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**Public Education in the Mass Media:
National Farm Radio Forum on CBC Radio**

Eleanor Beattie

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Communication Studies

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
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ABSTRACT

Public Education in the Mass Media: *National Farm Radio Forum* on CBC Radio

Eleanor Beattie, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 1999

The weekly radio program, *National Farm Radio Forum* (1940 - 1965) on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is the site of an examination of civic education in the mass media. The archived documentation of *NFRF* forms the corpus of my research. The subject of civic education is analyzed through a rhetorical examination of programs on the subject of health delivery, the latter chosen because it shares, with civic education, the topics of cooperativism and equity of access. I argue that the training of citizens in the habits, responsibilities and competencies of public life, elements essential for authentic democracy, demands a marriage of government, institutions and civic organizations. In particular, a developed and supportive public broadcaster is essential to facilitating the process of civic education. The site of examination, while a historical forum, suggests a number of possibilities and problematics that enable us to rethink civic education in contemporary Canadian mass media.

To Mary Beattie and Joshua Burston

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ABBREVIATIONS

AO	Archives of Ontario
AS	Alex Sim Papers, NAC
CAAE	Canadian Association of Adult Education
CAAE-AO	CAAE Papers at Archives of Ontario
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBC NAC	CBC Papers at the National Archives of Canada
CBC TOR	CBC Papers at CBC, Toronto Archives
CCEC	Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship
CCC	<i>Cross Country Checkup</i>
CCC	Canadian Citizenship Council
CF	<i>Citizens' Forum</i>
CFA	Canadian Federation of Agriculture
CFA NAC	Canadian Federation of Agriculture Papers, NAC
FF	<i>Farm Radio Forum</i>
FFG	Farm Forum Guide
HA	Harry Avison Papers, NAC
JPC	Joint Planning Commission
NFRF	<i>National Farm Radio Forum</i>
NM	Neil Morrison Papers, NAC
OISE	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

OS	Orville J. W. Shugg Papers, NAC
NAC	National Archives of Canada
WIB	Wartime Information Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
CHAPTER	
1. SITUATING PUBLIC EDUCATION	1
Introduction	1
Situating <i>National Farm Radio Forum</i>	8
Adult and Civic Education: The Liberal vs. the Welfare Model	35
Academic Institutions Initiate Public Education Projects	41
Enter Radio: The Redefining of Public Education and Broadcasting ..	48
Wartime Coordination: Negotiating Citizenship	51
“Community”: The Ground of Public Education	57
Notes	69
2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RADIO FORUM GENRE	72
Historical Inspirations: The Greek <i>Polis</i> and the Roman Forum	72
Distinguishing the Forum in Relationship to the <i>Polis</i>	74
The Necessity of Public Institutions for Forum Discourse: Sediments of Social Memory	76
The Revitalization of a Democratic <i>Polis</i> : Challenging Elite Democracy through Authentic Participation	81
The Rhetorical Genre: Responding to Recurrent Social Needs	89

Radio: The Centrality of Orality/Aurality and Technological Reframings	95
The Radio Forum in Canada: The Struggle to Institute the Genre . . .	100
Notes	112
3: THE CREATION OF THE RADIO FORUM GENRE: THE WAR YEARS	115
Introduction	115
Breaking the Ground for the Founding of <i>NFRF</i> : Three Projects . . .	119
From <i>Community Clinic</i> to <i>NFRF</i> : The Prescriptive Construction of a National Community out of Local Forums	131
Building Community through Rhetorical Drama	135
Building Community through Action	150
<i>NFRF</i> Stakes a Position in National Politics: An Introduction to the “Health Can Be Planned” Series	159
Notes	187
4: THE EFFORT TO ENTRENCH PUBLIC EDUCATION IN A POST-WAR ECONOMY	
Introduction: <i>NFRF</i> Enters the Post-War Era	192
Can Cooperativism and Voluntarism Survive in a National Health Plan?	194
What Do We Need to Do to Entrench Public Education?	199
<i>NFRF</i> Restakes Its Claim on A National Health Plan	210
The Interrogation of Public Education	222
<i>Divided We Fall</i> : The Convergence of Themes around the Formation of Leadership	244

Acquiescing to the Loss of Local Deliberative Space: <i>NFRF</i> 1954-1965	249
Notes	260
5: THE PROSPECTS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION	267
Returning to the Source: Idealism and the Archive	267
The Legacy of <i>NFRF</i> : The Possibilities for Mass Media Civic Education	269
Fighting for the CBC: Where is the Backbone of Public Education?. .277	
The Thorny Question of Place and Space for Public Education	281
Notes	290
APPENDIX I: <i>Men of the Soil</i>	293
APPENDIX II: E-Mail Exchange with <i>Cross Country Checkup</i>	294
BIBLIOGRAPHY	295

CHAPTER 1: SITUATING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Introduction

This thesis examines the possibilities for public or civic education through the mass media. I start with the premise that civic education, the conscious training of citizens in the habits, responsibilities and competencies for public life, is essential for authentic democratic governance. In terms of the sense of ourselves as citizens of a democratic nation, the mass media play a two-pronged role: on the one hand, because of their dominance through many technologies, the mass media have become the common space of citizens and proclaim themselves as an important part of the *polis*, the site of speaking and deliberation; on the other hand, the speaking that is done by citizens through the mass media falls short of that democratic promise, dominated as it is by expert opinion and public displays of the personal and the non-deliberative.

This thesis poses the question of how the mass media can serve the political educative process. I examine *National Farm Radio Forum (NFRF)*, a long-term radio program that used and integrated familiar forms and values to address a particular audience. However, *NFRF* was more than a combination of its familiar 'material' elements: the radio broadcast, written material and organized local forum groups; it was a project that attempted to construct its audience as participating citizens, responsible for their civic education through listening, discussion and being active largely in their local communities. *NFRF* is informed not just by its purpose but also by a variety of constraints. Its particular construction as an educative radio forum can be understood as a genre whose

study will allow us to see what the constraints and the possibilities are for further work in public education through the mass media.

The mass media seem unsuited to public education in part because of their diffused and omnipresent character; they are everywhere and yet lack a definite place. Our ideal models of democracy are in contrast based on the idea of the town hall meeting characterized by a definite physical site that served as an educative forum and a place of deliberation. The importance of a definite site and its relationship to the place of deliberation has its roots in ancient Greece, for the *polis* was both the ground of training and of deliberation. Hannah Arendt reminds us that "before men began to act, a definite place had to be secured and a structure built where all subsequent action could take place" (1958, 194). But Arendt also tells us that though the physical structure and the laws protected and stabilized the *polis* from one generation to the next, those elements were not the *polis* itself: that consisted of "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be" (198). The *polis* then was and is primarily a rhetorical structure but one that must have a medium that can gather people together although that site is transportable. Colonizing Greeks acted on the words "wherever you go, you will be a *polis*" (Arendt 1958, 198). Part of my work in this thesis then is to see how a mass medium with its mobility and reach can be grounded and secured for a particular purpose: a national site of public education.

The ancient world is a useful starting point for this discussion because it was the Greeks who first articulated the meaningfulness of speech for political life and who first created spaces in which both political speech and the training for it could take place. Aristotle described the democratic Greek state as "a sort of partnership . . . formed in order to attain some good" (Bambrough 1963, 382). This partnership included the Athenian public institutions and laws which both constructed and sustained the *polis* and thus were part of a larger concept of politics, "the supreme and most authoritative art . . . [that] decides what arts should be given a place in states, which should be learned by each class of persons, and how far their study should go" (Bambrough, 287). The review in this thesis of the kinds of Greek and Roman sites of deliberation is not meant to provide an idealized portrait of political systems that contain public education. However, the idea that the democratic state is a partnership of institutions and groups working together "in order to attain some good" speaks to the historical experience of Canadian society and to the work of *NFRF* which is under examination here.

In order to examine the possibilities of educating citizens for democratic participation, I consider ideas about "forum," a concept that is popularly recognized as referring to a regulated open site of face-to-face discourse for matters of public interest that offers the possibility for citizens to learn how to participate in democratic discourse while doing so. This work has been inspired by the Greek and Roman concepts of the *agora* and the *forum* and by recent

critical work on "forum practice;" the discursive procedures that constitute the forum (Farrell 1993; Stanley 1990). As I examine the forum practice of *NFRF* and the historical and technological influences that created it, I will develop the possibilities of the forum site to revitalize the awareness and the development of public education.

It is important to point out that a forum is not a *polis* per se; its participants are not elected but are present because of a public matter that presses on them, demanding understanding. In this sense, the forum is open to ordinary citizens, farmers and other working people, who have, in theory, the right and the responsibility to speak and to make judgements on public matters even if those judgments cannot be resolved through deliberation. In making political discourse accessible, the forum offers another possibility for developing the equality of citizens within the public sphere, a vital aspect of developing authentic democratic life.

As Hannah Arendt has pointed out, the concept of equality in Athenian democracy came not from the commonness of human nature but from the shared state of neither ruling nor being ruled. This equality is "necessarily an equality of unequals who stand in need of being 'equalized' in certain respects and for specific purposes" (1958, 215). Equality did not carry a notion of sameness but of freedom to challenge peers in order to attain greater excellence. Thus a citizen strove for his own excellence and, with it, that of the public sphere by verbally wrestling with his accomplished peers in order "to distinguish himself

from all others, to show through unique deeds or achievements that he was the best of all" (Arendt 1958, 41) and thus was able and willing to take on public responsibility. A further element of this equality in democratic discourse concerns the knowledge that participants bring from their practical experience: Aristotle speaks of the deliberating citizen as one who can correctly judge "those things he knows about; it is of these that he is a good judge" (Bambrough, 287).

The formation of Greek citizens happened within the *polis* itself. The importance of being in the political process in order to learn it has to do with the entwined relationship between deliberation and action. Deliberation is useless and unlearnable if action is impossible. As Aristotle argues: "man is the principle of action, and deliberation is about the courses of action to be pursued by man" (Bambrough, 322). A further aspect of political education needing to take place within a defined public site concerns the formation of community. Only in a public site can the citizen, a person among people, both hear other citizens *qua* citizens and be heard by them. The importance of citizens hearing and being heard has to do with what Arendt calls the experience and estimation of what makes it worthwhile for people to live together: that is, the "sharing of words and deeds" (1958, 197). This public sharing, the keeping alive of what is valued in social memory, is an essential part of the public knowledge that allows a political community to be formed and to be capable of examining its assumptions from various perspectives.

Given their small numbers, Greek citizens gathered into the *agora* were within speaking and hearing distance of one another and shared an interest in the object under discussion. From this Greek model we understand that public discourse must have a defined and limited space that then can incorporate significant common objects for deliberation. Therefore, one essential issue in the spatial organization of any *polis* or *forum* is the requirement of its participants to be able to communicate effectively within it.

The social cohesion we imagine present in ancient Greece and early bourgeois democracies no longer exists in modern democracies. The conviviality of the *agora* and the forum of the Ancient world, of the coffee houses of early bourgeois Europe, and the American town hall meetings have given way to mass-mediated and fragmented pluralism. Rather than pessimistically judging present public spaces as degraded versions of ideal models, we can say with Alvin Gouldner (1976) that they offer an opportunity for political invention:

The bourgeois public was never democracy-in-being. It was and is a small and precarious social space, with significant institutional support, from which to expand freedom and to win rights; but it is not freedom secured. Its vast and continuing importance cannot be overestimated, even if it provides 'only' opportunity. (Gouldner 1976, 162)

One opportunity is present in the way in which the public or in fact, a number of publics are structured by ideologies, which make sense of the mass of news information by "processing and clarifying", supplying background and by recovering silenced areas and . . . publicly unspoken aspects of people's

personal interests, experiences and everyday lives" (Gouldner 1976, 112).

Indeed,

. . . publics imply a development of rational discourse because they imply the existence of a cleared and safe space in the community available for face-to face discourse.... Such discourse is 'rational' precisely in the sense that it is critical; meaning that what has been said may be questioned, negated and contradicted. (Gouldner 1976, 98)

In light of the disparate publics and the globalizing pull, citizens are in danger of being narrowly politicized or being moved away from politics into non-deliberative communication. Both positions work against the creation of social cohesion, a necessity if a nation is to maintain its sovereignty and be able to deliberate on its future. While a nation like Canada is not in danger of losing its elected common deliberative space, that space becomes less authentic, less forceful when citizens are not involved in their civic instruction through democratic national forums that can be shared by multiple publics.

Modern states, such as Canada, exist and flourish democratically because of communication technologies that allow hearing and speaking across often vast distances. However, the democratic functions of a state cannot be accomplished just through the abstract capacity to hear and be heard: public discourse needs agreement on the commonness of the objects under deliberation and the realisation in practice of hearing and being heard.

This then is the challenge for the mass-mediated democratic society: to reinvent sites of public education that are for both training in and the exercise of critical inquiry into the issues confronting democratic representatives, that allow

for the probing and consideration of individual experiences that are relevant to public judgements, and that offer possibilities for at least local action. Public education that draws citizens into the public sphere, a complex and unstable site, is crucial for the survival and the re-creation of that sphere and democracy itself.

Situating *National Farm Radio Forum*

National Farm Radio Forum (NFRF) was one of three efforts in Canada to create a national site of public education through the medium of radio. *NFRF* and *Citizens' Forum (CF)*, experimentally launched in the early 1940's, were organized with the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as educational projects around local listening groups; *NFRF* had a third sponsor, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) whose membership represented the provincial farming organizations. The third radio forum, *Cross Country Checkup (CCC)*, was first broadcast in 1965 with the help of CAAE and continues to this day, now organized solely within the CBC and making contact with its participants largely through the telephone. These three forums overlap in terms of their sponsors and founders, and all three are part of a larger scheme that makes up the genre of radio forums; nevertheless, though all are referred to in this thesis, *NFRF* is the main object of this study.

The archival documents of *NFRF* are a source of a particular history of thinking about how democracy could flourish in relationship to mass communication technology. At the time of *NFRF*'s inception, this was not a new theme: John Dewey (1927), Walter Lippmann (1936) and later, Paul Lazarfeld (1940) had seriously studied the question, but aside from a few, usually local experiments on Canadian and American radio stations,¹ *NFRF* and its urban counterpart, *Citizens' Forum (CF)* stand out as unique, long-term, national experiments that pulled a number of ideas together in practice.

Thirty-three years after the end of this experiment, the clusters of *NFRF* archives are the traces of an animating spirit that worked to link voices across the nation, to inspire rural people to see themselves as citizens and to create the conditions for health delivery systems. These archives are "documents of ideas in social history" (Wrage quoted in Brock 1989, 27) as much as are the traditional object of rhetorical criticism, individual speeches by public figures. Indeed, one might argue that this archival extraction is closer to the integrity of social history in Canada because of our - what may now be, former - attachment to public institutions rather than to public figures as embodiments of our civic identity.

In a living experiment such as *NFRF*, the participants, through policy, contestation and negotiation, are writing a working theory, bit by bit. The theoretical writing of *NFRF* is scattered through hundreds of broadcasts, and hundreds of discussion and policy papers of the three collaborating sponsors

and through responses to the program by its forum participants. My study concentrates on one major subject of forum discussion, that of a health delivery system, as a means to examine how public education was theorized, how it was practised, and how it developed the combined media of radio, discussion groups and written feedback. I chose this particular subject because health delivery shares with public education the topics of equity and co-operativism, defining national characteristics that Canadians still pay lip service to. Furthermore, unlike public education, health delivery is still a major subject of debate in Canada.

Dispersion, Absences and Locations: The Valuing of NFRF Historical Records

The archival material on *NFRF* consists of three kinds: the broadcast program which includes the scripts and "Farm Forum Findings," that is the written responses from forum groups, some of which were read on the radio; the study material sent out to forum groups, and material such as discussion papers, letters and minutes of separate and combined meetings of the three sponsors. The national office of *NFRF* was responsible for the study material and the carrying out of the administrative plans and policies formulated by the National Board; this is simply to say that the vast amount of archival material, deposited at the National Archives of Canada (NAC), came through the national office and thus the CFA. Material from the last couple of years of *NFRF* held by the

national director, continues to be held by him or was stored in the CBC Archives or ended up at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) without any professional reorganization. *NFRF* material held by the CAAE (which was the central site for *Citizens' Forum*) was deposited at the Archives of Ontario while their book and magazine library went to OISE. For its part, the CBC sent the bulk of its material to NAC but some other material, *NFRF Guides*, reports and publicity, is in its own archives in Toronto. Other, very important *NFRF* material was deposited under donors' names, mostly in NAC by such founding individuals as Neil Morrison, Alex Sim, John Avison and Orville Shugg while others deposited material in their local public or university libraries.

The main object of my rhetorical analysis of health delivery discussions has been the broadcasts themselves. For most of *NFRF* broadcasting, scripts were prepared for both the dramas and the panel discussions. Discussant participants were brought together to present their points of view, and through this free exchange, a script was composed. Naturally, some absences remain: scripts have disappeared and early recordings were broken, recorded over or otherwise lost. In the attempt to track down specific items, I contacted individuals and peripheral organizations that took part. I was successful in obtaining a number of scripts from public and university libraries in towns from which forum discussions were broadcast.

A Literature Review of National Farm Radio Forum

NFRF is mentioned in the histories of broadcasting in Canada, most notably in Knowlton Nash's *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (1994), Frank W. Peers' *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting 1920 - 1951* (1969), Mark Raboy's *Missed Opportunities: The Story of Canada's Broadcasting Policy* (1990), D. B. Sumner's *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: A Dissertation on the Operation of the Public Corporation in Canadian Government* (1949), and Austin E. Weir's *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (1965). However, these do not discuss *NFRF* in much detail. The notable scholarship on *NFRF* is found as part of larger studies of adult education (Sim 1954, published in Kidd 1963; Faris 1975; Ohliger 1966, 1967; Selman & Dampier 1991) and as an object of study: (Brittain 1941; Corbett 1953; McKenzie 1946, 1950; Needler 1948; Nicol et al. 1954; *Farm Radio Forum in Saskatchewan* 1957; *Farm Forum Progress Report* 1964; Schwass 1972; Powell c.1976). In the following section I will review this literature. This review will call attention to the critical writings on *NFRF* and give us a general understanding of the project.

In "A National Farm Radio Forum," W. H. Brittain (1941) reviews the first year of *Farm Radio Forum* in Ontario and Quebec as it is about to become a national program, but more significantly it expresses the hope for its future. For Brittain, the process of public education directed to farmers would accomplish the following: national unity through "understanding between different sections of

Canada, a better appreciation of common problems" (7); a broader understanding of rural problems and their solutions; the co-ordination between family members, existing voluntary groups, official agencies; the organization and action of local groups stimulated by the broadcasts and written materials; the development of leadership (9).

Ruth I. McKenzie, research director of *NFRF* and editor of *Farm Forum Guide*, uses a phrase coined by Brittain in her 1946 article title, "Radio as an Instrument of Democracy." The premise of McKenzie's article is that democracy demands responsible participation by its citizens to compel members of Parliament "to give a good account of themselves" (171). She insists that "the practice of democracy requires a technique which can be learned" (192) and that *NFRF*, through listening, discussing and enacting group projects, is that instrument of democracy referred to in the article's title. She further claims that the program unites farmers, trains them to form public opinion and, in its dissemination, leads to co-operation with other groups, institutions, and governments. MacKenzie also points to some of the difficulties: sustaining local interest in a national program; financial problems; lack of leadership and suspicion of political partisanship (176).

Mary C. Needler's 1948 study, "Ontario *Farm Radio Forum* Research Report," was commissioned by and presented to the Ontario *Farm Radio Forum* Executive. The Report responds to three questions: How can the life expectancy of forums be improved? How can the local discussions be made more satisfying

and the reports out of those discussion, more dependable? What is the best use that can be made of the *Guide*? Needler's research included sitting in on local forum discussions, reading organizers' reports, records of attendance, files of the *Guide* and provincial and national summaries of responses to questions posed in the *Guide*. Most significantly, her suggestions point to the possibilities of restructuring local forum discussions (through the *Guide* and broadcast responses) so that they serve to cultivate an enquiring culture, that they develop a shared leadership, and a "loyal opposition" to the trusted *NFRF* leadership (Section III, 20).

Ruth I. McKenzie's 1950 article, "*Farm Forum - Voice of Rural Canada*," provides a little history of *NFRF*, its techniques, its accomplishments and its leadership. On its techniques, McKenzie describes the broadcasts as designed to stimulate discussions, and reveals that the questions posed are tried out in advance with groups in the Maritimes, Ontario and Western Canada. Topics for discussion were, she says, the result of a yearly questionnaire, timeliness and the consensus of opinion expressed at the annual *NFRF* conferences. As accomplishments, McKenzie mentions that study and discussions have led to farm people being "able to approach their problems more intelligently and to work together towards their solution" (176). Other credited accomplishments included increased neighbourliness; improved national understanding among farmers; a voice for farmers; encouragement of community projects and development of leadership (177). Finally, on the question of control and

leadership, McKenzie describes the representation of the three sponsors on the National Board and the representation of the Ontario and Quebec forum groups through the setting up of provincial committees (177).

E. A. Corbett's 1953 article, "Farm Forum Twelve Years After," grew out of the *Farm Forum* Essay Contest from which he claimed to find evidence for his own experience and expectations of *NFRF*: that broadcasting information does not have "very much lasting educational value in itself" (15); that group discussion clarifies thinking and leads to solving common problems; that *NFRF* has restored the lost sense of community and its work has developed the principle of self-help (15).

R. Alex Sim's 1954 article, "Canada's *Farm Radio Forum*," discusses *NFRF* in the following terms: the role of history and geography played in its formation; its structure; its methods and techniques and finally, its working principles. Sim discusses the proximity and economic influence of the United States, the isolation of farmers, particularly in winter and the need to organize against low farm prices as incentives for launching *NFRF* (214). He also discusses the enabling supplied by the CBC with its national scope and public interest mandate as well as its knowledge and experience of 'listening groups,' in particular, those music listening groups connected to the BBC and those organized through the CBC on an experimental basis (215-16). While the CBC was responsible for the costs arising out of the broadcasts, it gave no direct contribution to *NFRF*; that was done by the CFA, the CAAE and through the

selling of the *Guide* to forum groups through provincial *NFRF* offices. Sim also points out that the federal Department of Agriculture also makes no contribution to the project (218). The 'Findings,' those summaries of decisions and opinions expressed in forum groups, were broadcast each week regionally, and nationally at the end of a series. Sim speaks of these "Findings" as having two important purposes: by farmers in different regions hearing each other's points of view, "it would be more difficult to play off one section of the country against the other" (220); the "Findings" informed and influenced the Government, politicians, civil servants and other citizens. Concerning action taken in local forum groups, Sim sees this as giving "the people experience in small things, in order that they may be competent later to deal with larger ones" (221).

Sim also wrote the introduction to and edited the largest study done on *NFRF: Canada's Farm Radio Forum*, commissioned and published by UNESCO as an "assistance to countries wishing to develop radio as a tool for adult education" ("Preface"). The text of 235 pages is divided into three major parts with each part divided into four or five chapters: Part I: "The History and Organization of *National Farm Radio Forum*," by John Nicol ; Part II: "Communications Study," by Albert A. Shea; Part III: "Community Study, Halton County," by G. J. P. Simmins.

In the conclusions of Part 1, Nicol speaks of three devices in *NFRF* for making education more attractive: local listening groups designed to make *NFRF* a social activity; Action Projects; ensuring that members of local forum all feel

that their Findings in group discussion have influence beyond their communities. He claims that "there is really little evidence that the Forums have formed the habit of continuing study on the topics discussed, with the result that the educational aspect can never be more than relatively superficial" (92).

Shea, in Part II, "Communications Study," notes that a British group listening and discussion project experiment lasted for ten years, beginning in 1927. Under the co-sponsorship of the broadcaster and the adult education movement, the project had pamphlets and a national advisory council with workers in the field. Its demise, according to Charles A. Siepmann (as quoted in Shea's section), was due to "the difficulty of finding group leaders with sufficient skill and knowledge to hold the groups together and to sustain effective discussion following the broadcasts" (96). Siepmann came to the conclusion that there was "little prospect of the growth of an extensive educational group movement based and dependent on radio communication" (96). Shea's claim that *NFRF* was partially successful in this regard rested on the variety and number of contacts between forums and the provincial and national offices, contacts among local forums and those within a forum group.

Shea discusses at some length the types and use of these various forms of contact. The first is the broadcast that in order to communicate with farmers had to have discussants able to "combine expert knowledge of particular problems with speaking ability" (109) while representing a variety of opinions and the geographical regions of Canada. In order to create a lively discussion

and allow the listeners to separate out the voices, the discussants were limited to three, led by a chairman who usually held a neutral position, controlling defamation, lengthy speeches and creating balance (111). While broadcast discussions in the early years were scripted from spontaneous interchanges, moving from the disc to tapes allowed freedom in discussions that could later be edited for broadcast. In the 1944 - 45 and the 1945 -46 series, almost half of the discussions were held in front of live audiences in different regions. This expensive and time-consuming practice was dropped in 1946 when regional discussants were brought into the Toronto studios.

The second method of contact was through a variety of printed material, especially *Farm Forum Guide* (commonly known as the *Guide*), a miniature newspaper that grew out of the earlier *Farm Forum Facts*. Prepared by the National Office of *NFRF* with an editorial committee representing the three sponsors, the *Guide* was four pages of facts, figures, arguments, supplementary readings and films, questions for discussion and ideas for Action Projects. Each week, 15,000 copies were distributed to forum groups through provincial secretaries and to other interested organizations (newspapers, radio stations, colleges, and individuals: government officials, agricultural representatives and clergymen). According to Shea, the *Guide* provided a frame of reference to orientate the listeners, a permanent record given the transitory nature of orality, a sense of unity as the *Guide* linked up groups, and a method of building

audience by exciting interest in the topics and offering fuel for discussion (128 - 29).

A third form of contact discussed by Shea was the broadcasting of local forum opinion, called "*Farm Forum Findings*," regionally in the last five minutes three times a month and nationally every fourth week on the *Review Broadcast*. The Findings were the results of the weekly questions posed in the *Guide*; the questions aimed not to suggest answers nor to seek to influence the decisions reached by the groups; to this end and for clarity and relevance, the questions were pre-tested in some 15 local forum groups. Questions to forum groups also included a yearly questionnaire on topics for the coming year's program. In the early years, suggested topics were sent out for consideration and ranking; later, forums were asked for suggestions before the yearly questionnaire was sent. Decisions were made at the annual National Conference and finally, if no decisive agreement, by the National Executive (132 - 35).

Other contacts among the institutions and participants involved in *NFRF* included regional rallies held once or twice a year, gathering up to 400 forums. Another point of contact in Shea's opinion was the use of *Summer Fallow*, a dramatized weekly program (beginning in 1946) that preserved the Monday night time slot, kept up the contact with farmers throughout the summer, and made contact with urban listeners on farm conditions and problems (119).

In his conclusions, Shea sees that the biggest problem for forum education was the lack of leadership within forum groups (he reminds the reader

that the majority of the rural population had not completed high school), that there was “no indication of any serious or continuing effort to exchange views between the English-speaking and French-speaking farmers of Canada” (151), that it needed to reassess its role “to determine to what extent it must develop a completely separate series of national, provincial and local bodies of its own, and to what extent, in what localities, and at what levels, it can co-operate with existing organizations” (151).

The third section, “Halton County, Ontario,” is a study of *NFRF*'s social organization, written by G. J. P. Simmins who acted as a participant observer for a year of forum activity in a county with some fifteen forums at the time of writing. Simmins' study covers more than just the year; by looking at records and by talking and listening to former and present participants, he reconstructs the whole history of *NFRF* in Halton county within a larger socio-economic context. For example, Simmins points to the mix of rich and poor farm land, the need for many subsistent farmers to take jobs in the nearby urban areas. He describes “the dominant values which pervade the social organization: industriousness, rationality, individual achievement and egalitarianism” (160); still, “to the individual accrue the rewards of achievement . . . And he is held personally responsible for his success or failure,” although “the value attached to ‘neighbourliness’ . . . offsets the individualistic emphasis” (161).

As well as *NFRF*, other agricultural organizations existed including the Women's Institute, Junior Farmers' clubs, United Farmers in Ontario (UFO)

clubs, the Halton Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Department of Agriculture, represented in the area by an 'Ag Rep' who helped with technical problems as well as co-operating with the various local organizations. Although *NFRF* was started in the county in 1941, the big organizing push came in 1945 when the Halton County Federation of Agriculture in conjunction with the National Film Board (NFB) acquired the full-time services of a 'field man'; however, without close follow-up after the organization of forum groups, some dissolved into card-playing groups and others faded away (179). Some groups felt disappointed that their expectation that the forums would be an active and influential arm of the CFA was not fulfilled. However, continuing forums saw themselves as the vanguard of the Federation, formed at a time when the universe had radically changed and old theories and dogmas no longer held: "At no time in the past, so far as can be gathered, has there been as widespread an attempt to study social and economic problems" (189).

Simmins discusses in some detail the internal organization and activities of Halton county forums. He prefaces this discussion with information about the makeup of the groups: family and neighbourhood blocks, the majority of members between the ages of 45 and 55, conservative, "set in their ways". It was this group that supplied the leadership in the county farming organizations (193), not those who were younger, busy with young children (192). The shift from meeting in schools to meeting in homes increased sociability and regularity of attendance as well as the presence of women. At the same time, the normal

rules about socializing impinged on forum practice e.g. people arrived late; faulty radio sets were not adjusted for fear of offending the host; men dominated the discussion and the male host was also the evening's chairman. This latter practice had the effect of an informal rotation and thus aided in training a number of leaders. Generally, however, the chairman position evolved from the high status farmers to the lower ones. A story told to Simmins by one farmer points out the role of competition in creating leadership abilities:

'Do you think I don't know that I was the last on the list? They gave it to everyone else, then finally had to give it to me. But man, I read that *Guide*, went to the public speaking classes at Milton and I really showed them. When I had to make that speech at X, I practised by talking to the cows for weeks. I showed them.' (198)

Women, held to be better at reading and writing than men (199), were considered good secretaries of Halton forum groups and indeed, this office bore a lot of responsibility: figuring out and writing down the group's Findings; collecting dues to send the national office to cover the cost of the *Guide* and other services; sending the Findings and other news about the forum to the local papers; reading aloud to the group *The Sign Post*, the provincial newsletter.

Halton County forums did not necessarily use the *Guide* or the broadcasts as anticipated by the architects: reading material was often not read or read while the broadcast and discussion were in process; Simmins points out that knowledge was traditionally acquired orally and through practice rather than through reading. Both the readings and the broadcasts were criticized for not coming to conclusions: "One member remarked, 'If they can't reach a final

decision how do they expect a bunch of ignorant farmers to? If they are confused, how do you think we feel?" (204). Still, discussions did take place and the broadcasts and readings played a role in this. Simmins claims that through the broadcast, "the attention of the group is focused on a specific topic and they are united by a common activity, that of listening . . . [thus] creating an atmosphere for further discussion" (205). Discussions about local topics were generally livelier than those that dealt with national and international topics. The significance of the discussions were encapsulated in a group's completing the Forum Findings, in their opinions being mentioned on the subsequent broadcast and, of lesser importance, in Action Projects that resulted from discussions.

Active participation, however, was considered as an index of change and the hallmark of success for *NFRF*. Forum groups became aware of the role of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture as a channel for Halton County and used their forums as a way of spreading information. Indeed, forums were called "the backbone of federation" (217). Participation also included working with other organizations; for example, forums were involved in setting up the Halton Co-operative Medical Services, a co-operative group health scheme with 43 enrolled forum groups, covering 1,000 members and their dependents (218). Other valued participation in Halton forums was in voluntary leadership training and practice, and in the maintenance and development of community life.

Simmins deals with the question of *NFRF* as an educational organization by discussing whether it fostered the inquiring attitude. While he points out that

the *Guide* was not widely read and that local libraries did not increase their memberships, so-called "box libraries (boxes of books that are sent out on request by the Ontario Department of Education)" (223) had increased fourfold in two years, significantly around the 1951 broadcast, *Educational Outlets for Adults*. The demand for pamphlets, speakers and the "sponsorship of activities aimed at extending non-academic education within the community" (223) also increased. For example, folk schools for young people which were three days or week-long provided "training in speaking and conducting meetings, instruction on farm problems and farm organizations, and some instruction of a general cultural nature" (224).

In his conclusion, Simmins notes that in the thirteen seasons of *NFRF* in Halton, 50 forums existed with 15 existing at the time of writing and comprising a minority of its farmers. He asks the question, "Why has *Farm Forum* not had greater success?" (225). His three main explanations are as follows: "the efforts to promote *Farm Forum* have not been sufficient" (225) and, in particular, the lack of organizing officials and field men; that explanation is attached to the second reason, the lack of leadership at the local level to start forums and keep them going; a third explanation is that "the type of activity involved . . . is [not] sufficiently attractive to the majority of farmers," lacking "practical" topics, those close to everyday experiences and concerns. Other reasons given by the farmers for the lack of attractiveness of forum groups was the "inconclusiveness of the broadcasts" (226) and the fact the discussions seemed to have little

meaning if not acted on; thus Simmins tells us that sustaining forums were those with active participation including Action Projects (226).

The UNESCO volume concludes by reviewing the Findings of the three authors and emphasizing the following points: that farmers supported *NFRF* project "because they thought it was a mouthpiece for voicing their protest rather than a means for self-improvement" (230); that its greatest success has been in "social integration' or restoring the sense of community" (230); that it encouraged "co-operation and participation in farm organizations" (231) and developed leadership. The lessons to be learned from the study are that "radio may play a vital role in organized adult education, provided it has a broad base at both the national and the local level" (232); that broadcasting in itself is not sufficient but needs strong local sponsorship; that effective sponsorship cannot be confined to financial contributions; that issues of national concern needed to be tied to local concerns in order for the project to transcend immediate environments. Finally, the conclusion speaks of the importance of "co-ordinating the approach of the different media" (235) not just the printed media but that of film as well.

Another study, *Farm Radio Forum in Saskatchewan: An Evaluation of the 1956 - 57 Forum Program*, was done through the Saskatchewan Council of *NFRF* to evaluate the provincial program to see if it was sufficiently appealing to farm families and "if it was to have sufficient influence to merit continued support by Provincial organizations" (4). Done in a period of five months by

unskilled, voluntary assistants, the study was “based on the diverse proposals and criticisms of *Forum* participants” by using the mailed questionnaire supplemented by selected interviews and telephone surveys (6). In its conclusion, the Project Committee confirmed the need for the study of social and economic issues, that this was recognized by “a solid core of rural leadership” (204) and that “those dedicated to educational goals in a democratic society shall move toward those goals only if they are prepared to accept and live with a continual partial accomplishment of them” (204).

The Committee found the principles of *NFRF* to be sound; in practice, however, there were obstacles to active participation. Some were practical such as other activities, young children, weather, transportation; others were a question of the practice of *NFRF* such as gathering participants of different capacities and interests and those from different regions while others were connected to funding.² The Committee discovered the significant fact that there was “a much wider individual listening audience for *Farm Radio Forum* than had been anticipated” (211) but that a higher level of satisfaction existed for those who actively participated in groups. In its recommendations, the Committee urged greater group participation by supplying individual listeners with written *NFRF* material and encouraging youth through a planned effort. The Committee also suggested the following changes: a more active pro-*NFRF* leadership of sponsoring farm organizations and the integration of district and local organizations; year-round, essential maintenance of the Saskatchewan program

with a full-time secretary for increased face-to-face contact with forum groups; and more direct participation in the activities of the regional council by active *Forum* members. On the question of the *Guide* and the broadcast formats, the Committee urged the questions for the Findings to more effectively “contribute to an effective polling of rural public opinion on issues of importance to the welfare of agriculture” (218), and that while the national theme of programs must continue, close attention should be paid to the meeting of regional interests and programs that could encourage local Action Projects.

John Ohlinger's thesis study, *The Listening Group in Adult Education* (1966), looks at Canada's contributions to this practice, *NFRF* and *CF*, in its fifth chapter, “Canada's Projects: The Most Successful in the World.” Ohlinger reviews the national and international influences and the structures and practices of the programs, concentrating on *NFRF*. His research is based on the UNESCO study and interviews with the national leaders of the projects and of the three sponsoring organizations. The main focus of this chapter is understanding the reasons for the decline and demise of listening group projects. Ohlinger has suggested three reasons: “as the sponsoring institutions matured their concerns diverged more and more; a fully working field structure for organizing and maintaining the groups was never established; the groups never became integrated into the fabric of Canadian society” (141). Ohlinger's subsequent *Listening Groups: Mass Media in Adult Education* (1967) covers the same ground as his thesis with less material on the Canadian projects. He does,

however, review the UNESCO study, stating that the “Canadian program was based on a political principle - that ‘men of ordinary education can understand the world they live in, and that, with knowledge they can exercise more and more intelligent control over their social and economic environment’” (45). The UNESCO-sponsored groups, on the other hand, “were based on an educational principle - that ‘education requires personal, intensive and systematic study based on the active participation of those who are to be educated’” (45).

An article, “*Farm Radio Forum: An Experiment in Adult Education 1941-1965*,” written by Glenn B. Powell, Agricultural Specialist, CBC, Radio News circa 1975-76 offers a short, laudatory history of the project. Of particular interest here is his analysis of why *NFRF* declined. Powell cites the main reason as television since “community or neighbourhood meetings were secondary to the network television schedule” (9). He also cites other technologies, the car (and better roads) and the telephone as diminishing rural isolation from urban areas. The experiment to use television to extend the *NFRF* project “did not increase the number of Forums organized nor did it increase the activity of the Forums that were in operation” (10). Powell also claims that “the organizations that Farm Forums had fostered eventually hastened the downfall of the listening groups. The busy farmer had only so much time for meetings” (10).

Roger Schwass’ 1972 thesis, *National Farm Radio Forum: The History of An Educational Institution in Rural Canada* is a historical study of *NFRF* as a rural educational program by a participant who, as part of his extensive

research, also interviewed the surviving leaders. This study is divided into three major historical patterns: "Evolution and Development 1939 - 1951"; Assessment and Consolidation 1951 - 1959"; "Efforts at Diversification 1959 - 1965." The study concentrates on *NFRF* as a rural education project without stressing its practice as a function of civic education, nor critically acknowledging the part that radio played. Nevertheless, Schwass does refer to the culture of civic education that *NFRF* encouraged. In referring to *NFRF*'s first decade, Schwass speaks of it producing " . . . a notable improvement in neighbourliness, a better understanding of social and economic issues, a more consistent, thoughtful 'farm voice,' as well as numerous community development projects and a significant enlargement of the pool of rural leadership"(9). On a broader civic education scale, Schwass states that *NFRF* "marshall[ed] public support for social programs such as public health services, . . . and numerous other public services" (14).

Schwass highlights the characteristics of *NFRF* that led to its decline: the difficulty of serving local and regional needs through a national network; the western bias of farm leaders for a program that originated in the east; the substantially different objectives of the sponsoring organizations; *NFRF*'s "failure" to solve the farm problems; the difficulty in achieving a full two-way flow of ideas and in responding flexibly and imaginatively to "the demands of the forums for a greater voice in the direction of the program" (9); the tendency of the broadcasts and the printed material to "interpret events in a politically

acceptable fashion" (9); and finally, the demand on their resources that weakened the involvement of the CFA and the CAAE (9). Schwass implies the central role of the CBC in creating an educational forum site:

The reduced involvement of the CAAE exacerbated the conflicts between the various pressure group sponsors and the CBC. This tendency became particularly troublesome when CBC producers attempted to provide controversial topics to stimulate discussion. (10)

To conclude this review of literature on *NFRF*, I will examine one of the few texts that was written well after the demise of the two historical forums and was not dependent on interviews with their participants. Ron Faris' *The Passionate Educators: Voluntary Associations and the Struggle for Control of Adult Educational Broadcasting in Canada 1919 - 52* (1975) offers an analytical history of the growth of voluntary associations, their giving birth to the CAAE and the efforts of that organization to encourage and to take part in educational broadcasting.

The chapter "The Politics of Educational Broadcasting: the Development of Coop and *Citizens' Forum*" concentrates on the political battles for the establishment of *CF* but offers a twelve-year overview of *NFRF* links, membership and activities. The next chapter, "Friends and Foes: External Forces Affecting the CAAE and its Forums," pinpoints four reasons for the decline of the social movement that undergirded the founding and early years of *NFRF*: the relative prosperity of the post-war years; the social and political acceptance of basic social security measures including the "development of

more orderly marketing and the active participation of the CFA in the policy-making process in Ottawa" (112); the decline of the rural populace and the process of urbanization; the professionalization of adult education studies that "greatly reduced its social movement potential" (113). In this chapter, Faris tells a detailed story of the efforts by the CAAE, its membership and its forums to counter the attacks on public broadcasting made by politicians, businessmen and private broadcasters. The supporters of the CBC argued on the grounds that public broadcasting was central to authentic public education.

The chapter, "In the Interest of the Association: Internal Forces Affecting the CAAE and Its Forums," documents the pull between ideas of public education as needing to emphasize social action and those that opposed that position. In spite of the fact that social action was not built into the structure of *CF* as it was with *NFRF*, this question erupted in the CAAE around *CF* as Faris relates the story. Faris' work is both detailed and interesting with a good index and full endnotes.

This thesis is not a survey, nor a history of *NFRF* notwithstanding that the literature review has provided a critical survey and history. Although there is a clear chronological flow as I examine particular programs on the subject of health delivery systems, my focus here is on how such programs served as civic forums. Over a period of twenty-five years, from 1940 to 1965, *NFRF* presented dozens of issues of interest mainly to farmers but some, like that of medical delivery systems, were of interest to the broader population.³ I have chosen the

subject of medical delivery systems for analysis because it contains the topics of co-operativism and equity of access, conscious political constructions that depend upon long-term education and practice. In turn, the essential topics of this subject support the institutions and practice of civic education itself. As well, there are strong indications that the broadcasts on health delivery accurately reflected the course of *NFRF*; one indication can be seen in the use of local Action Projects around this subject. Indeed, the discussion and action around health delivery suggests that *NFRF* was both creating itself as an institution largely through this subject while also creating, if not the institution of health care, the expectations and possibilities for it to exist. Thus, the broadcasts, both dramas and discussions, were a bellwether of the state of health delivery and the state of the progress of national mediated public education itself.

The material I look at includes the scripted broadcast dramas and discussions as well as the printed material sent out to local forum groups, memos, correspondence and broadcast participant feedback. While regional forum offices tabulated and regionally broadcast provincial responses to the questions posed to forum groups, I was most interested in the Findings that were broadcast nationwide, for they were not only representative of their regions but also were communicated to other regions. As well as looking at particular broadcasts and the forum material surrounding them, I also explore the discussions between the sponsoring organizations and their correspondence

with governments, business and other institutions in relation to those broadcasts.

The methodology for examining these broadcasts and all that supported and grew out of them is that of rhetoric. Rhetoric, the "art responsible for the imitation and expression of public thought," (Farrell 1986, 17) shares with the project of public education certain processes and epistemic principles: that in participating, one understands, in relation to the "community," one's own perspective, ethos and capacity for action; that the present, where choices are evaluated, is part of the continuum that joins the knowledge of the past to the possibilities of the future; that the world is and will be constructed through language, and that language entails commitment; that new perspectives and information will change present knowledge.

As a rhetorical movement, public education constitutes an idea of "community" and uses that idea as its setting, its place or "topos." Put another way, the notion of "community" is a perspective both for the critic and the being-in-community to grasp the meanings of what can be broadly termed political association. Thus, the trope of "community" will be examined in key historical texts of the public education movement in Canada. This will lay the groundwork for the second chapter in which I will examine how the concept of forum is linked to community and to the production of public knowledge and finally, in chapters three and four, how "community" is developed as a basis of argument in the broadcasts and the materials on health delivery.

Because the objects of this study are radio forums, a genre which has many voices, and because it would be impossible to separate out their particular effects in that they are embedded in a larger rhetorical context of news production and analysis, an evaluation of effects is neither possible nor of interest. This study will move away from both the centrality of the speaker and historical effects to focus on the form and effectiveness of the forum-structured message, at "the rhetorical capabilities of the discourse itself" (Lucas 1981, 8) in its articulation with particular social-cultural-technological environments.

In the rest of this chapter, I will examine one seminal material element of *NFRF*, that of the early public education projects in Canada. These projects were part of a movement intimately connected to the working class that resisted being educated by its "betters" and insisted on seeing the possibilities of education as improving the lot of the class and not just that of individuals within it. While this early history of adult education in Canada has been told elsewhere, the following brief retelling of this history will permit me to lay the groundwork for the discussion of the complex configuration of *NFRF*.

Chapter 2 will look at the development of the radio forum as a genre: its historical inspirations; its roots in orality and public education philosophy; how it differs from traditional rhetorical genres. I also discuss its requirements, many of which were formulated through institutional constraints.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will be a rhetorical history of *National Farm Radio Forum* from 1940 to 1965. The beginning of the third chapter will examine

the direct sources of *NFRF* such as the New Canada Movement, the CBC Farm Broadcasts, and early listening group projects, *Enquiry into Co-operation and Community Clinic*. Chapter 4 will analyse the post-war years. Both chapters will examine the kinds of knowledge, identifications and action that *NFRF* produced in the service of public education. Chapter 5 will draw conclusions from this study and will imagine further possibilities for public education through the radio forum genre in a mass-mediated society.

Adult and Civic Education: The Liberal vs. the Welfare Model

Historically, the adult education movement started and was maintained in civil societies often in opposition to the state. One such opposition was that of working men who were excluded from liberal democratic rights by a state controlled by the bourgeoisie and serving market interests. The Mechanics Institute, formed in Great Britain in 1823 and imported to Canada in the late 1830's, is one such example. Because elementary education was so lacking, the mechanics' desire to improve their knowledge of the trade began, as did the university-connected Workers' Educational Association, with training in literacy (Corbett 1947, 1).

