the Patron creed — would remind women of the high position assigned to them and encourage them to be worthy of it. The inclusion of women into the community of the Grange was no accident, as the “interest, the social relations and the destiny of man and woman are identical. She was intended by her Creator to be the helpmate, companion, and equal of man.” The editors of the *Canadian Granger* bemoaned the fact that woman’s instinctive perceptions of righteousness and purity were lost to society, and determined that the Grange was the organization to re-introduce rural women to the entire community. While the Grange would assign women equal powers and privileges, it was noteworthy that in the public sphere, the Grange acknowledged that man “generally improves in knowledge and business ability after he enters active life, [and] woman too frequently retrogrades.” Ending the seclusion of women from society would not only

³⁸SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, file E2, circulars of the Co-op Sewing Machine Co., 1882 and 1884, and file E6, circulars of the Grange Wholesale Company, 1882. See also Arnett, *The Grange at Knock*, 51-3.

³⁹The position of the Grange in regards to women would prove to be fairly consistent with farmers in general; see Nordin, *Rich Harvest*, 110-30; Woods, *Knights of the Plow*, 165-78; Nancy Osterud, *Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth Century New York* (Ithaca and London 1991); Donald Marti, *Women of the Grange: Mutuality and Sisterhood in Rural America, 1866-1920* (New York 1991).

liberate females from confining pursuits, but would also allow men and women to universally elevate their social selves.⁴⁰

The Grange would also reflect the coming changes to agriculture in the late Victorian period, with a more gendered realignment of farm work. Even though the rituals of the Grange recognized that women were still required to labour "side by side" with their producer husbands, the nature of female agricultural work evolved substantially with the onset of commercial agriculture. Christina Moffat, in her pamphlet outlining the female Granger offices of Flora, Ceres, and Pomona, surprisingly utilized the masculine language of the husbandman in her description of Ceres, the "protectress of agriculture." And yet in her portrayal of Flora, the goddess of flowers and Pomona, the goddess of fruit gardens, Moffat emphasized that these branches of agriculture were for the prerogative of women alone. Reinforcing a domestic ideology, Moffat noted in her essay on the decorative importance of flowers "how pure and refreshing plants appear in a room watched and waited on as they generally are by the gentler sex; they are links in many pleasant associations, they are cherished favourites of mothers, wives, sisters, and friends not less dear, and connect themselves in our minds, with their feminine delicacy, loveliness, and affectionate habits and sentiments."⁴¹

The Dominion Grange experienced an early surge in membership growth due in large measure to their sociability and the recreational activities offered to rural inhabitants. Even a hardened critic such as William Weld recognized the potential of Grange social events in promoting brotherly feeling, allaying local animosities, and bringing together entire neighbourhoods through Grange picnics and other events. In Weld's view, by abandoning the solid structure of sociability for economic prosperity with the extension of the co-operative principle, the Grange was doomed to failure.⁴² The importance of social intercourse to end the isolation of farmers undoubtedly became a major selling point for the Patrons of Husbandry. Noting that the Grange was primarily a social institution, Grangers fully believed that the "old, selfish system of isolation" was giving way to this new "invigorating sociality" whereby the agricultural community could develop themselves as social

⁴⁰ *Canadian Granger* (London), October 1876; *Manual of Subordinate Granges*, 24-6; *Constitution and Bylaws of the Dominion Grange* (Toronto 1878), 3.

⁴¹ Christina Moffat, *To the Members of the Dominion Grange, Patrons of Husbandry of Canada, Three Essays, Called Flora, Ceres and Pomona* (Sunderland 1886), 4-6, 15-17, 26-27. On the evolution of agricultural work pertaining to women, see Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change* (Baltimore and London 1995). For the Canadian context, see Marjorie Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto 1988); Terry Crowley, "Experience and Representation: Southern Ontario Farm Women and Agricultural Change, 1870-1914," *Agricultural History*, 73 (Spring 1999), 238-51.

⁴² See the *Farmers' Advocate* (London), April 1874; January 1876; July 1878; July 1880.

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beings. The majority of the Grange's ritual and music would emphasize this feature, as one opening song proclaimed:

We have come to the Grange, where 'tis joyful to meet,
Our friends and companions in unity sweet;
Now our labour is done, and to rest and repose
We bid a fond welcome at day's weary close.
Then Patrons, in joy, come gather around,
Concord and harmony with us be found!
Down with the spite and the hate that estrange,
And long live the peace that we find at the Grange.⁴³

Local Granges quickly grasped the importance of this doctrine of sociability, and provided members with a number of entertainment options. Many of these activities emulated the social functions inherent in agricultural societies, such as ploughing matches, agricultural debates, and discussions along with musical interludes, recitations, *conversaciones*, and literary readings. Many culinary events such as oyster suppers and tea excursions were highly successful, as one such event in the Knock Grange led the executive to declare "all enjoyed themselves, with the good things provided, and social chat flowed freely round."⁴⁴ It would soon become apparent that Granges focusing on entertainment as a means of increasing their revenue streams were far more successful than their counterparts. Both the Minesing and the Knock Granges sold tickets to their tea parties and oyster suppers, while the Knock Grange held a concert for the villagers that resulted in a sizeable profit. As a result, both of these assemblies managed to remain intact well into the 20th century. Conversely, the Brougham Grange left the entertainment in the hands of its female members with limited support, while providing agricultural lectures as the only supplementary amusement to Grange meetings. The Royal Oak Grange likewise made only half-hearted attempts in arranging a festival to raise funds, focusing exclusively on the merits of the co-operative functions of the Patrons of Husbandry. Each Grange only lasted 4 years in operation as the Brougham Grange was forced to return over 300 dollars to its members, funds earmarked for the construction of their Granger Hall. The last entry of the Royal Oak minute book pro-

⁴³The corresponding closing ode went as follows: "Bless be the tie that binds/Our hearts in social love; The fellowship of kindred minds/Is like to that above. When we asunder part/It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart/And hope to meet again." See the *Songs of the Grange*, 50, 3-4, 7-10, 19-20; *Manual of the Grange*, 67-9; *Canadian Granger* (London), March 1877.

