THE 1936 LEMKE VOTE IN MICHIGAN:

A STUDY IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

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Donald Jay Gemmel

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James W. Miller
Major professor

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THE 1936 LEMKE VOTE IN MICHIGAN: A STUDY IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

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DONALD JAY GEMMEL

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PREFACE

Michigan was in the limelight in 1936 as one of the leading areas of agitation for a new third party movement, that of the Union Party, or Third Party, whose presidential candidate was William Lemke, the farmers' friend from North Dakota.

Lemke's most vociferous backer was a Michigan man--Father Charles Edward Coughlin, pastor of the Church of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, whose voice was known throughout the country in discourses on matters social, economic, and political.

Not since the LaFollette movement in 1924 had Michigan seen any ado over a minor party's efforts. To seek the factors behind the Lemke vote, the largest to date for a minor party in Michigan since 1924, is the object of this study. In attempting this analysis, two main methods of research have been employed: Newspaper editions for the period involved, and interviews with persons who were engaged in or who were observing politics in Michigan in 1936.

One source of information which might have been of value, the nominating papers filed with the secretary of state, had been destroyed before this thesis was begun.

Father Coughlin, with whom an interview was sought, refused to acknowledge the request; Simeon P. Martin, leader of the Michigan Farmers' Union, was extremely ill and unable to grant an interview.

Vote percentages for Lemke, other minor candidates and parties used in tables were computed from the popular vote totals in the Michigan Official Directory and Legislative Manual for the necessary years.

CHAPTER I

MICHIGAN'S THIRD PARTY BACKGROUND

Party politics in Michigan, as is the case throughout the United States generally, are dominated by one or the other of the two major parties. But periodically there have been minor parties which have not only obtained a place on the Michigan ballot, but also have polled a sizable third party vote.

The object of this investigation is to analyze one of the more recent and stronger of these movements--the 1936 bid of William Lemke for the presidency of the United States, in which he rolled up the largest minor party vote in Michigan since the 1924 campaign of the Independent Progressives.

Throughout the statehood of Michigan, its residents have voted in 29 presidential elections. There were minor party candidates in 22 of those elections, in 20 of them continuously since 1872, as indicated in Table I.

On one occasion--in 1912--a "minor" party candidate carried the state of Michigan. That year, Theodore Roosevelt polled 38.91 percent of the state's ballots, to make the Wolverine state one of five to come under the Bull Moose banner. (The others were Washington, South Dakota,

TABLE I

PERCENTAGE OF MICHIGAN VOTE GIVEN MINOR PARTIES IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Year	Minor Party	Vote Percentage	Total
1948	Progressive	2.2	
	Prohibition	.61	
	Socialist	.29	
	Socialist Labor	.06	
	Socialist Workers	.03	3.19
1944	Prohibition	.29	
	Socialist	.21	
	America First Party	.07	
	Socialist Labor	.06	.63
1940	Socialist	.31	
	Communist	.13	
	Prohibition	.08	
	Socialist Labor	.03	.55
1936	THE THIRD PARTY (Union Party)	4.19	
	Socialist	.45	
	Communist	.18	
	Socialist Labor	.03	
	Commonwealth	.03	4.88
1932	Socialist	2.35	
	Communist	.56	
	Prohibition	.17	
	Socialist Labor	.08	
	Liberty	.01	
	Farmer Labor	.008	3.17
1928	Socialist	.25	
	Workers	.20	
	Prohibition	.19	
	Socialist Labor	.05	.69
1924	Independent Progressive	10.51	
	Prohibition	.52	
	Socialist Labor	.45	11.48

TABLE I (continued)

Year	Minor Party	Vote Percentage	Total
1920	Socialist	2.76	
	Farmer Labor	.98	
	Prohibition	.91	
	Socialist Labor	.23	
	Single Tax	.04	4.92
1916	Socialist	2.47	
	Prohibition	1.28	
	Socialist Labor	.12	3.87
1912	National Progressive	38.91	
	Socialist	4.22	
	Prohibition	1.60	
	Socialist Labor	.22	44.95
1908	Prohibition	3.12	
	Socialist	2.14	
	Socialist Labor	.20	
	Independence	.13	
	United Christian	.01	5.60
1904	Prohibition	2.55	
	Socialist	1.71	
	People's	.22	
	Socialist Labor	.19	4.67
1900	Prohibition	2.17	
	Socialist Democrat	.51	
	People's Party	.16	
	Socialist Labor	.15	2.99
1896	D.P.U.S.	43.47	
	Prohibition	.91	
	National	.33	
	Socialist Labor	.05	44.76
1892	Prohibition	4.46	
	People	4.27	8.73
1888	Prohibition	4.40	
	Union Labor	.95	5.35

TABLE I (continued)

Year	Minor Party	Vote Percentage	Total
1884	Prohibition	5.08	
	Greenback	.20	5.28
1880	Greenback	9.88	
	Prohibition	.26	
	Labor	.08	10.22
1876	Greenback	2.83	
	Prohibition	.24	3.07
1872	Democrat and Labor	35.47	
	Prohibition	.57	36.04
1868-1856	None		
1852	Free Soil	8.70	8.70
1848	Free Soil	15.96	15.96
1844-1836	None		

Minnesota and Pennsylvania.)

Lemke's mark of 4.19 percent of Michigan's vote had been eclipsed by minor party candidates either 10 or 12 times during the 100-year span from 1836; in the three elections since 1936, no minor party aspirant has equalled Lemke's vote, including Henry A. Wallace, who ran as a Progressive Party standard-bearer in 1948. In two elections, 1896 and 1872, there might be some question as to the interpretation of "minor" party. Although losing to McKinley in 1896, William Jennings Bryan picked up 43.47 percent of Michigan's popular presidential vote on the "D.P.U.S." ticket. Horace Greeley, defeated by General Grant in 1872, was given 35.47 percent of the Michigan vote on the "Democrat and Labor" ticket.[1] In both cases, there were candidates on the Democrat ticket.

Excluding those two elections, the presidential campaign which brought the highest "other party" vote in Michigan except for the Bull Moose campaign was that of 1924. United States Senator Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin polled more than four and one-half million votes, carried Wisconsin and received 10.51 percent of Michigan's vote.

Other candidates of minor parties doing as well as or better than Lemke on a percentage basis, were the

representatives of the Socialist Party in 1912; the Prohibition Party in 1892, 1888 and 1884; the People's Party in 1892; the Greenbacks in 1880; and the Free Soil Party in 1852 and 1848.

The total minor party vote in the 1936 election in Michigan was 4.88 percent of the state's ballots for all presidential candidates. Excluding the Bryan effort of 1896 and the Greeley campaign in 1872, this 1936 total minor party vote has been surpassed but 10 times in the state's history, largely because of the efforts of the Independent Progressives of 1924, the Socialists of 1920, the National Progressives and Socialists of 1912, the Prohibitionists and Socialists of 1908, the Prohibitionists and People's Party of 1892, the Prohibitionists in 1888 and 1884, the Greenbacks in 1880, and the Free Soilers in 1852 and 1848.

The longest sustained effort by a minor party in Michigan is that exhibited by the Prohibition Party, which has been on the ballot of every presidential election since 1872, with the exception of 1936. On seven occasions the Prohibition Party led the minor parties in ballots: 1944, 1908, 1904, 1900, 1892, 1888 and 1884. This party reached its zenith in 1884, polling 5.08 percent of the Michigan vote for president, and held over 4 percent in the two

succeeding elections. After 1908, the party got fewer and fewer votes each four years, until the year 1936 saw the party without a place on the Michigan ballot. Since 1940, the party has been competing again, increasing its percentage of the total vote in each election.

Next longest record of a minor party since Michigan began voting in presidential elections is that of the Socialist Labor Party, with a candidate each election beginning in 1896. Its highest vote was .45 of 1 percent, in 1924.

With the exception of 1924, the Socialist Party has been on the ballot since 1904. Its peak pulling power was in 1912, with 4.22 percent of the vote.

William Lemke's vote has been the largest for a minor party candidate in Michigan since LaFollette's in 1924, and Lemke's own vote has exceeded that for all minor party presidential candidates in the state at any other election since 1924.

Michigan's vote for Lemke placed it eighth highest among the 37 states in which his name was on the ballot, as shown in Table II. Highest was the candidate's native North Dakota, which gave him 13.4 percent of its presidential vote. Lemke had been a leading figure in the Non-Partisan

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF VOTES FOR LEMKE, BY STATES

State	Popular Vote	Percentage of Vote
North Dakota	36,708	13.4
Minnesota	74,296	6.5
Massachusetts	118,639	6.4
Rhode Island	19,569	6.2
Oregon	21,831	5.2
Wisconsin	60,297	4.7
Ohio	132,212	4.3
MICHIGAN	75,795	4.19
Idaho	7,684	3.8
South Dakota	10,338	3.4
Connecticut	21,805	3.1
Arizona	3,307	2.6
Iowa	29,687	2.5
Washington	17,463	2.5
Maine	7,581	2.4
Montana	5,549	2.4
Illinois	89,439	2.2
New Hampshire	4,819	2.2
Nebraska	12,847	2.1
Colorado	9,962	2.0
UNITED STATES	1,805,098	1.9
Pennsylvania	67,467	1.6
Wyoming	1,653	1.5
Kentucky	12,501	1.3
Indiana	19,407	1.1
Missouri	14,630	.79
New Mexico	924	.54
New Jersey	9,405	.51
Utah	1,121	.51
Texas	3,281	.38
Delaware	442	.35
Alabama	549	.19
Tennessee	296	.06
Virginia	233	.06
Kansas	494	.05
Georgia	141	.04

TABLE II (continued)

State	Popular Vote	Percentage of Vote
Arkansas	4	.002
North Carolina	2	.0002
California, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, West Virginia	Lemke not on ballot	

*Vote percentages computed from popular vote totals in The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1943, New York: New York World Telegram, pp. 251-278.

League, a strong group in North Dakota politics. Minnesota, with considerable Farmer-Labor sentiment, accorded him 6.5 percent; and Massachusetts was a close third with 6.4 percent. Two factors probably were at work there: Lemke's running mate was a Boston labor lawyer named O'Brien, and Father Coughlin's backing of Lemke might have appealed to many Catholic voters. Rhode Island, fourth high for Lemke with 6.2 percent of its vote, contains many voters of Catholic faith. Oregon, reflecting the progressive spirit often evidenced in the northwest, ranked fifth with 5.2 percent. Sixth high was Wisconsin, with 4.7 percent, a state of noted progressive leanings. Ohio, fosterer of the "Ohio Idea"[2] and home of "General" Jacob S. Coxey,[3] was seventh with 4.3 percent, followed by Michigan's 4.19 percent. Twelve other states gave Lemke more than his United States average of 1.9 percent of the presidential vote.

Lemke might be termed something of a modern phenomenon in Michigan, in that only three times in the six elections since 1924 has a minor party candidate drawn more than 1 percent of the state's popular presidential vote: 1948, Progressive, 2.2 percent; 1936, Lemke, 4.19; and 1932, Socialist, 2.35.

Of the 12 times in Michigan history that Lemke's vote percentage of 4.19 has been bested by a minor party, only three have occurred since the turn of the century. The Independent Progressives of 1924 had gone above his mark, as had the National Progressives and Socialists in 1912.

If Michigan has accorded minor party candidates 4 percent or more of its popular vote 13 times during the 29 presidential elections, it would seem that Earnest C. Brooks, now superintendent of the state corrections commission who was elected state representative of the Twenty-third District in 1936, is correct in his opinion that Michigan has often given support to "the under-dog."[4]

At least, that was true prior to 1900, but since then the situation has been altered somewhat. This study is an attempt to analyze the most respectable vote for an "under-dog" in Michigan since 1924, a vote ranking eighth highest for Lemke in the nation.

FOOTNOTES

1. Greeley died before the votes were cast; Thomas Hendricks of Indiana was named in his place.

2. Peter H. Odegard and E. Allen Helms, American Politics: A Study In Political Dynamics. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947, p. 86. The "Ohio Idea" was a proposal in 1868 by George Pendleton to expand the currency by paying off the national debt in greenbacks.

3. In 1894, "Coxey's Army" of unemployed made a futile 35-day march from Massillon, Ohio, to Washington, D.C., to get Congress to use printing press money for a huge road-building program to ease the hardships resulting from the panic of 1893.

4. Interview, State Office Building, Lansing, January 22, 1951.

CHAPTER II

THE MICHIGAN AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The name of William Lemke had been closely associated with efforts to improve the lot of the farmer ever since the beginning of his activities with the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota. With indications that the heaviest vote for Lemke in Michigan was cast in agricultural areas, an examination of agricultural economics of the period in question might afford some insight into the Third Party vote in 1936.

Cash farm income. Michigan farmers made more money from productive efforts in 1936 than in any year since 1929. Cash farm income from marketings of crops, and livestock and livestock products totaled $230,343,000. Michigan's cash farm income had declined from a 1926 peak of $286,370,000 to a 1932 bottom of $128,739,000. But beginning in 1933, the income began to climb steadily, with the 1936 total reflecting the biggest annual gain. Government payments in 1936 were less than half those to Michigan farmers in 1935, but together with increased value of products consumed on the farms, boosted the over-all farm income to $272,212,000, likewise the biggest aggregate since 1929. (See Table III)

TABLE III

MICHIGAN: CASH RECEIPTS FROM FARM MARKETINGS, GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS, AND VALUE OF PRODUCTS CONSUMED ON FARMS WHERE PRODUCED, 1924-1936

Year	Cash income, farm marketings			Government payments	Cash income from farm marketings and government payments	Value of products consumed on farms where produced	Cash income, government payments and value of home consumption
	Crops	Livestock, livestock products	Total				
	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars	1,000 dollars
1924	113,876	152,187	266,063	.....	.....	44,945	311,008
1925	115,779	165,186	280,965	.....	.....	49,075	330,040
1926	116,537	169,833	286,370	.....	.....	51,071	337,441
1927	103,206	168,123	271,329	.....	.....	45,650	316,979
1928	103,950	172,179	276,129	.....	.....	44,169	320,298
1929	97,235	171,520	268,755	.....	.....	44,156	312,911
1930	86,817	142,828	229,645	.....	.....	41,922	271,567
1931	60,410	107,377	167,787	.....	.....	32,934	200,721
1932	47,833	80,966	128,799	.....	.....	26,284	155,083
1933	62,115	84,278	146,393	365	146,758	27,785	174,543
1934	71,233	97,722	168,955	2,363	171,318	31,198	202,516
1935	69,060	120,770	189,830	6,149	195,979	35,503	231,482
1936	91,581	138,762	230,343	2,557	232,900	39,312	272,212

*From Crop Report for Michigan: Annual Crop and Livestock Summary, January-February, 1947. Lansing: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics in cooperation with Michigan Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Industry, p. 10.

The index of average prices received for all groups--cash crops, feed crops, meat animals, poultry products, and dairy products--by Michigan farmers in 1936 was 120 (1910-1914 equals 100), a gain of 16 points over 1935 and reflecting a steady rise from the bottom mark of 64 in 1932. This 1936 figure was the highest since 1930,[1] and was 6 points above the index of 114 for the United States as a whole.[2]

The ratio of prices to costs in Michigan, 1910-1914 equaling 100, had dropped from 96 in 1929 to a low of 57 in 1932, but began bouncing back the next year until reaching 108 in 1936, the highest since 1920.[3]

Discussing Michigan farm prices and costs, Orion Ulrey, professor of agricultural economics at Michigan State College, advanced two reasons why the decline in the general price level in 1929-1933 had been less severe on Michigan's agriculture than on that of the entire United States: 1) Michigan farmers produced a larger proportion of products whose prices declined the least, such as dairy and poultry products and fruits and vegetables, while the United States farm price index was more heavily weighted with products such as feed crops and cotton, whose prices fell to very low levels; and 2) Michigan farmers also secured a larger proportion of retail prices than did

farmers of the United States in general, since their markets were closer and marketing costs lower.[4]

Total production of the state's main field and fruit crops for 1936 was 68.3 percent of normal, a drop of 14.8 percent from 1935. A composite index of eleven field crops showed production at 70 percent of normal, a drop of 14.7 from the year before; a similar index for five fruit crops put production at 54.9 percent of normal.[5] Probably largely due to this restriction of production, the farmers' income was up in 1936 from 1935 in the case of each of the five main fruit crops, and for eight of the eleven main field crops.

Fruit prices. Apples, the state's main fruit crop and produced commercially primarily in 21 counties, had risen in average season farm price from 64 cents in 1935 to 99 cents in 1936, for a total value of $6,488,000, the highest since 1929.[6] The year 1936 was one of the best peach years in a decade, the total crop value being $2,841,000. The same situation prevailed for pears, worth $971,000 in 1936. The value of grapes produced and marketed in Michigan had taken a sharp drop in 1931 and hadn't recovered by 1936, although the total value of $1,246,000

was above the 1935 amount. For all cherries, 1936 was the best year since 1930, with a total value of $2,351,000, as compared to 1935's $2,189,000.[7]

Field crops. The three field crops showing a decline in income in 1936 were buckwheat, field peas and rye. Buckwheat registered a slight drop, from $233,000 in 1935 to $210,000 in 1936;[8] field peas were down from 1935's $19,800 to $14,210;[9] in the case of rye, the 1935 mark of $1,293,000 had capped a steady rise from the 1932 low of $630,000, but 1936 saw a modest decline, to $1,256,000.[10]

In the cases of the other field crops, increased incomes were brought Michigan farmers in 1936. The total value for all tame hay had been fluctuating somewhat in recent years. The 1936 total value--$29,400,000--was up considerably from the $22,119,000 of 1935, but the total in 1934 had been much higher, $34,825,000.[11] For field beans, the 1934 and 1935 values had been above $10,000,000, with 1936 seeing the figure jump to $14,774,000.[12] The total value of oats had recovered from a 1932 low of $7,668,000 to $15,558,000 in 1934, dropped in 1935 to $12,252,000, and in 1936 climbed to $15,593,000, the highest since 1930.[13]

Income from barley in 1936 was $3,460,000, much above the 1935 total of $2,488,000, which had been slightly

under the 1934 mark, and the highest in several years.[14] The 1936 value of corn, $40,545,000, was above the 1935 mark and reflected a steady climb from 1931.[15] Winter wheat was worth $17,614,000 in 1936, up from $14,843,000 in 1935.[16]

There were an estimated 276,000 acres planted in potatoes in 1936, of which 263,000 acres were harvested, with an average yield per acre of 95 bushels. This total production of 24,985,000 bushels brought an average seasonal farm price of $1.02. This meant a total value of $25,485,000, or an average value per acre of $96.90. In 1935, there had been more acres planted and harvested, but the average yield was 87 bushels, or 8 less than in 1936. Total production in 1935 was higher, but the average seasonal farm price was only 55 cents, or an average of $47.85 an acre, less than half that of 1936. The total dollar value in 1936 was the highest in several years, as was the average value per acre.[17]

Carlot shipments of potatoes from Michigan for the 1935-1936 crop year (August to July) totaled 7,009, considerably under the 1934-1935 total of 11,944.[18] Apparently the Michigan potato crop would have fared better, but Michigan State College diagnosed in September of 1936 a "light blight, a disease causing heavy Michigan potato losses."[19]

In 1936, a total of 109,000 acres was planted in sugar beets, of which 98,000 acres were harvested with an average yield per acre of 8.8 tons. This was much higher than the average yield of 6.0 garnered from harvesting 114,000 of 127,000 acres planted in 1935. The 1936 total production was much higher than in 1935--867,000 tons compared to 686,000 tons--and the average season price per ton in 1936 was some better, $6.45 as compared to $6.29. The total value in 1936 was $5,592,000, as against $4,315,000 in 1935. The average value per acre was $56.76 in 1936, much improved over the $37.74 of 1935. The 1935 per acre value had dropped from the 1934 figure of $50.32. The 1936 mark was the highest in four years.[20]

Dairy products. Cash farm receipts from sales of dairy products in 1936 totaled $66,325,000. This was the highest since 1930, and reflected the steady rise since the 1932 low of $39,793,000.[21]

Drought problem. Governor Fitzgerald, Senator Vandenberg and J. F. Thomson, state agricultural commissioner, "felt out of place" attending a 4-state drought conference (Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan) at Indianapolis in

September of 1936. It was claimed that Michigan had no drought problem of any consequence, having solved its problem through diversification of crops. The latest figures, it was reported, indicated that no farm crop in Michigan would be less than 50 percent of average, and that bumper yields and higher prices in other crops would more than make up the difference. Michigan didn't want a federal handout, it was reported.[22] (The Michigan representatives feeling discomfiture were the only Republicans present.)