Even training in literacy was seen as potentially dangerous. Corbett,⁴ a leader in the Canadian adult education movement, describes the development of the Mechanics Institute⁵ movement as "the first record of an organized revolt"

(1947, 3) against the ideas and conditions perpetuated by the ruling class, as represented in the words of the President of the Royal Society of England:

Giving education to the labouring classes of the poor . . . will be prejudicial to their morals and their happiness . . . teach them to despise their lot in life . . . render them factious and refractory . . . enable them to read seditious literature, vicious books, and publications against Christianity . . . render them insolent to their superiors. (quoted in Corbett 1947, 3)

Indeed, an article in the Institute magazine echoed recognized class division and the oppression of the working class in asserting that

men had better be without education than be educated by their rulers, that working men needed to find a way of their own, and that a system of education, to be of value to working men and women, should enable them to understand the laws of body and mind, of physical science, and social relationship, so they might attain happiness and make the greatest possible contribution to the life of the community. (quoted in Corbett 1947, 3)

The Mechanics Institute understood that the equality necessary to function within the public sphere did not begin and end with the wage-earners' franchise that was forced out of the bourgeoisie by the logic of liberalism. Some kind of equality could come, through education, however. As Corbett says, the Mechanics Institute movement "made it quite clear that the social problem is partly an educational problem" (1947, 4). Indeed, education is vital to democratic citizenship and to the solution of social problems. At base, citizenship "defines those who are, and who are not, members of a common society." J. M. Barbalet in his work, *Citizenship*, goes on to point out that

the issue of who can practice citizenship and on what terms is not only a matter of the legal scope of citizenship and the formal nature of the rights

entailed in it. It is also a matter of the non-political capacities of citizens which derive from the social resources they command and to which they have access. A political system of equal citizenship is in reality less than equal if it is part of a society divided by unequal conditions. (1988, 1)

Education concerned with citizenship and thus the extension of democracy always comes face to face with the question of unequal social resources and the need to rectify the balance.

In an effort to rectify or, at least, adjust the imbalance within a market society that denies equal access to citizens, governments in democracies involve themselves in some way in extending participation in the public sphere. In Canada, voluntary organizations and civic associations took up that work, often supported and used by government departments as we will see in *NFRF*. The aim of the funding support provided by a state for what is generally called "adult education" points to the degree to which education is viewed as an instrument of that state.

It will be useful at this point to separate out the terms "adult education" and "civic" or "public education," the latter terms coming into popular parlance during World War II. Peter Jarvis in his study, *Adult Education and the State* (1993) delineates four models of education directed toward adults: two of them, the Market model and the Social Control model emphasize vocational adult education as a commodity to serve market demands. The other two models, the Progressive Liberalism model and the Welfare model, are of interest here because they are concerned with two models of citizenship and hence two

models of democracy. In referring to the latter two models, I will adopt the terms "public education" or "civic education."

These two models of public education attempt to create an awareness of citizenship and offer the means of equalizing the possibilities for entering the public sphere; however they approach the problems differently. The Progressive Liberalism model provides an education for "individual benefit, to enrich the lives of those who wish to attend classes" (Jarvis 1993, 43). This model seeks to produce critical thinkers who are aware of social forces and able to assess the actions of the governing elite; at the same time, however, it reproduces the demands of market by putting the emphasis on the self-interest and individualism of the learners, stressing their independence. Such education encourages them to submit to and confine their critique within that ideology of the "inevitable subjection to the determination of the market" (Macpherson 1962, 273).

While the kind of equality produced by the Progressive Liberalism model of education gives individuals the wherewithal, and indeed, the determination to be acquisitive players in the market society, the Welfare model, in contrast, critiques and attempts to modify, if not change, the structure of the market society; it ". . . is reformist and interventionist," putting "to rights any structural injustices that occur" although, it can be reasonably argued, ". . . introduced as a form of crisis management to reconcile the demands of the people expressed

through the democratic political processes with the recurrent crises of a capitalist economy" (Jarvis 1993, 43-44).

The Canadian history of the Mechanics Institute reveals the difficulty of sustaining public education that serves the working class. The demise of the Institute was summed up in an epitaph by the Principal of Queen's University, Kingston in 1892: "the one place you never find a mechanic is in a Mechanics Institute" (Corbett 1947, 5). This was a lesson to the next generation of adult educators such as Corbett, first president of the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE), to be aware of becoming "professional, paternalistic, and centralized," which has the effect of closing off discussions of a controversial nature (Corbett 1947, 4). Writing in 1947 with a number of freedom of discussion battles already behind him, Corbett warned that ". . . adult education must always remain a voluntary activity . . . its roots must remain in the interests, the needs, the intellectual demands of the people themselves" (1947, 5). He summed up, in words that ring with authenticity, the long history of continuing opposition to the type of education for adults that moves beyond serving the interests of the governing elite and the market economy:

. . . there are still many people in this country who regard adult education as a dangerous activity. We are often told that it stirs up the people, makes them dissatisfied with their rightful place in life . . . We are told that the less people know about the world they live in, its governments, and how they operate, the less they know about economics and the basic causes of the major problems in a democracy, the better for all concerned. Many of those who oppose adult education in these terms are quite prepared to flood the country with propaganda presenting a particular point of view, but they vigorously oppose any free and

objective discussion of questions of a controversial character. These people would leave a man free to do what he likes provided he does what they consider to be in his best interest. They would give a man Freedom of thought provided he thinks the right thoughts; Freedom of religion provided he worships the true God; Freedom of speech, provided he says the right things; Freedom from want provided he does not want too much. (Corbett 1947, 5)

As we will see in this brief history of public education in Canada, attacks rose to a vigorous level when the organized study among farmers and fishermen of co-operative enterprises became widely publicized on radio. In spite of the opposition, co-operative study-action was a vital part of the public education movement; this was so for two reasons: not only was it materially productive for organized groups of labourers, it was also encouraged and sustained by academic institutions in their extension activity. In the following sections, I will sketch out the roles played by academic institutions in initiating public education through their extension departments. While this activity was the basis for the founding of the CAAE, these institutions also continued to play an important, long-term role in sustaining *NFRF*.

Academic Institutions Initiate Public Education Projects

The Antigonish Co-operative Movement: The Welfare Model

Universities and provincial departments of education and agriculture began to take responsibility for adult education at the beginning of the twentieth century, establishing extension departments as a medium of exchange between

the community and the university (Corbett 1950, 5). This was particularly true in the western universities where the "response to community in the form of university extension is embodied in the statutes" (Thomas 1989, 118). One early and seminal model for the role of academic institutions in adult education and one that had a profound influence on *NFRF*⁶ was the extension work begun in 1921 by the St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia and developed into "the Antigonish way":⁷

We ask the Canadian people to run the biggest business in Canada, the political state, and then in the same breath declare that they are incompetent of running their own grocery store. If they are not able to own and operate the economic institutions that lie close to them and that are vital to their very subsistence, then democracy will be impossible. (Coady 1943, 55)

The co-operative movement confronted the thorny problem of the formal equality in liberal democracy and the inequalities of capitalism. In producing goods for profit and not, primarily, for use, capitalism subjects consumers to "the expensive machinery of salesmanship and advertising" (Coady 1967, 75). As well, industrial workers and primary producers have "their energies confined to the most menial functions in economic society" (121). Co-operativism, like capitalism, can free man from personally having to produce all that he needs; more significantly, it also frees him from being "at the mercy of someone who wants to make a profit" (123). Rev. Dr. Coady,⁸ one of the leaders of this movement, describes how, only in building co-operatives could working people find the road to improving their way of life and become masters of their own

destiny: "If the masses of the people have become, in a sense, slaves, it is because they have not taken the steps or expended the effort necessary to change society" (17).

A new social order and economic reconstruction could be neither a gift from governments nor a revolutionary grab from entrenched vested interests but rather the democratic work of people in their own parts of the world controlling their economic conditions through co-operation. Coady speaks of capitalism as a *cul-de-sac* for the masses of people for it seems to offer the possibility of climbing out of "menial positions and getting ownership and control of the institutions that generate the wealth in society" (122). That hope, however, is not fulfilled for most people and, at the same time, stops them from initiating co-operative projects. In the meantime, the best and brightest are pulled out from their communities, now diminished by the loss, and educated in the vocational and professional system to "promote the interests of the class which they serve" (Coady 1943, 20).

In contrast, co-operative education and action would "give the people life where they are and through the callings in which they find themselves" (1943, 21). With the help of the Extension Department, fishermen, farmers and miners organized their co-operative projects in Cape Breton with the assurance that they had the right "to own and control the economic life of their community" (33) and that this right, "to form mutual self-help associations" (31), would redefine democracy by redefining their role.

Co-operativism, Coady claimed, "builds the man as it frees him" (Coady 1967, 125). Study club discussions "give the people something to tie to. It keeps them together. They have to wrestle with it. It gives them a sense of togetherness which naturally issues in group learning" (Coady 1943, 71). The study process consisted of three parts: " (1) the small study club; (2) discussion issuing in economic group action; (3) the willingness of the more intelligent members of the group to place their abilities at the disposal of the slower members" (Coady 1967, 10). Through co-operative education and practice, citizens are developed, able "to manipulate effectively the other forces that should operate in a democratic society" (125); this would include an open and honest involvement in the political sphere as educated and propertied citizens, no longer alienated because no longer wholly controlled by the economic power wielded by others. Even though the percentage of co-operative ownership may be small, such ownership, according to Coady would be "an effective yardstick in determining the fair and just price" (132) and, more importantly, provide a moral standard or baseline for the way that citizens, institutions and enterprises should interact in order to build a democratic society.

This is not the republican model of Greek democracy. While the *polis* was both the training ground and the site of political life, its participants were only those who had been able to free themselves, with the help of slaves, from the realm of 'necessity.' In the St. Francis-Xavier co-operative model of education and action, participants are always in the *process* of freeing themselves from

certain aspects of necessity and the kind of robotic slavery that is endemic both in the mechanical-technological age and in liberal-welfare societies whose appropriation of people as consumers thwarts full political participation. Unlike participants in the Greek model of political life, ideal co-operative participants do not yearn to separate themselves from the economic, personal, and the social in order to embrace the political, but rather operate within those realms to both modify and to bridge the distance between those realms and the political realm: in short, to politicize the realm of necessity.

“Experiments and Demonstrations”: the CAAE in Partnership with Extension Departments

As well as St. Francis-Xavier University, many other universities in Canada had set up extension departments that served the interest of public education and not simply adult education directed to individuals. Indeed, it was “mainly through pressure on the part of university Directors of Extension” that “a national clearing-house and a co-ordinating agency” (Corbett 1947, 6), the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) was founded in 1935. One stated function of the CAAE was “to undertake experiments and demonstrations” (Wilson 1950, 42) and these were usually done through university extension departments.

One such experiment was set up in The Pas, Manitoba in 1938 by the CAAE and co-sponsored by the University of Manitoba. The Pas program, “to

demonstrate the power of adult education to solve community problems," (Welton 1987b, 1) is reviewed here to highlight its formulation in contrast to the work done in Antigonish and to understand how its weaknesses were instructive for the CAAE and the architects of *NFRF*.

Unlike the towns involved in the Antigonish Movement, The Pas was neither stable nor homogeneous. Michael Welton's study of The Pas experiment (1987b) describes the major ethnic groups that made up the town as being "suspicious of each other" and that suspicion was exacerbated by "The Pas' isolation, frontier individualistic political economy and myopic voluntary associations [which] perpetuated mutual fear" (Welton 1987b, 8). The town was also suffering from the effects of the Depression and the threat of war which created further antagonism between and within the French, German, Ukrainian and British ethnic groups.

The experiment set up by the CAAE seemed to create friction rather than resolve these antagonisms. One reason seems to be the distance between the locals and the two educators, Harry and Mary Avison, brought in from outside the region; this was in spite of CAAE's "deep conviction that programs should be developed locally, that they should be worked out and operated by people on the spot and familiar with local conditions" (Wilson 1950, 41). In contrast, the success of the Antigonish Movement was due in part to its leaders who were "born and raised locally . . . , known, trusted, loved and respected" (Lotz quoted in Crane 1987, 230). Still, the Avisons' lack of success went beyond their being

from outside the town. They set out to develop an education program as "a basis for people of different racial, political and religious affiliations to work together for the enrichment of their common life," one that would "[break] down social barriers that [work] against a unified community" (CAAE and The Adult Education Association of The Pas c.1938). The situation they faced was a miniature of many multiethnic societies and it was partly the miniaturization that led to the failure. The Pas was too small and too isolated to benefit from the sorts of institutions through which groups are able to negotiate their differences in order to find a common, if particular, ground from which to co-operate. Even the threat of war that would normally bring co-operation, seemed "to heighten the old prejudices and suspicions," which were "revivals from the last war and . . . not qualified by new alignments" (Avison 1939, 2). It was the stifling lack of new alignments that the CAAE took into consideration in planning future projects.

An enlarged perspective was defined at the CAAE Annual Meeting in 1940; it called on adult educators to develop "a national rather than a provincial or sectional outlook" by formulating one that is "sufficiently broad and comprehensive in its scope that it will embrace all of rural Canada" (Cameron 1940, 1). The report recommended an educational policy to improve "the economic status of rural Canada" and to provide an "equality of educational opportunity" (2). Both national objectives and local interests were to be served by provincial advisory councils which would meet in "national meetings and

formulate national policy from time to time" (8), and by two types of leaders who were capable of representing the two perspectives: "the University trained specialist and the local community leader who lives on the farm and is in daily contact with farm problems" (7).

The CAAE's developing policy recognized the need for individuals to learn skills as organized in The Pas, but also took into consideration the thrust of the Antigonish Movement that concentrated on transforming political economy. Lacking institutional support, The Pas experiment shied away from involving the community in a study-action project for economic and political change. While one small group of men studied in the area of political affairs, the majority of groups were concerned with vocational training, handicrafts and formal education. In short, though the CAAE and the Avisons hoped for the building of a "unified community" that could serve as a forum, their work in The Pas was largely rendered as adult education for small insular groups.

In his *Director's Report* at the 1941 annual meeting, Corbett confirmed the reformist and interventionist direction of the CAAE by vigorously taking a stand for an active, participant-centred approach to education for adults:

. . . adult education is more than a method or a system. It must mean more than just another society for the purpose of providing educational services for adults. It is a social philosophy, an attitude, a moral conviction that life can be vastly fuller and richer, and the world a better place to live in than it has ever been before, and that the way of approach to that possibility is through continued, fearless and open-minded study and discussion. (Corbett 1941, 17)

The model of Antigonish and the educational movements that set out to reform society, the sustaining support of academic and voluntary organizations, and the organizing of experiments under shared local and national auspices allowed the CAAE to enter a new authoritative stage; it pulled together all the strands concerning leadership, the relationship of the local to the national and methods of study, discussion and action, into a configuration that could be adapted to the medium of national radio.

Enter Radio: The Redefining of Public Education and Broadcasting

By 1940, a number of university extension departments, notably at the universities of Alberta and Manitoba, and a number of adult education programs sponsored by the Workers' Education Association of Canada, the United Farmers of Ontario and the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture had set up study and listening groups in conjunction with local broadcasters (Faris 1975, 87; Hannam 1940). As part of its mandate "to undertake experiments and demonstrations" (Wilson 1950, 42), the CAAE joined with the CBC in hiring Neil Morrison to head the Listening Group Projects "to promote experimentation with listening groups throughout Canada . . . to try to lay a basis for future work and make recommendations" (CAAE, Report of Annual Meetings 1940, 8).

The first national experiment in listening groups was organized around the subject of co-operation, the term exemplifying, both to its supporters and detractors, the social change approach to education. Thus the experiences of a

number of educational projects connected with farming communities and organizations and that of the Antigonish Movement were brought together at the request of the Co-operative Union of Canada and placed under the aegis of the CAAE which, in association with the CBC, broadcast in early 1940 a series of eight dialogues under the title, *Enquiry into Cooperation* (CBC 1940b). In the planning for the series, the CAAE and the CBC called for "co-operative listening" and offered "to help in the formation of listening groups by providing special services" that included instructions on how to conduct a listening group, outlines of the talks, questions for discussion and reading lists (CBC 1940a).

As long as education about co-operativism was confined to the local and regional through face to face contact, written material and local broadcasts, opposition to it was muted. However, once the CAAE and the CBC joined forces to broadcast potentially threatening ideas about co-operativism nationally, opposition was strident. Simply the advertising for the series elicited a strongly negative response from business groups. The following resolution, sent by the Winnipeg Board of Trade to the CBC in December of 1939, attacked the right of the CBC to air what business saw as "a highly controversial subject":

Resolved that the proposed broadcast of talks called *The CBC conducts an Enquiry into Co-operation* sponsored by the CBC itself, is undesirable for the following reasons: a. Discussion of a highly controversial subject, as this is admitted to be in the advertising of the program by the CBC, is understood to be contrary to the policy and regulations of the corporation. b. Investigation or enquiry into any subject and particularly into widely controversial matters is not within the proper field of the CBC nor are broadcast radio talks a proper medium for such enquiries. c. The program published, while purporting to be an enquiry, is clearly not in the form of

an enquiry, as advertised, but has a definitely propagandist trend. d. Such a discussion at the present time must tend to accentuate differences in economic opinion, and is therefore contrary to the public interest when united national effort, rather than bitter economic controversy, ought to be encouraged and that the Winnipeg Board of Trade therefore requests the Board of the CBC to withdraw the proposed broadcast of this program. (Winnipeg Board of Trade 1939)

The three arguments put forward were all open to examination: Did the CBC have the right to air controversial matters? Could those controversial matters be aired through the voices of their adherents? What public interest role should the CBC play at a time of national urgency? The answer to these questions could not be completely resolved within and by the CBC although it did begin by modifying the format of the series so that the introductory program included an oppositional voice, that of the secretary of the Retail Merchants' Association of Canada to put the case against the co-operative movement. Thus, a fifteen minute dialogue moved toward a debate format and thus conceded that oppositional voices had a right to be heard.

The more basic question, whether the CBC could raise contentious issues about liberal ideology, needed to be answered in the realm of public debate outside the constraints placed on the CBC. This debate took place because of Corbett's well-placed leaks to newspaper editorialists about the possibility of censorship. Their response and that of hundreds of listening and study groups from farming communities and organizations, allowed the CBC to go ahead with the series. What was clarified in this brouhaha was that such a series was

politically controversial and that broadcasters did have the right to air it; indeed, the controversy went some way to lay the foundation of that right. Morrison expressed the need for outside support for controversial expression in his March 6, 1940 letter to Roy Grant of the Canadian Livestock Cooperative in New Brunswick:

I am glad to hear that the Farmers' Association of N. S. and N. B. endorsed the broadcast by resolution and forwarded copies to the CBC. Such action is important and worth taking if we desire to have broadcasts of this character continue. The CBC is subject to pressure from other directions as you know, but if it also has support from organizations which are concerned with having the radio used in the interests of the common people, good programs of an educational character can be presented with more assurance. You will be interested to know that the CBC plans to continue the listening group work next year." (Morrison 1940)

The question posed about the public interest role to be played by the CBC in wartime was answered in its wartime activity in participating in public education services through working partnerships with government departments and the CAAE membership of voluntary associations.

Wartime Co-ordination: Negotiating Citizenship

With the outbreak of World War II, the CAAE's educational work was channelled into "the efforts being made by the government to marshal support for the cause of democracy, as a means of strengthening the war effort" (Selman 1991, 45). The CAAE sent a telegram to Prime Minister Mackenzie King on September 4, 1939 saying that "the CAAE . . . lays at the disposal of the Federal government its services and facilities for information and education in

citizenship and public affairs" (CAAE 1939). War has the effect of forcing all segments of society to co-operate for what is argued to result in a brighter future for all. In turn, as J. M. Barbalet (1988) succinctly points out, war forces states to come face to face with their populations as citizens who, with that acknowledged status, have an equal right to their nation's resources:

[Waging] war states require the commitment of their populations and this can only be bought with an extension of their citizenship; . . . warfare promotes social change through mass mobilization and state intervention; and under these conditions there emerges a new appreciation of collective and shared responsibility. . . . People come to realize that if the dangers a country faces are to be shared, then its resources should also be shared (Barbalet 1988, 37).

The wartime partnership in Canada, the co-operation between state and civil interests, was vitally important to the development of public education and to the whole of civic culture as the partnership continued after the war. Indeed, the line between state and civil interests is not clearly drawn: the CBC, for example, while government-financed is not a direct arm of the state as is the Department of Agriculture or as was the Wartime Information Board (WIB). Whether controlled directly by the government or being at arm's length, public institutions such as the CBC, the NFB and the Citizenship Branch were so important to the CAAE in its projects of public education that the 1946 CAAE National Conference argued that "the continuance of these public bodies is here taken for granted, since the services they can provide are essential to the work of the CAAE" (CAAE, 1946 "Building Community"). Roby Kidd, then associate

director of the CAAE, asked if government involvement was ". . . a threat or a stimulus?"

In many parts of the world this question would be fiercely debated. And it is of more than academic interest in Canada. . . . Take the problem of government information services. After hearing this discussed in the United States one might become convinced that if any federal funds were spent on films and radio it would mark the coming to power of totalitarianism with all its evils This all seems very unreal in Canada. Adult Education has had more than a decade of 'partnership' with the information services of the Federal Government (Kidd, 1950a, 22)⁹

For the CAAE, the partnership was both liberating and constraining. The CAAE moved from acting as an information clearing house to being the linchpin of the enormous movement of both public education and social change. At the same time, it was constrained by the vested interests of its partners and member organizations from government, voluntary groups, agriculture and business. The need to co-operate with all the interests in order to fulfill both the goals of war and those of a democratic citizenship found the CAAE balancing its role as social reformer with one that took into consideration the views of its institutional member organizations.

The balancing act can be seen in the wartime discourses that forced the CAAE to justify its alliance with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), a political organization for farmers. As Donald Cameron pointed out in his 1940 report to the CAAE, farmers had suffered in economic and social terms: "the rural dwellers of Canada comprise one third of the population and provide one half of the National wealth and receive one twelfth of the National income"

(1940, 3). In his address to the 1941 annual meeting, Corbett urged the CAAE to "throw off its attitude of academic detachment and make it quite clear that it intends to use whatever methods of propaganda are sound and legitimate in helping people to think clearly about the kind of world we have a right to look for when this war is over" (Corbett quoted in Selman 1991, 45).

In 1943, when the state of rural health services had been made evident, Corbett linked the awareness of and training for the responsibilities of citizenship to erasing social inequalities:

It has become abundantly clear to all of us during the present war that we have never as a people thought much about citizenship in a democracy. We have neglected to concern ourselves about public health. We have been blind to the inequalities of educational opportunity as between country and city, between the children of the worker and the children of the privileged classes. (CAAE, Report of Annual Meeting, 1943)

Wartime co-operation at the national and international levels allowed Corbett to question the postwar return to a market regulated economy: "Can we depend on private enterprise to provide full employment or will a considerable measure of government planning and regulation be required?" (Corbett quoted in Selman 1991, 46).

Corbett's position was reinforced in the *Manifesto* passed at the 1943 National Conference on Adult Education which called for "the principle of total and mutual responsibility - of each for all and all for each - both as between persons and as between nations" (quoted in Kidd 1963, 108). As described by the *Manifesto*, this responsibility needed to be expressed in "social controls and

planning" (108) for "social goals take precedence over individual and sectional purposes of profit or advantage" (109); however, this was not to be an initiative exercised just by the government but a "voluntary co-operative activity" (108): "Neither the old individualism nor the newer mass-collectivism but a relationship of voluntary co-operation, which balances rights with responsibilities, is the basic pattern of the emergent social order" (109).

In 1944 Corbett acknowledged that CAAE's close link with the CFA as a co-sponsor of *NFRF* was a source of irritation for many of CAAE's member organizations: "we had allied ourselves with people of progressive temper, we began to be accused of having ideas about human affairs, which is always dangerous in Canada" (quoted in Selman 1991, 47) The new 'middle way' called for by Dr. W. H. Brittain, the President of the CAAE, would allow partnerships with both openly political groups such as the CFA and with government institutions and voluntary associations. The CAAE was able to defuse criticism In its promotion of what was to become, in 1945, the Joint Planning Commission (JPC), a body of over a hundred organizations representing government, business, professional, labour, religious, educational and voluntary groups to co-ordinate adult education programs. In a new configuration, the CFA became one organization among many involved in educational programs with the CAAE.

For its part, the CFA sought in its relationship with *NFRF* to provide its members with opportunities to engage in civic practices while strengthening farming communities, to understand farm problems on both a provincial and

federal basis and to unite those practices and understandings into collective action. Its stated educational position with *NFRF* was that "it [*NFRF*] shall remain completely free and independent, that it should not become an instrument for special pleading. *NFRF* should be free so it can attract the widest possible support" (*NFRF*. Conference Proceedings and Reports 1950,15) This position on *NFRF* was successful in that various departments in the federal and provincial governments wove their interests into the fabric of *NFRF* as well. As examples of this, the 1942 *Farm Forum Facts*, the information paper of *NFRF*, headed an article with the words "Opportunities for Forums in Projects with their Departments of Agriculture: Provincial agencies are ready to help Forums take community action" (*FFF*, November 16, 1942). Another example is that the Wartime Price and Trade Board used the Findings from provincial forum groups for its own research "to answer the farmers' questions about the price ceiling, to explain the policy and practice of price control, and to deal with some of the major questions and suggestions put forward by the farm people" ("Looking at the Farmer Who Looked at Price Control," June, 1942). For the CAAE, this large farming constituency brought by the CFA held within its aegis in local, provincial and national groupings, the ideal "community" that could be transformed into active citizenry through *NFRF*.

'Community': The Ground of Public Education

"The conception that society is a body and that all its members prosper or suffer together is a fundamental truth for the teaching of citizenship in any real way."
(Sir Robert Falconer)

The process of CAAE's development and indeed, the development of the CFA was a gathering together of locals into national organizations. Many successful local rural projects such as Antigonish and those around other universities, and even the unsuccessful projects as in The Pas, convinced CAAE that the local in the configuration of community was the necessary basis for successful public education. The co-operation and shared judgments during the war linked up disparate interests, and local groups and voluntary groups into partnerships with governments, provincial and national, and government-funded institutions; these partnerships seemed to present a working national community. It was in this spirit that the CAAE's 1946 post-war conference, *Building Community Programmes*, argued for the continuation of that web of cooperation, that the defeat of fascism premised that "quite ordinary men and women have within themselves and their communities the spiritual and intellectual resources adequate to the solution of their own problems" (4) and that they deserved assistance in their "economic security, cultural enrichment, intellectual development, and social understanding" (4). The justification for the continuation and assistance is premised both on the importance of community and on the experience of war that developed a national community through the co-operation of institutions. In this section I will examine ideas about 'community'

and how these ideas worked into the rhetoric of *NFRF*. My discussion begins with the judgment made by the CAAE that local groupings are the ground for the training for citizenship.

Creating the “Great Community”: Ideas about the Local

We can conceive of the term “local community” as representing both an objective reality and an optimistic, ongoing enterprise. When the co-sponsors of *NFRF* set out to help organize farmers, they thought of the organization, not in terms of individuals, but as people grouped in local association, in what Dewey called “temporal and geographical localization” (Dewey 1927, 39) who shared not just space but a common kind of work and thus, problems to be confronted. In *The Public and Its Problems* (1927, Dewey argues that it is at the existing level of shared labour and affective exchange that the training necessary for political life must begin. This is so because the local is the level of hearing, as well as seeing, and of action with its consequences made clear. For Dewey, the intellectual wealth of local communities, necessary to the “great community”, can be “fulfilled only in the relations of personal intercourse” in primary oral dialogue for “vision is a spectator; hearing is a participator” (1927, 218-19).

The relationship between experience, action and consequence present in the local community is central to Dewey’s understanding of knowledge production necessary to the political life. Living in association means a continuous communicating and testing of what is known:

a thing is fully known only when it is published, shared, socially accessible Knowledge cooped up in a private consciousness is a myth, and knowledge of social phenomena is peculiarly dependent upon dissemination, for only by distribution can such knowledge be either obtained or tested. (176-7)

This free flow of knowledge tied to experience and action is one expression of the equality firmly attached to local community. Dewey claims that like "fraternity" and "liberty", the concept of "equality" isolated from communal life is a "hopeless abstraction" (149). The grounds of an authentic equality is denoted for

the unhampered share which each individual member of the community has in the consequences of associated action. It is equitable because it is measured only by need and capacity to utilize, not by extraneous factors which deprive one in order that another may take and have. (150)

Dewey's notion of a balancing flow of equality provided as "a fruit of the community when its action is directed by its character as a community" (151) refutes the hard edge 'rights-based talk' of the present day.

Dewey was a realist: he knew that local communities were often narrow and insular; for example, the experience of CAAE The Pas experiment, the low number of farmers in local forum groups, and the difficulty in getting rich farmers to work with poorer farmers attest to that. Still, *NFRF*, like Dewey, advocated the critical and practical work of promoting the desirable features of community and suggesting improvements (1927, 211). Dewey had also seen the immense problems that inhibited the growth of the "great community" and anticipated the growing dominance of the visual over the aural. Nevertheless, for him, community building was a hopeful rhetorical process, "not a fixed end, but a plan

for intelligent action" (cited in Brosio 1972, 88). His scheme envisaged the "great community" both being supported by and supporting local communities through public-minded institutions that serve public enquiry to produce knowledge that "does not exist except when there is a systematic, thorough, and well-equipped search and record" (Dewey 1927, 179).

Creating Political Community: The Rhetorical Process

Dewey based his concept of "community" on the idea of particular communities in time and space. As anchored in reality as his idea of community is, Dewey calls it up in numerous ways to warrant arguments and generate actions. In this sense, his "community" is rhetorical. Rhetoric, the "art responsible for the imitation and expression of public thought," (Farrell 1986, 17) is concerned with the weighing of probabilities in the political realm to come to judgments, grounded in praxis, about what we should do. The emphasis on the "we" points up rhetoric's dependence on, and constitution of a community for rhetoric. It "[accommodates] itself to the particular, substantive, beliefs and desires of the listeners it addresses, rather than holding to abstract or formal principles of judgment" (Beiner 1983, 101). In trying to understand how a political community can be constituted and addressed, what its rules of engagement are and what such a community can do, the term "community" needs to be refashioned as a trope that can help to figure complicated social and political relationships that serve overlapping realities and interests.

One of the faces of "community" that offers a perspective on its political function is that of the relationship among its members. Dewey saw the equality necessary for a political life flowing from the fact of living in intimacy, a longtime fraternal relationship that protects and instructs its own members. Arendt's understanding of equality in the Greek *polis* also takes into consideration the educative work of "unequals who stand in need of being 'equalized' in certain respects and for specific purposes" (1958, 215). However, Arendt sees the notion of brotherhood as pernicious for the political life. This is because the relationship of *eros* emphasizes *pathos* rather than *praxis*, or as Jasinski explains, it "shifts emphasis away from the 'what' of human interaction (reflected in a concern over specific social practices) and refocuses attention on the topic 'who' (embodied in quests for the 'essence' or ultimate motive of the person)" (1963, 469). *Eros*, then, collapses the space between "brothers," and what is held in common so that differences of perspective, the 'in-between' and indeed, the common world, are lost.

On the other hand, the expression of humanness is essential to political life. Arendt refers to the concept of *philia*, friendship or mutual trust among citizens, which "in Aristotle . . . is one of the fundamental requirements for the well-being of the City"; it is friendship that allows and encourages the kind of talk that humanizes the world:

They [the Greeks] held that only the constant interchange of talk united citizens in a polis. In discourse the political importance of friendship, and the humanness peculiar to it, were made manifest. This converse (in

contrast to the intimate talk in which individuals speak about themselves), permeated though it may be by pleasure in the friend's presence, is concerned with the common world, which remains 'inhuman' in a very literal sense unless it is constantly talked about by human beings and it does not become humane just because the human voice sounds in it, but only when it has become the object of discourse. (Arendt 1968, 24)

The object of this converse, that of the "common world," indicates a further rhetorical perspective on 'community' for it is both the ground of converse and, in turn, constituted by converse. Thomas Farrell has argued that the process of producing what he terms 'public knowledge' is indeed that which transforms a society into a community. This constitution of 'community' through talk has a number of elements: knowledge production, judgment and action, all three feeding back into new knowledge. I will first examine some aspects of knowledge production available to political communities-in-process.

That which is central to the process of knowledge claims is the preservative constituent, the enacting and preservation of memories of a community. One aspect of this constituent is what James Carey (1989) calls "ritual communication" which is

directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; . . . not the act of imparting information or influence but the creation, representation, and celebration of shared even if illusory beliefs [and centering] on the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality. (Carey 1989, 43)

Public or social memory is not, however, shared solely through public speech; Arendt has spoken of the monuments and public buildings squaring off the Greek *polis* as central to public memory, "a kind of organized remembrance"

(1958,197-8). In Chapter 2, I will argue that public institutions are central to this element of organized remembrance that contributes to the knowledge of a political community.

A further aspect of public or social knowledge (incorporating that of social memory) is its cohesive and projecting role. In other words, there is a link between what we agree on knowing and what we act on, what we do as a community. There is also a link between the ways that a community knows and the judgments it makes. Thomas Farrell (1976) has helped us to understand that public knowledge shares with technical knowledge, certain functional characteristics (we want to do something with this knowledge) and a presupposition of "a kind of regularity" though not of a kind that would allow for predictions. Unlike scientific or technical knowledge, public knowledge "must presume or attribute a consensus concerning the generalizable interests of persons in order that argument may culminate in the advocacy of choice and action" (Farrell 1976, 7). In short, public knowledge is necessarily presumptive since it projects its judgments into the future through action based on that presumption. Out of the judgments and action is established new public knowledge, "social precedents for future attributions of consensus in situations which have yet to be encountered" (10).

It is community that makes public judgments possible because as Ronald Beiner (1983) argues,

the objects of those judgments are shared by those who judge, or are the focus of their *common* concern. For instance, I judge as a member of a community because of a common tradition and shared history, public laws and obligations to which all are subject, common ideals and shared meanings (Beiner 141)

Rhetorical judgments confirm both the substance of community and the shape of that community's responsibility in consciously training its members for public life.

Beiner speaks of the conditions of "space and time as well as detachment and experience" for "judgment cannot be a matter of spontaneous immediate, intuition" (105).

In the next section, I will look at the discourse produced by the CAAE and *NFRF* to see how notions of creating a political community worked its way through *NFRF* rhetoric.

Creating a Political Community: The Rhetoric of the CAAE and NFRF

Although *NFRF* was working with localized communities, made up largely of family and neighbour groups in comparatively small areas, it attempted to press on *philia* rather than on *eros* or brotherhood as the grounds for community. The 1943 booklet, *My Share and Yours*, outlined the responsibilities of citizens to share public space equitably. While using wartime language, the authors were calling for participants to eschew the domination exercised in local and family hierarchical structures:

More often than we think, we are presented with a choice between the democratic way and the way of the dictator. Whenever human problems

arise, there is a choice between the methods of co-operation and tolerance on the one hand and those of domination and conquest on the other" (4).

The authors are taking people from where they are in families, and prescribing civic behaviour. They speak of the importance of not being bullies in relationships between husbands and wives, with children and in those of clubs and church societies. Further, the authors encourage membership in voluntary organizations, claiming that "it is in such independent free associations that the real spirit and the methods of democracy are learned and experienced by most people" (5). This exhortation to connect the life of the home and the community with that of the political is one of *NFRF* and *CAAE*'s philosophical underpinnings of public education for democratic citizenship.

As well as the incorporation of home and community, this rhetoric also incorporates the organization of work within political education. However, this incorporation was not in the same direct way as experienced by fishermen in the Antigonish experiments through which work co-operatives were set up. Farmers in Canada do not generally farm co-operatively; so work on the farm, strictly speaking, was not the object of public education in *NFRF* although co-operative Action Projects concerning the buying of machinery and participating in wheat pools were common. However, in spite of the lack of co-operative labour, ideas about work and its close relationship to civic education are found in the rhetoric of forum practice. Corbett and Coady (1947), in their "Basic Principles of Adult Education" adopted the Antigonish notion that "[civic] education . . . must suit its

efforts to the most intimate interests . . . in most cases those interests are economic" (Corbett 1947, 13). A later statement by Corbett reiterated the relationship: "Building the new society is as much the business of the working man as digging coal, catching fish or planting seed. Therefore he must be educated to recognize and to use the human and the material resources of the community in which he lives" (Corbett 1952, 12).

More important than the rhetoric about work itself was the rhetoric drawn from the ideas of co-operative labour and adapted to group discussion. Jean Morrison wrote in *Food for Thought*, the mouthpiece of the CAAE (Morrison, Jean Hunter 1946):

The essence of group discussion is thinking together. The result is different from the result of individual thinking . . . the essence of it [co-operative thinking] is that the ideas of each individual in the group are changed or modified by the ideas of the other members so that the idea finally accepted cannot be said to be the idea of any one of the members. It is common property . . . The by-products are friendliness and group spirit. (37)

This is a bit of a twist on Farrell's idea that the process of creating public knowledge creates community. In the ideas here of co-operative thinking and discussion, we have a headlong rush toward a single outcome: that of creating community for a specific purpose. John Macdonald, also in *Food for Thought*, insisted that the central feature of group discussion is " . . . a search for the common idea - or plan, project, policy" (Macdonald 1946, 38). I point out this emphasis on co-operative thinking because *NFRF* staked its program on local

action resulting from local discussions. The question can be asked to what extent this demand for action and a particular kind of action constrained the character and quality of local forum discussion.

This question and the ones that follow will be explored in chapters three and four, in which the subject of medical delivery systems will be followed through the life of *NFRF* broadcasts, written material and local discussions and Action Projects. For example, what was the role played by the persuasive rhetoric of the broadcasts and the written material and by the defined questions for local forum discussion in constraining that discussion and the possibilities for action? Given the constraints of the locals, what influence did they have on the national organization, its direction, programming and positions? Did the locals fulfill the demands of the democratic forum? To what extent did the locals and the national successfully collaborate in fulfilling the demands of forum speech to serve the national political life?

The subject of health delivery is helpful in confronting these questions. In Arendt's terms, health is in the realm of necessity and therefore, prepolitical. This was recognized by CAAE in an editorial that stated : "No single factor is more important to good citizenship than good health. A sick man cannot be a good citizen" ("In Our Opinion" 1948, 4). The historical moment of World War II with the mobilization of men fit for combat, forced health into the overlapping arenas of the social and the political. With health as an issue that was both long-term and one that concerned all parts of the nation, it took on the shape, in

wartime, of an urgent national issue. Thus, broadcasts, forum discussion of medical delivery systems and action driven by exigence became a way of defining and acting on what a citizen is, what democracy is, what is a political question and how we go about addressing our concerns in some co-operative way.

In this chapter, I began to situate, both theoretically and historically, public education as a largely oppositional practice, one which sets out to transform society. I briefly looked at how public education was able to make inroads during wartime for when a nation needs to call on its people as 'citizens,' it must treat them as such; in turn, volunteer organizations and governments in Canada were able to form a partnership that persisted in peacetime. I also looked forward to the in-depth study of *NFRF* programs on medical delivery systems by laying out the most important ground of public education: that of the concept of "community."

In Chapter 2, I will develop the inspiration, the theory and the history of forum practice and, in particular, radio forum practice, a developed genre.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. ABC, with 200 local sponsors, broadcast *Town Meeting of the Air* beginning in 1935. This program brought into discussion, distinguished and informed people. Copies of the broadcasts available to listeners for a nominal sum. Occasionally *Town Meeting* broadcasts were followed by local discussions of the topic at hand. Another example of sponsored discussions was the NBC *University of Chicago Round Table*. Weekly programs paid for by the university, were directed by George E. Probst of the Sociology Dept. Printed copies of broadcasts with additional pertinent material were distributed for a small fee. The University also sponsored home study courses in connection with program. Greenwood, Dorothy F., "Education for Adults On the U. S. Air Waves" in *Food for Thought*, Vol.12, No.8 (May 1952), pp.9-15.

2. A perennial problem for *NFRF* was that of funding. The study describes how the provincial office of *NFRF* collapsed at the end of each season and had to be revived for the next. Of course, the three institutions were always in operation but *NFRF* was broadcast outside the planting and harvesting seasons, from November to March. Fieldmen connected to the CFA were the contact men at the local level, starting up new forum groups and encouraging established ones to continue. The lack of consistently vigorous activity in these areas was partly due to the lack of the financial resources of both the CAAE and the CFA, the demands on fieldmen's time and the seasonal aspect of *NFRF*. Thus the interface between the institutions and groups lacked the face to face contact that the project set up as its ideal (Section 6, 214 of the Saskatchewan study on "an appropriate system of forum administration").

3. Faris (1975) analysed the subjects discussed over the twelve-year period from 1941 to 1953: "For instance, the single most popular subject which engaged over ten percent of all programming, marketing problems, was concentrated in the immediate postwar years. Not unexpectedly, programs centred around various problems of orderly, legislated marketing at a time when various government controls were being lifted, external markets were dislocated, and the threat of domestic inflation loomed.

The second most frequent topic, international problems (chiefly problems of world marketing) was concentrated in the period 1950-52 when economic recession was felt in the western world. The third most popular topic, rural education, was discussed almost every year, with a special series of related programs following the Massey Report in 1951.

The fourth and fifth most frequent topics, community life and action, and

prices and price spreads, were concentrated in the period 1943-47 when social movements were at their height and the possibility of government action in new social-economic fields was greatest. Of the next two most frequent topics, co-operatives and credit unions, and health services, the discussion of health services was the more concentrated, being mostly presented in 1943-45 when the CFA and other movements actively promoted a national health plan.

These seven topics comprised over half of the programs produced. If we take into consideration several less frequent topic areas, such as farmer-labour relations, postwar reconstruction, and social security, it is apparent that the forum covered a wide range of social-economic questions and reflected many of the concerns of the rural social movements of the time" (Faris 1975, 99 - 100).

4. Edward Annand (Ned) Corbett was born in Truro, Nova Scotia, April 12, 1884, the son of a Presbyterian minister. After preparing himself for the ministry, Corbett (after recovering from war related injuries) took up in 1920, a position as a lecturer in the Extension Department of the University of Alberta. By 1926, Corbett was involved in regular educational broadcasting with the establishment of station CKUA that included lectures for a farm audience. Corbett became an expert on educational broadcasting. He came to the CAAE as its first director in 1936 and remained in that capacity until his retirement in 1950 (Faris, 1975).

5. As well as Corbett's article, see Nora Robins' "'Useful Education for the Workingman': The Montreal Mechanics' Institute, 1828-70" in Welton, 1987a, and Gordon Selman's "Mechanics' Institutes in British Columbia," *Continuous Learning*, 10, 3 (1971).

6. As a member of the CAAE, St. Francis Xavier University informed the CAAE and *NFRF*: Dr. Coady and Corbett were partners in developing adult education philosophy (Selman 1991, 128-129). Its influence on *NFRF* in terms of practice includes the use of study guides, small discussion groups and Action Projects at the centre of local organization.

7. The Antigonish movement and the role played by Dr. Coady has been well documented: See Coady, 1943; Crane ,1987; Lotz & Welton, 1987; Selman, 1991. See also *The Rising Tide*, No. 3 in the series "Window on Canada." NFB, 1949, 31 min.. Dir: Jean Palardy, Prod: James Beveridge. Available on video: No. B0149004.

8. Rev. Dr. Coady was from 1930 to 1951, Director of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University. Both Coady and J. J. Tompkins, the founder of the Antigonish Movement, were Roman Catholic priests who came from the Cape Breton area that they served and did so "irrespective of religious affiliation." Coady was also a founding member of the CAAE and its President for many years. As well as authoring many articles and pamphlets, he wrote the story of the Antigonish

movement, *Masters of Their Own Destiny*. (Faris, 1975, 18)

9. The 1951 *Massey Commission Report* remarked on the relationship of governments and voluntary organizations: "We were first struck by the way in which governments in Canada, both federal and provincial, have enmeshed their activities with those of voluntary societies until very often it is impossible to think of the one without the other. There is no doubt a connection between these joint efforts and the hard facts of Canadian geography and of the Canadian constitution. For example, five national voluntary activities of very great educational importance, the *National Farm Radio Forum*, the *Citizens' Forum*, *Le Choc des Idees*, *Les Idees en March*, and the Film Councils, depend completely on national radio or film services. These voluntary efforts grew out of services offered by the government and its agencies, which in turn often make their chief contribution through the work of the societies. There is no question here of aid given or received but of mutual effort. There are two other examples of combined governmental and voluntary effort related to our geography and constitution. The Canadian Association of Adult Education and the Societe Canadienne d'Enseignement Post-scolaire have a joint planning commission through which they consult regularly more than fifty bodies, including national societies, provincial universities and such federal agencies as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board and the Department of Agriculture" (Quoted in Faris 1975, 124-125).

CHAPTER 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RADIO FORUM GENRE

In Chapter 1, I defined the concept of “forum” or the idea of “forum” as a regulated site of face-to-face public interest discourse, sustained by publicly-supported and legal institutions, made available over time and offering the possibility for the formation of citizens. This definition was developed as I looked at some of the roots of that concept through classical models of public education and explored how the public education movement in Canada echoed the classical model; that is, the efficacy of public education was seen as being dependent on its connection to the deliberative process. In this chapter, I will continue to explore the concept of “forum” and begin the exploration of the more particular “radio forum” which, I will argue, can be classified as a genre. I will trace the historically recurrent patterns of the forum concept through classical models, critical works and its history through radio in Canada with attention to the political and epistemological issues that it raises for the project of public education.

