

tive bargaining and a living wage although, these were probably the objectives of most of the labour rank and file.

Mary Jordan's book, obviously, does not fit at all in the context of this recent historiography. It is firmly in the romantic and naive tradition, oblivious to the subtleties of contemporary labour thought. What then is its merit, if any?

Simply that it fills in many of the details of the early life of Bob Russell when he left the Clydeside and came to Winnipeg. Miss Jordan's long association with Russell and his wife adds a human dimension to the academic analysis of Labour's evolution in Western Canada. More importantly, it tells the story of the long twilight of the OBU as it lived a precarious existence for almost thirty years after the general strike.

It had a small membership but a faithful one, based in Winnipeg. It supported the O.B.U. *Bulletin*, Russell's vehicle for many years and financed itself through a very successful football pool. A sorry end, perhaps, to that flaming idealism of 1919 which concluded when the O.B.U. formally disbanded and entered the mainstream of Canadian Labour. "Singled out as the chief conspirator in 1919, Russell would not leave the doomed ideal of the One Big Union."

J.E. REA,
University of Manitoba.

* * *

LOUIS AUBREY WOOD. — *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada: The Origins and Development of Agrarian Protest, 1872-1924.* Introduction by FOSTER J.K. GRIEZIC, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, 406 pp., \$5.95.

A reprint of a book described as "still the best study of the origins and early development of agrarian protest in Canada" is particularly appropriate at a time when the problems which induced that protest are recurring with possibly greater impact than in the past. Railways, tariffs and quotas, agribusiness, marketing boards, and related government policies have been and continue to be among the central concerns of organized farmers.

Those who share any of these concerns can find valuable perspectives in the 1975 reprint of Louis Aubrey Wood's history of agrarian protest, which was first published in 1924. Wood's book covers in remarkable detail the problems which farmers faced between the 1870's and 1924. And as a valuable addition, the reprint includes a 28-page introduction by Foster J.K. Griezic.

Griezic summarizes Wood's life and works as a means of explaining the latter's reformist approach to agrarian problems. The introduction also provides a descriptive bibliography of more than 100 titles. These contributions, combined with a summary of agrarian protest since 1924, make the 1975 reprint a most comprehensive reference.

Louis Aubrey Wood (1883-1955) was the son of a sales representative in London, Ontario. Up to 1924, his education and teaching were confined to Ontario, with the exception of a period at Heidelberg, where he obtained his doctorate in history; and a year (1912-13) as a lecturer in religious history at Edmonton's Robertson Presbyterian College. This predominantly Ontario background may help to explain Wood's neglect, as pointed out by Griezic, of such matters as western help in organizing the United Farmers of Ontario; or the extent of agrarian discontent in Quebec.

Wood's history begins with the entry into Canada in 1872 of the Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) from the American midwest. The Grange was mainly concerned with economic issues and avoided direct participation in politics.

It protested against speculative markets and monopolies; against tariffs on farm imports; against transportation costs. It promoted co-operative buying, selling and manufacturing. It advocated nationalization of public utilities, including railroads.

By the early 1890s, those experiences had impressed many farmers with the need for political action. For that, they turned from the Grange to the populist "Order of the Patrons of Industry", which entered Canada from Michigan with a program encouraging both economic and political action.

Political ventures under this new banner during the 1890s were unsuccessful. But the idea of political action persisted, and by the end of World War I, the farm movements were ready for important political achievements.

Here again, Wood's generally thorough work omits a discussion which, as a political economist, he could have been expected to pursue. He does not examine the probable connection between the sharp post-war depression of 1920-21 and the subsequent victories in 1921 of the Progressive Party and the United Farmers of Alberta; and in 1922 of the United Farmers of Manitoba. Instead, he accounts for these developments predominantly in terms of political strategies.

By 1924, as Griezic points out, the strength of the farmers' movements was declining. He notes how Wood's expectation of a bright future for them was unduly optimistic. The farm organizations were being undermined by such factors as inability to deal with the cost-price squeeze and the impact of large-scale agriculture.

Most of the problems emphasized by the Wood-Griezic history have persisted despite the farm protests. As an example, the current struggle of the National Farmers' Union against inland terminals in Western Canada actually combines several previous problem areas, and reflects the union's concern that some important past achievements may be nullified.

As an instrument of giant American grain companies, the inland terminals represent the private grain handling system against which the farmers have struggled co-operatively for three quarters of a century. If the terminals can obtain efficient volumes of grain, they will undermine or destroy the Pool elevator network. The question of American intervention in Canadian farm affairs is also revived. (That question became prominent when the Canadian Grange, and the Patrons of Industry, sought and achieved independence from their American founders despite resistance from the latter.) The inland terminal companies also encourage abandonment of the Crow's Nest rates on grain, and seek to promote the "free market" at the expense of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Thus some major organizational achievements and objectives of our farm organizations continue to be threatened or frustrated. As Griezic's summary shows, theirs is "a history of hopes unfulfilled", while "the basic class and power structure of which they complained remains intact."

By bringing Wood's history forward to that realization, Griezic has provided a basis for further advances in the analysis of farm problems and farm organization.

Harold E. BRONSON
*Department of Economics and Political Science,
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.*