H. L. Loucks and the Dakota Ruralist: Voices of Reform

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H. L. LOUCKS AND THE DAKOTA RURALIST:

VOICES OF REFORM

BY

THOM GUARNIERI

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree Master of Science, Major in
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H. L. LOUCKS AND THE DAKOTA RURALIST:

VOICES OF REFORM

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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Thom Guarnieri
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In early June, 1890, more than 500 representatives of the South Dakota Farmers' Alliance faced a fundamental question. They could avoid partisan politics and remain a pressure group within the dominant Republican Party, or they could strike out on their own.

At the center of their convention in Huron, as he had been at the center of their protest for the past four years, was Alliance President Henry L. Loucks of Clear Lake. Since moving to Dakota Territory six years earlier, Loucks had forged the territorial Alliance into a potential political force. The weekly Dakota Ruralist had been founded along with other alliance undertakings in cooperative buying and insurance. But demands by the alliance for reform legislation had been ignored by the Republicans and direct political action seemed more and more to be the farmers only course.

Despite a "strong faction opposed to independent action," Loucks fought for a third party at Huron. On June 6, "amid the wildest enthusiasm," delegates agreed with Loucks and the South Dakota Independent Party was born.

Six days later, members of the Kansas Alliance met in Topeka to form an independent party and at the end of July, the alliance in Nebraska did likewise. In September, the North Dakota Alliance, continuing this drive to independent political action, nominated a full slate of candidates. Clearly a political upheaval was stirring.

When delegates to the Huron convention crossed the line
between nonpartisan interest group and political party, they became
the first of a new generation of farmers to choose politics to solve
the problems they faced. It may be asserted then, that South Dakota
is the birthplace of that movement, populism,6 and that H. L. Loucks
assisted in the delivery.

The farmers' grievances that June arose from dashed hopes of
prosperity in Dakota Territory. Most had come during the preceding
decade for free homestead lands; many were German and Scandinavian
who were lured to the frontier by railroad agents and immigration
boards.

They had lived through the economic boom of the 1880s with
its easy credit and expanding railways. But when the boom burst with
the drought of 1887,7 their difficult existence grew even more
difficult. Credit contracted and their debts mounted8 while railroads
grew seemingly more powerful. Farmers felt more victimized by the
railroads than from any other source,9 though they also felt themselves
the prey of the big businesses that bought their wheat and sold them
farm equipment. But the farmer was not opposed to businesses'
techniques of organization and consolidation in mounting a counterattack.

"If we were organized," Alliance lecturer Walter Muir wrote
in the Ruralist in 1889, "and worked together as the monopolies do,
how long would they rule the country; let us drop party spirit and unite
on principle; and that principle the greatest good to the greatest
number."10

In that same issue Loucks wrote:

it makes little difference whether it be a railway,
manufacturer or a national bank ring they wear, there is such a community of interest that they will protect each other and vote together. I earnestly hope for the time when every farmer in America will take the same interest in his own welfare as every other class does and use the same means to secure such legislation as they do.¹¹

Loucks and the Independents called for an activist government, one that would own the railroads and control the amount of currency in circulation. It would intervene on behalf of the farmer and loan him needed funds at a low rate of interest.

This government would also be open to the populace. Loucks and the Independents wanted votes cast in secret (called the Australian ballot), the right of citizens to initiate legislation and the direct election of U.S. senators.

For more than a decade, these activist farmers wrestled for control of South Dakota's government so that it might be used to trim the power of the "trusts and monopolies." Only twice did they succeed—in 1896 and 1898. Each time they captured the governorship by a razor-thin margin of just over 300 votes out of nearly 80,000 cast.¹² During the 1890s, the Independents presented Republican domination of state politics with one of its most serious electoral challenges between the founding of the territory in 1861 and the late 1960s.¹³

Despite its threat to Republican hegemony and despite its being the first manifestation of what historian Richard Hofstadter
has called the first modern political movement in America, scant study has been made of South Dakota populism. In fact, in his *History of South Dakota*, Dr. Herbert Schell has noted, "A full-scale history of the Populist movement in South Dakota remains to be written."

This, however, is not a history of populism in South Dakota for such a broad topic is outside the paradigms of the present investigation. It is instead a study of how one man contributed his ideas and energy to shape a nascent political movement. As such, the study will focus not only on Loucks' ideas, but on a primary vehicle by which he dispersed them: the *Dakota Ruralist*.

The weekly paper, which listed Loucks as editor for most of its existence, formed, in the opinion of this writer, a point around which angry South Dakota farmers could rally. Begun in the fall of 1887, the *Ruralist* at first offered its readers a predominance of farm news and a minimum of politics; five years later the format had been reversed. While it was called the official voice of the alliance, there was a distinct change of tone in this period which mirrors, this writer believes, a change of tactics in the movement's leadership and in the movement itself.

Through the pages of the *Dakota Ruralist*, this writer believes, Loucks was able to articulate the major tenets of what was to become the South Dakota populism position. He also used the *Ruralist* to influence the movement at two key junctures: formation of a third party and fusion with the Democrats.
Guiding the farmers' protest away from nonpartisan alliance activities into an independent political party represented a profound change in direction. Indeed, the whole future of the movement would have been different had Loucks not prevailed at the Huron convention in 1890. Even if the alliance had achieved the same results by remaining as an interest group, the entire tenor of its approach would have been different.

The same can be said for fusion with the Democrats, although here the outcome was different. Loucks was steadfast against forming any coalition with the Democrats, whom he distrusted as "desperate political Copperheads." He saw them denigrating the principles of the Independents, while riding the party's popularity into office. While Loucks was perhaps able to slow down fusion, he was not able to halt it.

Loucks was also instrumental in formulating the South Dakota populist position. Through his writings in the Dakota Ruralist prior to June 1890, and his position as president of the state alliance since 1886, he was able to muster support for his proposals. In fact, the positions taken by Loucks and the positions taken by the Independents in their party platform were virtually identical. But some caution on causation might be in order here.

It is always dangerous to posit that one man's position on an issue caused another man to take the same position. Nevertheless, this writer believes that it is possible to say that one man's position on an issue might have been a major factor in another man adopting the
same position. Persuasion theory has isolated several variables—such as high source credibility and shared frames of reference among others—which, if present, may allow one man to have influence over another, or, for that matter, over an entire political movement.

It is the purpose of this paper, then, to study the impact that H. L. Loucks may have had on three major issues of South Dakota populism already stated: the populist position in the state, the formation of a third party and fusion with the Democrats.

Neither major state historian of the period—George Kingsbury nor Doane Robinson—has been kind in his assessment of Loucks and the state's populists. Kingsbury, according to Yale historian Howard R. Lamar, hinted they were "a combination of cranks and demagogues." Robinson has even admitted insinuating that Loucks was a crook—a mistake he later clarified. But it is the opinion of this writer that Loucks was neither; that he was instead a man of lofty and unbending principles. He saw the suffering of Dakota farmers at the hands of the powerful and set out to do something about it. He advocated a government that would intervene on the side of the powerless and help redress the balance, to make the lot of the monopolies a little less comfortable and to make the lot of the farmers a bit more comfortable. But it would also be an open government, one to which all citizens would have equal access.

The next chapter will trace the development of what became the two most serious grievances of the farmers: the abuses of monopoly, especially railroads, and the limited amount of currency in
circulation. The second part of Chapter II will explore these two conditions in Dakota Territory in the ten years preceding formation of the Independent Party in June 1890.

Chapters III, IV and V will present a detailed summary of and conclusions about the impact of H. L. Loucks on South Dakota populism through the Ruralist and other writings.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., pp. 80-83.

3 Argus Leader, (Sioux Falls) June 6, 1890, p. 1.

4 Ibid.

5 John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), pp. 155-158.

6 As Hicks, ibid., has noted, virtually every populist party that emerged in the 1890s grew from a farmers' alliance, which itself was politically nonpartisan. If one dates the emergence of a populist party by the date when farmers first decided to form a political party, South Dakota's party is the earliest. Though the movement was more successful in other states such as Georgia, Kansas and Nebraska, South Dakota's was first.


8 Ibid., pp. 419, 420.


11 Ibid., p. 3.


13 Howard R. Lamar, Dakota Territory 1861-1889 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956). Lamar argued convincingly that Republicans dominated territorial politics from the organization of the territory until statehood. Between statehood in 1889 and 1968, according to South Dakota Political Almanac, supra, the Republican candidate for governor, for example, has received less than 51 percent of the vote in only a dozen elections. They were: 1890, 1892, 1896, 1898, 1912, 1914, 1922, 1926, 1928, 1932, 1934, 1958, the first four being directly related to populist agitation in the state.
Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) p. 61. With the exception of Hendrickson, supra, this writer has been able to find few secondary sources on South Dakota populism. At the present time, Terrence J. Lindell, a graduate student at the University of Nebraska is researching a master's thesis on populism in South Dakota, which, with this study, may illume a neglected corner of the state's history.


During those years the alliance spawned the Independent Party, moving from dissent within the Republican Party to open revolt. Unfortunately, the years of microfilm remaining on the Dakota Ruralist omit two critical points in the state's populist movement—1890, when the party was formed, and 1896, when it achieved victory. The years remaining, which have been reviewed for this paper, are from September 1888 to September 1889 and from January 1891 to October 1894.

H. L. Loucks, "An Able Letter/From the Hon. H. L. Loucks Touching the Vital Issues of the Campaign" (By the Author, 1898, Henry L. Loucks Papers, 1900-1922, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, S.D.).


"Highly Intersting Bits of State History are Told by Doane Robinson in Address," *The Sunshine State*, (December 1925), pp. 33, 34.
Origins in the Civil War Era

When they finally coalesced into the populist movement in the 1890s, farmers' grievances centered on two related facts of post-Civil War life: the abuses of business monopolies, especially railroads, and the paucity of money in circulation. Both can be traced back nearly 40 years to the financial chaos of the Civil War years.

The United States was forced from the gold standard in December 1861 after a series of mishaps shook investor confidence in the government. Faced with the mounting costs of the war, which at first was going badly for the Union, the federal government approved in February 1862 the first of three issues of legal tender. By the end of the war, more than $400 million of these notes, popularly called "greenbacks," were in circulation. They were paper dollar bills and fractional paper currency, made valuable solely by their owners' faith in the federal government.

When the legal tender issues were authorized, Congress hoped for an early return to a currency redeemable in gold. Resumption soon became a rallying cry for both sides in the great battle over the circulating medium. Hard money interests fought for a return to specie payments while soft money groups fought against it. At this time, silver was still backing United States currency and a silver dollar was actually worth three cents more than a gold dollar.

The greenbacks in circulation, combined with government
spending during the Civil War, created an inflation in the United States unknown since the country's founding. By the end of the Civil War, the prices of some 135 key commodities were two and a half times greater than they were at the start of the war. A great business boom was also fueled by the inflation.

In April 1866, Congress passed the Contraction Act, legislation designed to reduce the number of greenbacks in circulation as a first step to resumption of specie payment. Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch, an avowed resumptionist, began withdrawing currency only to be met by a determined coalition of businessmen, Democrats and "agrarian intellectuals and politicians." The result, in February 1868, was the repeal of the Contraction Act, but not until after McCulloch had trimmed the "circulating medium" (the money in circulation) by $44 million in greenbacks.

In the developing climate of rapid business expansion, several distinct positions emerged on the nation's monetary standard. Historian Irwin Unger has identified four, with three advocating a currency not based on the gold standard and the last seeking a speedy return to it. The three soft money or greenback positions, said Unger, were held by:

a heterogeneous group of businessmen, political and labor leaders and Agrarians whose combined efforts ultimately thwarted the Treasury's contraction policy.

Arrayed against the trio of interests stood the monometalists, and Unger has noted: "they were a socially superior breed representing the eastern elite of merchants, commercial bankers, textile
As the decade of the Civil War drew to a close a general economic boom was under way and attitudes turned more to making money than arguing over it. It would be a problem soon to return.

With the prosperity, railroads continued expanding west, completing the first transcontinental link in 1869. What Carter Goodrich aptly termed the "Era of National Subsidy" began in 1850 and had "reached its peak in the few years following the end of the Civil War." In addition to $65 million in government loans to companies building the first transcontinental railroad, "land grants were authorized during the years 1861-75 to a number of railroad companies from which they ultimately received well over 100,000,000 acres."

As both farmers and railroads headed west, farther from the ports and large consuming cities of the East, a new type of agricultural market began to emerge. The farmer was growing huge amounts of crops for sale, rather than just growing enough for himself and his family. The broad, flat prairies of the North Central states were well suited for mechanized farming. As the distance between farmer and market grew, the commission man emerged to buy the burgeoning crop and sell it to the mills. The system quickly worked to the farmers' disadvantage, as historian Solon J. Buck has pointed out:

When the farmer carried the product of his summer's work to market and found himself practically obliged to dispose of it to commission men at quite unrenumerative
prices, it was but natural for him to look upon these dealers as enemies and to feel that they controlled the situation and fixed such prices as they chose, and indeed it seems to be true that the returns to the farmer were often smaller and the share retained by the commission men larger than would have been the case had there been more competition among the merchants and more organization among the farmers.12

**Early Agitation**

As the railroads grew, so did the first agrarian movement to challenge them—the Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange. Actually, the order was founded by Washington, D. C., postal clerks, or, as one author put it: "a fruit grower and six government clerks."13 Oliver Hudson Kelley, while a clerk in the Agricultural bureau, was sent on a tour of the South to gather information for the department and was struck by "the lack of progressive spirit among the agricultural classes."14 He soon came to the conclusion that a national secret order was needed to elevate the status of the farmer.15

In September 1868, North Star Grange became the first permanent grange in Minnesota and its officials soon embarked on economic activity to aid the farmer.16 They emphasized "protection against corporations, the advantages of crop and market statistics, depots for the sale of produce and concerted action in the purchase of stock and the testing of new farm implements."17

As the movement grew through the early 1870s, "business cooperation" became a leading feature of Grangerism. Farmers seeking protection from the middlemen set up agencies among themselves through which they could buy supplies at favorable prices. Statewide business agencies developed in Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois, among
others. There were also experiments in cooperative stores, manufacturing, and banking and insurance. 18

Perhaps the major impact made by the Grangers was on railroad legislation, and especially with the Granger cases that the U.S. Supreme Court decided in October 1876. These cases arose from states where Grangerism was active—Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin—and through them "the fundamental principle of the right of a state to regulate a business which is public in its nature . . . was established . . . ." 19

While they differed over the fundamental problems facing American society, Unger noted that both grangerism and greenbackism "overlapped in a significant way. Primarily, both movements were deeply imbued with the agrarian, anti-monopoly faith of prewar America." 20 And that faith, since the eighteenth century, had "been wedded to bullionism." 21

Farmers in general, noted Unger, did not support soft money until after the Panic of 1873. 22 As Minnesota's Ignatius Donnelly, later a leading populist, said: "We have no interest in an inflated money market . . . . As we have to sell our wheat at the world's price, it is our interest that everything we buy should be at the world's price." 23 While the effect of the panic was not felt by the farmers for a few years, a detectable leaning toward greenbackism emerged after 1873. 24

In February of that year, about seven months before a string of business failures signaled the start of the panic, Congress in a barely noticed measure discontinued use of the 412.5 grain silver
dollar as currency. Demonetization of silver by Germany two years earlier and the increased output of domestic silver mines in the West had helped force down the price of silver. Treasury officials were concerned that silver dollars would be redeemed for the now-more-valuable gold dollars, leaving the government with the less valuable silver. Virtually nothing was said about enactment of the Coinage Act until later when advocates of silver cloaked this quiet adoption with international conspiracy; silverites called the law the "Crime of '73."

The following year the voters reacted against Republican rule and the Democratic Party obtained its first majority since 1861. Meeting just after the fall elections, the lame duck Republican majority adopted a law resuming specie payments in January 1879.

A provision in the bill designed to ease the return to currency redeemable in gold was the subsidiary coinage provision. Under it, the government could issue silver coins to replace fractional greenbacks in circulation.

For the next year Treasury Secretary Benjamin Bristow bought $8.25 million in silver bullion for minting into subsidiary coins but refused to issue them. Once the silver was issued, he feared, it would be exchanged for the less-valuable greenback and be hoarded out of circulation.

As Congress debated the apparent failure of Bristow to follow its mandate, legislators considered reestablishing silver as a monetary standard. On April 24 Senator John Percival Jones of
Nevada proposed completely remonetizing silver, that is, accepting it as backing for United States currency. Jones had hit a great nerve in the American psyche of the time. As historian Allen Weinstein has noted:

Underlying the silver drive's emotional attractiveness to many Americans of different class backgrounds in the 1870s lay a more general hostility among many Americans of varied economic backgrounds toward the new industrial society, which was changing or had already changed many older economic patterns...

For the next two years, Congress argued remonetization of silver. The House passed Congressman Bland's bill three times—the first two to goad the Senate and the third to override a veto by President Rutherford B. Hayes.

The Bland-Allison Act, which finally became law in February 1878, restored full legal tender status to the 412.5 grain silver dollar. A total of $2 million in silver could be purchased each month for coinage.

Five years of depression began to end in 1878 and silverites and monometalists alike looked forward to the resumption of specie payments the following January. When it arrived, resumption day was met with apprehension, with federal officials fearing a serious drain on federal gold reserves. Nothing of the sort materialized and by the end of the day, if uneventfully, the United States for the first time in 17 years was backing its obligations in gold.

With the return of prosperity, settlers and railroad officials began looking westward once again.
The 1880s in Dakota Territory

The decade preceding the formation of the Independent Party in South Dakota was marked by economic conditions largely adverse to the farmer. After trekking to the Dakota Territory with hopes of prosperity, he soon found himself enmeshed in debt and victimized by big business and especially the railroad. From this bitter soil—railroad exploitation and a scarcity of money to pay his bills—grew a political movement that was to challenge the status quo in South Dakota during its first years of existence. But these perceived twin evils were masked at first by economic boom times which prevailed in Dakota Territory during the early and middle 1880s.