⁴⁴SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, minute book, 1875-77, 16 February and 18 March 1876; minute book, 24 February 1886; minute book, 1887-1901, 2 January 1889 and 23 March 1893; SCA, Minesing Grange records (hereafter MG), in the Harold Parker fonds (hereafter HP), Acc. 979-100, minute book, 1879-1906, 28 July 1879, and 28 March 1881.

claimed sadly that "this was the last of the Royal Oak Grange; it died a natural death just like all."⁴⁵

Another contributing factor to the decline of the Patrons of Husbandry in late 19th-century Ontario was the appearance of the Patrons of Industry in the early 1890s. In many ways, the Patrons of Industry emulated the Populist movement and the Farmers' Alliance in the United States, associations that have recently received a great deal of scholarly attention. Descriptions of the American Populist "moment" range from radical agrarian responses to monopoly capitalism, to agricultural class-consciousness finding political expression in the Farmers' Alliance. Current studies on the Populists conclude that the movement merely attempted to redress old agrarian grievances associated with capitalism and the ever-present isolation of the agricultural community.⁴⁶ The Patrons of Industry in Canadian historiography are viewed either as an agrarian retreat into classic economic liberalism, or the harbingers of radical social change as farmers confronted industrialism with collectivized solutions to the problems of modern monopoly capitalism. More recent treatments of the Patrons presume that the agrarian protest movement followed in the tradition of Clear Grit agrarian radicalism, providing a continuity of farmers' movements of agrarian protest well into the 20th century.⁴⁷

⁴⁵J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario, Royal Oak Grange fonds, vertical file #2, minutes 1874-78, 22 December 1874; 11 January 1876; 13 February 1877; 12 April 1878; in the AO, the Brougham Grange fonds, MU 7778 #2, minute book, 1880-84, 10 December 1880; 28 December 1881; 12 January 1884. See also the SCA, KG, Acc. 987-16, minute book, 1875-77, 5 September 1877; minute book, 1887-1901, 23 March 1893. See also the SCA, MG in HP, Acc. 979-100, minute book, 1879-1906, 13 February 1882, 11 February 1883, and 10 March 1884.

⁴⁶For Populism as a radical agrarian solution to industrial capitalism see Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (New York 1976); Bruce Palmer, *Man Over Money: The Southern Populist Critique of American Capitalism* (Chapel Hill 1980). Descriptions of Populism as a reaction to social change can be found in Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York 1983); Scott McNall, *The Road to Rebellion: Class Formation and Kansas Populism, 1865-1900* (Chicago 1988). Other historians argue that Populism was a movement of small producers, and accordingly critiqued capitalism from a republican ideology; see William Holmes, "Populism: In Search of Context," *Agricultural History*, 64 (Fall 1990), 26-58. See also Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers and the American State, 1877-1914* (Chicago 1999), 30-52 and 102-47 to see how the Farmers' Alliance was a successor to Greenbackism in republican lore. Robert McMath Jr. argued that Populism strove simply to create an agricultural community based on producerism and education; see his *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York 1993).

⁴⁷For the Patrons' retreat into classic economic liberalism, see S.E.D. Shortt, "Social Change and Political Crisis in Rural Ontario: The Patrons of Industry, 1889-1896," in Donald Swainson, ed., *Oliver Mowat's Ontario* (Toronto 1972), 211-35. For a view of the Pa-

What becomes evident through an examination of the ideology of the Patron movement is that they were far more attuned to the radical sentiments of the agricultural population than its immediate predecessor, the Dominion Grange. The reasoning behind the Patrons' ideological shift to a more intense radicalism is fairly straightforward. By the mid-1890s, a host of further transformations in Ontario's rural countryside confronted the new agrarian order. The spectre of rural de-population continued to haunt Ontario's farmers, although by the turn of the century it was more reality than perception; for the first time urban dwellers outnumbered their rural counterparts. Commercialized mixed farming continued to compel the subsistence family farmer to adapt to new methods of agriculture or be swept under. Likewise, the "consolidation of industrial capitalism" by the turn of the century amplified agrarian discontent and fostered a more militant ideology in the Patrons of Industry.⁴⁸ As a result, the agricultural community within the Patron movement began to search for new allies outside the accepted rural economic and social order, and they discovered one in the similarly outcast industrial labourer. While this coalition posed its own problems for farmers, renewed tension between those supporting a rural middle-class position within a more radicalized agrarian association presaged disaster for the Patrons of Industry in Ontario. As with the Dominion Grange, efforts at uniting an agricultural population divided by both ideology and material circumstances was simply impossible to sustain by the end of the century.

Founded in Port Huron, Michigan, the Patrons of Industry began as a politico-economic association of farmers with tentative overtures to the emerging industrial working class. By the time the American chapter of the Patrons of Industry faltered in 1892, the independent Canadian version flourished in Ontario and Manitoba. With a rapidity that even outstripped the Dominion Grange, the movement took hold of the hearts of farmers in Ontario. Within a scant few months of the initial meeting in 1891 of Patrons in Sarnia, the Grand Association of the Patrons of Industry of Ontario established their headquarters in Strathroy. By 1893, the Pa-

trons as heralds of collectivist solutions to the problems of capitalism, see Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism*; Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 5-20. For the Patrons as a link with the radical agrarianism of the early 19th century, see Wood, *Farmers' Movements in Canada*, 109-55; Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, 294-309; Badgely, *Bringing in the Common Love of Good*, 2-13.