Historical Inspirations: the Greek *Polis* and the Roman Forum

With its historical lineage in the Greek *polis* and the Roman *forum*, the concept of forum has been an inspiration for modern critics (Farrell 1993, Halloran 1978, Stanley 1990) and practitioners of public discourse and, for us, can be an investigative stimulus. Even the Latin term, “*forum*,” with its number of possible sources, allows us to imagine how the physical place and space developed: “*foris*, *foras*” meaning “outside”; “*foris*, *fores*” meaning “door” or more

precisely, “at door”; “forus” meaning “enclosed space” or “compartment” and finally, the verb “ferre” meaning “to carry” i.e., the place to which to carry disputes and also objects for sale (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* 1981: Grant 1970, 43). Thus, the idea of forum has its roots in the marketplace, the agora and the court of the ancient world.

Physically, the Roman forums were large, centrally located public spaces. The forums were not thoroughfares but enclosed by gates at the entrances and there were many entrances, many ways to have access to the forum; while in the forum, citizens were not just at the doors of the temples (profanus) but in front of many different kinds of doors including those of shops, temples and public administrative buildings. These structures, squaring off the forums, gave them shape and stability. A forum then was not just a narrow open space but what Kenneth Clark called “the open squares of Latin civilization, with their resistant masonry echoing the shouts of uninhibited extroversion” (quoted in Grant 1970, 15).

Like the Greek agora, or marketplace and acropolis, the forums served as public gathering places of all kinds over centuries of activity: religious and secular spectacles and ceremonies, marketplaces as well as sites of legal judgments.

Above all, this was the place of speeches, delivered from many a platform tribunal, basilica and temple Orators had to compete with one another in the Forum before a number of equally exacting but otherwise, very different audiences: the Assembly, the Senate and the courts. (Grant 1970, 15)

The Roman Forum was itself inspired by the Greek *polis* of democratic Athens of the 5th and 4th centuries. Like the Forum, the *polis* had an actual space but was, more accurately, a rhetorical "site" in which thousands of Athenian citizens, included equally, came together to deliberate on public matters, relying on what Harvey Yunis calls "mass communication by means of direct spoken language" (Yunis 1996, 1). This political rhetoric that allowed for deliberation by the *demos* had been constructed through numerous debates around the central question for the *polis*: "How, under the conditions that prevailed in Athens, would it be possible to speak to a large, diverse mass of anonymous citizens and induce them to render wise decisions?" (Yunis 1996, 1). For our particular interest in the forum as a site of public education, we note Yunis' argument that even the ancient critics of the *polis*, notably Plato, "explored the instructive potential of political rhetoric as the means of overcoming the limitations of mass deliberation" (Yunis 1996, 2).

Distinguishing the Forum in Relationship to the *Polis*

Since the Greek *polis* and the Roman Forum, in their similarities, have been used here as inspirations to investigate the concept of forum, the idea of forum now needs to be distinguished from that of the *polis*. *Polis*, for the Athenians, was both the city-state, and the "community of citizens" (Raaflaub quoted in Yunis 1996, 2) who had the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

In terms of their similarities, the forum shares with the *polis* the active participation of all who are within their boundaries, their multiplicity of speakers, and their drive to come to judgment on matters of public interest. For both, no separation exists between the rhetors and the audience. Both also enact an ideal of political community in mediating political conflicts by emphasizing the rule of reason, coherence and restraint around their multiplicity of voices.

Significantly, both the forum and the *polis* respond to the need to train participants since a democratic state cannot exist without experienced citizens. However, while both train participants *in situ*, this training in citizenship is the major project of the forum while the major project of the *polis* is deliberation. Thus, in the *polis*, there are clear practical consequences of a judgment whereas in the forum, the practical consequences are more diffuse, less certain even if local action is involved. A forum is indeed more of a "hearing," "meant to inform the public or to elicit information as a basis for future action" and "cannot include official action . . ." (Halloran 1978, 119). Unlike a hearing though and closer to the idea of *polis*, the forum anticipates the active interest and potential participation of those present since the issue at hand calls for public judgment at some time.

The *polis* is the community and deliberates in the interest of the community; the forum has no such status although it enacts the political ideal of the *polis*. Nevertheless, the forum has partial power to act through its participants who can come to judgment on a political and deliberative issue.

Whether the forum participants act or not in the local arena, they have prepared themselves through forum discourse to be an informed part of a to-be-constituted electorate.

The Necessity of Public Institutions for Forum Discourse: Sediments of Social Memory

The Roman forum was not so much itself a physical entity as one created by other physical entities; squared off by public and religious institutions and crowded with statues, monuments, the forum, like the Athenian agora that grounded the *polis*, was a repository of public discourses, public memories which, in turn, shaped the its rhetoric. Hannah Arendt has written of this preservative constituent of the Athenian *polis*, the site of the public "sharing of words and deeds":

Men's life together in the form of the *polis* seemed to assure that the most futile of human activities, action and speech, and the least tangible and most ephemeral of man-made "products," the deeds and stories which are their outcome, would become imperishable. The organization of the *polis*, physically secured by the wall around the city and physiognomically guaranteed by its laws - lest the succeeding generations change its identity beyond recognition - is a kind of organized remembrance. (Arendt 1958, 197-8)

Arendt helps us to understand the significance of the Greeks' preoccupation with the public realm, consciously constructed and highly valued over the private (deprived) life. As our society increasingly moves toward valuing the private over the public realm, public institutions, essential elements of civic education, are

withering away. In *The Good Society* (1991), Bellah *et al.* have documented how radical or Lockean individualism in America has created an atmosphere in which individuals think of themselves as "pitted against [public] institutions" (6). In Canada, we have traditionally seen public institutions as necessary, benevolent and worthy of public money. These institutions would be of three different sorts: those administered directly by the government; those financed but not run by the government, called crown corporations such as the CBC; and other public institutions which are partnerships of public interest groups and government, many partially funded by government such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. In recent years, established political parties have cut back funding of these in the name of balancing the budget while radical politicians have called for the withdrawal of public funds to many of those institutions such as the Canada Council, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Economic Council of Canada, the National Film Board and the CBC that have had, I would argue, a role in examining and influencing public policy and in creating civic culture.

The public realm of any state, that is, the realm for the expression of responsibility for a shared life, is embodied in common institutions, ones that endure well beyond an individual's scope, interest or lifetime. While some institutions, like the family, constitute our identity and others are merely instrumental (Taylor 1993), public institutions are both. When we consider, for example, the institution of Canada's health delivery system, both of those roles

are exceedingly strong: we treat Medicare as a service, complaining about its failures to deliver while also seeing in that system an ideal of ourselves as Canadians. Increasingly faced with the demands of the marketplace, demands for profit and efficiency and, in consequence, demands for a weakening of public institutions, Canadians must reconsider the educative and cohesive functions that obtain from them.

I will discuss here the part played by public and publicly-supported institutions in authentic forum discourse. As we shall see, such institutions offer a grounding for forum discourse; they are sites of shared identity and values; they are sites of social memory. Institutional grounding for forum discourse is of two sorts: first, there is the institution's own sense of place, of having been constructed in a particular place and historical space so that its own discourse is grounded both in the past and in the here and now. Secondly, in its role of "squaring off" the forum site, the institutions provide stability and solidity for forum discourse. Without such a grounding, so called "free expression" in a public site is a burlesque, a sort of Hyde Park where individual "eccentric" speakers are outside of the "squaring off," floating free from grounded institutions and thus, not taken seriously. Institutions offer, in Bellah's term, a "focal structure": "It is in such organizational - and physical - spaces that conflict can be sublimated into constructive argument" (Bellah 1991, 269).

Next, institutions function as authoritative sites of shared identity and values. In civic culture, we do not so much understand one another as we

understand ourselves through our institutions. By encompassing shared identity and values, public institutions are the ground on which that identity and those values are challenged. Thomas Farrell (1993) speaks of “authority as itself a form of argument”:

It [authority] must derive grounds for its pronouncements. It must stipulate conditions for the sphere of activity proper to its use. And, most important, it may always be challenged, disputed, and even disobeyed. (291)

Thus institutions have the ability to mediate between conflicting interests and different groups, to build bridges between the local, the national and the international, between different ideological positions and across large physical spaces; in short, the ability to create ethical community.

Finally and intimately connected to the other two roles, institutions function as sites of both the creation of social memory and the contestation of social memories. Social memory is political and rhetorical, competing with a plurality of possible memories, to argue for what should be done by selectively recalling and affirming what has been done. This rhetorical process of keeping alive selected social memories which incorporate the affirmation of excellence and moral values is an important source of public knowledge.

Because institutions do not arise naturally as a result of a need but are part of a sustained commitment to a particular ideal with an agenda or an ideology (Lang and Lang 1989), they create social memory; this memory is codified in certain practices, particular discourses which we, as individuals and

members of other groups and institutions, learn to speak. The social memory of an institution can become one that is dominant but that dominance sets up a series of contesting social memories, some attached to other institutions, others to individuals and groups.

The political life of a society depends on this public contestation of social memory. Nerone speaks of societies composed of groups “with memories that must be harmonized and generalized” (Nerone 1989, 93). As we share and contest social memories, they become the property of all segments of the society and begin to create unifying common narratives. Thus “the field of social memories is an arena for conflict and at the same time a mechanism for avoiding conflict” (Nerone 1989, 93).

To conclude this point on the essential function of institutions in forum discourse, I have argued that a nation’s public and parapublic institutions form a supporting wall around forums and, in doing so, both shape, protect and validate forum discourse. These institutions speak themselves through their developed channels but also make available their channels for other individuals, groups and institutions to speak. Speech channelled into the dominant discourse of an institution does not necessarily corroborate the institutional agenda. In fact, forum discourse is a process, both of contesting agendas and social memories and, in the process, of revitalizing those memories and thus the agendas of all implicated institutions. Certainly, speaking subjects are constrained and influenced by institutional memory but for forum discourse, this is essential. By

their speech being pulled through the narrows and channels of institutional discourse, it is brought into the mainstream of public debate. Otherwise, such speech is just talk, conversations over the back fence. To speak in the *polis* or forum supported by public institutions is to speak social memories agonistically, to intersect other social memories with that of institutionalized memory, and thus to own, not only one's own memories but that complexity of memories that make up the broader narrative of the nation's political discourse.

The Revitalization of a Democratic *Polis*: Challenging Elite Democracy through Authentic Participation

In a sense, the creation of the sovereign individual was the price paid by the laboring multitude for entry into the political community; or to be more precise, the historical process that gave rise to capitalism, and to the modern "free and equal" wage laborer who would eventually join the body of citizens, was the same process in which the peasant was dispossessed and deracinated, detached from both his property and his community, together with its common and customary rights In the end, the "liberation" of the individual was complete, as capitalism, with its indifference to the extraeconomic identities of the laboring multitude, dissipated prescriptive attributes and extraeconomic differences in the solvent of the labor market, where individuals become interchangeable units of labor abstracted from any specific personal or social identity. (Wood 1994, 71, 73)

Ellen Meiksins Wood's description of the individual "citizen" whose formal equality coexists with social inequality and thus leaves "economic relations between the 'elite' and the laboring multitude in place" (Wood 76) is drawn in direct contrast to her discussion of political participation by small producers and

peasants in Athens: "Political equality did not simply coexist with, but substantially modified, socioeconomic inequality. In this sense, democracy in Athens was not formal but substantive" (Wood 75). We are increasingly aware that the kind of elite democracy¹ practised in the West has not brought the orderly and managed society imagined by liberal policy makers or the elites themselves. Much of the rethinking about citizen participation has used classical models as inspiration for ideas on the revitalization of a modern democratic *polis*, challenging the notions of elite governance and calling for the creating or recreating of forms, structures and institutions that enable authentic participation.²

Carole Pateman (1970), in putting forward her argument for the necessity of active participation to create a revitalized democracy, draws both on the philosophies of Rousseau and Mill, and on recent theories of workplace participation. One of her major claims is the educative value of participation especially at the local level; the other claim of interest to my thesis is her argument that this value can be structured into the workplace, one of the central claims of *NFRF*. By participating, Pateman argues, the citizen learns "to distinguish between his own impulses and desires, he learns to be a public as well as a private citizen [and] eventually come[s] to feel little or no conflict between the demands of the public and private spheres" (25). Active participation also influences the freedom and control sensed by the individual, allowing him to accept collective decisions. This leads to the attachment of

individuals to a political community: "the participatory process ensures that although no man, or group, is master of another, all are equally dependent on each other and equally subject to the law" (27).

A further argument that Pateman makes, and one that is another central tenet of *NFRF*, is the importance of the local for an authentic educative engagement:

It is at the local level where the real educative effect of participation occurs, where not only do the issues dealt with directly affect the individual and his everyday life but where he also stands a good chance of, himself, being elected to serve on a local body. It is by participating at the local level that the individual "learns democracy". (31)

One of these local levels where people come together and share some common interests is at the level of the modern factory floor. In support of civic and political education taking place on the site of work, Pateman quotes G.D.H. Cole who makes claims of "moral transformation" in "cooperative forms of industrial organization" (Cole quoted in Pateman 1970, 34). Like the activists in the Antigonish movement and those that espoused the necessity of cooperative Action Projects in *NFRF*, Cole understands cooperative labour action as a necessary training for the agonistic civic capacities of both the individual and the community. When Cole asked "What is the fundamental evil in our modern society?" he anticipated the wrong answer, "poverty," would be given rather than the correct, "slavery":

Why are the many nominally supreme [in a political democracy] but actually powerless? Largely because the circumstances of their lives do not accustom or fit them for power or responsibility. A servile system in

industry inevitably reflects itself in political servility. (Cole quoted in Pateman 1970, 38)

While labour under the organization of capitalism was "just another commodity and so the humanity of labour was denied" (Pateman 1970, 39), post-modern capitalism has virtually denied the existence of labour as a category and thus denied the possibility of labour as a community that can participate in political life. Under terms such as "individualism," "personal choice" and the union-busting motto, "the right to work," the working person in this coded world is not one whose political and social capacities can be developed *in situ*; he or she is not allied with other working people but in competition with them, fearfully protecting his or her private interests. The documented apathy and lack of political knowledge of working people seems to justify the argument for an elite-dominated democracy in which "citizens" are just "voters," a term that considerably reduces their status and the importance of elections themselves. Concurrently, workers and the unemployed are placed on the margins of society as their wealth of experience is undervalued and reduced to statistics.

A further critique of elite democracy and one that brings us back to the notion of the forum is Manfred Stanley's work (1990). Like many critics of elite democracy, Stanley understands that civic education is at the centre of a revitalized democracy. He draws a parallel between elite democracy and his theorized model of the contractual/liberal forum that emphasizes the kind of expert talk that rationalizes adaptation to the logic of market forces where the

education of citizens is in the realm of laying out the limited policies "in an age of scarcity" (Stanley 244); therefore, the role of the citizen is also limited - to "hard choices". Scarcity³ is a favourite exigency put forward by market forces; its rhetoric is compelling, even alarming and, because this is the opinion of "experts," it demands urgent action. Thus the liberal forum sets itself up to deal with crisis after crisis; in the process of highjacking the economic life of a country, market forces also predominate over the political and social life as well.

Stanley's parallel model of participatory democracy is developed in what he calls the "democratic forum" in which exigences cannot be driven by short-term crises dictated by the market; this forum is a response to long-term social needs that require joint social action. The underpinning demand of the democratic forum is to ". . . [build] bridges of demystification between worlds of discourse by revealing the ways in which the politics of discourse implicates us all in the dynamics of world-making" (Stanley 1990, 239). Thus, each issue in this forum becomes a pedagogical device wherein the talk deepens the investigation and broadens the possibilities beyond the usual "hard choice" talk proffered by the liberal forum experts and reveals their discourse as just one of many discourses. In the democratic forum model, reified and justificatory values are questioned through an "experiential inquiry" (Stanley 249) so that people learn "to understand what values are as ways of thinking and feeling, how these ways are learned through differential social experience and how they are objectively encoded in social and linguistic intersubjective practices" (248). In

the end, choices have to be made but first comes the long period of "negotiating a shared, cumulative and ever more inclusive deep-structure narrative . . . regarding 'our' collective story and where 'we' want to take it from here" (249).

The term "immigration" denotes profound changes, the moving across space in time, to attempt to settle in another location. Stanley's use of the analogy "immigration" for the democratic forum imaginatively extends that journeying into public and social spaces to consider those profound changes, sometimes chosen, usually compelled. Changes in society such as high unemployment, government cutbacks of social programs, and corporate ascendancy in all sectors are experienced, usually painfully, as moves from rural to urban areas, from employment to obsolescence, from one class to another, from local autonomy to corporate control. The analogy is richly suggestive of another way, beyond expert talk, of deliberately revealing the relations among people as individuals and groups, institutions, expertise, and abstract forces; furthermore, the revealing - one can say, the knowledge created through the revealing - can influence ways of acting politically in the world. The analogy also offers us another framework to judge the kind of forum created by *NFRF*.

The analogy of immigration carries an awareness that, though borders are usually crossed under duress, they can also be crossed with intention. The duress makes citizens aware of the sites of political and economic power effecting our society; the intention makes them aware of their agency and the agency of other citizens, essential elements in democratic discourse and action.

Aware of themselves as agents under constraints, citizens become conscious of being "complex social beings whose consciousness is partly prestructured by group and institutional memberships, collective memories, mythic themes, and naturalized ideologies" (Stanley 252-3).

Crossing borders between worlds also suggests that citizens are capable of imaginatively moving from one perspective to another to constitute in public discourse an expanding integral reality. Having the perspectives of other locations means having a conception of the complexity of social worlds that make up our society, of the multiple loci where knowledge resides and of both the moral obligation and the right as citizens to know what is needed to be known in order to make good judgments.

The analogy of immigration validates common experiences and the way that those experiences are managed by ordinary people through narratives. These narratives do more than "serve the purpose of moralizing judgments" (White 1980, 27) as all narratives do. While citizens begin their migration with particular memories, prejudices and ideologies, immigration is a process of discovery and change through negotiation with authorities, institutions, groups and individuals. Heard in the locus of the democratic forum, these narrative experiences invite the audience to compare and affirm the validity of established narratives in relationship to newer narratives. These are not just stories; they take on an urgency to validate claims because the audience is being asked to act, to move, once again, into another location. By being negotiated through the

social memories of forum participants, the knowledge of the past is joined to the possibilities of the future. In this way, citizens are not limited to this or that alternate "choice" or paralysed by the rhetoric of consumerism, the world of infinite "choices." Seeing the democratic forum as immigration discourse can help citizens to imagine possibilities beyond hard choices, where "truths and values previously unknown to a public" can be generated and it is this generating that "sustains wisdom in the life of the public" (Bitzer 1978, 68).

Immigration both subverts and creates community. If a society can learn to "immigrate" well, new and richer communities can be created, ones that move away from old stereotypes and comfortable boundaries. In immigrating, citizens come into contact with other communities, perhaps ones that are as fragmented as their own. In joining forces, new communities can be more inclusive, tolerant, because of shared stories, shared wisdom. In *NFRF*, local groups, by narrating their experiences of the problems with health care and having these experiences disseminated across the country, created a new level of knowledge; in this way, the locals saw themselves, not as isolated but attached to other locals with whom they formed a national community.

Since crossing borders means moving into unknown territory, a high degree of confidence and courage is required. To facilitate the crossing over, "immigrants" attribute an ethos to that other world and in doing so, examine their own ethos in relationship to the other. Stanley's notion of the democratic forum as analogous to immigration speaks to the courage which is necessary to enter

into the public realm, the difficulty of reorienting a market discourse and the work involved in evaluating the past and making judgments about the future. This certainly is not the angry or shirking "community of nostalgia" but a rigorous "community of direct experience" (Stanley 1990, 251), an authentic locus of hope for a future that is securely attached to the full understanding of the present.

The Rhetorical Genre: Responding to Recurrent Social Needs

In these first two chapters, I have been reviewing theories and practices of civic education, in particular of the sort that promote a democratic *polis*. The fact that civic education repeatedly presents itself in the shape of a forum makes clear that civic education needs a site that resembles the *polis* in many of its aspects while offering participants the opportunity to learn on the job by its not being the official site of judgment. This broad notion of the forum is aptly defined by Farrell (1993). He says that through his reading of Stephen Toulmin

we learn that forums are formal and informal locations where argument is practised, that the forum exerts an influence on the invention, as well as the judgment, of arguments; that different types of forum usually admit to corresponding types of discussion; and that the more formal a forum is . . . , the more developed and distinct is the idea of the rational standpoint for the introduction and adjudication of arguments themselves. (282)

Farrell explores and broadens this definition by speaking of the forum as "a gathering place for discourse" that "provides a space for multiple positions to encounter one another" and, as he points out, a forum can go well beyond its own existence: "it may also provide precedents and modalities for granting a

hearing to positions, as well as sorting through their agendas and constituencies" (1993 282).

While the broadness of the scope of the idea of forum does not allow us to claim that the forum as such presents a generic form, the fact that aspects of its structure and function cross time and space does allow its theorists and participants to recognize the form, and that allows them to define and refine its procedures and uses. I will present *NFRF* as an instance of the forum, one that has narrowed down the broadness of the forum to a more precise pattern using the medium of radio. In this narrower shape, the radio forum has been repeated, with variations, three times in Canada over a fifty-nine year period. While this thesis is examining in depth only one instance of the radio forum, that of *NFRF*, the other two, *Citizens' Forum* and *Cross Country Checkup*, share a similar set of circumstances: the historical experience in Canada of public education, the immense geographical spaces, the close working relationship between voluntary organizations and public institutions, and publicly-owned radio as their dominant medium. Their characteristics include the regular and national weekly radio time slot; the prefacing news and/or expert input; the civility and accommodation offered to all participants; the negotiated regional parity of both the subject matter and the participation; the use of personal experience as a basis of argument. In short, the three Canadian radio forums with their roots in the idea of the classical forum can be designated as a genre.

"Genre," as an analytic category, allows us to historicize characteristics and conventions, not chronologically but in a grouping of instances. One can understand a genre as a pattern which serves recurring social needs. This is particularly true for the rhetorical genre, as distinguished from the more common literary genre, with its *vita activa* status. Bitzer (1968) reminds us that "a work of rhetoric is pragmatic"; that is, it responds to an exigence outside of itself and exists to create a change in the world "through the mediation of thought and action" (Bitzer 1968, 4). However, generic rhetoric is not so much a reaction to material circumstances wherein the speaker's intention is wholly determined by the situation; rather, it is a response to long-term social needs that require joint social action (Miller 1984, 158). Thus, the study of recurrent generic patterns tells us "less about the art of individual rhetors or the excellence of particular texts than it does about the character of a culture or an historical period " (Miller 1984, 158).

Because rhetorical genres respond to long-term social exigences, they are usually generated in close relationship to institutions so that rhetors are constrained by "their sense of the presentness of the past" (Jamieson 1973, 165) inherent in institutions. These constraints will include beliefs, traditions and especially audience expectations over time created by "previous rhetoric generated in response to similar situations." (Jamieson 1973, 167). Since the purpose of rhetoric is to effect change as well as to induce cooperation, other

constraints will present themselves in the form of opposition to the real, if not immediate, consequences of the called-for action.

In order to attribute generic status to the radio forum, we must be able to see, in Campbell and Jamieson's (1978) terms, "a group of acts unified by a constellation of forms that recurs in each of its members"(20). While these forms may occur in other discourses, "what is distinctive about the acts in a genre is the recurrence of the forms *together* in constellation" (20). As one of three radio forums of long duration in Canada, *NFRF* holds in common with the other two, recurring patterns and audience expectations that distinguish them from other genres that share some of those patterns. In its time, *NFRF* could be distinguished from news broadcasts, educational programs and free time political talks. In our time, *Cross Country Check-up* can be distinguished from phone-in and talk shows on private and public radio. There is a recognition that radio forum projects share essential characteristics in spite of a number of circumstantial and technological changes and in spite of differences in individual episodes. For example, *NFRF* and *CF* broadcasts were, at various times, drama, discussion and debate. Because we can understand the specific episodes and recurring series within the broader series of these projects, one can think of *NFRF* as akin to what Campbell and Jamieson refer to as rhetorical genre.⁴

The most significant form in the constellation of the radio forum genre and the one that overlays all others, is that of the locus of community. Community is a rhetorical creation, both the site of, and the *raison d'être* of the forum: the

forum works with community that has already been created and in which the audience resides, and moves to activate that community politically through forum practices. Consequently, the forum presents a model of the community to itself, not just of the structure and rules by which citizens enter and speak, but more importantly, of the ethos of the community since it is the locus from which citizens learn to speak of political matters.

The radio forum genre includes the voices of institutions and experts, usually attached to institutions. By using the infrastructure that already exists in terms of federal institutions and national publicly-owned radio, radio forums make that infrastructure part of this created educative community. Further to that, radio allows for the network of connected locals and in conjunction with the national infrastructure, a national forum space is established. A further aspect of this created space is its translation into time: through established, weekly programming and an attachment to the institution of publicly-owned radio, the forum has a long time line connected to public service rather than to market demands. This long time line also allows for the training of its participants in its rules and expectations of behaviour. The genre with its expectations reaches out to individuals as well as to collectivities, allowing them to see the patterns of political behaviour and thus to overcome their lack of knowledge and experience.

Another aspect of the constellation of the radio forum genre is that of action. Action is, of course, inherent in rhetorical discourse and, as in the radio

forum genre, is attached to the locus of community. The role of the rhetor, in Halloran's terms, is to "[make] present to his audience something of the spirit that binds him in community with them" (Halloran 1978, 123). In overcoming opposition and in persuading the audience to act together in the world, the rhetor links his interests to those of his audience with the use of the strategies of identification, and the enthymeme, "whose force is explained by the fact that auditors participate in the construction of the arguments by which they are persuaded" (Campbell and Jamieson 1978, 19). Both of these strategies were employed in *NFRF* mainly through the use of drama but as well through participants' stories. In *CF* and *CCC*, the mere participation or feedback from the "community" in forum discourse is an important action. In *NFRF*, the kind and the extent of its Action Projects existed mainly because of the intense localization of existing communities.

The forum genre with its multiplicity of voices "makes present" the spirit of community more than most genres whose rhetors are generally single voices. The participation of community, in that its members speak as well as listen, makes the forum "audience" different from most rhetorical audiences who are being persuaded to act. Within Canadian society, the radio forum genre has an affinity with leaders' debates and royal commissions that demand an awareness of many voices speaking from different perspectives, only some of which represent institutional voices and professional expertise.

In the radio forum, the central and most dominant voices are those that speak in stories and are grounded in the local. Though coming through the broadcast ether, these voices emanate from specific local places and that grounding is confirmed by local experiential discourses. In order to more clearly understand the use of the voices in radio forum discourse, I will turn to an examination of the primacy of orality in this genre.

Radio: The Centrality of Orality/Aurality and Technological Reframings

Orality links the radio forum genre to the classical forums and this study of it indicates the particular problems and benefits for public education that accrue. When we consider public space, we visualize it, seeing it as a gathering place for individuals who, in the criss-crossing of their various perspectives, make up an aggregate of citizens. A visual rendering of citizenship emphasizes the uniqueness of each participant and his assumed clear, unentangled point of view, as he comes to “look at” a public problem in the company of other unique individuals. The ancient agora and forum were, of course, material spaces where citizens gathered in sight of one another. However, the significance of that gathering is not in the within-sight, but in the within-hearing. This is not to deny the importance of sight in relationship to hearing; their contiguity is one of the characteristics of primary orality: since words are gone as soon as they are spoken, primary oral cultures found ways to make them memorable through

mnemonic patterns, many of which were echoed and reinforced in visual gestures.

While vision encourages clarity, distinctness, the analytical, the taking apart of things, the auditory has a unifying quality, a harmony, the putting together of things. While vision situates the viewer, keeps him always on the outside, separate and at a distance, hearing takes him inside. As Walter J. Ong says:

When I hear, . . . I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once: I am at the centre of my auditory world which envelopes me, establishing me at a kind of core of sensation and existence You can immerse yourself in hearing, in sound. There is no way to immerse yourself similarly in sight. (Ong 1982, 72)

Knowing or learning in an oral culture means, as Ong says, "getting with it" (45). Thus, any individual's reaction is not "subjective" but rather "encased in the communal reaction, the communal 'soul'" (46). Oral culture then is participatory, uniting people and offering a cooperative way of being, knowing and acting, unlike visual culture's subjective points of view that afterwards must be assembled for any joint action. Knowledge in primary oral cultures exists in the lived situation, remaining close to the human life world. It would be difficult to be hierarchically excluded from this kind of knowledge for knowledge is all around, with all members of the culture. In an oral culture, speaking is an art and one characteristic of that art is its verbal play. This agonistic characteristic is the way in which people hone their skills as rhetors and thus learn, through this process,

how to enter into public discourse. Like the riddle, popular in oral cultures, the enthymeme, the rhetorical syllogism, also belongs in the oral world since at least one of its premises draws on the audience's communal knowledge. This inclusiveness is bound, in turn, to inform the shape of what is considered knowledge within oral cultures.

For preliterate or primary orality, "context for the spoken word is simply present, centred in the person speaking and the one or ones to whom he addresses himself and to whom he is related existentially in terms of the circumambient actuality" (Ong 1977, 56). The radio listener, unlike the addressee, is not "simply present"; he cannot interrupt the speaker, gesture or make noises that can be seen or heard by the speaker. In short, the listener cannot influence the speaker's behaviour. For his part, the speaker has limited control over the listener: he has no direct access to knowing if his rhetoric engages the listener and, in consequence, cannot modify his rhetoric.

This one-way communication of secondary orality presents a particular problem for radio forum comprehension and participation. While no mass medium has the possibility of paralinguistic codes as present in interpersonal communication, film and television can partly "recreate" the conditions of interpersonal communication wherein their "speech is supplemented by various presentational codes" (Crisell 1994, 4). The visual media's denser presentation offers a virtual interpersonal contact and thus an increased likelihood of messages being quickly grasped. For their part, written texts can overcome

ambiguity with supplementary codes (drawings, numbers, photos) and with being reread since the decoding does not have to be done at the moment of consumption as with radio and television. To be unambiguously understood, radio uses a number of practices such as "different kinds of sounds (signature tunes, announcements, particular voices remarking on place) and silence in order to "frame" and separate out programs and "to locate the station within the solid, workaday world" (Crisell, 6).

Radio can construct a virtual reality but that reality does not necessarily serve public education. How then, within the secondary orality of radio can some kind of participatory dialogue be set up? In the case of *NFRF*, a number of methods were used, some that needed to go outside of the medium: "fieldmen" from the CFA offering technical support, also worked at organizing local forum groups; both *NFRF* and *Citizens' Forum* had registered local groups fill out written reports after each discussion. These reports were then tabulated statistically, first provincially and then nationally, and written comments from the local groups were read on the radio. By the mid-sixties, as telephones became as numerous as radios, *CF* set up a telephone response system and *Cross Country Checkup* predominantly uses that method for feedback (although they also read a few letters and e-mails at the end of each program in reference to the subject of the week before). The problem with telephone and read-on-the-air written participation is the exclusion of most participants because of the limitation of time. *NFRF* partially solved that problem by the formation of local

discussion groups in which everyone had a chance to speak. All of the solutions to overcome secondary orality set up some sort of response system but each largely moves from the local or individual to the central; communication between locals and individuals is much more difficult. *NFRF* tried to solve this problem by reporting on the air and in written material, the activity of local groups and encouraged them to join themselves in Action Projects.

Given the conventions of the radio forum genre, framed as it is in a discourse of quality news and expertise, many listening participants of all three forums sometimes have chosen not to speak but to leave room for others. Nevertheless, radio forum participants are not just individual listeners; they are gathered into a collectivity of being addressed at that moment on a matter of public interest. To participate in the forum, they must first be aware of this collectivity of address and the fact that they have the right and the possibility to participate.

The characteristic of secondary orality is central to the radio forum genre and, although I speak of it as a constraint, it allows for the genre: without the medium of radio, a nation could not speak to itself across vast distances. This constraint also draws on the creative use of radio techniques and other communication technologies to make the forums work by bridging the distances and thus changing the relationships between the locals and the centrals.

In the next section, I will look at other kinds of constraints that allowed the creative, negotiated formation of the national radio forum genre.

The Radio Forum in Canada: The Struggle to Institute the Genre

As we saw in Chapter 1, the struggle to establish a publicly-owned national broadcasting system in Canada co-existed with the struggle to establish educational forums on the radio. The struggles of one have informed the struggles of the other; the battles engaged in by the forums both structured radio forum practice and contributed to setting CBC policy on political and controversial broadcasting. Another aspect of this close co-existence is evident both in the forum participants in their own community forums and in the voluntary organizations that made up the membership of the CAAE such as the Women's Institutes, the YMCA and religious and educational communities. That is, when the CBC and *NFRF* were under attack from business and politicians, these groups publicly defended them and this widespread, institutional support was a weighty argument for forum discourse and for the institutions that enabled it.⁵

Each of the three (later four) sponsoring organizations of *NFRF* had their particular formations and projects that informed radio forum practice. The role played by the CBC in instituting the radio forum genre was in setting the ground rules for forum speech and in providing a national non-partisan and journalistically focused public space in which participants on radio and in local forums acquired forum training. In terms of ground rules and training, H. D. Southam's text, *Radio Listening Groups: A Course for Leaders*, describes the role of radio as "[setting] up before us certain standards of speech and diction, of discussion and debate, of presentation and production in art forms, and of

selection of subject matter” (Southam c. 1940, 13). This non-partisan public space meant that the CBC did not itself take a political position nor, ideally, censure any political positions.

Like the CBC, the CAAE was also a non-partisan organization even as within its membership there co-existed a variety of partisan positions. As we saw in the examination of the struggle for public education in Canada, the Welfare model of education did predominate among its members. The two farmers’ organizations involved in *NFRF*, the Cooperative Union of Canada, a later sponsor of *NFRF*, and one of the three original sponsors, CFA, were partisan pressure groups, structured and informed by cooperative ideas; this is not to say that all farmers supported the same political party but that the majority shared an anger about their voice not being commensurate with their population size and their economic importance especially in wartime.

The interests and positions of the farmers and their organizations were not newly minted within *NFRF*; they had been in common circulation in communities throughout the country. However, the interfacing of these positions and topics with the new public medium of national radio had an explosive effect on farmers, business and on partisan politics. The farmers, with their organized interests married to the national radio medium, had a new sense of their importance and a new means to press for greater status on the political agenda. *NFRF* and *Citizens’ Forum* made clear the power of the old formation and pointed to the possibilities of a power shift consciously effected by a democratic,

national educational movement. In the following section, I will look at examples of the powerful rhetorics of partisan politics and business interests in response to forum programming and examine how those rhetorics engendered constraints that became part of the constitution of the new radio forum genre.

Constraints of Radio Forum Discourse: Challenges from the Government

Early in radio forum practice, the integrity of the role of the CBC and its independence from partisan political pressure was tested. One well-known encounter between the powerful voice of a party in power and the government-financed CBC helped to clarify an important parameter of radio forum discourse. The events in 1943 of the Claxton-Liberal Party interference with *Citizens' Forum* have been told elsewhere (Faris 1975). In planning for the second season of the series, the producer, Neil Morrison along with the host, Morley Callaghan went to Ottawa "to personally invite speakers and consult with the national political parties about suggested speakers" (Faris 1975, 104). When Brooke Claxton, an early supporter of the founding of the CBC and, at that time, the Liberal Prime Minister's parliamentary assistant and chairman of the Liberal party policy committee, heard that two members of the CCF, M. J. Coldwell and David Lewis, had been invited as speakers before Liberal members were asked, he demanded that the CBC retract the invitations.

His arguments for this demand were frankly partisan: the subject matter, "an inquiry on the Post-War World", was, according to Claxton

concerned with a field which the CCF has made peculiarly its own and in which the Liberals have said little. Phrases in the titles like "new hopes," "longings for a better world" and "full employment" use the jargon which the CCF has succeeded in appropriating This whole incident points to the necessity of reorganizing the C.B.C. and of the government coming out with a strong reconstruction policy. No Liberal speaker knows what line to take today because the government has not yet declared itself. . . . This is a subject of paramount importance and we are handing it to the CCF (Claxton quoted in Faris, 105).

The fact that the acting general manager of the CBC, Augustin Frigon, acted on Claxton's demand by retracting the invitations⁶ and called on advice for speakers,⁷ ignoring the producer's prior arrangements posed a threat to the independence of the forums and of the CBC. In his response to both Frigon and Claxton, Morrison quoted the CBC policy governing "non-party controversial broadcasts."⁸ Morrison argued that the forum did not set out to be political but educational:

We believe it to be essential that the important questions of the war and post-war reconstruction should be discussed publicly in a fair and reasonable manner by both public leaders and experts of all points of view who are qualified to do so (Morrison, November 13, 1943).

To Frigon, Morrison argued for the justification of a forum to use political voices:

I think it would be a serious mistake in a program of this kind to rule out all public leaders of a political character. By doing that we would prevent our listeners from hearing the views of some of those, including Government leaders, who have the most practical experience and who have given a great deal of thought to these important questions (Morrison, "Memo to Augustin Frigon," November 12, 1943).

While compromise was a possibility within the confines of the CBC, such an easy solution became untenable in the light of publicity. When Corbett, head of the CAÆ, broke the story to newspaper editors, CBC management was pressed to stand its ground vis-a-vis political interference from the Liberals. An editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* asked

Are we to have - indeed can we have? - independence of the CBC or are we to have a national radio producing only such programs as are viewed with favour by those who at the moment hold political power in Canada? This goes to the root of the matter; and it is an amazing thing that the officers and board of governors of the CBC are not at this moment in conference in order to present without delay the strongest possible protest to the government at the action that has been taken by its friends and supporters at Ottawa. (*Winnipeg Free Press* Nov. 16, 1943)

The result of this publicized fray was threefold. The Board of the CBC reaffirmed the policy on controversial broadcasting and "agreed that all speakers who had already been invited should be retained" (Morrison, December 6, 1943). Also, "the incident revealed that a wide-ranging coalition of liberally-minded people and social activists was formed in defence of the forum and CBC independence" (Faris 108). Most importantly, an idea of the forum as both political and inclusive, offering a more balanced variation of political views than are in the *polis* itself, was established in the face of powerful interests. Faris points out that in the year before the controversy "Liberal parliamentarians had spoken seventy-five times [on the CBC] and opposition members. . . five times. To share equal time on the occasional *Citizens' Forum* program must have been a galling prospect" (Faris 107).

Constraints of Radio Forum Discourse: Challenges from Business

The three challenges from business to forum discourse to be discussed in this section shaped forum practice in the following ways: they confirmed the right of forum participants to analyse and critique any practice that touched on public life; they confirmed the open nature of the forum to include a variety of positions and opinions on a subject; they forced *NFRF* to more clearly distinguish the role of drama in deliberative matters. The first challenge concerns a 1941 program in the form of a discussion on the cost of farm machinery prices that brought a complaint from the manufacturer, Massey-Harris. Its public relations officer accused *NFRF* and the CBC of inflicting "an indictment of the implement industry" and questioned the CBC's right to air a "controversial subject" on an educational program (Martin, March 6, 1941). In discussion with the officer and repeated in writing, the supervisor of *NFRF*, Orville Shugg, offered the following response: "that despite a widespread belief to the contrary in some quarters, the CBC Constitution does allow us to deal with contentious material on the air"; that it was not giving vent "to farmers' pet theories," or 'radical' ideas" but dealing with economic and social facts and that the facts presented during the forum on farm machinery prices came from the company's own evidence before government committees; finally, all bodies, including that of Massey-Harris, had the facilities of the forum readily available for their points of view (Shugg, March 18, 1941).

Another example of *NFRF* forging its right to allow the expression on the radio of opinions contrary to those of established business came out of a challenge by the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Through their lawyers, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange argued against

the facilities of our Canadian Broadcasting Stations being used by one group of citizens to attack another group, and in our opinion it is unfitting that a Government-sponsored farm radio program should be permitted to broadcast any such statements (Pitblado, Hoskin *et al*, March 24, 1944).

After pointing out that *NFRF* was "not in any sense 'a government-sponsored program,'" Ralph Staples, National Secretary of *NFRF* argued that the speaker, Mr. Lewis, the Manitoba Secretary of *NFRF*

was well within his rights. He was, as you have said in your letter, merely giving the recommendations of the Forums in Manitoba. If the Forums wish to have the Winnipeg Grain Exchange abolished they have, in my opinion, a perfect right to expect that opinion to be noted in the same way as any other opinion they may happen to hold. Why should the Winnipeg Grain Exchange expect to maintain a preferred position? (Ralph Staples, March 30, 1944).

What is noteworthy about the exchange is its simplicity and clarity. While business was crudely testing its ability to control the relatively new broadcast public discourse, *NFRF* had developed a clear idea of what the larger parameter of forum discourse needed to be.

The final challenge concerned the relationship of the form of presentation to the material under deliberation: when is dramatization an acceptable form for a deliberative argument? The particular *NFRF* script under attack from business

was a 1952 dramatization of the issue of the freight rates with actors playing the roles of a farmer and a spokesperson for the railway. According to one complaint, the character representing the railway company had been given very weak arguments. The complaint was taken up so wholeheartedly by the then president of the CAAE, James Muir, that he called for the CAAE to disassociate itself from both forums, the *NFRF* and *CF*, claiming that the CAAE was "acting as a sponsoring stooge" of material prepared by the CBC "without participation in its preparation or a say as to its content" (Muir to Kidd, February 27, 1952). As a result of this controversy, a Special Committee of *NFRF* was struck to review CAAE's role in the forum, to consider possible disassociation, to review methods of operation of the forums and to prepare a recommendation for the board. The Special Committee report for the Executive Committee of the CAAE (CAAE, April 8 & 22, 1952), in arguing for the CAAE's continuing co-sponsorship of *NFRF*, admitted of a lapse in dramatizing the freight rate issue: it concluded that "the dramatic form of presentation of a complex problem is difficult and often dangerous and should not be used in broadcasts which are concerned with discussion and clarification of involved economic problems" (Ibid., 2). Muir's attempt to divide the partnerships that made up *NFRF* and to change the educational direction of the CAAE into one more in sympathy with business interests had its influence on the way forum discourse was structured.

Constraints of Radio Forum Discourse: Challenges from Within CAAE

Membership

In the same year as the freight rate controversy, the CAAE encountered further criticism from its president, James Muir; he complained that statements in two CAAE discussion pamphlets, "Has Big Business Too Much Power?" and "How Can We Get Bread and Milk to the Consumers Most Cheaply?" were "inaccurate and misleading" (Muir, June 1952). In his criticism, Muir went some way in defining an educational organization from his perspective which included his being, at that time, the president of the Royal Bank of Canada. For inaccurate and misleading statements, Muir put the blame on the lack of consultation of authority:

. . . every educational effort, to my mind, should be based on the best available authority The CAAE should be above seizing upon sectional or political or passing things, and should, instead, provide educational matter of authenticity, which would contribute toward a better broad general culture and the welfare of Canada (Muir, June 1952).

Muir's notion of civic education was of the elite model, reflected in his use of the terms "authority" and "authenticity". In his final address as president, Muir made clear his concept of a society that was capably preplanned by the pragmatic elite even though some segments of the population, including the CAAE and academics, were slow to come to that recognition:

I should like to see a closer liaison between the CAAE and business organizations and executives. . . . In my experience, business people are eager to support education which is devoted to spreading maturity among our adult people. If allowances are made on each side for the different

background of the other, much that would be good for Canada can be accomplished. Educators need to take note of the fast pace of competitive business life, accustom themselves to the quick decisiveness of business executives who wish to see things getting done without enervating and time-wasting debate. On the other hand, patience is demanded of business executives, who need to realize that the deliberate pace in academic halls is not easily or quickly changed (Muir, October, 1952, 9).

For Muir, civic education was best subsumed under the ethos of the market economy and citizens only needed to learn how to acquiesce in a commensurable way. In Muir's liberal concept of civic education, public knowledge is based on a scientific model characterized by authority and expert opinion. Citizens only need to discover what is already known. The very structure of the co-sponsored forums, *NFRF* and *CF*, acted against that idea. Indeed, Muir argued that "if these children of the CAAE begin to have ideas of their own which are at variance with what the CAAE believes to be constructive and contributory to public interest" (Muir, June 1952), then the forums should be cut loose.

Throughout the years, CAAE had been able to negotiate its position on civic education within a complexity of institutional support, important for its survival. The Muir complaint revealed the structural stresses present in a forum project that represented diverse interests subsumed under the banner of education. The CAAE's response to Muir's charges of "inaccurate and misleading" information in pamphlets was necessarily considered and judicious: the CAAE put together a discussion paper (CAAE, "Citizens' Forum Discussion

Pamphlet," 1952) in which suggestions for improving the pamphlets were critiqued. One suggestion was for their vetting by a committee or a recognized authority and another was that each topic should be assigned to an author whose "authorship and responsibility for the work" (2) would be indicated. Both these suggestions were rejected on the grounds that while the director of the CAAE and a CBC staff member did read the material, formal vetting was not practicable for producing a balanced and readable pamphlet "since every topic selected . . . is one on which Canadians hold different views and sometimes sharply conflicting views" (2). By-line authorship would lead to "expressions of opinion rather than balanced statements . . . [and] the Association would come under criticism for its choice of writers if pamphlets were considered biased" (3)

Two other suggestions, the use of direct quotes for controversial topics and the checking with all interested persons and organizations before publishing, were also rejected on the grounds that "official statements may disguise or conceal the real issues rather than illuminate them" (4) and in checking, "there is . . . the danger that an organization would try to delete material or render it innocuous" (5) In its response, the CAAE confirmed that what is public knowledge cannot be a simplistic adherence to the "facts" as understood by experts and authorities but the result of a process that includes the complexity created by all the larger community and its oppositional voices. The CAAE's response also confirmed its position as an institution to both

support and to defend a forum structure that facilitates and encourages democratic discourse.