The rise in both population and business activity from 1880 to 1885 can be seen in almost any set of statistics one studies. The territory's population more than tripled, from 81,781 in 1880 to 248,569 in 1885 and the miles of railroad built almost tripled in the same half-decade. In 1880, the territory had 547 miles of railroad and in 1885, the total had risen to 1,564. By 1885, just over a half a million tons of grain were being shipped from the territory.

Towns grew in the territory with equal rapidity. For example, the first load of lumber arrived at what was to be Hillsboro in September 1880. Two months later, the Traill County town could boast of three hundred residences, a school, a church, two grain elevators and a bank in addition to other businesses.

In a speech he gave in September 1885 to the first agricultural fair at Huron, Territorial Governor Gilbert Pierce traced the boom's effect on Beadle County. In 1880, he said, there were but
three farms and 37 improved acres in the county but five years later Beadle County claimed 1,823 farms and 135,834 acres of improved land. Whereas in 1880 the county had a livestock population of 84, Governor Pierce noted the population in 1885 exceeded 20,000. 39

The cause of this frontier growth, at least in part, developed in the aftermath of the panic of 1873. The depression immediately following this economic crash, wrote historian Halle Farmer, "served to call the attention of the discontented once more to the millions of acres of land available in the west." 40 Under the Homestead Act of 1862, a total of 160 acres was available to anyone willing to file a claim and farm it. During the early 1880s, many of the homestead claims were filed in Aberdeen, Mitchell, Huron and Watertown. 41 In 1883, as Schell has noted, "... about 23 percent of land filings for the entire nation was credited to the region east of the Missouri and south of the 46th parallel." 42

The economy developing in the territory was spurred by advancements in farm machinery and the growing importance of the export market. Large scale production of wheat and corn in Dakota would have been "impossible" without mechanization, according to Professor Fred A. Shannon. 43 New farm implements such as the disc plow and twine binder allowed more and more land to be put under cultivation by fewer and fewer men.

Advancements in devices for milling also broadened the market for Dakota's wheat. After the "invention and perfection" of two such devices—the LaCroix purifier and the chilled iron roller—hard spring wheat which previously sold at discount was commanding premium prices. 44
As settlers eyed land in the west, so did the railroads. The westward expansion of the lines had been checked by the panic in 1873 at the borders of Minnesota and Iowa. But an improvement in the business climate late in the decade brought railroad men's attention once more to the west. In 1877, general manager and later president of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Marvin Hughitt personally inspected the area around Brookings. Shortly afterward, the company began planning to expand its line from Tracy, Minnesota, to Pierre. To the south, officials of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway were planning to continue their line from Canton to Chamberlain. By late 1880, both railroads had reached the Missouri River, leaving in their wake the developing towns of Brookings, Huron and Mitchell among several smaller ones.

Part of these westward expansion plans involved a massive advertising campaign to attract settlers to the sparsely populated territory. Farmer has written, "Tha Dakota boom was for the most part due to the efforts of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul." The company distributed pamphlets filled with all manner of hyperbole about opportunities in Dakota Territory, calling it "Dakota the land of promise." The pamphlet continued: "Nowhere on the continent is there a more healthful climate . . . Many persons have come here as a last resort and instead of dying here become well and strong." Nothing, of course, was said of the harsh living conditions on the treeless prairie.

Glowing images of frontier life were distributed in both European and eastern United States cities by a vast network of agents
employed by both the railroad companies as well as midwestern states. Farmer noted that each state had its own board of immigration, the Dakota Territory in 1881 resurrecting a board it had abandoned four years earlier.

Even nature lent a hand to the economic boom because by 1880 a wet-weather cycle was two years under way, promising bountiful harvests to strengthen the territory's economy.

One beneficial result of this publicity was the "rush of eastern capital into the region" which usually ended up as investments in mortgages, municipal bonds or railroad securities.

**Territorial Railroads**

Of all the territorial investment opportunities, railroads offered the most fertile ground. Greater than almost anything else on the frontier was the need for transportation, railways to carry the burgeoning crop to market and railways to carry the necessities of life back to the farmer.

In its first annual report, issued at the end of 1885, the Board of Railroad Commissioners for the Territory of Dakota said:

The early settlers of the Territory looked forward to the day that should bring a railroad within their reach, as marking the commencement of an era in their lives. The whistle of the locomotive would be the sweetest music a resident of the broad prairie of Dakota could hear, and the mere rumor that a party of railroad surveyors had been seen in a particular locality, was enough to fill the hearts of every settler with joy, and cause visions of townsites and county seat speculations to color with all the beauteous hues of the rainbow his dreams at night. Nor is it strange. The hardy pioneer who had left all the comforts and convenience of civilized life hundreds of miles away, and ventured to erect a claim shanty on the fertile soil of Dakota, could be pardoned for being willing to mortgage the home of his choice to
secure once more communication with the civilized world. 52

Individuals through mortgages and townships and counties through bond issues invested generously in the railways. 53 With their support and a favorable economic climate, railroads expanded rapidly in the territory and carried larger and larger shipments of grain to markets in Minneapolis, Duluth and Chicago.

Thirty-six months after the commission issued its report, another 769 miles of track had been laid across the territory with the largest carrier being the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. During the same period, grain shipped over territorial railways increased 79 percent, from 522,070 tons in 1885 to 935,561 in 1888. 54 As the lines spread westward across Dakota, the increasing volume of grain was marketed through a growing number of grain elevators. By 1890, there were 600 elevators in the state. 55

The development of grain elevators as the major agency through which the farmer marketed his wheat, combined with railroad domination over transportation, quickly worked to the detriment of the producer. With their need for large shipments of grain, railways not only provided rebates to favored elevators, but also encouraged combination among elevators when it was to their advantage. 56 Before too long the coalition between railways and elevators produced a market so restricted that a number of abuses arose. 57 Railways could charge excessive and discriminatory rates and refuse to build sidings or provide farmers with freight cars to ship their crops at harvest time. Elevators could grade grain at a lower quality and thus offer the farmer less money for it. But as this market control
developed, so did agitation to alleviate it.

In the forefront of this protest was the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, which first appeared in the territory in 1881. After the arrival of H. L. Loucks, the alliance took an increasingly activist stance, agitating for reform laws before the Legislature and, like the Grange had done a decade earlier, organized cooperative buying ventures. It remained nonpartisan until 1890, preferring to work through the Republican Party which had dominated politics since the organization of the territory in 1861. A more complete analysis of alliance activities and its metamorphosis into the Independent Party will be presented in the next chapter.

In 1883, the territorial legislature at Bismarck enacted a grain and commission law, which established an agency to establish grades for grain. The measure proved ineffective when the Legislature failed to provide the commission sufficient powers to enforce its decisions.

Two years later the same agitation produced a nearly as powerless board of railroad commissioners. The Legislature granted it "general supervision of all railroads in the Territory," and while it could issue preemptory orders to enforce its decisions, delays and litigation could slow carrying out its power. The commission investigated many complaints leveled by farmers at the railroads and usually attempted to settle disputes by negotiation. The power to establish a state schedule of railway rates would have to wait until the populists came to power in 1896 and even then events would favor the railroads.
In viewing the conditions that brought the railway commission into being, the agency said in its first report:

The strong desire of our people was to secure railroad building, and this liberality of feeling was taken advantage of by the able counsellors and attorneys of said corporations with the result of placing upon our statute books as liberal if not the most liberal, laws ever enacted in any state or Territory in the Union... Our legislative assembly omitted the ordinary safeguards against corporate encroachment, and in their eagerness to secure railroads seem to have been indifferent to the terms upon which they were obtained.

Noting that the legislature that established the commission had "assembled for the fixed purpose of curbing corporate privileges," the commission in October 1885 announced a general policy: railroads, being a public carrier available to everyone, should have "cars sufficient for the ordinary business of the road." The policy struck at one of the abuses railroads inflicted on farmers: refusing freight cars during harvest, when huge shipments of grain had to be moved quickly to market.

**Farmer Complaints**

One of the many such complaints recorded in the commission's annual reports arose in DeSmet, where the 46-member Farmers Shipping Association was apparently refused freight cars by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. On Nov. 1, 1886, John A. Owen, treasurer of the group, wrote to I. E. West, commission secretary, explaining that while the railroad would provide cars to Milwaukee and Chicago, none were available to Minneapolis, where, he said, "our wheat is in great demand for milling." Owen also pointed out that "a car which can
run to Chicago can run to Minneapolis, the track is the same width, and it is a hardship that we are so treated."65

West wrote to General Manager Marvin Hughitt and said the board "could see no reason" why the farmers were denied cars to "the market he [sic] may choose and designate."66 Hughitt's assistant, W. H. Sennett, replied November 10, stating flatly: I know positively that no discrimination has been practiced against Mr. Owen or his colleagues at DeSmet."67

While not discussing why freight cars were apparently being furnished to Milwaukee and Chicago, Sennett placed the blame for the ban on travel to Minneapolis to striking switchmen there. In his reply, Sennett offered an argument made by other railway officials when refusal to supply cars was alleged:

Neither the C.&N.W. Ry. Company, nor any other railroad company, as far as I have any knowledge, have an inexhaustable [sic] supply of freight cars to draw upon; and when from any cause its stock of cars is tied up, it is utterly impossible to supply the demand of the shippers.68

In a similar case three years later, D. R. Lippett complained that the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul had refused to stop at White Rock siding to take grain shipments from farmers.69 The line's assistant general superintendent, W. G. Collins, told the commission in an Oct. 11, 1889 letter that since the first of the month, 46 cars had been shipped to White Rock. Since the line had no agent at the siding, Collins could not be sure of the situation, but promised to investigate.70

Later that month, C. C. Walcott of Marimore complained to
the commission that "wheat had been laying in elevator [for] thirty day" and that he had been unable to obtain the needed cars. The commission notified the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Company and on October 29 W. P. Clough, the firm's second vice president, replied, "Walcott will be supplied; no one [is being] discriminated against." The commission also heard complaints of refusals by railroad companies to build sidings. As with refusals to supply cars, this type of railroad abuse was often practiced against independent grain elevators which were likely to be in competition with railroad supported grain elevators. Such a case, described as "probably the most important case coming before the commission," dealt with an apparent refusal by the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad to build first a warehouse and then a siding near Lidgerwood. After first being refused permission to build a warehouse on the company's right of way, the Farmers' Elevator Company of Lidgerwood built one a short distance away and applied for a siding to it. The company again refused, although specifically directed by the railroad commission act to allow such sidings. After several requests went unanswered, the commission ordered the siding built.

The territorial attorney general went to the railroad's main office in St. Paul to settle the matter while the Farmers' Elevator Company ordered the track switching equipment to install the siding, with or without permission. On November 3, when the equipment arrived:

... complainant [the Farmers' Elevator Company] proceeded
to cut the respondent's track and make the connection, which was completed at dark on the evening of the 3rd, but no sooner was it completed than the employees of said railway tore it out and closed the gap in said tracks. 75

After this incident, the commission lost jurisdiction when North Dakota became a state; Lidgerwood being in North Dakota, the case was transferred to the railroad commission there.

Another case of this sort arose in Webster in September 1886 when farmers who had built a mill discovered that the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was not planning to build a siding to it. 76 In buying the land where the mill was built, commission secretary West told Roswell Miller, the railroad's general manager, the farmers were assured by the company's agent that the mill would be connected to the main line by a siding. In his reply about three weeks later, Miller used a peculiar form of reasoning. While denying any promise to construct a side track when the property was sold, he said he had already contracted to have grading done in preparation for constructing the siding. 77

The commission also negotiated cases of discriminatory rates, such as one that began in Henry in October 1889. 78 Coal was being transported by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad from Duluth to Watertown for $3 a ton, but the commission's report noted "the rate on the same coal to Henry, 18 miles further west, was $4 a ton." 79 Residents of Henry would buy coal in Watertown and haul it home by wagon so that, as commission secretary J. L. Robinson wrote General Manager Hugitt, "by reason of your excessive rate you are deprived of a large amount of carrying; for with a reasonable rate from Duluth to Henry you would get the haul for the entire distance." 80
Hughitt "at once" granted the Watertown rate, Robinson wrote.  

In considering the efficacy of the territorial railroad commission, its congratulatory self-appraisals must be viewed along with the farmers' protest. When one realizes that a major political movement was taking form, largely in reaction to abuses of the railroads, the extent of the commission's success is certainly open to question. The commission was criticized for its riding in special cars with railroad officials on inspection tours. These accommodations were necessary, the board argued in its first report in 1885, so it could carry out its work. "In very many instances," the report stated, "the Division Superintendents gave orders on the spot for the prompt carrying out of recommendations of the Board."  

Earlier in that report, the commission noted:  

The fact that these corporations [the railroads] had invested millions of dollars in Dakota; that they had constructed nearly three thousand miles of track in the Territory in advance of the settlement of the country; that they had carried the homesteader with his household goods and gods to his new home, at much less the actual cost of train service ... all was forgotten and a feeling of distrust and almost downright hostility became common.  

All this mattered little to the producer, for as Farmer has pointed out: "The Dakota farmer claimed that, when freight rates absorbed one-half of the price of his oats and one-third of the price of his wheat, it was prima facie evidence that the rates were too high."  

Nevertheless in its 1888 report, two years before the farmers' protest crystalized into the Independent Party, the commission said that during the two previous years "over 500 complaints have been
considered and, with very few exceptions, the cases have been satisfactorily adjusted.\textsuperscript{85}

Cases such as these, perhaps, hint at the general decline in the farmers' economic status. Even near the height of the boom period, in 1884, some farmers in the territory complained that the cost of wheat exceeded its selling price by twenty percent.\textsuperscript{86}

\textbf{Economic Decline}

As well as railroad and grain elevator control over the agricultural market in the territory, overproduction, falling prices and rising expenses added to the farmers' economic woes. These conditions "not only narrowed the margin of profit for Dakota wheat farmers, but also made it difficult for them to meet the heavy financial obligations assumed so lightly during the boom."\textsuperscript{87}

A study in 1893 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicated that it cost Dakota farmers more per acre to produce corn and wheat than they were able to sell the crops for. While it cost farmers in the territory $8.57 to produce an acre of wheat, the grain sold for $5.93. The cost of producing an acre of corn showed even greater disparity, costing $8.89 an acre and selling for $5.93.\textsuperscript{88}

One expense which rose relentlessly during the 1880s in Dakota Territory was the tax farmers had to pay on their land. Property assessments, upon which the tax was based, rose an average of 27.36 percent a year for the eleven years between 1879 and 1890. Even a static or slightly rising mill rate would mean an ever larger tax bill for the farmer.\textsuperscript{89}
During much of the 1880s the output of wheat from the territory nevertheless increased, hitting a peak of 52,406,000 bushels in 1887. But during that year a drought occurred, triggering a widespread crop failure and signaling the end of the economic boom. Dakota farmers also had to contend with a bitterly cold winter in 1887-1888, which killed thousands of cattle, and a severe frost in 1888 which devastated the wheat crop. Indeed, in 1888 the output of territorial wheat had fallen to 38,036,000 bushels, beginning a decline that lasted well into the 1890s.

By 1887 it became apparent, as Farmer has written, that "the prosperity of the period was a prosperity based on credit." The news of investment frauds, which became commonplace in the speculative mania of the 1880s, was reaching eastern money markets and credit available in the territory began drying up. The farmer found it increasingly difficult to secure funds through real estate mortgages, so he turned to chattel mortgages, "securing such money as he could upon his livestock and farm machinery." By 1890, the per capita indebtedness in Dakota was $110 and, on the average, mortgages equalled 23.84 percent of the total value of territorial farms.

Another measure of the increasingly difficult times faced by farmers was the growing amount of taxes not paid. By 1891, delinquent taxes totaled $49,540.19; four years later the total had risen to more than a quarter of a million dollars.

In fact, many families in Dakota were prevented from leaving
when their crops failed because their "horses and wagons were mortgaged and could not be taken from the state." As Farmer has succinctly pointed out: "It was only after 1887, when the interest payments were hard to meet and the foreclosures began, that the West realized how great was the burden it assumed."

While farmers were struggling to meet mortgage and tax payments, railroads were able to legally avoid a large part of their own taxes. Under territorial laws, railroads paid taxes on a system of gross earnings rather than on the valuation of their property. In 1888, the territorial auditor reported that railroads had paid $104,167.82 in taxes under the gross earnings system in 1887. Had railroad taxes had been based on property values, like all other property in the territory, the tax bill would have been $1,075,000, a difference of more than $970,000.

The auditor called for a repeal of the gross earnings tax system, saying, "it is practically an exemption of all railroad property from taxation and worthless as a means of raising the public revenue."

In conclusion, he noted, "Lightening the burden upon one class of property serves to increase it upon another, thereby producing unequal taxation, which is the principal cause of complaint relative to the revenue laws."

As the farmers' condition worsened year after year, he looked around for causes, and they were not hard to find: the railroads and financiers who controlled the amount of money circulating in the territory.
In the February 23, 1889 issue of the Dakota Ruralist, E. W. Shulz, a member of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, wrote:

If we can get a foot hold in controlling the circulating medium of Dakota, we draw the knife across the main artery of financial manipulations and start the life blood of combines and trusts to oozing out ... 105

And in the May 4, 1889 issue an article commenting on legislation designed to tighten railroad regulation which had been defeated in the territorial legislature noted:

There is no longer the slightest doubt that we have the right and the power to regulate and control the railroads in their management. In the case in point, we simply say that where rates are unjust or unreasonable, the commission shall have the power, etc. When the railroads object to this, they admit that they are charging unjust or unreasonable rates. They condemn themselves. They stand in the way of justice and reason, and must be brushed aside, or the car of progress will run over them. 106

During the next few years many were driven from Dakota by the harsh conditions; an estimated 26 counties lost 30,000 people during the 1890s. 107 Some farmers, however, chose to stay and fight.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 15.


4 Unger, The Greenback Era, p. 16.

5 Ibid., p. 68.

6 Ibid., p. 243.

7 Ibid., p. 44.

8 Ibid., p. 162.


10 Ibid., p. 269.

11 Ibid.


13 Ibid., p. 42.

14 Ibid., p. 41.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 46.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., pp. 260-273.