⁴⁸On the continuing changes in agriculture and rural de-population, see McInnis, "The Changing Structure of Canadian Agriculture," 191-98; Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development*; Crowley, "Rural Labour," 63-70. On the effects of industrial capitalism, see Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*; Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism* and Heron, "Factory Workers," 480-515. Unfortunately, it is even more difficult to ascertain the social composition of both rank and file members and the executive of the Patrons of Industry than the Dominion Grange. The lack of membership records remains a vital impediment, while the executive of the Patrons was divided equally between farmers and radical journalists. See Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 5-20.

trons had nearly 100,000 members in Ontario, with over 2,000 active associations.⁴⁹ From the outset, the directors of the Patrons of Industry desired to establish a more radical producer alliance of “tillers and toilers,” of industry and husbandry. Promoting the interests of both industrial employees and farmers, the Patrons’ main aspiration was to “advance the interest of the suffering masses.” In doing so, the Patrons of Industry understood that all members would enter a mutual agreement to elevate the moral, intellectual, social, political, and financial position of the toiling workers. In aiding these individuals who provided subsistence to all life and who advanced the prosperity of all nations, the Patrons were summarily convinced that the community as a whole would benefit.⁵⁰

Even though the Patrons were of a more radical shade, they also moved quickly to dispel illusions that their association would disturb the existing rural social order. The directors of the Patrons of Industry, therefore, took great pains to explain that their organization was for the protection of individual members, not to unfairly curtail the rights or privileges of other groups and classes. Even though the Patrons boldly decreed that farmers were vital to the community as they provided both food and rent, society was interdependent on each occupation to provide the necessities of life:

be they manufactural [*sic*] to prepare fabric from his cotton fields or the back of his animals, or implements and utensils from his forests and mines; commercial, with its monetary medium of convenience, to effect the desired exchange of productions of the various departments and the different parts of his extended realm; educational to develop and mould the character and accumulate knowledge for the more successful prosecution of his labours; or governmental, to formulate and administer his will in prudence and justice.⁵¹

As the Patrons moved steadily toward becoming a political protest movement, many of the biographies of prominent Patrons lauded their vision of a comprehensive and all-encompassing organization of all classes. A biographical sketch of George Wrigley, the editor of the *Canada Farmers’ Sun* and the official organ of the Patrons, noted that he was successful in preventing the Patrons from becoming

⁴⁹ See Wood, *Farmers’ Movements in Canada*, 109-12; Shortt, “Social Change and Political Crisis,” 212-13; Brian McCutcheon, “The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba,” in Donald Swainson, ed., *Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces* (Toronto 1970), 142-65.

⁵⁰ In the AO, see the miscellaneous records of the Gainsborough Patrons (hereafter GP), MU 7185, pamphlet, *Ritual and Installation Service of the Patrons of Industry* (n.p., n.d.), 4. See also, *Constitution and Rules of Order of the Patrons of Industry of North America* (Strathroy 1892), preamble and 3-4; *Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Grand Association of Ontario Patrons of Industry* (Strathroy 1894), 2; *Canada Farmers’ Sun* (London), 7 March 1893 and 21 March 1893.

⁵¹ See the AO, GP, MU 7185, pamphlet, *Principles and Rules of the Patrons of Industry Industrial Co-operation for the Province of Ontario* (Strathroy n.d.), 1-2. See also the *Canada Farmers’ Sun* (London), 10 May 1892, 7 June 1892, and 27 September 1892.

merely a class movement. Likewise, the President of the Grand Association of the Patrons of Industry of Ontario, C.A. Mallory, reviewed with satisfaction that they had received the political support of all classes, races, and creeds, stating "our platform is so broad that all may stand upon it."⁵²

Consequently, the Patrons attempted to rectify the conflicts over commercial retailers experienced by the Grange by limiting adversarial comments leading to the condemnation of the commercial class itself. One year after the creation of the Patron Constitution, President C.A. Mallory insisted that while understandable antagonism between Patrons and merchant retailers did exist, that prejudice was just as quickly being eroded. Editorials in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* confirmed this sentiment, as once again farmers attempted to absolve all "legitimate" merchants and manufacturers from derision. Unscrupulous traveling sales agents, who extorted high profits from hardworking farmers earned the wrath of the Patrons, not conscientious businessmen. An article written by Phillips Thompson conceded that the original concept of the Patrons of Industry was fairly exclusive, yet experience illustrated that the middleman was necessary to the community. Apparently the message trickled down to the local level, for when the Victoria Lodge expelled a merchant from its ranks, it was not for commercial activities *per se*, but for being a traveling peddler.⁵³ The president of the Bronson Lodge of the Patrons of Industry, J.P. Mullett, took things a little too far when he suggested that all residents of villages and towns be excluded from the order. Noting that such a practice was "antagonistic to the spirit and principles" of the Patrons of Industry, an editorial in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* underscored that the Patrons' object was to "secure justice and improve social conditions for all; to abolish rather than emphasize and intensify class and caste distinctions. Injustice suffered by one class always reacts upon a community."⁵⁴

And yet the Patrons also demonstrated their more radical colours, as they were even more unequivocal in their denunciation of other classes. By excluding candidates of an immoral character, as well as lawyers, doctors, merchants, liquor dealers, manufacturers, party politicians, and "minor members of families of persons as above mentioned," the Patrons exhibited a fairly condemnatory vision of the

⁵²See the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 27 March 1894 and 7 November 1894; Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism*; Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 7-10.

⁵³See the AO, Records of the Victoria Patrons (hereafter VP), F.D. McLennan collection (hereafter FDM), MU 7195, series F, minute book, 1892-93, 1 April 1893. See also the *Minutes of the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 1-2; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 27 September 1892 and 11 April 1893; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 1 August 1893, and 22 August 1894. For attitudes of farmers to traveling peddlers, see Badgely, "Then I Saw I Had Been Swindled."