Farm population. Farming was reported as but a part-time job for many of Michigan's farm population. The federal agricultural census of 1935 showed 56,782 part-time farmers in the state. The census indicated that the back-to-the-land movement of 1929-1935 carried 110,413 persons from Michigan cities and villages to the country districts, more than 13 percent of the state's population being involved in this migration.[23] The census disclosed that 310,147 persons worked on farms in Michigan during the first week in January, 1935. Of these, 270,955 were family workers, and 39,192 were hired workers.[24]

Labor supply, wages. From 1932 to 1936, Michigan's supply of farm labor had steadily decreased from 142 to 75 percent of normal, with the demand increasing during the same period from 63 to 91 percent of normal. Thus, for the period mentioned, the ratio of supply to demand had been dropping from 225 to 82. From 1935 to 1936, the Michigan supply dropped from 89 to 75 percent, and the demand increased from 90 to 91 percent, the ratio of supply to demand dropping from 99 to 82 percent in the one year, October to October.[25]

As of October 1, 1936, the daily wages of male farm labor in Michigan stood at $1.55 with board, and $2.05 without board. These wages had been climbing steadily from $1 and $1.35, respectively, in 1932, and the 1936 figures were almost identical with the $1.56 and $2.05 averages for 1932-1941.[26]

Farm land values. Results of the census of agriculture compiled by the federal Department of Commerce showed that in Michigan, there was an increase of 27,145 farms during the period from 1930 to 1935. Farm values dropped, however, about $300,000,000 during that time. In 1930, there were 169,372 farms, totaling 17,118,951

acres, valued at $1,160,651,607. In 1935, there were 196,517 farms, totaling 18,459,922 acres, valued at $826,260,594. In 1930, the value per farm, for land and buildings, was an average of $6853. It was down to $4205 in 1935.[27]

The index on the estimated value of farm real estate per acre in Michigan, based on 1912-1914 as 100, had decreased from a high of 154 in 1920 to a low of 80 in 1933, and by 1936 had turned back only to 84. For the United States as a whole, the index dropped from a 1920 high of 170 to a 1933 low of 73, and by 1936 was back to 82.[28]

Value per acre of Michigan farm land with buildings was $44.76 in 1935, a considerable drop from $67.80 in 1930 and $75.48 in 1920. This was much better, however, than for the United States as a whole: $31.16 per acre in 1935, $48.52 in 1930 and $69.38 in 1920.[29]

<u>Farm loans</u>. The Farm Credit Administration had reported that as of December 31, 1935, Michigan farmers had failed to repay $783,001 they had borrowed from the United States treasury--this figure representing overdue and unpaid balances of crop and feed loans which the government made to Michigan farmers from 1921 through 1935.

These loans, direct loans of federal money, were emergency crop and feed loans to aid in planting, cultivating and harvesting crops.

Of the total, $63,706 was the unpaid balance of loans made mainly by the Department of Agriculture from 1921 to 1933. Of $510,809 in loans in 1934, there was a total of $209,705 unpaid; of $353,715 loaned in 1935, there remained $210,590 unpaid. This meant Michigan farmers had repaid 70.8 percent of the loans made from 1921 to 1933, 41 percent in 1934, and 59.7 percent in 1935.

For the United States as a whole, farmers owed $106,975,648 at the end of 1935; their repayment of loans from 1921 to 1933 amounted to 71.4 percent, a slightly better rate than for Michigan. Likewise, for the United States as a whole, repayment was better than in Michigan for 1934 and 1935 loans--41.7 percent and 62.1 percent, respectively.[30]

In August, 1936, short term loans by the Farm Credit Administration to Michigan farmers totaled $2,750,000.[31]

The United States government was reported in May, 1936, to be coming to the aid of hundreds of Michigan farmers who were down and almost out. Since December of 1935, the start of aid administered by the rural rehabilitation

division of the Rural Resettlement Administration, chattel mortgage loans totaling $515,417.40 had been made to 1015 farm families with a "fighting chance" to work themselves out of the economic rut. There were two types of loans: 1) With livestock and tools as collateral, the farmer getting five years to repay; and 2) To buy seed, feed and fertilizer, the borrower getting two years to pay. Grants to others, wanting loans to help them until they could qualify for one of the two types above, had been made to 3009 farm families totaling $164,592.34.[32]

Farm mortgage foreclosures. The general United States farm real estate situation in 1935-1936 was held by federal agricultural economists to be characterized by a continuation of a trend to higher farm realty values, more voluntary transfers and trades of properties, and a smaller number of forced transfers due to delinquency upon farm mortgage indebtedness or farm real estate taxes.[33]

Michigan's total farm mortgage debt, having declined from a 1923 peak of approximately $252,000,000 to about $181,000,000 by January 1, 1934, had risen sharply a year later to $187,000,000. It remained near that figure as of January 1, 1936, and by the first of 1937 was down some, to

about $184,000,000. For the United States as a whole, the farm mortgage debt had been declining fairly steadily since its peak of 1923--$10,786,000,000--and by the end of 1936 stood at $7,154,000,000.[34]

Although the East North Central region of the United States was the second highest of nine regions in the percentage of total farm mortgage debt as of 1935,[35] the average debt per mortgaged farm in Michigan in 1935 was $2224, considerably under the United States average of $3227.[36]

It was estimated that the number of farms in Michigan changing ownership per 1000 of all farms due to foreclosures and associated causes, was 20.5 for the year ending March 15, 1936, some above the United States figure of 20.3. A year earlier, the Michigan figure of 20.8 had been a bit under the United States number, 21.0.[37] Dr. Karl T. Wright, professor of agricultural economics at Michigan State College, estimated the number of Michigan farms foreclosed at 14.3 per thousand farms for the year ending March 15, 1936, as compared to the United States rate of 18.1. For the year ending March 15, 1935, his Michigan estimate was 20.5, for the United States, 20.3.[38]

Farmer bankruptcy cases concluded in federal courts in Michigan totaled 61 in 1935. There had been 36 in 1929, 39 in 1930 and 31 in 1931. They jumped to 47 in 1932, to 68 in 1933, dropped to 43 in 1934, and jumped again in 1935 to 61.[39]

Summary. Michigan's cash farm income for 1936 was the highest since 1929, even with government subsidies declining, and generally speaking, a rise in farm income more than any other factor accounts for an increase in land prices.[40] But in 1936, the land prices hadn't yet adequately reflected the upped farm income. The average value of Michigan farms had dropped nearly $2650 between 1930 and 1935, and the value per acre with buildings was off more than $23 during that same period.

Michigan farmers were lagging behind those of the United States as a whole in repayment of federal loans, and bankruptcy cases had increased among farmers. The rate of farm ownership changes due to foreclosures and associated distress causes was higher for Michigan than for the country as a whole, and the state's farm mortgage debt remained high in 1936.

Based on the federal census figure of 196,517 farms in the state as of 1935 (Page 22) and the 20.5 foreclosures and other distress transfers per thousand farms (Page 25), more than 4,000 farms in Michigan had forecfully changed hands in the year ending March 15, 1936. More than 2,800 of those transfers were the result of foreclosures alone, according to Dr. Wright's estimated 14.3 foreclosures per thousand farms (Page 25).

Thus, it would appear that Lemke's Michigan entree came through his efforts in Congress on behalf of legislation to ease the burden for distressed farmers, to enable them to hold onto their farms while riding out the depression. More than the average number of farmers were losing their farms in Michigan through distress transfers, despite a general increase in farm income prices, making many of them receptive to a candidate espousing lawful protection from banks, insurance companies and other lending agencies.

Add to that the agitation of the Farmers' Union, reaching a state of high activity, and the depression-born movements of Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend, and Michigan presented something of a testing ground for the Lemke candidacy.

FOOTNOTES

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11. Ibid, p. 27.

12. Ibid, p. 24.

13. Ibid, p. 16.

14. Ibid, p. 18.

15. Ibid, p. 12.

16. Ibid, p. 14.

17. Ibid, p. 22.

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FOOTNOTES (continued)

19. Bay City Times, September 9, 1936, p. 13, col. 4.

20. Crop Report for Michigan: Annual Crop and Livestock Summary, January-February, 1943. Lansing: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in cooperation with Michigan Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Industry, p. 21.

21. Crop Report for Michigan: Annual Crop and Livestock Summary, January-February, 1947. Lansing: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in cooperation with Michigan Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Industry, p. 87.

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23. Bay City Times, June 26, 1936, p. 23, col. 2.

24. Ibid, July 3, 1936, p. 12, col. 5.

25. Crop Report for Michigan: Annual Crop and Livestock Summary, January-February, 1943. Lansing: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in cooperation with Michigan Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Industry, p. 58.

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31. Ibid, August 17, 1936, p. 3, col. 3.

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FOOTNOTES (continued)

33. B. R. Stauber and M. M. Regan, The Farm Real Estate Situation, 1935-36. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Circular No. 417, 1936, p. 1.

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CHAPTER III

GETTING ON THE BALLOT

Michigan's election laws provide that the nomination of candidates of parties not receiving 2 percent of the total vote cast for all candidates for secretary of state at the last state election shall be by caucus or convention; that the results must be certified to the proper authorities (secretary of state) not less than 35 days prior to the ensuing election. An attorney general's opinion had ruled that a new party may nominate its candidates accordingly.[1]

Meeting this 35-day requirement was to cause the Lemke movement considerable difficulty.

On the eve of the state convention of the Michigan Farmer-Labor Party in Owosso, it was reported that a controversy was expected over whether to offer the party vignette to Lemke in the November 3 election. The Farmer-Labor Party had polled enough votes in 1934 to assure it a place on the ballot. Delegates representing the National Union for Social Justice and the Townsend movement (reported pro-Lemke) were to attend the Owosso conclave. Farmers' Union units of the party had indicated their approval of a

proposal to make Lemke the party's presidential candidate. In Wayne county, however, where the labor element of the Farmer-Labor Party was dominant, the county executive committee of the party had voted against endorsement of Lemke.[2]

At Owosso, the Farmer-Labor's central committee rejected a petition of the National Union for Social Justice delegates for affiliation, and declined to seat the 133 National Union delegates. Recorder's Judge Edward J. Jeffries and Walter Nelson of Detroit, the latter attorney for the Farmers' Union, charged that a Wayne county faction headed by Maurice Sugar, another Detroit attorney, was trying to deprive Farmer-Labor Party members of the right to choose their own presidential candidate. Trouble flared, and a large group of farmer delegates walked out of the convention to meet with delegates of the National Union for Social Justice to endorse Lemke for president. Two possible courses of action were considered: 1) Endorse Lemke as a "Third Party" candidate, or 2) Hold a rump convention of the Farmer-Labor Party and try to give him the party's endorsement.[3]

Finally, the Farmer-Labor state convention was split three ways: The so-called "regulars," controlled by the

Detroit labor elements, endorsed only candidates for secretary of state and state treasurer. The "rump" group, headed by the state Farmer-Labor chairman, Milton E. Scherer of Muskegon, and comprised of old guard Farmer-Labor leaders, endorsed Lemke and his running mate O'Brien for president and vice president, Judge Jeffries for United States senator, and Simeon P. Martin, McBride farmer, for governor. A "Third Party" group, comprised primarily of Father Coughlin's National Union for Social Justice delegates, endorsed Lemke and O'Brien in an effort to clinch the North Dakotan a place on the ballot.[4] Lemke's national Union party was not accredited in Michigan.[5] The old guard farmers and the Social Justice delegates had started the rump convention together, but it was disrupted when Father Coughlin's group refused to join the Farmer-Labor Party while asking for a place for Lemke on the Farmer-Labor ticket. The farm group walked out and held its own convention.[6] All three groups recessed for a time to leave the matter open for consideration.[7]

The secretary of state's office was prepared to certify William Lemke as a candidate for the presidency on the Farmer-Labor ticket, unless a court order were to bar such a step. It was expected by some that there would be

litigation because of the two Farmer-Labor conventions, although Judge Jeffries and Attorney Nelson took with them the officers of the state central committee who said they would certify Lemke and O'Brien.[8]

Secretary of State Orville E. Atwood received a wire from Eugene L. Brock of Detroit, claiming that Milton E. Scherer and W. A. Nelson were not chairman and secretary, respectively, of the Farmer-Labor Party's state convention, which two convention officials the state election laws required to certify the nominations of candidates. Brock declared the Farmer-Labor convention had elected him chairman and Eugene Fay of Flint, secretary. Secretary of State Atwood said he had no legal proof as to the identity of the party's official chairman and secretary.[9]

Things were stalled for about a week, but then Atwood decided to accept the complete Farmer-Labor ticket nominated by the Scherer-Nelson group, for a place on the November ballot: William Lemke, president; Thomas O'Brien, vice president; Judge Edward J. Jeffries, United States senator; Simeon P. Martin, governor; Wesley Reid, lieutenant governor; G. C. Liebrand, attorney general; Milton E. Scherer, secretary of state; and D. B. Hovey, Sr., state treasurer.[10]

Immediately, however, the placing of this ticket on the ballot was held up by notice of a court action to protest. Maurice Sugar wrote Atwood, stating that he would seek to enjoin him from certifying the Farmer-Labor ticket to the ballot. Sugar claimed that only two Farmer-Labor candidates were nominated at the state convention: Cyrus F. Boorum for secretary of state, and Harry H. Hanson for state treasurer.[11]

At the same time, the nominations of Lemke, O'Brien, Jeffries and Martin were certified to Atwood, attested by Scherer,[12] others on the slate having withdrawn.[13] Finally, Secretary of State Atwood asked the attorney general to decide what candidates should be certified for the Farmer-Labor party in Michigan.[14]

Guy H. Jenkins, capital correspondent for the Booth Newspapers, wrote that the Farmer-Labor certification of the Lemke ticket might go to the courts, as the "leftists" who wanted to support the New Deal philosophy of the government were hostile to the use of the Farmer-Labor Party label by the Lemke followers. They feared, he wrote, that Lemke would take the "fringe" vote from Franklin D. Roosevelt and thus aid the Landon cause.[15]

Maurice Sugar promptly asked the state supreme court to force Lemke to withdraw as the Farmer-Labor candidate,[16] and requested that Eugene L. Brock's candidates--Boorum and Hanson--be put on the ballot.[17]

Lemke was reported as announcing his intent to withdraw as the Farmer-Labor candidate, to attempt to run as the Third Party candidate. Secretary of State Atwood said that on the advice of the attorney general's office, he couldn't accept the names of any candidates for a state-wide election nominated by a convention after September 29. Atwood said that if Lemke's name were withdrawn as the Farmer-Labor candidate, his name couldn't appear on any ticket November 3.[18]

Meantime, the state convention of the Third Party met October 1 in Detroit as an "adjourned convention" to get under the September 29 wire, and named Lemke, O'Brien and a candidate for United States senator, Louis B. Ward of Pontiac. Ward, an advertising man, had been defeated in a close race by Prentiss M. Brown for the Democratic nomination for senator in the primary election the preceding month. The convention adopted Father Coughlin's principles of social justice for its platform, made no nominations for state or local offices, but endorsed several congressional candidates.[19]

On October 3, Secretary of State Atwood said he would accept and put on the ballot the candidates submitted by the Third Party, following the conclusion of its adjourned convention, unless blocked by court action. The time requirement had been met, it was deemed, as the convention originally convened September 12.

Louis Webber, deputy secretary of state, said Lemke must say in five days after his certification by the Third Party whether he would run as a candidate of that party or the Farmer-Labor organization. Webber said the law prohibited Lemke's name from being on more than one ticket.[20] In Big Rapids, Walter Nelson, counsel for the Farmer-Labor Party, said Lemke assured him by telephone that he had not changed his allegiance, and still wanted to be the Farmer-Labor candidate.[21]

Two hundred delegates of the Maurice Sugar faction of the Farmer-Labor Party convened in Flint after its September 12 recess in Owosso, and ratified its action there in repudiating Lemke. The group approved the court action under way to prevent Lemke's name from appearing on the Farmer-Labor ballot,[22] and authorized its state central committee to repudiate Lemke if he should be upheld by the court.[23]

The delegates held that the platform of Father Coughlin, Lemke backer, "means Fascism."[24] The group also put down an attempt by Abe Dishell, Detroit labor leader and former Flint beer garden operator, to get the delegates to endorse the Democratic slate of Roosevelt, Murphy and Brown.[25]

Meantime, Judge Jeffries became concerned at the extent of the complications arising from the ballot controversy, and wrote Secretary of State Atwood on October 6 that he was withdrawing as a candidate for United States senator on the Farmer-Labor ticket. He had wanted, he explained, labor, farmer, Social Justice and Townsend groups united for independent political action. "But as matters have turned out," he said, "my candidacy would only add confusion to the political situation."[26]

Secretary Atwood accepted the Third Party slate of Lemke, O'Brien and Ward, thus having Lemke and O'Brien on two tickets accepted for certification on the Michigan ballot.[27] The following day the state supreme court denied the petition filed by Maurice Sugar to force Atwood to reject the slate certified by the other Farmer-Labor faction, thus "dismissing a challenge by the Communist-labor section of the party which attempted to block such indorsement."[28]

Sugar countered the next day on behalf of Eugene Brock, who claimed to be the Farmer-Labor convention chairman, by asking the supreme court for a writ preventing the opposing party faction from certifying the name of Lemke with Atwood. The writ refused by the court the day before had been directed against the state board of canvassers.[29]

On October 9 Lemke notified the state department in Lansing that he would be a candidate on the Third Party ticket in Michigan, thus eliminating a major point of controversy. O'Brien sent similar notification.[30]

Michigan Democrats, however, toyed with idea of attempting to block the Third Party from the ballot, reportedly being apprehensive of Ward's strength at the polls. But three days after Lemke's announcement, Murray D. Van Wagoner, state highway commissioner and a leading state Democratic figure, said the party would not interfere with the state department's certification of the Third Party candidates. He said the Democratic organization had mulled the advisability of recourse to the courts, but decided against it, as nothing would be gained. It was reported that the party leaders finally concluded that court action might throw indignant Ward backers to the Republicans.[31]

The next day the state supreme court ruled that all parties to the dispute over the legality of tickets presented by the Farmer-Labor Party be represented on the November ballot. This would have in one column the slate headed by Simeon P. Martin for governor, and in an adjoining column the names of those on the slate backed by Maurice Sugar and his followers. The court decided that complainants against the proceedings at the Farmer-Labor convention September 12 at Owosso were so lax in their protests that it was impossible to determine who was right.[32]

Next, the supreme court was asked to keep the Third Party off the Michigan ballot, as a writ of mandamus to cancel the Third Party slate was asked by Eugene I. Van Antwerp, a member of the Detroit Common Council, who charged that the Third Party's Owosso convention was invalid because it had not been legally called. He claimed that acceptance of the ticket would be a fraud upon the voters.[33] An answer to Van Antwerp was filed on behalf of the secretary of state by Leslie D. Harrop, assistant attorney general, who charged that Van Antwerp had delayed his challenge unnecessarily, and that additional delay would halt the printing of ballots by county clerks.[34]

On October 15, the two state candidates nominated by the Maurice Sugar faction of the Farmer-Labor Party--C. F. Boorum and H. H. Hanson--withdrew from the race, even though the ticket had been authorized by the supreme court.[35] The controversy was finally resolved with the Lemke-O'Brien ticket being assured a place on the ballot under the Third Party label, as the supreme court denied Van Antwerp's petition.[36]

But the attempt by the Coughlin backers of Lemke to use the Farmer-Labor Party label for their candidate had caused a rift between the farmer and labor elements of the Farmer-Labor organization, the labor group wanting to prevent its support from aiding the Republicans by being drawn away from Franklin Roosevelt. Despite the fact that the labor faction finally withdrew its two nominated candidates from the ballot, the antagonism that had arisen was no doubt sufficient to alienate many of the labor Farmer-Labor sympathizers from any enthusiasm for Lemke.

This apparently left Lemke with the prospect of getting only Farmer-Labor votes from the ranks of the farmers, particularly from the ranks of the Farmers' Union, whose

attorney, W. A. Nelson, was a leader of the party faction which had been boosting Lemke, and which one day would be headed by Simeon P. Martin, who had been nominated for governor by Nelson's faction.

FOOTNOTES

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3. Ibid, September 12, 1936, p. 5, col. 7.
4. Detroit Free Press, September 13, 1936, p. 1, col. 2
5. Lansing State Journal, September 14, 1936, p. 6, col. 1.
6. Flint Journal, October 4, 1936, p. 15, col. 8.
7. Detroit Free Press, September 13, 1936, p. 1, col. 2.
8. Lansing State Journal, September 14, 1936, p. 6, col. 1.
9. Ibid, September 15, 1936, p. 9, col. 4.
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12. Detroit Free Press, September 24, 1936, p. 1, col. 5.
13. Bay City Times, October 2, 1936, p. 20, col. 8.
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16. Lansing State Journal, October 2, 1936, p. 1, col. 4.
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21. Flint Journal, October 4, 1936, p. 15, col. 8.
22. Ibid.

FOOTNOTES (continued)

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34. Ibid, October 15, 1936, p. 1, col. 4.

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36. Ibid, October 16, 1936, p. 1, col. 7.

CHAPTER IV

CAMPAIGN: PERSONALITIES AND ISSUES

Michigan, a key state in presidential elections generally, was deemed especially vital in the 1936 campaign, with native son Frank Murphy relinquishing his post of governor-general of the Philippines to run for governor in an effort to assure the New Deal of the Wolverine state's electoral votes.