19 Ibid., p. 206.


21 Ibid., p. 201.
22 Ibid., p. 195.

23 Ibid., p. 200.

24 Ibid., pp. 228, 229.


26 Ibid.


28 Einstein, *Prelude to Populism*, pp. 33, 34.

29 Ibid., p. 83.

30 Ibid., pp. 95, 96.

31 Ibid., p. 55.

32 Ibid., pp. 235-349.

33 Ibid., p. 349.


42 Ibid., p. 159.


46 Ibid., pp. 161-168.


48 Ibid., p. 408.

49 Ibid., p. 409.

50 Ibid., p. 410.

51 Ibid., p. 412.

52 First Annual Report of the Board of Railroad Commissioners [1885], p. 8.


54 The figure has been compiled by the author from data in the first four annual reports of the Board of Railroad Commissioners of the Territory of Dakota.


57 Ibid., p. 17.

58 First Annual Report of the Board of Railroad Commissioners [1885], p. 10.

59 Ibid., p. 12.

60 Ibid., pp. 8, 9.

61 Ibid., p. 9.


87 Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 223.


89 This percentage figure was put together by the author from data in State Auditor's Report for 1896, pp. 219-222, cited supra (endnote 36).


91 Ibid., p. 416.


94 Ibid., p. 418.

95 Ibid., p. 413.

96 Ibid., p. 419.

97 Ibid., p. 420.


100 Ibid., p. 420.


102 Ibid., p. 214.
103 Ibid., p. 215.
104 Ibid., p. 238.
107 John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), p. 32.
Henry Langford Loucks was born May 24, 1846, in Russell, Ontario, the third of a dozen children of William and Anne Loucks. His mother was born in a village near Belfast, Ireland, and made the long voyage to Ontario where she met William Loucks and married him in August of 1841.¹

Henry Loucks received his early schooling in Ottawa, about 25 miles west of his native Russell.² At nineteen, he journeyed southwest into Michigan where he spent two years as a "contractor in the lumber trade".³ At 21, he returned to Hull, just north of Ottawa, to enter "the merchandising business."⁴ He remained in this line of work for the next dozen years.

Just two days before his 32nd birthday in 1878, Loucks married 20-year-old Florence Isabel McRaney, daughter of the Hon. William McRaney, a member of the Dominion Parliament.⁵ The first of their seven children, Winnifred Geraldine Loucks, was born the following year in Hull.⁶

By the time their second child, William McRaney Loucks, was born in November 1881, the Loucks family was about to leave for the American West. They moved to Elgin, Illinois, staying there for about
four months before moving on to Jefferson City, Missouri. It was here that Loucks, the man who would later organize Dakota farmers against railroads and monopolies, worked to construct the Chicago & Alton Railroad line. While in Jefferson City, his third child, Perry Franklin Loucks, was born.

In the spring of 1884 Loucks, his wife and their three small children arrived in Clear Lake, Dakota Territory. He took a homestead claim and opened a farm of two sections.

**Dakota Farmers Organize**

Loucks was part of the great wave of migrants which tripled the territory's population in the first half of the 1880s. He apparently had no fixed political beliefs when he arrived in Dakota and "aimed to approach every subject with an open mind."

Prosperity seemed omniscient in those days, although it would turn out to be more apparent than real. Railroads were swiftly crossing the territory and new towns were appearing rapidly. A steady flow of capital from the East helped farmers obtain new machinery and put more and more acres under cultivation, expanding the territory's output of crops, especially wheat. But the burgeoning agricultural market was heavily dependent on railways and grain elevators, which often worked in tandem against the farmers' interest. Even as the boom was hitting its peak, troubles began to emerge.

In Chicago the editor of the *Western Rural*, Milton George, had been denouncing railroads as "discriminatory and a menace to the nation," and to fight back, he organized what became known as the
National Farmers' Alliance. In February 1881, less than a year after George's association was founded, farmers in Yankton County obtained a charter for the first alliance in Dakota Territory. Spurred by a drop in wheat prices in 1884, the number of territorial alliances grew and mass meetings in Clark, Huron, Mellette and Redfield were soon denouncing railroads and demanding their regulation.

Loucks joined the ranks of discontented farmers in the fall of 1884 when he organized a farmers' club in Clear Lake. Although ostensibly the group was formed to share ideas on farming, the purpose was probably more political than agricultural. At any rate, the gatherings grew so popular that three more clubs were soon founded in Deuel County.

Farmers had already turned to politics by the time Loucks arrived in Dakota. In the elections of 1884, farmers' tickets appeared "whenever local Republican machines rejected demands that they run farmer candidates." The territorial legislature resulting from these elections, which convened in Bismarck in January 1885, was the first in which farmers were able to exert enough political strength to influence legislation. A territorial railroad commission was created, although the vigorous opposition of "the railroad lobby at Bismarck" left the new agency without any power to establish freight rates.

A month after the legislature convened, in February 1885, alliance delegates from 11 counties in Dakota gathered in Huron to form the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, affiliating with George's Northern
Farmers' Alliance. The movement grew rapidly; by mid-summer the number of local alliances in the territory had tripled. 20

During this period in the South, a completely separate farmers' movement, which would soon affect Dakota, was stirring. From beginnings in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, a regional association which would eventually be called the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union began to emerge. 21 Men like newspaper editors C. W. Macune of Texas and L. L. Polk of North Carolina denounced conditions in which farmers found themselves. Like the earlier Granger movement, and unlike the Northern Farmers' Alliance the membership of this southern association was secret. Not only was the Dakota Farmers' Alliance to later affiliate with this southern group, Loucks would be elected its president.

**Alliance President**

After the Deuel County farmers' clubs began, Loucks became increasingly active in the alliance. Just over a year after these first clubs were formed, in January 1886, a convention at Aberdeen unanimously chose Loucks president of the territorial alliance. 22

As Edwin C. Torrey has noted in *Early Days in Dakota*:

Up to this time he [Loucks] had no more than a local acquaintance, but having accepted the presidency he applied himself to the study of general conditions and the duties of his office and in a few years was known as one of the most persuasive speakers the state had produced. Feeling the touch of a master hand, the machinery of the alliance began to speed up. 23

Loucks turned his attention to the rates being charged by territorial railway companies, perhaps the major grievance among
farmers. He saw an interview with Capt. Alex Griggs, a member of the territorial railway commission, in a St. Paul newspaper and thought Griggs' views "too solicitous for the welfare of the roads, and too passive concerning the condition and needs of the settlers." He addressed an open letter to the commissioners which attracted more attention for the alliance after being given ample coverage in the territorial press. Eventually Loucks was able to win a small victory over the railways—the reduction by six cents per hundred-weight of grain rates along the eastern edge of the territory.

As a sequel of his successful bout with the commission and the roads, his [Loucks] mail increased to enormous proportions. He was accustomed to drive a team on his farm during the day, and then sit up a large part of the night to attend to his correspondence. He was working without salary as president of the alliance, and paying his own expenses.

In July of 1886, Loucks called a special convention of the alliance at Aberdeen where the feeling against railroads and those who controlled the currency remained strong. Delegates passed resolutions demanding lower freight and passenger rates and lower interest for mortgages and loans as well as the election of railroad commissioners. Politically, however, the farmers did not fare well in the elections of that year—only 13 alliance men were elected to the territorial legislature and "no significant reform bills were seriously considered."

From its origin however, the National Farmers' Alliance and its member alliances were nonpartisan politically, choosing to work through the dominant political party. Much of the alliance activity nationally was directed at economic betterment of the farmer and in
the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, "cooperation in marketing and shipping was one of its cardinal doctrines." Dakota alliance men began limited ventures in cooperative hail insurance and cooperative buying, where farmers would pay premiums to an association of farmers for insurance and be able to obtain reduced prices on farm machinery. These efforts culminated in June 1887 when the alliance organized a $200,000 stock corporation. During a convention at Aberdeen over which Loucks presided, alliance delegates pondered forming the corporation.

It was shown that through the territorial purchasing department [of the alliance] more than a quarter of a million dollars was saved to alliance members and through them [sic] prices had been reduced 25% on machinery and that all farmers had the advantage of this whether members of the alliance or not.

In the end, alliance delegates decided to form the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company to provide members with farm machinery at lower prices and then offer loans "at greatly reduced rates of interest." George G. Crose of LaMoure was chosen as its president.

Delegates also decided to expand the alliance's insurance business to include protection against fire and cyclones as well as hail. As Dr. Herbert S. Schell has noted, the alliance "was a pioneer in the field of cooperative insurance and saw its system of life insurance copied by other state alliances."

As the farmers' activities quickened and alliance membership swelled, the leadership of the movement fell upon several men. In addition to Loucks and Crose was Alonzo Wardell of Milbank, who had been among the founders of the Territorial Board of Agriculture in
1885 and a director of the Dakota Horticultural Society the following year. He had become the alliance's business manager and would later be the farmers' candidate for U.S. Senate. He and Loucks would remain close friends for several years.

Other leaders included J. W. Harden, whose unsuccessful candidacy for Congress in 1888 would quicken the alliance's tilt toward partisan politics; J. R. Lowe, also a director of the Dakota Horticultural Society and later associate editor of the *Dakota Ruralist*; and Z. D. Scott, the alliance secretary who argued monetary policy in the *Dakota Ruralist*.

**Birth of the Dakota Ruralist**

While alliance ventures in cooperative buying and insurance aided the farmers, the assistance was more financial than political. The metamorphosis from nonpartisan interest group to political party, this writer believes, took an important step forward in September 1887 with the founding of the *Dakota Ruralist*. Essentially a journal of farm news at first, the *Ruralist* came to Dakota alliance men with the payment of their dues. It was assembled in an office in Aberdeen and published every Wednesday, mixing agricultural news with laudatory articles on alliance members' involvement in territorial politics.

The *Ruralist* had a four-column format with a picturesque page one flag (see Appendix A). Headlines tended to be labels and only a bit larger than body type. Perhaps to underscore its agricultural orientation, early issues of the *Ruralist* often featured large sketches of prize-winning horses, cattle and other farm animals on page one.
These would disappear in subsequent issues as the Ruralist moved toward advocacy of the Independent Party. It was at first "edited by members of the alliance," and along with mentioning Loucks and other alliance directors on page two, listed Crose, president of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance Company, as its editor. The idea of forming the newspaper was apparently suggested by a J. C. McNamina, who became one of its first owners. Also involved in the paper's founding was George Schlosser, who became its first business manager.

The relationship of Loucks to the Ruralist in this early period is unclear. Several of Loucks' letters appeared during late 1888 and early 1889 and he was sometimes mentioned in the paper's news columns. Beginning in the spring of 1889 the Ruralist listed both Loucks and Crose as editors. On page two, a logo read: "Alliance Department--Edited by members of the alliance." Below was listed the names of Crose as editor and Schlosser as business manager. On page four, however, another logo appeared stating "Alliance Department, H. L. Loucks, Editor." Since Crose was also president of the alliance's buying company at the time and Loucks was alliance president, it is possible the paper was at least a joint effort among men whose energies ran in several directions. The Ruralist was an alliance paper and it is probable that Loucks exercised control over its editorial content. Alliance members supported the venture, voting at a convention in July 1889:

That as the Dakota Ruralist is the official paper of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance that we will give our financial support to it by subscribing and using our
best endeavors to get others to subscribe for it. Be it further,

Resolved, that we will not support any paper that is not in sympathy with the alliance movement and will not give it its friendly support.41

E. B. Cummings was editor from early 1890 until July 1891, when Loucks took over.42 The paper continued to list Loucks as editor for at least the next four years.43

The Ruralist apparently had no legal status until March 10, 1890, when incorporation papers were filed with the South Dakota Secretary of State to form the Alliance Publishing Company. The seven directors were Loucks, Wardell, Crose, Cummings, Sophia M. Harden, S. D. Cooley and C. V. Gardner.44 Cooley was named company president.

According to the papers, the "object of this Association shall be to transact a general printing, publishing and stationery business."45 The offices had been moved from Aberdeen to Huron.

The Jan. 10, 1891, issue of the Ruralist announced the change in ownership and location, praising Wardell for "managing" the move and Cooley for the "constant and careful assistance that he has given to the finances of the company."46 The notice also gave the only circulation figures able to be uncovered by this author, listing the number of subscribers at the end of 1890 as 13,000.47

Throughout its existence the Ruralist, like the farmers' movement itself, underwent profound changes. The Sept. 26, 1888, issue carried the slogan "Farm, Stock and Home" under its distinctive page one flag and on page four ran a statement of the paper's purpose:
The Dakota Ruralist is devoted to the Farm, Home and Live Stock interests of Dakota and the Northwest and its aim will always be to promote prosperity on the Farm, happiness in the Home and improvement in Live Stock, believing these to be three of the great elements in the upbuilding of our Western Civilization. It will aim to be a family paper in the full sense of the word and on each weekly visit will contain something that will interest each member of the family.¹⁸

Early issues of the paper were largely devoted to farm issues and politics, though present, was kept to a minimum. The entire front page of the Sept. 26, 1888, issue, for example, was devoted to an address on the "Science of Breeding" given to a farmers' institute in Mitchell.⁴⁹ The inside pages were frequently filled with farm news, including some very practical advice on "curing a horse of the habit of kicking."⁵⁰ There were columns on "poultry notes," "dairy notes" and a list of recently given cattle awards.

The newspaper also provided a channel of communication among subscribing farmers, allowing them to exchange tips on farming and to argue over currency and monopoly questions. Farmers offered personal experiences in growing strawberries,⁵¹ timothy grass⁵² or trees.⁵³ In February 1889 one farmer wrote the Ruralist seeking information on "the way starch is made from potatoes," and the Ruralist replied:

We do not have the detailed information which you seem to want, at hand. Most likely some of the Ruralist readers can furnish it.⁵⁴

Other farmers argued monetary policy and the evils being wrought upon them by monopolies. In the Nov. 24, 1888, issue, for example, S. H. Goodfellow argued that not enough money was in
circulation. He called for a more elastic currency, where the amount of money in circulation would expand and contract to meet the needs of farmers and businesses. 55

When alliance secretary Z. D. Scott argued that the value of money was established by the government, alliance member E. W. Shulz disagreed. "The value of money," Schulz wrote, "... is put upon by the corsairs of human greed and not by Congress as I understand it." 56 These "corsairs" controlled the interest rates at which money was lent, he charged, effectively controlling the money's value. A few weeks later the discussion continued when another alliance member wrote Schulz: "I have been anxiously awaiting for a fuller development of your banking system, I am not clear concerning it." 57

Along with letters and farming columns, the Ruralist carried news of the alliance's involvement in politics. One of several short items appearing during the campaign of 1888 stated:

Several legislative conventions will be held this week, and the prospects are that in most instances the farmers will win. A little energy on the part of every alliance man will secure a legislature for next winter that we can depend upon to make some corrective legislation and right some of the unjust laws under which we now live. 58

By the start of 1891, the Ruralist was devoting extensive space to legislative coverage, sometimes filling entire pages with lists of bills that had been approved or rejected. The amount of farm news had declined and the paper was billing itself the "Official Organ of the Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union of Both Dakotas." 59 The entire front page of the Jan. 10, 1891, issue,
for example, consisted of three long letters: one on prison reform, one on school textbooks and one on "The Insane Hospital" at Yankton.

Growing Activism

In pressing their grievances politically in 1888, the farmers were taking on a formidable foe: a Republican Party that had dominated politics since Dakota Territory was organized in 1861. In the 28 years of territorial rule, "a specific and distinct element of the population had developed the technique of controlling local government for its benefit alone." During the 1880s territorial officials appointed in Washington, D.C., and Dakotans fighting for statehood, as Yale historian Howard R. Lamar pointed out, were bitter enemies although for the most part Republicans. It would be the leaders of this party—notably Arthur C. Mellette, first governor of South Dakota, Richard F. Pettigrew and Gideon C. Moody—who would oppose the alliance as it moved closer to partisan politics. They could see little veracity in the farmers' grievances and as Professor Lamar noted:

Mellette's correspondence after 1888 dealt with little else but the problem of controlling the farmers, and it is damaging revelation of the small vision of these men that they were never once prepared to grant that the farmer had a right to enter the political forum as an equal. Their chief reaction was anger; their constant question was: what is their price? Only a few saw the situation in the larger sense as a social and economic problem created by national and international rather than by local factors, and these few did not control the party.

The drought in Dakota Territory in 1887 and the worsening economic climate helped bring the alliance a few victories. In 1888, alliance men managed to control Democratic and Republican party
conventions in eight counties. In hopes of mollifying the
insurgents, the Republicans adopted a platform calling for the
reduction of railroad rates and a more equal system of taxation. 65

That year the Democrats nominated J. W. Harden, second
vice president of the alliance, for territorial delegate in
Congress. 66 The alliance took an expected, but unofficial, interest
in Harden's candidacy. Loucks and Crose actively campaigned for
him because his Republican opponent's record "had been antagonistic
to the interest of the farmers." 67

Loucks was soon the target of Republican invective. He was
not without his defenders, however, as seen by one letter in the
Ruralist:

. . . of late the Republican press have been loading
their [sic] guns from the political cesspools and
aiming at President Loucks because he refuses to
be whipped into line. President Loucks takes
exceptions to the Watertown [Republican party
convention] because of their [sic] refusal to
place a man on the platform that [sic] is in
harmony with it. I would ask where the boasted
platform of the Republican party would have been
for such men as President Loucks and Vice President
Harden and many other reformers who for several years
have been sowing the seed of reform. 68

Loucks' Campaign Letter, October 1888

During the campaign of 1888, Loucks discussed engaging the
Dakota Farmers' Alliance in partisan politics, though obliquely,
because it was a step opposed by many alliance men. In a lengthy
letter to the Ruralist on Oct. 24, 1888, he not only discussed such
a move but offered some of his ideas on public finance.

He asked rhetorically if his personal activism was "an attempt
to drag the alliance into politics and if so, is it right?"