I have looked in these two chapters at the historical, political, institutional and technological conditions and constraints that allowed the radio forum genre to be called into being. The conditions of radio forums are complex, historically specific and, most significantly for our continued interests in them, tied to a number of unfinished and affiliated projects: a national public media system, a national identity and the development of a participating citizenry.

While in the first two chapters I have concentrated on the sources of forum practice, Chapters 3 and 4 will analyse forum practice itself by looking at the specific programs on health delivery in the twenty-five year life of *NFRF*.

Notes

Chapter 2

1. "Elite democracy" both accounts "for existing facts of political behaviour and attitudes, and, at the same time, [does] not endanger existing democratic systems by giving rise to unrealistic, and potentially disruptive, expectations" (Pateman 1970, 11). With minimal participation by citizens to simply vote or even run for representative leadership, the elite, elected or not, is allowed to steer the state. Active participation by farmers in *NFRF* made the structural fault lines in Canadian democracy evident. From the 1940s into the 1960s, through forums and public discussions, and through Action Projects around health delivery, a consensus was reached that an inadequate and inequitable health delivery system undermined the validity of Canadian democracy.

2. See sections by Ober; Raaflaub, Strauss, Wallach, Wollen and Wood in J. Peter Euben et al: *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (1994); Bellah et al. 1991; Stanley 1990; Yunis 1996.

3. "Deficit" is the new term meant to arouse fears and a bewildered submission to expert opinion, that is, to those who manipulate the market. Linda McQuaig in her expose, *Shooting the Hippo: Death by Deficit and Other Canadian Myths* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1995) speculates on the reason for the crisis: "In many ways, what the elite wants now is to lower citizens' expectations of what they can count on from society, to roll back the frontiers of government - to return to an earlier focus on enforcing more narrowly defined legal and political rights. It wants to wean us away from the notion of government as a provider and equalizer, and re-establish the discipline of the marketplace in meting out these sorts of rewards where they are 'earned.' Under the harsher discipline of the marketplace, we would have no automatic 'rights' or 'entitlements'; all we would have is whatever we could get by selling our services to those with the money to pay us" (7).

4. The study of genre in rhetorical studies has been a matter of intense interest in the last twenty-five years: Bormann 1978; Campbell and Jamieson 1978, 1986; Freedman and Medway 1994; Jamieson 1973, 1975; Jamieson and Campbell 1982; Miller 1984, 1994; Simons 1978; Simons and Aghazarian 1986.

5. The following documents defending the CBC and *NFRF* are those that I came across in my research:

"Do You Want To Help the CBC?" A three page letter sent to forums in Quebec arguing the criticisms of the CBC mounted by the owners of private stations and urging local forums to write their own resolutions (a model is attached of a resolution sent by the Farm Forums of Shefford-Rouville-Brome and Mississquoi, March, 1944). The letter is undated, (circa 1944) and unsigned but

another version of the letter, sent to Farm Forum secretaries is signed by R. Alex Sim, Secretary, Adult Education Service (NAC Avison, Vol.8, File 42) "CAAE and CBC Briefs 1940-1946." (4 pp.)

"Brief Presented by the CFA and the CAAE to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Radio Broadcasting 1944". Presenters were Mr. Herb Hannam and Colonel W. H. Brittain, Ottawa, Ontario, June 1, 1944 (NAC-Morrison, Vol.13, File "Committee of the House"). (4 pp.)

"Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting: Session 1946, House of Commons: Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, No.6, Thursday, July 4, 1946" Witnesses: W. H. Brittain, President of the CAAE assisted by Mr. Corbett and Mr. H. M. Estall, director and assistant-director. (NAC-Avison, Vol.8, File "CAAE and CBC Briefs 1940-1946," pp.178-195.)

A number of articles detailed the history of radio in Canada and the briefs presented: "We Speak Our Piece on Radio," Dr. Martyn Estall, *Food for Thought*, Vol.7, No.1, October, 1946, pp.20-23; "I Hear on the Radio", *Farm Forum Guide*, Vol.6, No.5, December 6, 1948, pp.1-3; "Farm Forum Presents Brief to Massey Commission", *Farm Forum Guide*, Vol.7, No.5, December 5, 1949 p.3; *Where are We Going in Canadian Radio Control?* Canadian Federation of Agriculture and The Cooperative Union of Canada, c.1949. (12 pp. in CBC-Toronto Archives.)

"Report of Meeting on National Radio Service, Toronto, April 22, 1948," by Leonard Harman In NAC AS, Vol.3, File: "NFRF Correspondence and Memorandum 1941-48 (3-5)." (1 p.) The report begins: "Present were 13 persons who are connected with farm and cooperative organizations, adult education, the churches and labour unions. The meeting reviewed the background of the present controversy over control of radio." It ended with: "It was agreed to make a report of this meeting available to certain people in other parts of Canada with the suggestion that similar meetings should be held in those centres to review the threat to public radio in Canada and to consider the possibility of a Radio League or other forms of action."

CAAE, *Brief to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting*, September 20, 1956, Archives of Ontario-CAAE, Box 10, "Director's Files 1961-1967." (15 pp.)

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture Memorandum to Members of Parliament Respecting Canadian Radio and Television Broadcasting, June 16, 1959, NAC CCC, File "CBC 1954-1968."

6. Frigon's letter of November 11, 1943 (see below) was sent to the entire list of speakers invited to participate on broadcasts for 1943 -1944 series: Dec.7 "The New Demand - the Right to Work - what chance is there for full employment?" D. J. Deachman & J. L. Cohen; Dec.14 "Public and Private Enterprise - a new partnership? Will such a partnership guarantee the right to work?" Paul Fournier, P. C. Armstrong, Francis Hankin; Dec 21 "Social Security Plans - do they provide security?" Dr. C. Whitton, Paul Martin; Jan 11 "The Right to be Healthy - the health of a nation," Dr. S. H. Prince, Dr. Allan R. Morton, Dr. H.B. Attlee; Dec 18 "The School Comes First - equal opportunity for our children," A. W. Trueman, Dr.

Balakeney, Minister of Education, N. B.; Jan.24 "A Man's Own Castle - homes and housing," Clare Gillis; Feb.1 "The Constitutional Barrier - can we plan for a better Canada without amending the BNA Act?" Antonio Perrault, K. C., Frank Scott; Feb 8 "One People - Two Cultures - a basis for unity between French-speaking and English.-speaking Canadians," Mme. Casgrain; Feb.15 "Canadians - World Citizens - How Canada is bound up with the world?" E.P. Taylor. April 4 "The New World Order - Can the U. N. provide the power to organize the world?" M. J. Coldwell.

In part, the letter said "Following my survey, it may be found advisable to modify certain decisions which may have already been made by our personnel. May I, therefore, ask you not to consider as final whatever understanding there might exist between yourself and those who are in charge of 'Of Things to Come', as I would not want you to go the trouble of making preparations which might prove needless. I am sorry that circumstances require that I should take such steps." (NAC Morrison, Vol.11, File: "Citizens Forum -'Of Things to Come' - Correspondence and Memos, n.d., 1943-1945.")

7. Frigon sent letters to Mr. Bernard K. Sandwell, Chief Editor, *Saturday Night*, Mr. Malcolm Wallace, Principal, University College, Toronto, and Mr. Charles G. Cowan, British American Bank-Notes Co. Ltd., Ottawa, on November.11, 1943. In part, the letter reads as follows: [you would] "render a great service to the Canadian public if you were good enough to submit to me the names of people whom you believe are qualified to discuss the various topics indicated in the tentative schedule I enclose herewith. Some preliminary work has been done by our staff in the matter but I need the advice of well qualified persons like yourself to guide me in my giving final approval to what has been suggested." (NAC Morrison, Vol.11, File: "Citizens Forum -'Of Things to Come' -Correspondence and Memos, n. d., 1943-1945.")

8. Morrison quotes Section D - 35 of the "Non-Party Controversial Broadcasts," passed July 8, 1939 by the Board of Governors: "The CBC is opposed to and shall resist any attempt to regiment opinion or to throttle freedom of utterance. It believes in the fullest use of the air for forthright stimulating discussion on all controversial questions. It believes that the best safeguard of freedom of discussion is a policy which permits the largest possible opportunity for the expression of varying and opposite opinions. It believes that as largely as possible all main points of view should be presented equally and fairly." (Morrison to Frigon, November 12, 1943).

CHAPTER THREE: THE CREATION OF THE RADIO FORUM GENRE: THE WAR YEARS

Introduction

National Farm Radio Forum was a project, the creation of a new genre out of existing organizations and experiments in civic education, some using the medium of radio. The first chapter looked at the institutions and organizations of civic education that made radio forums possible. The second chapter examined the historical roots of the forum, and the constraints that shaped the radio forum genre. This chapter will continue exploring this territory with a study of three pre-*NFRF* rural education projects that directly influenced the structure and authorship of *NFRF*: the first is the New Canada Movement ; the second, *CBC Farm Broadcasts* and third, two listening groups projects, *Inquiry into Co-operation* and *Community Clinic*, forerunners of listening group co-operation between the CBC and outside groups.

As we turn to the internal structure of *NFRF*, revealed in its sponsorship, its institutional practices and its programming, we become aware of the complexities of this radio forum project whose combined sponsorship was, on one hand, creating a neutral space for civic education and, on the other, developing a powerful political voice for farmers and their organizations.

Farm Radio Forum, later called *National Farm Radio Forum*, had three initial institutional sponsors, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA); the Cooperative Union of Canada became the fourth. The

latter two represented the interests of farmers across the country. As we saw in Chapter 2, politicians and business interests were suspicious about the roles of the sponsors in *NFRF* and, for their part, participant farmers complained that "the *National Farm Radio Forum* broadcasts do not go far enough in presenting realistic solutions of farm problems" ("Who Sponsored the Project?", *Farm Forum Facts*, Vol.1, No.15, March 30, 1942, 8). While the CAAE was an organization of member organizations, the CBC as a publicly-funded entity carefully tried to separate its role from that of the partisan political mandate of the CFA:

It should be clearly understood that this is not the function of the CBC. *Farm Forum Facts* suggests alternative solutions and practical courses of action, but in the final analysis, the responsibility for working out solutions of farm problems and putting them into effect, both on a local and national scale, rests with the farmers themselves and their organizations. The CBC as a nationally owned broadcasting system simply presents the facts and the arguments pro and con relating to important problems, with a view to stimulating thought and discussion. Radio also provides an opportunity for expression of the ideas of farm people themselves. This is the purpose of the provincial *Farm Forum* news period at the conclusion of the broadcasts. Through the use of this period, the broadcast becomes a truly democratic forum for the expression of farm opinion. ("Who Sponsored the Project?", *Farm Forum Facts*, Vol.1, No.15, March 30, 1942, 8)

However, the lines that separated the non-partisan from the partisan were not always clear. While the CBC, through its writers and producers, was responsible for the formal broadcast material, other material which formed an important part of the broadcast was researched and written by the national office and sometimes the provincial offices of *NFRF*. These offices and the material

produced for sending out to forum groups were the joint responsibility of the CAAE and the CFA.

For its part, the CAAE had a civic educational mandate that favoured the welfare model, and I have recounted in the first two chapters the controversial battles fought by both the CBC and the CAAE for the right of the forums to warrant free and open debate of political issues including those that challenged vested interests. The CFA also had an educational mandate: in this case to educate farmers in both political action and farming practices. Representing the interests of farmers across the country through its provincial and federal bodies, the CFA was a partisan organization, though not connected to any particular political party.

NFRF was a result of negotiations by these three organizations with different mandates and constraints to produce a national mediatized site of civic education for farmers. Much was at stake. All three of the sponsoring organizations were relatively new and untested on the national stage;¹ each of them put an enormous part of their financial and human resources into creating a new national institution. Thus, the creation of the radio forum would play a seminal role in the structures and development of each.

NFRF was created in the war years when a new openness and co-operation in all segments of society were propelled by the exigence of war. Farming organizations that had struggled to represent a membership oppressed by low produce prices, high machinery costs and poor social services found, with

the increased demand for farm production in wartime, an opportunity to press their case. As well, the claim made by war on healthy young men, a large percentage of whom were from rural communities, broadened and deepened the awareness of the need for rural medical services. This convergence of interests of government and business, as well as educational, scientific, and farming organizations created an openness to at least minimum structural changes in society.

The structure and discourse of *NFRF* integrated itself into forms and values known to its participants. Groups of local farmers were organized into and trained to be radio listening groups. Since forums need their participants to be heard as well as to hear, *NFRF* set up a system of reporting back to the central by local groups. The questions asked and responded to in *Farm Forum* Findings circled back into the broadcasts as considered opinion and future forum topics. The roles of narrative and dramatic form are also of importance here particularly as they were used in constructing a political community around the projects of rural health care. This was a community, like all rhetorically constructed communities, that needed to act, in order to fulfill its rhetorical aim. For this reason, a fundamental component of *NFRF* were its Action Projects, which I will examine in this chapter.

Breaking the Ground for the Founding of *NFRF*: Three Projects

New Canada Movement, 1933-1934

The New Canada Movement (NCM) (Crowley, 1988; Nolan, 1986; Shugg, 1978) was an important forerunner of *National Farm Radio Forum* in its attempt at a broadly-based non-partisan civic education program, its linking of education to social-political action, and its development of leaders and organizations that were later implicated in the development of *NFRF*. The NCM was an agricultural youth movement that sought new leadership for, and new solutions to the problems that had led to the Great Depression and forced agriculture into decline. Its leaders warned that without remedial action, "we are coming to the day when farmers will be a class of tenants working for a class that owns all the land" (Crowley 1988, 20). In spite of its search for new solutions, the NCM ideas were imbued with values from Ontario's rural past, including traditional religious values and an agrarian "aversion to political parties" (Crowley 1988, 11). These served the movement well. The movement attracted broadly-based support: leaders from churches, cooperatives, political parties as well as journalists and intellectuals who found common cause with 100,000 young farmers, mostly in Ontario, whose motto was "Save Agriculture - Save Canada."

NCM called for a broad education for its members, one that offered an informed economic and political analysis of technology, production and distribution and of the relationship of farming to business, government and international markets. Such education did not yet exist for the farming

community: traditional rural education was "wedded" to "the status quo" and agricultural colleges and government-sponsored programs offered only "narrow technical training" (Crowley 11). The NCM borrowed the study methods and the organizing structure of the Antigonish Movement in its use of both mass group lectures and small study groups that printed material as a basis for discussion. Thus, a new "division" of NCM would begin with an advance team of young farmers "storming" a county, i.e., pledging large numbers of youth to serve the Movement, before the so-called "Big Team" of speakers arrived to begin the mass training course. Their topics concerned difficulties faced by farmers including replacement of labour by new technologies, trade barriers and mounting personal debts. Pledged members were then organized into groups of ten to fifteen to create new ideas out of their studies and experiences and to train themselves and others on political action.

In order to enhance and extend the program, the leaders of the NCM met in October, 1934 to discuss the need to co-operate with other educational organizations and movements in "raising the cultural and economic standards of the Canadian people" (Shugg 1934a, 2) and "developing a national Canadian philosophy or outlook" (3) and, in doing so, predated a similar and successful move by the CAAE by a year. The NCM joined with the YMCA, Christian Commonwealth Youth Movement, the Cooperative Union, the United Farmers of Ontario, the Religious Educational Council, the Workers' Educational Association and the Extension Department of the University of Toronto to offer a

two week "central training school" to 40 students to "study and discuss social and economic problems particularly as bear upon agriculture" (4). The hoped-for spin-off was to be the growth of county schools and the "establishment of permanent, non-partisan study groups" (4-5).

While the NCM lasted only a year, its philosophy of study for action, its non-partisan but political stance, its cooperative attitude of working with other institutions all prefigured attitudes and stances taken by *NFRF*. A further seminal influence from the NCM is evident in the founding of organizations and personnel that backed the radio forum.² The creation of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in 1939, the "more permanent solution to voicing agriculture's concern" (Crowley 29) brought experienced activists to the *NFRF*. Indeed, it was the fieldmen of the CFA who were instrumental in the organization and maintenance of forum groups on a national scale.

The later planning committee of the *NFRF* included Alex Sim, Orville Shugg, young farmers who took on a leadership role in organizing NCM in their areas, and Alan Plaunt and Graham Spry, both founding members of the Canadian Radio League that pressured for public broadcasting. Indeed, Plaunt and Spry's attempt to build NCM by using a newspaper as a means of communication was a step toward understanding the need for an established non-partisan communication system in building a public education system. While the financial collapse of Plaunt's paper, *Weekly Sun*, in 1934 spelled the collapse of the NCM itself, Plaunt, Spry, Sim and Shugg dedicated their efforts to

building the kind of public broadcasting system that could and would co-sponsor a national program of civic and rural education.

CBC Farm Broadcasts

In writing about the NCM, Shugg reiterated the oft-repeated line that "no movement which has sound objectives is completely lost when it dies" (Shugg 1941a, 2). Indeed, as a consequence of his involvement with the NCM, Shugg, in 1936, submitted to the new public radio system a paper entitled, "Rural Canada and National Radio." In it he argued why the CBC must serve the rural Canadian population which comprised, at that time, 46% of Canada's population: to wean rural listeners away from American stations, to incorporate them into "the broad cultural influence [made] possible through radio at its best" (1) and to serve their interests. These interests included setting up farm broadcasts to give accurate and correlated local and national marketing information at a set time each day and to offer non-partisan explanations of government policy and programs that recognized and spoke to the interests and needs of rural Canada such as "a regular national health broadcast" (Shugg 1936, 4).

Shugg called on the CBC to "take carefully into consideration an important body of organized opinion, the Federated Women's Institutes³ of Canada . . . not only as a listening audience but as a medium of publicity" (Shugg 1936, 4). Shugg's advice anticipated the kind and quality of CBC's involvement with outside organizations in fulfilling its mandate to develop a civic

culture.⁴ Three years later, in 1939, Shugg, the first supervisor of CBC Farm Broadcasts, had his department adhere to a number of fundamentals that allowed it to be successfully involved in *NFRF*: never allowing agricultural broadcasting to “be invested in the hands of any one agricultural body” while encouraging the “co-operation of every agricultural source, but please understand that we call the shot. Only in this way can everyone be fairly represented”; making sure that regional interests did not interfere with national interests for “farm broadcasts without central control would be throwing away any chances we may have for building a correlated and efficient national service” (Shugg 1940, 4). While the CBC Farm Broadcasts were, as Shugg pointed out, largely service programming, they were also “the foundation of the system, building up a loyal, satisfied listener following in the rural areas across Canada” (Shugg 1941b, 21). The NCM, though short-lived, was a powerful training ground for farm activists that fed into the development of the CBC Farm Broadcasts and the CFA, and for rural educators who pushed the CBC to set up experiments in listening/study groups that evolved into *NFRF*.

Listening/Study/Discussion Group Radio Projects:

“Inquiry into Co-operation” and “Community Clinic”

Beginning in 1935, many study groups connected to university extension departments, the CAAE and farming organizations, experimented with the medium of radio.⁵ In June, 1937, the CBC set up a “Talks Conference,” inviting

members of the CAAE to discuss cooperative educational work such as support for experimental educational work with the University of Alberta radio station.⁶ In 1938, Gladstone Murray, the general manager of CBC, wrote to Wilfred Bovey, of the CAAE, stating that given the CBC's aims of "fostering a truly Canadian spirit by making Canadians better known to one another . . . , spreading the knowledge of history and science . . . , giving an unbiased view of current events, and promoting knowledge of good music, good drama and good literature," that "more advantage may be derived" with the organization of listening groups. While the CBC was "unable to assume any responsibility financial or otherwise for the organization and conduct of such groups," it did offer to train group leaders from among people recommended by the co-operating CAAE organizations and to make printed material available to them and to other recognized societies.(Murray 1938). In partnership, the CBC and the CAAE (with its affiliates that comprised most educational societies across Canada), jointly employed Neil Morrison to set up two controlled experiments in listening/study group projects, *Enquiry into Co-operation* and *Community Clinic*.

Enquiry into Co-operation, already referred to in Chapter 1 as the cause of some controversy, consisted of nine broadcasts "on the economic and social aspects of consumer and producer cooperatives in Canada," a subject of proven interest to local study groups and one "on which the listening groups could take some action" (Nicol 1954, 42). Study material on the weekly broadcasts was prepared and sent to registered groups (documents put the number between 350

and 550 groups) and the talks and discussions by leading co-operators and their critics was ultimately put out in booklet form. While the series presented arguments and stimulated discussion in small groups, the series of short duration was not interactive, lacking a medium for group discussion feedback.

Community Clinic, the second experiment by the CBC and the CAAE in radio listening groups, also was attached to an existing organization of radio study groups, this one run by the Rural Adult Education Service of Macdonald College, McGill University. *Community Clinic* was a small and geographically local program that presented topics of current interest to an Eastern Ontario and Quebec English farming audience through interviews and round-table discussions carried on CBM and CHLT, a Sherbrooke radio station. As a local testing ground for rural radio adult education, it could be controlled and observed in a way that a national series could not be. In particular, it began to confront the problems of creating an interaction between the broadcast forum and the local forum groups through "roving reporter" meetings with local groups and the encouraging of correspondence, especially through the "*Community Clinic* Question Box" (CBC 1939). It also experimented with narratives and dramas in both broadcast and written forms.

Morrison began the experiment with a number of guiding principles (Morrison 1940) resulting from the experience with *Enquiry into Co-operation*. Morrison's first principle was that educational programs must be planned on a regional basis, directed to a selective audience with its interests and needs in

mind and, if possible, include personal and local or community interests. Many of the twelve programs in the *Community Clinic* series were written in the week between the broadcasts with opinions from farmers, some sent into the program, and read on air. Anxiety was expressed about the airing of farmers' problems: "I am sure the Government should be ashamed to allow such a broadcast. Why tell the world farmers do not eat proper food? It is a down right disgrace to a farmer to be made into such an ignorant class before the eyes of the world." (CBC. *Community Clinic*, "Letter Night, 1940) On the whole, though, farmers expressed a belief in the relationship between discussion and action: "Your programs are great, farmers have problems to be sure, but we don't take time to think, discuss and plan. Why should we sell milk for 3 1/2 cents a quart, that in turn sells for 12 cents. It's easily seen that we don't work together" (Ibid)

While the discussion on health and health schemes, "Do Farmers Need a Health Program?" (CBC. *Community Clinic*, "Do Farmers Need a Health Program," 1940) featured two McGill professors, the Dean of Medicine⁷ and the Director of the Home Economics Department on rural health, their knowledge, while pan-Canadian, was generated by a local university with lots of examples from Quebec and Eastern Ontario. As well, a number of comments from listeners were read: "You have to be pretty sick before you send for a doctor if you live 10 miles from one and it costs a dollar a mile for a visit." Another remark, this one in opposition to the general tenor of the programme, was read: "I listened last night to your farm debate on Nutrition. What kind of farmers do you know? If there are

any farmers' children in Eastern Ontario that are underfed, I never heard of them." This farmer's response pointed out the economic differences within a defined region and seemed to suggest that all experiences were valid and to be considered.

Morrison's second principle was that in using the best type of educational program, i.e. the discussion, a real clash of opinion or exchange of views should be aired with some order or coherence to make it easy for the listener to follow, and in language that is informal, personal and non-academic. In consequence, the first three programs were set up as a narrative of the two hosts/organizers in friendly rivalry; Alex Sim presented himself as the country man, aware of local rural problems who needed to educate Neil Morrison, the city man, about Eastern farmers having problems as did Western farmers. The listeners were challenged to organize their own "community clinics" in order to diagnose rural problems. They could join in on the broadcast discussions and investigations by articulating their problems either through letters to the program or in personal contact with Sim and Morrison, roving reporters.

The final principle laid out by Morrison was that the radio program should be supplementary to a broad adult education program and related directly to it, thus demanding co-operation among broadcasting and educational organizations. Part of that co-operation was the written material prepared by The Rural Adult Education Service of McGill University, the CAAE and the CBC. The material for *Community Clinic* was of two types: first, study and discussion

outlines called "Canadian Farm Problems" used in conjunction with particular broadcasts; second, material about leadership, that is, the organizing, running and taking part in radio listening groups. Since much of this material formed the structural basis of *NFRF*, I will examine in this section how this written material constructed its audience.

I have chosen two items from the publication, "Canadian Farm Problems" that are of interest because the first, "Can Discussion Benefit the Rural Community?," confronts the problems of and solutions for the political isolation of the rural population, and the second, "Do Farmers Need a Health Program?," begins the difficult process of conjoining common knowledge with expert opinion in a public forum genre.

"Can Discussion Benefit the Rural Community?", the text for the first broadcast of the same name, begins with a narrative introduction, presenting the farmer of the past and the farmer of today. The past is one of simplicity, "old-time neighbourliness" with "quilting bees" and "bewhiskered males perched on the herring barrels and the cracker boxes of the country store." This is an image of a close and closed community where all problems were confidently solved at the local level through friendly discussions. The contrasting narrative is one of fear, confusion and helplessness as the modern farmer is faced with complex problems which seem beyond his control. Paralysed, he is letting others, those in government, do his thinking for him. After the introduction, a second section asks questions and gives some positions for and against which, in turn, identify

two characters in another dichotomous narrative: one farmer stays in his fearful, paralysed state - complaining, keeping to his own business, feeling cowed by experts who might have the answers, seeing discussion as sowing discord and sharing ignorance; the other farmer welcomes the benefits of discussion. He understands that behind problems are causes and that, while experts and government may be helpful in defining them, the farmer has an expertise as well. He also understands that discussion is a way of sharing different points of view, a way of both increasing knowledge and of developing a group for action. Finally, this farmer turns to the radio, to books and other printed material in order to contribute to the greater knowledge and success of the group, to be able to question and criticize ideas and decisions of authorities. The final section of the text is a list of books and pamphlets available from the Rural Adult Education Service and from CAAE.

The material looked at here constructs an image of the politically active community as a way out for isolated, paralysed individual farmers. Through discussion, study and active relationships with other farmers and organizations, farmers are able to find answers to their problems. While the image reconfirms the traditional independence of the farmer, it refashions the centrality of his personal expertise with the possibility of new solutions when that expertise is shared with other farmers, all with their particular "blind spots."

"Do Farmers Need a Health Program?" in the "Canadian Farm Problems" series accompanied the program of the same name. The introductory material

again is largely narrative, presented through a dichotomy of the past and the lived present as opposed to the unfolding present and the future. The farmer of the present/past is physically isolated, poor and "haunted by the fear of the costs of sickness and hospital bills. He may scrimp and save - doing without medical examination, proper food, or hired help, in order that he can afford to pay those bills." As well, public health matters, such as "the problems of controlling food supply, and sanitation are left almost entirely to the judgement of the individual". In contrast, the farmer of the present/future moves away from isolated individual responsibility toward being one part of a movement of "national importance" to study the subject of rural health:

Only when rural people have studied conditions, methods of solving them, only when they bring these conditions to the attention of the government, can effective measures be taken. Health laws are imperative. Health organizations in the form of municipal doctors, cooperative hospitals, clinics and immunization are needed.

The present/future farmer character has moved out from narrativized experiences into action. This directive quality in the introduction is reinforced in the two pages of reference material and in the program itself, both laying out the study and recommendations made by the Dean of the McGill Faculty of Medicine. As well, the questions for group discussion such as, "What health services should be expected in a rural community?," "Can farmers afford adequate medical care?," "What constitutes a hospital service?" and "What are the causes of ill-health among farmers?," are followed by researched, expert answers.

The following section will examine the second kind of publication material from *Community Clinic* that formulated the role of the radio listening group in relationship to its own participants, to other listening groups and to the larger forum. This topic will be extended into later written material on listening groups as the *NFRF* project entered into its first years of operation.

From *Community Clinic* to *NFRF*: The Prescriptive Construction of a National Community out of Local Forums

The creation of a national radio forum community out of hundreds of local rural groups across the country was planned in a number of documents. Most of these, examined here, evolved out of the *Community Clinic* experiment, notably, Southam's Radio Listening Groups: A Course for Leaders and were presented at the "Radio Listening Group Conference" in 1940 in preparation for *Radio Farm Forum*, renamed *NFRF* in the following year.

One way in which community was prescribed was through the instructions that produced a common physical space and the formal organization of the local forums. Like the classic forum, such a space must be at least partially enclosed and small enough for all participants to hear and be heard. Southam speaks of the forum group, (gathered in a circle, the better for multi-directional discussion), being a minimum of six participants and a maximum of twenty for the inclusion of "enough shades of opinion for worthwhile creative discussion" (23) and for allowing "time enough in a meeting for each member to make several

contributions" (23). In spite of the organizational formality of the space, it was to be less formal in its location for forum participants were "guests of each other in turn":

The public hall introduces a formality which detracts from the naturalness of this association. If the hall is large and the attendance is small, the echoes will discourage the stoutest hearts. [Besides] one always feels an obligation to attend a meeting in a friend's home and to get there on time, that one does not feel regarding a hall meeting. (Rural Co-operator, March 14, 1939)

Another prescribed aspect of the organization of the local forums was the formalization of leadership. The duties of the chairperson and secretary included registering the group, keeping attendance, keeping members informed on upcoming broadcasts and reading material received, reporting on the way in which programs were received, and sending in the group's constructive criticisms of programs heard and its suggestions concerning the improvement of programs" (Southam 1940, 23-25). This formal written function, followed by all the forums, set up a system in which each group was linked to a much larger, national and more powerful group.

The prescribed consistency of conduct constructed the audience of each local forum as participants capable of entering into a public space. Local forum members, present to one another and thus able to be heard, were told: "speak your mind freely Your ideas count Do not speak to please anyone; say what you honestly think. Do not hold back because your idea seems incomplete; it may be just the one that the group needs to move ahead." (Radio

Listening Groups Conference, Macdonald College, 1940, "Suggestions for Discussion Group Members"). Participants also had a responsibility to hear the views of others. They were told to "listen thoughtfully to others. Try to understand the other man's viewpoint - to see what experience it rests on. Listen and learn" (Ibid). If they didn't understand what was being said, they should say so: "Ask for examples and illustrations until you do understand" (Ibid). Every participant in the forum was to have equal access to offer his point of view; therefore, "don't monopolize the discussion. Say what you have to say and stop. Give the other members as much chance to talk as you have had" (Ibid). All these suggestions for speaking and listening encouraged forum participants to enact the ideals of a political community by emphasizing their practical knowledge, their rationality, and most importantly, their ability to create such a community.

The commonness and consistency of local forum conduct was reinforced by the regularity of meetings everywhere across Canada (every Monday evening from November to March) at a regular time with a regular format (a half hour of radio listening, followed by an hour of discussion and then a social time). The commonness and consistency also was embedded in the common program topic and in the questions to be answered. While the building of a national political community began in the individual listening and discussion groups, "no one of these small groups is alone: For thousands of others are also meeting, studying, discussing together, using the same material, thinking through the same

problems, coming, we hope, to reasoned conclusions on the basis of the facts” (Brittain 1941, 7). Discussion groups were described as contributing to the welfare of the nation as a whole: “By learning something of [public] problems, we are contributing, not only to our own enlightenment and that of our neighbours, but we are doing something to strengthen our hard won democratic way of life” (Brittain 1941, 4). Thus, local participants were urged to see their local efforts as a model for other citizens outside the forum and as the foundation of a democratic society.

Finally, the demand that local action result from forum discussion was a major prescriptive element of *NFRF*. So-called “Action Projects” were understood as the necessary thrust of discussion and judgment:

When conclusions are reached, based on the general consensus of opinion and acceptable to the group as a whole, the democratic process is functioning. The conclusions of course, must lead to action otherwise the discussion group will be as ineffective as a parliament whose debates never lead to legislation. The neighbourhood discussion group should therefore work for a specific objective, such as a credit union or a local cooperative. In learning to operate such an undertaking successfully, the group members participate in a democratic enterprise and thus learn how true democracy works. (*Farm Forum Guide*, Vol.1, No.2, Nov.15, 1943, 1)

Forum members were encouraged to work together on projects and also to join up with other forum and non-forum groups with expertise. While forum discussions themselves were seen as action, it is hard to imagine the shape of *NFRF* without the discourse of Action Projects; in the subject of health delivery, they, along with narratives of health conditions, were a powerful impetus for the

demand for change on the provincial and national stage. First, however, came the narratives that demanded action.

Building Community through Rhetorical Drama

In addition to the written material, the broadcast material also aimed to build a community that would act in specific ways. While the debate format was used in controversial issues, for those issues where consensus existed on the broad questions, a drama format dominated; this was certainly the case in the subject of health care, the subject chosen in this dissertation for analysis in *NFRF* programming.⁸ As I have said, the subject of health care delivery contains the topics of cooperativism and equity of access, and as we see in the dramas, the necessity of both neighbour and political community. The question of health is something concretely seen at the local level: your neighbour is ill and you see that; you are ill and your neighbour sees that. Neighbours also share the broader political conditions that allow or do not allow citizens to receive adequate health services.

The drama format of health care was not literary in its intent but rhetorical; that is "disputational, positional, instrumental in its aims, presumptuous in its methods" (Farrell 1985, 118). Its material is rooted in a specific audience, speaking of its present in terms of deliberation about the future. Thus the drama must be, first of all, consistent with "the audience's general outlook on the world, with both its logical and sociological expectations" (Lucaites and Condit 1985,

96). Secondly, it must focus in on its aims in terms of "brevity" and "unity of direction and unity of purpose" (Lucaites and Condit 1985, 98). In doing so, the rhetors "state [their] facts like advocates not witnesses" (99). Finally, the closure of the drama is not within it, not internal, but outside with the audience in its enactment of the rhetorical thrust.

Inextricably tied to the unities of purpose and direction is the formal unity of the rhetor even though he may be represented within the drama by various characters and be the result of more than one author. Since the speaker is implicated in the purpose or gain growing out of his rhetoric, and since he is persuading the audience to actively participate in a specific purpose, he

is therefore expected by an audience to assert and accept responsibility for the power and veracity of the narratives that are featured in a discourse. The ability of the narrative to frame an interpretation of the proof and to move the audience to action is thus functionally contingent upon the speaker's credibility. (Lucaites and Condit 1985, 101)

Thomas Farrell has asked the question, "How do we gain the authority to tell a story about others in the first place?" (Farrell 1985, 110) In our particular case, what was the credibility of this new organization, *NFRF*, made up of three other organizations and numerous local groups, to be the "author" of the dramas?

Part of the answer to this question lies in the relationship of the sponsoring organizations to the farmers. The CFA represented Canadian farmers through their membership in established provincial organizations; the CAAE and its provincial members had a long history of supporting public education on behalf of groups of people publicly under represented. For its part,

the publicly-owned CBC, ultimately responsible for the dramas aired, worked in conjunction with the CFA and the CAAE to research authentic material on which to base the dramas. The audience was being told stories about itself, stories that narrativized rural experiences, ethos and aspirations, in this case, around health delivery. Statistics on rural health conditions including the number of medical personnel, the lack of hospitals and clinics compared to such institutions in urban areas, and the number of young rural men refused military sign-up because of their inadequate health condition were also part of the narratives.

The facts of the matter, ensconced in the narrative voices of farmers, the voices of the kinds of people the audience was familiar with, fulfilled an important requirement of rhetorical narrative: that it include "the audience's general outlook on the world, with both its logical and sociological expectations" (Lucaites and Condit 1985, 96). In short, the program itself, through the voices of a number of characters, was rhetorically presented as having the same aims as the rural audience. Thus, the voice of *NFRF* was authoritatively and favourably established.

In what way did the rhetorical dramas on health care in *NFRF* work to build the audience into a community of shared interest and aims with a role to play in national deliberations? First of all, the dramas took health care out of the private realm and put it into the public realm. While individuals and families were personally struck with illnesses and accidents, the dramas opened up the field of health care into the community which gathered into its aegis the province and

the nation - a widening circle of political community and responsibility. The use of publicly collected statistics on the state of rural health in conjunction with the dramatized characters who "lived" those statistics disclosed the larger and public responsibility necessary for the problems of individuals and families to be solved.

While the private and the personal were politically insignificant in the world "out there," the conjunction of statistically-gathered information combined with the formerly personal experience to disclose the acting and speaking characters as political agents on the site of health care. Their combined experiences, interpreted statistically, pulled them into a relationship that more consciously constructed the world. Thus the audience saw itself in the political world - interacting with institutions, recreating old institutions, and creating their own new and powerful institutions: CFA, *NFRF*, and ultimately, a national health delivery system.

We saw in the discussion of public institutions how essential they were to the creation of social memories both within those institutions and among individuals and groups. The broadcast narrative also had its impulse from legal institutions for they provided the standard knowledge of the past, an "objective" history into which subjective histories in the form of local narratives could be inserted. Furthermore, the social memory within institutions encouraged narratives to be more than, in Farrell's term, "happy talk" for "an ethic of narrative would find the bounds of rationality in those commitments we have

already made and what we must now do because of them" (Farrell 1985, 124).

The narratives offered a model to the community about who has the right to speak and about how to speak about problems. Since oral scripts and certainly those in dramatic form, tend to emphasize the agonistic (Ong, 1982), the dramas on *NFRF* offered as well a model for how to handle disagreements and differences as part of the deliberative process. If the characters in the drama could come to a resolution on what action to take by following certain practices, so, ideally, could the local forum.

Finally, the dramas of *NFRF* were community bound: individual characters spoke as representatives of a community. The dramatic narratives urged forum participants to speak representationally, to tell their narratives in relationship to the local and to the larger "community" of radio-linked forums. They were thus taught, through the dramatized narrative, how to tell their stories rhetorically and in what way that telling could lead to community action.

Farm Radio Forum: "You Can't Afford to be Sick": A Dramatization of the Problems of Rural Health Care

In the first year of operation, *Farm Radio Forum* broadcast to the Eastern provinces only: the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario. The sixth program in the 1941 *Farm Radio Forum* series, "You Can't Afford to be Sick," was a half-hour dramatization about health services set in a farming community called Sunnyridge. Our guide and narrator, the Old Timer, described as a retired

farmer-philosopher, gave the audience a tour of what was happening out there in terms of sickness. First, through a series of aural fade-ins and fade-outs, the audience hears snatches of voices, those of people in physical and mental pain as they express guilt, fear and regret about their illnesses. Second, the Old Timer takes us into a farming home where a doctor is insisting to the parents that in spite of their inability to pay either the doctor or the hospital, the child must be admitted to save his life. In two of the three cases in the first section, and in the case in the second section, the illness has become life-threatening because the doctor had not been called due to lack of money. In the third and final part of the drama, the Old Timer takes his audience to hear farmers, men and women, none related, and a doctor who has lived among them for ten years, in discussion about what could be done about "this health problem."

Although the audience for the broadcast was largely specific, that is, English farmers in the eastern provinces, still it was geographically scattered, each part with its own history and experience of medical services. Any one documented experience would be only partly true for other parts of the audience and location. For its part, the drama allowed the rhetor to generalize the conditions while personalizing the effects of those conditions on individuals as characterized in the drama. Since the audiences of the drama were expected to act in the world, this could only be encouraged if, as Farrell has pointed out, the narrative presents "a background postulate governing the expectations of communicants themselves" (Farrell 1985, 115).

The parts and sequencing of "You Can't Afford to be Sick" made possible an interacting rhetorical movement. The situation in the first two parts delivered not just past procedures, "what went on" in Farrell's terms, but also laid out the "urgency of the moment" (1985, 116). The three sets of characters were caught in the urgency of the moment. The first set were sick, isolated individuals in pain, unable to respond; the second set was a small familial group, poor and frightened, proudly resisting its helpless dependence on charity whose response was incomplete and inadequate for their needs. The third set was a group of healthy farmers, not related to one another, who, with the doctor, responded to the exigence by creating, with friendship and proximity, a new community through the sharing of experiences and expertise, and through the decision to look into a possible cooperative solution for community health delivery. In its movement of characters and narrative, the drama allowed the audience to see and understand past procedures, what logically led up to the need for a change in procedures and the ensuing process of change, that is, the enacting of action that happened within the drama. Such a sequencing offered a model for individual and community growth, the "passage from one moral order to another" (quoted in Ettema 1988, 258).

While the rhetorical narrative demands brevity, that is, the focusing and framing of "the audience's attention precisely on the issue before it - no more, no less" (Lucaites and Condit 1985, 96), - the dramatized narrative form allows for other characteristics that could also be rhetorically useful. While the primary

purpose of the broadcast at hand was to encourage groups of listeners to cooperatively educate themselves about the conditions of health delivery in their regions, other related purposes were incorporated into the dramatic structure. One important purpose in the broadcasts was the development of the concept of cooperative friendship in forum groups. As discussed in Chapter 1, *philia*, friendship or mutual trust among citizens, was one of the fundamental requirements for political discourse for the Greeks. Friendship “was essential to ensure that agents expressing opposing positions would not forget that the best political decisions demanded a cooperative spirit of fraternity in the face of controversy” (Frentz 1985, 5). The dramatized question at issue in “You Can’t Afford to be Sick” seems to have been a result of ignorance and a lack of community structure rather than of real differences. Confronted by the supporters of health delivery changes, the opposition was quickly enlightened and backed down:

Mrs. Armitage: I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings but look at George here. You feed your cattle concentrates, don’t you?

Powell: By golly, I sure do. Costs plenty to balance feeds for livestock.

Mrs. A. There, you see - if livestock need balanced diets, so do humans.

Powell: Oh yeah, I see what you’re driving at now - proper feeding. You know, I never thought of it that way before.

What little controversy that existed did so in an atmosphere of laughter and gentle teasing as arguments about farmers’ personally unhappy experiences with the inadequacy of health care were easily (and, one might say, too simplistically) winning the day. Other signs of friendship were revealed in the

use of first names (except between the farmers and the invited guest, the doctor), and the reading aloud of a personal letter to Aunt Kate (Armitage) concerning a working municipal health scheme in her niece's area. The final sign of friendship was in the setting of the forum group meeting place, the warmth and intimacy of the room next to the kitchen in Mrs. Armitage's home. This setting is in stark contrast to the vague, lonely setting of the floating voices of the first part and, in the second part, the isolated house "over on the 9th sideroad" where a fearful little family confronts the question of health while facing death.

As well as developing the need of friendship as a basis for political talk, the drama also dealt with how a group of ordinary people can enter into a debate that is largely in the realm of specialized knowledge. The need for expertise is a prickly problem for the democratic forum. As Thomas S. Frentz has remarked,

Where once agents could be presumed to share a common social knowledge from which moral action might emanate, that presumption has become all but untenable in an age of increased specialization and the concomitant proliferation of technical knowledge.(Frentz:1985, 4)

The solution proffered in "You Can't Afford to be Sick" was to incorporate expertise into the neighbourly circle. Dr. Evans serves the dramatized community and is also someone who grew up in the neighbourhood. Since his father was a doctor as well and served the same families, Dr. Evans has expertise about the generational progress of the health of local citizens, questions of lifespan, infant mortality compared to other countries and other

parts of Canada, and, interestingly, the position of the medical profession on compulsory health insurance:

Doctor: You know, there was a scheme ready (*sic*) planned in B.C. but the doctors opposed it, because they didn't like the way it was organized.

Another expert in the group is the character Eric, an immigrant farmer from Denmark who gives an international perspective on health care systems. However, the most important expert in the group is Mrs. Armitage because she has sought up-to-date institutional expertise through a pamphlet, How Healthy is Canada, published by the Women's Institute. Thus Mrs. Armitage is able to inform the other members of the group "about rural health units operating in Quebec and Prince Edward Island," how they operate and are paid for. She is also knowledgeable about municipal doctor schemes in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and how doctors in such schemes perform the duties of health officers as well. For her part, Mrs. Richards offers expert information from her reading of a study of Canadian nutrition with the conclusion that "over half - half, mind you - of the people in Canada are under nourished." The drama presents expertise as not just the result of experience but also that of active seeking out of information from various institutions. As well, women, just as men, are seen to be experts in the dramatized group forum.

Finally, how did "You Can't Afford to be Sick" try to persuade the forum audiences to act outside the drama? The drama has offered a progressive movement from despair to hope, from a dramatic enactment of rural illness to a

dramatized, prefigured model of a rural forum able to bring about local change. Certainly, this progressive movement leads the audience to an optimistic conclusion about the future health of the Sunnyridge populace; however, what about the future health of the audience? The role of the Old Timer narrator is important here. While he does not take part in any of the three dramas, speaking as he does from a narrator's position, he is a long time resident farmer of the same area, intimate with all the characters and close to the events recounted. In fact, his narrative, which includes the three dramas as well as his monologues, are a recounting, but more, an accounting of many events which he remembers:

I've seen a lot of folks in my time, going around - sick on their feet and in their eyes a kind of hope along with fear. But inside those same folks, inside everyone of them they'd be saying to themselves maybe it's nothing to worry about . . . poor souls.

His intimacy with the characters, his recounting of memories and of forum activities tie all the parts and the characters into a consistent whole and together they make the Old Timer a reliable narrator. After the dramatic episodes, he again speaks directly to the broadcast audience, incorporating it into an expanded "we," joining the audience, himself and the rest of the Sunnyridge community into a kind of *polis* that will meet again in a formalized meeting place:

Just as I was saying, you can buy health if you want to, doesn't cost much if you spread it around evenly. Rural people can't afford health now and haven't got the facilities available even if we could - but there's no reason why we can't afford health if we go after it Anyway we'll leave that until next Tuesday. I'll hope to see you all then.

National Farm Radio Forum: "We Can't Afford to be Sick": The Extension of Community and Responsibility

The formulation of the inclusive "we" at the end of "You Can't Afford to be Sick" was continued in the second drama on health, as first seen in the title, "We Can't Afford to be Sick." This program, unlike "You Can't Afford to be Sick," went all across Canada on the renamed *National Farm Radio Forum*, and the "we" includes this extended geography as well as an expansion of the idea of community and its responsibility. Because the material of the earlier drama had not been heard by the Western provinces, many of the discomfiting statistics are repeated in this drama such as those on infant and maternal mortality and on the high incidence in Canada of malnutrition, typhoid fever and diphtheria. Once again, the drama begins and ends with a monologue by the Old Timer who introduces the subject and describes the settings of the two incorporated dramas, the second one being, as before, a discussion on health by the Sunnyridge forum group. Once again, he wraps up the dramas with a call for action from the audience.