The campaign generally was that of a staunch defense of the New Deal's record since 1932 in the face of a strong attack by the Republicans and big business. The Republicans nominated Alfred M. Landon of Kansas, one of few Republican governors elected in 1932 and 1934, to carry the fight to Franklin Roosevelt.

Several minor parties had presidential candidates on the Michigan ballot, but the only one causing anything of concern to the major parties was the Third Party, headed by William Lemke and Thomas O'Brien. Lemke's chief backer was a prominent Michigan figure, Father Coughlin, formerly an intimate friend of Frank Murphy. The only Michigan candidate on the Third Party ticket was Louis B. Ward,

for United States senator.

The Third Party was perhaps best described as "a curious compound of ideas and personalities, in which the personalities take the foreground."[1]

William Lemke. Congressman William Lemke was best known as a man who fought for the farmers, particularly those whose homes were mortgaged, and whose name was recognized in North Dakota, Iowa, Idaho, Wisconsin and Minnesota.[2] He was born in Minnesota, and attended the University of North Dakota, where he was a classmate of Senator Lynn J. Frazier, co-author of the Frazier-Lemke bill.[3]

Lemke was a member of the Non-Partisan League's national executive committee, and in 1916 became chairman of the North Dakota State Republican Central Committee. In 1920 he was recalled as attorney general, over a matter of League funds and the choice of a questionable bank to hold the funds. But his financial integrity was not long questioned, it was reported.

He practiced private law for 12 years,[4] and in 1932 was elected to the House in Washington as a pro-New Deal Republican. Two years later, having voted for many of the

administration's measures, he was renamed to Congress; and in 1936 he ran again for Congress, as well as being the Union or Third Party candidate for president. Lemke was considered a rather dry talker. He filled his speeches with statistics, and, like Father Coughlin, the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith and Dr. Townsend, with Biblical references.[5]

Lemke, who started in poverty, became perhaps the most active figure in the entire Non-Partisan movement[6] which sought to protect the farmer through high prices for his products and low prices for purchases. (In North Dakota, the Non-Partisan program involved state-owned grain elevators, warehouses, flour mills, packing houses, cold-storage plants, creameries, stockyards, cheese factories, a state-owned bank, a large extension of rural credits, a home building scheme, state hail and fire insurance, the exemption of farm improvements from taxation.)[7]

Among the assessments made of Lemke, the former obscure Fargo attorney who became principal legal advisor to Governor Frazier, by one of the Non-Partisan League's leading critics were: He had selected the judicial candidates in his state, he had directed the political campaigns, he had controlled the political machinery of the Republican Party

(the vehicle used by the Non-Partisan League), he selected at least one League member of the North Dakota Supreme Court--his law partner, James E. Robinson.[8] The critic, former chief justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court and professor of law at the University of Minnesota, had been defeated for chief justice by the League forces.[9]

In the eyes of the Socialist Labor Party, "Lemke unquestionably represents the one clearly discernible manifestation of outspoken absolutism in America." He was painted as but a front for Father Coughlin, "the howling Detroit priest." Lemke's candidacy, said the party, was "a reminder that the possibility of a renaissance of darkest medievalism is not precluded."[10]

Lemke was touchy about the question of Father Coughlin's "telephone booth" nomination, and gave assurances that he had been nominated by the sovereign people of the nation who worked for a living.[11]

Thomas O'Brien. Thomas O'Brien, candidate for vice president on the Union or Third Party ticket, was a Harvard man,[12] a Boston labor lawyer, and not exactly a novice at politics. In 1922 he had been chosen on the Republican

ticket as district attorney[13] of Suffolk County, Massachusetts,[14] which contains Boston. In 1930 he switched parties and sought the Democratic senatorial nomination.[15] He was, however, unsuccessful.

Louis B. Ward. Louis B. Ward of Pontiac,[16] candidate for United States senator on the Third Party ticket in Michigan, was an advertising man[17] who had been serving as Father Coughlin's Washington lobbyist.[18] He sought the Democratic nomination for senator in the primary September 15, 1936, but lost a close race to Congressman Prentiss M. Brown, 125,338 to 117,872.[19]

Father Charles Edward Coughlin. Most colorful figure of the Third Party campaign was Father Charles E. Coughlin, pastor of the Royal Oak parish, near Detroit, who was credited with bringing Lemke into the presidential ring.

Father Coughlin had achieved national renown when Roosevelt defeated Hoover, and he took part in White House councils, being credited with getting his then friend, Frank Murphy, his post in the Philippines.[20] But eventually he was not content to merely shape public opinion; he desired to lead men.[21]

In a radio broadcast from the Shrine of the Little Flower on November 11, 1934, he made an appeal for converts to an organization "superior to political parties in principle and independent of them in power." The organization, to be financed by contributions from members, was to be known as the National Union for Social Justice. Sixteen basic "principles of social justice" were the basic planks of this new movement. Said Father Coughlin:

1. "I believe in the right of liberty of conscience and liberty of education, not permitting the state to dictate either my worship to my God or my chosen avocation in life.

2. "I believe that every citizen willing to work and capable of working shall receive a just and living annual wage which will enable him to educate and maintain his family according to the standards of American decency.

3. "I believe in nationalizing those public necessities which by their very nature are too important to be held in control of private individuals. By these I mean banking, credit and currency, power, light, oil, and natural gas and our God-given natural resources.

4. "I believe in private ownership of all other property.

5. "I believe in upholding the right of private property, yet of controlling it for the public good.

6. "I believe in the abolition of the privately-owned Federal Reserve banking system and in the establishment of a government-owned central bank.

7. "I believe in rescuing from the hands of private owners the right to coin and regulate the value of money, which right must be retained by the Congress of the United States.

8. "I believe that one of the chief duties of this government-owned central bank is to maintain the cost of living on an even keel and the repayment of dollar debts with equal dollar values.

9. "I believe in the cost of production plus a fair value for agriculture.

10. "I believe not only in the right of the laboring man to organize in unions, but also in the duty of the government which the laboring man supports to facilitate and to protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth and of intellect.

11. "I believe in the recall of all non-productive bonds and thereby in the alleviation of taxation and the

direction of this corpse-capital into productive industry.

12. "I believe in the abolition of tax-exempt bonds.

13. "I believe in the broadening of the base of taxation founded upon the ownership of wealth and the capacity to pay.

14. "I believe in the simplification of government, and the further lifting of crushing taxation from the slender revenues of the laboring class.

15. "I believe that in the event of war for the defense of our nation and its liberties, there shall be a conscription of wealth as well as of men.

16. "I believe in preferring the sanctity of human rights to the sanctity of property rights. I believe that the chief concern of government shall be for the poor, because, as it is witnessed, the rich have ample means of their own to care for themselves."[22]

There was some question of the citizenship of Father Coughlin, who was a native of Hamilton, Ontario. Father Coughlin's father, like his father and grandfather an Irish-American laborer, had moved from his birthplace in Indiana to Hamilton. There Father Coughlin was born and reared, later graduating from the University of Toronto.

His interests were in the church, politics and

sociology, and a former instructor provided the advice, which he followed, that by entering the church he could embrace all three. He first taught English at Assumption College in Sandwich, Ontario, and in 1921 began visiting Detroit to give weekly sermons at St. Agnes church. Within a few months he was transferred to the Kalamazoo district, and after three years of service he was assigned by Bishop Gallagher of the Detroit diocese to build up the little church at Royal Oak.

The beginning of the radio career for the "microphone messiah" was in 1926, when he was granted a request by radio station WJR in Detroit to broadcast his sermons in an effort to build up his parish. For four years he aired his sermons without undue consequence, but then started to vary his radio procedure, talking to children on moral lessons, and almost by accident highlighting his talks with brief comments upon contemporary social, political and economic events. Letters received indicated that parents were more interested than their offspring in his speeches, and late in 1930, with the depression apparently to last for some time, his addresses began getting more than local notice.

Meantime, said an observer, Father Coughlin had fashioned his formula: A) An assault on some principle, economic or political, or special group; B) Fervid exaltations of honesty and Christian ethics in business and government; C) Tribute more ardent than exact to anyone who happened to agree with him; D) The whole buttressed by quotations or paraphrases from the encyclicals of Pope Pius XI and Leo XIII.

The response was tremendous, and any hints that funds were needed to keep the broadcasts going brought money from areas around Detroit, Cincinnati and Chicago. By 1931 Father Coughlin had set up the Radio League of the Little Flower and was able to spend $1650 a week on radio time. He reiterated the idea that there must be a way to manipulate money to bring about permanent prosperity; his audience grew, and he attacked the "god of greed" as worshipped by the day's leading financiers. Detroit postal authorities had to increase their delivery force to handle the mail response.

He turned his attention also to communism and the hypocrisy of prohibition. His radio network grew coast to coast. Contributions helped him to start building the church of St. Theresa of the Little Flower, his patroness,

canonized in 1925 for her "strange prophecies." Nearby, Father Coughlin erected his Shrine of the Little Flower, which housed his headquarters for 96 clerks and stenographers to handle his fan mail, which for two years reportedly averaged 80,000 letters a week. By 1936 his duties took so much of his time that a substitute took over his former routines.

In surrounding himself with subordinates, he brooked no opposition. Men such as Sylvester McMahon, prominent Cleveland attorney, and Louis Ward, his Washington lobbyist, were termed "errand boys." His apparently complete control over his followers was exhibited at the 1936 national convention of the organization in Cleveland, where "the mere mention of his name was a signal for bedlam." He dressed elegantly, moved about little during a speech, letting his voice inflections keep the crowd enraptured, and made his entrances and exits in dramatic fashion, complete with motorcycle police escort, bodyguards and an entourage of clerks and secretaries.[23]

Dr. Francis E. Townsend. Dr. Townsend, venerable advocate of the revolving pension plan bearing his name,

made up in sincerity for his lack of color.

Frank R. Kent, columnist and author, in covering the national Townsend convention in Cleveland in 1936, wrote that Dr. Townsend sincerely believed in his own plan.[24] And Townsend was described by another newsman and author as "a good man who wants to help others...He is an honest Utopian," but fostering mass delusion. His popularity stemmed from his plan, rather than from his personality, as in the cases of Father Coughlin and Gerald Smith.[25]

Dr. Townsend's life began as that of a humble American, with his birth in an Illinois log cabin. He tried homestead farming in Kansas, and did some school teaching, but finally decided upon a medical career. He got his degree at the Omaha Medical School on a financial shoestring, and went to North Dakota, Lemke's home state, to practice. There he married a nurse, and they later moved to Long Beach, California.

It was after he lost his job with the public health department in Long Beach that he conceived his pension plan.[26] The movement got its impetus from the response to his letter to the editor of a local paper.[27]

Townsend's feeling toward Lemke was that he was the only friend his plan had among the three presidential

candidates, but he felt his plan would eliminate the need for reforms urged by the Union Party and the National Union for Social Justice.[28]

The Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith. Reverend Smith got an early start on the oratory that was to be his trademark. He was born in Wisconsin, the son of the pastor of a rural congregation and the descendant of four generations of circuit-riding "hell-fire and brimstone" preachers. He was the best debator in the county when in high school, and worked his way through Valparaiso University, Indiana. He served as pastor at King's Highway Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, until giving it up for social welfare work.

Smith became a henchman for Huey Long, was chief official organizer for the Share-Our-Wealth clubs, and later claimed to be Long's successor. Smith got a chance to climb aboard the Townsend organization by making speeches endorsing the Old Age Revolving Pensions when Dr. Townsend was in trouble with a congressional investigating committee. He became second in command to the physician, and got the name of the plan changed to the Townsend Recovery Plan. Smith also sought the support of youth for the movement.

Smith, who was anti-public ownership, described the objective of the Share-Our-Wealth movement as "to democratize wealth without destroying the capitalist system." His technique, he said, was: "Religion and patriotism, keep going on that. It's the only way you can get them really 'het up'."[29]

Frank Kent, after seeing Smith in action at the Townsend convention in Cleveland, described the pastor as virile, eloquent, attractive, "full of animal magnetism and one of the most effective rabble rousers ever seen."[30]

Herman Dignan, Michigan state representative in 1936 and later secretary of state, recalls that Smith was a "great orator," drawing a good crowd when appearing in Shiawassee county.[31]

Primary campaign. Rumblings of discontent, foreshadowing the possible advent of a third party were evident at the start of 1936.

Michigan's Republican agricultural commissioner, who had waged a "vigorous fight in the state against the AAA," urged the farmers of the state to pin their faith on improved marketing methods, rather than crop curtailment, during the

new year.[32] Both the Michigan Farm Bureau[33] and the Michigan State Grange,[34] however, had favored curtailment benefits.

Another farm organization--the Farmers' Union--had grown lustily in 1935, and reportedly might be wooed in the 1936 election campaign.[35] There were an estimated 300 Farm Union locals in the state, with 30,000 members.[36] It made itself heard in the national capital in March, when 150 farmers made the second annual Farmers' Union tour to Washington, spending five days there for conferences with congressmen and other national leaders. One of the group's aims was to further action on the Frazier-Lemke bill, passed by the senate and then held up in the house.[37]

At the turn of the year, Father Coughlin declared in a radio address that "at least 5,267,000 members" had joined community groups in his organization in the past month. The National Union for Social Justice, he said, was functioning in 26 states, representing 302 of the 435 congressional districts.[38]

Father Coughlin, too, was backing the Frazier-Lemke bill. So strongly, in fact, that he was wired an invitation to Washington to be publicly kicked by Representative John J.

O'Connor, chairman of the house rules committee. Coughlin had declared that O'Connor tried to get house members to remove their names from a petition to force a vote on the measure.[39] When two days later Father Coughlin was castigated in the house by O'Connor, New York Catholic layman, three members didn't stand in the ovation given him, including George D. Dondero, Republican from Father Coughlin's district.[40]

Dr. Townsend, who had flexed his aging muscles in a special congressional election in the Third district in Michigan late in 1935, was flushed with apparent success and not averse to swinging his weight in the national arena.

The Third district--comprising Branch, Calhoun, Eaton, Hillsdale and Kalamazoo counties--needed a congressman to fill the vacancy resulting from the death of the incumbent Republican. Among the candidates in the Republican primary was Vernor W. Main, a Battle Creek attorney, former state representative, a church man, a prohibitionist, who favored at least a substantial old age pension.[41]

Dr. Townsend himself moved into the nomination campaign on behalf of Main, speaking in Battle Creek[42] and Kalamazoo.[43] Main proceeded to carry all five counties in

the balloting, his total vote being greater than the aggregate of his four opponents. Urban and rural areas alike voted for him.[44]

This prompted a flurry of editorial comment in Michigan newspapers. Advocates of the Townsend plan had captured the Republican primary, observed the Lansing State Journal.[45] In the opinion of the Kalamazoo Gazette, this win of Main's eliminated the fact that the special election December 17 would be a clear-cut battle over the New Deal; instead, many leaders envisioned a "regrouping of political forces around the issue of Townsendism with traditional affiliations almost completely swept away."[46] The Bay City Times clucked that the politicos who had ridiculed the Townsend Plan would now have to take it more seriously. "There can be little doubt," it said, "that their (Townsendites) votes decided the primary."[47]

As the day of the special election drew near, Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald flew to Kalamazoo where in a talk he went on record with an unqualified endorsement of Vernor Main.[48] This pleased the Bay City Times, which lauded the governor for not shying at the Townsend issue as many

Republicans were doing.[49]

Once again the national Townsend organization sent in a field general to aid Main. This time it was R. E. Clements, national secretary and co-founder of the Townsend Plan, who declared that the eyes of millions of America's aged were on this election--a test of the Townsend Plan's popularity.[50] There were reports that 30 Townsend clubs in the district, claiming a membership of 8000, were holding 60 meetings a week on behalf of Main in his race against another Battle Creek attorney, Howard W. Cavanagh, who had opposed the pension plan.[51]

In the voting, said the Jackson Citizen-Patriot, the Townsend Plan would be more of an issue than the New Deal, for Main had been nominated only because of his endorsement of the scheme.[52]

When the votes had been counted, Main had won as decisively as in the primary, more than doubling Cavanagh's vote.[53] He carried every county in the district and the cities of Kalamazoo and Battle Creek.[54] Main was reported as estimating that 10,000 of his 24,000 votes came from advocates of the Townsend Plan.[55]

One observer decided that the young people didn't vote in the election; that it was the people past 60 who had the time to vote, attend meetings and to be practical in politics. They constitute an efficient machine, he said.[56]

Not only the eyes of America's aged had been on the Third district election, but also those of several hundred congressmen in Washington. For the house voted 240 to 4 to probe the Townsend and other old-age pension movements,[57] and Representative C. Jasper Bell, Missouri Democrat, was named chairman of the committee. The house committee said the Townsend Plan was a lobbying and political scheme,[58] and Representative Clare E. Hoffman came home to Michigan to probe the matter.[59]

In Detroit, the former Michigan manager of the pension plan testified that he had been discharged for organizing so rapidly that members would have expected immediate results.[60] The secretary of the Kalamazoo Townsend organization said his county had 3,143 members and that about 100 merchants had signed voluntary agreements to rebate to Townsend clubs 2 percent of gross cash sales to members.[61]

At Battle Creek, Hoffman was heckled by the Townsendites who set up a recruiting stand after the hearing was recessed

and reportedly got half a dozen enlistments.[62]

By June Dr. Townsend and the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith had gotten together and moved upstate in Pennsylvania to begin their attack "against the dictatorship in Washington." Smith, claiming to head the share-the-wealth clubs organized by Senator Huey Long, announced the merger of his group and Townsend's forces.

"We stood under the historic arch in Valley Forge," he proclaimed, "and vowed to take over the government." The two men had a joint platform: Anti-dictatorship, anti-communist and anti-Farleyism. Townsend claimed four million members, and Smith six million.[63]

Meantime, a conference of third party advocates from over the nation was held in Chicago, but without prospect of immediate formation of a party. The Minnesota organization of the Farmer-Labor Party, headed by Governor Floyd B. Olson, was charged with the duty of calling a convention at some future date, with an advisory council of 25. Among the members were two Michigan Farmer-Laborites, Maurice Sugar of Detroit and Milton Scherer of Muskegon. Also attending from Michigan was Recorder's Judge Edward Jeffries.[64]

Townsend and Smith were in Detroit on June 6, amidst rumors of a union with Father Coughlin. One spokesman for Michigan Townsendites told Dr. Townsend they didn't mind the share-the-wealth group, but didn't like the idea of adding the other group (National Union for Social Justice).[65]

On June 18, Dr. Townsend and Reverend Smith shook hands before 4,000 supporters at Atwood stadium in Flint and pledged their cooperation. Smith said the farmers would become "tenants" of the government under the New Deal.[66]

An then on June 20 came the announcement by William Lemke of his presidential candidacy on the Union Party ticket.[67]

The Union Party platform: Central bank of issue for currency; refinancing of agricultural mortgages; legislation of an annual living wage for laborers; legislation of an assurance of profit for farmers; legislation of decent old age security; legislation of protection for local markets; legislation of distribution of all federal offices and positions through civil service; legislation of federal works for jobs; anti-monopoly; congressional limitation of the net income of individuals in any one year.[68]

Father Coughlin, in a New York address, immediately

endorsed Lemke and asked his National Union for Social Justice to follow him.[69] The day after Lemke announced his candidacy, Dr. Townsend in addressing 3,500 persons at Syracuse, New York, said the next president would be a candidate who would let Father Coughlin define his money plank, Dr. Townsend his old age security plank, Smith his planks on labor, education and homesteads, and the Farmers' Union his agriculture planks.[70]

Later, Father Coughlin in Chicago said Lemke was an even bet to carry Michigan. Roosevelt could have, he said, but not with his dictation of Frank Murphy as a candidate for governor. This, said the Detroit Free Press, ended the political alliance of Father Coughlin and Murphy. Before Murphy went to the Philippines, it said, Father Coughlin had been his closest friend; they had been inseparable since Murphy campaigned for the recorder's bench, and then for mayor. Father Coughlin helped organize Murphy's mayoralty campaign. Together they campaigned for the New Deal in 1932, "acting as contact men for Roosevelt in Michigan." Murphy's appointment as governor-general of the Philippines was due to support given by Father Coughlin.[71]

As the second annual convention of Townsend clubs

opened in Cleveland in mid-July, Columnist Frank Kent theorized that there were two reasons why the national group was not endorsing Lemke: 1) Most of the Townsend-endorsed congressional candidates were Democrats, and 2) Most of the Townsendites were Protestants.[72] Although not formally endorsing Lemke, Dr. Townsend announced to the convention that he, Father Coughlin and Smith would work for Lemke. The three clasped hands and the crowd cheered.[73]

Dr. Townsend later in the month told a Boston rally that he personally would support Lemke. Lemke was not the best man in the country, he said, but he is "clean and honorable and has endorsed our plan." Townsend said he preferred Landon to Roosevelt.[74]

The first of Lemke's four visits to Michigan during the campaign, three of them before the September 15 primary, was on August 1 at the West Michigan Farm Union rally in Johnson Park at Grandville. Predicting success at the polls, he flayed international bankers and "coupon clippers," "stand pat" Democrats and "reactionary Republicans."