⁵⁴*Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 18 August 1892; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 20 June 1894, 29 August 1894, and 3 October 1894.

non-producing class.⁵⁵ By the mid-1890s, the resentment of the Patrons kindled far more against the professional class of doctors, lawyers, and politicians than the commercial classes. Patrons of Industry complaints against the medical profession are well documented, as they viewed the practices of the Canadian Medical Association as being restricted to an educated elite. To Patrons, the fees charged by medical colleges were akin to tariff walls, ensuring that the special privileges of medical doctors would remain intact. A concerted effort was similarly made to curtail the entrance amount charged by the Law Society, to do away with the monopoly of lawyers and the "laws made for the few at the expense of the many."⁵⁶ Clearly all forms of monopoly were repugnant to the new radicalized version of agrarian discontent housed in the Patrons of Industry.

Perhaps the ultimate cause of the downfall of the Patrons of Industry came in the flouting of the agricultural staple of remaining aloof from sectarianism and partyism. Initial proclamations from the Patrons condemned the practice of introducing partisan and sectarian discourse in both the Ontario executive and their subordinate associations. In reinforcing the edict by fining, suspending, or expelling any repeat offender, Patrons attempted to unite a very diverse group under one hegemonic banner. Many prominent Patrons such as Grand Association of Ontario President C.A. Mallory traced all the evils of the age back to partyism, as the modern age required "free men" to break the shackles of the party whip.⁵⁷ To relieve the pressures of party conflict, the Patrons proposed a solution that kept within the liberal traditions of 19th-century popular politics. Recognizing that partyism introduced class legislation and influence, Patrons demanded that the people — the source of all political power — be afforded the opportunity to make their own laws and to initiate legislation in Parliament. Accomplishing this task required the elimination of election spending and the injection of referenda into the political process. Limiting the spending of political parties would ensure that independent men free from party ties would be elected, who would "serve the whole community" rather than class interests. In supporting the referendum movement, Patron leaders argued that frequent decisions left to the electorate would result in "no party, no elections, no political enmity or strife, yet a thoroughly responsible and popular government." Masking material inequalities by joining the political process was

⁵⁵ *Constitution and Rules of Order*, 1; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 26 December 1893 and 2 January 1894.

⁵⁶ AO, Patron Committee minute book (hereafter PC), MU 2087 #8, 26 March 1895; C. David Naylor, "Rural Protest and Medical Professionalism in Turn of the Century Ontario," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 21 (Spring 1986), 5-20.

⁵⁷ *Constitution and Rules of Order*, 3-4, 17; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 6 September 1892, 27 September 1892, and 18 October 1892.

key even at the local level, as the Willow Vale Lodge of the Patrons of Industry encouraged its members to run as candidates in the local municipal election.⁵⁸

Despite Patron strictures against partyism and their condemnation of the corruption of the Canadian political system, prominent Patrons recognized that the movement was intensely political. By 1891 the Patrons of Industry launched the fairly liberal London platform, which contained such political platitudes as the maintenance of the British connection, the independence of Parliament, rigid economy in every branch of the public service, civil service reform, and the abolition of the Senate. With the perceived sluggish pace of reform, the Patrons decided to test the waters on independent political action by fielding a candidate in the riding of North Bruce in an 1893 by-election. When the "People's candidate" was successful in the election, the Grand Association determined to field other candidates in the 1894 Ontario election, all using the London platform as a guide.⁵⁹ In an attempt to steal the Patrons' thunder, the consummate politician Oliver Mowat "exposed" the Patrons as an exclusively agricultural political party, and as hostile to the rural social order. Mowat therefore appealed to more liberal farmers when he proclaimed in the North Bruce by-election that "the Reform party has always been specially a farmers' party, *while faithful to every other class as well*; and that the Reform Party is the true farmers' party." Similarly, when Liberal critics accused the Patrons of Industry of acting like any other political party, Patron claims of political independence soon gave way when executives made voting for the Patron candidate an obligation for lodge members. Perceived Patron hypocrisy over the party system came full circle one year after Phillips Thompson lauded the Patrons for an absence of party hierarchy, when the Patrons of Industry in the Ontario legislature organized both a party secretary and whip.⁶⁰

Even though the Patrons of Industry were non-sectarian as well as non-partisan, Patrons still advocated the "elevating influence" of Christianity and

⁵⁸AO, WVP, MU 7185, minute book, 1891-95, 1 December 1891, 43; *Minutes of the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 9; see also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 20 September 1892 and 23 October 1892; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 13 March 1894 and 15 June 1894.

⁵⁹*The Patrons: An Answer to the Annexationist Campaign Writer in the Canada Farmers' Sun*, (n.p., 1894), 1; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 30 August 1892, 20 September 1892, and 4 July 1893; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 28 November 1893, 5 December 1893, and 23 May 1894.

⁶⁰*The Patrons of Industry: From the Speech of Oliver Mowat Delivered in North Bruce* (North Bruce 1893), 10; *The Patrons: An Answer to the Annexationist*, 8; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 23 May 1894 and 10 August 1894; AO, PC, MU 2087 #8, 11 April. S.E.D. Shortt argued that the Patrons failed as a result of political immaturity, while S.J.R. Noel stated the Mowat Liberals deliberately blurred the line between Liberal and Patron policies, leading to a Liberal triumph. Ramsay Cook sees the Patron failure as more a lack of political identity. See Shortt, "Social Change and Political Crisis," 230-35; Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, 302-5; Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 17-20.