Alliance men who thought it was not a proper course of action were referred to the constitution of the National Farmers' Alliance and the Dakota Farmers' Alliance. The section of the national constitution cited by Loucks noted the group's purpose was "to unite the farmers for the promotion of their interests, socially, politically and financially." In Article I of the state constitution, Loucks found:

The object of this organization shall be to unite the farmers of Dakota for their protection against class legislation, and the encroachments of concentrated capital, and the tyranny of monopoly. To oppose in our respective political parties THE ELECTION OF ANY CANDIDATE TO OFFICE, COUNTY TERRITORIAL OR NATIONAL, WHO IS NOT THOROUGHLY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE FARMERS' INTEREST. The demand that the existing political parties shall nominate farmers or those who are in sympathy with them, for all offices in the gift of the people, and to do anything in a legitimate manner that may serve to benefit the producer. 71

Loucks recalled his address to the annual alliance meeting the preceding year, where he recommended "appointment of an advisory campaign committee whose duty it would be to see that every legislative district was thoroughly organized." The committees would present the alliance demands to both political parties and ask that they call party nominating conventions before Sept. 15, 1888. Should the parties refuse, "we can safely count that they ignore us and must act accordingly." In a vague passage, probably understood nonetheless by alliance men, Loucks continued:

Where each party nominate men in whom we have confidence, then support the nominees of our party. Where either party fails to make satisfactory nominations and the other one does,
we should support their nominees. If neither party calls conventions, or makes satisfactory nominations, then it will be our plain duty to call conventions, nominate independent candidates and elect them. In brief, we must place principle before party and acquit ourselves like men.74

Though oblique, the inference of the passage seems nonetheless clear: support Democrat Harden, a friend of the farmer over Republican G. W. Mathews, whose voting record in the territorial legislature has not favored farmers. While Loucks at one level was merely offering campaign assistance to a fellow alliance leader, he was weaving a more profound theme that would be used again to generate support for organizing a third party: support principle over party. If a party's candidate has not been a friend to the farmer, that candidate does not deserve the farmers' support. Loucks closed his letter by saying "Remember our motto: We place principles before party and men above platforms."75

In the same letter, Loucks discussed an economic idea of his to which he would return again and again, stating:

A great deal of fun has been made of my proposition that the United States should lend their [sic] enormous idle surplus to the farmers, secured on their land, for 2 or 3 percent per annum, instead of loaning it to the national banks for nothing.76

Loucks argued that through high tariff rates, the government had built up a huge surplus in the U.S. Treasury. Three methods of distribution being advocated: paying on the national debt, which would enrich the bondholders, loaning it to national banks without interest, or as Republican James Blaine had suggested, distributing it for the relief of "the poor, the loyal, the suffering and the
starving among the Union soldiers." 77

Noting that there were many former Union soldiers farming in Dakota, Loucks argued that some of the surplus should be loaned to them:

Already our farmers are appealing to the outside public for help. Could they borrow a part of that surplus, giving security on their lands, they would gladly pay a reasonable rate of interest and they would be enabled to tide over and remain to build up our territory.

There are times when the government should come to the rescue. Now, the question to be considered is, should the government be called upon to aid any class of the people? On general principles I say no. But what do we find as the present state of affairs? We find that the government has for many years legislated in the interest of three classes, viz: the manufacturer to whom we annually pay an immense tribute as a bonus to aid them in their business; the bondholders, who loaned us in a depreciated currency and receive their pay in gold . . .; and the national banks, to whom we loan an immense sum free of interest. 78

Harden was beaten by nearly 20,000 votes on election day 79 and there were fears of a split in the Dakota Farmers' Alliance along partisan political lines. A few weeks after the election, the Ruralist urged alliance men not to give solace to their enemies by quarreling among themselves, noting:

There is utmost harmony among all elements of the farmers' movement as to all matters properly covered by that movement; and that the warmest friendship exists between [sic] those who have worked so faithfully for the results now in sight . . . Some of them like H. L. Loucks have contributed largely of their time and money to the result. Loucks may be said to be the Powderly of the alliance movement in Dakota. Stand by your faithful honest servants and your alliance movement will continue successful. 80
In December the alliance met in Jamestown for its annual convention and took another small step toward independent political action. Delegates from Alliance 701 introduced a resolution "protesting against the political interference of alliance officials." The resolution "was evidently intended as a rebuke to President Loucks and was evidently by him so regarded . . ." Loucks accepted the challenge, stating that any opposition to political activism should be cleared up right then and there. After a long discussion of whether partisan activities by leaders of non-partisan groups give the group a "partisan coloring in the estimation of the outside world." the resolution was tabled. While historian George W. Kingsbury noted that after the motion was tabled "it was evident that the safest road for the alliance to travel was the middle of the road," such may not have been the case. A challenge to Loucks' political activism had been made and turned aside; it could only serve to strengthen his position and cheer his followers who sought a third party.

Pyrrhic Victory

Farmers made gains in the election of 1888, but they were not able to turn their electoral mandate into effective legislation. Alliance-backed candidates won 28 of 48 seats in the territorial house and seven of 24 seats in the council (the upper house). They were able to dictate selection of the council president and speaker of the house.

Despite their numerical superiority in the lower house and their strategic influence in the council, alliance legislators tended
to suffer some embarrassing setbacks. On Jan. 17, 1889, for example, a resolution to appoint a legislative committee to study the Alliance platform adopted at Jamestown the year previous was defeated on a vote of 24 to 24. \(^{36}\) A few weeks later a tie vote of 23 to 23 in the house killed a resolution "inviting H. L. Loucks to address its members."\(^{37}\)

Political naivete, forceful lobbying by the railroad interests and lack of leadership are all possible explanations for the performance of alliance legislators. Near the end of the session, alliance business manager Alonzo Wardell visited Bismarck and commented on pending business. While he praised the council for enacting prohibition legislation, he decried the defeat of the equal taxation bill, noting:

\[\ldots\] there are some unaccountable things in this world, and this is one. There is a strong pressure brought to bear on our members all the time. \(^{88}\) The hotels are full of lobbyists all the time.

The \textit{Ruralist} itself questioned the lack of leadership among alliance legislators, stating shortly after the legislature convened:

There is trouble ahead and all for the want of a recognized leader \[among alliance legislators]. President Loucks should spend two or three weeks of his time at the Capitol. Just at this time his presence would be of untold value. \(^{89}\)

In mid-February, a strongly worded article by alliance secretary C. A. Soderburg decried the "Unfaithful Members" of the alliance at Bismarck. He said that not only had "the bankers and
lawyers" voted against a bill on mortgage taxation but they were joined by

... some of the best and most enthusiastic supporters of the alliance, thus placing themselves squarely against our platform and resolutions. Perhaps personal pledges made by candidates before election amount to nothing as said pledges are willfully violated every day by men whose chosen calling in life are not spent between the plow handles [sic], but pledged their word of honor to legislate for a majority instead of a minority of their constituents.  

As the legislature began its penultimate week in session, the Ruralist opined:

The farmers lack a leader. They have many brilliant men among their number but none of them feel their ability quite equal to the emergency. When it comes to voting, however, we observed that they generally got there on the right side.  

Farmers were able to enact some reform legislation, such as new corporate tax laws, needed loans for seed wheat and "mediocre" revisions to the railroad commission law enacted four years earlier. Meager though their accomplishments may have been, the alliance legislators' presence as a legislative bloc served a more symbolic purpose: foreshadowing the "entrance into the political field" of Dakota farmers serving under their own political party. Formation of South Dakota's populist party from the alliance ranks was a little over a year away.  

During this period Loucks had become involved in a seldom-attempted experiment in terminal grain marketing. By establishing a grain elevator at the point where crops were sold either to mills or
for shipment abroad, farmers could market their grain more profitably. Professor Paul R. Fossum has pointed out that such cooperative ventures, though most were short-lived, aimed to break the control over agricultural marketing exercised by the railroads and their aligned grain elevators. 94

Sometime during late 1888 or early 1889 Loucks and his entire family, now comprising three young daughters and two young sons, moved to Minneapolis. Once there he preceded to establish the Scandinavian Elevator Company. Loucks was blackballed by the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and the plan ultimately failed. 96

The measure was heartily endorsed in the pages of the Ruralist. In February 1889, Walter Muir, the alliance lecturer who would be prominent in North Dakota populism, discussed "The Monopoly Curse" and how the elevator company would combat it.

... Farmers of Dakota, this [the growth of the wheat monopoly] is a gigantic move against your prosperity as wheat growers and you can depend upon feeling the iron hand of this gigantic monopoly at your financial throats in the near future. If our wheat market is almost a closed market today, what can we expect when confronted with a combination so great that it can practically control the price of every bushel of wheat ... sold in the Northwest and can make a market to suit themselves.

... It is now clearly our duty to join with the Scandinavian Elevator Company and force our way through this monopoly to the sea. President Loucks holds the fort, let us rally to his support by each taking out one or more shares of stock and thereby enable him to build elevators at terminal points and ship our wheat through that line and so reach the markets of the World outside of the ring. 97

Charges of malfeasance were made against Loucks and he
answered them bluntly. In April 1889, Loucks replied to charges apparently made by the editor of the Dakota Farmer that Loucks had enriched himself through the elevator company. Since these charges were made in an unsigned editorial, Loucks reasoned it would seem "to indicate that it is not so much information for your readers that you want so much as a hope to injure me personally."

Like many cooperative marketing ventures of the period, the Scandinavian Elevator Company ultimately failed and its bankruptcy apparently cost Loucks a good deal of his own money. During a heated campaign in the fall of 1892, Loucks issued a blistering defense of his conduct in Minneapolis. Specifically, he refuted charges of a C. C. Wolcott, whom Loucks called a "notorious blackmailer," that Loucks had forgotten the interest of Dakota farmers to make money off the elevator company for himself.

Now, as to [my] change of mind... My enemies as well as my friends know better. I defy the quotation of a word in proof. My public speeches and the columns in the Ruralist are evidence to the contrary. ... The mortgage on my farm, then, I regret to say, is still on, increased by twenty-five percent. If Wolcott's statement were true... does any sane man believe I would have permitted the Elevator Co. to fail and with it cripple myself financially for years?

I defy him [Wolcott], the elevator wheat combine and the whole Republican party—whose stock in trade is slanderous insinuations—to trace one dishonest dollar to my pocket.

During the time he was in Minneapolis, Loucks remained alliance president and wrote several letters to the Ruralist. One, which filled the entire front page of the March 16, 1889, issue, was entitled "Special Circular to The Farmers' Alliances of Dakota" and
contained perhaps the most comprehensive early statement of his overall political philosophy. It was also a much more direct plea for a third party than his letter of the previous October.

The Letter from Minneapolis

In the spring of 1889, the farmers' movement was growing restive under its mantle of nonpartisanship. Despite its power in the just-ended territorial legislature, the alliance had not done as well as might be expected. The Republican Party was paying less than sincere homage to farmers' demands in its platform, while acting to thwart the alliance legislative program. Even the most nonpartisan alliance men could not help feeling an animosity toward the party's leaders.100

In a letter from Minneapolis which appeared March 16, Loucks set out to review the most recent territorial legislature "and then make up our work for the future..."101 While he flatly declared against forming a third political party, he employed his "principle over party" theme through the piece and the overall impact is unmistakable: The organized parties were not representing the real interests of the farmers, so it was up to the farmers to form a political party which did. Loucks argued:

It requires no stretch of the imagination to say that the machinery of politics in both parties was and is in the hands of the monied classes and they would be quick to resent any attempt at change. Their interest was, and is, to kill any organization that attempts to encourage any independent action, politically. Independence of thought or action is death to boss or machine rule. The only thing left for us to do was either to give up and suffer or organize to protect ourselves; we resolved on
the latter course. We expected a bitter fight and were not disappointed. Baffled politicians swore vengeance against the men who would dare stand up for principle rather than party.102

Loucks then spoke glowingly of the alliance convention which had met in December 1888, where, he said, "... the policy of the past was endorsed and, midst the greatest enthusiasm, adopted for the future."103 To initiate reforms such as more government control over the railways, Loucks said the farmers must work to secure more representation in both state and national political offices. In that way would farmers secure "such legislation as we believe our interests demand."104

Perhaps to ward off criticisms of alliance ineffectiveness in the territorial legislature, Loucks argued, perhaps unconvincingly, "We want it clearly understood that we consider the present a Republican legislature. In numbers it is overwhelmingly so."105 Loucks may have been trying to turn the ineffectiveness of alliance legislators into an argument for organizing a third party. In essence, he was saying that though many legislators were elected by alliance votes, they were members of the Republican Party and, in the end, "The Republican caucus rules."106 Loucks then drew an interesting analogy, especially when one considers that many members of the Republican and Democratic parties were in some way influenced by the railroad interest.

One of our prominent issues being prohibition, it would be folly of us to elect a saloon keeper as U.S. Senator, Congressman or state officer, even though he stood on the prohibition plank and promised to vote in the interest of temperence and sobriety.
I venture to say that there is not a true prohibitionist in Dakota, North or South, who would think it a prudent or safe thing to do. Believing that the solution of the transportation problem lay in the government owning and operating our railroads, we unanimously adopted that as one of our principal planks. It is equally evident that though either or both parties should adopt this plank, it would be sheer folly for us to entrust the carrying out of such a policy to a railroad attorney or a representative of railroad interests.107

Again Loucks argued obliquely that the organized parties, because of their allegiances to interests antagonistic to the farmer, were not the parties to represent the farmers, no matter what their platforms said. The inference seemed to be that the farmers, organized in their own political party, could best represent the farmers. Turning to another grievance of the farmer, he said:

Believing that a financial system that will allow or permit the extraction of usury is radically wrong; that the government, instead of issuing money at the cost of issue to that highly favored class, the National Banks, should issue it to the people direct as its needs require, or loan it on their land, the best of all security, and in such volume as "will provide sufficient money at a reasonable rate of interest for all legitimate pursuits:" does anyone believe that a user, a stockholder or a representative of a National Bank can be trusted with the task of legislating, in our, as against their own, interests?108

Loucks continued his indirect argument for a third party which he discussed Republican Party criticism of those advocating independence. Stating "Our motto is that we place principles before party and men above platforms,"109 he continued:

We want every Republican farmer, as well as every Democratic farmer, to use his best endeavor to see that in the future there are no mistakes made in either platforms or nominations and there will be no need of alarm for the party. The best friends
of the party are those who try to make their party best.\textsuperscript{110}

With statehood approaching, Loucks argued that it was of paramount importance to carry the party primaries and follow with a strong posture at the conventions. The farmers of South Dakota, he argued, and not candidates beholden to the railroad interests, must guide the area through its infancy as a state. As he would at an alliance meeting two months later,\textsuperscript{111} Loucks bluntly stated the alliance's political goals for 1889:

\begin{quote}
In view of our numbers, of the interest which we have at stake, are we asking too much when we claim that we should have four farmers in the United States Senate and three in the House of Representatives from the Dakotas. Yes, and one in each of the executive offices? We may expect to hear the politicians yell: "The farmers want the Earth." Well, as the only class who till it [sic], is there any reason why we should not have it?\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

As the spring of 1889 became summer and Loucks returned from Minneapolis, profound changes were confronting both Dakota Territory and the Dakota Farmers' Alliance. And leaders of the powerful Republican party, while fearing the farmers' protest, were beginning to argue among themselves.

\textbf{Summer, Fall 1889}

After years of debate in the United States Congress and after being a political issue in the presidential election of 1888, lame duck president Grover Cleveland signed legislation on Feb. 22, 1889, admitting Dakota Territory to the Union as two states, North and South Dakota.\textsuperscript{113}

In the afternoon of March 22, Arthur C. Mellette, a Sioux Falls real estate agent and personal friend of the new president, Benjamin Harrison,
was sworn in as governor. Under the enabling legislation, elections would be held in October to elect a permanent governor and members of Congress. Mellette had his eye on election to a full term while Richard F. Pettigrew, also a Sioux Falls real estate agent, and Judge Gideon C. Moody of Deadwood looked to being the new state's first two U.S. Senators. Republicans mobilized for the upcoming battle with the alliance.

Having set the alliance's political goals for that year, Loucks set out to achieve them. He and Alonzo Wardell tried to keep the gubernatorial nomination from Mellette, whom they thought too friendly to the railroads.

The alliance gathered in Huron in July and a committee appointed by Loucks recommended the group work "through the machinery of our respective parties." The resolution also noted that farmers were in a large majority in both parties and nominations to office could be attained if the alliance "made a systematic effort to possess ourselves of them." Loucks probably had in mind plans to run Wardell for the U.S. Senator when the legislature convened for a special session October 15. The alliance president would have been a candidate himself, but apparently had not been in the country long enough to run for federal office.

By mid-1889, the Dakota farmers' movement had met defeat three times at the hands of the Republican party. The railroad commission had been rendered ineffective in 1885, the alliance's second vice president, J. W. Harden, had been defeated for congressional delegate in 1888, and their legislative program had been thwarted by Republican
votes in the recently ended legislature. 119

Loucks and Wardell were not able to keep Mellette from gaining the Republican gubernatorial nomination when the party met in Huron in August. However, alliance member J. H. Fletcher received the lieutenant governor nomination, probably in a bid to get farmer support for the ticket. 120 Though Loucks through the Ruralist endorsed the ticket, it did not ring true. 121

The Republicans won an easy victory in the September elections and a legislative majority headed to Pierre in mid-October. Republicans were lulled into no sense of complacency by alliance support, however, and continued to watch the "Loucks crowd" carefully. 122

Wardell would join the popular, though aging, A. J. Edgarton in opposing Republican candidates Pettigrew and Moody. In the days before direct election of United States senators, state legislatures chose them. Farmers and Republicans would clash over similar elections again in the next few years.

The Republican leadership apparently made a deal with Edgarton before the balloting began, offering him a federal judgeship if he withdrew in favor of Pettigrew and Moody. 123 Edgarton withdrew his candidacy at the last minute and Pettigrew and Moody were sent to the U.S. Senate with a resounding majority. 124 Loucks immediately charged a deal had been reached whereby Edgarton withdrew in return for the appointment, and, as if to bear out his allegations, Edgarton, despite his advanced age, was soon named as a federal judge. 125 While the whole affair "served to strengthen the power of the machine at the
expense of the alliance, "126 it may also have been one of the final sparks leading to formation of the Independent Party.

The final territorial legislature convened shortly after the special election and the alliance once again presented it with farmers' demands. They called for government ownership of the railroads, the direct issuance of currency by the government, direct election of United States Senators, and state and national prohibition among others. Legislators paid so little regard to the alliance proposals that the alliance met in Pierre in February 1890 and "passed resolutions condemning the legislature."127

The metamorphosis from nonpartisan interest groups to third party challenger of the Republican Party was nearly complete. A convention of the alliance was called for that summer where the idea of a third party would be discussed.