The new inclusiveness of the "we" in this program is part of a complex reworking of ideas about why there is the need for improved health care, what the needs are in health care and who is primarily responsible for improved health care. The first drama is of a farm family whose son has been rejected by the medical board of Air Force Recruiting because of an eye problem "that should have been caught a long time ago." The disappointment, especially of the

son and his father is palpable. The mother hopes that the son was not blamed by the examining military doctor. At this point, the feelings of personal disappointment and responsibility about not being able to fulfill a duty turn to anger that is directed outward:

No, he wasn't blaming me, mother or you or Dad either. He was just blaming everybody. I was doing some heavy thinking coming back on the bus. It's a funny thing that people only start thinking about the health of young fellows like me when there's some fighting to be done. In peace time we can go to the devil. If we'd been looked after in this school section like the kids are in some city schools, my eyes wouldn't be like they are today. I'd be good enough to put on a uniform.

The reasons given for the anger are backed up by statistics as the Old Timer recalls the recent words of the Minister for National War Services:

The calling up of men for military training has revealed that the state of health of Canada's youth is much below what might properly be considered the standard of fitness for young men in a virile nation. Out of a total of 217,588 men examined . . . only about 56% were placed in category A, the only category that is accepted for training . . . This is a serious situation.

This position is picked up by Mrs. Richards, a Sunnyridge forum member:

"'Serious?' Why, I think it's simply terrible . . . Why the country should be ashamed." Some members of the forum try to push the genie back into the bottle, insisting that "If children aren't well, you can just blame the homes and the women" but the Danish farmer refutes the idea of the family having sole responsibility: "what if you cannot pay the bills? I do not want to ask for free service so what do I do? Nothing. And it is bad for the whole family. I think we need some national plan, health services for everyone."

A number of arguments are presented in the Sunnyridge forum to support the Dane's position. One is the "lack of preventive care due to poor public health services and inadequate medical facilities." As well as the appalling information given by the doctor on preventable deaths, both maternal and infant, and controllable diseases that were out of control, Mrs. Richards reports on a health study of children examined in Oxford County, "one of the best farming districts in Ontario: Of the 2,000 children, 893 had over 1,100 defects" and when the same children were examined a year later, "nothing had been done to correct 1,000 of those defects." Another argument concerns the breakdown of the rural family doctor system. Sparsely settled, low income farmers cannot adequately support a doctor who, in consequence, leaves for the populous city. War worsened the collapse of the system as a fifth of Canadian doctors joined military service. The third argument concerns the success in different parts of Canada in passing enabling legislation to tax whole communities for a common health service. All these arguments allow the Old Timer to define an enlarged need and responsibility:

We used to think health and doctors were just family matters. Now I'm not so sure. Looks like it's too big for most families alone but working together, that's different. It's a job for the community, maybe even the nation, too.

Both incorporated dramas began with the situation of the audience farmers: "you/ we can't afford to be sick," can't afford the medical care when "we" farmers are sick. With the drama of young Bob who was hoping to be recruited

into the Air Force, the “we” who can’t afford to be sick is the nation at war, a nation that sees the loss of a possible soldier and realizes that “it is expensive *not* to spend money on health”; indeed, uncontrolled diseases “are fifth columns helping Hitler . . . , enemies we can fight and kill right here at home.” While the waste begins with the loss of one farm boy soldier whose medical problem was not attended to when he was a child, the “we” of the collective nation becomes personalized again to include all the children of the nation whose health must be looked after both because of and in spite of the war.

With the extension of the “we” who must receive health care comes the extension of the “we” who must take responsibility for health care. With the war, the problem of health delivery is refocused from a family or local problem to a national problem that demands national action particularly in the areas of public health, the equalizing of rural health care with city care, and enabling taxation legislation. As health care becomes a project in the *national* interest and one that must be inclusive, it also becomes one that demands equity of access, regardless of the ability of individuals or communities to pay. By the end of the second drama, this argument is secured; the concerns of the first drama, that no farming family can afford to be sick, have now become the concerns of a nation which cannot not afford to support equitable preventive health and medical care.

The shift in focus for the responsibility for health care did not exclude the local. Indeed, the local forums are refigured as the engine that will drive the successful national health project. As the Old Timer says, “I guess it’s up to the

citizens in communities all across the country to do something." The Sunnyridge forum decides on its action: first, to educate the community to know what community medical service is; second, to discuss taking a vote to bring in enabling taxation legislation in their community; third, and most important, to make a health survey of their district: "find out what the facts are about sickness, physical defects in the schools and outside. Find out just what health facilities and services the people here have and what they need." While the third action is similar to the local action suggested in the first broadcast drama on health, this one has a national thrust since the combined local information will give a national picture of needs and services.

Building Community through Action

Action, as distinguished from fabrication, is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act. Action and speech need the surrounding presence of others no less than fabrication needs the surrounding presence of nature for its material, and of a world in which to place the finished product. Fabrication is surrounded by and in constant contact with the world: action and speech are surrounded by and in constant contact with the web of the acts and words of other men. (Arendt 1958, 188)

The farmer, in his labour, is involved in fabrication, not action; he is used to working on his own, producing food that demands only "the surrounding presence of nature for its material, and of a world in which to place the finished product" (Arendt 1958, 186). The Second World War with the demands for increased food production and young men to be soldiers forced the Canadian

farmer out of his self-sufficiency, inadequate to the new demands, into the public space of speaking and acting. *NFRF* was an attempt by its three sponsors to build a political community by educating farmers in how to both create and enter that space.

As a rhetorical genre, the radio forum mandates action. As performed by the local *NFRF* forums, Action Projects were those that served the practical interests that farmers held in common such as pest and weed control, and cooperative banking, buying of machinery and marketing. As well, Action Projects were also seen as rhetorical constructions that served to create community and in so doing, defined the shape of civic education on the radio. Although outside the scope of this thesis, I note here that across the three radio forums, *NFRF*, *Citizens' Forum* and *Cross Country Checkup*, there was a spectrum of what constituted forum action. While *NFRF* built local group action into its weekly broadcasts and written material and into its discussion practice, action in the other two radio forums was contained in forum speech and in potential action outside the forum structure. I do take note, however, that even within *NFRF*, the broad spectrum of action was acknowledged in the argument that forum speech and its reporting was in and of itself action;⁹ indeed, it was sometimes considered more important than local, practical action.¹⁰

In the project of building a national community of farmers, the program of Action Projects was attached most closely to the CFA and defined as a way for the CFA to meld together its disparate and 'self-sufficient' membership, to

control that membership in the face of unfair and unequal conditions and to gain political power by working within existing structures. For instance, in his September 17, 1941 memo, "Action Projects Following Radio Forums," Leonard Harman, Secretary of Ontario *Farm Forum*, stated that "the main purpose of adult education is to build a foundation for community action which is democratic and cooperative in character" (Harmon 1941). Community action was meant to temper the frustrations of individuals and bring them into co-operation with others. He recounts the experience of the CFA fieldmen who reported that "last winter, without the broader and saner background provided by the Forums, parts of rural Ontario might have erupted bitterly with ill-conceived and uninformed movements" (Harmon 1941). If farmers believed in the possibilities of speaking and acting together to bring control and power, this would be an incentive for the development of forum practice.

In reporting on an organizational meeting of ten forums "to select two Action Projects for the winter series," Ralph W. Burton, Educational Secretary of the Oxford County Federation, claimed that such a communal action was a necessary antidote to both individualism in farmers and individualism in particular forum groups :

This winter, forums have seemed too satisfied to live for and in themselves, and there has not been enough reaching out to other neighbouring forums in order to accomplish some definite purpose of mutual interest. It is urgent that forums learn quickly to work together in township or other units for projects they can undertake in common. (Burton 1942)

This argument was extended by Elizabeth Hudon, *NFRF* researcher who argued that Action Projects could help to form a broad alliance among farmers of unequal resources, to "try to win the middle-class farmers (the ones we are reaching) for joint struggle with the small farmers" (Hudson, April 15, 1942).

Another cooperative and linking aspect of organized action was to be found in the relationship of local forums to those institutions already established in the rural communities and the provincial arenas. Harman called on *NFRF* Action Projects to be both discussed with and guided by "action" agencies such as various farmer organizations, the Ontario Department of Agriculture, Credit Union League and the Ontario Dental Association. Such a co-joining brought the forums into existing structures and allowed those existing structures "to ensure successful organization" (Harman September, 1942)

In order to more closely examine the kind of community that *NFRF* aimed to create through the use of Action Projects, I will look at the strategies used in the written material of the two rhetorical dramas, "You Can't Afford to be Sick" and "We Can't Afford to be Sick." The dramas could find their closure only in action taken by the audience that was addressed as local forum 'communities' across the country. The action within the dramas themselves, that taken by the fictional Sunnyridge forum, offered both a model for community action and the energy of the narrative thrust that could be useful for local forum groups as they narrated their experiences with the lack of health care.

The written material on Action Projects that I examine here are of three types: first is that material going out to and coming back from forum groups. This would include *Farm Forum Facts*, later renamed *Farm Forum Guide*, other information sheets from either the national or provincial offices of *NFRF* and the written responses by local forums to questions posed for forum discussion. The answers to the questions were systematized and then conveyed to the forum groups and other concerned organizations through forum broadcasts or in written documents. The second type of written material I review is that found in magazines and official publications of the three sponsors. The third type is internal policy documentation; this includes letters, meeting and conference discussions and decisions and studies done on *NFRF*.

A particularly salient aspect of all the written material is its use of the narrative form. *Farm Forum Facts* on "We Can't Afford to be Sick" (Vol.1, No.8, February 9, 1942) covers much of the same information on health care as is covered in the broadcast in an echoing narrative form: the material moves from what the problems are about the losses that the nation sustains through poor health to what can be done to solve the problems. In this, the written material is much fuller and more directive about action than the broadcasts. The front cover presents, in succinct form, the argument that medical care is a necessary and economical project for the nation:

We Can't Afford to be Sick because Canada at peace or in war needs healthy people to fight for freedom, to maintain and improve her institutions. The mentally and physically unfit are an expensive and

dangerous liability. Hospitals, doctors, medicine and diagnostic services freely available to all - rural or urban - are cheaper than a weak and sickly citizenship.

The opening argument is warranted by ten quotes from government ministers, medical and lay people in a page called "Opinion"; the quotes are arranged under headings in an order which suggests a progressive movement: Health, Income, Medical Care, Today, Tomorrow. Indeed, the same pattern is echoed in the next section, "Can We Afford to be Sick?" The headings with negative connotations, Low Standards, Lack of Facilities, Lack of Good Food, Lack of Income give way to the more positive headings, Health and War, What Can Be Done and The New Idea.

Indeed the positive aspect of these little narratives implies action which, on the page entitled "ACT," has a number of components. First of all, action can be in the home and in the community. Home action revolves around preventive cleanliness and careful water, milk and waste management. Community action consists mainly of study: "You can study your community to find out if communicable disease control is effective You can study the municipal doctor system. You can study cooperative medicine and health insurance."

A further aid to study is given in an annotated bibliography on Canadian health studies¹¹ and medical plans sometimes including the prices of the books and pamphlets and always addresses. Also on the "ACT" page is an example from Osprey Township, Ontario, of "What One Group Did" with their

recommendations in what is implied as being their own words, but words which echo the larger discourse.

This unimpeded and progressive narrative flow unifies the broadcast and written material: the very strong argument about health care, its status and solutions, has no explicit and grounded opposition. Implicitly, the opposition is the poor health of the citizens and, by extension, the Nazis who benefit from our national weakness. Thus, the war against the Nazis must be fought on the homefront in the field of health care. The causes of the poor health of the nation such as low income and the unequal resources in the city and country are registered but become subsumed under a more significant problem: the lack of [organized] communication, locally and nationally, that could lead to action. On the last page of this particular *Farm Forum Facts* entitled, "Forums Lead to Action: Farm People Face Problems of National Importance," the author claims that the Farm Radio forums are making up this lack by "helping to create a new state of mind":

Towards a constructive programme of farm action, the Farm Forums contribute two things: a knowledge of the facts about the conditions under which the farm people of the nation live and do their work; and the experience of meeting to discuss these facts and work out the most desirable programme of action.

Local forums were to begin their program of action by responding to three questions:

Are the present medical and hospital services adequate in your community, both from the standpoint of availability and the ability of the average person to pay? Do you think that "The New Idea" in medical

health services could be applied in your community today? Why? Discuss a practical plan for medical care in your community, and indicate what steps should be taken to carry it forward.

The provincial office of the Ontario forum put out four additional sheets that presented further statistics and information about the Municipal Doctor System in Western Canada.¹² The sheets also comment on other systems of health services but spell out in detail the advantages of the Municipal Doctor System. The final sheet on organizing the system calls on forums to act in two arenas: "developing public opinion" and "securing legislation." The suggestions and rationale for specific actions end with a further and more direct question to forum groups: "What action is being taken in your community on the Municipal Doctor System?" One suggested action was broadcast on the Ontario five minute segment at the end of the February 10, 1942 drama. A letter was read from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture about a brief presented to the Ontario Cabinet asking for "legislation to enable municipalities to levy for health services." Individual forums were asked, if they agreed, to write a simple statement of support for the brief with supporting signatures and send it to the Premier of Ontario, Honorable Mitchell F. Hepburn with a copy to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (FF Finding, Feb.10, 1942).

All of the Ontario *Farm Forum* Findings broadcast February 16, 1942 ("Ontario Farm Forum Broadcast" February 16, 1942) confirmed the conclusions reached in the broadcast and in written material. However, what is significant

here is that new arguments in the form of story-telling and the sharing knowledge of other health systems were sent in by the local forums to support the conclusions. For example, on the insecurity caused by medical bills, "a Forum in Grey [county] recalled farms lost under mortgage because of serious illness in the family" (Ibid). Another example confirms the catch-up aspect of the Canadian plan:

A Forum from Thamesford questioned if all this was a "New Idea". The people of China have a custom of paying the doctor for the time they are well, instead of for the time they are sick. And people from the Old Country attending the Forums miss the security of the British system of health insurance (Ibid).

One forum's objection or concern about the plan was answered by another forum. For instance, the objection of not having a choice of "a certain doctor or a certain nurse," had the following response: "A Forum Secretary in Cartwright Township in Durham County, delved into history to reveal that Ryerson met the same obstacle in launching our system of public schools. But today, everyone accepts the teacher employed by the municipality" (Ibid). The suggested actions, the narrative, and argued responses set the groundwork for actual projects. Another aspect of that groundwork was that forums called for more information on how to set up such a system: "We are anxious to go ahead but don't know where to begin. That is where the broadcasts should be ready with a 'what to do' series" (Ibid). The Action Projects were the attempt to join separate and disparate local forums into a broadly-based community of common interests, one that could be a basis for provincial and national communities and one that could politically

sustain other institutions such as a national health plan. The rhetoric and the organization of Action Projects of local forum groups encouraged farmers to see themselves as an active and cohesive community on the national political stage. This was accomplished by connecting up the stories and experiences around Action Projects of one forum to those of other forums across the country. Thus, local forums entered into a national space of common experiences and replication of Action Projects. In this way, farmers in *NFRF* began to create a community beyond that of the local and to develop a sustained belief in co-operation, equity and the need for public institutions.

***NFRF* Stakes a Position in National Politics: An Introduction to the "Health Can Be Planned" Series**

The Canadian and Allied propaganda spoke of the war as "the people's war" and in the interest of survival, all elements of Canadian society co-operated. At the same time, the slow pace of national agricultural reform and the concern about post-war status prompted the executive committee of *NFRF* to take a more direct and politicized approach to forum broadcasting, discussion and action:

Farm Forum is just regarded as a "good thing" but only an extra. They don't see it as having any central or vital part in agricultural planning or the war production programme Make the *Farm Radio Forum* the centre of a great practical education and action campaign for meeting next year's problems and those of the future. Active participation of the farm people in the war effort now is the best possible guarantee we can have for just and adequate post-war reconstruction. This would also be one of the best methods of building and strengthening farm organizations (Morrison, August 23, 1942).

Thus, the 1942-43 series, "Planning for Plenty," developed the theme that plenty is available when needed for war and that through education and cooperative planning, could also be made equitably available in the post-war years.

To create a more robust national organization that reflected the demands of the regions, *NFRF* worked to actively tie-in local and provincial issues and actions with national issues and actions. This brought a number of changes in the broadcasts: less dramatization of issues and more debates whereby the listeners were forced into making judgments on opposing views rather than sympathetically judging a dramatized situation. Another important change was in the depth of presented issues and the extension of time given to Forum Findings: instead of presenting a virtually different issue every broadcast, the series, "Planning for Plenty," concentrated on five major subjects, with three broadcasts given to discussions and debates and the fourth given over to the provincial forum secretaries who reported on the opinions of forum participants in their provinces.

Four integrated programmes comprised the series "Health Can Be Planned," part of the larger series "Planning for Plenty." In these broadcasts about various approaches to a national health plan, the drama of earlier broadcasts on health was replaced by discussion and debate. These approaches had been developed through a number of documents: one, the government *Draft Bill on Health Insurance*;¹³ two, a plan submitted by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture;¹⁴ three, the brief presented by the Canadian Medical Association and

four, a brief presented by the Canadian Labour Congress. The three discussion/debates in the series were in regard to these four submissions: "How Stands Health," December 6, 1943; "The Draft Bill for Health Insurance," December 13, 1943 and "The C.F.A. Health Plan," December 20, 1943. The fourth programme, "What the Forums Say About 'Health Can Be Planned,'" was based on Forum Findings and aired December 27, 1943. This series was prefaced by the January 18, 1943 broadcast (not archived), "A National Health Plan," a survey of rural preferences on an organized health plan.

Drawing the Notion of 'Community' through the Discussion Format: "How Stands Health?"

While this series of programs on health eschewed the dramatic form, the first program, "How Stands Health?" ("How Stands Health," December 6, 1943) began with the voice of a familiar narrator. He is not the Old Timer of the earlier dramas, but someone like him who is a farmer using the inclusive "we" with his audience, and one who knows the history of the poor medical services not only in rural areas but in the urban areas of Canada. His narrative recalls the information given in the earlier dramas as he recounts the disturbing figures now familiar to listeners on infant and maternal deaths, and death caused by preventable diseases such as tuberculosis. By beginning the series with a familiar narrator who recalls to the audience information and statistics already known, the

program establishes a notion of an existing in-the-know community that is ready to take on new information, new ways of examining the problems of health care.

New information and arguments come in the form of military metaphors that dominate the narration, calling attention to the *national* co-operation, focus and resources, now given to war, that could be applied to health. Thus,

we've proven to our own satisfaction here in Canada, that it is possible to plan our attacks on disease. Twenty-five years ago typhoid fever held a leading position as a killer of Canadians Both typhoid and diphtheria have been fought by specific weapons which were developed for the purpose. However, it is one thing to develop a weapon with which to combat disease and quite another to get it to the people who need it.

As the narrator moves through the statistics and toward introducing the topic of the programme, the rationale for setting up a national health plan, he recalls the conditions that kill thousands each year on the medical home front that, like those on the war fronts, must be strategically countered: "These are enemies of the people, and while disease is being beaten back and prevented on some fronts, the fronts are not wide enough to protect all Canadians."

The discussion, chaired by the CBC Prairie Farm Broadcast commentator, moves from the large picture of a Canadian health plan to a local/regional picture by introducing the audience to three people intimately and actually involved in municipal health services in Saskatchewan: Mr. Knox, a farmer and president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; Mrs. Atkinson, an activist in public health issues; and Dr. MacIntosh, a practitioner in a rural health unit. Their long involvement allowed the guests to speak with authority

about the beginnings of municipal health in their province, the fact that as early as 1916, "the provincial legislature authorized municipalities to pass a bylaw to engage a municipal physician" and later, another legislative act that gave two or more municipalities "the power to set up local hospitals and operate them out of their joint funds." These two services, the municipal doctor and the union hospital "represented the first big step toward providing a better service than the individual could possibly get for himself."

What followed in the programme discussion was a constructive and historically based critique of the Saskatchewan service, entrenched, supported, seemingly stable and certainly improved over time, as explained to the sympathetic and generally informed chairman. He stood in for many members of the audience who had information about the Municipal Health Service but no direct experience with it. Other members of the audience could identify with the three guests as rural people who had actively supported the idea by helping to set up such a service in their rural area, perhaps in an Action Project. So the guests and the chairman were speaking to an audience that knew, through earlier broadcasts, and local forum discussions and actions, many of the issues and problems of rural health services.

The co-operation by members of a rural community was at the centre of the Municipal Health Plan. However, the three guests, in unfolding the history of this cooperative health movement in Saskatchewan, made clear that local co-

operation was not enough to insure a minimum standard of required health services nor, within this standard, equity of access. As Dr. MacIntosh recalled,

[local cooperation] worked all right in the good times, but when we came to the drought and low farm prices of the thirties, it all went to pieces. The municipalities couldn't collect the taxes to carry on their health services. The doctor went unpaid and the hospitals suffered too.

The expansion of health planning into the provincial arena brought new legislation which included the taxing of all municipal residents, not just the landowners. Still, the number of tax-paying residents controlled the number and quality of services available; Dr. MacIntosh spoke of joining up

three or four municipalities with a population big enough to maintain at least two doctors for curative work, and also a medical man with special training in public health, to supervise the preventive work. There would have to be a hospital within reach, and the public health officer would need one or more public health nurses to carry out a complete preventive service.

Knox point outs, however, that "even the ideal unit would have the same weakness as the others. It would never know when it was going to run into a crop failure over the entire area." In short, municipalities and regions were ultimately too small and vulnerable to assure full health service, an argument for expanding the range through provincial and national governments.

A further justification for provincial and federal involvement was that both levels of government were already involved: the province of Saskatchewan had subsidized hospital, sanatoria and mental institutions, the cancer clinic, maternity grants, treatment of venereal disease, sanitation and the work of public health

nurses. A further justification is based on the similar role played by the provincial governments of British Columbia and Alberta.

The federal government as well had been involved in municipal health services in that it provided money to the provincial government which in turn gave it to the municipalities to shore up the income of Depression-poor local doctors. This argument about prior involvement of all three levels of government to support a minimum standard of health service is married to the argument of equity of access. Mr. Knox, the farmer and President of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, concludes the broadcast by calling for a national health plan:

You know, I feel that both the existing local units and the provincial services, much as we appreciate them, cannot solve the whole problem. Not even the kind of provincial plan I was mentioning. I'm thinking about the years 1931 and 1937, when nearly the entire province of Saskatchewan had a crop failure. We need to go further yet. For quite apart from the possibility of another great crop failure, there's the fact that some provinces are wealthier than others. Also the costs of health services will be greater in some of the provinces. But we're all Canadians, and as such we should all be able to enjoy the benefits of a minimum standard of health services. In other words, we need a national health plan.

Through the progression of the argument, the "we" of the rural communities of Saskatchewan becomes the "we" of the whole province and finally, the "we" of all Canadians. Even if other local regions and other provinces had not experienced the process that created the argument, the broadcast makes a claim for the "universalizing" of a local argument that resulted from local experience.

“The Draft Bill for Health Insurance”: The Reshaping of ‘We’ in Confrontation with ‘Them’

That a broad national health plan was needed was not under dispute: wartime demands for healthy recruits and the push by agriculture and labour for better and more equitable health care prompted studies such as the one done by The Honourable George Hoadley which led to the preparation of health insurance plans.¹⁵ Because agriculture and labour, through their representative organizations, had played important roles in demanding health care, they were considered main players and, along with the medical profession, were asked by the government to submit briefs. As representatives of brief submissions converged both in the government’s Draft Bill and in the forum discussion, the broad consensus for a plan also revealed the divergent interests. The “we” of the first broadcast seemed to include everyone in Canada, even the medical profession as represented by Dr. MacIntosh. In this second programme in the series, “The Draft Bill for Health Insurance,” (“The Draft Bill for Health Insurance,” December 13, 1943) the ‘we’ claims the space of the wartime rhetoric, “we, the people” but confronts a new “them”: the Canadian Medical Association and by extension, the national government that authored the Draft Bill under discussion in this broadcast. The participants representing three interested parties were Eugene Forsey, Research Director, Canadian Congress of Labour, David Smith, representing the CFA, and Dr. T. C. Routley, Secretary of the CMA. The chairman was Jack McPherson of *CBC Farm Broadcasts*.

The government in its Draft Bill pointed out that since health is under provincial jurisdiction, provinces could exclude themselves from the plan, decide what services would be included in their province, what grants would be given to train and maintain public health services and decide who would be eligible for the plan. Given the experience of labour and agriculture with regional and provincial inequities and certainly *NFRF*'s attempt to create a common front for farmers, their representatives pressed on the need for equity of access across the country which would entail, if not an amendment to the British North America Act, at least some Federal "rules and regulations for the administration of Health Insurance in all the provinces in Canada."

The question of equity is a point of issue in two administrative proposals in the Draft Bill: one concerns the make-up of the administrative boards, provincial and federal; the other concerns the administrative division of curative and preventive care. The Draft Bill, in proposing the establishment of provincial commissions, suggested that the majority of its members, including the only full-time administrator, would be either doctors or other medical personnel. Labour and agriculture argued for a more equal representation of their constituency, the users of health care; besides, not only would "the Commission . . . be too heavily weighted with representatives of those providing the services," since the commission would meet only twice a year, the chief administrator, a doctor, "would be left in practically full charge of the health insurance programme for the greater part of the time."

Dr. Routley countered that “the professional people who provide these health services are the best qualified to administer the plan. After all, the professions know from experience and training the problems to be met.” His final argument on this point, “besides their livelihood would be tied up in the plan,” allowed Smith to draw attention to the narrowness of that interest: “It may be their livelihood but it’s our lives they’re dealing with.”

As well as the provincial administrative boards, the proposed national council on Health Insurance would also be dominated by doctors as suggested by the government's Draft Bill: at least nineteen out of the twenty-nine members and all the rest, save five representing the service users, would be drawn from the medical profession. In spite of Dr. Routley's reassurance that such a board composition would protect the interests of the users and that it would serve only in an advisory capacity to the Federal Minister, Smith pointed out that such advice would shape later amendments to the act: “For my part, I think the people who would receive the services should have a much greater opportunity to supply the necessary advice.”

The third point of contention concerned the administrative separation of preventive care and curative care although, according to the Draft Bill, there “would also be provision for such cooperation between the two sets of administrations as may be deemed necessary.” The speakers representing labour and agriculture believed the services “should be thoroughly integrated.” They argued that this was particularly important for rural areas which, lacking

facilities, would take a long time to catch up to urban areas especially for curative services. According to Smith, "if preventive and curative services were integrated in all areas, then the services could be more evenly distributed throughout the whole country." It is around this last point of contention but with extended arguments, that the third programme on the CFA plan revolved.

CFA's Preventive Medicine Scheme: The Outgrowth of Civic Education

The set of principles put forward in the CFA's health plan was premised on the experiences of farmers in *NFRF* Action Projects with municipal health services. The discussant for the CFA Health Plan argued in this program that

These municipal services have raised the standard of community health, radically lowered sickness and death rates and have decreased the need for hospitalization. The Federation proposes that every opportunity should be given within the national plan for the preservation and extension of this method of providing services.

"The C.F.A. Health Plan" ("The C.F.A. Health Plan" December 20, 1943)

broadcast,¹⁶ sharing the same chairman and guests with the discussion on the Draft Bill, presented CFA's primary argument that "the promotion of positive health and the prevention of disease" could be realized "only through the integration of preventive and curative medicine." All other arguments concerning its administration, who was to be included in the system, its financing and how doctors were to be paid were warranted by this primary argument.

The question of administrative control was at the crux of the debate. Just as citizens, some through *NFRF* Action Projects set up and ran Municipal Health Systems, so, the CFA Plan insisted, laymen must have majority administrative control over the national, provincial and local services through independent administrative commissions. The Plan also allowed for local participation in the smaller administrative units which would have the effect of "stimulat[ing] local interest in the operations of the Plan."

Both the question of administrative control and of the funding of the plan impinged on how people could be aware of their responsibilities for a health program. The CMA, in choosing an elite administrative model, also opposed the CFA principle that the total funding of the new national health plan should come out of the national taxation fund. On behalf of the CMA, Routley further argued the necessity of individual contributions or payment of premium: "persons who contribute to health insurance will have greater self-respect, a keener appreciation of the services and a knowledge of the costs". Forsey rebutted by saying that such an attitude had not developed around taxation-paid education and Smith added that real appreciation and knowledge of the costs will come with "the full participation of the people in administration, such as the *Federation* proposes."

The CFA principle that preventive and curative medicine be joined in a health plan argued for the necessity for local educative sites of health education.

Thus "The Health Centre," as well as including traditional diagnostic and treatment facilities, would also be

the source of the educational work in nutrition, maternal and child care and other health subjects. Through the health centre also the public health work of the district would be carried out and it would be possible to coordinate the preventive and curative aspects of health care.

The setting up of community health services and thus a single standard of health services across the country was to be facilitated by a national mapping "to show the proper distribution of hospitals, equipment and personnel needed to serve the population as a whole." This would have been an idea well understood by local forums since they had already begun the mapping through Action Projects.

Finally, the principle of preventive medicine led in this broadcast to the disagreement on how a new system should pay physicians. The CFA's position was that "the present method of payment - that is the fee system - prevents advances in national health," that the way in which doctors were paid determined the kind of service they could offer:

It seems to me that the concern of the general public is to see that the funds available for national health insurance are apportioned in the way most likely to secure a complete integration of preventive and curative services To secure this integration . . . , it is important that all the health workers, doctors, dentists, nurses, research workers etcetera, together with representatives of the public, plan the spending of the public funds.

For its part, the CMA, as represented by Dr. Routley, "recommended that the doctors in each province be paid by a method to be agreed upon between the provincial Commission and the doctors." Doctors, he claimed, allowed that

contract salaries could be useful but should be "limited to areas with a population insufficient to maintain a general practitioner without additional support from the insurance fund." In arguing for the fee for service system and its schedules to be established solely by the medical profession, Dr. Routley attempted to make such control seem innocuous by insisting that the total amount of fees could not exceed the percentage of the fund earmarked for doctors.

The three discussion broadcasts just analysed in the "Planning for Health" series allowed for free and open debates among representatives of the major players - medicine, labour and agriculture - against the background of the fourth major player, the national government in the form of its Draft Bill. The broadcasts allowed for equitable hearings of all positions in the debate. The printed material sent out to forum groups prepared the listeners for the broadcasts and suggested questions for forum discussion and action. Unlike the broadcast debates, it was less even-handed, more ideological as it viewed all the positions on health care plans through the optics of the CFA.

Before discussing the fourth and final broadcast in the series on the submitted results of the Forum Finding questions, I will examine the written material made available to the audience as part of the framing argument for, and practice of citizen participation in a national health plan. This written material reveals the awareness of *NFRF* that, because it was now playing competitively on a larger field with powerful players, it needed to make clear the ideological positions that undergirded the debate of a health plan.

Framing the Ideological Argument: Written Material for the “Health Can Be Planned” Series

The three examined broadcasts in the “Health Can Be Planned Series,” that is “How Stands Health,” “The Draft Bill for Health Insurance,” and “The C.F.A. Health Plan,” were open exchanges of opinion of all parties implicated in the national health plan question. In Stanley’s terms, a democratic forum ought to be a “pedagogical device” and a site of “experiential inquiry” (Stanley 1990, 247 - 249). These three broadcasts allowed for a full range of expertise, opinions and experiences to assist local forums in continuing the discussion, thus working within the principles of *NFRF*.

In creating *NFRF*, the three sponsors had been historically and philosophically constrained by notions of ‘community,’ cooperativism and equity. As *NFRF* was in the process of helping to create another institution, that of a national health system, it brought to it the same notions that created the forum. Now, however, *NFRF* was dealing with a project that was not under its sole control: the provincial and national governments and the emerging CMA were powerful players. Even though the CMA took part in a democratic forum process on a new health institution, its discourse concerning the institution itself was decidedly elite. While the broadcasts themselves were under the constraints of balance and objectivity, the written material, under the aegis of the CFA and the CAAE, framed the larger debate from their perspective. This framing perspective included recalling the experiences of farmers that propelled them into becoming

active in matters of a public health plan; reinforcing the *NFRF* principles on which both public education and health plan discussions emerged; critiquing all other points of view on a health plan from the perspective of the CFA plan.

The pamphlet, Planning for Health (1943), laid out the argument for a preventive health plan by analysing the Draft Bill and some of the briefs presented to the Advisory Committee on Health Insurance “from the point of view taken by the CFA that the practice of preventive medicine should be the first objective of any national health scheme” (2) The material is organized into four sections: “Why Health Insurance is Needed,” “Benefits Proposed in the Draft Bill,” “What Will Health Insurance Cost?,” “Who Will Run the Health Plan?” Each section begins with what the Draft Bill recommends, then what other briefs, including the CFA brief, say on each issue, and finally, critical comments on the Bill and the briefs. The pamphlet is set up as an informational debate but with the CFA choosing the point of view from which all other briefs are viewed and having the final word in each section of the debate. Certainly this would be the point of view familiar to *NFRF* participants.

The written material explicitly points out how a certain kind of health care impinges on all other aspects of a plan: who should be covered, how doctors are to be paid and who should decide such matters. While the CMA brief, as reported in this material, recommends that “the plan be compulsory for persons having an annual income below a level which proves to be insufficient to meet the costs of adequate medical care” (13), the CFA counters that “the Plan should include all

citizens [because] . . . to adopt any other policy is to deny democracy and to destroy national unity" (14). The arguments of financial soundness and equitable cost across the country, across generations and different economic circumstances are tied to the priority of preventive medicine: " . . . it is obvious that unless all the population is in the Plan, preventive health measures cannot operate effectively to serve and protect the whole community" (14)

On the question of how doctors are to be paid, the written material responds to the CMA demand by tying the fee structure payment to the kind of medical service experienced by farmers:

Curative medicine has always operated on a fee basis. You got sick and you paid the doctor to make you well. How can you pay him a fee for keeping you well? You can't. You can, however, pay him a salary for keeping you well. In the early days there were doctors who ran their business on a yearly family fee which amounted to a salary basis for regular attendance. This is the only basis on which preventive medicine can be practised (15 - 16).

By recalling the experiences of the farmers in their negotiation with rural doctors, and by appealing directly to forum participants through the pronoun "you," the argument is made less abstract, less a matter that requires expertise.

The CMA notion of the necessity for expert administrative control of a health plan is countered by being put into the context of the promise implicit in the war effort for a more democratic world. Why should medical expertise extend into controlling the decisions about health care policies: "Canada has a serious health situation and what is done about it depends on the people of Canada" (19). While calling for "a thoroughgoing change in the organization of medical

services," necessary to the "inauguration of a complete preventive program," the CFA, in recognizing the experience gained by the rural population through action projects, insisted on the participation in an independent commission "that represents . . . all groups in the community" (19).

As well as the above material that led up to the series of broadcasts, a *Farm Forum Guide* was prepared for each broadcast. For the first program, "How Stands Health," the *Guide*, "Farm Forums Want Health Insurance" (Vol.1, No.4, December 6, 1943), stressed the alliance between the principles in the CFA plan and the opinions of farmers. The premise of the argument in the pamphlet was that "Farm Forum members have put themselves on record as favouring health insurance on a national basis and for good reasons too" (1) Some of the good reasons concerned poor preventive care:

Many groups from all over Canada said that whereas public health services for children were partially adequate there were absolutely no preventive services for adults. It is evident from the reports that public health services in rural Canada are uneven, inadequate and haphazard (1).

On the question of the inadequacy of the community based plans, "one group pointed out that the municipal doctor system does not include medicine, hospitalization, dentistry or eye treatment" (2) Other good reasons concerned the costs of medical care:

There is good medical service to be had but at a price prohibitive to the lower-income brackets. Those who have the money to pay can get service and the very poor are given attention in emergencies. We all have a dread

of hospitals and doctors because it has taken many of us several years to pay for one or two operations or long illnesses (2).

The only objection to a national plan was “based on the belief that a national plan would be too expensive or that it would lead to bureaucracy” (2) However, according to a Manitoba group, “Nothing is too costly that can make our people healthy, secure and loyal members of our national family; we can’t afford the fifth column of disease, fear and disunity” (2). Finally, the usual reason given for supporting the plan was one of equity of access: “equal services to all, favours to none” (2) The questions for forum discussion and action were inspired by the 1938-40 survey and a more recent one done in Manitoba of municipal doctors paid a salary to keep people well: what was the cost of medical care? how much money had been spent on preventive care? what were the immediate improvements the community would expect “upon adoption of a satisfactory national health plan?” (3)

For the second broadcast, “The Draft Bill for Health Insurance,” the written material, “Dental Clinics in Rural Ontario” (“Farm Forums Want Health Insurance” Vol. 1, No. 5, December 13, 1943) concentrated on specific preventive health projects that could be followed by other forum groups. For instance, an Ontario project on dental care for children presented the grave problem: “Anywhere from 80% to 100% of the children in most schools where no dental health program has been in effect need remedial treatment” (1). The solution was the involvement of forum groups for the project which was launched

by the local CFA office. It received the cooperation of both the Township Board of Health and the Provincial Department of Health. In the third year of operation, the project grew from serving five school to serving sixteen schools in Simcoe County. The two messages to forum groups about this project were that resources in public health were available and that communities must take the initiative to access such under used resources.

A second article "Too Few Health Units in Canada" holds up the model of the Quebec county public health units but points out that in spite of Quebec's impressive unit numbers that helped to reduce infant mortality to half its former rate, "the rate remains, however, appallingly high"(2) In pointing to the shortage of such units, the article calls on forum groups to see themselves as part of provincial and national networks in creating adequate services. For this reason, the material aimed "to place before Farm Forum members the important factors involved in a national plan for health insurance" (3) For further study, forum members were presented with a bibliography.¹⁷

The December 20, 1943 issue of *Farm Forum Guide*, "Travelling Clinic of Alberta," continues in the spirit of offering examples of successful health care units in Canada; in this case, forum members learn about the travelling dental, medical and surgical clinic set up in Alberta in 1921 to serve the children in remote rural areas and about the municipal hospitals set up in both Alberta and Saskatchewan "to bring hospitalization at a low cost to rural areas" (3) For forum members, "they are evidence of what can be done along medical lines through

community effort" (3). All the examples offered in the three *Farm Forum Guides* are of local struggles to provide health services, curative and preventive, which are as successful as local groupings and provinces can make them; however, their successes, as the articles point out, are limited by the lack of regional resources.¹⁸

The questions for local forum discussion in the December 20th *Guide* go over the same ground as the broadcasts: how can a national plan respond to the integration of preventive and curative services; the fair distribution of costs for equitable medical services across the country, and the roles of medical and lay people in the administration of the plan (3). While the questions are not new to forum members, they did demand knowledge acquired both through listening and reading as well as experience. The questions also contained a political presumption: planning for a national health plan was not the prerogative of the medical profession or the government but a grave and rightful concern of all citizens and their institutions.

In the early broadcast narratives, a virtual community was presented in dramatized form, though one that spoke affectively to the essential experiences of farmers about sickness and problems around health services. As the form of the broadcasts on health shifted from drama to discussions and debates, the notion of community became broader and more complex. In reflecting the experiences of other local and regional groups, the broadcasts and written material opened up the possibility of Action Projects being instituted. Even if local

forums did not themselves participate in a project, all forum participants were inscribed as a 'community' interested in information about how other groups, provinces and countries organized medical services, and about the particular characteristics and constraints for a Canada-wide health plan.

The linking of these three rhetorics - the creation of an identifiable virtual community, the presentation of facts and opinions that undergirded the possibilities for health plans, and the attempts to put those possibilities into action at least at a local level - attributed certain characteristics to the audience. While the audience was, of course, made up of thousands of individual farmers across the country joined into hundreds of local groups, the discourse attributes to them shared identifications and beliefs. In assigning particular attributions, ones that strengthen the notion of community such as shared responsibility, an acceptance of equity of access and a faith in and reliance on public institutions, the discourse presumes to call the audience, as a whole and in its parts, a particular community.

One final and essential element of the communicative process allowed the *NFRF* rhetor to assign particular attributions and to act on those claims: the answering of questions by local forums and their use by the rhetor as Forum Findings.

“What the Forums Say About ‘Health Can be Planned’”: The Significance of Forum Findings

Farm Forum Findings were a source of information from the local which, in turn, both broadened and deepened the base of rural knowledge and opinion. Many of the questions answered in Forum Findings demanded local research by forum groups on what services were lacking, what needed to be done, what the forums were doing and what they planned on doing. Out of this questioning came discussion and local initiatives for Action Projects. The provincial and national airing of these answers allowed forums across the country to measure their own activity in relation to others, to ask for and receive help from the provincial *NFRF* offices and from other local and provincial institutions and organizations. Thus answers in Forum Findings, by being both written out by local groups and broadcast across the country, pushed forum groups to see themselves as active citizens; first, they had created hundreds of local deliberative spaces; second, in perceiving themselves as working together on a common project through discussion, action and publicity, forums saw themselves as creating and maintaining a national deliberative space.

Forum Findings were primarily written reports, answers to the three questions posed in *Farm Forum Guide* on each of the weekly topics. Local forum groups discussed the questions; the local forum secretaries then summarized the discussion on the Forum Findings sheets and sent them on to provincial offices where they were noted, analyzed and tabulated. The Forum Findings were “the

only contact the local Forum has with the Forum office. Broadcasts and literature go out to the Forums. Only the Findings return and in completing two-way communication, they are indispensable" ("NFRF Report," 1945, Section VI, "Use of Farm Forum Findings, 1).

Tabulated Forum Findings were also broadcast back to the participants. Traditionally, the provincial Findings from the week before were heard provincially in five minute segments at the end of the following broadcasts. This tradition was maintained in the 1943-44 series, "Planning for Health," in which five minutes were given to provincial forum reporting after the broadcasts. While forums across the country heard the same broadcast and answered the same questions, it was only with the 1943-44 series that Forum Findings were broadcast nationally. Indeed, the whole of the fourth broadcast in each series was dedicated to the national airing of the Forum Findings. The effect of this new national exchange of Forum Finding results was twofold: first, even if some issues were not of particular regional importance, groups did become aware of the significance of these issues for other groups of farmers; second, since this national site existed and farmers across the country were virtually gathered in the exchange, other information, other opinions that they may not have gathered for could come into the picture.

The questions, like the rest of the written material, queried ideas about the structure of an ideal national plan through that proffered by the CFA; concretely, the CFA plan reflected the experiences of rural people with both the

inadequacies of their health services and their attempts to respond to those inadequacies through local projects. In answering the questions in the Forum Findings, groups across the country spoke out for the kind and quality of a national health plan that the CFA had been advocating in the public debate and a majority of forums in all the provinces supported the CFA principles. What is more interesting than the anticipated affirmation by forum groups is how Forum Findings were used in constructing national community and how that construction linked into public education.

Farm Forum Findings were often tabulated into statistics to be used by the CFA in arguing its position with government; however, these statistics reflected "no snap judgment of individuals but the considered opinion of groups of people who have the information on the subject and who spend time in discussion" ("NFRF Report," 1945, Section VI, "Use of Farm Forum Findings, 1). For example, the series "Health Can Be Planned" included three weeks of discussion in forum groups and these groups had already discussed other aspects of health care after earlier broadcasts on health delivery. Furthermore, their discussions were informed by the experiences of health related Action Projects. Any emerging statistics from the Findings were, therefore, not simply polls or snapshots of opinion at a particular moment.

Many of the questions that made up the Findings demanded research questions on local preventive health services; hundreds of forums across the country were able to supply up-to-date and detailed local information. Instructed

by the first broadcast in the series, "Health Can Be Planned," in which local initiatives in Saskatchewan were discussed, forum participants knew that local and non-expert information was valuable in the broad discussion of a national health plan. For instance, most of the forums in all the provinces reported that preventive care was woefully lacking; the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick secretary, for example, spoke of the specific problems in his area:

About seventy-five percent of our groups say no preventive medicine whatever is practised in their communities. Of course occasional examinations are made in the schools by hardworking public health services. But the over-all picture in the Maritimes is without any semblance of organized preventive measures among the adult populations. Only two of our groups reported attention being given to pre-natal care (NFRF Findings, December 27, 1943).

Thus, in being broadcast in a nationally heard forum, these local experiential arguments became part of the documented argument for a particular kind of national health plan.

Both the broad statistical information and the detailed research material provided by the Forum Findings were sent to farm organizations, educational institutions, local newspapers¹⁹ and government departments including the Wartime Information Board, as "the most authentic information existing concerning what informed rural opinion really is" ("*NFRF Report*," 1945, Section VI, "Use of Farm Forum Findings, 1). This allowed the *NFRF* and CFA to claim not only that its members were of certain opinions but that they spoke in the name of the rural population across the country.

Forum Findings allowed an exchange of opinions on a national site, crossing county and provincial boundaries. Two comments from Saskatchewan forums illustrate the importance of this interprovincial contact: "It has taught them that the people of Canada think much alike and brought about a sense of cooperation It has created better fellowship. Has proved to be very educational. Broadens our viewpoint. Contacts us with the rest of the Dominion, and makes one feel you really belong to Canada" (*NFRF Findings*, " Excerpts from Forum Findings," Saskatchewan, February 14, 1944). The exchange created a sense of a larger, national site where all the forums, though in provincial formations, could be heard. In being heard in the same site, they developed a sense of responsibility for one another. On the question of equity of access for health care, part of the discussion concerned how the plan could be funded, whether the richer parts of Canada should subsidize the poorer provinces. While none of the poorer provinces pronounced on this, Ontario forum groups did: "There is no reason why the wealthier provinces should not help the poorer provinces . . . ; It is our responsibility to see that our neighbours are healthy . . . ; Serving one another in love is the soundest Democracy." (*NFRF Findings*, December 27, 1943). These statements are significant for, if acted on, equity of access for unequal partners would be sustained by a public and legal national institution.