the need for Christian education. As with other 19th-century associations, the Patrons of Industry recognized the importance of the Christian religion to its members, stating "we, the farmers and employees of the Province of Ontario, believing that Almighty God, as the source of all power and the ruler of nations, should be acknowledged in all constitutions of societies, do hereby with due reverence to Him, associate ourselves together."⁶¹ Notwithstanding Patron insistence on religious toleration and neutrality, one of the greatest difficulties they experienced during the 1894 election came as both the Liberals and the Tories attempted to paint them as closet supporters of the Protestant Protective Association (PPA), a conservative anti-Catholic pressure group. Denying any affiliation with an organization concerned solely with racial and religious questions, Patron directors insisted that Roman Catholics were "quite as loyal members and good subjects as those of other creeds. We believe in equal rights for all." Despite claims that only the partisan press desired to see a Patron/PPA connection, confusion over party positions within the Patron movement not only contributed to their defeat at the polls, but also to a loss of credibility as a group devoted to social, moral, and intellectual improvement.⁶²

The Patrons of Industry often confronted head-on the economic difficulties facing both farmers and industrial workers at the turn of the century. Historians of both the Patrons of Industry and the Populist "moment" in the United States have debated these points of political economy, concluding either that these rural protesters suggested collectivized or "socialist" responses to industrial capitalism, or were simply a part of 19th-century popular radicalism that often challenged the hegemony of the marketplace.⁶³ In many ways, both visions of the Patrons of Industry are fairly accurate, as adherents of liberalized market agriculture and those advocating a more radical political economy could be found in the movement. While of-

⁶¹ *Constitution and Rules of Order of the Patrons of Industry*, preamble; AO, GP, MU 7185, pamphlet, *Ritual and Installation Service*, 4.

⁶² *Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 26 and *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 14 August 1895. See also Shortt, "Social Change and Political Crisis," 224-6; Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers*, 303-6; Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 12-15. In using loaded terms such as "equal rights," the Patrons exposed themselves to uncertainty as to their ultimate motives; see J.R. Miller, *Equal Rights: The Jesuits' Estate Act Controversy* (Montréal and Kingston 1979).

⁶³ The former view of Populism can be found in Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise* and Palmer, *Man Over Money*. The latter perspective is found in Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism*, 3-10. See also Holmes, "Populism: In Search of Context," 50-58 and Sanders, *Roots of Reform*, 30-52. In the Canadian context, both Hann, *Farmers Against Industrialism* and Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," argue that along with the Knights of Labor, the Patrons offered new collectivist solutions to late 19th-century economic concerns. Of course, S.E.D. Shortt concludes in "Social Change and Political Crisis" that the Patrons committed themselves to a more traditional liberal "anti-protection" economic strategy. See also Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers* 1-14; Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*, 8-12.

fering economic critiques consistent with the popular liberalism of the times, the Patrons of Industry also went against the producer ideology by proposing radical new solutions to age-old agrarian concerns. Of course, this rather striking paradoxical discourse would mirror the complexities of the class position of farmers throughout the 19th century. While some members attempted to uphold the rural social and economic order, by the latter decades of the century the effects of industrialization, rural de-population, urbanization, and increasingly commercialized agriculture caused the Patrons to cast about for more radical solutions to the perceived substandard condition of agriculture.

Those farmers of an ideologically liberal bent could find much to approve of in the social and economic thought of the Patrons of Industry. Noting that the prosperity of Canada was due to the "untiring industry of the toiling masses," the Patrons envisioned that the hardy work ethic of the stout Canadian yeoman was the panacea that would solve all of society's ills. The true aim of the Patron movement was to "build, not palaces, but men; to exalt, not titled stations, but general humanity; to dignify, not idle repose, but assiduous industry; to elevate not the few, but the many." Unlike the Grange, which furthered mid-Victorian agrarian diatribes that pinpointed bankers and speculators as *the* cause of depression and economic hardship, the Patrons kept this discourse at a minimum. They did recognize that bankers were part of the "privileged class" that favoured large monopoly over the small producer, and that the usury practiced by the large banks was a "direct tax on the community." Similarly, the Patrons threatened to expel any member who purchased goods at a reduced price to sell in speculation. Oddly enough, however, neither bankers nor speculators were mentioned by name as occupations barred from membership in the Patrons of Industry.⁶⁴ These examples demonstrate that those commercially influential farmers favouring less antagonistic relations with the commercial class remained a viable force in the constituency of the Patrons of Industry.

Patron political economy regarding trade practices pursued a fairly liberal course of only tentatively agreeing with free trade, following in the footsteps of the Dominion Grange. While there is some disagreement over whether or not the Patrons under the guidance of C.A. Mallory or the *Canada Farmers' Sun* under the editorship of George Wrigley agreed with the doctrines of reciprocity, the tone of Patron pronouncements throughout its history approved, at least in principle, of free trade.⁶⁵ What is certain is that the Patrons disapproved specifically of the Na-

⁶⁴ AO, GP, MU 7185, pamphlet, *Ritual and Installation Service*, 4-6; *Constitution and Rules of Order of the Patrons of Industry*, 14-16; the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 15 November 1892; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 17 October 1893; *Brotherhood Era* (Toronto), 16 October 1895.