Loucks' efforts to form a third party were reaching fruition when he suffered a personal tragedy that underscored his friendship with Alonzo Wardell. The previous August Loucks' sixth child was born at Clear Lake and the boy was named Alonzo Wardell Loucks. Seven months and nine days later, on March 20, 1890, the infant died.128 Another of Loucks' sons would die nearly two and a half years later, but then the death would have political ramifications for Loucks and the Independent Party.
Birth of the Independent Party

In the evening of June 4, 1890, delegates from local alliances gathered in the opera house at Huron. H. L. Loucks called the session to order and noted the gathering was to discuss "the political situation". He continued:

Why was this necessary when we have two political parties whose ostensible purpose it is to look after the interests of its constituents? If they were doing their duty, or if we had any hope of their duty in the near future there would be no necessity for the meeting.

Before long, Loucks launched into the main thrust of his argument: a direct appeal to delegates to form a third party:

I would suggest that there is in Huron at the present time as fair a representation of the farmers, mechanics, miners and laboring men as can well be brought together, and as we have in our various assemblies and alliances thoroughly discussed the question, that it would be quite appropriate for all those who favor an independent political party to meet together and organize it. If such a party should adopt our platform of principles then I think all true alliance men will support it.

Loucks, by now recognized as one of the state's more persuasive orators, apparently caught the mood of farmers in the audience. As well as confronting drought, high railway rates and mortgage payments, farmers had to deal with a Republican Party, which in their eyes was keeping needed reforms from being enacted. The Daily Huronite reported an Independent Party ticket would likely be nominated before the convention adjourned, continuing:

The opposition to such a movement is strong, yet it is claimed if the alliance is determined to free itself from both political parties and create an independent or alliance party, it may as well
be done now as at some future time. Mr. Loucks, in his address, was earnest in his advocacy of a new party and with his strong following there is no doubt that a complete state, legislative and congressional ticket will be named and also a candidate for United States senator endorsed.\footnote{132}

The Sioux Falls \textit{Argus Leader} was also keeping an eye on proceedings in Huron that week and the day after Loucks' address editorialized:

The Farmers' Alliance of this state is treading dangerous ground. Many other industrial combinations have grown rapidly and become notably prosperous only to find their graves on entering politics. When a great body puts its influence blindly in the hands of ambitious leaders, it takes a tremendous risk.\footnote{133}

The farmers at Huron were apparently not adverse to taking risks, though they did not go as far as the \textit{Daily Huronite} predicted. The evening following Loucks' address, after adopting a statement of six demands,\footnote{134} delegates were offered a motion by J. R. Lowe, who would soon join Loucks as associate editor of the \textit{Ruralist}. He proposed that the alliance take steps to form a new political party.\footnote{135}

As the \textit{Daily Huronite} reported the next day:

This was submitted to full and free discussion, the counties being given ten minutes each. At about midnight the resolution was adopted by the following vote: Ayes, 413, noes 83.\footnote{136}

When delegates reconvened the following morning to begin structuring the new political party, Loucks made two significant contributions which were both adopted. He offered motions that the new party be called the Independent Party and that it adopt the platform already embraced by the Dakota Farmers' Alliance.\footnote{137}

Loucks had managed a successful coup against a faction in the
alliance which wanted to remain nonpartisan. The lopsided vote, nearly five to one in favor of his position, gives some idea of the extent of his victory. As alliance president he "breathed the
breath of life into it and made it in a few years a force to be reckoned with." Yet he was still frustrated because he felt that the really basic reforms--government ownership of the railroads, for example--required political action, which the Republican Party was blocking.

Through the Ruralist, he helped nudge a nonpartisan group toward political action. The paper offered him a communication link to the angry farmers. As well as serving as a conduit for his ideas, the Ruralist offered farmers a chance to communicate with each other. They exchanged ideas on subjects ranging from planting strawberries to controlling the money supply. Along with harsh economic conditions and the intransigence of the Republican Party, the Ruralist helped crystalize farmer opinion toward a third party. And in the summer of 1890, chances for a victory appeared favorable.

As the South Dakota Independent Party was being formed, a feud was simmering between two dominant forces in the state's Republican Party--Governor Mellette and U.S. Senator Pettigrew. They had clashed over the Edgerton appointment which helped keep Wardell from going to the U.S. Senate the previous fall. When Pettigrew delayed with the appointment, Mellette, a personal friend of Edgerton's, traveled to Washington, D.C., to press the case in person. Though Edgerton got the appointment, Mellette's persistence annoyed Pettigrew. Mellette was also a personal friend of President Benjamin Harrison's, with
whom Pettigrew had quarreled, and through the president the governor was able to control much of the state's patronage. 140

While Pettigrew did not attack the principles of the Independents—notably railroad legislation and free coinage of silver—he attacked its leaders. He wrote later in June: "I cannot believe that the intelligent farmers will go for such scoundrels as Loucks and Wardell." 141 Later that summer he began seeking information on Loucks' background, writing in August to the president of the First National Bank of Jefferson City, Missouri. 142

Amid the political turmoil of the first summer of statehood, one thing was for certain: the new state of South Dakota had a third party in sympathy with the national populist movement, and that party appeared to be quite strong.

The Saturday night after the Independent Party was formed, Harden traveled to Sioux Falls where he addressed a large crowd in Germania Hall. He "dwelt at considerable length" on the Independents' positions on currency and transportation. In a burst of less-than-objective reporting, the Argus Leader's reporter wrote:

The remedy for all these and kindred evils is in the hands of the people and if but used properly and intelligently will inaugurate and bring about a change that will relieve thousands of our distressed, tax burdened people. United action must be had and this is the time to accomplish it. Party prejudice should be buried and a joining of hands and coming together all along the line, with the understanding that our interests are identical and that we have all to gain and nothing to lose. 143

While formation of the Independent Party's first ticket was about a month away, the Dakota Farmers' Alliance by its vote at Huron
had discarded its long-held nonpartisanship. South Dakota was the first state where farmers adopted a party espousing populist ideals. Other states—Kansas, Nebraska and North Dakota—would follow during the summer of 1890 and the new parties would throw state and national politics into turmoil for a decade to come.
ENDNOTES

1 Genealogical chart prepared by William Norris Loucks, Stow, Ohio, a grandson of H. L. Loucks. (Hereinafter referred to as Loucks Genealogy).

2 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929, p. 2.


4 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929, p. 2.

5 Memorial and Biographical Record, p. 1032.

6 Loucks Genealogy.

7 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929, p. 2.

8 Memorial and Biographical Record, p. 1032.


10 For a more complete discussion of economic conditions in Dakota Territory in the 1880's, see Chapter II.


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Torrey, Early Days in Dakota, p. 229.

15 Ibid.

16 Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 225.


18 Ibid.

19 Schell, History of South Dakota, pp. 224, 225.

20 Ibid., p. 225.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., p. 230.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.


29 Ibid., p. 80.


32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.


37 Terrence J. Lindell, graduate history student, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., to Thom Guarnieri, letter in possession of this author.

38 *Dakota Ruralist*, (Aberdeen) 26 September 1888, p. 2.

It recommended, on page three of its Sept. 26, 1888, issue that the offending horse be placed in a "narrow stall that has both sides thickly padded" with a sack of hay and straw at its heels. The farmer should then let "horse and sack fight it out," concluding: "The sack will be victorious every time and in the end the horse will absolutely refuse to kick the sack or anything else."


63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., p. 268.


66 Kingsbury, History of Dakota Territory/South Dakota: Its History and Its People, 2:1536. The territorial delegate was Dakota's non-voting representative in Congress.


68 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 24 October 1888, p. 2.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.


80 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 24 November 1888, p. 1. Terrence Powderly was president of the Knights of Labor, an early labor union with which the Independents were in contact.


82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Lamar, Dakota Territory 1861-1889, p. 277.
88 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 23 February 1889, p. 4.
89 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 26 January 1889, p. 2.
90 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 16 February 1889, p. 2.
91 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 23 February 1889, p. 4.
92 Lamar, Dakota Territory 1861-1889, p. 278.
95 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929, p. 2.
96 Ibid.; H. L. Loucks, Our Daily Bread (Watertown: By the Author, 1919), pp. 30-32.
98 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 27 April, 1889, p. 2.
99 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 20 October 1892, p. 6.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 227; In July 1890, Mellette received a free railroad pass for his wife and in July 1892, he received a railroad pass for his son. Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.
117 Ibid.
118 H. L. Loucks to J. L. Robinson, 8 August 1913, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.
120 Ibid., p. 82; Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 227.
121 Hendrickson, "Some Political Aspects of the Populist Movement in South Dakota," p. 82.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., pp. 82, 83.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid., p. 83.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Loucks genealogy.
129 Daily Huronite, (Huron) 5 June 1890, p. 3.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Argus Leader, (Sioux Falls) 5 June 1890, p. 4.
134 Daily Huronite, (Huron) 6 June 1890, p. 1.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid., pp. 1, 2.
138 Torrey, Early Days in Dakota, p. 228.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid., p. 59.
142 Ibid., p. 60.
143 Argus Leader, (Sioux Falls) 7 June 1890, p. 3.
CHAPTER IV

POPULIST YEARS

The Election of 1890

A month after Loucks' coup, farmers, now delegates of the Independent Party, returned to Huron to assemble a slate of candidates for the November election. At the convention in June, Loucks had been clearly favored as the gubernatorial nominee, but in July he faced a challenger—"Honest Abe" Van Osdel. A former member of the territorial legislature, Van Osdel, a farmer, led the Yankton County delegation to Huron. Support for either man to head the ticket was strong and one Yankton County farmer predicted his fellow delegates "will support Van Osdel and Loucks for any office to which either may aspire."2

The previous year Loucks, aided by Alonzo Wardell, had shifted the affiliation of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, a move that facilitated formation of the Independent Party. The National Farmers' Alliance (or Northern Alliance), with which Dakota alliance men had been affiliated, was much less militant than its southern counterpart, the National Farmers Alliance and Industrial Union (or Southern Alliance). Both alliances had held separate conventions in St. Louis in December 1889 and attempts were made at consolidation. While the merger failed, delegates from three Northern Alliance states—South Dakota, North Dakota and Kansas—left the Northern Alliance to join the
Southern Alliance. 5

The defection swelled the membership of the already large
Southern Alliance, a group which was "moving with less disguise and
restraint toward third party politics" than was the Northern Alliance. 6
Loucks became vice president of the Southern Alliance 7 and it was
probably he who brought Col. Leonidas L. Polk to Huron for the
Independent Party's first gathering.

On the first night of the convention Loucks introduced Polk,
president of the Southern Alliance. Polk offered a ringing endorsement
of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance's turn to politics. Like Loucks, he
favored independent political action and was looking for a spot on a
national populist ticket. The Daily Huronite reported:

The opera house was closely packed, the large
attendance of delegates and members of the
Independent Party being augmented by citizens
of Huron who were desirous of hearing so
distinguished a speaker [Polk]. The stage was
occupied by many ladies, wives of prominent members
of the party and leading lights of the Equal
Suffrage Association. The K.P. band also
occupied seats on the rostrum and furnished
music of an excellent order, executed in their
usual entertaining manner . . . 8

Polk, as did Loucks, favored independent political action,
saying:

Who has any better right to go into politics than
peaceful, conservative farmers? . . . I would not
give the snap of my finger for the alliance if it
were not full of politics. But the alliance does
not interfere with political or religious views.
It has no more right to dictate party affiliation
than church connection. We are freemen with no
man's collar around our necks. 9
Candi
dates were voted upon the following day with Loucks and
Van Osdel being nominated for governor. At first an informal ballot
was held and with 126 votes needed to win, Loucks received 127 and
Van Osdel 125. In the ensuing debate, many delegates argued that
"it would be a great mistake to put in nomination candidates who
would draw too much fire," presumably a reference to the
controversial Loucks. E. W. Shulz of the Black Hills wanted Loucks
to be "reserved for the United States Senate" seat which would be
decided by the legislature in January 1891. Loucks himself "did
not want to go to the Senate [because he] did not think city life
would agree with him." On a second and formal ballot Loucks
received the nomination, but his margin of victory was not much
better than on the first one. He polled 134 to Van Osdel's 115.

Probably in a gesture of party solidarity, Alonzo Wardell
then offered Van Osdel's name for the lieutenant governor nomination
and Van Osdel won it handily. While they chose not to endorse anyone
for the U.S. Senate, delegates approved an entire slate of candidates,
including J. R. Lowe for state auditor.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader interpreted the farmers' entrance
into partisan politics in the light of a feud between Governor
Mellette and U.S. Senator Pettigrew. The paper said that Mellette
wanted to become senator rather than governor, which upset Pettigrew's
plans to have Judge Moody re-elected. It was even hinted that
Loucks had met with Mellette and that the real thrust of the farmers'
protest was against Pettigrew and Moody. By offering Loucks the
lieutenant governor's spot, Mellette could expect farmer support in
the legislature when it chose a candidate for the U.S. Senate. Loucks
would, of course, then become governor. 16

While the theory seems implausible, 17 relations between
Pettigrew and Mellette were strained in mid-1890. 18 They were in
agreement on one thing, however: Loucks and the Independents must
be defeated. Pettigrew wrote Mellette from Washington in March,
even before Loucks had been nominated:

I hope that no political contests which may occur
in the state this year will result in the election
of Loucks or Wardell or any of that gang of cranks,
they are free-traders, and they would be glad to
break up the republican party, [sic] and I should feel
disgraced to have them for a colleague [sic]. 19

Pettigrew's senatorial colleague, Judge Moody, wrote Mellette
in late summer that he had heard from "all sources" that the party
was "nervous in places for fear the Democrats and Independents may unite
upon the legislative tickets and be successful." 20 Moody, who had for
some reason remained in Washington and declined to campaign for the
legislature which would be asked to re-elect him in January, made a
prophetic warning:

Of course the Democrats would never consent to the
election of a Republican Independent. If the
fusion is at all dangerous, it will be because the
Independents support a Democrat for the United
States Senate. 21

A fusion effort of Independents and Democrats would ultimately
foil Moody's re-election and in that victory would demonstrate a
simple political reality: two parties with pluralities can become
the majority party if they join together. The debate would be carried
on through the 1890s and ultimately have profound impact on the Dakota farmer's movement.

Both senators were not the only ones to fear and condemn Loucks and the Independents. J. L. Robinson, then secretary of the state railroad commission, would later admit drawing a cartoon which was used against Loucks during the campaign.²² It depicted pipelines running through the Ruralist and other alliance cooperative ventures "from the farmers' pockets to a pump, the handle of which Mr. Loucks was vigorously plying and from the spout of which a stream was trickling into his ample pouch."²³

A few days after Loucks was nominated for governor, a Republican wrote Mellette:

Well, Loucks has got things as he wants them after working for it 4 years [sic]. He will have a chance in Nov. [sic] to know how many Cranks there are in the State.²⁴

A bank president from Gettysburg was of the opinion:

The Independents think they have this county but I think they will be the worst fooled set of men in the county. I believe we can handle everything O.K. . . .²⁵

A similar theme was repeated in other letters Mellette received during the campaign: the party may be in disarray and the Independents powerful, but on election day the Republican Party will remain in power.²⁶ In the end they proved to be only partially correct. While Mellette defeated Loucks and Democrat Marvis Taylor, his victory stood only on a plurality of votes. He received 34,519 votes to Loucks' 24,470 and Taylor's 18,462.²⁷ Had the votes cast
for Loucks and Taylor been cast for a single candidate, Mellette would not have been elected.

In addition, Republican control of the legislature was seriously eroded. In the state senate, Republicans claimed just one legislator more than the combined ranks of Democrats and Independents, while in the house, the Republicans and the coalition were equal in strength. There were 61 Republicans in the house, 42 Independents and 19 Democrats.

The precarious balance of power set the stage for a lengthy legislative confrontation that winter. It would not only yield a victory for the Independents, it would touch H. L. Loucks in a uniquely personal way.

The Election of James H. Kyle

When the legislature convened in January 1891, a major item of business was the election of a United States senator. The Republican caucus endorsed the re-election of Judge Moody while the Democrats chose Bartlett Tripp. The Independents could not decide on a candidate and so the names of Alonzo Wardell, George Crose and J. W. Harden went before the legislature. With 85 votes needed to win, Moody received only 76 in the first ballot on January 7. The other votes were split among Tripp, Wardell, Crose and Harden.

Moody's vote total continued to fall short of 85 in subsequent balloting and more candidates entered the contest, each hoping to be "stricken by senatorial lightening." The voting continued while beyond the legislative chambers negotiations were hurriedly under way.
Various candidates were endorsed by Democrats and Independents but none could get the required votes. In early February the Independents rallied behind a little-known Congregationalist minister from Aberdeen, James H. Kyle.

Kyle had become popular among activist farmers in South Dakota since an impromptu Fourth of July address he had delivered the previous summer. At the holiday rally in Aberdeen, the scheduled speaker failed to arrive, and Kyle was asked to take his place. He spoke only a half-hour, arguing that the "concentration of wealth was the ruin of the republic," and captivated his audience. After the election of 1890, Kyle was one of the new Independent senators in South Dakota's legislature.

Despite Kyle's attractiveness as a candidate, the Independent-Democratic coalition could not muster the needed votes until a fairly unusual political arrangement was worked out. While the balloting for senator continued, a delegation left for Springfield, Illinois, to confer with Democratic Party officials there. It was finally agreed that Democrats in South Dakota would support Kyle and Independents in the Illinois legislature would support Democrat John Palmer, who was running for the U.S. Senate there. On February 16, Democrats in the South Dakota legislature "suddenly switched their votes to Kyle and he was elected." The legislature had voted 40 times in choosing a U.S. Senator.

While the legislative maneuvering was under way, Loucks' wife Florence was in the final weeks of her seventh and last pregnancy. The
child was born March 4, 1891, at Clear Lake, and Loucks, enthusiastic over Kyle's victory, named the boy Daniel Kyle Loucks. After a similar legislative battle six years later, Loucks would regret his decision.