Lemke scored Roosevelt's monetary and agriculture policies, his relief methods and disparaged the results of the AAA. He advocated "real farm aid," a revolving fund

for old age pensions, establishment of a Bank of the United States with control over money. Quoting "the immortal Huey Long," he said: "This should be a land where every man is a king and every woman a queen and every girl and boy has something to look forward to in the way of a future."[75]

Defeat of the Frazier-Lemke bill, he said, had brought hardship to the farmers, and he urged an embargo on importing of agricultural products until "we can consume our own products." The drought was pictured as "a curse Providence has visited upon us" for governmental follies; he said the nation should protect people in drought areas. If president, Lemke said, he would name "a real honest-to-God dirt farmer for secretary of agriculture," clean out the state department and fill it with "real Americans," and keep the army and navy out of Europe.[76]

In a second talk at the rally in the evening, he outlined six planks in his platform:

1. A decent security for old age.

2. A living annual wage for laborers capable of and willing to work.

3. Protection of American markets, agricultural, industrial and commercial, against those products produced

abroad at less than a living wage.

4. Civil service for all men and women in government except those in key positions, such as cabinet officers.

5. Restoration of representative government.

6. Conservation of waters, public lands and forests to give two million families permanent homes and preventing future droughts by creating between 250,000 and 300,000 lakes and water basins east of the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River.[77]

Asked in an interview what caused him to become a candidate for the presidency, Lemke replied: "The ganging up on the Frazier-Lemke bill;[78] failure of congress to provide adequate old age pensions in the national security act, and failure of either major party to nominate a suitable candidate for the presidency. I wanted to give the people the chance to vote for or against Wall Street."[79]

In mid-August Lemke was endorsed by the National Union for Social Justice in Cleveland,[80] only one of the 8153 registered delegates to the national convention dissenting. Father Coughlin squatted among the footlights of the platform and told his followers he would quit his broadcasts if he couldn't deliver his radio audience--nine million votes--for

Lemke and O'Brien.[81]

Shortly thereafter, Lemke came to Michigan for his second appearance, addressing 3,000 in the House of David open air theater in Benton Harbor. He attacked Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace as "the greatest vandal the world has ever known." Lemke rapped the crop curtailment policies of the administration, and ridiculed Roosevelt's relief policies, spending $16,000,000,000 "handing out sandwiches."

Of the Townsend plan, he said anyone working from ages 20 to 60 had created enough wealth to be entitled to live in comfort. Lemke said if president, he would call in $36,000,000,000 in government bonds and pay for them with the government's own money, saving a tidy sum in interest which could go into an old age pension fund. Congress, he said, would again write the nation's laws, but must include the Union Party's platform, and he would fire the "brainless trust" and clean out the state department and "put in Americans."[82]

On August 30, both Townsend and Smith were speakers at a rally of 2,000 Townsendites at the Detroit naval armory.

Townsend said that Lemke, "that good, old, honest farmer," had taken an oath to approve Townsend plan enactments. He expressed faith in his own plan,[83] and said the circulation of money must be stimulated to create consumption. Townsend said he believed in the capital-profit system, but wanted to correct its faults. Both the Democrats and Republicans had failed the country, he said.[84]

Smith denounced the New Deal and its "brain trust," declaring that "more socialism and communism have been put into effect than if either of those parties had elected its own candidate." He termed Frank Murphy as Roosevelt's proposed "governor-general of Michigan."[85]

It was at this rally that Recorder's Judge Jeffries espoused publicly the idea that the Farmer-Labor ticket might be used as the Michigan vehicle for Lemke. Judge Jeffries announced to the Townsendites that he would be an independent candidate for United States senator and endorse Lemke for president "if the National Union for Social Justice and Townsend groups and labor want me to."

The Farmer-Labor convention in Owosso (September 12) would be an "open convention," he said, to which Townsend and other friendly groups could get credentials for delegates.

"If you want me to run for the senate and Bill Lemke for president, prepare to go to Owosso and get what you want," he challenged.[86]

Lemke appeared at Olympia stadium in Detroit on September 9 for a rally of the National Union for Social Justice and other supporters, and attacked the dole system, the administration's trade policies and the piling up of the public debt.

He said one out of every ten in the United States was on relief--on disguised dole. The old-line politicians, he said, were too banker-minded to be aware of the nation's needs; the bureaucrats believed in concentration of power in Washington, in unemployment and the dole. Lemke rapped the restriction of crop production, and the importation of Asiatic goods produced by human slavery and misery. The nation's money and credit, he charged, were farmed out by the government to a few who had and would manipulate it to cause depressions, destroying property values and almost the nation.[87] Lemke called for abolition of tax-exempt bonds, and the substitution of currency for them. This, he said, would "be the first honest money the bankers ever had."[88]

Father Coughlin, sharing the platform with Lemke, proposed the sum of $1,800 as an "adequate annual wage" for labor, and said labor had the right to strike for it, if other means failed. He denounced the New Deal efforts at foreign entanglements for the United States, and urged the Democratic nomination of Louis B. Ward (his Washington lobbyist) for United States senator.[89]

Ward nearly rewarded Father Coughlin with a victory in the primary, losing by less than 7,500 votes to Congressman Prentiss M. Brown in a four-way race.[90] So close was the vote, that a recount was started, although called off before completion.[91] The Republican nomination for senator went to former Governor Wilber M. Brucker, who defeated Senator James Couzens, who had endorsed the New Deal.[92] Incumbent Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald handily was renominated over Roscoe Conkling Fitch,[93] and Father Coughlin's former intimate friend, Frank Murphy, had no difficulty in getting the Democratic nomination over George W. Welsh,[94] former Republican lieutenant governor, who had been endorsed by Townsend.[95]

The primary could not be regarded as a loss for Townsend, however, as Vernor W. Main once again held the

spotlight in the Third congressional district. This time, Congressman Main was defeated, with Townsend's blessings. The parting of the ways had come during the summer, when Main objected to not being consulted on plans of the Townsend organization in Washington, and frowned upon the reported alliance of Townsend with the Huey Long clubs.[96]

When the first state convention of Townsendites was held in Lansing, several endorsed candidates for congress were introduced, but Vernor Main was not among them.[97] And when shortly before the fall primary the Michigan Townsend organization and Father Coughlin's organization announced several congressional candidate favorites, the only endorsee, a joint one, in the Third district was Democrat Rosslyn L. Sowers of Charlotte.[98] The following day at a Townsend mass meeting in Kalamazoo, Sowers shared the platform with O. D. Davis, of the public relations bureau of the Townsend national office in Chicago. Stating that he was speaking officially for Townsend, he declared: "The day Congressman Main criticized Dr. Townsend at Washington the national organization decided to put the skids under Mr. Main."[99]

In the Republican primary on September 15, Main lost

the nomination by 400 votes to Municipal Judge Paul W. Shafer of Battle Creek,[100] after having waived Townsend support in a pre-primary statement. Rosslyn Sowers received the Democratic nomination.[101]

General election campaign. Louis Ward called off the recount of the votes in his contest with Congressman Brown on September 30, and the next day was nominated as a candidate for the senate by the Third Party at its adjourned convention in Detroit.[102] It was Ward's influence, one source reported, which had sent Father Coughlin to Washington to clinch Frank Murphy's appointment as high commissioner to the Philippines. Murphy was to have taken Ward with him as an adviser, a position Ward had occupied without pay during Murphy's most troublesome times as Detroit mayor, it was claimed, and at the last moment Murphy spurned Ward.[103]

It was beyond mid-October before Ward began to appear at major rallies. His two opponents, however, were actively engaged in a verbal duel around the state, Brucker attacking the New Deal and Brown defending it, but both ignoring Ward in their addresses.

Brucker claimed the administration's sugar policy had wrecked sugar beet production in Michigan; Brown defended the Jones-Costigan bill, providing quota regulation of sugar production, and said actually that none of Michigan's sugar plants had equalled their production quota in the four years the sugar bill had been in effect. He said there was no practical limit on sugar in the midwest.[104] Brucker attacked Brown's record as a congressman, charging him with absenteeism or abstenance from voting on 40 percent of the roll calls the last two years.[105] Brown said Brucker's campaign expenses had been big, and wondered if he was being supported by the chain store interests; he said Brucker left the governor's office with Michigan having a $28,000,000 deficit.[106]

Michigan residents got a glimpse of the two major presidential candidates when Governor Landon and President Roosevelt gave speeches in Detroit within 48 hours of each other, and made platform appearances in a few other cities in the state.

Speaking at Navin Field on October 13, Landon said the president was traveling the road to dictatorship, that a supine congress had surrendered its powers to the president,

who had abused them.[107] This brought an endorsement of the Republican candidate by Henry Ford, who declared America had had about all the New Deal it could stand.[108]

President Roosevelt spoke from the city hall steps in Detroit on October 15, and declared there would be no retreat in the New Deal. It had been responsible, he added, for the recovery of the auto industry, and he said federal relief expenditures had aided Detroit's recovery.[109]

Two Henry Wallaces were in the Michigan news late in October.

Henry A. Wallace, secretary of agriculture, was in Lansing to tell farmers and representatives of farm interests that reciprocal trade agreements had helped industry and farmers alike. He assailed the Smoot-Hawley protective tariff of the Hoover administration, and said Franklin Roosevelt's farm and gold revaluation program had put new buying power in the hands of farmers. Auto sales had jumped, he said, with new car sales up more in small towns than in large ones.[110]

Henry M. Wallace, a national committeeman in the 1912 coup which delivered Michigan to the Bull Moose party, refused

to join the Democratic camp. The retired Milford lawyer said the Michigan progressives who carried the state for Theodore Roosevelt wouldn't support Roosevelt or Murphy, and would probably vote Republican. Wallace said he resented the "betrayal" of former Governor Comstock (the selection of Murphy as the administration candidate), whom he claimed had carried Roosevelt in Michigan in 1932.[111]

Several thousand National Union for Social Justice members attended a rally at the Detroit fairgrounds on October 17, at which Father Coughlin declared he would vote for Republican Governor Fitzgerald, who appeared at the rally. Coughlin announced his break with Frank Murphy, whom he said was being "forced to come back for governor" at a salary drop from $18,000 to $5,000. He said he believed in state's rights, and so would put principles above friendship. He said he objected to "dealocrats" who told the people whom they should support for governor.[112]

Ward made an appearance on the platform at the fairgrounds rally, attacking the records of both his opponents for the senate.[113] He continued his attack on both Brown and Brucker at a Third Party rally in the Saginaw auditorium.

Brucker's organization, he said, was made up of Detroit bankers opposed to the principle of an annual living wage for the working man. Brown, he said, had voted in congress against publicity for income tax payers.[114]

On October 21, came formal announcements that both the Union Party and the Townsend Plan had severed relations with Gerald Smith, who had been on the national board of directors of the Townsend Plan.[115]

As election day neared, the Third Party forces moved into high gear. Lemke and Ward spoke in Saginaw and Port Huron on October 25, and Father Coughlin spoke in Flint.

Lemke predicted for 2,500 persons at the Saginaw Auditorium that no presidential candidate would get a majority of the electoral vote November 3, throwing the election into the house. He called the major party candidates "the gold dust twins," both tied to Wall Street.[116] He said the monetary policy of the administration--creating a $2,000,000,000 stabilization fund to dabble in European currency--would get the United States into another World War. He criticized the president's veto of the bonus bill, and said one or two million homes could have been saved by

the Frazier-Lemke bill. In running for congress as well as for president, Lemke said, he wanted to help elect himself and help write the laws "so I'll know what I'm signing as president."[117]

Ward, speaking at the Lemke rally, said the campaign's one issue was that of economic freedom. The New Deal philosophy (of restricting production), he said, "was conceived in Hell and you know it."[118]

In Port Huron, Lemke again charged "the gold dust twins" with playing with Wall Street. The New Deal, he said, was "double crossing the farmers by stealing one dollar from their pockets and giving them back ten cents, and then saying, 'Look what we've done for you.'"[119]

Father Coughlin asked 3,000 at a Social Justice rally in Flint to "put the hypocritical New Deal in the gutter where it belongs with the Hoover Old Deal." He said Murphy was handing out platitudes about his honesty, while he and a clique tried to keep the Third Party off the ballot.[120]

Following this last Third Party thrust in Michigan, Father Coughlin moved east. In New York City on October 31, he discussed the social security act, picturing it as only

guaranteeing security "for continuance of the money changers in power and for retention of an immoral wage system."[121] The next day he spoke in Scranton, Pennsylvania, calling Roosevelt "the upstart President" and "the revivor of the heresy of the divine right of kings." He decried dictatorship and "must legislation."[122]

When the election returns were in, Lemke had received 4.19 percent of the state's popular vote for president. Ward fared a shade better, with 4.44 percent of the popular vote for senator. Roosevelt, Brown and Murphy were victorious in Michigan.

Four days later, the dejected priest announced his retirement from radio; the National Union for Social Justice would become inactive.[123]

Summary. And so sputtered out the spark of the Lemke movement, after a campaign which featured in the key state of Michigan an attempt to weld together a strong, workable amalgamation of the poor, the aged, and the farmers who were too impatient with the efforts of a major party at grappling with the economic ills of the time. For each of the groups

there had been a spokesman: Flamboyant Father Coughlin for those whose only luxury was a radio receiving set, Townsend for those who desperately hoped to be able to afford to age gracefully, and William Lemke for the agricultural malcontents. Each was a personality in his own right, apparently believing in his own cause, but realizing that only in union was there opportunity for sufficient strength to achieve the ends of his followers. The degree to which the results were commensurate with their actual hopes is difficult to determine, but they succeeded in making in Michigan the strongest third party bid in 12 years past, and for at least 12 more years into the future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert Harris, "That Third Party," Current History, Vol. XLV, No. 1. New York: Current History, Inc., October, 1936, p. 77.

2. Ibid., p. 89.

3. Andrew A. Bruce, Non-Partisan League. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921, p. 70.

4. Herbert Harris, "That Third Party," Current History, Vol. XLV, No. 1. New York: Current History, Inc., October, 1936, p. 90.

5. Ibid., p. 91.

6. Andrew A. Bruce, Non-Partisan League. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921, p. 67.

7. Ibid., p. 4.

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12. Roger Shaw, "Third Parties of 1936," Review of Reviews, Vol. XCIV, No. 2. New York: Review of Reviews Corporation, August, 1936, p. 30.

13. Time Magazine, Vol. XXVII, No. 26, June 29, 1936, p. 10.

14. Roger Shaw, "Third Parties of 1936," Review of Reviews, Vol. XCIV, No. 2. New York: Review of Reviews Corporation, August, 1936, p. 30.

15. Time Magazine, Vol. XXVII, No. 26, June 29, 1936, p. 10.

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16. Lansing State Journal, October 3, 1936, p. 1, col. 2.

17. Hub M. George, Detroit Free Press, writer, interview, Michigan senate room, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

18. Bay City Times, September 10, 1936, p. 1, col. 8.

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CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF VOTE: PATTERNS AND CORRELATIONS

The bulk of Lemke's 75,795 votes, amounting to 4.19 percent of the popular vote for all candidates for president in Michigan, came mainly from the lower peninsula. As indicated in Figure 1, only one of the 15 counties of the upper peninsula, Menominee, gave Lemke a percentage of its vote at least equal to the state average.

The other 31 of Michigan's 83 counties giving Lemke a vote of as much or more than the state average were in the lower peninsula, with the bulk of Lemke's strength being in the Thumb area and across the center of the lower peninsula. The disparity between the lower and upper peninsula vote is further emphasized by the fact that 12 of the 15 counties in the upper were among those giving the least vote to Lemke, while only 9 of the 70 lower counties were in this bracket.

In an attempt to analyze the vote cast for Lemke in Michigan in 1936, this study seeks to determine first, whether any correlations exist between the Third Party vote and that for other significant minor parties, and second, to check other factors having possible bearing on the balloting.

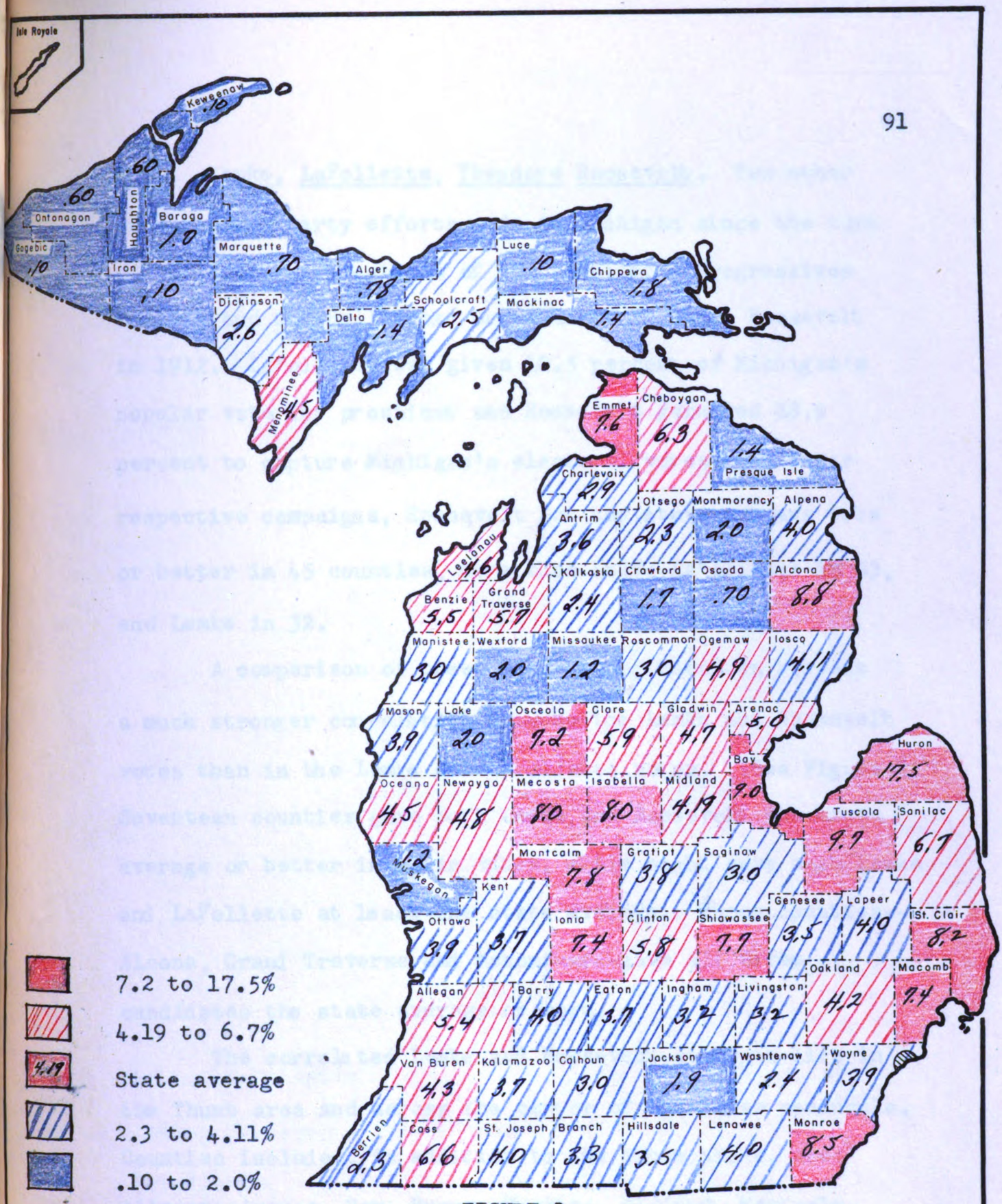

FIGURE 1

LEMKE'S PERCENTAGE OF PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

Lemke, LaFollette, Theodore Roosevelt. Two other strong minor party efforts made in Michigan since the turn of the century were those of the LaFollette Progressives in 1924 and the Bull Moose movement of Theodore Roosevelt in 1912. LaFollette was given 10.5 percent of Michigan's popular vote for president and Roosevelt garnered 38.9 percent to capture Michigan's electoral votes. In their respective campaigns, Roosevelt got the state average vote or better in 45 counties, more than half; LaFollette in 33, and Lemke in 32.

A comparison of these high-voting counties reveals a much stronger correlation between the Lemke and Roosevelt votes than in the Lemke and LaFollette votes. (See Figure 2) Seventeen counties gave both Lemke and Roosevelt the state average or better in their votes, while eight gave both Lemke and LaFollette at least the state average. Three counties--Alcona, Grand Traverse and Menominee--gave all three candidates the state average or more.

The correlated Lemke and Roosevelt strength lies in the Thumb area and across the center of the lower peninsula. Counties included, in addition to the three above, are: Allegan, Arenac, Bay, Huron, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, Newaygo, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Sanilac, St. Clair, Tuscola.