⁶⁵ Both C. David Naylor in "Rural Protest and Medical Professionalism" and Shortt in "Social Change and Political Crisis" agree that the Patrons were a movement of small producers which, therefore, adhered to a more liberal economic outlook. Russell Hann in *Farmers*

tional Policy and tariffs in general, calling them a "direct tax" on the community. Patrons blamed the National Policy for almost everything wrong with the economic outlook of Canada, from the proliferation of monopolies and combines to the reality of young men leaving Canada to seek their fortunes in the United States. Perhaps the most damning indictment of tariffs was based on the liberal principle of honest industry when the *Canada Farmers' Sun* noted, "the average Canadian gets no Government aid to enable him to live. He would be ashamed to have his neighbours taxed for his benefit."⁶⁶ Several other articles in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* under the editorship of George Wrigley came out strongly in favour of reciprocity with the United States. In July 1893 the Patron periodical reprinted a lecture by Nathaniel Burwash on political economy, where he roundly denounced protection as a detriment to the economy and helpful only to the manufacturing sector, concluding that free trade was the only economic principle guaranteed to bring about prosperity for all classes. It is also interesting to note that the paper, edited by a socialist sympathizer, contained not only platitudes on Henry George's Single Tax, but also articles on free trade by one of George's harshest critics, Goldwin Smith.⁶⁷

Upon closer inspection, the Patrons of Industry were fairly ambivalent on the question of free trade, sharing with the Dominion Grange rather liberal concerns over receiving equitable treatment in trade practices. Noting that the rights of the farmer were "determined largely by the equal rights of others," Patrons appeared to disparage protection only when inaccessible to farmers, and reserved for the infant manufacturers of Ontario. Patrons therefore insisted that reciprocity with the United States was the most impartial economic policy as it ensured justice and fair play among all occupations and classes. The Patrons also insisted that free trade should become the preferred economic policy of organized Labour for similar reasons.⁶⁸ In objecting to the favoured status that protection placed upon manufacturers and the commercial sector, the London platform of the Patrons nevertheless called for tariffs as a means to increase revenue for the government coffers. C.A.

Confront Industrialism and Cook, "Tillers and Toilers" conclude that the Patrons were more collectivist and harboured a nascent socialist outlook, and only favoured free trade when noted liberal Goldwin Smith purchased the *Canada Farmers' Sun*.

⁶⁶*Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 7 June 1892, 9 August 1892, 13 February 1893, and 4 July 1893; see also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 16 August 1893 and 18 September 1895.

⁶⁷The *Canada Farmers' Sun* also contained such articles as "How Britain's Free Trade Policy the Secret of Enormous Growth in Trade and Increased Wealth." See the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 31 May 1892, 28 June 1892, 4 October 1892, 11 October 1892, and 29 November 1892. See also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 5 September 1893 and 5 December 1894.

⁶⁸*Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 10 May 1892, 9 August 1892, 14 February 1893. See also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 16 August 1894. For articles on free trade and labour, see the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 13 February 1895.



MR. HARDY: Very similar and near to each other are these two platforms, Mr. Patron, aren't they?
MR. PATRON: Yes, but wait till the train starts, Arthur. You'll find there's no coupling pin between 'em.

Mallory attempted to justify the tariff under the banner of equal rights, stating that this was to increase the revenue not only of the Canadian government but of other countries as well. Mallory also claimed that the majority of small producers, farmers, and industrial workers preferred a reasonable tariff, and as the Patrons of Industry were the "people's party," such a stance on a controversial issue like the tariff was fully defensible.⁶⁹

Despite adhering to the more liberal principle that agriculture and industry created the wealth of a nation, the Patrons also discussed a new radicalized scenario whereby toilers in agriculture and industry would receive a more proper share of the wealth that they themselves created. Calling on the producing class to receive "more of the leisure that rightfully belongs to them; more society advantages; more of the benefits, privileges and emoluments of the world," Patrons were therefore forced to combat charges of being "anarchists and socialists." However, to farmers, Patrons were simply demanding "those rights and privileges necessary to make them capable of enjoying, appreciating, defending and perpetuating the blessings of good government."⁷⁰ In order to secure a more prosperous future, many Patrons were prepared to abandon normative ties to the rural social order by forging new bonds with the Knights of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress (TLC). In early 1893, the TLC and the Patrons assembled as a "conference of workers in city and country" to construct a community of "field and factory." Even though this was a short-lived partnership — in 1895 the TLC banned Patrons from joining their organization — the temporary coalition did produce agreement on such issues as monopoly and direct political action. In 1895 when the Patrons formed a political committee in the Ontario Legislature, the TLC sent representatives to encourage the Patrons to vote for "laws fully protecting the public interest and those of employees in the charters asked for by electric railway companies." Unfortunately, the varied economic conditions between a group that traditionally formed the rural middle-class — no matter how radical they appeared on the surface — and an increasingly "class-conscious" group of industrial workers simply could not sustain unifying interests.⁷¹

⁶⁹ *The Patrons, An Answer to the Annexation Writer*, 1 and 4; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 3 October 1893.

⁷⁰ *Minutes of the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 1; *Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 2; *Minutes of the 4th Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 2.

⁷¹ AO, PC, MU 2087 #8, 26 March 1895; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 7 March 1893; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 12 September 1894. See also Shortt, "Social Change and Political Crisis," 226-29; Cook, "Tillers and Toilers," 15-20. On the incompatibility of the Patrons and the TLC, see Palmer and Kealey, *Dreaming of What Might Be*; Burr, *Spreading the Light*; Darroch, "Scanty Fortunes." See also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 27 September 1892, 21 March 1893, and 6 June 1893.

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Even more than the Grange, however, the Patrons of Industry recognized that the new urban industrial capitalist with his monopoly and combines was the new threat to the producing classes. It was the duty of the agricultural and industrial classes to correct the imbalance that monopoly capitalism and the new breed of large-scale industrialism created. As one opening ode of the Patrons, *Labour's Tribute*, confidently proclaimed:

Ye noble sons of labor, and daughters fair and true,
Truth's bright and gleaming sabre at last is drawn for you.
The minions of aggression, monopoly and trust,
Dread bulwarks of oppression, we'll trample in the dust.

Our fathers met to battle with this tyrant's proud array,
And 'mid the din and rattle they nobly won the day.
They hurled the proud oppressor from off his lofty throne,
And made themselves possessors of rights they'd justly won.

Now generations later, this haughty grasping lord,
By effort even greater, with power of his hoard;
Is gathering up each valley and riverside and plain,
Oh sons of freedom rally and drive him back again.