The four part series, "Health Can Be Planned," concluded the wartime *NFRF* discussions on health care and delivery. In Chapter 4, I will continue to examine the programs on health, this time in the post-war period.

Notes

Chapter 3

1. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was founded in 1936, just four years before the start of *National Farm Radio Forum (NFRF)*; the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), an amalgam of local and provincial farming organizations, was founded in 1935; the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE), also founded in 1935, was an amalgam of local and provincial educational organizations.

2. Active members of the NCM who were later involved with *NFRF* included H. H. Hannam, secretary of the United Farmers of Ontario, Ralph Staples, director of the Cooperative Union of Canada, Leonard Harman, secretary of the United Farmers Cooperative Company of Ontario, Donald McLean, president of the United Farm Young People of Ontario as well as Arthur Haas, F. Griesback and Jim Gibson.

3. Selman (1991) offers a short history of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada: Founded in Stoney Creek, Ontario early in 1897 on a suggestion by Adelaide Hoodless, the Institutes responded to the need to study "the welfare of children and farm homes" (91). By 1914, Institutes were in most provinces and most had established links with the provincial Departments of Agriculture, institutions that provided "a variety of kinds of support, including a modest amount of funding and various kinds of assistance with their educational activities" (92). As well as involvement in study group activity "by 1945, 83 Institutes were participating in *NFRF* or *CF*" (92). *Institutes* were also involved in advocacy in public health matters, conservation and environmental concerns, maternal and infant mortality, laws affecting women, campaigns to have women named to the Senate, abolition of salacious literature and services for immigrants (93).

An article "Women of the World Unite," by Danielle Gauthier in the P. E. I. *The Guardian* (July 6, 1998, C1) documents three long-term members of the Island's *Women's Institute* who recently travelled to Pretoria, South Africa to take part in the 22nd triennial conference of the Associated Country Women of the World, a gathering of 750 women from 47 countries: "The international association has over nine million members in 67 countries, and its goals are to improve the standards of living and education of women, especially those in rural areas worldwide" (C1).

4. While education is a provincial matter, public or civic education crosses provincial boundaries in national public institutions such as the National Film Board and the CBC. In speeches and reports on a policy of public broadcasting and in the CBC mandate, the understanding that radio will serve the needs of civic education is usually wrapped in the discourse of national identity. In the "Report of the Royal

Commission on Radio Broadcasting," September 1929, the following claims are made: "The potentialities broadcasting as an instrument of education have been impressed upon us; education in the broad sense . . . in providing entertainment and of informing the public on questions of national interest. . . . In a country of the vast geographical dimensions of Canada, broadcasting will undoubtedly become a great force in fostering a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship" (Bird 1988, 430). In *Canadian Forum*, April, 1931, Graham Spry spoke of a public broadcaster being able to offer "the final means of giving Canada a national public opinion, of providing a basis for public thought on a national basis It is a great entertaining, educational, artistic, and political power; too great, too valuable, too dangerous to be left in irresponsible hands and devoted to narrow purposes" (quoted in Bird 1988, 64). Prime Minister R. B. Bennett, in the May 18, 1932 parliamentary debate, developed the notion of public radio as a medium of civic education: "Without [complete Canadian control] radio broadcasting can never become a great agency for the communication of matters of national concern and for the diffusion of national thought and ideals, and without such control it can never be the agency by which national consciousness may be fostered and sustained and national unity still further strengthened we have problems peculiar to ourselves and we must reach a solution of them through the employment of all available means. The radio has a place in the solution of all those problems. It becomes, then, the duty of parliament to safeguard it in such a way that its fullest benefits may be assured to the people as a whole" (Bennett as quoted in Bird 1988, 112). Finally, the 1991 revised Broadcasting Act mandates the CBC to provide programming "that informs, enlightens and entertains be predominantly and distinctively Canadian, reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, . . . Contribute to shared national consciousness and identity" (www.cbc.ca/about/cbc/mandate/mandate.html, June, 1998).

5. For instance, in 1936, the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Association for Adult Education set up "School of the Air," for rural students on the station, CKY (owned by the Manitoba Telephone System), broadcasting academic lectures and organizing group discussions with the help of study and reference material. In the same year, Agricola Study Clubs (the link between the farmer and the university) under the sponsorship of the Workers' Educational Association of Toronto broadcast "The Farmers' University of the Air." Also, in Ontario in 1937, the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) sponsored a listening group study program over a Wingham radio station that featured the history and principles of cooperative organization including how to organize and conduct study groups. The same year, the UFO with a Chatham radio station organized twelve groups around cooperative study and action. The emphasis in all these study groups was on cooperative studies for cooperative action, rather than on subjects that demanded outside expertise such as scientific farming. ("Early listening group programs 1937-41" NAC - CFA Vol.1, File "History & General Information (1937-41)":)

6. The first Talks Conference was held in June 30, 1937. Gladstone Murray invited Mr. Brockington, Colonel Bovey, Mr. Plaunt, Mr. Corbett and Mr. Bushnell. "1. Mr. Corbet recommended that a subsidy of \$2,400 for one year be given to the University of Alberta for continuing experimental educational work with the University radio station. 2. It was suggested that steps be taken to secure specifications for and the manufacture of a standard receiving set for schools. 3. The CAAE being a combination of all competent societies concerned with adult education in Canada, it was agreed to recommend that the main adult educational series to be broadcast by the CBC be announced as undertaken in cooperation with the CAAE. 4. In addition to the Canadian Constitutional series, it was recommended that there be undertaken next season a special Workers' Educational Association series covering industrial organization, Mr. Wren to work out a syllabus. Numerous other detailed suggestions and proposals were noted by Mr. Buchanan." ("Talks Conference, June 30, 1937." NAC - CBC Box 25 , Files 4-36-2).

7. Dr. Grant Fleming, Dean of Medicine, McGill University, was author of the report, *A Study of the Distribution of Medical Care and Public Health Services in Canada* (1939) that formed the basis of this discussion.(CBC. *Community Clinic*, "Do Farmers Need a Health Program," 1940)

8. See section 22 (3) of *The Canadian Broadcasting Act*, 1936, amended in 1951 prohibiting dramatized political broadcasts (see Bird 1988, 151).

9. In the discussion "On Action Projects," Alex Sim framed action in the following way: "Some Action Projects do not require much planning and the forum may not think of it as an Action Project. Reporting regularly to the Provincial Office is a form of action. We should be careful not to give the Forums an inferiority complex for not having a specific project". (*NFRF Conference Proceedings* 1946)

10. Letter from Neil Morrison at the CBC, Toronto, March 11, 1942 to Alex Sim, Macdonald College, Quebec concerning Sim's report of the Brome Conference. Sim was quoted as writing:

Another noticeable change, in the beginning of the series there appeared to be a great deal of fault finding with the powers that be, but lately very constructive ideas have been reported on how they may improve their community through group effort." Morrison responds to Sim's statement in the following way: "This is a poor excuse for realistic thinking on social problems. Moreover, it is a misleading and essentially conservative idea to spread among rural people. The idea that criticism of the government or the authorities is bad and represents a weakness on the part of discussion groups is entirely erroneous and contrary to the theory and practice of democratic government It is obviously impossible for local groups to solve many of the problems facing farmers. Indeed, many community

problems can't be solved until something is done about the larger questions, such as farm income. To encourage people to believe that self-help and community group action are morally better and more desirable than national or government action is doing farm people a grave disservice. I would suggest that the action of the Saskatchewan farmers indicates a much healthier development than the illusory type of self-help which absorbs such a large proportion of the thought and energies of people in comparatively unimportant cooperative self-help projects in some sections of the country." (1-2)

11. One such publication was *How Healthy is Canada?* by R.S. Lambert published jointly by CAAE and The Canadian Institute for International Affairs as a pamphlet, No.6 in the series, "Democracy and Citizenship Series," March 1, 1941 (21 pp.).

12. The four sheets, "Municipal Doctor System" contained material from *Canada's Health*, a booklet by the Honorable George Hoadley which was available from Ontario Radio Forums office for five cents per copy.

13. The document, *Draft Bill on Health Insurance*, was prepared by the Advisory Committee on Health Insurance and presented on March 16, 1943 to the Special Committee on Social Security by the Minister of Pensions and National Health.

14. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture's national health plan document was drafted and approved by the CFA executive on October 13, 1942 and submitted to the Department of Health and Pensions, Ottawa.

15. A few studies are as follows: *Study of the Distribution of Medical Care and Public Health Services in Canada* (Canada: National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1939); *Municipal Health Services* (Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 1942); *Health on the March* (Canadian Federation of Agriculture, 1943); *Health Insurance*. Report of the Advisory Committee on Health Insurance, Dr. J. J. Heagerty, Chairman, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942); *Public Health*, A. E. Grauer, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1939). A study of public health in Canada prepared for the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations.

16. The principles for the CFA Health Plan were drawn up by the CFA, and presented, as requested, to the Advisory Committee on Health Insurance and later published in a pamphlet, *Health on the March*. Smith, representing the CFA, made clear that the principles enunciated had the popular support of the CFA with its affiliated membership of 350,000, or a million and a half farm people when families were included.

17. The following books and pamphlets were recommended: *Canada's Health* by George Hoadley, 1940; *Health Insurance Report* of the Advisory Committee on Health Insurance, 1943; *Health on the March*, CFA, 1943; *Municipal Health Services*, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 1943; *Public Health*, Royal Commission on Dominion - Provincial Relations, 1939.

18. For example, the article, "Travelling Clinic of Alberta" ends on the following note: "The clinic has been remarkably successful in its surgical work. No deaths have been recorded following the operations. Unfortunately, provincial finances have forced restrictions which have limited the extent of the Travelling Clinic's service" (3).

19. *NFRF* encouraged, at the local level, forum groups to contact their farm press and weekly papers and radio stations to make forum opinions known and to assist in activating the local populace and other local organizations to become active in forum-led projects ("*NFRF* Conference Proceedings and Reports," 1945, Section VI, 2).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EFFORT TO ENTRENCH PUBLIC EDUCATION IN A POST-WAR ECONOMY

Introduction: *NFRF* Enters the Post-War Era

As we saw in Chapter 3, the exigences of war forced, in Canada, a degree of national tolerance and cooperation of competing interests. *NFRF* took advantage of this tolerance and cooperation to create, through radio and local discussions, a deliberative space for rural citizens to participate on the national political stage.

In Chapter 4 we continue this examination of *NFRF* as a site of public education through the medium of radio. What is at stake in the post-war economy is the survival of a particular kind of public education, i.e. the welfare model and this is the focus of my investigation. We begin to see the crumbling of the tolerance and cooperation that had marked the earlier relationship among voluntary organizations, governments and business and, indeed, the outright attack on institutions promoting public education; this happened in spite of the work of the Joint Planning Commission (JPC) as a strategy to broaden the base of support for public education.¹

In the programming examined in this chapter, the subject of health delivery continues to be a bellwether of the possibilities for civic education through radio. However, the project of health delivery, once a powerful, compelling and active partner of public education in *NFRF*, begins to lose its power to act in the post-war period. Health delivery had been pushed by *NFRF*,

other volunteer organizations, and regional and provincial governments into a place that demanded national rather than local action. However, farmers and the large non-professional movement that had initiated discussion on this deliberative issue were now distanced from it; this is particularly evident in the non-participation of the increasingly powerful Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in broadcast discussions.

Whatever the particular reasons, many of which are beyond the scope of this study, the subject of health delivery in post-war forum discussions is no longer a catalyst for public education, no longer able to elicit the topics of cooperativism, equity and institutional support. This is not to say that the topics were not used with the subject of health; their use, however, did not add clarity and no longer appeared relevant.

Indeed, the most vigorous broadcast on health delivery in this period responds to the lack of cooperation by expressing the frustration and anger of farmers through a dramatized trial of those agents that impeded the delivery of a national program. The few discussion programs on health delivery both moved away from formerly central interests of forum groups such as the agenda of the CFA plan for preventive medicine and from calling on forums to take part in innovative Action Projects.² Thus, the subject of public education is left to soldier on without the essential and compelling subject of health delivery. While *NFRF* had other national subjects to consider, they were rural, and did not connect up with urban preoccupations.

In place of deliberative discussions on health delivery leading to Action Projects, *NFRF* rehashed old themes: the reviewing of already answered questions on health conditions; the treatment of localized projects and, in dramatic broadcasts, the largely nostalgic reexaminations of the principles and underpinnings of public education that had formerly allowed *NFRF* to make gains in health delivery.

In trying to account for the complicated configuration suggested by these strategies, I will analyse a number of programs: the few that exist on the subject of health delivery and those that discuss public education itself.

Can Cooperativism and Voluntarism Survive in a National Health Plan?

*What About Health Insurance?*³ was broadcast at a time when the Federal government was, according to the *Guide*, “seeking the cooperation of the provinces in setting up national health insurance” (“What About Health Insurance?” December 10, 1945, 1). Thus, the first post-war program on health was the last one which reflected the pre-war confidence that the work done in rural and urban health education and activism would speedily result in the creation of an equitable and community-based nation-wide health plan.

The *Guide* recalls the pre-war discussions and findings on health plans and particularly the strong support given by forum groups to equitable services. In documented statistics, the readers are reminded of the disparities of health care between urban and rural areas and among the richer and poorer provinces.

One of these disparities is that of the distribution of doctors who, in the system of private practice naturally "go to those areas where they are most likely to be well paid."⁴ Another disparity is that of "convenient and up-to-date" medical facilities: "Country doctors, even if there were enough of them, could not make up the difference between specialized city services and the ordinary rural practice" (*Guide*, December 10, 1945, 1) A national plan would, it claimed, equitably distribute medical personnel, equipment and facilities in health centres. As well, the *Guide* reminds readers of the support given to the CFA Plan that stressed preventive over curative medicine and that by consequence, prescribed the integration of the public health and medical services and salary rather than fee for service payment for doctors.

The thrust of this *Guide* is a reminder to the reader that "this ideal plan does not seem impossible of attainment, when we consider that two provinces - Manitoba and Saskatchewan - are organizing health services now with the health centre as the nucleus" and that "in these provinces too, many rural doctors have been paid a salary by the Municipal Doctor arrangement over a period of years, and the arrangement has been satisfactory to both doctor and patient" (3). Thus the *Guide* offers an optimistic picture of Canadians' consensus on a national health plan, the possibility of it integrating voluntary and local initiatives and of a seeming acceptance of salaried doctors working in a preventive health system.

This consensus allows the authors of the *Guide* to speak of a common “we” that refers to all forum participants. Ultimately, however, the “we” refers to all citizens of Canada who “have said ‘Yes’ [“Do we need a national health plan?”] at different times and in different ways” through Gallup polls and briefs “by some thirty nation-wide organizations representing agriculture and labour, medicine and social work, war veterans and groups of women” (1). Thus, while the *Guide* acknowledges the different approaches to how a national health plan should be administered and financed, “the general tenor of opinion has been: we need health insurance on a national scale” (1) Thus the document, as does the broadcast, concentrates on the broad consensus about and the urgency for, a national health plan.

It is in the broadcast discussion, *What About Health Insurance?* that the cracks in the optimistic consensus suggested in the *Guide* more fully reveal themselves. The discussion among a doctor, a labour leader and a farm leader concludes in an agreement that any plan would be better than no plan at all but all agree on three general principles: “Regardless of what plan is adopted, we must have more doctors, dentists and nurses. The initiative for any legislation should come from the people, and they should have a say in its administration”. In coming to this conclusion, the discussants offer their own arguments. The doctor, for example, in supporting the farmer’s statement that life is lost through the lack of adequate health services, tells the audience that during the war, while 38,000 servicemen were killed, in the same period, 37,000 people in

Canada died of tuberculosis alone. The labour leader, Cleve Kidd, extends the CFA suggestion for preventive medicine, calling for a national health plan to be connected to a comprehensive social security plan "Proper health planning demands control and integration of all measures affecting the well-being of the community." However, in spite of strong agreement with some new supportive material for a national plan, the broadcast has a futile quality because the decisions about federal-provincial cooperation on a health plan were being made elsewhere in closed debate. As the Chairman of the broadcast observes,

It's difficult at the present time to assess the Government's plans in the way of National Health Insurance, because the draft bill is still undergoing extensive amendment. As late as last week the bill was under discussion at the conference of premiers and we have no knowledge of what decisions were made at this time.

The closed door on government negotiations was reproduced in another important institution: the CMA that both habitually and officially spoke for the medical profession, had drawn back from public debate, without doubt preparing itself for private negotiations with federal and provincial representatives. The accommodating doctor on this broadcast who largely supported the opinions and aims of the farm and labour leadership, was on his own, a junior, a member of CAMSI, the Canadian Association of Medical Students and Interns who, even in that lowly position, protested that he was "speaking as an individual and not for the organization."

In spite of the evident reluctance on the part of governments and professionals to push through a national health plan, forum discussions reveal

an optimism about just such a possibility and the role that communities could play. The question posed by the *Guide* explores the articulation between the existing voluntary plans and a national insurance plan:

The statement is sometimes made that national health insurance would be a government handout and that it is better if the people have to use their own initiative in obtaining good medical services for their own communities. What do you think? (*Guide*. December 10, 1945, 3)

In the December 17, 1945 broadcast on the Forum Findings, *What the Forums Say About Health*, the question about a government "handout" was speedily dispatched by all the provincial forums with comments such as "Everything handed out by the Government is handed in by the taxpayer. So what." What is of import here is the common belief in forum groups that government initiatives need not sap other initiatives and that the two approaches could work to enhance a single national plan. Indeed, according to the responses, the national government would be an active force for the good especially when its initiatives and management are part of a negotiated relationship among local and provincial initiatives and management. Manitoba forums expressed this most clearly in their forum conclusions:

Most forums explained that health insurance could not be regarded as a Government handout, but was a planned system to give a much-needed service. Health insurance would do much to eliminate the glaring differences in communities as to their ability to pay for their health services. Ninety percent of the forums preferred Government supervision in health insurance, although a fifth of the groups qualified this by stating that community, municipal and provincial initiative and participation were equally essential.

Saskatchewan groups, in discussing the supervision of a national plan, were reported to "agree that the details can be worked out in a satisfactory manner by cooperation between municipalities, provincial and Federal authorities." From the Quebec groups the following report was made:

A great many groups want to retain a measure of local initiative, but when asked point blank if from their experience in similar projects like TB testing and health units the community could manage better alone, not one group plumped for action without the Government. Fifteen thought the Government could do it best and ten favoured a combination of Government and local action. Some comments were: - small communities cannot do a big job like this alone. Equalization between provinces and between different income groups is only possible with comprehensive Government action.

Forum discussion reinforced traditional belief in the virtue of government institutions and confidence in the possibilities for cooperation among all involved institutions and groups, including the citizens as a whole, to create an equitable national health delivery plan. The continuing question on whether cooperativism and voluntarism would survive in a post-war economy was answered by a call to action: forum participants in the upcoming programs were encouraged to strengthen and expand local community in order to meet the post-war challenges to public education.

What Do We Need to Do to Entrench Public Education?

In the early months of 1946, *NFRF* had a series of programs on farm organizations with the emphasis on the role of these organizations in extending and entrenching education by creating community, by being more effective and

inclusive, and by influencing public opinion. I will discuss this series of programs with references to the programs' three objectives: to extend the influence of local forums; to shore up institutional support; to initiate and institutionalize the inclusion of women and youth.

Extend the Influence of Local Forums

Just as many voluntary organizations involved in voluntary health schemes recognized the need to connect up to have more effective health services, so *NFRF* recognized the need to strengthen ties within local areas and to have them join forces with other areas in order to have a more effective voice, locally and nationally.

The *Guide* material for the January 7, 1946 broadcast, *How Important are Rural Community Organizations?* does not so much ask the question but offer inspirational and classic vignettes to support the argument that community cooperation and action have powerful effects within and beyond community. The first vignette concerns the setting up of a credit union in Starbuck, Manitoba, a town formerly "split into several groups according to race and religion." Inspired by the cooperative movement in Norway, members of the town organized study groups leading to cooperatives: "Gradually our neighbourhood changed from an individualistic, group-conscious district to a unified cooperative community" and "its greatest achievement is spiritual in the unconscious development of a united community spirit and in the building of character" (*Guide*, January 7, 1946, 1). The final lesson of this inspirational story as a model for action is that its

influence went beyond its own membership: two other cooperatives, in oil and health, were started up in Starbuck and the credit union cooperative was part of a NFB teaching film, *The People's Bank*.⁵

The second vignette, reminiscent of the Antigonish movement, is of Nova Scotia lobster fishermen setting up a cooperative that "brought them a better standard of living, but it has also given them a social intelligence and a confidence in themselves that cannot be valued in terms of money" (*Guide*, January 7, 1946, 2). Its success influenced "other fishing communities with the result that the entire lobster industry in the Maritimes will soon be controlled by the fishermen themselves" (2) The final vignette in the *Guide* and the one discussed in the broadcast is closer to the activity of the forums, that of the St. Ives, Ontario forum that, in conjunction with the CFA and the University of Western Ontario, successfully organized a broad and in-depth survey of all aspects of soil use and problems of some 3,500 acres. The story ends with the words, "the original group of seven people could hardly have dreamed of such far-reaching results" (2).

The conclusions drawn in this article are fourfold: one, that group action can accomplish what individuals working separately cannot do; second, that "although the action in each case was localized to meet a particular community need, it had more than local significance, and the participating group had connections reaching beyond its own neighbourhood"; third, that community life was radically changed for the better by cooperative action; and fourth, that

democracy was well served by their action, their "responsibility for their own welfare and that of the community" and their reaching out "in influence to other communities, to other regions and, indeed, to the whole country" (*Guide*, January 7, 1946, 2, 4). The telling of these stories in the *Guide* is another step in the process of encouraging and inspiring forum groups to think and act beyond their local group.⁶

While each of the inspirational vignettes noted the economic advantage of community organization, the broadcast discussants⁷ disputed such benefits. One guest insisted that there can be no advantage to having "a whole lot of little community cooperatives struggling along - and often failing" and, in the process, "[destroying] healthy competition and [leaving] the individual without opportunity for the application of initiative." Another expressed concern that local organizations could isolate farmers by pulling them away from provincial and national farm organizations: "That's where we can make hay." While the discussants did not dismiss an element of economic advantage for local organizations (they too mention the successful St. Ives' survey and a dozen other examples of economic cooperative action), the kernel of their argument for the support of community organization revolves primarily around educational and democratic advantages in the following ways: one, that national leadership emerges from community leadership; second, that without community organization, national organizations have no check on bureaucratic control, and

three, that community organizations have the capability to pull in larger resources for action and can educate and affiliate beyond their physical borders.

Shore up Institutional Support

For *NFRF* to survive, it needed the enduring support of public institutions that could make a space for both the philosophical development and the more tangible aspects of public rhetoric. The post-war years saw the institutions whose mandate was public education under new constraints: the CBC was under siege by organized private broadcasters, and *NFRF* and *CF* were under siege by business interests. Both the private broadcasters and other businesses had support for their opposition in members of Parliament who charged the forums with promoting left-wing ideology. In response, the CAAE presented a brief to the 1946 Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, making the point that

it is part and parcel of the democratic tradition that public issues be faced openly when they arise and that representative opinion be heard. This can only be done, in our opinion, if the national broadcasting system is maintained and strengthened, with continuing safeguards of its independence against either political or commercial interference. (CAAE 1946, 179)

The brief makes the further point that *NFRF* exists “by virtue of our national broadcasting system” (180). The arguments of the brief and calls for action to support the CBC are found in numerous other documents of this period.⁸

As well as support from its sponsoring institutions, *NFRF* needed to develop its internal institutional strength. In 1947 with its number of forums

stagnant or, in Ontario, falling, *NFRF* began a series of initiatives to both memorialize and shore up support for public education around itself as an institution. As Ralph Staples remarked in his March, 1947 address to the Ontario *Farm Radio Forum* Conference, *NFRF* had an

evident lack of physical indications of permanence It has no impressive buildings like cathedrals or banks or even a school; in the event of the demise of Farm Forum there would be no place you could go and point and say there is where it stood (Staples 1947, 1).

In asking the question, "What problems appear to restrict the further fulfilment of Farm Forum purposes as effective education for action?" Leonard Harman, in his May, 1947 address to the national *NFRF* Conference, spoke of the need to "recapture and promote the original aim and purpose of Farm Radio Forum as education for progressive rural reconstruction" (Harman 1947, 2) Thus, the drama, *Introduction to Farm Forum* (October 27, 1947) argued that *NFRF* was not only groups of dispersed locals but a strong institution, worthy of a continuing loyalty and did so by dramatizing its passionate and reasoned beginnings arising from an expressed need of farmers.

The first part of the drama presented the experiences of two fictionalized farmers, John Pritchard and Ben Devlin, whose dilemmas in a wartime economy lead them to resolve to act but they don't know how. The second part is a dramatized reconstruction of the founding of *NFRF*. Shugg, Sim, Harman and Morrison play "themselves" as they recreate the working out of problems around the setting up of a democratic forum through study groups, discussion in and

communication between groups and the communication of factual and accurate information in a graphic format. In the third part, we return to John and Ben who, with assorted neighbours, listen to an early broadcast and comment on it. As the discussion is about to begin, a guest, Mr. Leonard Harman, secretary of Ontario *Farm Forum* steps out of his "broadcasting role" into the "reality" of the forum meeting. He asserts the central importance in *NFRF* of Action Projects by recalling their history and their success within and between forum groups. The next section moves into the second year of the broadcasts when the west of Canada joined and *Farm Radio Forum* became *NFRF*; this section features Shugg in conversation with a Western farmer. The final section has the founding fathers in the present tense making claims about what *NFRF* has done over its nine year history:

Shugg:The two-way communication between the forums and their national and provincial offices is working well. . . . A new understanding is developing between regions. . . . The farmers of Canada are finding their voices!

Harman: It is time for farm people themselves to take an active part in Farm Forum broadcasts. . . . this year, our broadcasts will take the form of discussions between farmers and technical men. . . . Action Projects are on the increase. Remember that's the whole aim and object of Farm Forum- - education for action.

Staples: The forums have become a sounding board of farm opinion. Through them Governments and city people have learned a new respect for the farm population.

Morrison: If the forums have done nothing else, they've served to break down the reticence of farm people to speak their minds. People who never opened their mouths in a meeting learned to voice their ideas in discussion.

Mutrie, head of *CBC Farm Broadcasts*, speaks of the pride of CBC in its part in the development of a project “not equalled in any country in the world.” The broadcast ends in praise of forum participants “who make the thing tick. More power to you in the season just ahead” and the enthusiastic words of John and Ben, the newly-converted forum members: “Come on Ben, it’s Forum night! Right with you, John. Let’s go!”

This first broadcast of the 1947- 48 season called on the audience’s loyalties for the institution of *NFRF* by recreating, through drama, both the social needs and the dynamism of individuals and organizations, CAAE, CFA and the CBC, working together that brought the project into being. Thus is the role played by institutions understood in relationship to the needs of local communities. Still, the reality of shrinking membership demanded more than the memorializing of *NFRF*. The second broadcast in the 1947- 48 series confronted the problem of how to, actively and democratically, open up the CFA and their provincial counterparts and thus forum groups to women and youth.

Initiate and Institutionalize the Inclusion of Women and Youth

As *NFRF* moved to strengthen and expand local forum groups, the participation of women and youth in the CFA was seen as both necessary and right. *A Farm Organization for Everyone* (November 17, 1947) asks, “How can farm organizations assure the participation of women and youth as well as that of men?” Their participation is framed in terms of the democratic process in

which all individuals have a right and a responsibility to speak and act.

According to Mrs. McElrea, a panel discussant and Quebec farmer, inclusiveness is an important element of individual responsibility to the local community and to the broader collectivity:

The farm family should be educated to work democratically - democracy should come right from the home up. I think we've looked too long for things to be handed down to us. We should reach for the things we need. "Let George do it" is too common a saying - let the government do it - let the farm organization do it. We are George - we are the government - and we are the farm organization.

In the broadcast, the discussants voice their belief that men traditionally have more interest and talent for the business side of farm activities and women and youths, for the social side including that of education and health. Mrs. McElrea, however, reminds her fellow discussants and the listeners that the woman is involved in the economic side, that she spends a good share of the farm income. Mr. Stewart, director of the CFA, elaborates on the interconnectedness of problems and interests and comes to the conclusion that the social and the economic must be brought together at all stages of organization; rather than having auxiliaries and institutes for women and youths, all should be fully represented in "one farm organization for everyone." However, because youth have not had the experience and training for civic participation in public discussion and decision-making, the members of the panel concede that youth needed junior organizations set up at the local and provincial levels.

The *Guide* ("A Farm Organization for Everyone," November 17, 1947) refers to two schools of thought on how to ensure democratic participation: one says that the interests of men, women and young people are virtually the same and that they should, therefore, hold office as individuals, not as women and young people. The other school of thought says that the above theory sounds fine but doesn't work in practice; therefore, women and youth "do their best work when they . . . have separate sections within the main organization" (1). A compromise theory suggests that within a single organization, without separate sections, a stated number of women and juniors must be on the Board of Directors.

Each of the three possibilities is defended as legitimate and justified with examples from the many rural organizations including the CFA and its provincial arms and from a successful model of activated youth and women participation in the Ohio Farm Bureau in the U. S. While the *Guide* does not suggest the ideal situation, it does set up criteria for an ideal democratic organization:

- . Everyone would participate in a program that would meet the needs of men, women and young people.
- . Women and young people as well as men, would have the opportunity to gain experience and knowledge through participation.
- . There would be a constant injection of fresh blood through the recruiting of new officers from among the men, women and young people of its members (3).

The theme of inclusiveness is carried into the dramatized broadcast, *Organizing for Community Action* (December 15, 1947), designed to inspire forums to participate in Action Projects. Evidently, however, inclusiveness does

not have the weight of equality even though the drama has an equal number of male and female characters. The question of women's practical knowledge and their importance for success of the dramatized Action Project is brought up but in a rather farcical way. In discussing where to get help for a warble fly campaign, Williams says, "We'll get the Ag. Rep. to help us." When Jean suggests also getting help from the Women's Institute, Williams responds, laughingly, "What do women know about warble flies?" Marion sets the young man straight, saying that without women behind him, "none of your fine plans will come to anything."

The second encounter is also farcically presented and out of tune with the determination of the CFA to include women in executive positions. When this group of neighbours discuss setting up a committee to steer the chosen Action Project, only men are named by the other men. When Mrs. Rolleson protests, "shouldn't there be a woman on this committee?" an older man responds that there will be, that the wife of one of the committee members will be just as involved as her husband. The issue of women's equal participation is resolved in laughter, without further discussion, at the end of the meeting. The rest of the drama, as a number of projects get underway, reveals that women and men play their traditional roles.

While the written material and broadcast discussions in this period break with the traditional attitudes about the level of women's involvement and gender defined roles, the dramas continue to fulfill many of the old stereotypes. In this particular example, an imaginative fantasy of how people get together and

produce marvellous results - is primarily meant to inspire the audience to act. This strange cobbling together of the stereotypical and the fantastical suggests that in order for the latter to be accepted, the relations between the characters, especially those of men and women, needed to mirror the day-to-day experience of the audience. The writers of *NFRF* dramatic scripts knew that deeply established conventions of farming communities, especially those that formed the work relationship of family cooperation needed to be respected, that to push forward on one line of action meant to hold another line in its traditional place.

NFRF Restakes Its Claim on A National Health Plan

A National Health Plan: A Democratic Moral Enterprise, Not a Miracle

The two seasons separating the discussions about a national health plan on *NFRF* saw the attempt and the failure of the provincial and the federal governments to agree on the terms for such a plan. The dramatic broadcast, *What's New in Health?* (December 1, 1947) critically assesses gains made in rural health services and cries out in frustration and outrage about what has not been done. The play has the farmer imaginatively take control of a national plan by coming to the conclusion that the experts on a national health plan are not the professionals in health and government but those long-term volunteer groups in rural communities that have both set up local health systems and understood the need for an expanded system.

An agreement on the profound need for a national plan had been established by all parties within and outside forum circles over and over again. The *Guide* for this broadcast patiently repeated the statistics to support the need for a national service and reported on the advances made provincially, especially in public health services and in Saskatchewan and Manitoba in a fuller state-sponsored medical plan. The *Guide* ("What's New in Health?" December 1, 1947) asks "Is this good enough?" (3) The answer to this question comes partly in the Forum Findings and, more dramatically, in the broadcast "trial."

The drama in *What's New in Health?* is set up as a morality play in a court setting with characters representing, not individuals, but institutions and groups of people. The traditional character of morality drama, that of "Everyman" is, in this play, Mr. Interrogator, representing farmers and it is he who must find his way to the greater good through the statements and rebuttals of the seven witnesses. Another character, Mr. Referee, calls the witnesses and tries to control the passions which erupt throughout this inquiry into developments in rural health schemes and the attempts to move toward a national plan. While no absolute virtues and vices are represented in this drama, three witnesses are less virtuous: Dr. Penny, urban physician and representative of the CMA, Mr. Marvin, member of Parliament and representative of the federal government and Jack Collins, the representative of organized labour. Collins' outburst about the doctors' organizing of their own health scheme "because they're afraid the

medical profession is going to lose the stranglehold they now have on medical services" brings up a legitimate but largely unspoken criticism in *NFRF* broadcasts and written material. Better, it seems, that the negative attack should be explicitly made by organized urban labour on a farming broadcast, in order that the farmer could embody a more positive expression of anger. Recall that in all the *NFRF* broadcasts on health, the medical profession had always had a sympathetic image, the rural doctor who shares a community with the farmers. In this drama, unlike the organized urban doctor, Dr. Countryman is a virtuous witness living at the same crossroads as the farmer,.

The three less virtuous witnesses, after having had their say and after helping to produce a history of events leading up to the present stalemate, are told to leave the hearing because of their refusal to hear each other out and to accept the others' good faith.

Referee: If one thing stands out more than anything else as a result of this inquiry, it's this - Political manoeuvring, sectionalism and petty group differences must not be allowed to interfere with the wish of farm people everywhere for adequate health services! No group is free of blame in this connection! This is a democratic state. In this country the wishes of the people are respected.

While the Referee seems to spread the blame around evenly, the main culprit is Mr. Marvin, representing a government virtually inactive on the proposed national health plan:

Interrogator: And what was the fate of this proposal Am I to understand then that nothing has been done?

Marvin; (UNEASILY) You must appreciate the fact sir that the Federal Government can take no action in health matters without the support of the provinces. Under the British North America Act - -

Farmer: (OFF) (EXASPERATED) I know! (MOCKING) Health is a provincial responsibility! (ANGRILY) How long do you fellows plan on playing ring-around-a-rosy while we farm people die for lack of medical care?

In contrast to the bloodless, bureaucratic explanation by the government representative is the passionate and humane response of Mr. John Farmer a virtuous witness and a knowledgeable and angry representative of the farmers. He points out that while Canada has more doctors per capita than any other country in the world outside of Sweden, “[its] infant mortality rate is twice that of Sweden’s.” largely due to poor care in rural areas. He also gives examples of an expectant mother having “to be moved more than fifty miles by dog-sled and automobile to a hospital” and that a seriously injured Nova Scotia farmer who “had to wait eight hours to secure medical aid, thirty hours before he was placed in a hospital.” Other virtuous witnesses are Dr. Countryman who is too busy working to organize with other doctors and Mrs. Conway and Mr. Couture, health activist farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, representing the only two provinces with publicly-paid health schemes.

At the end of the fact-finding inquiry on the history and the activity for a national health plan especially for the rural areas, the Referee concludes “that in the final analysis, the responsibility rests with you, Mr. Farmer” and the farmer answers “I accept it, Mr. Referee”; nevertheless, the farmer, who lives at

Isolation Corners at the intersection of the roads Hope and Despair, needs to make an alliance with the broader population of Canada in the personification of

Mr. Interrogator:

Interrogator: I'd like to call on you the next time I'm in your neighbourhood. Which is the best road to get to your place - -Hope or Despair?

Farmer: That depends on you!

This is a Morality Play, not a Miracle Play in which god is the single authority. Here, the play tells us, the authority of Canadian citizens, based on their collective experience and understanding in open dialogue with all interested parties, will form the necessary moral basis both for the decision to act and the kind of action taken. Inaction, sectionalism and jockeying for power will destroy just bases on which a national health plan was conceived.

The Forum Findings (December 1, 1947) out of this dramatized program, *What's New in Health?* gathered information on medical and public health services available in rural communities and how they came to be. Opinions on what difference an unequal system of health in Canada makes and what would be the advantages of a national system were also solicited. Forum comments do not break new ground but do offer anecdotal evidence to support the arguments of the broadcast. On the problem of the uneven distribution of doctors, a forum in Hastings, Ontario offered this evidence:

In our community there are only two doctors to take care of the rural residents within a radius of twenty-five miles, whereas there are about

twenty-five or twenty-eight doctors in the city of Belleville about twelve miles from us and we cannot get service from any of them (6).

The Tarantum Forum in P.E.I. called attention to the consequences of inadequate medical services: "Present poor health and medical facilities are effecting [sic] the decrease in rural population. Nobody wants to stay in a place where there are no health services" (6). Nor should the forums in the rest of Canada be allowed to think that Saskatchewan had solved its medical care problems with its advanced initiatives. According to the Hawkshaw, Saskatchewan forum

No visits to school by public health nurse for past two years. No sanitary inspection in rural areas. Health education on curriculum but does not reach the homes. No Mental hygiene except treatment of advanced cases. The National Health Plan should be taken down from the shelf. It would round out existing Provincial programme and help to equalize the financial burden of health services (5).

In the three years since the last programme on a health plan, forum groups may have forgotten many of the arguments, new forums had come on stream and, politically, they all needed to be enlivened. The allegorical dramatic form of *What's New in Health?* allowed for historical and current information to be presented in a pedagogical and amusing way, for moral judgements to be made and, in forum discussions, for farmers to again make public their local experiences. Within the scope of the play, the denouement suggests that in order for the virtues to win out over the vices, more and better political action was required. Triumph, the script tells us, will be secured for and by all

Canadians, including farmers in local forums, by the nation taking into consideration the practical and documented experiences of rural health projects.

Can Rural Communities Have Some Control Over Doctor Availability?

The country doctor was always treated in *NFRF* programming as hardworking, even heroic. Overworked and underpaid, he lived among his patients under similar, often harsh conditions, virtually isolated and limited by the lack of many types of support including institutional support. The rural communities and their doctors recognized their interdependence at a micro level: when the lot of the community improved through an organized health unit, so did that of the country doctor. This broadcast, *What's Happened to the Country Doctor?* (November 27, 1950) and its written material explore both the micro and the macro levels of that interdependence: that is, what are the problems at the local level to attract and keep doctors, and the problems at the macro level where the institutionalization of medical training, practice and delivery resides. In short, it explores what kind of control rural communities could have over medical services.

The concern posed by the question of the 1950 broadcast is detailed in statistical information: "while the number of doctors in Canada, as a whole, has increased since the war, the number of doctors in rural areas has decreased" (*Guide*, "What's Happened to the Country Doctor?," November 27, 1950, 1) with cities and towns having one doctor per 596 to 776 people, rural areas under

10,000 residents had one per 1,807 (1). This shortage was not blamed on the doctors themselves but attributed both to poor rural conditions and to the lack of institutional support.

According to the broadcast discussants, Mrs. H. Ellard, a registered nurse and convenor of the health committee of the Quebec Women's Institute; Dr. H. J. G. Geggie, a country doctor in Wakefield, Quebec, and Dr. Taylor, PhD., director of the Saskatchewan Health Survey and member of the Health Services Planning Commission, some of the problems facing country doctors and their patients such as roads, housing and schools could be solved by the welcoming communities alone:

Ellard: . . . one thing they could do would be to provide a house for the doctor to live in, several municipalities could go together on this; they could rent it at a low rental rate . . . to him or they could sell at a low rate of interest. Then they could take some interest, I believe, in trying to get more consolidated schools if possible amongst [them] in their communities so that the doctor would have better educational facilities for his children.

Taylor: Not only the doctor but all the people in the area.

Other problems are beyond the simple scope of the communities and their doctors: the lack of medical facilities, the lack of opportunity for specialized consultation, the lack of professional training for general practitioners and technicians willing and able to serve rural areas and finally, the lower income of rural doctors as compared to that earned by specialized personnel in densely populated centres. The suggestions for solving these problems point to the

dependence of both the doctor and the population he serves on an intricate institutional support system.

In order to attract doctors to rural areas, the problem of work-related isolation needed to be solved through the establishment of equipped hospitals that gather into them specialized medical personnel as well as general practitioners. This point is argued in the broadcast in the described success of doctors attracted to areas that had Municipal Hospital plans and provincial hospitals built in Saskatchewan and Manitoba with Federal Construction grants.

In order to produce doctors willing and able to serve in rural communities, medical schools, according to Dr. Geggie, needed to dignify the position of the rural doctor by having "a general department of medicine in every medical school where, of course, it would be headed by a general practitioner" who would supervise students in "practical experience with chosen rural physicians." Also, less well-off rural students needed to be recruited by medical schools and provided with scholarships or bursaries as well as rural practicum in the hope they would return to rural areas. On these two points, Mrs. Ellard suggested that local organizations try to influence the institutions. On the creating of a department of general medicine, she poses to Dr. Geggie a question about the possible role of organized women:

Ellard: . . . do you think it would be of any use if our, say Women's Institutes, you know we are very powerful, stronger than we realize I believe, to send resolutions to these universities, asking for such a system to be put into practice?

She informs her audience that “we - our women’s organizations, in particular the Women’s Institutes, are working and recommending, stressing so many scholarships for rural boys and girls to be able to go to the colleges and take up medicine and other professions.”

In response, the other broadcast participants agree that community groups and intra-community organizations can influence those institutions that control medical services and, indeed, need the cooperation of those non-medical community institutions in order for the population to get satisfactory medical care:

Taylor: In solving this problem I’m firmly convinced that it’s not a problem which anyone can solve by himself, the doctors can’t solve it - it’s not their problem, farmers can’t solve it alone, but the evidence and experience in the west certainly shows that these groups participating together can.

Geggie: But doesn’t it show that it’s only to be solved with government help?

Taylor: Well I think that the broader the financial base for providing these services the better off you are, of course. . . .

Finally, on the question of payment for rural doctors, the experience of the Municipal Doctor plans with the help of the Prairie provinces in levying municipal taxes for health allowed for three types of payment: salary, capitation and fee for service. All three bases of payment attracted doctors to the rural areas. The more recent and doctor-attracting Saskatchewan Swift Current experiment operated on a fee for service basis payment. Still, the type of payment is seen as less important than the medical support services that could be available to the

doctors made possible by a broad financial base. Thus, rural doctors needed the help of rural communities which, in turn, needed the help of provincial and federal money.

In spite of the broadcast discussion that interprets the problem as multifaceted and global, the questions for local forum discussion (*Guide*, November 27, 1950, 3) are limited to the local and do not touch on the other significant problems raised in the broadcast and in the *Guide*; these would include the policies of medical schools and provincial medical boards; the drive toward specialization; the lack of rural internship; the limitation put on medical student enrolment (not increased after the war as in other programs); the lack of scholarships for poorer students; the reluctance of provincial medical boards to grant licences to immigrant doctors. The questions do not touch on the problems associated with the medical establishment but rather concentrate on the physical factors that would discourage a doctor from practising in their community (bad roads, lack of or poor hospital facilities, lack of housing, poor income and a scattered population) and what the community could do to make it more attractive for a doctor. The questions in the *Guide* encouraged this limited response through the micro-narrative: "Suppose, for a moment, that you are a young doctor, just ready to start practising" (2) "You," then, are taken through all the decisions about where to practice based on the needs of your professional confidence, your family and your income and finally decide to practice in the city. Both the statistics and the narrative identification direct forum members to

discuss the questions of whether the services in their community are adequate, the factors that would likely discourage a doctor from practising there and what could be done to make it more attractive.

The Forum Findings for the November 27, 1950 broadcast reveal a modified perception of the country doctor, no longer the stable partner in rural life but a separate entity who makes specific demands whose fulfilment may or may not woo him: "‘This group came to the conclusion there could be no going back to the old style country doctor, and we would have to make conditions attractive to the medical profession.’ - Carstairs East Forum, Alberta" (3); and from the Christophers Cross Forum, Prince Edward Island, "Tignish Coop has bought a home for a doctor's use, we also guaranteed a young doctor \$6,000 per year, but were unable to secure a doctor's services" (4).

Thus, the forums reported that even in the area where they could have some control, their efficacy was limited: doctors were not responding. The larger issues that affected rural medical conditions were certainly discussed in the broadcast and the *Guide* but given no room in directed forum discussion. This separation between what the problem was and what was talked about at the local level suggests a kind of impasse for democratic deliberation. The implied Action Project, i.e. to create doctor-friendly conditions in the communities, left out the larger project of influencing governments and institutions that controlled medical training, services and payment. How real was this lack of leverage by forums to bring about structural changes for a medical delivery system that could

serve rural communities? If this lack was self-imposed by *NFRF*, did the reason have to do with the attacks on public education at the national level? Did *NFRF* programme planners hope to protect what they had in terms of institutional support by narrowing their influence to the local community?