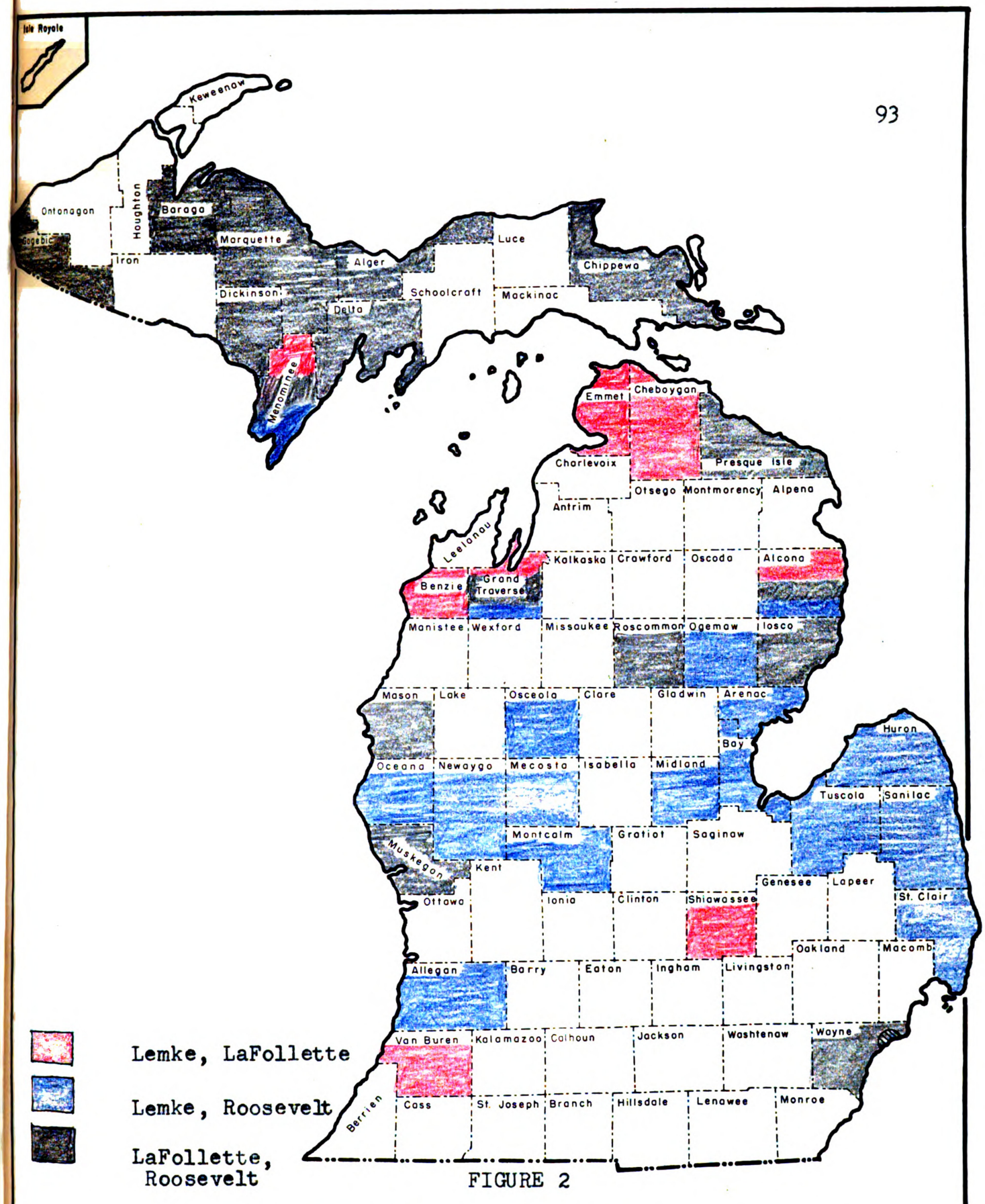

FIGURE 2

COUNTIES STATE AVERAGE OR MORE IN PERCENTAGE OF VOTE

In the case of the Lemke and LaFollette correlation, the counties are a bit more scattered, although five of the eight are in the upper portion of the lower peninsula. In addition to the three "constant" counties are: Benzie, Cheboygan, Emmet, Shiawassee and Van Buren.

Correlation of the voting for LaFollette and Theodore Roosevelt is almost as strong in the number of counties as that between Lemke and Roosevelt, and much stronger than that of Lemke and LaFollette. Sixteen counties, including Alcona, Grand Traverse and Menominee, gave both LaFollette and Roosevelt the state average or better of the popular vote for those candidates. Half the counties in this group are in the upper peninsula.

The vote percentages for all counties in the three campaigns are contained in Table IV, having been computed from the Michigan legislative manuals for the elections involved.

Lemke, Farmer-Labor. A measure of correlation exists between the Farmer-Labor vote and that for Lemke. For comparison purposes, the Farmer-Labor vote for auditor general in 1936, the party's top state candidate, is used. The party

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

County	Lemke	LaFollette	T. Roosevelt
Alcona	8.8*	12.6*	46.6*
Alger	0.7	20.6*	43.0*
Allegan	5.4*	6.6	40.8*
Alpena	4.0	7.9	46.0*
Antrim	3.6	9.2	49.0*
Arenac	5.0*	9.7	48.0*
Baraga	1.0	16.3*	44.6*
Barry	4.0	3.0	34.2
Bay	9.0*	8.5	42.3*
Benzie	5.5*	16.0*	34.0
Berrien	2.3	17.0*	36.3
Branch	3.3	10.1	29.7
Calhoun	3.0	11.0*	34.1
Cass	6.6*	8.5	26.6
Charlevoix	2.9	9.2	34.1
Cheboygan	6.3*	10.5*	36.0
Chippewa	1.8	14.1*	41.9*
Clare	5.9*	6.3	36.2
Clinton	5.8*	6.8	33.6
Crawford	1.7	11.8*	33.8
Delta	1.4	44.0*	43.7*
Dickinson	2.6	22.6*	39.6*
Eaton	3.7	3.5	30.4
Emmet	7.6*	11.4*	33.1
Genesee	3.5	5.1	44.5*
Gladwin	4.7*	9.9	33.6
Gogebic	0.1	23.1*	44.7*
Gr. Traverse	5.7*	13.2*	43.3*
Gratiot	3.8	2.2	36.0
Hillsdale	3.5	9.8	43.8*

TABLE IV (continued)

County	Lemke	LaFollette	Roosevelt
Houghton	0.6	9.4	44.6*
Huron	17.5*	9.0	49.9*
Ingham	3.2	4.3	36.3
Ionia	7.4*	4.3	33.3
Iosco	4.11	13.7*	44.8*
Iron	0.1	26.5*	38.2
Isabella	8.0*	4.1	36.7
Jackson	1.9	10.1	44.1*
Kalamazoo	3.7	9.3	33.5
Kalkaska	2.4	12.9*	34.0
Kent	3.7	9.0	42.6*
Keweenaw	0.1	4.2	45.2*
Lake	2.0	10.2	50.5*
Lapeer	4.0	3.2	49.9*
Leelanau	4.6*	10.4	38.6
Lenawee	4.0	5.2	31.5
Livingston	3.2	37.8*	29.4
Luce	0.1	7.8	43.2*
Mackinac	1.4	15.4*	22.3
Macomb	7.4*	9.4	24.7
Manistee	3.0	20.3*	27.7
Marquette	0.7	21.5*	46.1*
Mason	3.9	14.8*	44.0*
Mecosta	8.0*	6.0	41.4*
Menominee	4.5*	31.6*	40.9*
Midland	4.19*	7.0	46.4*
Missaukee	1.2	3.9	43.5*
Monroe	8.5*	8.7	25.7
Montcalm	7.8*	3.9	43.6*
Montmorency	2.0	22.5*	31.9
Muskegon	1.2	12.0*	52.3*
Newaygo	4.8*	6.2	47.1*
Oakland	4.2*	6.2	28.6
Oceana	4.5*	8.5	49.0*
Ogemaw	4.9*	7.2	42.3*

TABLE IV (continued)

County	Lemke	LaFollette	Roosevelt
Ontonagon	0.6	12.6*	29.2
Osceola	7.2*	6.5	39.9*
Oscoda	0.7	6.3	46.6*
Otsego	2.3	9.2	36.1
Ottawa	3.9	8.1	50.4*
Presque Isle	1.4	18.7*	45.6*
Roscommon	3.0	14.5*	46.0*
Saginaw	3.0	13.3*	31.4
Sanilac	6.7*	3.9	47.7*
Schoolcraft	2.5	29.1*	36.3
Shiawassee	7.7*	11.0*	37.6
St. Clair	8.2*	7.1	41.0*
St. Joseph	4.0	7.3	37.2
Tuscola	9.7*	7.0	45.4*
Van Buren	4.3*	11.3*	38.7
Washtenaw	2.4	8.6	34.5
Wayne	3.9	11.8*	39.2*
Wexford	2.0	8.7	42.1*
State	4.19*	10.5*	38.9*

*State average or above.

had no presidential candidate in Michigan after Lemke dropped his nomination by a faction of that organization to cast his lot with the Third Party forces. In 1932, the Farmer-Labor candidate, Jacob S. Coxey, drew but 137 votes in Michigan, scarcely sufficient for comparison. That was the first time the party had had a presidential candidate on the Michigan ballot since 1920.

Seventeen counties were above the state average in their vote for the Farmer-Labor candidate for auditor general in 1936. Of these, six in the center of the lower peninsula--Clare, Isabella, Mecosta, Montcalm, Newaygo and Osceola--and St. Clair in the Thumb were among the counties giving Lemke a vote considerably higher than his state average. (See Table V) Of the other 10 counties going over the state Farmer-Labor average in 1936, two were not far below Lemke's state average vote of 4.19 percent: Ottawa, 3.9, and Kent, 3.7. Thus, of the 17 high Farmer-Labor counties in 1936, nine were above or close to the state average vote for Lemke.

It might be noted, that of the other eight high Farmer-Labor counties, six were in the upper peninsula: Alger, Baraga, Delta, Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon. In other words, approximately one-third of the Farmer-Labor strength by counties was in the upper peninsula, an area in which Lemke had but one higher-than-state-average county.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE

County	Farmer-Labor (Auditor General, 1936)	Lemke
Alcona	.04	8.8*
Alger	.25*	0.7
Allegan	.12	5.4*
Alpena	.01	4.0
Antrim	.02	3.6
Arenac	.13	5.0*
Baraga	.34*	1.0
Barry	.08	4.0
Bay	.03	9.0*
Benzie	.18	5.5*
Berrien	.04	2.3
Branch	.04	3.3
Calhoun	.03	3.0
Cass	.06	6.6*
Charlevoix	.05	2.9
Cheboygan	.05	6.3*
Chippewa	.10	1.8
Clare	.26*	5.9*
Clinton	.02	5.8*
Crawford	---	1.7
Delta	.31*	1.4
Dickinson	.19	2.6
Eaton	.06	3.7
Emmet	.10	7.6*
Genesee	.09	3.5
Gladwin	.03	4.7*
Gogebic	.90*	0.1
Gr. Traverse	.07	5.7*
Gratiot	.03	3.8
Hillsdale	.07	3.5

TABLE V (continued)

County	Farmer-Labor (Auditor General, 1936)	Lemke
Houghton	.18	0.6
Huron	.05	17.5*
Ingham	.04	3.2
Ionia	.20	7.4*
Iosco	.03	4.11
Iron	.44*	0.1
Isabella	.29*	8.0*
Jackson	.07	1.9
Kalamazoo	.05	3.7
Kalkaska	.06	2.4
Kent	.26*	3.7
Keweenaw	.09	0.1
Lake	.04	2.0
Lapeer	.05	4.0
Leelanau	.06	4.6*
Lenawee	.06	4.0
Livingston	.01	3.2
Luce	---	0.1
Mackinac	---	1.4
Macomb	.12	7.4*
Manistee	.07	3.0
Marquette	.09	0.7
Mason	.11	3.9
Mecosta	1.2 *	8.0*
Menominee	.11	4.5*
Midland	.12	4.19*
Missaukee	---	1.2
Monroe	.10	8.5*
Montcalm	3.3 *	7.8*
Montmorency	---	2.0
Muskegon	.50*	1.2
Newaygo	.47*	4.8*
Oakland	.14	4.2*
Oceana	.11	4.5*
Ogemaw	.03	4.9*

TABLE V (continued)

County	Farmer-Labor (Auditor General, 1936)	Lemke
Ontonagon	.76*	0.6
Osceola	2.6 *	7.2*
Oscoda	----	0.7
Otsego	----	2.3
Ottawa	.37*	3.9
Presque Isle	.09	1.4
Roscommon	.13	3.0
Saginaw	.11	3.0
Sanilac	.05	6.7*
Schoolcraft	.02	2.5
Shiawassee	.10	7.7*
St. Clair	.30*	8.2*
St. Joseph	.007	4.0
Tuscola	.10	9.7*
Van Buren	.11	4.3*
Washtenaw	.33*	2.4
Wayne	.11	3.9
Wexford	----	2.0
State	.23*	4.19*

*State average or above.

Lemke, Communist Vote. A comparison of the vote for Lemke and that for the Communist party candidates for president in 1932 and 1936, plus the gubernatorial candidate in 1934, indicates that Lemke siphoned off some Communist voters in 1936.

There was a general trend of reduction in the Communist vote from 1932 to 1936, with 71 counties casting a smaller percentage for the party's candidate in 1936 than in the previous election, as shown in Table VI. Michigan's Communist vote had been quite consistent, county-wise, with 14 above the state average in 1932, 12 in 1934 and 16 in 1936. Eleven of the counties were the same in all three years: Nine in the upper peninsula--Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Marquette and Ontonagon--and Mason and Wayne in the lower peninsula. In all these 11 counties above the state average in Communist vote, Lemke was below the state average.

In only one county--Van Buren--did both Lemke and the Communist party obtain a state average or better vote in 1936. Thus, in the 31 other counties according Lemke state average or better, the Communist vote was below average. And in 15 other counties giving the Communist candidate his average or better, Lemke was below.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE

County	Communist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Alcona	----	0.05	----	8.8*
Alger	3.7*	2.2 *	1.1*	0.7
Allegan	0.1	0.08	0.03	5.4*
Alpena	0.05	----	0.02	4.0
Antrim	0.07	0.05	----	3.6
Arenac	0.3	0.3	0.14	5.0*
Baraga	2.9*	1.6 *	0.7*	1.0
Barry	0.01	0.03	0.07	4.0
Bay	0.01	0.01	0.02	9.0*
Benzie	1.0*	0.19	0.08	5.5*
Berrien	0.09	0.06	0.02	2.3
Branch	----	0.01	0.07	3.3
Calhoun	0.1	0.1	0.06	3.0
Cass	0.1	0.1	0.02	6.6*
Charlevoix	0.07	0.06	0.01	2.9
Cheboygan	0.1	0.09	0.01	6.3*
Chippewa	1.0*	0.6 *	0.2*	1.8
Clare	0.09	0.09	0.02	5.9*
Clinton	----	0.01	0.01	5.8*
Crawford	0.2	----	----	1.7
Delta	0.4	0.2	0.2*	1.4
Dickinson	0.53	0.3	0.18*	2.6
Eaton	0.007	0.008	----	3.7
Emmet	----	0.01	----	7.6*
Genesee	0.2	0.2	0.1	3.5
Gladwin	0.1	0.49*	----	4.7*
Gogebic	3.3*	1.7 *	0.5*	0.1
Gr. Traverse	0.07	0.06	0.02	5.7*
Gratiot	0.04	0.07	0.008	3.8
Hillsdale	0.1	0.1	0.02	3.5

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE

County	Communist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Alcona	----	0.05	----	8.8*
Alger	3.7*	2.2 *	1.1*	0.7
Allegan	0.1	0.08	0.03	5.4*
Alpena	0.05	----	0.02	4.0
Antrim	0.07	0.05	----	3.6
Arenac	0.3	0.3	0.14	5.0*
Baraga	2.9*	1.6 *	0.7*	1.0
Barry	0.01	0.03	0.07	4.0
Bay	0.01	0.01	0.02	9.0*
Benzie	1.0*	0.19	0.08	5.5*
Berrien	0.09	0.06	0.02	2.3
Branch	----	0.01	0.07	3.3
Calhoun	0.1	0.1	0.06	3.0
Cass	0.1	0.1	0.02	6.6*
Charlevoix	0.07	0.06	0.01	2.9
Cheboygan	0.1	0.09	0.01	6.3*
Chippewa	1.0*	0.6 *	0.2*	1.8
Clare	0.09	0.09	0.02	5.9*
Clinton	----	0.01	0.01	5.8*
Crawford	0.2	----	----	1.7
Delta	0.4	0.2	0.2*	1.4
Dickinson	0.53	0.3	0.18*	2.6
Eaton	0.007	0.008	----	3.7
Emmet	----	0.01	----	7.6*
Genesee	0.2	0.2	0.1	3.5
Gladwin	0.1	0.49*	----	4.7*
Gogebic	3.3*	1.7 *	0.5*	0.1
Gr. Traverse	0.07	0.06	0.02	5.7*
Gratiot	0.04	0.07	0.008	3.8
Hillsdale	0.1	0.1	0.02	3.5

TABLE VI (continued)

County	Communist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Houghton	1.9*	1.0*	0.3*	0.6
Huron	0.05	0.07	0.03	17.5*
Ingham	0.06	0.09	0.05	3.2
Ionia	----	0.02	0.01	7.4*
Iosco	0.2	0.1	0.11	4.11
Iron	3.3*	0.9*	0.4*	0.1
Isabella	0.05	0.1	0.08	8.0*
Jackson	0.2	0.2	0.10	1.9
Kalamazoo	0.51	0.1	0.09	3.7
Kalkaska	----	0.06	----	2.4
Kent	0.3	0.3	0.14	3.7
Keweenaw	0.9*	0.8*	0.5*	0.1
Lake	1.3*	0.2	0.08	2.0
Lapeer	0.06	0.002	0.01	4.0
Leelanau	0.1	0.3	0.08	4.6*
Lenawee	0.03	0.09	0.01	4.0
Livingston	0.03	0.03	----	3.2
Luce	0.9*	0.41	0.2*	0.1
Mackinac	0.02	0.02	----	1.4
Macomb	0.54	0.43	0.17	7.4*
Manistee	0.3	0.2	0.09	3.0
Marquette	1.7*	0.8*	0.2*	0.7
Mason	0.6*	0.48*	0.19*	3.9
Mecosta	0.09	0.05	0.12	8.0*
Menominee	0.2	0.1	0.09	4.5*
Midland	0.01	0.07	0.07	4.19*
Missaukee	0.1	0.03	0.06	1.2
Monroe	0.1	0.1	0.02	8.5*
Montcalm	0.008	0.08	0.009	7.8*
Montmorency	0.1	0.3	----	2.0

TABLE VI (continued)

County	1932 (President)	Communist 1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Muskegon	0.3	0.41	0.13*	1.2
Newaygo	0.1	0.1	0.06	4.8*
Oakland	0.3	0.3	0.10	4.2*
Oceana	0.1	0.2	0.08	4.5*
Ogemaw	0.06	0.06	0.05	4.9*
Ontonagon	6.1*	4.5*	2.0*	0.6
Osceola	0.09	----	0.05	7.2*
Oscoda	----	----	----	0.7
Otsego	----	----	----	2.3
Ottawa	0.09	0.08	0.04	3.9
Presque Isle	0.1	0.02	----	1.4
Roscommon	0.2	----	----	3.0
Saginaw	0.1	0.1	0.03	3.0
Sanilac	0.02	----	0.009	6.7*
Schoolcraft	0.02	----	0.05	2.5
Shiawassee	0.02	0.01	0.05	7.7*
St. Clair	0.02	0.06	0.007	8.2*
St. Joseph	0.03	0.03	0.007	4.0
Tuscola	0.008	0.04	0.009	9.7*
Van Buren	0.06	0.1	0.18*	4.3*
Washtenaw	0.2	0.2	0.11	2.4
Wayne	0.9*	0.9*	0.32*	3.9
Wexford	0.05	0.08	0.04	2.0
State	0.56*	0.45*	0.18*	4.19*

*State average or above.

Another indication that Lemke drew votes from the Communists in 1936 is in the fact that in 35 counties, the 1934 Communist vote had been equal to or higher than it had been in 1932, but dropped in 1936. Included in these counties are 18 of Lemke's highest counties. (See Figure 3) The decline in the total Communist vote in 1936 from 1934 was more than twice that from 1932 to 1934.

Lemke, Socialist vote. Comparison of Lemke's vote with that of the Socialist party for 1932, 1934 and 1936 reveals some of the same indications as the Lemke-Communist Party comparison.