The tillers of the soil for many ages past,
Have bent the knee in toil before the tyrant's mast;
Then rally 'round your standard and by your colors stand,
And paint upon your banner the equal rights of man.⁷²

While many of these sentiments echo those of agriculturalists in Canada throughout the 19th century, the Patrons introduced collectivized solutions that were fairly unique. Stating that the interests of the Patrons were for the "suffering masses," President C.A. Mallory noted that the real menace of society was the personal opulence of the capitalist. An editorial in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* suggested that combines and trusts be made "criminal," and that monopolies be placed under public control.⁷³

Another significant facet of Patron popular political economy regarded capital and labour and the need to reconcile the two seemingly opposing forces. As with the Grange, the Patrons of Industry maintained that the principle of co-operation would be the solution to agricultural economic malaise. Not only would

⁷²AO, GP, miscellaneous papers, *Odes to Patrons*, (n.p., n.d.), 3; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 2 August 1892 and 11 October 1892; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 12 September 1894; *Brotherhood Era* (Toronto), 16 October 1895.

⁷³*Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Patrons of Industry*, 2-3; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 23 October 1892.

QUITE INDIFFERENT.



FARMER—" This snow has got to come off the roof whether it hits a politician or not."

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co-operation bridge the gulf between capital and labour, it would address the imbalance of trade between the commercial class and the labour/farmer alliance. As noted, the Patrons exercised restraint in employing the language of co-operation, as they emphasized the necessity of the commercial class, particularly the honourable occupation of the village storekeeper. To the Patrons, co-operation would simply protect the farmer from the effects of the "super" market, and the power of monopoly combines.⁷⁴ The Patrons of Industry followed stringent co-operative doctrines at the local level, buying livestock, dairy products, grains, and seeds on a strict co-operative basis. The Willow Vale lodge focused so much on the co-operative system that they sent a delegation to their township trade association to "bring up the market question" with other commercial representatives. Local Patrons even established a co-operative store in Bismarck with like-minded merchants of the town, demonstrating that not all co-operative efforts would foster an antagonistic relationship with the commercial class.⁷⁵

Once again less radical farmers who favoured the prolongation of the market system had their say, as conflicts often erupted over co-operation and the hazards it presented. Although William Weld had passed away by the time the Patrons of Industry rose in force, the *Farmers' Advocate* under the direction of his son John Weld initially found much to praise with the Patron platform, as his father had done with the Grange. The junior Weld entreated farmers to forsake party politics and join with this "national organization" of farmers and workers dedicated to combat the double evil of monopoly and class legislation. However, John Weld also recognized that the Patrons went against the producer ideology with the co-operative system, as he believed the only remedy to economic depression was the liberal solution of retrenchment and thrift. Co-operation also severed the rural social and economic order, as "the farmer cannot do without the merchant and the middle man, any more than the merchant can do without the farmer. The one is dependent on the other."⁷⁶ Not unlike the Grange, by offering a radical modification of the accepted popular political economy of economic liberalism, the Patrons risked alienating market-based liberal farmers.

The extent of women's participation in the Patrons of Industry movement rivaled the Dominion Grange in scope, as they incorporated women in their rituals with the creation of the Demeter and Minerva degrees. The pages of the *Canada Farmers' Sun* were often replete with editorials advocating the increased presence

⁷⁴ AO, GP, MU 7185, pamphlet, *Principles and Rules of the Patrons of Industry*, 2; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 10 May 1892, 4 October 1892, and 28 March 1893

⁷⁵ WCA, records of the Arthur Lodge, A1980.26, treasurer's book, 1891-1897, and AO, WVP, MU 7185, minute book, 1891-95, 15 November 1892, 15; 6 December 1892, 17; 21 February 1893, 25; 25 April 1893, 32. See also the AO, WVP, MU 7185, minute book, 1891-95, 22 November 1892, 22.

⁷⁶ *Farmers' Advocate* (London), May 1891, June 1891, November 1891, 15 March 1893; and 1 January 1894.

of women in colleges and universities, or lauding the Council on Women and the work done by women factory inspectors. The connection of the Patrons of Industry and the WCTU was also very intense, as the Patrons not only became leaders in the temperance cause, they also agreed to make female suffrage a plank on the Patron platform if the subordinate associations were in agreement. Despite these calls for an escalation of women in the public sphere, columns in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* entitled "With the Fair Sex," "Just for the Ladies," "Sunlight for Women," and "Facts for Housewives" continued to affirm the domestic ideal for women witnessed in other agricultural associations.⁷⁷ Women obviously felt comfortable joining their men folk at Patron meetings, as the Galetta, Victoria, and Willow Vale lodges reported that between 33 and 23 per cent of the membership were women. And yet the limited contribution of women in the Willow Vale Lodge was a committee of ladies authorized "to buy blinds [*sic*] for the house." Under these conditions the wife and daughter of John Strumm refused their appointments as Minerva and Demeter, and a few months later the Willow Vale Patrons slashed fees for women to join from ten cents to five. The Victoria Lodge had the highest concentration of female members, and consequently two women received an invitation to sit on the committee on bylaws. Gender conflicts soon erupted, as a motion was put forward to restrict the rights of women to vote on Lodge business. Given the high percentage of women members, the two men putting forward the motion apologized in writing for "depriving the ladies of their right to vote."⁷⁸

As with other agricultural associations, the Patrons of Industry attempted to prevent agricultural isolation by providing social interaction for rural inhabitants. The Grand Association of the Patrons in Ontario sponsored many events from picnics, excursions, baseball matches, *conversaciones*, and literary entertainments, to shooting matches and garden parties in elevating the sociability of farmers. John Miller, the traveling lecturer and Vice President of the Grand Association, noted that the main object of the Patrons of Industry was to "develop our social relations

⁷⁷ *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 14 July 1892 and 28 February 1893; see also the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 5 December 1893 and 24 July 1895. For the Patron position on women's suffrage see the *Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Patrons of Industry* (Strathroy 1895), 20; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 1 November 1892 and 11 July 1893; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 12 December 1893 and 10 October 1894. On the Patrons and domesticity see *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 16 August 1892, 4 October 1892, 1 November 1892, and 18 January 1893. Similar attitudes were experienced in late 19th-century agricultural societies. See E.A. Heaman, "Taking the World by Show: Canadian Women as Exhibitioners to 1900," *Canadian Historical Review*, 78 (December 1997), 599-631.