Despite the victory and new son, Loucks was to suffer the amputation of one of his legs not long afterward. He had apparently been thrown from a horse and had developed an infection after his leg was broken. The limb was sawn off, according to one account, in the farmhouse at Clear Lake.

While Kyle's election was a victory for the Independents, it also showed a serious weakness: their inability to act without Democratic support.

During 1891, historian George W. Kingsbury said, the state was "wholly and absolutely" under the control of the populists and that "H. L. Loucks as its authorized head and front was the principal character to be reckoned with ..." The assertion is undoubtedly hyperbole, but with the Independents' sudden emergence as the state's second party and the election of Kyle, they must have appeared formidable. If a true fusion of Independents and Democrats could be achieved, political power might be wrested from the Republicans for good. As Kingsbury noted:

All looked to the Farmers' Alliance, the populist party and H. L. Loucks. Even the democrats looked to [sic] Loucks, because in fusion alone could they expect official favors and political advancement. Loucks himself was at all times opposed to fusion, but yielded in order to humble the pride and lower the power of the republicans [sic].
The Independent Party's dependence on the Democrats led to "failure of the South Dakota legislature of 1891 to enact far-reaching reforms for which alliance had fought so hard." And while the reformers were unable to act, economic conditions confronting farmers in the early 1890s continued to grow worse.

As debts mounted and mortgages could not be paid, farmers began leaving the state—mostly from the western counties, although Hughes and Hand counties lost half of their entire population during the decade. When state farmers were asked their opinions on the causes of their plight early in the decade, several mentioned silver and several others mentioned railroads. Wardell wrote in 1891, "In Dakota the poor man . . . pays four cents a mile passenger fare, while the rich man pays two cents and the politicians, judges and office holders [sic] go free."

Complaints kept coming to the railroad commissioners of the roads refusing to provide freight cars or to build siding necessary for the farmer to market his wheat. In their report of 1890, the commissioners noted:

At one of these stations, there was marketed in one day the almost incredible amount of 29,000 bushels of wheat, and for several weeks there was not a day that the receipts fell below 12,000 bushels. During November the pressure taxed every resource and the situation was appalling. In many places every available building in the town was turned into a grain house and filled, and farmers were obliged to return home with their grain. There was one instance where the warehouse doors were fastened up and holes cut in the roof, and the house filled up in this way to its utmost capacity.

Loucks himself appeared before the railroad commission in
July 1891 to argue the case of the Farmers' Union Elevator Company of Ferney. The farmers had been refused a warehouse site by the Chicago & Northwestern Railway. As the commission's report said, "The matter was immediately taken up with the railway company and on August 7 the site was granted and the elevator company proceeded at once with the construction of their building."\textsuperscript{45}

While the farmers favored government ownership, or at least regulation, of railroads to alleviate their marketing problems, the use of silver was gaining favor as a method to increase the money supply. The Sherman Silver Act, which had passed Congress in July 1890, had enlarged upon the provisions of the Bland-Allison Act of 1878. Whereas Bland-Allison provided for the government to purchase silver at the rate of $2 million a month, the Sherman Act called for $4.5 million a month to be purchased. Under the terms of the newer act, the government had guaranteed purchase of virtually the entire output of western silver mines.\textsuperscript{46}

The Sherman Act would also increase the amount of money in circulation because the silver would be purchased with new treasury notes, which were redeemable in gold or silver coin.\textsuperscript{47} Loucks and other Dakota populists tended to view currency expansion in a different light. Rather than argue that some precious metal—whether gold or silver or both—must provide value for money, populists claimed the government itself, in the mere act of designating something as currency, created the currency's value.

In a letter to the Dakota Ruralist in early 1889, Loucks
Union (the Southern Alliance) met in Ocala, Florida, and the gathering "became a mecca of all the leading advocates of the third-party idea."51

While alliance men from the Midwest generally favor the idea, those from the South did not. In southern populism there was a problematic factor absent from midwestern populism: racism. A third political party that would challenge the one-party rule of southern Democrats, which kept blacks from gaining any political influence, would be universally condemned in the South.52 But the momentum toward a third party would not be checked, and a compromise was effected.

C. W. Macune of Texas, popular among southerners at the Ocala meeting, proposed letting the matter lie until the eve of the next presidential election, in February 1892, to see if support for a third party continued to mount. If it did, the party could be formed then.53 But the compromise failed to satisfy delegates who did not want to delay and plans were soon drafted for a convention in Cincinnati in May 1891.

The convention proceeded to form the People's Party with a national executive committee consisting of a chairman and three members from each state in attendance. The committee was directed to attend a scheduled conference of reform groups in St. Louis to explore the possibility of joining forces. If the group's mission failed, a plan by Minnesota's Ignatius Donnelly empowered the executive committee to call a national convention in the summer of 1892 to endorse a national ticket of candidates for the
presidential election, 54

While many of its members were not, leadership of the
Southern Alliance strongly favored formation of a third party.

Colonel Polk had been so disposed in his time [toward
favoring a third party], and by chance the vice
president of the order who succeeded to Polk's
duties was an ardent third party man and a northerner
as well, H. L. Loucks of South Dakota. Polk had
embraced Populism reluctantly and as a last
resort. Not so Loucks, who had none of the
repugnance to party irregularity so natural in
a southerner. 55

The convention was called for Omaha in July 1892 and Polk
had planned to arrive with 'several trainloads of Confederate veterans'
to help him secure the presidential nomination. 56 His death just before
the gathering convened was only one of the shocks received by Omaha
delegates. The other was that Judge Walter Q. Graham of Illinois,
whom many populists hoped to name for president, would not allow his
name placed in nomination. 57 In casting about for a candidate,
delegates came to favor James B. Weaver of Iowa. An ex-Union army
general, Weaver had made a previous bid for the presidency as the
candidate of the Greenback Party in 1880.

When Loucks arrived in Omaha he began "laying wires for
Gen. Weaver's nomination," 58 and was optimistic about the outcome of
the November election. He told the Omaha Bee: "We are sure to carry
both Dakotas and their seven electoral votes. I have been campaigning
two weeks in North Dakota and know the sentiment up there." 59

Despite Weaver's popularity with delegates, many thought he
represented too greatly the unsuccessful Greenback movement and looked
They settled upon the first-term Independent Senator from South Dakota, James H. Kyle. A movement formed to advance him as a candidate and he was the strongest of Weaver's several challengers. It is not clear what role Loucks played in advancing Kyle's candidacy. While he undoubtedly favored Kyle, he was also on record as supporting Weaver.

On the Fourth of July, 1892, a total of 1,366 delegates gathered in the cavernous Omaha Coliseum to nominate a candidate for the presidency. Calling them to order was H. L. Loucks, who had been elected permanent chairman of the convention. The *Omaha Bee* reported:

> It was a picturesque spectacle when Permanent Chairman Loucks, standing firmly on his one leg and swinging a crutch at arm's length, brought the great assemblage to order. His speech as it progressed was a surprise and a disagreeable one to perhaps a majority of the convention, but its impetuosity and fire, if not its hits for and against candidates, elicited cheers at every few words.

Loucks professed his faith in democratic procedure, where grievances of an oppressed segment of the population could be resolved through political action and elections. He noted at one point:

> It [the convention] is a grand tribute to the civilization of the present century. In the past ages when great revolutions were in progress they have been brought about as a rule by the sword, by the bullets. This, the greatest of all revolutions, is being propelled by that silent power of education, the ballot.

After other speeches the voting took place and Weaver became the party's presidential candidate on the first ballot, polling 995
votes to Kyle's 265. 64

As permanent chairman Loucks was at the center of the convention's politicking, but other business lay before him. He had ascended to the leadership of the Southern Alliance upon Polk's death and was heading for Washington D.C. to take up his new duties when the convention closed. 65 In November the alliance would meet in Memphis, Tennessee, to choose a successor to Polk and Loucks would be challenged by the popular Macune.

The Growing Fusion Sentiment

At the end of June, before traveling to Omaha, Loucks had been one of the principal speakers at the Independent Party convention in Redfield. Delegates endorsed his 1890 running mate, Abraham Van Osdel for governor and adopted a platform which called for, among earlier demands, a constitutional amendment to the state constitution allowing the initiative and referendum. Both were proposals to limit the power of the legislature, the former allowing citizens themselves to initiate legislation and the latter allowing statewide balloting on measures already acted upon by the legislature. 66

Delegates also named a full slate of candidates, indicating they would oppose fusion with the Democratic Party. 67 Democrats meeting in September likewise opposed fusion, but recessed their convention and reassembled as a committee of the whole to discuss it. While they decided to field a full ticket, they empowered the state central committee to "take out what portion of it they deem proper for the best interest of democracy." 68 As Kingsbury noted, Democrats
would fuse with the Independents in cases where it benefited Democrats. Although both conventions officially opposed a merger, the fusion of parties "was adopted and carried into effect in nearly every county of the state and was in the end practically adopted on the state ticket through private or personal understanding."  

Mellette had chosen not to seek re-election and Republicans, in a convention largely dominated by U.S. Senator Pettigrew, nominated Charles H. Sheldon, an Aberdeen farmer, for governor. The silver movement was gaining popularity in the state and Pettigrew, increasingly at odds with his own party, went over to it "heart and soul." But he was up for re-election to the U.S. Senate in 1895 and, for the time being, retained his power within the party.

As the campaign got under way, the Ruralist threw its editorial columns behind Van Osdel's quest for the governorship. Not only had the paper by now expanded from eight to 16 pages, but the farm news which filled earlier editions had largely disappeared. The Ruralist had evolved, this writer believes, from a politically oriented farm journal to the advocate of a particular political party. Instead of "Farm, Stock and Home," the slogan under the page one masthead read: "Seek the Truth. The Truth Shall Make You Free."  

Though he was probably out of South Dakota during much of the fall of 1892, Loucks continued to be listed as editor and probably authored a strong statement against fusion in the September 8 issue. An article entitled "That Fusion" stated:

An editorial on page 9 of our issue of August 18th does not represent the views of the editor in that
particular where it would seem to favor what is called a "cooperative" county ticket. We are glad to welcome all to our ranks who will vote for our principles. We never have been and are not now in favor of a fusion for the sake of office.

We have a grand platform of principles on which we can conscientiously invite all men to stand for the sake of principles. We must stick to that text. The question of office is personal and selfish and can affect the interests of office holders only. In this movement men are nothing, principles are everything. We cannot afford to sacrifice our principles for the sake of office nor can we afford to do it for the sake of temporary success.

Considered in the light of practical politics, this writer believes, the statement contains a startling assertion: remaining faithful to one's political principles is more important than being elected to office. Arguing as he had in his campaign letter of 1888 and his letter from Minneapolis the following year, Loucks contended strongly that political ideals must guide political action. In these two statements, he argued principle over party. In 1892, he argued principle over fusion.

While combating the growing fusion sentiment and answering criticism of his role in the Scandinavian Elevator Company, Loucks suffered a stunning personal tragedy during the 1892 campaign: the death of his 10-year-old son, William. The Republican Party apparently tried to capitalize on Loucks' inability to attend the boy's funeral. A brief item in the Estelline Press, reprinted in the Ruralist, said:

Alonzo Wardell and Mrs. H. L. Loucks drove over by team to Estelline from Clear Lake last Sunday where they had been to bury the eldest son of H. L. Loucks. There are those in this world who would envy Mr. Loucks for his position, or the $5,000 a year salary, but when a man is so pressed with business that he cannot attend the funeral of his own
son, the man who would envy him is not far enough from the animal creation to do him any harm.\textsuperscript{76}

The \textit{Ruralist} then followed with a scathing reply, which was probably written by Loucks.\textsuperscript{77}

For cold blooded brutality we think the above the most inhuman we have ever read. Yet several newspapers, in hopes of wounding us, have copied it. . . . Our son was as well as usual when we left home for a three-month's trip in the performance of our duty as we see it. Suddenly he was stricken down without warning of approaching death Friday evening during that intensely hot spell. We were advised by wire same evening but having left for New Jersey, did not receive the message until one o'clock Saturday. We promptly cancelled all appointments and took the first train for home. We knew very well that we could not reach there in time for the funeral. We also knew that we had plenty of good friends who would do all they could for his mother in her hour of sorrow, but none could comfort her as well as we could. To make use of such an affliction for the purpose of making political capital is not politics in its most depraved sense; it is not journalism. It is ghoulish vandalism particular to South Dakota republicanism [sic]. It is such disgraceful tactics that it makes us ashamed that we were ever affiliated with a party that will tolerate and support such advocates.\textsuperscript{78}

As Kingsbury pointed out, the campaign of 1892 was virulent, filled with "reckless pursuit and violent personal assaults."\textsuperscript{79}

The \textit{Dakota Ruralist} played no small part in creating this turbulent atmosphere.

\textit{The Dakota Ruralist, Fall 1892}

The change in the \textit{Dakota Ruralist} from the fall of 1888 to the fall of 1892 was striking (see Appendix A and B). During the former autumn, most articles on page one were farm-oriented and there were many front page sketches of prize-winning cattle, horses and other farm
animals. Four years later farm news had been reduced to periodically running a crop bulletin from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which contained little more than a listing of harvest's progress or noting weather conditions in several counties. Columns offering poultry or dairy advice had been eliminated.

Much of the news columns was devoted to populism in general and South Dakota populism in particular. In every issue from early September to the November election, for example, the Ruralist printed in its back pages the People's Party platform and the Independent Party platform. A new column, entitled "Notes From The Field," gave Ruralist readers an optimistic view of the progress of the People's Party campaign in the South and in other midwestern states. The feature was billed as being "Gathered from our exchanges--how the forces are Crystallizing [sic] for the overthrow of plutocracy--short editorial comments." One short item, typical of many others in this column, described a "monster People's rally" which had taken place in Wichita, Kansas. Eleven hundred vehicles participated, led by "150 old soldiers on horseback." Another regular feature of the Ruralist during the fall of 1892, which twice filled the front page, was "Notes From The Counter," by Louis N. Crill. An Independent Party activist from Union County, Crill wrote a column which both advanced populist ideas and attacked Republican foes. The tone was usually quite strident:

Are you in favor of the government owning the railroads? If so, vote the People's Party ticket. Are you in favor of the railroads owning the government? If so, vote the
republican [sic] or democratic [sic] ticket.
Are you in favor of people controlling the
circulating medium? If so, vote the People's
Party ticket. Are you in favor of the circulating
medium controlling the people? If so, vote the
old party ticket.83

Crill's prose in the praise of populism could be quite florid:

The people's party [sic] principles are a blending
together of the guiding precepts of a Jefferson and
the historic words of a Lincoln, making a seven-
hued rainbow of promise; a grand arch whose columns are
as wide apart as the Atlantic and Pacific.84

The Ruralist also carried highly subjective articles about
events and personalities in the 1892 campaign. On page one of the
Sept. 29, 1892 issue appeared a favorable biography of Mrs. S. W.
Hassell, the Independent candidate for superintendent of public
instruction. The following week there was a similar sketch of
S. G. Mogn, Independent candidate for secretary of state.85 The
newspaper also attacked Mogn's Republican opponent, Tom Thoren, who
it said was a "hired servant of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul
Railroad Company."86

The Ruralist seemed to save its most scathing criticism for
Republican Charles H. Sheldon, who was challenging Independent Abe
Van Osdel for governor. On the front pages of at least four issues
during the campaign,87 the paper attacked Sheldon in an unusual
fashion. The Ruralist carried a statement Sheldon had made at the
Republican Party convention in 1890 in which he attacked both Loucks
and the Independents:

This independent party [sic] is fearfully and
wonderfully made; and I want to say to you
gentlemen that it is a matter of humiliation
and regret by the intelligent farmers of the section of the state from which I have come, that a recent importation from Canada, whose ignorance of the character of American institutions is only equalled by his impudence and insecurity should aspire to the highest position in the gift of the people. The man who comes among our people and endeavors to teach them to break away from their allegiances and undertakes to teach them that all the measures for which they have labored and all the burdens they have borne have been in vain is a public nuisance and ought to be abated. 88

Beneath the statement, the Ruralist added a simple editorial commentary:

The result of the vote of the section of the state from which C. H. Sheldon hails will hardly justify this statement. Let us take Day, his own county, as an illustration. In 1890 Sheldon's own township cast the following votes: Loucks, 66, Mellette 22, or 3 to 1. In the county of Day, Loucks, 1,765, Mellette, 746, 89

The Ruralist also filled the entire page eight of its Sept. 29, 1892, issue with an article from the Day County Herald, which attacked Sheldon's record. Sheldon was a former head of the Farmington Alliance and the article noted that his nomination was "an attempt to stampede the farmers' vote from the Independent Party . . . Mr. Sheldon is more in sympathy with corporations--particularly railroad corporations--than with those of his own calling." 90

On October 20, a few weeks before the election, the Ruralist reprinted on page one an article from the Aberdeen Star Republic which was headlined: "A claim jumper--A victim of Sheldon's greed tells his story." 91 A C. W. Lohr charged that a decade previous Sheldon had falsely obtained his claim to land near Groton in Brown County, adding: "The man who would jump a poor man's claim in the way he did, is not fit
As the election grew closer, the newspaper's tone grew more strident. On September 22, the Ruralist declared, "Don't be caught sleeping on your post, at least not until after the election." Three weeks later, three of the 27 brief political notes appearing on page four stated:

Less than thirty days.
Put on your war paint.
See that vote is polled.

It is unclear who was running the Ruralist during the campaign. Loucks, who continued to be listed on the newspaper's masthead as editor, was in the South campaigning for Weaver. J. R. Lowe, listed as associate editor, was campaigning across South Dakota for the Independent ticket. The editorial offices were still in Huron and the paper was published every Thursday instead of every Wednesday. In September, however, a brief item stated that after Jan. 1, 1893, the weekly would no longer be free with the payment of alliance dues. "The Ruralist lost too much money," the item explained, adding the price per year would be $1 when 1893 began. The staff of the Ruralist was nonetheless proud of its efforts, noting as the campaign drew to a close:

The Ruralist has improved not only in appearance but in the matter it contains, ever since the present management [took over]. It is a vote maker and should be in the hands of thousands more in South Dakota. Our thousands of friends ought to do all possible to increase its list. It is an educator, strikes hard blows on provocation yet it does not antagonize to the extent of angering the opposition.

