



Summer 7-1963

# The campaign and election of Quentin Burdick, 1958

Herbert A. Thorson

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THE CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION OF  
QUENTIN BURDICK, 1958

by

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B. S. in Education, State Teachers College, Dickinson,  
North Dakota, 1957

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

Graduate School

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

July

1963

T1963  
T39

This thesis submitted by Herbert A. Thorson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

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## CHAPTER I

### REPUBLICAN TRADITION OF NORTH DAKOTA, 1889-1958

On November 4, 1958, the people of North Dakota elected Quentin Burdick to the office of United States Representative. Burdick became the first Democrat to be elected to that office in the history of the state. Since North Dakota has been traditionally a Republican state, it is the purpose of this thesis to examine some of the reasons why Quentin Burdick was elected.

It is necessary to examine the political history of North Dakota to determine why the election of Quentin Burdick was a political phenomenon. It is a history that has been dominated from the beginning by Republicans.

It is desirable to develop the consistency of the Republican tradition in the state of North Dakota. This chapter will also examine some of the reasons behind this apparent consistency.

The existence of Republican tradition will be determined by an examination of the number of times North Dakota voters have chosen Democratic Presidential Electors, Democratic United States Senators, Democratic Congressmen, and Democratic Governors. Since this study is concerned with Burdick's election to the House of Representatives,

an examination will be made of the vote for that office from 1946 through 1956.

Since the turn of the century, North Dakota has chosen Democratic Presidential Electors in 1912, 1916, 1932, and 1936. The Democratic candidates received the North Dakota vote in 23.5 per cent of the elections from 1892 through 1956. Recent presidential elections indicate a lack of Democratic strength in North Dakota. Harry S. Truman polled 41.9 per cent of the vote in 1948.<sup>1</sup> In 1952, 28.4 per cent of the voters supported the Democratic candidate, Adlai Stevenson.<sup>2</sup> Stevenson polled 38.1 per cent of the vote in 1956.<sup>3</sup> The mean percentage of the vote received by the Democrats in the above elections was 36.8. The Republicans carried every county in 1952 and all but two counties in 1956.<sup>4</sup>

There have been sixteen different persons elected or appointed to the office of United States Senator from North Dakota prior to 1958. Eleven were elected and five were appointed. Of these sixteen, only one Democrat was elected

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<sup>1</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, National and State, 1946-1954.

<sup>2</sup>Richard M. Scammon, America Votes: A Handbook of Contemporary American Election Statistics, I (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 273.

<sup>3</sup>Richard M. Scammon, America Votes: A Handbook of Contemporary American Election Statistics, III (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959), p. 308.

<sup>4</sup>Scammon, I, 273. Scammon, III, 308.

(popularly) and none were appointed. The Democrat, John Moses, was elected to office in 1944. Moses died March 3, 1945. Milton Young was appointed successor to Moses.<sup>5</sup> Thus a Democrat served in the Senate from the opening of Congress in January, 1945 to March 3, 1945. The above exception does little to deter from Republican tradition. The senatorial elections from 1950 through 1956 demonstrate further weakness of the Democratic Party. The mean percentage of the total vote from 1950 through 1956 was 30.6.<sup>6</sup>

There had been thirty-four elections by 1958 to choose congressmen for the United States House of Representatives. Twenty-four different persons were elected to the House during this period. Not one of the twenty-four elected was a Democrat.<sup>7</sup> The election of Quentin Burdick in 1958 was the first exception to the tradition of electing Republicans to the House of Representatives. The average percentage received by Democrats in the six elections preceding Burdick's election was 26.2. Further study of these elections will be made below.

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<sup>5</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Blue Book, 1954, p. 149. Democrat William N. Roach was elected to the United States Senate by the North Dakota Legislature in 1893.

<sup>6</sup>Compiled from: Scammon, I, p. 274. Scammon, III, p. 309.

<sup>7</sup>Blue Book, 1954, p. 149.

By 1958 twenty-five persons had served in the office of governor of North Dakota. Four governors were Democrats and the remainder were Republican.<sup>8</sup> The mean percentage of Democratic gubernatorial candidates in general elections from 1914 to 1952 was 39.9.<sup>9</sup>

The election of four Democratic governors appears to be a strong deviation from Republican tradition. This makes it necessary to examine the reasons and conditions surrounding their elections.