Again is found a general trend of reduction in the Socialist vote from 1932 to 1936, with indications that Lemke accounted for some of this difference. In one county, only, Keweenaw, did the vote percentage for the Socialist candidate for president go up in 1936 from 1932; in all others, the vote was less in 1936. (See Table VII, page 108)

Whereas 32 counties gave Lemke his state average or better, only 19 gave the Socialist candidate his state average vote or better in 1936, a considerable decline from the 30 counties of 1932 and 1934. A correlation of the vote reveals that in only four counties--Benzie, Montcalm, Newaygo

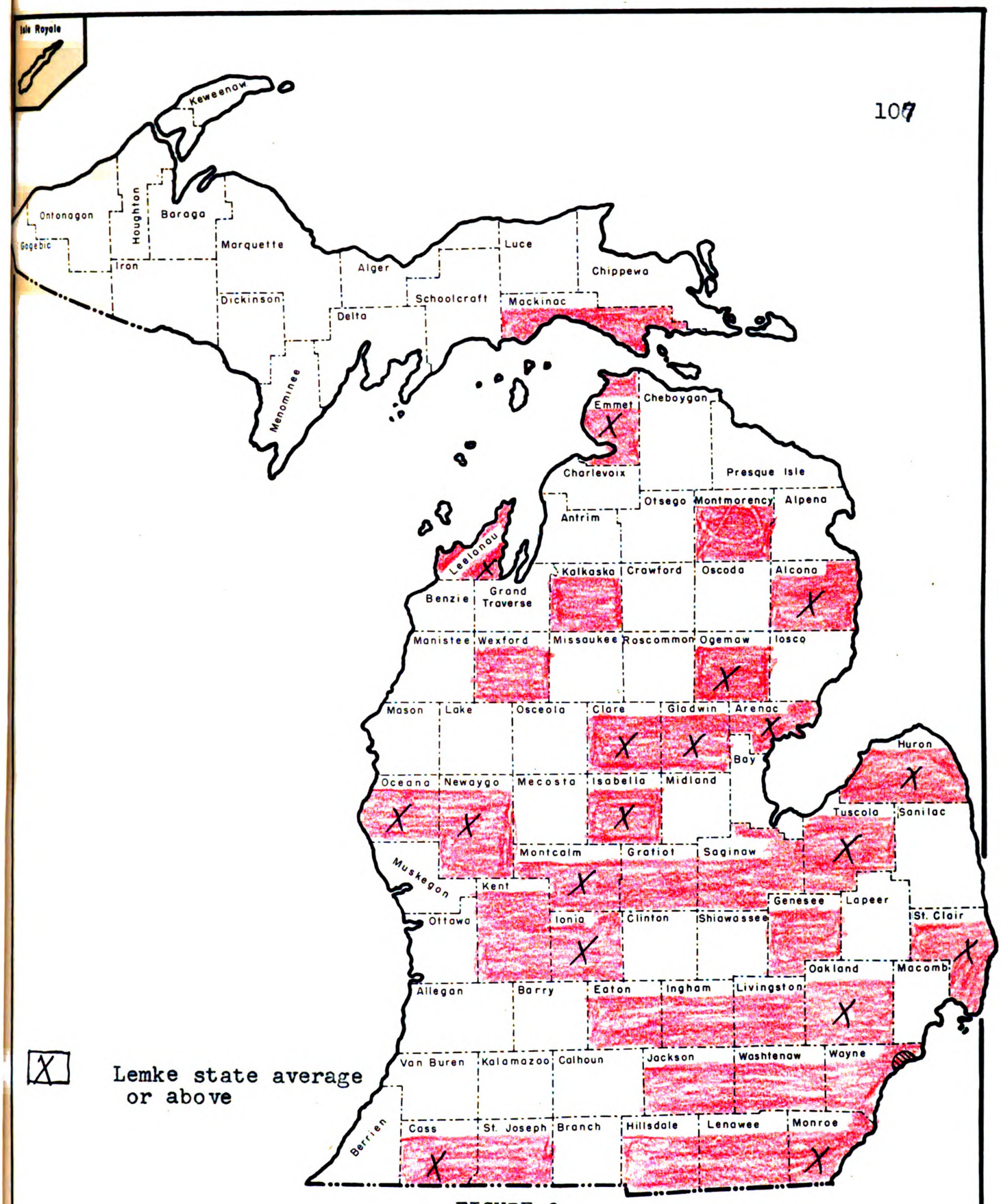

FIGURE 3

1934 COMMUNIST VOTE EQUAL TO OR HIGHER THAN IN 1932 BUT DOWN IN 1936

TABLE VII

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE

County	Socialist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Alcona	3.9*	1.1*	0.1	8.8*
Alger	2.0	0.5	0.2	0.7
Allegan	1.6	0.6	0.1	5.4*
Alpena	2.8*	1.0*	0.3	4.0
Antrim	3.4*	1.9*	0.2	3.6
Arenac	2.3	0.5	0.2	5.0*
Baraga	0.5	0.2	---	1.0
Barry	2.2	0.91	0.3	4.0
Bay	2.1	1.0*	0.2	9.0*
Benzie	3.2*	1.0*	0.5*	5.5*
Berrien	1.7	0.5	0.2	2.3
Branch	1.7	0.5	0.1	3.3
Calhoun	2.6*	1.4*	0.45*	3.0
Cass	2.0	0.4	0.1	6.6*
Charlevoix	5.6*	3.1*	1.1*	2.9
Cheboygan	0.8	0.98*	0.41	6.3*
Chippewa	0.6	0.2	0.2	1.8
Clare	2.7*	0.5	0.43	5.9*
Clinton	0.8	0.2	0.3	5.8*
Crawford	1.2	3.9*	0.8*	1.7
Delta	3.8*	0.98*	0.5*	1.4
Dickinson	2.7*	0.99*	0.46*	2.6
Eaton	2.7*	1.9*	0.49*	3.7
Emmet	3.9*	1.3*	0.3	7.6*
Genesee	2.7*	0.7	0.3	3.5
Gladwin	2.5*	0.3	0.17	4.7*
Gogebic	1.7	0.4	0.3	0.1
Gr. Traverse	2.0	0.4	0.2	5.7*
Gratiot	1.5	0.7	0.3	3.8
Hillsdale	1.5	0.2	0.2	3.5

TABLE VII (continued)

County	Socialist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Houghton	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.6
Huron	1.6	2.1*	0.3	17.5*
Ingham	2.1	0.8	0.3	3.2
Ionia	1.7	0.5	0.3	7.4*
Iosco	2.8*	0.3	0.3	4.11
Iron	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1
Isabella	1.2	0.4	0.3	8.0*
Jackson	2.2	0.4	0.2	1.9
Kalamazoo	2.5*	1.6*	0.40	3.7
Kalkaska	7.3*	2.7*	0.9*	2.4
Kent	2.7*	0.7	0.5*	3.7
Keweenaw	0.2	0.2	0.41	0.1
Lake	2.0	0.3	0.3	2.0
Lapeer	1.6	0.4	0.2	4.0
Leelanau	0.8	0.1	0.2	4.6*
Lenawee	0.9	0.3	0.2	4.0
Livingston	1.1	0.8	0.1	3.2
Luce	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1
Mackinac	0.5	0.5	0.2	1.4
Macomb	2.2	1.1*	0.3	7.4*
Manistee	3.9*	1.2*	0.40	3.0
Marquette	1.4	0.3	0.2	0.7
Mason	3.5*	1.0*	0.3	3.9
Mecosta	1.6	0.5	0.2	8.0*
Menominee	2.9*	1.4*	0.42	4.5*
Midland	1.6	0.7	0.40	4.19*
Missaukee	1.3	0.5	0.1	1.2
Monroe	1.3	0.2	0.1	8.5*
Montcalm	4.0*	1.2*	0.5*	7.8*
Montmorency	3.6*	0.6	0.6*	2.0

TABLE VII (continued)

County	Socialist 1932 (President)	1934 (Governor)	1936 (President)	Lemke
Muskegon	1.9	0.6	0.45*	1.2
Newaygo	2.6*	0.3	0.6*	4.8*
Oakland	2.8*	1.0*	0.42	4.2*
Oceana	2.1	0.7	0.40	4.5*
Ogemaw	2.2	0.2	0.5*	4.9*
Ontonagon	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.6
Osceola	1.1	0.4	0.3	7.2*
Oscoda	1.1	0.6	0.1	0.7
Otsego	4.3*	1.3*	0.2	2.3
Ottawa	2.7*	1.4*	0.3	3.9
Presque Isle	1.8	0.2	0.2	1.4
Roscommon	2.9*	0.97*	0.7*	3.0
Saginaw	2.0	0.8	0.47*	3.0
Sanilac	2.0	1.1*	0.1	6.7*
Schoolcraft	3.2*	1.1*	0.48*	2.5
Shiawassee	1.6	0.6	0.3	7.7*
St. Clair	1.1	1.2*	0.2	8.2*
St. Joseph	1.7	0.8	0.2	4.0
Tuscola	1.2	0.3	0.1	9.7*
Van Buren	2.7*	0.7	0.3	4.3*
Washtenaw	3.6*	1.1*	0.5*	2.4
Wayne	2.6*	1.2*	0.6*	3.9
Wexford	1.3	0.6	0.2	2.0
State	2.4*	0.95*	0.45*	4.19*

*State average or above.

and Ogemaw--was the vote state average or better for both Lemke and the Socialist candidate.

Another indication that Lemke pulled some votes from the Socialist Party is found in a check of 11 counties in which the Socialists were equal to or above state average in 1932 and 1934, but in which they dropped below in 1936. In four of these counties, Lemke polled more than his state average; in five of the other seven he was not far from his state average: Alcona, 8.8 percent; Emmet, 7.6; Menominee, 4.5; Oakland, 4.2; Alpena, 4.0; Mason and Ottawa, 3.9; Kalamazoo, 3.7; Antrim, 3.6; Manistee, 3.0; and Otsego, 2.3.

In five counties--Cheboygan, Crawford, Huron, Mackinac and St. Clair--the Socialist vote percentage in 1934 was equal to or better than in 1932, but declined in 1936. Three of these five were strong for Lemke--Cheboygan, 6.3 percent; Huron, 17.5; and St. Clair, 8.2.

As in the case of the Communist vote, a certain geographic consistency in the vote is noted in the case of the Socialist Party. With 30 counties equalling or going over the state average in 1932 and 1934, 22 of them were the same. Of the 19 in 1936, 12 were in the 30 of 1934 and 15 in the 30 of 1932.

Lemke, Prohibition vote. The strongest correlation is found between the vote for Lemke and that in the 1932, 1928 and 1924 elections for the Prohibition Party candidates. The Prohibition Party had no presidential candidate on the Michigan ballot in 1936, and there is strong evidence that Lemke picked up sympathizers of that party in at least half the state.

As shown in Figure 4, in 26 of the 32 counties giving Lemke his state average vote or more, there had been an above average vote in 1932 for the Prohibition candidate. That most of these counties had been Prohibition strongholds for some time is evidenced in the fact that in 21 of the 26 counties, the vote had been above the state average in 1928 also, and in 19 of them in 1924 as well. (See Table VIII, page 114) Only 6 of the 32 counties giving Lemke his state average or more in 1936 had not been up to average for the 1932 Prohibition candidate, and in two of those--Cheboygan and Macomb--the vote was very nearly on the state mark.

In all, 54 counties gave the Prohibition candidate a 1932 vote equal to or better than his state average. As has been stated, 26 of these gave Lemke his state average or better in 1936. In addition, in 10 other of these 54

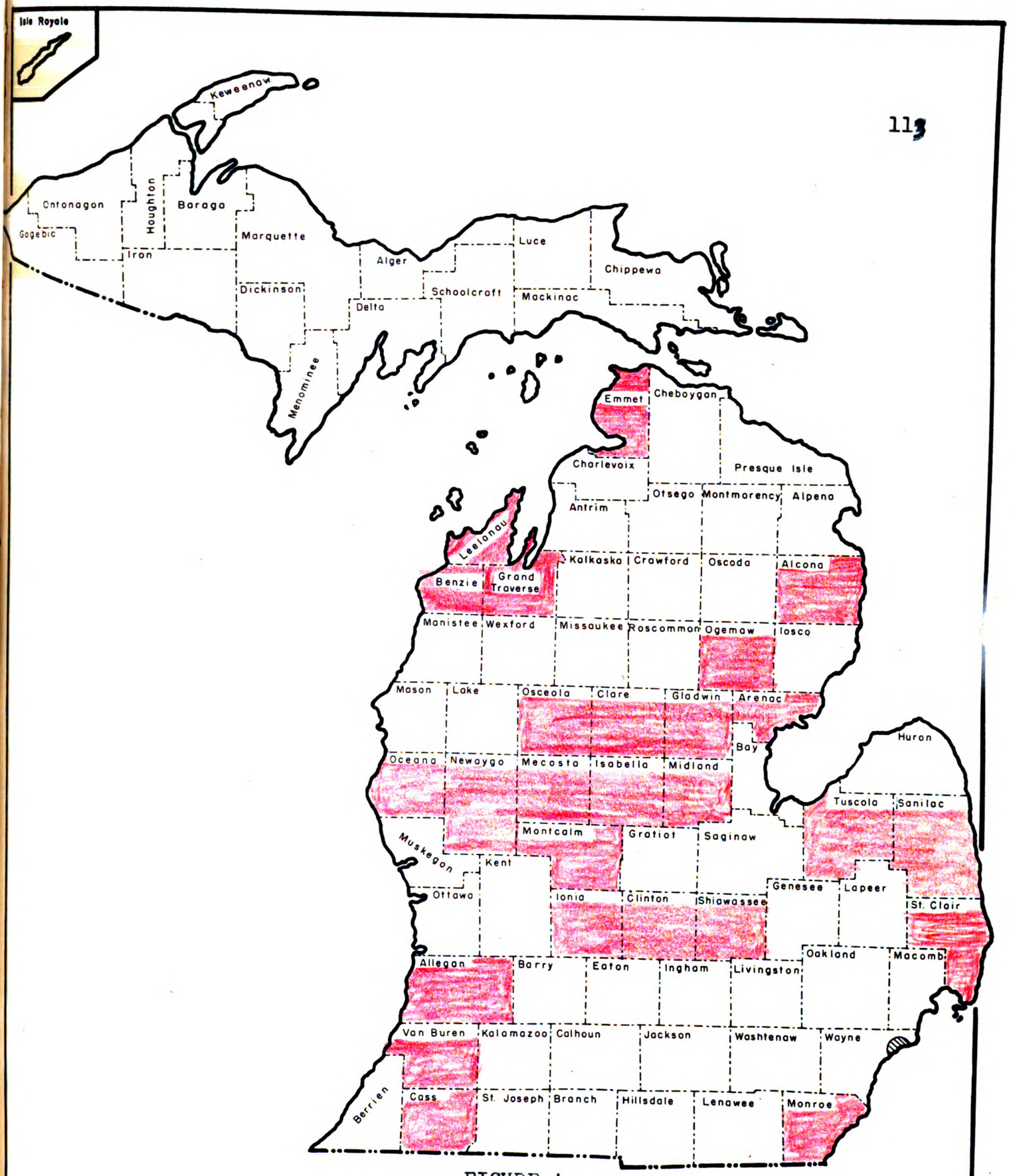

FIGURE 4

COUNTIES ABOVE AVERAGE IN LEMKE VOTE
AND IN 1932 PROHIBITION VOTE

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

County	Prohibition 1924	Prohibition 1928	1932	Lemke
Alcona	1.4*	.27*	0.2*	8.8*
Alger	1.5*	.13	0.10	0.7
Allegan	.57*	.30*	0.2*	5.4*
Alpena	.34	.10	0.12	4.0
Antrim	.78*	.33*	0.2*	3.6
Arenac	.53*	.12	0.19*	5.0*
Baraga	1.5*	.11	0.04	1.0
Barry	.55*	.55*	0.7*	4.0
Bay	.61*	.11	0.04	9.0*
Benzie	1.6*	.13	0.3*	5.5*
Berrien	.64*	.24*	0.2*	2.3
Branch	.74*	.48*	0.9*	3.3
Calhoun	.67*	.23*	0.2*	3.0
Cass	.56*	.40*	0.6*	6.6*
Charlevoix	.88*	.11	0.15	2.9
Cheboygan	1.0*	.24*	0.15	6.3*
Chippewa	.51	.11	0.10	1.8
Clare	.76*	.30*	0.2*	5.9*
Clinton	.43	.31*	0.2*	5.8*
Crawford	.60*	.19*	0.2*	1.7
Delta	.50	.20*	0.01	1.4
Dickinson	1.2*	.05	0.09	2.6
Eaton	.49	.33*	0.5*	3.7
Emmet	.80*	.24*	0.2*	7.6*
Genesee	.30	.13	0.15	3.5
Gladwin	.94*	.18	0.4*	4.7*
Gogebic	.21	.19*	0.13	0.1
Gr. Traverse	1.0*	.26*	0.2*	5.7*
Gratiot	.60*	.42*	0.7*	3.8
Hillsdale	.69*	.42*	0.6*	3.5

TABLE VIII (continued)

County	Prohibition 1924	1928	1932	Lemke
Houghton	.49	.13	0.07	0.6
Huron	.55*	.23*	0.09	17.5*
Ingham	.42	.24*	0.2*	3.2
Ionia	.60*	.45*	0.3*	7.4*
Iosco	1.3*	.28*	0.12	4.11
Iron	1.3*	.12	0.04	0.1
Isabella	.76*	.50*	0.4*	8.0*
Jackson	.49	.29*	0.2*	1.9
Kalamazoo	.39	.27*	0.4*	3.7
Kalkaska	1.3*	.42*	1.3*	2.4
Kent	.44	.28*	0.16	3.7
Keweenaw	.38	.64*	0.04	0.1
Lake	.25	.25*	----	2.0
Lapeer	.53*	.36*	0.4*	4.0
Leelanau	.96*	.41*	0.18*	4.6*
Lenawee	.44	.45*	0.2*	4.0
Livingston	.55*	.25*	0.3*	3.2
Luce	.85*	.32*	0.2*	0.1
Mackinac	.38	.15	0.02	1.4
Macomb	.33	.19*	0.13	7.4*
Manistee	.67*	1.9*	0.2*	3.0
Marquette	.87*	.17	0.07	0.7
Mason	1.1*	.16	0.3*	3.9
Mecosta	.65*	.31*	0.3*	8.0*
Menominee	.61*	.12	0.04	4.5*
Midland	1.2*	.21*	0.2*	4.19*
Missaukee	.64*	.39*	0.8*	1.2
Monroe	.47	.21*	0.18*	8.5*
Montcalm	.88*	.42*	0.4*	7.8*
Montmorency	1.1*	.18	0.3*	2.0

TABLE VIII (continued)

County	Prohibition 1924	1928	1932	Lemke
Muskegon	.37	.16	0.19*	1.2
Newaygo	.89*	.34*	0.2*	4.8*
Oakland	.46	.07	0.09	4.2*
Oceana	1.1*	.46*	0.6*	4.5*
Ogemaw	.87*	.27*	0.2*	4.9*
Ontonagon	.73*	.14	0.11	0.6
Osceola	1.0*	.37*	0.4*	7.2*
Oscoda	----	----	0.6*	0.7
Otsego	.51	.19*	0.04	2.3
Ottawa	.36	.31*	0.2*	3.9
Presque Isle	.78*	.26*	0.12	1.4
Roscommon	.86*	.29*	0.2*	3.0
Saginaw	.46	.35*	0.14	3.0
Sanilac	.54*	.16	0.2*	6.7*
Schoolcraft	.97*	.29*	0.17*	2.5
Shiawassee	1.1*	.33*	0.4*	7.7*
St. Clair	.30	.16	0.19*	8.2*
St. Joseph	.51	.29*	0.5*	4.0
Tuscola	.97*	.42*	0.2*	9.7*
Van Buren	.69*	.33*	0.2*	4.3*
Washtenaw	.46	.18	0.15	2.4
Wayne	.33	.08	0.04	3.9
Wexford	1.4*	.31*	0.3*	2.0
State	.52*	.19*	0.17*	4.19*

*State average or above.

counties, the 1936 Lemke vote was from 3.5 to 4 percent, close to his state average of 4.19 percent, and in 6 other counties of the 54 his vote was from 3 to 3.3 percent. Thus, in 42 counties there are indications that Lemke drew support from the ranks of those voters who had balloted for the Prohibition Party in 1932, and many of whom had voted as Drys in the two preceding elections.

Although the Prohibition vote, like that for other minor parties, was declining by 1932, a certain consistency in the party's efforts is noted. In 1932, 54 counties were equal to or above the state average vote; in 1928, a total of 57 counties so voted; in 1924 the figure had been 55..

There had been a decided drop in the Prohibitionist votes in 1928 from 1924, as many Drys undoubtedly cast their lot with Hoover in an effort to prevent Alfred Smith from becoming president.

With no candidate of their own and not sympathetic to an administration which had brought about repeal, the Prohibitionists who did not vote in protest for Alfred Landon in 1936 cast their ballots for William Lemke, since other minor parties declined in strength from 1932 to 1936 (see Table I, page 2).