The Interrogation of Public Education

The Attempt to Promote the Cooperative Element of Public Education

In both CAAE and *NFRF*, the cooperative movement with its *modus operandi* was seen as a primary site of civic education and part of its founding vision which included institutional support. We might remind ourselves here of the Antigonish Movement and its reliance on provincial and federal departments of agriculture as support for cooperative education and marketing.⁹ As discussed in Chapter 1, cooperativism was defined as the basis of a particular kind of public education, reformist and interventionist, that changes social conditions and, in the process, transforms contiguous individuals and groups into communities. In the 1951 four part discussion on cooperatives (three broadcast panel discussions and another on Forum Findings),¹⁰ *NFRF* eschewed drama with its possibility of concentrating on a nostalgic past and thus being out of touch with the political and economic tenor of the times. The debate format, however, was flawed by being between two people only, representing the arguments for and against cooperativism. As well, those who spoke against cooperativism were able to energetically define the discussion within the

parameter of business practice and capitalist ideology. A number of conditions account for this: the post-war world was living within an increasingly business-dominated ideology made aggressive by the Cold War whose rhetoric defined the superiority of capitalism over communism in terms of the freedom and the ability of individuals to make profits. *NFRF*, dedicated to open discussion, faced its detractors to debate cooperativism in terms that business had mastered.

The first program, *Are Coops Efficient?* (October 29, 1951) presented a debate between two farmers, both experienced in cooperatives, with a chairman Professor W. M. Drummond who controlled the debate with difficulty. Platte, the anti-cooperative farmer, deftly argues the inefficiency of cooperative by backing up his strongly expressed opinions with examples, speaking at length and, in short, dominating the debate. Platte argues that when a business is inefficient, "the business concerned is the loser and not the innocent members" as in the cooperatives. The question of "innocence" turns around a number of issues as argued by Platte: first, "many directors are elected by the membership because they are good honest, popular individuals and not for their knowledge and experience"; second, that members do not go to meetings, that "once they elect a director the members expect [him] to carry on the year's business until the following annual meeting"; third, that cooperative education is suspect, an arm of propaganda: the "innocent members" are either ignorant or duped or both.

In answer to these charges, Lutes, the cooperative farmer, stayed within the limited topic boundaries set by Platte, arguing that "if more attention were

paid to the cooperative education of their members, boards of directors and managers," then "cooperatives could be made more efficient." The broader educative and democratic implications of cooperatives as opposed to private business interests were not even hinted at. We are left with the impression that non-participating members of cooperatives are failed businessmen rather than citizens struggling with issues of participation and cooperation.

Indeed, the Forum Findings summarized in "What the Forums Say: Are Coops Efficient?" (October 29, 1951) confirm this dominance of opinion. The question, "In setting up a cooperative, what steps should be taken to ensure its success?" 73% of the forums took the business-like position and said "Get an efficient manager and staff" while only 21% said that "members and Board of Directors should have a knowledge of cooperative principles and procedure; coop should have a good educational program" (1) On the question, "What steps should the members of a cooperative take if their coop is not giving good service or if it is showing financial loss?" only 15% said "get members to take more responsibility, attend annual meetings, study coop principles" (2)

The second program, *Are Cooperatives Democratic?* (November 5, 1951), continues the debate format with Norman Priestly, Secretary of the Alberta Cooperative Union, F. E. Smith, a farmer and seed grower in Manitoba and the chairman, Professor Drummond. In spite of the equal abilities of the two debaters, the debate is framed by Smith to become not whether cooperatives are internally democratic but whether they are democratic in relation to the "free

market.” While Smith claims to “believe in cooperatives,” in “the advancement of my class by association,” he defines cooperatives and, in particular, the western wheat pool cooperatives, as monopolistic institutions cutting off the autonomy of individual entrepreneurs as if, indeed, free enterprise business and its underpinnings were not themselves institutionalized:

Smith: The free market is [the] real expression of democracy, it is perfectly natural and goes back into history, a place where people can meet and buy and sell. The free market has been eliminated. The free competitive market has been eliminated entirely and that is a direct attack on democratic institutions in this country.

Smith goes on to argue that the grain marketing board system as set up by the Federal Government is “dictatorship by ballot” and that this

indirect form of dictatorship. . . . is accompanied very often by bribes or suggestions that you will exchange political freedom for economic advantage. And that has been done because they have associated monetary rewards and rewards in the way of security for the individual to induce him and prevail upon him to give up his rights.

The innuendos in this statement, argued by free market interests, imply that the coop member is an innocent or even a dupe. Smith claimed that

the prevailing opinion in many quarters that policy is now not a matter for membership determination at all but that it is decided at levels very far removed from the membership, and the members are expected to conform and acquiesce in all that is taking place.

This language that describes members as controlled by “a hard core of devotees to the movement,” and cooperative education as meant to “endeavour to create

proper thought" is the language of red-baiting prevalent in the 1950's in both Canada and the United States.

Thus the central educative element of cooperativism, always a problematic pursuit for cooperators, became a cudgel with which to attack cooperative enterprises. For his part, Priestley defends the cooperative as "the greatest possible field for democratic training" and, in the end, "beneficial to our democracy." His defence is also a plea for participation, self-inclusion and group leadership.

Priestley: . . . we do not know what the unorganized farmer thinks or feels. We can only judge by the men who come into our organizations, express themselves, hear their ideas debated, take their part in the debate and come to a final conclusion. And so long as we have a body of people who stay outside organizations and criticise but do not get into the organizations to shape the policy according to their desires, we are going to have the opposition of view that is here expressed in Mr. Smith and myself.

In the final debate of this series, *Are Coops Socialistic?* (November 12, 1951), the red-baiting about cooperatives continued but the chairman, Professor D. L. MacFarlane of Macdonald College, Quebec, created a debate more equitable than those of the former two. Certainly the question posed in the debate allows Mr. Ralph Staples, Ontario Manager of Coop Life Insurance Company to explain in some detail the difference between state-owned enterprises run top down and cooperatively-owned enterprises "established to eliminate profit . . . to provide a service for the members at cost." If Mr.

Haliburton, a farmer from Avonport N. S. does not explicitly accuse cooperatives of being "red," he implies it.

Haliburton: ...if they [cooperatives] are established to eliminate profits then this is one of the popular conceptions of socialism, the elimination of profits means socialism because our free enterprise system, our capitalistic system is based on profits. It has to be. Profits develop this country. Profits built up the North American continent.

Haliburton goes on to draw a parallel between the cooperatives in the Russia of 1919 and the founding of the communist state, concluding that because those in cooperatives were "used to conducting meetings and doing business - it was all done for the people and by the people that's true but there was a complete set-up for the Russian government to take over and operate." Staples counteracts that interpretation of Haliburton's that-could-happen-here history with another scenario: that big capitalist monopolies could be taken over much more easily than cooperatives "democratically controlled by little groups of people here and there all over the country."

Haliburton continues his argument that cooperatives, "being based on community ownership," deny control to its members, leading them, willy-nilly, into "state ownership, state regimentation, state regulation." From being dupes, cooperators begin to dupe others. His claim is that pressure from cooperative wheat organizations "*forced* the government to bring in wheat pools" and "cooperative fruit growers organizations *managed to needle* the government into forming a marketing board." The language Haliburton uses suggests that the

government, as well as being an enemy of free enterprise, is also an innocent pawn of the cooperative leadership and, in the example of the fruit growers' marketing board in his area, a stupefied pawn of marketing boards as well.

Haliburton: ...since the government has given us another grant this year and we feel that the way to get grants out of the government is to have marketing boards, we'll probably have another marketing board. We're just going to keep on *milking* the Federal Government just as long as we can. If marketing boards will enable us to do it we're going to do it.

Like many critics of cooperative institutions, Haliburton denies the efficacy, the value and, indeed, the very possibility of civic pedagogy which the cooperative movement claims as essential in cooperative enterprises while, at the same time, cynically taking advantage of them. The red-baiting attack, implying both conspiracy and naivety, is logically unanswerable. In contrast to Haliburton's baroque arguments, Staples returns to the unadorned but arduous basis of cooperation: equity, participatory learning and action, pointing out that coops are "open to all regardless of the political belief or their religion or their race or any other factor except their ability to use the coop" and that, controlled by their membership, "they'll move in the direction that those members consider desirable." None of his earnest arguments though are as dramatic and thus compelling, as those of Haliburton.

In the final program of the series, *What the Forums Say?* (November 19, 1951), provincial reports of forum group discussions reviewed the series as a whole. Almost all of the provincial secretaries reported that forums saw that the

problems arising in cooperatives stemmed from poor participation. On whether cooperatives were democratic, the Alberta forums claimed that they were and "where there was any doubt in that regard it was not because of the structure or the practices of the organization but that the members themselves failed to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities." Another typical comment, this one by the Coverdale Forum was reported by the New Brunswick secretary: "one of the problems in democratic control is the lack of information which creates a great deal of opposition from members and others because they do not understand about coops." The Manitoba Tecumseh Forum is quoted saying that the problem is "to get its members out to meeting, to take serious responsibilities, and thus keep informed on the basic principles of democracy and cooperation." Only 18% of forums across the country believed that "cooperatives pave the way for public or state ownership and more government control" while 82% of all forums thought that "the good society should be a mixed society with four kinds of ownership: some individual ownership; some cooperative ownership; some private-profit enterprise; and some state and municipal ownership." So while the forums saw the lack of active participation as a problem for the quality of cooperatives, they did not see cooperatives themselves as problematic in spite of the heavy barrage of criticism and red-baiting by the critics in the three radio broadcasts. Forum members' participation and education in cooperative enterprises, including health cooperatives, had taught them the value of such institutions in both their ideal and operational

forms. Nevertheless, the forum participants who by and large supported the idea of cooperativism were within a structure whose discourse encouraged that support. With the falling forum numbers and the changing face of agricultural practice, attitudes about cooperativism among the larger rural population were probably closer to that of its opponents. In opening up its scope of membership and variety of discussants, and in attempting to reinforce cooperative values, *NFRF* also opened itself up to the increasingly influential project of the marketplace being the model for civic practice.

***The Attempt to Promote the Elements of Public Education through Drama:
Rhetoric in the Service of Nostalgia***

In Chapter 3, we saw how narratives in dramatized broadcasts can be powerful rhetorics aimed at deliberation and specific action by forum members. The rhetoric of *You Can't Afford to be Sick, We Can't Afford to be Sick* and the post-war drama, *What's New in Health?* - personified in the Old Timer and Mr. Referee - was advocacy for an equitable health system. This advocacy is inserted into a rich fabric of dramatized personal stories within community groupings that mirrored those of the audience. There, the deliberation and action of the dramatic characters to enact the rhetorical thrust, could be completed only outside the drama, in the forums of the audience and in the provincial and national parliaments.

The three post-war dramas¹¹ discussed in this section are different in kind: rather than advocates of future action, these dramas are enclosed witnesses of a constructed past. For all instituted projects, and that of public education is no exception, their constructed history must be made known; their social memory is an essential element in creating loyalty to an institution. For example, the 1947 broadcast, *Introduction to Farm Forum*, had successfully combined drama and documentary interviews to understand the past and the present as the way to the future. These three later dramas, however, steeped in nostalgia, have a retrograde, closed-in and congratulatory quality that undermines a vibrant future-oriented rhetoric.

Certainly these dramas have work to do: they are responding to falling forum numbers and the rising attacks on public education itself as illustrated in the series on cooperativism. In an effort to counteract these shifts, the dramas do offer information about and models for forum work; indeed, they are scripted to define elements of public education such as the enabling structures and institutions; the need for active participation and the development of equitable inclusiveness and communicative competence. However, because these elements of public education are wrapped in a nostalgic notion of community, *NFRF's* founding principles are all but abandoned.

Perhaps the justification for the *Pre Forum Broadcast* (October 22, 1951) sets the stage for historical nostalgia. UNESCO had "granted a fairly large sum of money to study Canada's *Farm Forum*" as Harry tells his wife Katy. Her

response, "Study it? What's there to study about it? A group of people get together in a radio station and discuss a certain subject. Farm groups all over the country meet in homes or halls to listen. Then they have their own discussions" is the opening for Harry to impress Katy, and, presumably, the audience, with the reasons for *NFRF's* fame.

The scene shifts to that of a farmhouse where Sarah is trying to convince her reluctant husband, Alan, to join the forum. Sarah uses the arguments of neighbourliness, self-interest (i.e. taking part in the buying cooperative), the knowledge of what farmers are doing in other parts of the country and what they are saying about the sorts of problems (i.e. high cost of farm machinery) that Alan complains about. His reluctance to take part in the forum points to the roadblocks for developing civic education at the local level where relations and capacity were insufficient. An example of how problems of local structure were to be handled was the focus of the following scene which develops the question of leadership and communicative competence: the elected chairman controls an interrupting forum member with the words "Just a second, Jimmie, I think Alec asked for the floor first." When Jimmie is recognized, he speaks of his "bad habit of always getting my two cents in and sometimes not giving others a chance to express themselves."

Jimmie: One guy hogging the floor all the time can destroy a Forum group this Farm Forum Group has helped me see myself. I've gotten a clearer picture of myself and of other human beings because of our discussions. And I've made good friends here.

Jimmie is one side of the equation; the other side is Alan, the reluctant participant, who, when asked to speak, refuses: "I just came to listen." Another forum member, Norman, is held up as an example of how members who listen carefully ultimately do become competent discussants: "John: If I remember correctly, you (Norman) started off last year by hardly saying anything, but by the end of the season, you were in there with the rest of us." Indeed, by the end of the pre-forum meeting, Norman has joined the recreation committee and Alan has expressed interest in coming back the following week.

What does it serve that this drama reviews the institutional and local structures and practices of *NFRF* and dramatizes them in local forum models? My tentative answer to this question is partly influenced by my emotional response to the drama and this is also true of the two other dramas analysed in this section. I am touched by the drama and, at the same time, feel that I have been manipulated. At a period when forum membership was standing still or falling, an emotional drama that tells a story of the development and coalescing of community through *NFRF* appears to be a loyalty test: "Do you buy into this image of *NFRF*?" Rather than a drama meant to move people to action, it is meant to keep them from moving out of forum groups by appealing to their loyalty especially at a time when *NFRF* was being studied by UNESCO.

The second drama in question is also inspired by the UNESCO study for, as the narrator says, "It's the prototype for similar programmes among farmers of a dozen nations. *Farm Forum* has come of age. With maturity has come a desire

to know itself better, to examine its aims and objects, to weigh its virtues and its faults." The October 27, 1952 pre-forum broadcast, *One of the Thirty Thousand*, is "a dramatized case history of the effect of *National Farm Radio Forum* on the life of one Canadian farmer." Jerry Thomas, describing himself as "a rugged individualist" ("I want to live my own life in my own way and on my own terms!"), refuses to join forum members, calling them "a bunch of people who think much alike - - when you think at all." Through pressure from his wife and neighbours, Jerry begins to listen at home to a broadcast discussion, turning it off when he disagrees with the first speaker, believing that one side only of an argument would be presented. He learns otherwise and also that many non-farmers in the area listen as well; the storekeeper tells Jerry that "the prosperity of every businessman in town depends on the prosperity of you farmers. Naturally we're interested in hearing about the problems you people face and how you go about solving them."

When Jerry does join a forum group, he is taught to listen to the broadcast without talking so that all the arguments can be heard, to understand that the forum aims to "exchange opinions and argue things out" and not to necessarily change anyone's point of view. Jerry also learns that a forum can be "a unifying influence":

Jerry: There are members of three religious denominations in this group I've joined. In most Canadian farm communities these days, several nationalities are represented and people of as many viewpoints. They can all come together in *Farm Forum* on the basis of common interest. That's something!

Also in the spirit of inclusiveness, Jerry has the experience in the forum of arguing with his wife, having "never heard [her] in public debate before." For his part, Jerry encourages forum members to make notes during the broadcast: "It's hard to remember points unless you jot them down at the time"; his independent opinions spark a discussion among forum members who had "gotten into the habit of yessing one another. We needed a livewire like yourself, somebody who had opinions of his own and wasn't afraid to voice 'em." In the end, the expression and hearing of Jerry's strong points of view in a public forum are seen as essential in creating civic education through community:

Jerry: Another thing. I've always prided myself on my rugged individualism.

Walter: (Dryly) You have that.

Jerry: And I'm still for individualism. There are too many forces driving people into regimented patterns. All the same, a man has needs can't be fulfilled within himself.

Walter: A man is part of his community.

Jerry: Right! He must rub shoulders with his neighbours. . . . I'm not a yes man and never will be. However, I've found that *Farm Forum* needs me and I need it!

This drama lays out some new material in terms of recognizing the criticism of the lack of passionate discussions at forum meetings. In a sense, Jerry is both the problem and the possible solution to problems of forum participation. He refuses to join because of his rugged individualism and, when he does, inspires the group to be more independent in their thinking. Other material in the drama seems stale and fantastical. Would a character like Jerry take part in *NFRF*? Whom could such a programme attract? It seems doubtful

that farmers like Jerry, who did not go to forum meetings, would be listening. The drama might have the effect of encouraging forum members to be more critical in discussions and more attentive to the filling out of forum opinion forms. More likely, the title points to the dominant self-congratulatory aim of the story: that a very special community has been created by all thirty thousand *NFRF* participants who, like Jerry, are individuals who have rationally overcome their resistance to community organization. Like the earlier drama, this too is a pre-forum broadcast that did not ask for feedback. The third drama to be discussed however, is within the regular forum program and thus the object of forum response.

The Hub of the Farm Community, the December 8, 1952 broadcast on community centres, is also an inspirational and nostalgic drama about the structures and institutions that enable civic education. Written by Len Peterson, the play, narrated by an old timer farmer, Jamieson, is squarely set in the past, recalling the days before and after a community centre was built; thus, emerging from Jamieson's memory are dramatized vignettes that exhort both the need and the success of a community centre, a signifier of community itself. The six opening vignettes delineate, through the lack, what a good community should be doing: the first vignette is of the local doctor telling Jamieson that a boy with a tumour will die because of the lack of information regarding community resources:

Oh, it's an old story, Dave: you farmers isolated, keep your troubles to yourself, don't profit from other people's experience like you should, don't use all the help there is around. Mrs. Hermiston said she was afraid of medical expenses, that's why she kept putting off doing anything. If word of the boy's condition'd gotten around, somebody better informed than the Hermistons would've told them that money doesn't ever have to be a factor in getting medical help

The other vignettes dramatize the unconnected lives of many small groups of people: farmers exchange bits of information as they pass one another in town, with no place or structure to extend the conversation; young people have no place to meet and play together so end up in cars, getting drunk; farm women are "spending so much time alone, not getting out and associating much with other people, not seeing things - day after day working around the house and yard"; retired farmers are "miserable," without contacts and activities.

Pushed by the obvious needs and by the dissatisfaction of "just working and grouching and dreaming and dying," people got together to develop a community centre. First, the local school was converted into the community centre during evening hours and weekends, and later, built in stages by volunteer labour, a new centre dedicated to "acting together for our economic welfare, studying together and playing together." These activities comprised many social and educational groupings including a Saturday morning baby clinic and a periodic chest x-ray clinic organized by the doctor.

This drama links up the community centre with health which becomes the warrant for the centre, the central justification. The past without a community centre, without readily available health care, is a bad dream, in sharp contrast to

the happy community with a centre. It is "the hub of our community." Ironically, the nostalgia of this drama is for the bad old days that drove people to organize themselves into community. The question of whether this drama would encourage action on the part of forums is answered by forum responses.

The Forum Findings (December 8, 1952) reveal that many communities with forum groups had community centres and those without did see the value of such a centre; however, the "typical quotations from the Forum Findings" (3) expressed another need: for leadership in conjunction with community centres. In the drama, leadership was not problematic; leaders were inspired by the narratives that revealed a lack and by the enthusiastic responses from the fictional community groups. However, in the narratives coming from actual forum groups is an expressed need for leadership and for "greater participation and interest in all the activities of the centre" and "better community spirit" (2). The Tofield Forum in Alberta said, "perhaps our greatest improvement would be to get folks to think of it as their community centre and to use it as such. Capable leaders are needed to supervise the activities of the centre" (3). Poplar Grove Forum, Hants Co. in Nova Scotia felt that "one of our biggest problems is the lack of leaders" (3).

As we see in the forum responses, the nostalgic drama about community centres being the hub of the community does not answer forum needs for organization and leadership. The three dramas set out to define the importance of local community to public education. In figuring this principle in a drama

based in a nostalgic past, could the programs create community or just create a longing for community, an unrealistic, romantic idea about community? Further to this, was the use of health as a signifier of community pushing health further away from being a political matter and into one that makes deliberation and action less likely? In these three dramas and in the response by forum groups, the force of the local community is being questioned. On one hand, the old notion of such a force has been made a matter of nostalgia but, on the other, profound problems are revealed. These problems are particularly concerned with the lack of vigorous debate and the lack of leadership at the local level.

Attempts to Empower the Local: Encouraging the Emergence of the Individual Voice

In the 1946-47 season, *NFRF* was already becoming aware that national and international power shifts, powerful new structures that effectively restrained many debates, had altered the efficacy of local forums and indeed, of the whole forum movement. The suggested solution in those immediate post-war years was to entrench public education more deeply by extending the influence of local forums, shoring up institutional support and bringing in women and youth to swell the membership ranks. Certainly the creation of local knowledge and the ability to act on it locally had been well established in forum practice. However, by 1952, *NFRF* was more aware that the local was problematically linked to larger, more complex structures as seen in farming distribution and marketing as

well as in medical delivery. In the broadcast, *Where Are the New Farm Leaders?*, Leonard Harmon, of the United Cooperatives of Ontario, speaks of “this rapidly-changing world” in which

. . . farm organizations [that] got under way in earlier periods don’t appear in the same form. We move farther from the local community. In addition to the problems there, we move right out to the world arena and that’s where we’ll decide whether our children live or die, anyway.

As the boards of CFA and *NFRF* tried to grapple with their position in the emerging power structures, they needed to deal with their internal problems resulting in part from falling forum membership.¹² The central question asked in the four programs¹³ that I look at in this section is how CFA and *NFRF* could be reformed so that the local forums could have a voice and effectively participate in matters of public policy in the changed post-war world. While the solutions offered in the broadcasts and written material were not materially different from those offered in 1946-7, they do stress a new dimension in *NFRF* rhetoric: the importance of the role to be played by the individual.

The concern around structure and leadership was, in fact, a concern about how local judgments could fit into national and international judgments; that is to say, how could the practical wisdom and knowledge developed in local groups be generalized in order for the local to effectively intervene in places and structures that develop *expert* knowledge. In order to deal with this concern, the local groups needed to maintain and develop their knowledge and power including the power that comes with large numbers of participants.

The obstacles to farmers' active involvement in farm organizations were in both the occupation of farming itself and in the structures of farming organizations. One discussant in the January 21, 1952 broadcast, *What's Wrong with Farm Organizations?* pointed to the isolation of some "650,000 farmers, each of them operating as a separate small business and each of them as his business grows getting further and further away from his neighbours." The discussants revealed that this isolation was compounded by the fact that no more than 50% of farmers even belonged to farming organizations.

As well, membership in the CFA, the major organization representing farmers in Canada, was through provincial organizations and not individual memberships; thus farmers, in being represented only through their cooperatives or credit union memberships, "were not aware that they were members of an organization, possibly of a local organization, but not of a national organization." While the discussants believed that institutional membership gave strength and stability to provincial and national farm organizations, linking up individuals and groups to political action, they suggested that CFA follow the democratic lead of the Farmers' Union of Alberta that structured local districts and organized annual conventions for hundreds of delegates to present their grievances and resolutions.

In response, 88% of local forums, those already involved, thought the individual farmer could "play an effective part in the present set-up of farm organizations with the CFA" ("What the Forums Say", January 21, 1952, 2).

They also suggested increased information and publicity on CFA activities, the encouragement of farmers to take “a more active part in local farm organizations” and direct membership in the CFA to attract new members to *NFRF* (1).

The question of where to find leaders had been addressed in the 1946-47 broadcasts with the answer being among youth and women. The discussants¹⁴ on the leadership broadcast, *Where are the New Farm Leaders?*, January 12, 1953, continued to see those groups as a source of leaders but the central problem became the formation of those leaders, especially youth, to prepare them to cope with the post-war world. While the CFA and the *NFRF* reaffirmed their philosophy that leadership must be an extension of farming experience, local organizations such as 4-H Clubs, Junior Farmers' Associations, agricultural colleges, District Farmers' Associations and forum meetings, such training was not sufficient for the new reality as they were “still pretty directly related to the problems of production of agricultural products.” In order for farm leaders to prepare for the changing world, they needed more work in “social and economic fields.” To fulfill this need, the discussants suggested that agricultural colleges teach social and economic studies to young farmers. While local training in these studies through short courses and folk schools was also suggested, the notion of leadership training had moved from being mainly community based training to educational institutions attracting individuals with particular interests and abilities.

The leadership of women was tackled in the November 10, 1952 broadcast, *Farm Women in Public Life*, which moved away from the 1946-7 dramatized format into a discussion with women in the first all-women panel in *NFRF*.¹⁵ The early drama had reinforced women's relationship to their husbands rather than seeing women as independent individuals in the public space. The question, "What part should farm women take in public life?" and the broadcast title presumed a leadership role for women, even if only with respect to traditional concerns that directly affected their families and local communities. The reality of mothers' lives was expressed in that active participation was possible only if husbands and fathers of families supported the idea "that we take part in public life." Still, the women on the program insisted that as rural women, they were suited for active participation because in running the farms with their husbands, they knew "the meaning of the word 'cooperation' right from the start" and therefore were "admirably suited to go on and help build a nation and a strong country."

One discussant broadened the scope of an active public life by introducing the phrase "political life" and insisting that women's concerns were, *de facto*, about broader political involvement and that women did not have a choice about that inclusion: "I feel that women must take a definite interest in political life. They must realize that politics means their husband's job, the education of their children, health measures and so on." According to this speaker, political living was in involving oneself in the future: "It is her duty to go

farther afield than her home and see for herself the conditions that influence the lives of her children and then only can she understand her children and their problems." In involving herself, the rural woman is also training her children for the future, to "make a greater contribution to Canadian citizenship." This changed discourse around women's participation and leadership was reinforced and extended in the 1953 drama, *Divided We Fall*.

"Divided We Fall": The Convergence of Themes around the Formation of Leadership

At first glance, *Divided We Fall* (November 1, 1954), the first broadcast on the subject of health care in almost four years is simply a narrative of tradition, meant to affirm *NFRF* lore through an inspiring story of a community that learns to cooperate. This impression is partly due to the drama being set in the past and built, once again, around the subject of health delivery, a subject both involving and successful for many forum groups in terms of Action Projects and one whose cause had not yet been won. However, unlike the earlier 1947 drama, *Organizing for Community Action* which presented familiar gender defined roles while introducing imaginative action, this drama is able to break gender definitions by locating new roles in a past that could strike the listener as realistic.

The drama begins with an unorganized community in which one woman takes the initiative to make use of *NFRF* as an institutional source of education,

and ends with the founding of a local medical delivery system. The audience sees that leadership demands courage, particularly for those who have been on the periphery of power. Marge, a farm wife, told by her husband, Harry, and other men, including the Reeve of the township, to mind her own business, persists until her right to speak, to argue openly, and to encourage others to do the same are accepted by those that opposed her .

When the drama opens, Marge is concerned that her neighbour with a sick child needing to be hospitalized is forced to ask for charity from the doctor and the Reeve of the township:

Marge: . . . It's wrong, Harry,

Harry: Been that way a long time.

Marge: Nobody likes it.

Harry: Been that way a long time.

Marge: We ought to do something about it. People should be able to rest easy about hospital bills. They shouldn't have to put off goin' just because they don't have cash.

Harry: The Reeve takes care of us.

Marge: We shouldn't have to ask for charity.

Harry: What are you gettin' all steamed up about?

Marge: Because something should be done.

One can argue, as Harry does, that the rural neighbourhood is taking responsibility through charitable means for the illness suffered by its inhabitants. What is at stake for Marge, however, is beyond the responding to a lack of resources. What is at stake is the ability of neighbours to transform themselves into citizens through education, leadership, and democratic structures. For Marge, citizenship, first of all, means not to be enslaved by charity, not to be

placed in an unequal position in order to have equal access to health care. It is not only the father of the ill child who is put into this position of not having pride of place from which to speak; when Marge announces her intentions to talk to the Reeve about what could be done, her husband Harry denies her right to do so, saying "if anything's gonna be done, men should do it. Women got no right foolin' around with things like this You're a woman. You got enough to do here at home." Marge's response argues the right to be a woman in the public space: "I'm part of this neighbourhood the same as you."

The right for which Marge argues goes beyond the right of women to freely take their place in the public sphere; she is arguing for the "universality" of citizenship through medical care so that no member of her community will have to ask or be asked to have basic needs met. The universalization of such needs as housing, education and health care assumes the citizen's place in the collective whole where she/he is thus not required to ask for "special status"; needing to ask for charity puts the supplicant, if even briefly, outside the pale of his community in an unequal, excluded place from which his voice will not be heard. Marge, in her practical voice, argues that "no matter how you look at it, gettin' money from the township, that way is charity. . . . [this hospital plan] isn't charity. It's everybody helpin' the community and the community helpin' everybody." Marge is arguing for the realization of citizenship through the distinction of a hospital plan as opposed to charity.

The second theme, closely aligned to that of the right of citizenship is that of leadership and rhetorical competence, the capacity to engage in effective persuasive communication. Marge takes on the leadership role “because”, as she tells Harry, “nobody else will. This community needs wakin’ up. They’ve lived too long every man workin’ for himself.” Though unused to leadership, the character of Marge reveals the process of gaining the competence to learn, argue, persuade and to cooperate with others. Her eagerness to set up a health plan is dampened by the opposition from the men in the community, an opposition fuelled by her husband’s campaign. At one point she is forced to drop the idea for, not only is her marriage at stake; she has not, as well, found community support for such a plan to be adopted.

Ironically, while the men are not willing to have Marge “interfere” in the public arena that concerns people, they do allow her to carry out a project to replenish the stock of animals killed by lightening on the Reeve’s farm. Indeed, they join her in the project:

Jim: I saw that storm. Coulda been my stock that was hit. Sure, I’ll give a calf.

Marge: And if you want, I’ll lend you a hand gettin’ the rest to give.

The success of the cattle replenishment project with “everybody helpin’ the community and the community helpin’ everybody” allows the men to move from the familiar rural neighbourliness to the unfamiliar project of a community hospital insurance plan. Marge is given a space in which to speak and, more

importantly, she is prepared to speak, having informed herself through the provincial *NFRF* about similar projects.

Before leaving the themes of leadership and rhetorical competence, we must note that Marge's last, generous speech in the drama reminds the audience of the necessity for all citizens to take their own places in the public space: "Sure, I was the first one to speak out. But if it hadn't been for the people, all the people workin' together, we'd still be worried to death about gettin' sick." On the other side, her courage to lead the entrance to the public space is celebrated by the members of the dramatized community, including her husband. On his earlier opposition to the hospital plan, he remarks: "I believed in it all right. But I knew I didn't have the guts to do anything about it. And I didn't want you to, neither. I was afraid people'd say I wasn't wearin' the britches in this family anymore." Thus, the successful development of leadership in a community is closely allied to both the recognition of the needed courage and the repudiation of exclusivity.

A third theme in *Divided We Fall* is of the necessity for the leadership of enabling institutions. Two of them exist in this drama: one, *NFRF*, and the other, the hospital plan set up by the community. The first institution enters peripherally into the drama but carries a heavy import: it is through a forum broadcast on hospital plans that Marge, in her isolation, understands that "other communities have had the same problems" and that those problems found solutions. On writing to *NFRF*, she receives information and advice in the form of a visit from

the provincial Farm Forum secretary. He explains various plans and emphasizes the need for community interest and study. Thus the cooperative sharing of the experience of other communities through the institution of *NFRF* as well as its support provides a basis for Marge's, and ultimately, the community's competence. The second institution, the hospital plan, set up in conjunction with the surrounding communities, provides a grounding for future cooperative study and action.

Divided We Fall is a drama that supports the earlier discussion around the need for a renewed leadership by bringing those on the periphery into the centre of *NFRF* organization. While the leadership of women, as characterized by Marge may not have been acceptable to all the forums, they would have been convinced and conciliated by the larger, irrefutable theme of 'community' that sticks together, i.e. "divided we fall."

Acquiescing to the Loss of Local Deliberative Space: *NFRF* 1954-1965

The Promise/Aspiration of Local Voices on the National Scene

Marge's powerful voice that underlined the leadership, the rhetorical competence and the need of local communities to act was constrained within a drama whose setting was in the earlier, more optimistic years of *NFRF*. The insistent return in the post-war years to the subject of local voices indicates the real and rhetorical constraints on *NFRF*. The problem faced by *NFRF* can be

phrased in the following way: Can a national rural program of public education and action be effective when faced with the declining power of local forums?

The philosophy of *NFRF* was embedded in the notion of the local being a rhetorical space: that is, not just a space of deliberation but of judgment that leads to action. The action was to be at the local level but also to reach into the regional and national levels in various ways. The importance of local voices being heard and paid attention to, that is, resulting in action, was central to the institution, the CFA, whose membership made up the majority of forum participants; it was formed after a 1932 farmers' protest march on Ottawa failed to make farmers voices effectively heard.¹⁶ *NFRF* was a further attempt to have the voices of the farmers heard by one another, by the organizations that represented them, by governments, provincial and national, and by the larger population. This was to be done not only by organizing rural neighbours into listen-study-action groups but also by linking them, mainly through radio, to one another and to other institutions and to governments.

Without doubt, the model of the Antigonish movement, working at the local level in taking over fishing and farming distribution, was both inspirational and influential for *NFRF* in terms of local power and in the way institutions could work with local groupings so that the local was capable of having agency beyond its boundary. Indeed, local judgment and action were never meant to be limited to the local; *NFRF* structure, programming and discourse were set up to persuade participants that local deliberation and action would play out on the

national stage and have a national effect. Certainly the work done in local forums in organizing cooperative medical services and the fact that health delivery became a major national issue seemed to confirm the possibilities for a vital interconnection of the local and the national.

The characteristics of that interconnection were subtle and complicated. As we saw in Chapter 3, the early efforts to set up local medical services were largely an internal *NFRF* affair, whereby the national offices of *NFRF* and CFA collaborated with local forum groups. From the groups, however, came information about the virtual impossibility of setting up an adequate service without the broader collaboration of provincial and national institutions and governments. Organizers of local projects for the delivery of health services realized that they were hampered in their efforts by conditions, regulations and laws beyond the control of both the local alone and in relationship to *NFRF* and CFA. Other constraining elements, those that demanded expertise and those that set out to deny the legitimacy of local authority and cooperative enterprises, also distanced the local from the centres of political and economic powers. All the new constraints that distanced farmers from one another and from access to decision making powers complicated the question of whether *NFRF* could flourish within its established principles and practices.

In an attempt to answer this question and to renew *NFRF*, a number of broadcasts revisited the notions of community and cooperativism in the last decade of *NFRF*. In the November 8, 1954 broadcast, *Farm Forum in the*

Community, the national community is once again presented as formed out of the bedrock of the local community with its essential quality of neighbourliness, "one of the cornerstones upon which you build the rest of the program." Such a community, according to the broadcast discussants, offered a source of leadership, an impetus for developing new organizations and the resources for co-ordinating those existing organizations for the development of national projects with the help of sponsorships and regional leadership. However, in response to the question, "What do you consider to be the most important features of a successful forum?" (*NFRF Findings*, November 8, 1954, 1), local forum groups put a high emphasis (44%) on "neighbourliness and sociability," while smaller numbers saw "development of a better informed community" (32%), the "development of leadership," and "understanding of agricultural problems in all parts of Canada" (11%) as significant aims for forum groups. Thus, the grand idea of a national community-in-education based upon deliberation and action seems to have been reduced to the local and to principles of sociability of neighbourliness.

The second established principle of *NFRF* discourse was cooperativism, discussed in the March 11, 1963 broadcast, *The Cooperative Idea*. The *NFRF Findings* reveal that while the majority of forums agreed that "the cooperative way of doing business contributes] to a better society" and that "the Rochdale Principles [were] still valid and useful" (1), they also admitted that in most cooperatives they were part of all the principles were not observed (1);

thus the attachment of forum groups to *NFRF*'s basic principles were more apparent than real. And this came at a time when *NFRF* was calling on national and provincial governments and the medical profession to take up co-operative principles in order to develop an equitable national health plan.

In the war years of *NFRF*, medical services became a political issue that moved into the national arena through the deliberation and action in local forum groups. In the post-war years, Action Projects continued to exist but became increasingly local in scope, as in the case of building community centres, while deliberations of national interest, specifically in health care, became increasingly theoretical and distant from local forums. In short, local forum action was increasingly being severed from deliberation on major questions of interest. The forces changing forum relationships and forum membership included evolving technologies, mechanization, and new social and economic conditions,¹⁷ as well as ideological assaults by business and the emergence of an organized medical profession that saw itself not needing to engage with groups like *NFRF*. As the number and role of local forums changed, the established concepts through which forum rhetoric was constituted and sustained, those of equity, co-operation and community, could only be held onto through nostalgia and romance.

A National Health Plan: Hello, Locals? Hello, NFRF?

We have been following *NFRF* from 1940-41 mainly through the subject of health delivery with its topics of co-operativism and equity of access. These topics will be highlighted in the following discussion that covers two of the last three programs on health in the final decade of *NFRF*. *A National Health Insurance Plan* (December 6, 1954), *Paying for Our Health* (February 27, 1956) and *The Price of Life* (November 2, 1964) speak of a growing will in the national and provincial governments and among the Canadian people to launch a national health plan.¹⁸ Though these three programs were developed by *NFRF*, there is within them a virtual absence of what local forums had supported in their many years of discussing and acting on the subject of health delivery. In short, whatever resolutions, influence and authority that were constituted by *NFRF* in its treatment of health delivery were not evident in these last three programs that discussed the plan as conceived by the national government.

What does become evident is first, the growing distance between the ideas in the broadcasts and what is discussed in local forums and second, the distance between the historically established principles and what, in the end, seems to be satisfactory. As for the first, the distance between the broadcast and local forums, it was not prominent in the major years of health delivery discussion. Both the dramas and the broadcast discussions reflected the situation and demands of local forums, made clear through forum responses in written feedback and Action Projects. Indeed, the insistent call over the years by

forum groups for provincial and national health plans grew out of their experience with co-operative plans that did not have sufficient resources for adequate medical and hospital coverage. What had been a balance between the purposes and means of the locals and the 'authors' of the broadcasts was lost in the last years, as illustrated in the lack of connection between the drama on community centres and the locals' response that leadership, not the lack of centres, was the problem.

The program, *Paying for Our Health*,¹⁹ also illustrates this lack of fit between the broadcast and the questions for local discussion. The broadcast examined the characteristics of existing rural plans and their connection to a possible government plan. The *Guide* (February 27, 1956) suggested that these rural plans "might become part of the machinery for administering the [national] plan" (1) Two such plans, one in Swift Current, Saskatchewan and the other in Ontario, are offered as examples but the questions posed to the discussants, "What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of these two plans?" and "What do members of your Forum consider to be a reasonable annual payment?" (3) do not address possible plan integration. What the forums were asked to consider did not begin to approach the issues raised in the *Guide* of the two plans nor the profound implications for local control of health delivery. While the *Guide* raised issues akin to the wartime concerns, the long-standing problem in rural areas concerning the lack of equitable resources was addressed neither in the *Guide* nor in the discussion. This may have been because both of the

discussed plans seemed to have attracted sufficient medical personnel as innovative projects often do.

Another historical concern of *NFRF*, that of how costs could be controlled, did not become a matter for forum discussion. Both plans had introduced deterrent fees: in Swift Current "charges for house and office calls have been effective in controlling the costs of the program by cutting down the rate of use of doctors' services" (2). In Ontario, "rates are kept low by using a \$15 deductible clause" (3). In both plans, doctors were paid fees for services: in Ontario, "payment is made according to the general rates set out by the Ontario Medical Association" (3). These elements of deterrent fees and fees for service had been highlighted as decisive in the kind of health care that would be provided. While preventive service was mentioned as being part of both plans, it was a tacking on to a largely curative service, a falling short of the demands by forums in the 1943 debates. Forums at that time supported the plan proposed by the CFA in which all other aspects of a national plan, including administrative control and payment of doctors, were subject to the primary demand, "the promotion of positive health and the prevention of disease" (*The CFA Health Plan*, December 20, 1943).

Not only did discrepancies exist between the researched February 27, 1956 *Guide* material and the non-substantial questions for forum discussion; the questions posed for forum discussion neither addressed the already known prerequisites of a successful health delivery system nor offered an opportunity

for any deliberation. The questions may have been the result of inattention or, as I suspect, designed not to be deliberative since any organized rural control over the outcome of a national plan seemed improbable under the circumstances. By 1956, *NFRF* was losing importance with diminishing membership and its loss of influence in national debates. The growing distance between the national office and the local forums and the irrelevance of positions once held diminished the idea of a community that could make judgments.

The final discussion on health in *NFRF* proper was *The Price of Life*,²⁰ November 2, 1964; this program discussed the report of The Royal Commission on Health Services, commonly known as the Hall Commission which recommended a "Health Charter for Canadians . . . to make all the fruits of the health sciences available to all our residents without hindrance of any kind" (*Guide*, November 2, 1954 6).

Perhaps because the Hall recommendations so positively confirmed the need for and ways of, obtaining universal coverage, the *Guide* expressed *NFRF*'s relief and support for the plan even though it questioned the "basis for opposition to a broad, medical care program" (3) by the CMA and insurance companies. In the *Guide* giving a precis and commentary on the Hall Report, it is surprising, considering *NFRF* constituency, that no comment about how or whether such medical services would adequately serve sparsely populated rural and remote regions of Canada was made. This omission is striking considering that it is noted that "the Commission would guarantee the doctors' right to

conduct the type of practice which they choose and to locate themselves according to their own wishes" (12), It is remarkable that *NFRF* did not respond to this measure, considering its position in earlier years. This is another example of how *NFRF* was no longer willing to question or debate matters of formerly great significance in forum discussions.

Unfortunately, the broadcast for this program is not archived, although the *Guide* reported that statements from both the CMA and insurance companies would be heard. Evidently, their particular arguments reached the local forums whose response in the "National Summary" (*NFRF* Findings, November 2, 1964) included an overwhelming concern about the high cost of such a plan, the fear that doctors would leave Canada and the diminishing of the quality of medical care, concerns that echoed the concerns and discourse of the CMA. As such, the debate on the future of health care had been virtually abandoned in *NFRF* itself. Where the debate finally took place was in a couple of new *ad hoc* forums²¹ that featured institutions and personalities familiar to *NFRF* participants.

With the decline of *NFRF*, the institutions that formed it still existed and took part in debates on public issues. The CBC, CAAE, CFA and the Co-operative Union of Canada made interventions in the discussions of the Hall Commission and continued their educational work on many fronts. Still, because they needed to carry on with their more recent and pressing commitments,

without working in close concert as they had, they could not sustain separately the kind of educational program that was the hallmark of *NFRF*.

As it faded away, the organized communication network of *NFRF* left traces within the institutions that once sustained it. The scope of this thesis does not allow me to follow up on these traces but, in any case two observations can be made. First, that CAAE and CBC were weakened by the loss of *NFRF*. Much of their power to speak as representatives of a larger constituency was built on the voices of the organized locals that fed into those institutions. This is not to say that the locals did not continue to speak to those institutions; it just says that those institutions no longer “spoke” the locals. The structure of *NFRF* was an organization of the locals into a network of communication, speaking their relationship to other organized locals through the reporting structure. This structured aggregation of locals informed the way those locals thought about their influence on the national stage and their own judgments and actions. In turn, the institutions through which they spoke were themselves structured and informed by the locals. Without such an infrastructure, local voices lose their status of being a collective voice and are heard as eccentric individual voices or as pressure groups; for their part, public institutions, bereft of this local structure, are, in turn, open to attacks that they represent no one.

Notes

Chapter 4

1. The Joint Planning Commission (JPC) was created in 1947 and continued until 1968. For more detailed information on the commission, see Selman and Dampier (1991); and Clark (1954). In this thesis, refer to short discussions in Chapter 1 on JPC and "the middle way"; and, in Chapter 2, the section, "Constraints of Radio Forum Discourse: Challenges from within CAAE Membership," on Muir's presidency.
2. In spite of this, the *Farm Forum Guide*, January 8, 1951, reported that "the biggest Action Project that has come out of Farm Forum to date is the cooperative medical service development." (n.p.)
3. The broadcast, *What About Health Insurance?* (Monday, December 10, 1945) was part of the series on health which included two other programs, *Poor Soil Produces Poor Food* and *Are Farm People Healthy?* The final program in the series, *What the Forums Say About Health* (December 17, 1945) discussed all three of the broadcasts.
4. Two statistical charts illustrate this: one, "Distribution of Doctors, Town and Country, Canada 1943" shows that 28% of the population (those living in the city) had 45% of the doctors while the 72% rural population had 55% of the doctors: two, "Ill-Health & Poverty - Notorious Bedfellows: Poorest Provinces Have Fewest Doctors (1941)," shows that Ontario with the highest per capita income of \$644 had one doctor per 933 people while New Brunswick with a per capita income of \$351 had one doctor per 1,834 people. Saskatchewan, the poorest province on the chart with a per capita income of \$341, but one with organized health services, had one doctor per 1,452 people (*Farm Forum Guide*, December 10, 1945, 2).
5. *The People's Bank*, NFB, 1943. 18 min. Title Code: 101430983. Scripted and Directed by Gundrun Bjerring.
6. In supporting documents, forums were encouraged to act beyond themselves. For example, Andrew Hebb's (1946) article, "Supremacy of the Community," in *Food for Thought* critiqued the role of forums in the development of democratic action. He claims that "there is too much faith in the impact on governments of the collective opinion from a Farm Radio Forum discussion. This is to attempt to run farm opinion up through a funnel to the government concerned" (31). Hebb insisted this was too simple an idea, arguing that "the sure way to secure government action is to influence public opinion, so that not only the [Forum] segment but as much as possible of the whole population favours the desired

action" (31). To do this, forum groups needed to educate themselves and then educate their fellow citizens by organizing new forum groups and by more broadly publicizing their opinions in the local press. In this way, forum groups would help to create a larger, more influential community of opinion; it is this community that would have "supremacy" - not the narrower community of farm forum groups. In order to influence public opinion, forums were encouraged, through two how-to articles, to publicize their activities. The November 10, 1945 *Farm Forum Guide* carried "Newspaper Game" by Hebb on how to write up a story about local forum activity and the January 14, 1946 issue carried an interview with the editor of a local newspaper on the kind of forum report that would be published.