The statement was more laudatory than factual. By the
campaign of 1892, the Ruralist had developed into a full-fledged partisan newspaper, backing the Independents and populism nationally. It undoubtedly angered Republicans and fusionists quite a bit.

Despite its efforts, however, election day brought a "stunning defeat" to the Independents. Not only was Van Osdel easily defeated by Sheldon, but a mere 17 Independents were elected to the state legislature. When the new legislature convened in January 1893, only a single Independent-supported measure—the election of railroad commissioners—was enacted. But as Professor Kenneth E. Hendrickson noted, reform was not dead in South Dakota. The sentiment for free coinage of silver was growing in the state and the wily U.S. Senator Pettigrew was making plans to capitalize on it. At the same time, the Ruralist's editor was engaged in a struggle for the presidency of the Southern Alliance.

Memphis, November 1892

When delegates of the Southern Alliance gathered in Memphis, Tennessee, in November 1892, they were divided along lines similar to those dividing the Dakota Farmers' Alliance more than two years earlier. C. W. Macune, who wanted the alliance to remain politically nonpartisan, fought for the presidency against Loucks, who led the third party forces. Not only were Loucks' forces better organized, they had assistance from H. E. Taubeneck, chairman of the People's Party executive committee. Although not even a member of the Southern Alliance, Taubeneck had arrived in Memphis several days before the convention began and "seemed to be managing Loucks' campaign for
Taubeneck and other People's Party officials apparently wanted a Loucks victory to insure the alliance would remain an "adjunct" to the national third party. A last-minute rally by the Macune forces was so vigorous that Taubeneck, who had directed Loucks' campaign through "trusted lieutenants . . . was compelled to come out of his [hotel] room and . . . take personal charge of the contest on behalf of Loucks." Macune's followers felt certain of victory, but Loucks' supporters "had little to say but appeared eager for the fight . . . ."

After Loucks had called the convention to order, a dispute arose over voting procedures. The Florida delegation had three votes but only one delegate and convention chairman Mann Page was asked if the delegate could cast one or three votes. Page, a "warm supporter of the candidacy of Loucks," ruled the delegate could cast but one vote, a decision all but sealing Loucks' victory. The convention then erupted into wild disorder and as the Memphis Appeal-Avalanche reported:

> It was a continuous squabble, an uproar, a Babel of conflicting voices. Many members left the hall in disgust . . . but so great was the confusion that they were not missed.

The session ended without any action being taken by delegates on selecting a president. When the convention opened again the following morning, former Confederate General A. M. West told delegates that Macune had withdrawn from the race. Immediately after the announcement, Loucks' supporters moved quickly and "before the dazed followers of Macune could realize what it all meant, a
formal ballot was being cast and Loucks was elected to a full term as president.

The result of the vote had hardly been announced when Chairman Page turned to Loucks, who had just entered the hall, and requested him to come forward and take the chair. President Loucks received no warm welcome from his people. In fact, his reception as he walked down the stage to the chair was decidedly chilly. A few of his intimate followers clapped but the rank and file made no sign.

Angered at being outmaneuvered, Macune and his followers met to discuss the possibility of bolting the alliance. They ultimately decided not to, registering instead a strong protest which deplored the "false, cruel unjust warfare which has been waged upon Brother C. W. Macune by partisan leaders throughout the country."113

That night Loucks met in his hotel room with a reporter from the Appeal-Avalanche and minimized the importance of the convention fight. "Storms must occur, you know," Loucks said, "so that the air is purified afterward."114

Loucks also denied that his election meant the Southern Alliance would be "carried bodily into the third party."115 In an answer that undoubtedly had more than one interpretation, Loucks said that while he did not plan to make the association a partisan organization, the Southern Alliance "is intensely political in its demands but it is not partisan."116

Marion Butler, president of the North Carolina Alliance, was chosen vice president and would succeed Loucks when his term ended in February 1894. While president, Loucks ran the Southern Alliance's
headquarters in Washington, D.C. In addition to other alliance activities, he was involved in numerous farming conferences.\textsuperscript{117} Back home in South Dakota, the sentiment for silver and fusion with the Democrats was growing.

\textbf{Fusion Triumphs}

In mid-1893, Pettigrew announced his decision to seek another term in the U.S. Senate and that fall, hoping to gain from silver's growing popularity, began organizing "Bimetallic Leagues."\textsuperscript{118} Under Pettigrew's urging, the Republican Party adopted a plank in its platform declaring for a currency backed by both silver and gold.

As part of forming the "Bimetallic Leagues," Pettigrew and his colleagues planned a "massive propaganda campaign designed to convince farmers that their economic salvation lay with continued loyalty to the Republican Party."\textsuperscript{119}

When the Independents met in June 1894 to nominate a ticket for the fall election, a resolution endorsing fusion with the Democrats was defeated through the vigorous opposition of Loucks.\textsuperscript{120} He declared that the party's platform "was adequate and that fusion would only cost votes and cause the reform movement to lose its integrity."\textsuperscript{121} Democrats meeting in September also rejected fusion.\textsuperscript{122}

During the campaign, Loucks made what must have been a rather startling statement: had it not been for the "bossism which refused a fair fight within the ranks of the republican party [sic], there would have been no third party in the state."\textsuperscript{123} Rather than fighting the party per se, Loucks opposed the party's refusal to give credence to
demands of the economically oppressed farmers.

On September 6, the Ruralist continued its opposition to fusion. The Madison Outlook had advised reformers to "pull Mr. Loucks off" before the forces of reform suffered too greatly. The Ruralist commented:

Funny how the Outlook, a democratic [sic] paper should now so earnestly give the advice the republican [sic] papers have been giving the Populists ever since the party was organized, and still Loucks sticks. Why this wrath? Simply because we are opposed to the idea of the Populists of Nebraska sending W. J. Bryan, a Democrat, to the U.S. Senate, or Senator Morgan back from Alabama by Populist votes. We have never objected to Mr. Bryan or Mr. Morgan, or any other good Democrat coming into the Populist ranks. Indeed, we are very anxious for their coming. But how we could induce them to leave democracy by voting for them to remain there, is a question that puzzles us. Will the Outlook please explain? 125

The Ruralist added that Morgan's and Bryan's advocacy of the free coinage of silver did "not make them Populists by any means." 126

The Ruralist continued:

To claim that the Populists of Nebraska should support Bryan for U.S. Senator because he advocates that one plank of the Populist platform would be equivalent to stating that the Populists of South Dakota should haul down their state ticket since the Republican convention adopted a silver plank. 127

The returns on election day did not favor the Independents. Their gubernatorial candidate, 70-year-old Isaac Howe, was defeated by the Republican Sheldon, who was seeking a second term, and only 24 Independents were elected to the state legislature. 128 A Republican controlled legislature ensured that Pettigrew would be re-elected to the U.S. Senate.
Still not swayed by the political opportunity offered in merger with the Democrats, the Rulalist stated the following May:

In South Dakota we have fought fusion from the start... In our judgment we will never succeed in this state until we can assure the dissatisfied Republican voters that Populist success does not mean semi-democratic victory. 129

Loucks and the Rulalist, however, were unable to halt the fusion which finally occurred during the summer of 1896. As the 1891 election of James H. Kyle to the U.S. Senate had shown, South Dakota Independents could only be successful after merging with other political groups.

In June 1896 Pettigrew was a delegate to the Republican national convention and when the party committed itself to the gold standard, he joined 34 delegates who dramatically left the gathering. 130 The protesters formed the Silver Republican Party and Pettigrew returned home to organize such a party in South Dakota. He was repudiated by South Dakota Republicans at their convention July 8 131 and six days later, when the Independent Party gathered at Huron, Pettigrew publically declared himself a populist. 132

Meeting with the Independents were representatives of the state's nascent Silver Republican Party. A resolution instructing delegates to the national People's Party convention in St. Louis to vote for the nomination of Bryan was fought by Loucks and others opposing fusion. 133 After three hours of heated debate, the resolution was adopted, signaling defeat for Loucks and the anti-fusion forces. 134

After more debate, the anti-fusionists suffered a second
defeat. Delegates by a vote of 499 to 71 favored merging with the Democrats on a state ticket. Delegates finally agreed on Andrew E. Lee, a Vermillion businessman and popular advocate of silver, as their candidate for governor. South Dakota Democrats soon afterward called off their convention and strengthened the Independent-Silver Republican coalition by endorsing Lee and the fusionist ticket.

Out of more than 80,000 votes cast in November 1896, Lee was elected governor by a slender margin of 331 votes. The ticket also captured a clear majority of 17 in the state legislature. By joining with two other groups, the Independents had finally captured the reins of state government. When the legislature convened in January 1897, members began to consider electing a U.S. Senator. Kyle sought re-election and one of his challengers was H. L. Loucks.

Return to the Republican Party

When the fusion coalition caucused at the start of the 1897 legislative session, they endorsed no candidate for the U.S. Senate. Kyle, whose election in 1891 was hailed as a triumph for the Independents, was "cordially hated" by Lee and Pettigrew, fusionist leaders. Kyle's name was placed before the legislature but on the first ballot did not get the necessary 85 votes to win.

Loucks was not a contender in the initial ballot and his role in events that followed is not completely clear. But on January 20, his name came before the legislature and Loucks received 14 votes to Kyle's 33. The decision to enter parliamentary combat against the
man after whom he named his son must have been a difficult one for Loucks. Rumors circulating through the legislature that Kyle was negotiating for Republican support were probably a factor in his move.

Eight days later Loucks abandoned his quest, releasing his supporters in an atmosphere that "was full of combinations and sales." Balloting continued until February 18 when, "in a sudden and wholly unexpected coup," the legislature's Republicans threw their votes to Kyle, and he was elected.

Loucks never forgave this action of Kyle's and, returning home to Clear Lake, forbade anyone to call his youngest son Kyle again, but rather to call him by his first name, Daniel.

Loucks apparently had a falling out with Wardell later on, after which he declared he would never name a child after a living person again.

Kyle was unconcerned about his denunciation by the fusionists, explaining shortly after his re-election:

Under ordinary circumstances I could continue a populist in good standing, but the corrupt influence and powerful machine installed in the party have, regardless of party welfare, by persecution of my friends and venomous and false personal attacks, attempted in the interest of a small clique of new-found allies to thwart my re-election and have sought to drive me from the party which I helped to found.

The same was apparently true of Loucks and the fusionists. He grew increasingly estranged from Governor Lee after Lee failed to appoint "many of the old Populist figures" to positions in state
Pettigrew, recognizing Loucks' influence with the farmers, was circumspect, saying early in 1898:

My policy in regard to Mr. Loucks is to treat him with the utmost kindness and consideration. It is certain that he will fight within the Populist party [the fusion coalition] and will even support the ticket. Loucks is a man of ability and of character and of great service to the cause which entitles him to much consideration.  

Loucks argued with Pettigrew that the Democrats had absorbed the Independent Party and in the resulting fusion had abandoned principles upon which the Independents were formed. Pettigrew apparently felt that Loucks would work for the fusionists after all, "for he has sense enough to know that he is running counter to the general wish of the people of the state."  

In early April, shortly before he made a momentous decision, Loucks received a letter from an apparently exasperated Pettigrew which stated in part:

I must say that I am at a loss as to what you are driving at. You first wrote me that you are in favor of cooperation, at least so I interpreted your letter, but opposed to fusion. Now you say cooperation is simply a delusion, a snare, and a lie.... I am well aware of your great influence in the state, but for you to undertake to work up a sentiment in opposition to cooperation, which will carry the state for us, is not dictated, in my opinion, by good judgment.  

Loucks completed the circle of his political career in April 1898 when he announced his return to the Republican Party. The move angered Lee and Pettigrew but in renouncing the fusionists, he contributed his influence to another first for South Dakota: adoption of the initiative and referendum.
"An Able Letter"

In "An Able Letter," a privately printed broadside, Loucks detailed with great vehemence his estrangement with the fusionists, and especially the Democratic Party. Though dated "1900," this author believes the pamphlet could only have been written during the campaign of 1898. The basis of his argument, as it had been for many years, was principle.

He attacked the fusionists for searching for what they could make the "paramount issue" to be used against Republicans. They first endorsed initiative and the referendum. When the Republicans agreed to study the two measures, fusionists realized both would be ineffective as political weapons. So, said Loucks, the coalition "promptly dropped the 'paramount issue,' demonstrating very plainly that it was not 'the issue' nor 'the principle' they wanted, but the offices."

The fusionists then cast about for other issues, first opposing American involvement in the war in Cuba, and then supporting it. Finally they settled on opposition to the railroads.

The fusionist legislature of 1897 had adopted a law empowering the railroad commission to set a schedule of rates for railways in the state. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad promptly began legal action and succeeded in convincing a judge to issue an injunction against the schedule. In his broadside, Loucks argued that the fusionists were actually working against their position that the legislature should regulate railroad rates. Prominent fusionist attorneys were in the employ of the railroads, charged Loucks.
In the end, he concluded the "paramount issue" of the fusionists

is the most bare-faced, farcical, hypocritical attempt to deceive and fool an intelligent constituency ever perpetrated on this or any other state, by political party, or combination of parties.\textsuperscript{157}

He sealed his break with the fusionists by saying he hoped they received a "stinging and well-merited rebuke" at the polls in November.

**Initiative and Referendum**

At the Republican convention in Mitchell in August 1898, a letter from Loucks was read announcing his return to the Republican Party, "whereupon joyful pandemonium held supreme control for several minutes."\textsuperscript{158} In the letter he asked the party to endorse the initiative and referendum, two measures that would place more power over legislation in the hands of the populace. No other state had such provisions at the time and South Dakota was voting on them in the election of 1898.\textsuperscript{159} While Republican delegates declined to support the measure, they agreed to study it.

Loucks had fought for initiative and referendum, arguing in an article that year that "Every citizen should support it, because it is right, and will prove an effective safety valve for the discontent of the people."\textsuperscript{160} The measure would not "abrogate representative government. The people will continue to elect representatives to enact their laws, but they will reserve the right to sanction or veto them."\textsuperscript{161}
While Loucks credited Aberdeen priest Rev. Robert W. Haire as the originator of the initiative and referendum, he felt that his letter to the Republican convention "was the culminating factor that secured its adoption." Loucks' support and the tacit approval of the Republicans were certainly, this writer believes, important factors, for both measures were adopted in the November election. South Dakota became the first state to allow its citizens direct control over legislation.

The fusionists, on the other hand, suffered in the election for every one of their candidates but Lee was defeated. With the defection of so many of its influential members and the return of rising farm prices, the farmers' protest began to collapse. Kingsbury noted that the election of 1898 had "sealed the fate of populists in this state." In the election of 1900, their rout was complete as the Republicans captured the governorship and control of the state legislature. National Republican leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt and Mark Hanna had come to South Dakota to campaign against Pettigrew, who was defeated.

At the Dakota Ruralist, Loucks had been joined as editor by William E. Kidd in 1894 and the paper had merged with the Aberdeen Star. Early in 1895 Loucks moved further away from the paper by remaining at Clear Lake and sending in his editorials from there. The paper probably ceased publication in 1904, although the exact date remains unclear.

Late in the decade, Pettigrew apparently considered purchasing
the Ruralist. Included in the proposed deal was a provision that Loucks not edit any other papers if he stepped down from his position at the Ruralist. The proposal, however, never got any further. 172

**Truly Independent**

After breaking with the fusionists in 1898, Loucks never became active in the Republican Party. He moved to Watertown in 1908 and concentrated more on writing. Loucks had written a number of privately printed books that dealt with the twin themes of controlling railroads and the money in circulation. The first of these, *The New Monetary System* appeared in 1893 followed by *Government Ownership of Railroads and Telegraphs* in 1894, *Farm Problems and State Development* in 1914 and *Common Sense Rural Credits* in 1915. 173

Loucks made an independent bid for the U.S. Senate in 1914 and developed his campaign around an unusual strategy: astrology. In a letter to Robinson, Loucks explained:

> I have a friend, an astrologer, in New Jersey, whom I first met in Minneapolis and he has certainly been very correct in my horoscope up to the present time.

In the same letter he explained that he would probably face Republican Coe I. Crawford in the 1914 senate race and wanted some information on the principal events in Crawford's life. "I have a good deal of faith in astrology and it is for that reason I wish the information," he wrote. 176 A few months later he wrote, requesting "as good a nativity of C. H. Burke as you did of Coe I. Crawford." 177
Early in 1914 he wrote again for details on three other candidates.\textsuperscript{178}

The astrology was no help to Loucks for in the election of 1914 he came in the fifth of five candidates, polling a paltry 2,104 votes.\textsuperscript{179} It was his last venture into elective politics.

In late summer 1916, Loucks wrote to Doane Robinson, a former adversary with whom he corresponded. He said he was finishing his latest work, entitled \textit{The Conspiracy of the House of Morgan Exposed and How to Defeat It}.\textsuperscript{180} In the volume Loucks argued that farmers were suffering because the New York banking house of Morgan had through trickery obtained control over the money in circulation. One of the first steps in combating it should be the enactment of strict laws against usury.\textsuperscript{181} Money was a product of government and he argued that the government should issue money directly to the people and not to banks like Morgan's which charged usurious interest rates for it.\textsuperscript{182}

Loucks also attacked his old foes, the railroads, saying they were:

- public highways, chartered by the public, to serve the public. All they are entitled to is a reasonable compensation for services performed, and the employer, not the employee should be the judge.\textsuperscript{183}

By January 1919, Loucks was completing another book, \textit{Our Daily Bread}, which he told Robinson dealt "with the one thing I think by far the most important--BREAD--WHEAT--FLOUR--BREAD."\textsuperscript{184} In it, he described his experiences in Minneapolis with the Scandinavian Elevator Company and argued for farmers owning their own terminal grain elevators.
When Our Daily Bread was published later that year, Loucks was 73 years old and still engaged in writing projects. Three years later he published a 61-page pamphlet entitled "The Mythical Gold Base," which continued the arguments for an expanded currency, which would be issued directly to the American people.