⁷⁸ National Archives of Canada, notebooks of the Galetta Lodge, in A.L. Riddell fonds, MG 55/30 no. 184, membership book. See also the, AO, Willow Vale Patron fonds (hereafter WVP), MU 7185, minute book, 1891-95, 2-13; 27 October 1891, 39; 28 June 1892, 68; 28 December 1892, 19; 4 April 1892, 29; AO, VP, in the FDM, MU 7915, series F, minute book, 1892-93, initiation pledges; 22 April 1892 and 29 April 1892.

by meeting as brethren and visitors on a common level and to cultivate and improve the talents with which we have been endowed." Many Patrons reported the kind of success of a Brantford picnic, where the promoters proclaimed enthusiastically "another Patron event makes rural life enjoyable." Even the *Canada Farmers' Sun* attempted to imitate the style of the most thriving agricultural periodical, the *Farmers' Advocate*, by appealing to a larger readership than just agriculturalists. By the end of 1892, the *Sun* not only contained serial novels and other prose, but the editors also created a children's section with short stories, puzzles, games, and attractive homilies. Pandering to a youthful audience would be a mainstay for the *Canada Farmers' Sun*, with the establishment of "For the Young People" and "Chat for Children" sections as late as 1895.⁷⁹ However, it would be at the local lodge level that the Patrons of Industry would prove to be most beneficial as a source of sociability for rural villages and towns.

Patron lodges quickly learned that in order to draw and maintain members, entertainments were needed to keep lodge meetings attractive for new recruits. In the Victoria Lodge the directors decided to hold debates, singing, and mouth organ selections for amusement purposes, only when the "normal business was concluded," corresponding perfectly to canvassing drives in the neighbouring village. When the executive offered only lukewarm support for a union picnic with the nearby Grove Lodge, to little fanfare the Victoria Lodge closed after a scant nine months in operation.⁸⁰ The Willow Vale Lodge of the Patrons of Industry lasted much longer, and a healthy dependence on entertainment as a necessary part of the functions of the lodge aided in this process immeasurably. Readings, instrumental and vocal music, recitations, speeches, and debates were all part of the "literary part" of the lodge meetings, while a picnic was held with the Bismarck Lodge for fundraising purposes. While a motion was lost to acquire some literature for the lodge as part of a Patron library, it was one of the few decisions against entertainment made by Willow Vale Lodge directors. When a debate was held on whether or not to procure an organ for musical programmes in the Lodge, Brother John Strumm argued against the purchase, stating, "business was more important than pleasure, and thought business took up all our time." Although the Willow Vale Patrons actively participated in the co-operative system, obviously the amusement portion of lodge activities was equally important and the organ was purchased.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Constitution and Rules of Order of the Patrons of Industry*, 3-4. See also the sections entitled "Rays from Patrons" and "From Patron Pens" in the *Canada Farmers' Sun* (London), 7 June 1892, 14 June 1892, 5 July 1892, 27 September 1892, 1 November 1892, 2 May 1893, 11 July 1893; *Canada Farmers' Sun* (Toronto), 2 January 1894, 3 October 1894, 26 June 1895, and 14 August 1895.

⁸⁰ AO, VP in FDM, MU 7915, series F, minute book, 1892-93, 28 March, 8 May, 13 May, 10 June, and 22 July 1893.

⁸¹ AO, WVP, MU 7185, minute book, 1891-95, 3 November 1891, 39; 1 December 1891, 42; 12 January 1892, 49; 30 March 1892, 54; 17 May 1892, 60-1; 7 June 1892, 65; 6 December 1892, 17; 17 January 1893, 22.

The rapid materialization of agrarian protest in the late 19th century and its equally abrupt disappearance from the rural landscape by the turn of the century was a difficult lesson for Ontario's farmers to learn. Their experience with the Dominion Grange and the Patrons of Industry would also be repeated in the 20th century with the meteoric rise and fall of the United Farmers of Ontario.⁸² While the leadership of the Patrons of Husbandry and the Patrons of Industry offered ideological visions of class harmony, the promise of united political action through antipartyism, and the assurance of material prosperity to Ontario's farmers, the history of agrarian protest can be viewed as one of broken promises and unfulfilled expectations. Even though farmers could blame monopoly capitalism, the professional classes, and the unfair business practices of commercial retailers for the difficulties experienced by their members, in reality the class divisions between farmers themselves played a large part in the failure of both the Grange and the Patrons of Industry. And yet these agrarian movements also united farmers as never before, with the growth of a fairly inclusive organization, wide-ranging social activities, integrated economic mutualism, and combined political action. Simply put, the complexities of varied material circumstances and representational differences amongst the farming population in late 19th-century Ontario precluded agreement on any issue confronting them. While the Dominion Grange and the Patrons of Industry made an admirable attempt to unify an easily alienated agrarian class, to sustain harmonious relationships in a very combustible economic and ideological environment proved far too problematical for either group. The pressures from within agrarian protest, rather than from without, would eventually be the undoing of both the Dominion Grange and the Patrons of Industry in Ontario.

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⁸²See Badgely, *Bringing in the Common Love of Good*.

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