7. The broadcast discussion, *How Important are Rural Community Organizations?*, was held at the Public Library in London, Ontario on January 7, 1946 with the following discussants: Orlo Miller, journalist, as chairman; Watson H. Porter, editor of the *Farmers Advocate and Home Magazine*, London; Alex M Stewart, farmer and president of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association; William Molland, farmer from St. Ives.

8. *Brief*, Presented by the CFA and the CAAE to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Radio Broadcasting, 1944 in NAC - Morrison, Vol. 13, File "Committee of the House"; "We Speak Our Piece on Radio," Dr. Martyn Estall, *Food for Thought* (Vol.7, No.1, October, 1946); "Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence" No. 6, Thursday, July 4, 1946, pp. 178 - 195, House of Commons, *Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, 1946 Session* in NAC Avison, Vol. 8, File "CAAE & CBC Briefs 1940 - 46"; *Where are We Going in Canadian Radio Control?* Ottawa: CFA & The Cooperative Union of Canada, n. d. circa 1948 in CBC Archives - Toronto; *Do You Want to Help the C.B.C.?*, Quebec, n.d. circa 1944-46 in NAC Avison Vol.8, File 42 "CAAE & CBC Briefs 1940 -46"; Leonard Harman, *Report of Meeting on National Radio Service*, Toronto, April 22, 1948 in NAC - Sim, Vol.3, File "NFRF Correspondance & Memorandum 1941 - 48 (3 - 5); *Brief to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting*, September 20, 1956, CAAE in Archives of Ontario - CAAE Box 10, A-111-3 File "Director's Files 1961 - 1967"; *The Canadian Federation of Agriculture Memorandum to Members of Parliament Respecting Canadian Radio and Television Broadcasting*, June 16, 1959 in NAC CCC, Vol.2, File "CBC 1954 - 1968."

9. In his text on the Antigonish Movement, *Masters of Their Own Destiny*, M. M. Coady speaks of the sympathetic cooperation of both provincial and federal departments of agriculture: "The story of cooperative marketing is their story in fact because without their efforts, very little would have been accomplished. . . . The creation of the Marketing Division and the establishment of the Economic Council by the Nova Scotia government in 1935 are probably the two most

important steps taken in our time for the betterment of the primary producers of the province of Nova Scotia" (1937 (1967) 94-5). Further Coady recalls, "Cooperative marketing of fish received an impetus from the recommendation of the MacLean Royal Commission which investigated the fishing industry in eastern Canada in 1927. As already indicated, at the instance of the Canadian government, the fishermen were organized into the United Maritime Fishermen in 1930. One of the chief purposes of this organization was to enable the fishermen to undertake cooperative production and marketing" (101).

10. *Are Coops Efficient?* October 29, 1951 with chairman Professor W. M. Drummond, Department of Agricultural Economics, Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, Ontario; *Are Cooperatives Democratic?* November 5, 1951; *Are Coops Socialistic?* November 12, 1951; *What the Forums Say*, November 19, 1951.

11. *Pre Forum Broadcast*, October 22, 1951, Script: Ted Allan; *One of the Thirty Thousand*, October 27, 1952; *The Hub of the Farm Community*, December 8, 1952 Script: Len Peterson.

12. For the December 3, 1951 broadcast, *Educational Outlets for Adults*, 953 groups reported (610 of these in Ontario) with the attendance of 15,114 people; the January 21, 1952 broadcast, *What's Wrong with Our Farm Organizations?* had 912 reporting groups (642 in Ontario) with an attendance of 14,475; the November 10, 1952 broadcast, *Farm Women in Public Life* had 793 reporting groups (540 in Ontario) with an attendance of 12,704.

13. *Educational Outlets for Adults*, December 3, 1951; *Farm Women in Public Life*, November 10, 1952; *What's Wrong with Farm Organizations?* January 21, 1952; *Where are the New Farm Leaders?* January 12, 1953.

14. *Where are the New Farm Leaders?* Monday, January 12, 1953. Chairman, Watson Porter, Editor of the *Farmer's Advocate*; Discussants F. W. Walsh, Ministry of Agriculture, N. S.; Leonard Harmon of the United Cooperatives of Ontario; W. B. Baker of the Saskatchewan Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life.

15. *Farm Women in Public Life*, November 10, 1952. Chairman, Stuart Tweedie of the University of Manitoba Department of Extension Discussants; Hilda Fitz-Randolph of Nova Scotia, a community activist; Mrs. J. R. Fitcher of Ontario, past president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario; Mrs. Henry Lawrence of Saskatchewan, past president of the Women's Cooperative Guild and representative on the International Women's Cooperative Guild.

16. In the January 31, 1955 broadcast, *Press Interview on CFA*, Dr. H. H. Hannam, President of the CFA, spoke of the history that led to the institutional

organization of farmers:

In the days when I helped to organize a march on Ottawa in 1932, the farmers had no organization whatever in Canada. It was a violent sort of protest, an angry protest, but when the people came home from there and found they didn't gain very much by the march on Ottawa, they said "well a far better way would be to set-up a proper organization for the farmers all over Canada and have it work every day and every week and every month the year round" and we have been doing that.

17. In 1987, Orville Shugg recalled those social and economic conditions: When the CBC Farm Broadcast service went on air in 1939, Canada was still an agrarian society with rural families making up 46 percent of the total population. By 1951, rural families were 21 percent of the total population and the relentless transformation into an urban society was accelerating. (Shugg 1987, 32).

Mrs. Orville Shugg, chairwoman of the panel broadcast *Bringing Up the Farm Family*, January 17, 1955 spoke on that broadcast of how those conditions influenced the activities of the farm family:

We have been told that family living has been changed considerably in the last twenty-five years, farm mechanization is changing, the methods of farming, farming is larger, farming is becoming more specialized, the car is taking the farm family further and further afield for social contacts, radio and TV are taking the place of creative activities, the extent of these changes varies tremendously from one area to another across Canada, but it is determined largely by farm income over production costs.

18. The December 6, 1954 broadcast, *A National Health Insurance Plan*, was a panel discussion with the Minister of Health, Honorable Paul Martin, Sr. The argument of the day was that by joining existing plans into provincial and national plans, the cost could be equally distributed. Questions remained, however, about whether equitable cost distribution would translate into equitable personnel and resource distribution and whether a national plan in which all citizens were compulsorily enrolled through tax deductions, could maintain co-operative values and local control.

The essential differences between a voluntary and a compulsory system are not so evident. The generalized concept of a voluntary plan included both co-operative and for-profit plans while the *NFRF* ideal compulsory system was to be only co-operative. The medical profession played with the term "voluntary"; the *Guide* reported that the Canadian Medical Association "favours the extension of voluntary plans," for in this way "the essential doctor-patient relationship is retained. [Such a plan] would not detract from the pride that should exist in every good citizen to be independent". However, as the *Guide* pointed out, millions of Canadians were "unprotected" under the system of voluntary health plans. In fact, one reporter in the broadcast discussion quoted statistics which indicated that the patchwork of the different kinds of voluntary

schemes in Canada, urban and rural, covered just 7% of the population. The extension of voluntary insurance, co-operative or for profit, for those who could not afford the premiums would mean having to pass "some sort of means test" for government support. Evidently, pride of so-called "independence" would exist for the doctor but forum groups had already rejected the idea of charity in health care and indeed that opposition had been a strong argument for cooperativism. In defining a possible national plan, Martin conceptualized co-operativism as a good: "Well, I think health insurance is not a question of socialism or regimentation, but, properly conceived, a system whereby the cost of medical and hospital care is shared by all the people." When asked if a national plan could be voluntary rather than compulsory, Martin at first suggests it could but acknowledges "that a scheme in Canada that was truly national in scope and truly contributory on a national basis" would have to have the imposition of compulsory contributions. The more important question for farmers was whether medical resources would be more equitably distributed.

As discussed in *NFRF* forums over the years, equity of medical access was dependant on two factors: a broad economic base of participation and a fair distribution of institutions and personnel. Even though cooperative rural schemes joined a number of townships to provide a broad enough base, that was often not enough to provide adequate services; the sparse and scattered population base worked against the provision of hospitals and other specialized resources.

Martin's tentative response called on the experience within Canada and in countries with national health plans: On the distribution of doctors across Canada, Martin quotes statistics on New Brunswick and Ontario, confirming for forum groups that "the per capita income has quite an influence on the distribution of medical personnel". However, whether a compulsory national plan would rectify intra-provincial and regional disparities of full accessibility, Martin waffles:

McTaggart: . . . Would we have more doctors in rural areas if there was a health insurance scheme?

Martin: Well, I think you might and might not. It would depend on the successful planning and embrace of your whole scheme, but in those countries where they have health insurance there is a better distribution of professional skills.

Boyd: Do you think that is a compulsion, Mr. Martin?

Martin: Not necessarily. In these countries, like the Scandinavian countries, where I said a moment ago until recently they did not have compulsory schemes, they had a more effective distribution than they had in the United States, or that they had in this country.

What Martin does not talk about and what the forums are only implicitly asked about is the lack of compulsion on medical providers. As reported in the forum findings forums said the main problems with health services in their communities

were first of all the "high cost of insurance services" and the "scarcity of doctors and dentists". In response to the question of whether an expanded voluntary or a compulsory national health insurance plan would solve these problems, the majority of forums put their faith in the compulsory plan. The McGuire Road Forum, Chilliwack, B.C. thought that "the need for additional doctors, nurses and hospitals is great and we feel a voluntary plan would be much slower in providing skilled personnel;" the Cahility Forum, Heffley Creek, B.C. thought that "a national program may help in general by having the doctors disperse from the now crowded areas to the more non-crowded areas. A richer section of the country would help pay for a poor section." Forums were putting their faith in a compulsory system that they believed would fulfill the co-operative and equitable ideals that failed to be realized at the local level.

19. The February 27, 1956 broadcast, *Paying for Our Health*, is not available. My comments will be based on the *Farm Forum Guide* and the forum findings in "The Forums Say," of February 27, 1956.

20. *The Price of Life*, November 2, 1964 broadcast is not available. My comments are based on the extensive material in the *National Farm Forum Guide* of November 2, 1964.

21. The CBC, the CAAE and the Canadian Institute on Public Affairs co-sponsored the *Health of a Nation Project* for the 1965 series "Healthier, Wealthier, Wiser!" to

... make the Hall Report a 'public' document in the real sense of the word. Our purpose is not to mount a pro-Hall Report campaign, but to increase public knowledge of the actual content of the Report and to promote widespread discussion of the practical effects its implementation would have on various segments of the community. (CAAE, April 1965, 1)

This notice also spoke of background material for public discussion: four half-hour broadcasts on the television series, *The Sixties*. The four broadcasts, May 3, 10, 17, 24 at 10 pm on the CBC-TV network set out to examine "the costs for an individual to be healthy," "medical education," "the changing view of health," "the special case of Canada" (1)

Four *Citizens' Forum "Open Lines"* programs were to take place May 6, 13, 20, 27 at 9 pm., produced in conjunction with The Canadian Institute on Public Affairs and The Canadian Association for Adult Education as part of the series "Healthier, Wealthier, Wiser!" The special May 24, 1965 *Citizens' Forum "Open Line"* program on the Hall Report entitled "Cross Country Checkup," taking its name from a medical checkup, posed the question, "Are you for or against a comprehensive health scheme for all of us?") and a discussion kit issued by the CAAE. The name of this program became the series' name for the

continuation of the telephone forum that continues to this day (CAAE, April 1965, 1).

Another forum, *Health Services in Canada: A Working Conference on the Implications of a Health Charter for Canadians*, had twenty-one co-sponsors including all the major religious councils, organizations involved in the *NFRF*: CFA, CAAE, Canadian Labour Congress, Co-operative Union of Canada, Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and the National Farmers' Union. Also co-sponsoring were the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of National Trade Unions, Conseil Canadien de la Cooperation, National Council of Women in Canada. Its steering committee was made up of representatives of five organizations including the CFA and the CAAE (CCC November, 1965).

CHAPTER 5: THE PROSPECTS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

Returning to the Source: Idealism and the Archive

Before beginning this thesis, I was most familiar with *NFRF* as an object of nostalgia and as a precursor of *Cross Country Checkup*. In approaching it, I decided to put aside any earlier studies, aware that most of them had been done during or close to the life of *NFRF* and either by, or in collaboration with, its participants. With this in mind, I faced the archival material and attempted to develop my own critical position. Certainly I entered *NFRF* archives with a particular subject to follow but I also needed to learn about the operations and negotiations that created the possibilities for the kinds of dramas, discussions and action that the subject of health delivery constituted.

My decision to "discover" *NFRF* for myself and the sheer mass of material meant long hours over many months, mostly in the National Archives of Canada. Enclosed within the vast amount of material in boxes belonging to many different archival collections was the story of the growing awareness by the three sponsoring institutions to the idea of what, *in practice*, public education consisted, and its consequences. The mixture of the individual and institutional archive collections that now makes up our understanding of *NFRF* is a reflection of the organizational characteristics of the project itself; individuals, groups and the sponsoring institutions were co-operating in attempting to develop, through internal and external constraints, a complexity of voices that could be heard at many levels. As well, *NFRF* was a project in the process of creating itself and

also of creating and reframing the sponsoring institutions and their technologies and practices into a culture of public education.

At the heart of the project was the idea of the necessity to have public matters discussed openly by those whose voices were not usually heard: the voices of farmers, men and women, of cooperators, and voices outside of political and economic centres. All three of the sponsoring organizations, the CFA, the national voice of rural Canada, the CAAE and the CBC struggled with the right for those voices to be heard and worked to find the means for that expression. *NFRF* was part of what the Popular Communications Research Project at McGill (1985) called "popular communication movements," defined as projects that "have arisen from a variety of constituencies," (1985, 2) that in their use of media "there has been a recurring preoccupation with practical self-reflection, interaction, and dialogue; and of course an interest in connecting media to forms of social action": (3)

Yet what most unites these projects . . . , what makes them worthy of the demanding task of reconstructive research, is their basis in a set of grounding and motivating assumptions and beliefs: about media and its relationship to other institutional realities; to change and learning; to negotiation and struggle; and finally, to the bounded notion of rationality vis a vis social action. (Popular Communications Research Project: 1985, 3)

In researching the archives, I felt a powerful admiration for those involved in the creative and political struggle to set up and maintain *NFRF*. Many of the leaders of *NFRF* are alive, still intellectually and even politically active. Even though I chose not to interview the surviving *NFRF* practitioners, their collections

form the basis of my resources. In spite of my decision not to elicit their retrospective analyses of *NFRF* and its demise,¹ I did need to contact the founding and implicated participants in my search for non-archived material. The intellectual interest and enthusiasm that Shugg, Sim and Morrison among others showed in my project confirmed for me the idealism, the democratic commitment and high seriousness they had brought to the project.

I have kept faith with the idealism present in the archives of *NFRF* because that idealism speaks of the energy and hope that sustained the project and continues to sustain its memory. On the other hand, such idealism has the tendency to lapse into nostalgia and thus to lead us away from an understanding of its complexity. This was true even in its own day, particularly in its last years of operation when its main preoccupation was exporting the concept to India.² Our appreciation of *NFRF*'s idealism must be articulated with a close critical analysis of its capacity to fulfill the demands of public education for a democratic society. In this way, perhaps some part of its theories and principles, including its idealism, can be useful in considering present day questions about authentic civic education through the mass media.

The Legacy of *NFRF*: The Possibilities for Mass Media Civic Education

The (Re)constructing of Social Memory

The possibilities of creating authentic public education in the mass media begin with looking back at the work that has been attempted. I have been

involved in social memory, (re)constructing it, aligning myself with a particular way of remembering the historical period and the work done on public education as a way of understanding how the mass media, and radio in particular, can articulate with citizens. At the same time, I have been concerned with confronting new and recycled economic paradigms about how a democratic society does or should operate. In her discussion of the Greek *polis*, Hannah Arendt describes the “organized remembrance” of the public buildings and monuments that protected and sustained the *polis* (1958, 197-8). I have argued that the richness of the public “voice” is dependent on the complexity of organizations and institutions such as surrounded *NFRF*. Indeed, the inclusion of these institutions was vital as reported in a document for the 1946 *NFRF* Conference.³

The institutions of Medicare and public broadcasting have left traces of the complexity of public institutions and civic organizations involved in *NFRF*. Following up on these traces reminds us that Medicare resulted from the co-operation between farmer, labour, voluntary, professional and government supported institutions, such as the those involved in the *CAAE* and *NFRF*. They created an environment, both intellectual and physical, that allowed Medicare to come into existence. Many years after the inception of Medicare when the memory of the struggle for a public health system has been virtually forgotten, the institution of health care has left a trace that continues to persuade us of our civic connection across regions. However, when governments dismantle public

institutions and do not actively support or work with civic institutions, those diminished remains cannot adequately defend the philosophy and practice of public education. Without access to the topos of the past in social memory kept alive through vibrant institutions, citizens will not have sufficient resources to make judgments and to participate in social change.

The Struggle to Initiate Authentic Voice: The NFRF Experiment

When *NFRF* was founded at the beginning of WW II, the nation was, in theory, our political space; in practice, however, the ability of citizens to deliberate across the vast space was virtually confined to parliamentary representation: the CBC was a mere three years old and still in the process of cobbling together a national network from existing private stations and new public stations. The creation of public radio was a technological and political intervention for the development of citizenship, a response to the demand that those within Canada be heard by each other. In this demand was the expectation that the speaking and the hearing would engender a more just society. Farmers were the first to benefit from this idea with the institution in 1936 of a noon hour farm and stock exchange report on the CBC that brought an equitable stability to produce pricing. However, the first sustained effort to use the new public media system to create an educative democratic space, national in scope was *NFRF*.

As Ursula Franklin argues in her text, *The Real World of Technology*, while “technology has built the house in which we all live” (1990 11), it is not just the sum of its material parts but a system that allows for invention and intervention as the *NFRF* experiment demonstrated. Further, while the voice of humans, at least over distances, is necessarily contained within the house of technology in that we cannot move out of the house in order to speak to one another, we can find ways to make most technologies work for the development of the human spirit, what Franklin calls “redemptive technologies” (1990). The determination to use a technology such as radio in a redemptive way depends on the political will and the structure of civic life. At the same time that Hitler was using the radio as a megaphone for a fascist dictatorship, the sponsors of *NFRF* were attempting to take a mass media technology in its narrow parameters and to enrich and cultivate it to allow a citizen-based “reciprocity” (Franklin 1990, 48), a term used by Franklin to signify situational understanding and accommodation and not just feedback.⁴ This reminds us that the success or failure of mass media public education is connected to the political and civic forces that support or oppose it and not simply to the limitations of mass media technology.

When referring to “voice”, I am speaking of a participatory democratic discourse in which speakers are not individuals *per se* but, “individuals-in-relations” (Rucinski 1991, 186). Rucinski argues that “in this perspective, primacy is granted neither to social structures nor to individuals alone.

Individuals gain their identity through social interaction" (186). I am not speaking of the individual voices that disclose private matters in a public site even though private topics are often "outed" in this manner to become subjects of public debate. The difference between public talk that deals with private and intimate matters made public, and public talk that deals with matters of public interest and concern pertains to the kind of material under discussion, the manner of speaking, and finally, the outcome of talk. One dimension of talk shows is to encourage feel-good talk resulting in an affective coalescence of individuals by which differences are collapsed to create a sort of brotherhood. Political forums, where to disagree does make a difference, encourage agonistic talk. This is the function of talk as future-oriented and demanding a rationale that takes into consideration institutional complexities and pulls deliberative issues through those institutions. In this way, those institutions, essential to civic culture, become more sensitive to authentic democratic discourse and process. While the genre of the radio talk show and that of the radio forum share the idea of the authenticity of the voice that relates personal narratives, the building of community is the central characteristic of the radio forum "voice."

By contrast, elite democracy puts the emphasis on the individual and his "one man, one vote" status, an idea that conceptualizes democracy as "an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter quoted in Rucinski 1991, 186). So-called tele-democracy,

most recently championed by the Reform Party (Barney 1996), is an extension of the separation of individuals from the negotiations essential in participatory political discourse as the “voice” is punched in via the telephone. However, “voice” or “the people’s voice” cannot be a programmatic poll⁵ which attempts to bypass existing institutions. Darin David Barney (1996) in his study of Reform’s tele-democracy argues that

when individual voters are able to express established private choices directly from the isolation of their homes, the social processes and political institutions which moderate particular interests in the light of the needs of the community as a whole are effectively eliminated. (401)

While those tele-voters have expressed themselves as individuals, those institutions they “bypassed” continue to exist and exert their control but now, outside of the individual’s full knowledge and possible influence. If public institutions are not used in debate with citizens, their consequent monologic functioning, and perhaps contraction, simply leaves a vacuum for other organized forces and private institutions to control the lives of these individuals now seemingly “unfettered” by institutions.

For a more precise definition of the relationship between “voice” and technology in public education, we turn again to *NFRF* and the rhetoric of creating a health system through building and extending community. In the early years of the war, medical delivery was largely a local matter with some regional preventive care. Groups of local farmers in *NFRF* discussed the existing health care available in their areas, their own experiences and their needs. Through

written and broadcast material, they learned of the situation in other locals, and of systems in other regions and other countries; the possibilities for developing alternate local systems, and farmers' possible influence on governments and medical personnel in developing a more comprehensive national system. Thus, the social political knowledge that was created through this process, the knowledge of the perspectives of others, and the role that institutions played allowed farmers to perceive systems as created, open to interventions and capable of being redemptive.

The creation of the responsive system of collective voices as developed in *NFRF* around the subject of health care was necessarily done within the house of technology. Without the mass medium of radio with its dominant characteristic of orality at a distance, the national and local sites of *NFRF* would probably not have existed nor been able to gather and extend the kind of knowledge that helped to set the stage for an equitable national health plan.

I have been talking about "voice" as connecting up the local with the national and thus creating a new political voice, national in scope. *NFRF* created a national "voice" that was more than a single interest group whose participants were all farmers; in fact, this "voice" considerably extended itself beyond the immediate interests of its participants. One way in which this extension happened was through the program of Action Projects.

The Relationship of "Voice" to Action Projects

Action Projects were a way for *NFRF* to develop a common "voice" out of the disparate locals and regions across Canada with different problems and resources. Local forums were encouraged largely through written material to form a common front through their Action Projects by becoming aware of each other's interests and concerns, and by acting together. Both in their rhetoric and in their practice, Action Projects were designed to extend the "voice" of local forum groups beyond themselves, to create common experiences and a common vocabulary for speaking from experience. Thus, Action Projects served the national cohesiveness of *NFRF* in creating a "voice" that had pan-national significance.

NFRF used the voice of Action Projects to build community for public education beyond its own constituency of farmers. For example, in the discussions and the development of a primarily preventive position on a national health plan, that "community" of farmers was able to extend its "voice" with the support of urban labour through the Canadian Labour Congress. Further, in order to negotiate and implement health systems, the local, regional and national structures of *NFRF* made contact with other institutions and volunteer organizations and thus strengthened the mix and involvement of institutional and voluntary groups necessary to civic life.

Finally, Action Projects also allowed for the exercise of the "voice" in a public space. While *NFRF* was not *per se* a deliberative site, the opportunity to

act at the local and regional levels created small deliberative sites and thus the training for farmers to speak rhetorically from the community. Beyond the exercising of the "voice," this speaking also incorporated the hope for the future: that the voices heard would influence subsequent action to be taken by the larger political community.

Fighting for the CBC: Where is the Backbone of Public Education?

It is instructive to recall how the CBC responded to and facilitated the public education movement. What has been done is a beacon for what could be done if the corporate body of the CBC took the significance of that legacy seriously. The traces remain. As a public broadcaster, CBC continues to serve the public, gathering and analysing national and international news from a well-researched and historical perspective. As a public educator, however, the CBC has been weakened, first by its being drastically defunded, and second, by its loss of the relationship with participating institutions and organizations that empowered its early work in public education programming. No structure exists by which communities of listeners can make long-term contact with and through the broadcasting system. In consequence, the ability of the CBC to be defended in its public role is reduced.

An example of this concerns a campaign that many Canadians, including myself, participated in, one that confronted the 1996-97 budget cuts to the CBC. Without the help of locally-based citizen support institutions, individual CBC-

Radio-Canada supporters across Canada mounted, with difficulty, what became known as the *Save the CBC*, or the *Ours to Keep* campaign. While *Friends of Canadian Broadcasting* works politically to support public broadcasting and is itself supported by contributions from its “membership” to prepare analyses and make recommendations to the CRTC and the federal government, it acts as a *representative voice* of its supporters; those supporters are not actively organized citizens who have connections with one another.

The difficulty in organizing the protest campaign was primarily in the lack of rallying voluntary institutions such that *NFRF* and *CF* provided; the *ad hoc* groups set up to protest the cuts had no connecting history with the CBC except as listeners. The lines of communication that these groups tried to force open had not been in use for some time and thus there was the near impossibility of publicly stating the case except by creating “media-worthy” events that reached largely local audiences. While little was produced on television, *Cross Country Checkup*, true to its role as an educative forum, did air two national programs on the CBC's altered state and its consequences.⁶

In an e-mail I received from the producer of *CCC* in answer to my enquiry about CBC's meagre on-air response to the cuts,⁷ he speaks of the “important distance preserved between CBC management and the programming staff,” a distance that would not allow a simple relationship between management views on the cutbacks and on-air content. Rather than charging management with self-protective censorship, perhaps the more precise understanding is in the

following words of the producer: "There may also have been a reluctance on the part of the programmers to mount shows on the topic of the CBC cutbacks lest it be perceived as self-serving."

To frame such discussions as "self-serving" suggests a definition of CBC's role as one that has been nurtured by a market-oriented culture, one that encourages the privatization of public institutions and believes that corporations should have the same rights as individuals and who, like them, are discrete entities. The CBC is no longer popularly perceived as owned by citizens who once saw their relationship to the Corporation through linked voluntary and government institutions. Now, those who listen to the public broadcaster are seen as just another segment of a much larger audience but with unfair special privileges under the Broadcasting Act. Such an idea would not have made sense in the years of *NFRF* and *CF* when the CBC was intricately linked to communities of listeners and institutions that structured civic culture.

As one broadcaster among many private broadcasters, and vulnerable to attacks from governments and business, the CBC walks gingerly in step with its time, blending with the dominant discourse. The criticism of "self-serving" has become viable. In not being willing to publicly distinguish its mandate from the interests of private broadcasters, the CBC did not actively team up with citizens rallying to its support. At the end of the *Save the CBC* or the *Ours to Keep* campaign that brought little fiscal relief from Ottawa, the exhausted and

unsupported *ad hoc* groups disbanded and returned to their old roles as individual listeners.

For its part, the CBC, conscious of its loss of democratic inclusion has nostalgically recast discussions on television as "townhall meetings," as if they were citizen-centred even while experts and representatives of narrow interest groups dominant the space.⁸ When generally voiceless citizens are given an opportunity to speak, they are squeezed into a small and contained space, limited to thirty second spots - certainly not the training ground for thoughtfulness and the learning of how to speak publicly. As non-participating viewers, we see them as individuals, speaking on their own behalf, offering a little witnessing, a little testimonial.

In 1954, John Grierson complained about the "thin, safe, and artificial standard of the polite conversation" on the *BBC* that did not allow "the noisy, raucous, and authentic voice" to be heard (Grierson 1954, 54-55). Rick Salutin echoes Grierson's question, "What is so wrong about giving offense anyway?" with his own question: "Why can't public broadcasting include a rawer edge too?" (Salutin 1997, C1). Salutin was commenting on the loyal CBC listeners' grieving response to Peter Gzowski's retirement from "Morningside" where, according to the producer, "the premise of the show is everyone likes each other." The "niceness factor" and putting an emphasis on a single personality who needs both to be nice and not distressed on air, misses the essential point of public broadcasting and does little to serve as a basis of a reconstructed radio

forum, one that must allow for political authenticity with its spectrum of “raucous” voices. Through the steadfastness of its much-loved host and the regularity of time and place, Morningside” did create a community of English-speaking Canadians. And while the “Morningside” meeting-place did offer discussions on political matters, those discussions played down disagreement and any contact between listeners was only through the program. In short, “Morningside” was a simulacrum of community which seemed to combine the civility of *philia* with political judgments, but lacked the opportunity for “action” that comes from the engagement and communication between the “locals.”

If our idea of public education is “Morningside” where niceness coats over disagreement, and becomes a pernicious substitute for a necessary civility, then we have not grasped what is at stake in recreating an effective national educative forum. There are certain characteristics, demands that we would have to make on our public broadcaster that include political courage, a developed organization having contact with local groups of citizens and a creative use of techniques and technologies that allows for reciprocity.

The Thorny Question of Place and Space for Public Education

Reasserting the Role of Publicly-Owned Radio

When we recall *NFRF* history, we can conceive of a public broadcaster that vigorously instigates political discussion and not just reports on it. In the thesis, I recounted a number of battles fought for the right of the CBC to air

controversial matters and to not kowtow to partisan politics and market interests. I am not suggesting that the CBC is now bereft of provocative investigative journalism. As seen in the uncovering of the Somali affair, for example, that could only have been accomplished with the CBC's resources and a high level of professionalism as well as the audience's expectation of that level of coverage. Still, the recent cutbacks to the CBC, the hesitancy to publicly examine and discuss its role in the democratic life of the country, and the lack of popular support call into question CBC's relevance as a public broadcaster and further gives ammunition to its detractors who are calling for its privatization.

For *NFRF*, radio, and in this case, publicly-owned radio, was not just the connective tissue that linked groups of farmers to one another and to the three sponsoring organizations; it was also a medium that wielded other kinds of powerful promises to those outside the political centres, and a threat for the status quo. For instance, we saw in this thesis the number of oppositional attacks on the three sponsors, *NFRF*, *CF* and CBC from government and business. While I took note that these attacks helped to define both radio and forum speech often to the advantage of both, the advantages were cut short by the decision not to bring a discussion of those attacks into the forum debates. Certainly the general public and forum members knew about the attacks through newspapers and written forum communication but they never became a matter of open forum discussion on the radio. *NFRF* and the CBC could have sustained a more authentic educational forum by revealing and discussing on the radio

those powers that refused to speak in open forum or those that tried to deny others the right to speak.

The role of public education is to give equitable hearing to all citizens so that each can be part of educative deliberation. Just as an equitable health service meant for the participants of *NFRF* that the national government needed to be involved to allow for an equality of resources across the country, so the involvement of the CBC allowed for the possibility of equitable communication services to connect those on the periphery with those in the urban centres. For this equitable connective ability, we must not be willing to give up on the broad idea of public broadcasting. While narrowcasting will serve niche markets and perhaps even marginalized groups, they cannot, on their own, serve the building of a national public educative space where citizens can deliberate across their differences.

The experience of *NFRF* suggests that the CBC needs to make closer contacts with institutions and civic groupings which also serve the educative process by offering information and analysis. The CBC can also gather around it the educative arms of labour and voluntary organizations as they did with *NFRF* and *CF*. This is not a model of interest groups organizing around single issues but a way for linking groups through public broadcasting so that all can see themselves, not as embattled and separated but as part of a larger public discourse.⁹

Exploring CCC as Derived from NFRF and CF

Radio was conceived in Canada, not as technologically-driven but useful as a means of politically coping with the vast geographical expanse: not to leap over the expanse however but to connect places within it. The public broadcaster began its life with a strong sense of place in that the founding of the CBC was a way of claiming and controlling the broadcast waves over Canada for Canadians. This attachment to place was confirmed in *NFRF* and *Citizens' Forum* in the way they constructed a discourse with three types of localities: the first, a multiplicity of listening/discussion groups attached to specific locations and communities; the second, regional locales that gathered and tabulated regional points of view; the third was that of the central broadcasting locale whose place was both the airwaves and topos of common significance. *NFRF* differentiated the national space into particular places in organizing forum groups within geographical locations; in having written reports sent back to the regional locales; in having those locales broadcasting the "Forum Findings" nationally in recognizable regional voices; in publicizing in written and broadcast materials, the local actions to be emulated by other local forums. The emphasis was on the encouragement and development of the local forums becoming deliberative communities and from this exercised voice, to contribute to a national deliberative voice.

I have used *NFRF* as a model for a mass medium civic forum for it gives us clues and guidelines for what could work in another time with new

technologies and a changed use of the older ones. We could also look at the possibilities in the successor of *NFRF* and *CF*: that is, *CCC* with its now thirty-four year history. While this thesis has not had the scope to develop a study of this program as a site of civic education, I will look at the idea of place in *CCC* especially as it touches on the important characteristic of community and place.

CCC constructs a discourse with two types of localities: the first, thousands of locations across the country with radios and telephones, and the second, the central broadcasting locale. On the face of it, this discourse seems to be a conversation among physically and communally isolated individuals who represent nobody except themselves and whose speaking is refereed by a central locale which is much more abstract than the regional and central locales of either *NFRF* or of the *CBC* at that time. As for the technological bias, both radio and the telephone have the effect of collapsing space, of putting users into an undifferentiated space. Forum participants do not have to be in specific physical places in order to take part in this forum. Participants call as individuals not necessarily bounded by their local community.

Still, the differentiation of place is practised by *CCC*: When callers come on the line, they are identified by name and location and gain a certain authority by speaking from a place, thus becoming representatives of that place, especially if they are not speaking from large centres. Individual speakers come to map a network of places. This consciousness by the program that place is significant is revealed or reinforced by the host assuming that what a speaker

from a particular place has to say on a question is what the audience wants to know - a kind of geographical solidarity of citizens who know their geographical place and are aware of the place of others.

Another way of thinking about place in regards to radio forums is that of the topos or “place” of the lines of argument used in deliberative issues. CCC is not an open-line show where anything goes: a particular topic is to be deliberated; expert guests and the host define the topic and while its parameters can be pushed, participants are trained not to go outside the topic at hand nor the ways in which arguments are made in deliberative discourse. Thus CCC is grounded both in a geographical place and in deliberative discourse that demonstrates the arguments for particular judgments by particular citizens.¹⁰

What is the importance of place for a deliberative forum? Forum discourse depends on knowledge that comes from the experience of where we live, the experience of being in a particular place. It is this experience that allows people to speak authentically and it is this speech that appeals to us in CCC as voices tell us their stories from where they live. Each voice comes from a place that is both our national political place and from a particular place within it, a place lived in by that speaker. These voices collectively represent the variousness of positions across the vast geographical space.

The local place is where we have face to face contact, where we have to negotiate and develop the skills of speaking to one another as John Dewey (1927) understood. While we cannot reconstruct a radio forum in the likeness of

NFRF, we have to construct one that encourages the formation of local association because it is at that level that people learn, have the experience of negotiating how they can best organize their lives in community. There must be an understanding in radio forum practice that place is significant, for that sense of place develops the local as a source of learning beyond the program itself. If we can conceive of a radio forum that validates and can make contact with place in its structure, its content and in making permanent contact with groups, then it can be integrated into and strengthen democratic life.

Citizens of a nation are bounded by place and a forum must reflect that boundedness. Speaking from "where I stand" is concerned with the authenticity of self and of voice at a time when the visual technologies move their audiences so quickly from one virtual point of view to another. The Internet and its dislocation from place papers over the fact that people live in real places in unequal conditions. "Nowhere" technologies run ahead of the ability of citizens to deliberate on how they are in the process of "immigrating," in Stanley's (1990) terms, from one way of communicating to another, and how these disjunctions might affect their political process. When we think about the Greek *polis* and the ideal of the forum, we think of the necessity to speak from a place within and out of community. The mass media with their bias to cover a large space are not necessarily attached to specific places; thus a conscious effort has to be made to fit mass media to the purpose of a forum that demands a recognition that participants inhabit real places. In spite of the bias against reciprocity and place

in mass media, *NFRF*, *CF* and *CCC* have shown us the possibilities to develop reciprocity and to connect up local places in the creating of sites for national deliberation.

When I wrote to Mr. Orville Shugg (now deceased) to ask permission for publishing access to information found in his archival papers at NAC, I concluded my letter¹¹ with the following paragraph: "Mr. Shugg, I have often been moved by the open expression of humanity and public duty to be read in these archival documents and I will, in my work, be accountable to the spirit found there." In response was his permission, a suggestion that I read a recently published book on early insurance co-operatives in Ontario and this remark: "Who would have thought, half a century ago when we were making the welkin ring with new ideas in mass communications, that Farm Radio Forum would still be of interest today? Amazing!"¹²

The nostalgia surrounding *NFRF* has suggested that its idea is of another time and not relevant to the present. It was a time of necessary wartime collaboration, and perhaps it is that defined period that pushes *NFRF* into nostalgic prettification. Still, the spirit of optimism and the belief in democracy generated there need to drive any present implementation of mass media forum discourse. *NFRF* reminds us that hard battles had to be fought to create and maintain an open forum. The results of these battles served the integrating process necessary for a democratic society. The process of speaking across differences on important social issues was enabled by the collaboration of radio

and farmers' groups with existing institutions. As an historical event and practice, it offers us an example of how democratic discourse can work for citizens acting in their collectivity. We can not allow the knowledge of political movements or the gathering of momentum around an issue to be submerged in nostalgia. In contrast to the present time when individual crusades and heroism tend to drive change, we must work to strengthen the democratic discourse of collectivity.

The model of *NFRF* with its optimism and idealism can be mined and adapted to present conditions and teach us that mass media technology can serve the purpose of democratic education. We have this important experiment in our social memory to draw on, the result of the gathering of many strands of knowledge and practice from across the country and from other countries. To lose this social memory is also to lose the creative gathering and processing that went into this Canadian experiment of public education. In order to maintain our political integrity, confronted as we are by social and technological changes, we need to reinvent, with mass media, ways of making public education in Canada work.

Notes

Chapter 5

1. I note Hannah Arendt's insight that "action reveals itself fully only to the storyteller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, who indeed always knows better what it was all about than the participants. All accounts told by the actors themselves, though they may in rare cases give an entirely trustworthy statement of intentions, aims, and motives, become mere useful source material in the historian's hands and can never match his story in significance and truthfulness" (1958, 192). Because the oral history of *NFRF* is steeped in nostalgia, I preferred to depend on the records the actors left rather than on the stories they could tell me today.

2. A body of literature exists on the exportation of the *Farm Forum* idea to India and other third world agricultural countries. I have come across the following: Abell, Helen C. *Farm Radio Forum Project, Ghana 1964 - 65 Evaluation*. Waterloo, Ontario: Department of Geography and Planning, University of Waterloo, 1968; Atkins, George "Farm Radio in the Developing Countries: A Case Study of the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network." in *Development = Developpement = Desarrollo*. 1990, No.2, p.108; Donker, Clifford "The Rural - Radio Forum," *Rural Radio Formats*, Kiranmani A. Dikshit et al. "Unesco Monographs on Communication Technology and Utilization." Unesco: Paris, 1979; Moemeka, Andrew A. "Radio in Rural Community Education," Chapter 3 of *Local Radio: Community Education for Development*. Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, Ltd., 1981; Wilson, Elizabeth W. *Farm Radio in One Hundred and Thirty Languages*. 1993.

3. At the 1946 *NFRF* Conference, "Building Community Programmes: Report of National Conference," one topic was "The Role of the CAAE" that discussed the bridging role of the CAAE: "to make suggestions about programme needs and to work out ways of using programmes that are made available by public bodies such as CBC, NFB, CIS, Citizenship Branch, etc." The report went on to say that "the continuance of these public bodies is here taken for granted, since the services they can provide are essential to the work of the CAAE" (7).

4. Franklin explains reciprocity in opposition to feedback: "I'd like to stress that reciprocity is not feedback. Feedback is a particular technique of systems adjustment. It is designed to improve a specific performance. The performance need not be mechanical or carried out by devices, but the purpose of feedback is to make the thing work. Feedback normally exists within a given design. It can improve the performance but it cannot alter its thrust or the design. Reciprocity, on the other hand, is situationally based. It's a response to a given situation. It is neither designed into the system nor is it predictable. Reciprocal responses may

indeed alter initial assumptions. They can lead to negotiations, to give and take, to adjustment, and they may result in new and unforeseen developments" (Franklin, 1990 49).

5. In the face of such programmatic stripped-down ideas about how democracy works, we can remind ourselves again of Arendt's powerful understanding of what constitutes public space: "The reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised" (Arendt 1958, 57).

6. September 22, 1996, "Do you think the CBC will survive and should it?" and February 4, 1996, "What do you think of the CBC mandate review?" Information in e-mail from Charles Shanks, producer, CCC, October 3, 1998. E-mail in Appendix.

7. The exchange of e-mails between Eleanor Beattie and Charles Shanks, producer of CCC can be found in the appendix of this thesis.

8. The term "interest group" has most recently been used as an attack on groups speaking out on public issues. What an interest group is compared to a citizen group may best be understood in the groups level of authentic participation in forum discourse as developed in a 1958 article:

"Immersion in . . . interest groups often means that the individual citizen comes to identify the importance of his group with that of the whole society and thus regards its contribution as invaluable for the well-being of the country. Thus, devotion to special interest groups often ties the citizen into a sort of local patriotism and clouds his vision of the larger public good" ("Citizenship Today," Aileen D. Ross, in Kidd 1958, 394).

9. Marc Raboy (1990) remarks on the relationship of the CBC and groups in his reference to *NFRF* and *CF*: "The notion of social action broadcasting fostered by the CAAE and expressed in the "forum " projects was absorbed by the CBC and transformed into institutional public affairs programming. Public interest groups would never again be directly involved in programming, except in a strictly advisory capacity" (77). In an endnote to this, he points out that, "At the time of writing, the CBC had French and English advisory councils in three areas: agricultural, religious, and scientific programming" (371). The question of the importance of the public broadcaster having contacts with groups is discussed in Raboy: 1990, 352-357 and in Raboy, et al., 1994.

10. One way in which participants are kept to the topic is by their being asked before going on air what they want to say on the forum question. This is a process of helping the callers to clarify their thoughts and to offer them a small exercise, as local forums in *NFRF* offered, in public speech. Thus, while CCC has no formal

connection to local groups or voluntary institutions, it does pursue the idea of place in its practice.

11. A copy of the letter dated October 6, 1993 from Eleanor Beattie, Montreal, to Orville Shugg is in the possession of this writer.

12. Letter from Orville Shugg, Ottawa, to Eleanor Beattie dated October 10, 1993 in possession of this writer.

Men of the Soil

Men of the soil! We have laboured unending,
We have fed the world upon the grain that we have grown,
Now with the star of the new day ascending,
Giants of the earth, at last we rise to claim our own.
Justice throughout the land, happiness as God had planned,
Who is there denies our right to reap where we have sown?

Men of the soil! Now the Torch we have lighted,
Kindles fire in ev'ry land where rings the harvest song,
Shoulder to shoulder in courage united
From ev'ry race we come to join the tillers' mighty throng.
Earth ne'er shall eat again, Bread gain'd though blood of men,
We have sworn to right for evermore the ancient wrong.

Men of the soil! We are coming to judgement,
To tell the world till justice rules there is no liberty,
We in our strength are arising as prophets,
Marching on to show the world the dawn that is to be.
There's a lightning in the sky, There's a thunder shouting high;
We will never stop until the sons of men are free.

Song that opened *NFRF* broadcasts. PAC CFA, Vol.1, File: "History & General Information (1941-43) Vol.1-A."

E-Mail Exchange with *Cross Country Checkup*

E-mail to *Cross Country Checkup*, September 28, 1998:

Dear CCC,

I am in the process of finishing my doctoral thesis on public education in the mass media (the main site is *National Farm Radio Forum*) with some few references to CCC in my conclusion. I was part of the Save the CBC/Ours to Keep campaign that I write briefly about as an illustration of how, as I say, "the CBC management was unable or unwilling to openly support our efforts, and so forced us to create 'media-worthy' events". Now this is where I need help. How correct am I when I say "the CBC did not, nationally or locally, create one open media discussion on the drastic cutbacks and their consequences"? Did CCC do a program or two on that? I know that Susan Mahoney was the producer at the time - but of course CCC memory resides in your files as well as in individuals. Could you please contact me about this or pass this message on to Ms. Mahoney. I would appreciate your help. Sincerely, Eleanor Beattie

Reply to my e-mail by e-mail, October 3, 1998

Dear Eleanor Beattie,

Cross Country Checkup did indeed do two programs related to the CBC cutbacks. I was producer with Susan Mahoney at the time. They were: September 22, 1996 "Do you think the CBC will survive and should it?" and February 4, 1996 "What do you think of the CBC mandate review?" – both with host, Rex Murphy.

But I should remind you that there is an important distance preserved between CBC management and the programming staff and whether or not the management had the will or the fortitude to submit their decisions to public scrutiny and discussion would not necessarily be reflected in the on-air content. There may also have been a reluctance on the part of the programmers to mount shows on the topic of the CBC cutbacks lest it be perceived as self-serving.

CBC management did produce a separate accountability show themselves with the help of the staff here at *Cross Country Checkup*. It was in concert with TV appearances by CBC President Perrin Beatty and CBC Chair Guylaine Saucier. *In Reply* went to air February 1/98 with Ann Medina as host and studio guests, radio v-p Harold Redekop and TV v-p Jim Byrd. Callers were invited to comment on the changes that had been implemented at CBC and on the direction in which it was going. There may well have been other local or regional shows devoted to the same topic throughout the prolonged period when the cutbacks were taking place. I hope this helps.
Sincerely, Charles Shanks, producer

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