

NB NDP rejects "manifesto" at convention

By ROLAND MORRISON

The problem-plagued N.B. New Democratic Party seems to have recovered from the recent split in party ranks. In a convention held in Chatham last Saturday, the moderate wing of the party, with federal party approval, elected a new executive and passed new resolutions. According to Pat Callaghan, a Waffle leader, the main purpose of this convention was to throw the controversial manifesto "out the window."

The problem began at the NDP convention held in Saint John September 25. After the controversial left-wing manifesto was passed by a one-vote margin, the moderate wing of the party, led by Albert Richardson, walked out. The remainder, the so-called Waffle group, then proceeded to reconvene the convention October 16 in Fredericton. At this latter convention the Waffle elected Pat Callaghan of Fredericton as leader. The moderate wing of the party did not participate in this convention at all.

However, 28 moderate members of the party sent a petition to the federal party council protesting the validity of the Oct. 16 meeting, resulting in the expulsion of the entire N.B. body from the federal group. A further convention was designated and was held in Chatham, November 27, to "patch things up."

Richardson's main contention was that after the moderates had left the Sept. 25 convention, the meeting was without a quorum, and therefore could not vote to reconvene, which it did, contrary to the decision of the provincial council. Richardson also maintains that because the Oct. 16 convention was "illegal", Pat Callaghan was not elected leader of the party. The convention in Chatham decided who was leader.

Richardson also mentioned "irregularities" concerning the Oct. 16 convention, in which his name was entered in absentia as a leadership candidate. He also complained that only select people (Waffle supporters) received notices and copies of the resolutions to be discussed at the meeting. Concerning the convention in Chatham, Richardson says it was constitutional because it was a special convention, and special conventions can be called whereas former conventions cannot.

Pat Callaghan, a soft-spoken Irishman and immediate past president of the NB New Democratic Party, maintains that the

October 16 convention was indeed constitutional. He dismisses Richardson's charge of "irregularities" by stating that the same charge could be applied to the convention which elected him president of the party, and Richardson as leader. Said Callaghan, "He is giving himself a lot of lee-way in talking about irregularities. The only reason put forth why our convention was invalid was this petition signed by 28 party members. They say that no notices were sent to them and that they didn't receive copies of the resolutions, but somebody is always bound to be overlooked when these things are being sent out. It was a well-advertised convention and to say that you didn't know about it is just stupid. I didn't receive notice of the convention in Chatham, but I knew about it."

The main cause of the split in the party ranks was due to the Waffle's advocacy of the Manifesto, "For A Socialist New Brunswick." The document is extremely left-wing in nature, and caused many moderate NDP'ers to gasp aloud. Mr. Callaghan stated several reasons why the manifesto was adopted in the first place. "It forced the federal NDP officers to know there is a place called NB. The only damn reason they have us in NB is to be able to say that the party is nationwide. We can't get a cent from them for elections! Lewis thinks this manifesto is a piece of shit!" But, it did force Lewis's attention on the province.

Another reason why the radical manifesto was created was to shock the people of NB and thereby make them aware of the NDP party. The NDP has had humiliatingly little support in past elections, and the Waffle group attempted to change this by focusing people's attention on party policies. But perhaps the manifesto went too far. "Maybe it was too much too soon," said Callaghan, reflecting on the adverse reaction to the document.

The most important reason why the manifesto was drawn up was to give the NDP party a distinctly socialist appearance. "Richardson's group call themselves 'moderate socialists,' Callaghan commented, "but hell, the Liberals and even the Conservatives are moderate socialists. We want to be different. Forty per cent of the people in the province are in poverty because of moderate socialism."

Callaghan went on to discuss

certain aspects of the manifesto. One of the main points of the document was the immediate confiscation, without compensation, of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, under workers' control, with production for need rather than profit. "It is quite obvious free enterprise has failed miserably in NB", he stated. "The government has been working hand-in-hand with big corpor-

cause it wasn't making a profit. The government then had to step in when it saw how many men were going to lose their jobs, and bought control of the plant. In the first year of operation they made \$2 million profit. But the workers could have taken over instead of the government and they could have been just as successful."

Another of the manifesto's goals is the confiscation of the media, also without compensa-

"especially when one man can undo all you've done in ten years in one newspaper."

Another of the manifesto's main points was the abolition of virtually all compulsory educational institutions and services, either by equal participation of students, teachers, and people's representatives, or through workers' cooperative ownership. Callaghan's interpretation of this point is actually quite moderate. He agrees with having compulsory education up to a certain point, to give the student a basic academic background. What he disagrees with is forcing people who want to take technical careers, for instance, to study English, French, History, and other such irrelevant subjects. "If he wants to be a doctor, he should be able to concentrate all his efforts on being a doctor, and should have no outside interests or sidelines forced on him."

Mr. Callaghan also discussed his views on the environmental problem. "Many people say jobs come first; we've got to have pollution, and other such shit! Jobs are very important, but what's the use of a job when you can't live in the environment? They're like the guy who's sitting in the living room when someone sings out that the house is on fire. So he runs to the bedroom and closes the door so he doesn't see the fire. But the door burns down and the fire gets him anyway. It's alright to say jobs come first as long as you don't have to see the mess of our environment."

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Alastair Robertson

Photo by Ken De Freitas

ations by giving them free hand-outs and tax cuts. If the taxpayers have to pay for it, why shouldn't they own it?"

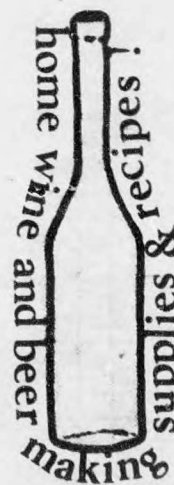
His explanation of why no compensation payments are required sounds much like Alende's excuse for confiscating the American holdings in Chile without paying for them. "They have been making profits for years with these plants. So actually, they're already paid for by the profits they've made from them."

He gave several examples of where control of a plant or factory was taken out of the hands of the capitalists and given to the workers or the government. "In Scotland the workers have taken over several places, and they have been quite successful. The bosses said they were going to close the plants down because they weren't making enough profit, and would have thrown these men out of work. But they took over and kept their jobs."

"Profit doesn't mean a damn thing—you just have to break even to keep workers employed, producing for use, not profit. Nationalization doesn't always fail. Take Dosco Steel (Sydney, Nova Scotia). The company said it couldn't continue to operate the plant be-

tion. This is especially aimed at K.C. Irving who owns all the province's daily newspapers, as well as owning a radio and a TV station, and having part ownership in many other broadcasting stations throughout the province. "It's hard to talk to people," said Callaghan,

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