Lemke vote a rural vote. In discussing the composition of Michigan's population, J. Allan Beegle, professor of sociology and anthropology at Michigan State College, has pointed out that although the state was predominantly urban in terms of total population as of 1940--with 65.7 percent of the people residing in places having 2,500 persons or more[1]--practically three-fourths of the counties contained more rural than urban persons. There were 61 of these counties, varying greatly in the degree of rurality, including 22 counties completely rural.[2]

A check of Table IX reveals that there are eight counties equal to or over the state average of 65.7 percent urban population. In none of these counties did Lemke get his state average vote of 4.19 percent:

County	Lemke vote
Wayne	3.9
Kent	3.7
Genesee	3.5
Ingham	3.2
Dickinson	2.6
Muskegon	1.2
Marquette	0.7
Gogebic	0.1

Of the 22 counties indicated as having 50 percent or more urban residents, only four of them gave Lemke better than his state average vote: Bay, 9.0; St. Clair, 8.2; Grand Traverse, 5.7; and Oakland, 4.2.

TABLE IX

COMPARISON OF LEMKE VOTE, COUNTIES' DEGREE OF URBANITY

County	Percent Urban	Lemke Vote
Alcona	----	8.8*
Alger	43.4	0.7
Allegan	19.0	5.4*
Alpena	61.7	4.0
Antrim	----	3.6
Arenac	----	5.0*
Baraga	27.4	1.0
Barry	22.9	4.0
Bay	64.0	9.0*
Benzie	----	5.5*
Berrien	46.0	2.3
Branch	28.4	3.3
Calhoun	60.6	3.0
Cass	22.9	6.6*
Charlevoix	22.3	2.9
Cheboygan	41.6	6.3*
Chippewa	57.0	1.8
Clare	----	5.9*
Clinton	16.6	5.8*
Crawford	----	1.7
Delta	58.2	1.4
Dickinson	71.6*	2.6
Eaton	36.6	3.7
Emmet	38.1	7.6*
Genesee	68.0*	3.5
Gladwin	----	4.7*
Gogebic	66.2*	0.1
Gr. Traverse	61.8	5.7*
Gratiot	31.8	3.8
Hillsdale	21.9	3.5

TABLE IX (continued)

County	Percent Urban	Lemke Vote
Houghton	27.7	0.6
Huron	8.0	17.5*
Ingham	67.0*	3.2
Ionia	29.4	7.4*
Iosco	----	4.11
Iron	34.9	0.1
Isabella	32.4	8.0*
Jackson	53.3	1.9
Kalamazoo	54.1	3.7
Kalkaska	----	2.4
Kent	68.7*	3.7
Keweenaw	----	0.1
Lake	----	2.0
Lapeer	16.7	4.0
Leelanau	----	4.6*
Lenawee	32.3	4.0
Livingston	18.0	3.2
Luce	36.8	0.1
Mackinac	28.3	1.4
Macomb	44.8	7.5*
Manistee	47.1	3.0
Marquette	68.4*	0.7
Mason	44.9	3.9
Mecosta	29.5	8.0*
Menominee	41.1	4.5*
Midland	38.1	4.19*
Missaukee	----	1.2
Monroe	31.5	8.5*
Montcalm	18.6	7.8*
Montmorency	----	2.0
Muskegon	67.4*	1.2
Newaygo	13.1	4.8*
Oakland	56.3	4.2*
Oceana	----	4.5*
Ogemaw	----	4.9*

TABLE IX (continued)

County	Percent Urban	Lemke Vote
Ontonagon	----	0.6
Osceola	----	7.2*
Oscoda	----	0.7
Otsego	----	2.3
Ottawa	44.3	3.9
Presque Isle	25.1	1.4
Roscommon	----	3.0
Saginaw	63.5	3.0
Sanilac	----	6.7*
Schoolcraft	56.7	2.5
Shiawassee	42.6	7.7*
St. Clair	52.3	8.2*
St. Joseph	43.9	4.0
Tuscola	8.6	9.7*
Van Buren	13.5	4.3*
Washtenaw	51.9	2.4
Wayne	95.7*	3.9
Wexford	54.8	2.0
State	65.7*	4.19*

*State average or above.

aPercent urban figures from J. Allan Beegle, Michigan Population Composition and Change. East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947; Table I, "Number and percentage of population, by residence and county, 1940," pp. 76-78.

Of the 22 Michigan counties completely rural, 10 gave Lemke more than his state average vote, and an eleventh county was just under his state average:

County	Lemke Vote	County	Lemke Vote
Alcona	8.8	Antrim	3.6
Osceola	7.2	Roscommon	3.0
Sanilac	6.7	Kalkaska	2.4
Clare	5.9	Otsego	2.3
Benzie	5.5	Lake	2.0
Arenac	5.0	Montmorency	2.0
Ogemaw	4.9	Crawford	1.7
Gladwin	4.7	Missaukee	1.2
Leelanau	4.6	Oscoda	0.7
Oceana	4.5	Ontonagon	0.6
Iosco	4.11	Keweenaw	0.1

All in all, 28 of the 32 counties giving Lemke his state average vote of 4.19 percent or better were counties having 50 percent or more rural residents, as shown on Figure 5. Thus, in only four strong Lemke counties are the areas classed as urban--Bay, Grand Traverse, St. Clair and Oakland. Beegle, however, points out that the areas adjacent to some of the major cities are heavily populated by farmers. He said this tendency could be observed in the area surrounding Bay City.[3]

George W. Welsh, who had sought the Democratic nomination for governor in the September 15, 1936, primary, termed the Lemke movement primarily a farm movement.[4]

Herman Dignan, former state representative, senator

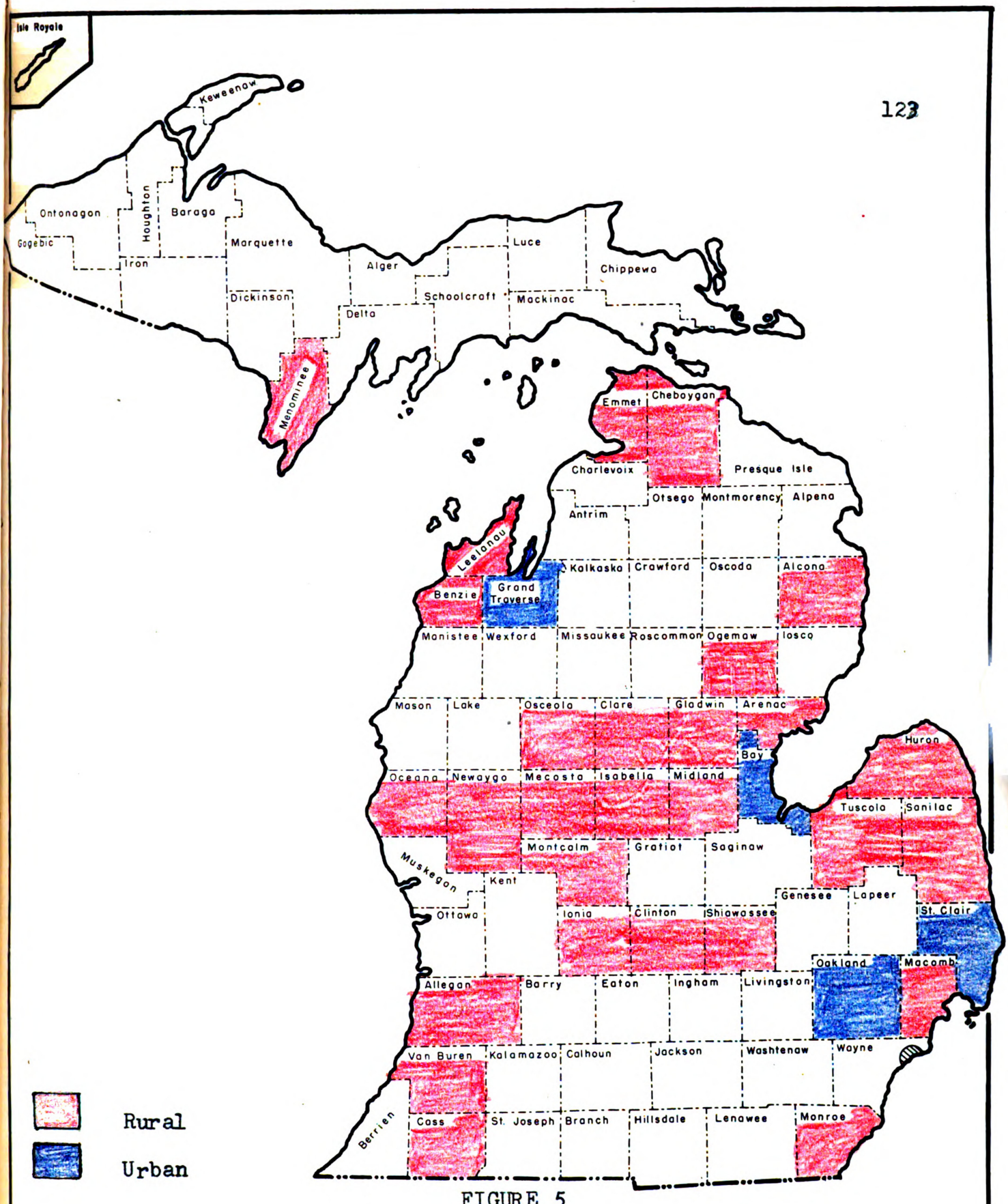

FIGURE 5

COUNTIES STATE AVERAGE OR ABOVE FOR LEMKE

and secretary of state, also said the Lemke vote was a rural vote, pointing to the 15th senatorial district--Shiawassee, 7.7 percent for Lemke; Clinton, 5.8; and Eaton, 3.7.[5]

Also contending that there was not much city vote for Lemke is W. F. Doyle, legislative agent for the Michigan Chain Stores Bureau. He said evidence is found in the fact that Wayne county's vote (3.9 percent) was less than Lemke's state average.[6]

Likewise, Senator Harry F. Hittle stated, "I believe Lemke drew most of his support from rural counties."[7]

Lemke vote, farm mortgage foreclosures. There is some correlation between the number of farm mortgage foreclosures in Michigan and the vote for Lemke, co-author of the Frazier-Lemke bill designed to aid distressed farmers.

The evidence, however, is restricted to the only compilation of Michigan farm mortgage foreclosures apparently available, contained in a federal WPA survey of transfers of farm real estate in 485 selected United States counties, done in 1936. The survey contains the estimated number of total distress transfers of realty, including foreclosures, assignments to creditors, sales for taxes and bankruptcies.

The nine Michigan counties, and the correlation with the Lemke vote, are:

TABLE X

LEMKE VOTE, REALTY DISTRESS TRANSFERS

County	Lemke vote	Farm mortgage foreclosures		Total distress transfers	
Shiawassee	7.7	Lapeer	42	Lapeer	58
Arenac	5.0	Lenawee	28	Lenawee	42
Lapeer	4.0	Calhoun	25	Shiawassee	42
Lenawee	4.0	Shiawassee	25	Calhoun	40
Mason	3.9	Mason	14	Arenac	28
Calhoun	3.0	Arenac	12	Mason	24
Charlevoix	2.9	Charlevoix	5	Charlevoix	7
Jackson	1.9	Jackson	2	Jackson	2
Marquette	0.7	Marquette	0	Marquette	0

*Foreclosures, total distress transfers from Transfers Of Farm Real Estate. Washington: United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, August, 1939, pp. 32-34.

Shiawassee, highest of the nine counties of the survey in its Lemke vote, ranks tied for third high in the number of farm mortgage foreclosures, and second high for total distress transfers. Arenac, second high in Lemke vote, is fourth lowest in foreclosures and the fourth highest in total distress transfers. Lapeer and Lenawee, just under Lemke's state average vote of 4.19, and third highest, are first and second, respectively, in total distress transfers. Mason, also just

under the state average Lemke vote with 3.9 percent, and fourth high, is also fourth in foreclosures and fifth in total distress transfers. And at the bottom of the group are Charlevoix, Jackson and Marquette, ranking in that order in Lemke vote, foreclosures and total distress transfers.

In terms of total distress transfers, the correlation with the Lemke vote is even stronger than in the case of mortgage foreclosures alone.

Lemke and the Farmers' Union. There seems to be no question but what the Farmers' Union was a strong factor in the rural vote for Lemke, particularly in the Thumb area and the center of the lower peninsula.

The two men credited with organizing the Farmers' Union in Michigan were John W. Lentz of Maybee, in Monroe county, and Blythe Kellerman of Elkton, in Huron county. Monroe gave Lemke a vote of 8.5 percent, and Huron accorded him 17.5 percent.

Lentz, who was president of the Michigan Farmers' Union at the time of his death in February, 1936, and Kellerman organized the Thumb area farmers for their first

trip to Washington in 1935 to discuss farm problems. Kellerman said it was Lentz, who, when advised by congressmen in 1933 to return to Michigan and organize the farmers, had done so.[8] By early 1936 there were reported to be 300 Farm Union locals in the state, with 30,000 members.[9] It was Kellerman who took charge of the second Farmers' Union tour to Washington in March, 1936.[10] Immediate successor to Lentz as head of the Farmers' Union was Edward A. Rohlfs of Akron,[11] located in Tuscola county, which gave Lemke 9.7 percent of its presidential vote.

When the organization elected new officers in October, 1936, at the state convention in Big Rapids, the new leader was Ira Wilmoth, Adrian farmer.[12] Adrian is in Lenawee county, which was just under the state average with 4 percent of its vote for Lemke. Vice president was Roy S. McDonnell of St. Clair, in St. Clair county which voted 8.2 percent for Lemke. Delegates named to the national convention were Chester Graham of Grant and President Wilmoth. Grant is in Newaygo county, which voted 4.8 percent for Lemke. At the convention in Big Rapids (in Mecosta county which went 8 percent for Lemke), there were some Lemke-O'Brien banners in the parade.[13]

In July, the Tuscola County Farmers' Union picnic drew 1,200 Thumb farmers to hear the speaker, Edward E. Kennedy, national secretary of the Farmers' Union, urge support of Lemke.[14] And in August, the Sanilac County Farm Union picnic at Forrester drew 2,000.[15]

The activity of the Farmers' Union in the Thumb and Saginaw Bay area is noticeable from the amount of space devoted to it by the Bay City Times. For example, when the farmers took their tour to Washington to meet with congressmen, the Times carried stories daily from the time they left home until they returned.[16]

Many Michigan political observers still on the scene today are of the opinion that the Farmers' Union played a vital role in the Lemke campaign.

Vernon J. Brown, then a state representative, said the Farmers' Union had been active in Greenville, in Montcalm county which gave Lemke 7.8 percent of its presidential vote, and in Ionia county, also well over the state average with 7.4 percent for Lemke. He said those in politics concerned with Montcalm, Tuscola and Huron county areas had a healthy respect for the Farmers' Union.[17]

Representative Howard Nugent of Huron county, said

the Farmers' Union was a big reason for the Lemke vote there and in Tuscola county.[18]

Two veteran newspaper correspondents covering the capitol then and now--Hub M. George[19] of the Detroit Free Press and Guy H. Jenkins[20] of Booth Newspapers--are agreed that the Farmers' Union was a factor in the Lemke vote in the Thumb area and the center of the lower peninsula.

And sharing their opinion is Henry Oakley, head of the compiling section of the secretary of state's office.[21]

W. F. Doyle, lobbyist for the Michigan chain stores, termed Lemke "the impetuous philosopher of agriculture," whose vote was due largely to the Farmers' Union which represented a segment of agricultural voters who had broken away from conservatism.[22]

Stanley Powell, lobbyist for the Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan State Grange, said the vote in Ionia (7.4) and Newaygo (4.8) could reflect the Farmers' Union.[23]

<u>Lemke and the Catholic vote</u>. "The votes for Lemke were almost purely the ballots of the inalienable Coughlin followers," said Carl Muller in discussing "The Rise and Fall of Father Coughlin" in the Detroit News.[24] This view seems to have been largely shared by many observers, past and present.

Herman H. Dignan, who was state representative from Shiawassee county in 1936, and later a state senator and secretary of state, said "The Lemke vote was due to Smith, Coughlin and the radio, which was in its first stage of big development."[25]

The present Pope, then "papal secretary of state," toured the Catholic population centers in the United States during the campaign of 1936, and in Detroit told a congregation "not to bite the hand that fed it," according to Guy H. Jenkins, dean of the capitol correspondents in Lansing and head of the legislative reporters for the Booth Newspapers.[26]

Textbook authors Peter H. Odegard and E. Allen Helms comment: "Few people paid much attention to William Lemke, the Union Party's official candidate; he was overshadowed by his three chief aides--Coughlin, Gerald Smith and Dr. Townsend."[27]

In an attempt to get an indication of the influence of Father Coughlin on the Lemke vote, the Third Party candidate's vote is placed against the Catholic population of Michigan by counties in Table XI.

As shown in the table, in 17 counties the Catholic population is equivalent to or more than the state percentage

TABLE XI

COMPARISON OF CATHOLIC POPULATION, LEMKE VOTE

County	Percent Catholic	Lemke Vote
Alcona	10.5	8.8*
Alger	24.7*	0.7
Allegan	4.8	5.4*
Alpena	27.7*	4.0
Antrim	5.7	3.6
Arenac	17.8	5.0*
Baraga	29.1*	1.0
Barry	2.0	4.0
Bay	36.3*	9.0*
Benzie	2.1	5.5*
Berrien	7.3	2.3
Branch	7.2	3.3
Calhoun	7.4	3.0
Cass	4.1	6.6*
Charlevoix	10.7	2.9
Cheboygan	19.3	6.3*
Chippewa	22.8	1.8
Clare	3.4	5.9*
Clinton	14.5	5.8*
Crawford	7.7	1.7
Delta	35.2*	1.4
Dickinson	44.4*	2.6
Eaton	3.4	3.7
Emmet	11.6	7.6*
Genesee	10.1	3.5
Gladwin	5.0	4.7*
Gogebic	21.5	0.1
Gr. Traverse	10.0	5.7*
Gratiot	1.4	3.8
Hillsdale	2.0	3.5

TABLE XI (continued)

County	Percent Catholic	Lemke Vote
Houghton	20.9	0.6
Huron	28.5*	17.5*
Ingham	7.5	3.2
Ionia	13.1	7.4*
Iosco	10.6	4.11
Iron	25.4*	0.1
Isabella	14.1	8.0*
Jackson	12.3	1.9
Kalamazoo	5.8	3.7
Kalkaska	0.9	2.4
Kent	15.4	3.7
Keweenaw	16.8	0.1
Lake	4.1	2.0
Lapeer	7.0	4.0
Leelanau	29.2*	4.6*
Lenawee	7.4	4.0
Livingston	10.1	3.2
Luce	7.3	0.1
Mackinac	20.1	1.4
Macomb	28.8*	7.4*
Manistee	23.3*	3.0
Marquette	24.1*	0.7
Mason	15.0	3.9
Mecosta	6.9	8.0*
Menominee	38.4*	4.5*
Midland	10.8	4.19*
Missaukee	1.2	1.2
Monroe	31.6*	8.5*
Montcalm	3.7	7.8*
Montmorency	4.2	2.0
Muskegon	11.2	1.2
Newaygo	1.9	4.8*
Oakland	12.9	4.2*
Oceana	7.1	4.5*
Ogemaw	19.0	4.9*

TABLE XI (continued)

County	Percent Catholic	Lemke Vote
Ontonagon	13.7	0.6
Osceola	2.3	7.2*
Oscoda	1.4	0.7
Otsego	20.8	2.3
Ottawa	5.9	3.9
Presque Isle	35.2*	1.4
Roscommon	4.2	3.0
Saginaw	19.4	3.0
Sanilac	7.3	6.7*
Schoolcraft	14.3	2.5
Shiawassee	10.2	7.7*
St. Clair	24.6*	8.2*
St. Joseph	4.5	4.0
Tuscola	5.7	9.7*
Van Buren	5.5	4.3
Washtenaw	9.7	2.4
Wayne	41.4*	3.9
Wexford	5.4	2.0
State	23.01*	4.19*

*State average or above.

aCatholic percentages computed from "Area and Population of Counties or Equivalent Divisions," Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Washington: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; Vol. II, pp. 110-111; and, from Religious Bodies, 1926, Washington: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1930, Vol. I, Table 32, "Members in Selected Denominations by Counties: 1926," pp. 627-628.

of 23.01. In seven counties, both the Lemke vote and the Catholic population are above average: Bay, Huron, Macomb, St. Clair, Monroe, Leelanau and Menominee. The first four are in the Thumb territory, the area of greatest Lemke strength, as shown in Figure 6.

In the other ten counties in which the Catholic population is equal to or better than state average, Lemke was close to his state average of 4.19 percent in two: Alpena, 4.0, and Wayne, 3.9. In the 25 counties in which Lemke went state average or more, but the Catholic population was below its state average, there are three in which the Catholic population is near the state average of 23.01 percent: Cheboygan, 19.3; Ogemaw, 19.0; and Arenac, 17.8.