Much of his writing during these final years of his life was done in the den at his home at 400 Third Street, Watertown. His granddaughters would visit for a few weeks in the summer and while his wife Florence entertained them, Loucks remained at work in his den. "He was always typing his political papers, which didn't mean anything to me then," said Mrs. Thorne Lee of Sioux Falls, a granddaughter of Loucks, in recalling a visit as a young girl. 185

When not before the typewriter, Loucks would entertain his grandchildren with tales of Canada and early days in Dakota Territory. He also played a game where he asked them to pull on his wooden leg until it came off in their hands. The children were terrified but delighted, recalled Mrs. Lee. 186

In February 1928, Florence Loucks died and in May Loucks turned 82. The last months of his life must have been lonely ones. One grandchild, Charlotte Morris of Youngstown, Ohio, recalled that Loucks often sat quietly on the front porch "watching neighborhood activities." 187

In mid-December, Loucks went to visit his daughter, Elizabeth, in Clear Lake. At five in the morning of Dec. 29, 1928 he died at her home after "a general breakdown." 188 His obituary noted with
simple elegance that Loucks had been considered "the father of
the national populist party." While such may have been an
exaggeration, he was certainly the father of South Dakota populism.
ENDNOTES

1 Daily Huronite, (Huron) 5 June 1890, p. 1.
2 Argus Leader, (Sioux Falls) 9 July 1890, p. 2.
5 John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1931), p. 121.
7 Omaha Bee, 3 July 1892, p. 1.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Argus Leader, (Sioux Falls) 6 June 1890, p. 4.
16 Ibid.
17 As an example of Loucks' opposition, cited in Chapter III, he and Wardell fought in 1889 to keep the gubernatorial nomination from Mellette.
18 Richard F. Pettigrew to Arthur C. Mellette, March 1890, Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.
19 Ibid.
20 Gideon C. Moody to Arthur C. Mellette, 6 August 1890, Mellette
Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

21 Ibid.

22 "Highly Interesting Bits of State History are Told by Doane Robinson in Address," *The Sunshine State* (December 1925), pp. 33, 34.

23 Ibid.

24 A. D. Smedley to Arthur C. Mellette, 13 July 1890, Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

25 S. C. Leppelman to Arthur C. Mellette, 1890 but specific date uncertain, Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

26 For example, see J. M. Kidder to Arthur C. Mellette, 28 July 1890, William T. LaFollette to Arthur C. Mellette, 25 July 1890, Mellette Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.


28 Ibid.


31 Ibid.

32 Omaha Bee, 3 July 1892, p. 1.

33 Hendrickson, "Some Political Aspects of the Populist Movement in South Dakota," p. 85; In Illinois, the arrangement was equally advantageous for Palmer because he was elected to the U.S. Senate with Independents casting the needed votes.

35 Genealogy prepared by William N. Loucks, Stow, Ohio, a grandson of H. L. Loucks (hereinafter referred to as Loucks Genealogy); Gordon G. Carlson to Mrs. Thorne Lee, 23 April 1981, letter in possession of Mrs. Lee, Sioux Falls; Mrs. Thorne Lee, granddaughter of H. L. Loucks, interview held in her home, Sioux Falls, 20 March 1981.


39 Ibid.


41 Hallie Farmer, "The Economic Background of Frontier Populism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review X (March 1924): 421, 422.


43 Ibid., p. 397.


47 Ibid., p. 42.

48 Dakota Ruralist, (Aberdeen) 16 March 1899, p. 4.


50 Ibid.

51 Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 207.

52 Ibid., p. 208.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., pp. 214, 215.
55 Ibid., p. 242
56 Ibid., p. 233.
57 *Omaha Bee*, 2 July 1892, p. 1.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Hicks, *The Populist Revolt*, pp. 235, 236.
61 *Omaha Bee*, 5 July 1892, p. 1.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 2; In addition to voting for Weaver and Kyle, delegates cast ballots for other minor candidates.
65 *Omaha Bee*, 2 July 1892, p. 1.
68 Ibid., p. 664.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 663.
72 Ibid., p. 662.
73 *Dakota Ruralist*, (Huron) 1 September 1892, p. 1.
74 *Dakota Ruralist*, (Huron) 20 October 1892, p. 4; In addition to his duties in Washington D.C. as president of the Southern Alliance, Loucks was campaigning in Georgia for Weaver's presidential bid.
75 *Dakota Ruralist*, (Huron) 8 September 1892, p. 4; This article
referred to a pro-fusionist statement which "does not represent the views of the editor" on the same page where Loucks was listed as editor of the Ruralist. The primary argument of the editorial was faithfulness to one's principles, a theme repeatedly made by Loucks.

76 Ibid., p. 8.

77 The use of such personal references as "our son" and "We were advised by wire . . ." indicate a personal involvement to the tragic episode that could only have been felt by Loucks.

78 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 8 September 1892, p. 8.


80 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 15, 22, 29 September 1892.

81 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 29 September 1892, p. 6.

82 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 16 October 1892, p. 6.

83 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 1 September 1892, p. 1.

84 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 6 October 1892, p. 1.

85 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 29 September; 6 October 1892.

86 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 8 September 1892, p. 5.

87 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 8, 22, 29 September; 13 October 1892.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 29 September 1892, p. 8.

91 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 20 October 1892, p. 1.

92 Ibid.

93 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 22 September 1892, p. 4.

94 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 13 October 1892, p. 4.

95 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 20 October 1892, p. 4.

96 The Ruralist on September 22 (p. 4) and October 13 (p. 6) listed towns across South Dakota where J. R. Lowe would be speaking.
97 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 15 September 1892, p. 4.

98 Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 20 September 1892, p. 4. By "present management," this writer believes, was meant the Alliance Publishing Co., incorporated two-and-a-half years earlier.


100 Ibid.

101 Ibid., p. 87.

102 Appeal-Avalanche, (Memphis) 18 November 1892, p. 4.

103 Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 271.

104 Ibid.

105 Appeal-Avalanche, (Memphis) 18 November 1892, p. 4.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

108 Hicks, The Populist Revolt, p. 272.

109 Appeal-Avalanche, (Memphis) 18 November 1892, p. 4.

110 Appeal-Avalanche, (Memphis) 19 November 1892, p. 4.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Appeal-Avalanche, (Memphis) 20 November 1892, p. 5.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929.


119 Ibid., p. 87.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid., p. 88.
123. Ibid., p. 670.
124. Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 6 September 1894, p. 5.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
130. Ibid., p. 235.
133. Daily Huronite, (Huron) 15 July 1896, p. 4.
134. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
140. Ibid., p. 89.


144. Ibid.


146. William H. Loucks to Thom Guarnieri, 27 May 1981, letter in possession of this author.


148. Terrence J. Lindell, graduate history student, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb. to Thom Guarnieri, letter in possession of this author.


153. In the broadside, Loucks made reference to two events which occurred in 1898. The first was that the initiative and referendum were "to be voted on this year." South Dakota voters adopted both measures in 1898. The second was the "bottling up of Cervera's fleet in Santiago," which took place May 19, 1898.


155. Ibid.
156 Schell, History of South Dakota, p. 237.


159 Ibid., p. 680.


161 Ibid.

162 H. L. Loucks to Doane Robinson, 28 November 1911, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.


164 Ibid.


169 Lindell letter to Guarnieri.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

172 Ibid.


174 Alice Kundert, Secretary of State, to Thom Guarnieri, 30 April 1981, letter in possession of this author.
175 H. L. Loucks to Doane Robinson, 17 September 1913, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

176 Ibid.

177 H. L. Loucks to Doane Robinson, 22 December 1913, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

178 H. L. Loucks to Doane Robinson, 8 January 1914, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.

179 Kundert letter to Guarnieri.

180 H. L. Loucks to Doane Robinson, 30 August 1916, Robinson Papers, South Dakota State Historical Resource Center, Pierre, South Dakota.


182 Ibid., p. 54.

183 Ibid., p. 18.


185 Lee interview, 20 March 1981.

186 Ibid.


188 Clear Lake Courier, 3 January 1929, p. 2.

189 Ibid.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

A single theme dominated the activism of H. L. Loucks and, by extension the life of the Dakota Ruralist: the importance of principles as a guide to political action. During the 14 years of his alliance and populist involvement, from 1884 until 1898, Loucks repeatedly demanded greater public control of the railroads and a greater amount of money in circulation. Such beliefs formed the framework of what issues he supported and what issues he opposed. And an important vehicle that transported these convictions to his constituency was the Dakota Ruralist.

The newspaper began in 1887 as an agency of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, the same year the alliance expanded its cooperative buying and insurance ventures. Loucks as alliance president and later as Ruralist editor undoubtedly had profound influence on the newspaper's contents. The Ruralist, this writer believes, did not so much reflect reality as it did a point of view.

The farmers had already begun to organize alliances before Loucks arrived in Dakota Territory in 1884. Rapidly growing railroads and easily available credit had lured thousands to the open prairies during the early 1880s but their hopes evaporated in short order. Railroads and grain elevators joined to control the marketing of their crops and when the credit contracted, farmers sank deep into debt.

Control of the burgeoning railroads and expansion of the
currency had been argued earlier, the former by the Grangers in the
1870s and the latter by the Greenback and silver movements. The
precedent had been well laid out for Dakota alliance men in the 1880s.

Loucks did more than just lead farmers when elected president
of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance in 1886, this writer believes. While
he fought for immediate amelioration for the farmers, such as for
lowering railroad rates, he also set out to formulate the causes for
these conditions. Railroads and the coinage of money were public
utilities, he later argued and should be controlled by the public,
not by giant railroad corporations or New York banking houses. He
probably soon realized that to counterbalance these two great interests,
the people—and in Dakota, the farmers—had to control government.
But to build a consensus for independent political action, he needed
an organ of mass communication and found it in the Dakota Ruralist.

By the fall of 1888, when Loucks became active in the campaign
of J. W. Harden, farmers had been elected to the state legislature.
But they remained members of the Republican Party and their efforts
at reform were thwarted by the party leadership. Using the Ruralist
as his vehicle, Loucks argued that the principles of a candidate must
be considered before his party affiliation. Using his "principle over
party" theme in two lengthy letters to the Ruralist in the fall of
1888 and the spring of 1889, Loucks pressed for direct action by
farmers.

Other aspects of the Ruralist aided this consensus building.
In its pages, farmers exchanged their ideas on farming and railed
against the perceived villany of railroads and those who controlled the money supply. As it facilitated communication among farmers, this writer believes, the Ruralist served to reinforce farmers' opinions on the causes of their problems and to isolate ways of alleviating them.

During the alliance convention in December 1888, Loucks advocated the public ownership of railroads.\(^6\) Four months later the Ruralist carried the alliance platform, one plank of which stated: "Our railroads should at the earliest possible date be bought by the government, and operated in the interest of the whole people."\(^7\) The same platform also called for the government to loan money, at reasonable rates of interest, directly to the people.\(^8\)

Mere advocacy was not enough, however, and Loucks continued urging farmers to take the reins of government themselves. They took the first steps to this end in June 1890, when the Independent Party was formed.\(^9\) The change in farmers' methods was reflected in the Dakota Ruralist, for the newspaper unabashedly backed the Independent Party as a way to alleviate the condition of the farmers. Republican candidates were attacked in its pages as tools of the railroads and Independent candidates were presented as instruments of the farmers' betterment. In the heated campaign of 1892, when Independent Abraham Van Osdel challenged Republican Charles Sheldon for governor, Ruralist columnist Louis N. Crill wrote:

Where are you at, Mr. Sheldon? At work for the same old boss, Pettigrew. After those foreign born citizens who won't drop in under the party lash. Stumping the state apparently in the interest of
yourself, but really in the interest of the
ring. Keeping one eye on the public crib and
surveying Van Osdel with the other as he speeds
about making friends by the hundreds, and
touching elbows in common sympathy with the
people.10

In the turbulence created by the emergence of the Independents,
the Republican domination of state government was threatened for the
first time since Dakota Territory was organized in 1861. The
Republicans remained a powerful foe, but politicians began to see a
way they might be beaten: fusion. If Democrats united with
Independents, the resulting coalition might overpower the Republican
hegemony.

Loucks, and with him the Ruralist, opposed the merger. If the
Democrats really believed populist principles, they could join the
Independent Party as many erstwhile Republican farmers had done.
He argued through the Ruralist that "We have a grand platform of
principles on which we can conscientiously invite all men to stand
for the sake of principles... We must stick to that text."11

As he said in 1898: "The surest and quickest way to destroy
a reform party is for the older parties to adopt the most popular
and meritorious principles of the new organization."12 But fusion
grew in popularity among those—notably, U.S. Senator Richard
Pettigrew—who would oust the Republicans. Loucks and the Ruralist
would not yield, opposing fusion all the way to its victory in 1896.
Always the argument was the same: If the Democrats supported the
populist principles espoused by the Independents, why did they not
join the party?

In the end Loucks rebuked the fusionists and, in returning to his former enemy, the Republicans, again acted on the basis of principle. In reviewing the political campaign of 1898, he praised the Republicans for their decision to study the initiative and referendum. While Democrats adopted these two reform measures without really understanding them, the Republicans took a more prudent step. Despite the popularity of both proposals, the Republicans chose to study rather than endorse them. Loucks said the party "preferred to face defeat on principles they believed in, rather than to insure a victory by the adoption of a resolution they were not sure of." Both were adopted that year with Loucks' support, this writer believes, being an important factor.

The Ruralist, however, was not the only means by which Loucks advocated reform, but was rather a trumpet he could sound when he chose to. As well as being Ruralist editor, he was an active president of the Dakota Farmers' Alliance, the Independent Party's first candidate for governor and twice a candidate for the United States Senate. He joined with the populist movement on the national level as president of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (Southern Alliance) between 1892 and 1894 and as permanent chairman of the first national populist convention in July 1892.

By the mid 1890s, William E. Kidd joined Loucks as editor of the Dakota Ruralist and Loucks' influence probably began to wane. Loucks moved back to Clear Lake where he wrote editorials and
continued writing books on government and the monetary system. It is unclear precisely when Loucks severed his relationship with the weekly but it was probably before April 1898, when he denounced the fusionists and returned to the Republican Party. His condemnation of the coalition would have made being editor of the Ruralist very difficult. The weekly itself lasted only a few more years, until probably 1904, before it ceased publication. 14

Its being a conduit for Loucks' reform ideas, this writer believes places the Dakota Ruralist in a unique category of newspapers. The Ruralist eschewed objectivity to fight for a select group of citizens—the farmers of Dakota. By raising their political consciousness, the Ruralist served to unite farmers for political action. The relationship of mass communication and the mobilization for political action, this writer believes, is a link worthy of much greater study. Are characteristics of the Ruralist studied in this paper reflected in other advocacy journals? Historically, there are many unexplored corners of the Dakota farmers' protest. What did men like Alonzo Wardell, J. W. Harden, George Crose, J. R. Lowe contribute to the movement? And what did groups like the Prohibition Party, the Knights of Labor and the Socialist Party, all friendly contemporaries of the Independent Party, contribute to reform in the state?

For out of this reform effort, although it did not assume definite shape until much later, grew a new relationship between the government and its citizens. Loucks and the Ruralist called for an activist government, one he felt would curb the abuses that emerging
corporate giants were inflicting on the people. The federal
government would later broaden regulation of business with the
enactment of such agencies as the Federal Reserve System, the
Federal Trade Commission and, in the 1930s, Securities and Exchange
Commission. While the atmosphere for this new relationship was long
in emerging, this writer believes that H. L. Loucks aided its
formulation and the Ruralist formed one of its earliest
constituencies.
ENDNOTES

1. See Chapter III, "Alliance President."


3. See Chapter II, "Origins in the Civil War Era" and "Early Agitation."


5. See Chapter III, "Dakota Farmers Organize," "Growing Activism" and "Pyrrhic Victory."


8. Ibid.


11. Dakota Ruralist, (Huron) 8 September 1892, p. 4.


14. Terrence J. Lindell, graduate history student, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., to Thom Guarneri, letter in possession of this author.
Farm, Stock and Home

Vol. 11, No. 4

Aberdeen, Dakota, September 26, 1888

$1.50 Per Annum

Farmers' Institute

The following address was delivered by Hon. A. A. Arnold before the farmers' institute at Mitchell.

It is a question of much importance, and one which will long be remembered when answered.

The question of the time of planting is one which is of vital importance to the farmer, and one which will long be remembered when answered.

A farmer's success in raising stock depends in a great degree upon the time of planting, and the amount of attention paid to this subject.

The time of planting should be studied with great care, and the results of previous years should be carefully considered.

A farmer should always be prepared to act upon the principle that the time of planting should be determined by the season of the year, and not by the weather of the season.

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A farmer should always be prepared to act upon the principle that the time of planting should be determined by the season of the year, and not by the weather of the season.
Speech of C. H. Sheldon, the Republican Nominee for Governor, Made at Mitchell as Chairman of the Republican Convention. 1890.

"So this independent party is fearfully and wonderfully made; and I want to say to you, gentlemen, that it is a matter of humiliation and regret by the intelligent farmers of the section of the state from which I have come, that a recent importation from Canada, whose ignorance of the character of American institutions is only equalled by his impudence and insincerity, should aspire to the highest position within the gift of the people. The man who comes among our people and endeavors to teach them to break away from their allegiance and undertakes to teach them that all the measures for which they labored and all the burdens they have borne have been in vain, is a public nuisance and ought to be abated."

The result of the vote in the section of the state from which C. H. Sheldon hails will hardly justify the statement. Let us take Day, his own county, as an illustration. In 1890 Sheldon's own township cast the following votes: Loucks 66, Mellette 22, or 3 to 1. In the county of Day, Loucks 1,165, Mellette 746.

The latest from Alabama.

In an interview with a reporter, Mr. Kelby, the people's party candidate for governor, said with emphasis:

"I have been elected governor and I am going to be governor, although of the 177 newspapers in the state, but six of them were for me. I carried the state by 45,000 majority and recounted me out. Take the fourteen black belt counties. I carried them by 25,000 majority. Yet they have been counted as giving Jones 20,000 majority. I carried this county by 1,300. Yet they gave Jones 6,000 majority—more votes than were polled. It was the same way all over the state, and I tell you our people are not going to submit to it. I am going to be governor. I will contest before the legislature and in the end they will not be able to keep me from doing that."
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