Thus, there are indications that Lemke pulled a sizable number of Roman Catholic votes in 12 counties: Huron, Bay, Monroe, St. Clair, Macomb, Leelanau, Menominee, Alpena, Wayne, Cheboygan, Ogemaw and Arenac.

In the 22 other counties in which Lemke went over his state average but the Catholic population was below its state average, and the 8 others in which the Catholic figure is state average or above but Lemke polled beneath his state average, the evidence isn't clear. But perhaps it bears out

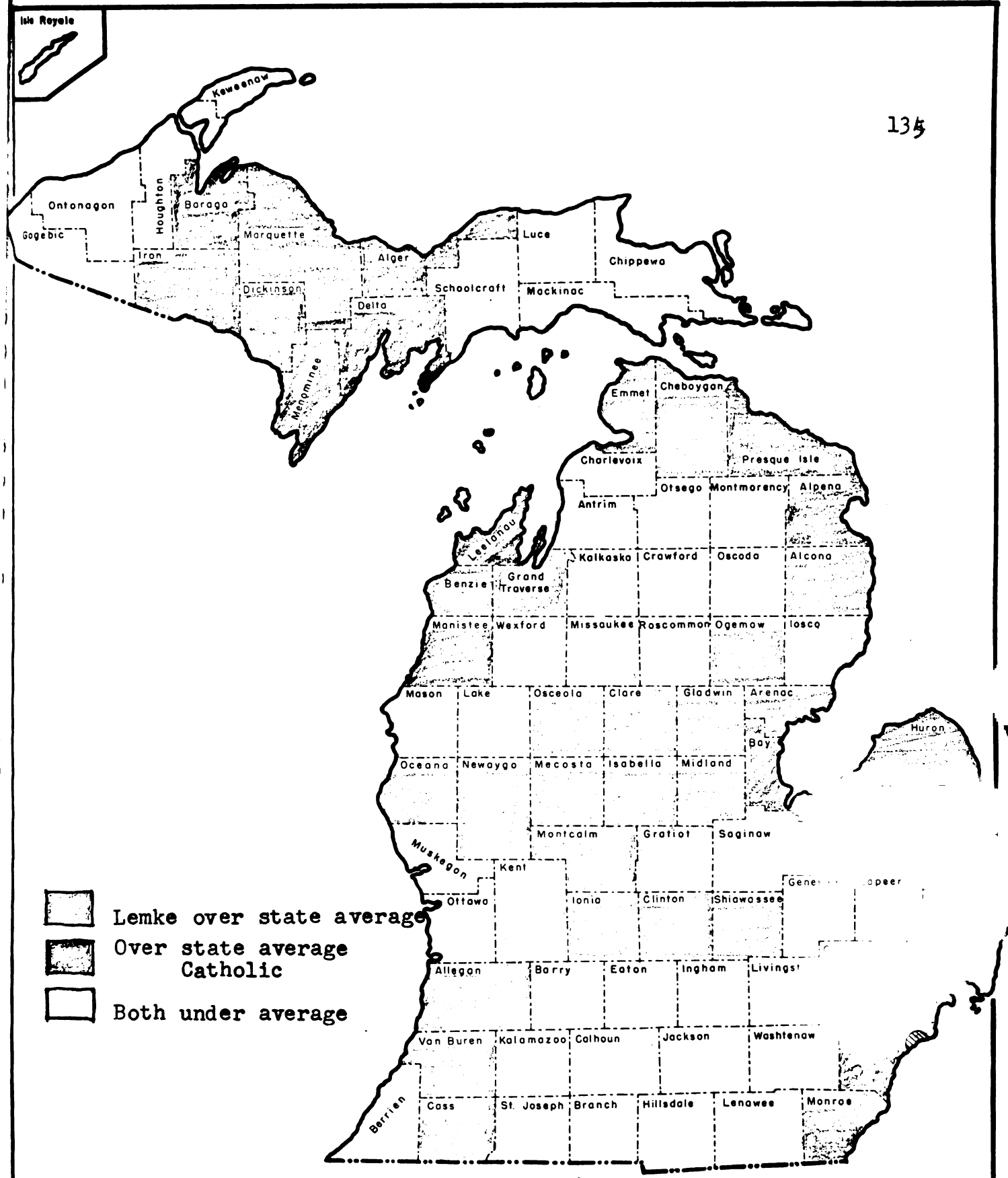

FIGURE 6

COMPARISON OF LEMKE VOTE, CATHOLIC POPULATION

the contention of Hub M. George, veteran Free Press political writer both then and now, that Father Coughlin didn't attract only Catholics, but many others who went along with his economics.[28]

In the upper peninsula, where Lemke fared the worst, there was a wide disparity between his vote and the concentration of Roman Catholic strength in 14 of the 15 counties:

County	Percent Catholic	Percent Lemke
Dickinson	44.4*	2.6
Menominee	38.4*	4.5*
Delta	35.2*	1.4
Baraga	29.1*	1.0
Iron	25.4*	0.1
Alger	24.7*	0.7
Marquette	24.1*	0.7
Chippewa	22.8	1.8
Gogebic	21.5	0.1
Houghton	20.9	0.6
Mackinac	20.1	1.4
Keweenaw	16.8	0.1
Schoolcraft	14.3	2.5
Ontonagon	13.7	0.6
Luce	7.3	0.1

*Over state average.

Lemke and Townsend's influence. The only check on possible Townsend influence in the Lemke campaign is in the Third congressional district, where in 1935 the Townsendites allegedly helped nominate and elect Vernor W. Main to congress to fill out an unexpired term. In both cases, Main carried

all five counties in the district. In the 1936 primary, however, Main was defeated for renomination after breaking with the Townsend forces. In defeat, he carried three of the five counties: Eaton, Hillsdale and Kalamazoo. He lost Branch and Calhoun in a 3-candidate race.[29]

The Townsendites had endorsed Rosslyn L. Sowers in the Democratic primary, who won a 3-candidate race and carried Branch, Eaton and Hillsdale counties, losing Calhoun and Kalamazoo.[30] Thus, in winning, Sowers with Townsend support carried two of the counties which Main also carried in losing: Eaton and Hillsdale. Sowers carried one which Main lost: Branch.

In the fall election, Sowers lost to Paul W. Shafer, carrying only one county--Calhoun[31]--which neither he nor Main had carried in their primaries. The one county carried by Sowers in the final election gave the least support of the five to Lemke, although the vote for Lemke in the district ranged from 3 to 3.7 percent: Calhoun, 3.0; Branch, 3.3; Hillsdale, 3.5; Eaton, Kalamazoo, 3.7.

Representative Howard Nugent of Huron is of the opinion that the Townsendites were a factor in the vote for Lemke, and declared the clubs are still active in Huron today.[32]

Correspondent Hub George of the Free Press, too, believes the Townsendites were a factor in the Lemke campaign, and was impressed with the turnouts at Townsend rallies.[33]

"The Reverend" Edna Villiard, vice president of the Sixth congressional district Townsend organization and secretary-treasurer of Club No. 1 in Lansing, believes that many Townsendites voted for Lemke.

"When Dr. Townsend endorsed Lemke, it was all we needed," she declared.[34]

Townsend's Michigan representative, however, is more conservative in his estimate of the situation. The state leader, George W. Woodson, said the Lemke campaign "was our first effort on a national basis." He said people might desert their regular party stand in a congressional election and vote according to Townsend recommendations, "but it's tougher to do in a presidential election."[35]

Lemke vote and ethnic groups. According to J. Allan Beegle, in his study of the composition and change of Michigan's population, 82.9 percent of the state's 1940 population was native white; 13 percent was foreign-born white, 3.9 percent Negroes and 0.2 percent "other races."[36]

Of the foreign-born, the five top ethnic groups in order were: Canadians (non-French), Poles, Germans, English and Russian.

Only 10 counties in the state were under the Michigan average of 82.9 percent of the population native-whites. And in none of these counties did Lemke get his state average vote of 4.19: Alger, Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Lake, Luce, Ontonagon and Wayne. And only one of the 32 counties giving Lemke his state average or better--Arenac--was over the state average of 13 percent of its residents foreign-born white.

Only one of Lemke's 32 best counties--Cass--was above the state average in Negro residents. Ten of Lemke's top 32 counties were equal to or above the state average of 0.2 percent of the population in 1940 of "other races": Arenac, Benzie, Cass, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Isabella, Leelanau, Menominee, Oceana, Van Buren.[37]

For Lemke's high 32 counties, the picture is quite consistent with the state situation for the top three ethnic groups, as shown in Table XII. In 19 of the 32 counties, the non-French Canadians are the top group, as for the state as a whole. Polish and German, second and

TABLE XII

COMPARISON OF LEMKE VOTE, ETHNIC GROUPS

County	Lemke Vote	No. 1 Ethnic Group
Huron	17.5	Canadian
Tuscola	9.7	Canadian
Bay	9.0	Polish
Alcona	8.8	Canadian
Monroe	8.5	German
St. Clair	8.2	Canadian
Mecosta	8.0	Canadian
Isabella	8.0	Canadian
Montcalm	7.8	Danish
Shiawassee	7.7	Czechoslovakian
Emmet	7.6	Canadian
Ionia	7.4	Canadian
Macomb	7.4	Canadian
Osceola	7.2	Canadian
Sanilac	6.7	Canadian
Cass	6.6	Polish
Cheboygan	6.3	Canadian
Clare	5.9	Canadian
Clinton	5.8	Canadian
Gr. Traverse	5.7	Canadian
Benzie	5.5	Norwegian
Allegan	5.4	Netherlands
Arenac	5.0	Polish
Ogemaw	4.9	Canadian
Newaygo	4.8	Netherlands
Gladwin	4.7	Canadian
Leelanau	4.6	Norway
Menominee	4.5	Sweden
Oceana	4.5	German
Van Buren	4.3	German
Oakland	4.2	Canadian
Midland	4.19	Canadian

aAll counties state average or above in Lemke vote.

bEthnic groups from J. Allan Beegle, Michigan Population Composition and Change, East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947, Table 4, "Rank of the first five most numerous ethnic groups, by county, 1940," pp. 83-84.

third for Michigan, are second in these counties with three counties each. Then the picture varies slightly from that for the state. The Netherlands and Norway, eighth and twenty-second, respectively, for Michigan, are third in the 32 counties, each dominant in two of the 32 counties. There is one county each with the Swedish, the Czechoslovakians and the Danes as the leading ethnic groups. For the state as a whole, the Swedish rank thirteenth, the Czechs fourteenth, and the Danes twenty-first.

Dr. J. F. Thaden, Michigan State College professor of sociology and anthropology, in a study of ethnic settlements in rural Michigan, found that the foreign-born in Michigan have a greater tendency to settle in cities than on farms.[38] For 1940, he found, the urban population was comprised of foreign-born to the extent of 15.3 percent, as compared to 9.2 percent for the farm.[39]

In 12 of Lemke's 32 high counties, the percent of the rural-farm population foreign-born white was equal to or more than the state average of 9.2 in 1940. The top ethnic groups in these 12 counties were: Canadian--Alcona, Gladwin, Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, St. Clair, Oakland, Macomb; Polish--Arenac, Bay; German--Van Buren; Swedish--Menominee.[40]

Thus, Canadians are the top group in eight counties, Polish in two counties, Germans in one and Swedish in one. Again, the picture closely resembles that for Michigan as a whole, with Canadians, Polish and Germans in one-two-three order.

Lemke may have picked up a few more Scandinavian votes than average, but foreign-born groups in the state apparently were not much of a factor in the vote for Lemke.

FOOTNOTES

1. Michigan Population Composition and Change. East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947, p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

3. Ibid., p. 14.

4. Letter, postmarked "Grand Rapids, January 26, 1951."

5. Interview, residence, East Lansing, January 20, 1951.

6. Interview, residence, East Lansing, January 20, 1951.

7. Interview, office, Lansing, January 18, 1951.

8. Bay City Times, February 5, 1936, p. 1, col. 7.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., March 5, 1936, p. 1, col. 2.

11. Ibid., May 6, 1936, p. 2, col. 2.

12. Lansing State Journal, October 3, 1936, p. 1, col. 8.

13. Detroit Free Press, October 3, 1936, p. 9, col. 6.

14. Bay City Times, July 19, 1936, p. 18, col. 7.

15. Ibid., August 6, 1936, p. 3, col. 2.

16. March 5-12, 1936.

17. Interview, residence, near Mason, December 13, 1950.

18. Interview, Michigan house chamber, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

19. Interview, Michigan senate press room, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

20. Interview, Michigan senate chamber, Lansing, March 14, 1951.

21. Interview, Michigan capitol, Lansing, March 14, 1951.

FOOTNOTES (continued)

22. Interview, residence, East Lansing, January 20, 1951.

23. Interview, Chamber of Commerce building, Lansing, February 7, 1951.

24. November 15, 1936, p. 15, col. 1.

25. Interview, residence, East Lansing, January 20, 1951.

26. Interview, Michigan senate chamber, Lansing, March 14, 1951.

27. American Politics: A Study in Political Dynamics. New York: Harper and Brothers, Second Edition, 1947, p. 600.

28. Interview, Michigan senate press room, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

29. Michigan Official Directory and Legislative Manual, 1937-1938. Lansing: State of Michigan, Secretary of State, p. 217.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 278.

32. Interview, Michigan house chamber, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

33. Interview, Michigan senate press room, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

34. Interview, Michigan Townsend headquarters, Lansing, June 11, 1951.

35. Ibid.

36. Michigan Population Composition and Change. East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947, Table 2, "Number and percentage of population, by race and nativity and county, 1940," pp. 79-80.

37. Ibid., Table 4, "Rank of the first five most numerous ethnic groups, by county, 1940," pp. 83-84.

FOOTNOTES (continued)

38. Ethnic Settlements In Rural Michigan. East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 102-111, November, 1946; reprint, p. 105.

39. Ibid., p. 106.

40. J. Allan Beegle, Michigan Population Composition and Change. East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947; Table 2, "Number and percentage of population, by race and nativity and county, 1940," pp. 79-80.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated in Chapter V, an attempt was made to check for correlations between the Third Party vote and that for other significant minor parties, and second, to seek other factors bearing upon the balloting for Lemke.

The strongest correlation between the Lemke vote and that of another minor party is in the case of the Prohibition party, which had been on the Michigan presidential ballot every election from 1872 until 1936. (See Table I, pages 2-4) There is evidence that in more than half the counties of the state, with no Prohibition candidate on the Michigan ballot in 1936, Lemke pulled the Dry vote.

Lemke also appears to have drawn some votes away from the Communist Party in a number of counties, mostly in the lower peninsula. In the upper peninsula, where Lemke's vote was weakest, the Communist vote was strongest.

The Socialist Party, too, evidently lost some strength to Lemke in 1936 in a few counties, notably in Huron, St. Clair and Cheboygan, but not as noticeably in general as in the case of the Communist Party.

Lemke served in effect as standard-bearer for the old-line Farmer-Labor interests in Michigan, as well as for the Prohibitionists, in 1936. Lemke, after withdrawing from his Farmer-Labor nomination in Michigan to run on the Third Party ballot, was not deserted by many of the Farmer-Labor followers. For approximately half the counties going over the Farmer-Labor state average in 1934 did so for Lemke in 1936, among them some of Lemke's highest counties, particularly in the center of the lower peninsula.

Thus, Vernon J. Brown, former state official, appears to be correct in his estimate that "Lemke picked up at least half his vote mainly from other minor parties."[1]

That the Lemke vote was a rural vote, there is no doubt. Large proportions of farmers, says Beegle, are to be found in the Thumb area, and in the northern and central portions of the lower peninsula. "The entire upper peninsula," he adds, "with a few minor exceptions, contains a small proportion of farmers."[2] Lemke's vote was heaviest in the Thumb, the central portion of the lower peninsula, with some heavy counties in the northern part of the lower peninsula. Practically the entire upper peninsula was cool to the Lemke candidacy. Correlation of Lemke's vote with the rural and

urban counties of the state also points to a predominantly rural vote for Lemke, with 28 of his 32 over-state-average counties having 50 percent or more rural residents.

One of the factors contributing to the rurality of the vote for the Third Party was the matter of farm mortgage foreclosures and allied distress transfers of farm realty. Lemke's co-sponsorship of the Frazier-Lemke bill to aid distressed farmers was worth votes, as indicated in the correlation between the number of farm mortgage foreclosures and other distress transfers in selected counties and the Lemke vote.

According to Vernon J. Brown, high taxes on Michigan property owners had brought about a rebellion which resulted in the adoption of the "15-mill" amendment. This, he said, helped lift the burden from farm property owners, and enabled many to get out from under mortgages--as well as with federal aid from 1932 to 1936 under Franklin D. Roosevelt. "But," he adds, "there still were many smarting in 1936 from past injustices."[3]

And in the opinion of Hub M. George, veteran capitol correspondent of the Detroit Free Press, some farm people in 1936 "were still nursing wounds on the mortgage matter,

making them ripe for Lemke."[4]

A large share of the rural agitation for Lemke came from the Farmers' Union in Michigan. The Union was most active in the Thumb area and the central portion of the lower peninsula, areas of the concentration of Lemke's vote. When Lemke spoke at the West Michigan Farmers' Union rally on August 1, 1936, in Grandville, he was introduced by E. A. Rohlfs, president of the Michigan Farmers' Union, as "our next president."[5]

There is some evidence that the Farmers' Union movement in Michigan included supporters who had previously been identified with the Farmer-Labor movement. Among the counties which gave the highest Farmer-Labor vote for governor in 1934 and for Lemke in 1936 were Ionia, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo, areas of strong Farmers' Union activity.

According to George W. Welsh, the Lemke campaign was an attempt to encourage in Michigan the Farmer-Labor movement which "had been strong in Minnesota and to a lesser extent in Wisconsin."[6] (Welsh had unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for governor in 1936.)

Simeon P. Martin of Stanton (Montcalm county), present

president of the Michigan Division, Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America, was the Farmer-Labor candidate for governor in 1936.

Father Coughlin had a limited influence in attracting votes for Lemke in Michigan, despite his failure to draw millions on a nation-wide basis. At least the evidence indicates a correlation between the Catholic population and the Lemke vote to some extent in 12 counties of the Thumb and Saginaw Bay areas, and in Monroe and Menominee counties. Protestant followers of the National Union for Social Justice are an unknown quantity.

From some observers come the expressed beliefs that many Townsendites went along with Lemke in Michigan, but they were not a powerful force. The "test area" in the Third congressional district revealed a vote of 3 percent or more for Lemke in each of the five counties, but in none did his vote reach his state average of 4.19 percent.

Townsend performed a service in that, in the words of the Bay City Times, he "brought the hapless plight of our aged people before the conscience of the nation."[7] But the indications are that the Townsendites were not a dominant figure in Lemke's Michigan vote.

Gerald Smith seems not to have affected the Michigan vote, as newspapers of the day indicate not much activity in the state by Smith, although Herman H. Dignan, who represented Shiawassee in the legislature, recalls a good turnout there for an appearance by the pastor.

Ethnic groups were not a factor in the Lemke vote. Comparisons of his vote with that of foreign-born whites reveals that they were present in Lemke's strongest counties about in proportion to that for the state as a whole.

The Third Party campaign in Michigan appears to have confirmed a prediction made by Jonathan Mitchell, who in discussing "Liberty Bill Lemke" said the Lemke followers would provide the farmer half of a Farmer-Labor party if one was to come before 1940.[8] Lemke's candidacy, he said, would give farmers of the lowest stratum a voice in the campaign.[9]

Michigan's Lemke campaign also confirms Pendleton Herring's picture of third parties as predominantly agrarian and debtor.[10]

Lemke, Coughlin, Townsend and Smith might have taken heed of the chief lesson learned from the campaign of the Progressive Party of 1924, as pointed out by William B.

Hesseltine. That lesson, he says, is that a third party movement needs a well-grounded local organization to be a success. It needs more than a leader, principles and issues;[11] it needs local candidates, ward-heelers and door-bell ringers.[12]

NO MENTION

LT. GOV. LEO J. NOWICKI

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview, residence, near Mason, December 13, 1950.

2. J. Allan Beegle, Michigan Population Composition and Change, East Lansing: Michigan State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 342, 1947, p. 15.

3. Interview, residence, near Mason, December 13, 1950.

4. Interview, Michigan senate press room, Lansing, March 15, 1951.

5. Grand Rapids Herald, August 2, 1936, p. 1, cols. 5-7, caption under photograph.

6. Letter, postmarked "Grand Rapids, January 26, 1951."

7. May 25, 1936, p. 4, cols. 1-2.

8. The New Republic, Vol. LXXXVIII, No. 1132, August 12, 1936, p. 8.

9. Ibid., p. 10.

10. The Politics of Democracy: American Parties in Action. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1940, p. 183.

11. The Rise and Fall of Third Parties, from Anti-Masonry to Wallace. Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1948, p. 11.

12. Ibid., p. 12.

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