The first candidate on the Democratic ballot to be elected governor was the Populist Eli Shortridge in 1892. Shortridge was elected as a fusion candidate of Democrats, Populists and Farmers Alliance as the result of the 1892 uprising against Alexander McKenzie.<sup>10</sup> He served one term.<sup>11</sup>

John Burke was elected as a Democrat to the office of governor in 1906 and served three terms.<sup>12</sup> The reason for the election of Burke was apparent dissatisfaction within the Republican Party. Charles N. Glaab states:

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>V. O. Key, American State Politics: An Introduction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 99.

<sup>10</sup>Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Non-Partisan League, 1915-1922, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Blue Book, 1954, p. 149.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

Although the Democrats seemed to pose no threat to its continued control, the McKenzie organization did have to contend with a growing number of dissatisfied reformers within the Republican Party. These insurgents, as they were generally called during the period, had won especially after 1900, a number of liberal laws from the old guard. For example, important pure food and drug legislation was enacted. Nothing was done, however, to weaken measurably the power of the machine leaders or of the corporations they represented. Therefore the insurgents came to realize that if any real changes were to be made, control of the government had to be wrested from McKenzie and his henchmen.<sup>13</sup>

Machine candidate Elmore Sarles received the nomination over the candidate of the insurgents, Martin N. Johnson. This caused the insurgents to support Burke for governor.

The insurgent leaders had made no effort to defeat the entire slate. They felt that the election of a Democratic governor would be enough to check the power of the machine, and they did not wish to wreck their party in the state. The Democrats recognized this and directed their campaign toward electing only Burke and Fisk, but many normally Republican voters were evidently willing to turn down the entire ticket, so great was their discontent with the McKenzie organization.<sup>14</sup>

It seems evident that the switch to the Democratic Party was not the result of a desire to do away with the Republican Party or tradition, but merely an attempt to break the machine control of Alexander McKenzie.

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<sup>13</sup>Charles N. Glaab, "The Revolution of 1906 - N. D. vs. McKenzie," The North Dakota Quarterly, XXIV (Fall, 1956), pp. 100-09, at p. 103.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 108.



The election of a Democratic governor in 1934 was a shallow victory. Democrat Thomas Moodie was elected in 1934 and removed from office on February 2, 1935, for failure to meet a residence requirement.<sup>15</sup> Moodie had been elected by a fusion of anti-Langer Republicans and Democrats.<sup>16</sup>

Democrat John Moses was elected to the office of governor in 1938 and served three consecutive terms. In opposition to the Non-Partisan League, conservative Republicans joined with Democrats to support Moses.<sup>17</sup> The reasons for the elections of John Moses are stated by V. O. Key:

In 1938, the NPL candidate won the Republican nomination and the conservative wing of the Republican Party discovered great virtue in Moses, who won as a Democrat with substantial support from anti-NPL Republicans. In 1940 and 1942 NPL candidates again won the Republican nomination and Moses drew sufficient support from conservative Republicans to carry the election. Moses was no New Dealer: a conservative Democrat, he supported measures acceptable to most businessmen and conservative Republicans.<sup>18</sup>

The above statements indicate Moses owed his election to the conservative Republicans as well as the

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<sup>15</sup>Federal Writers Project, North Dakota: A Guide to the Northern Prairie State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 62.

<sup>16</sup>Adam J. Schweitzer, "John Moses and the New Deal in North Dakota" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of North Dakota, 1954), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>18</sup>Key, American State Politics, pp. 252-53.



Democratic Party. The Democratic Party had not reached any period of ascendancy.

It has been the purpose of this chapter, thus far, to demonstrate the very strong Republican tradition in this state. The study reveals that of the sixty-five persons elected to serve in the three highest offices of North Dakota only five have been Democrats. The study indicates further that the five Democrats were elected as a result of unusual situations.

This writer believes that some of the apparent Republican consistency should be examined further to determine some of the reasons behind the Republican victories. It is intended to determine the nature of the Republican victories and their relation to progressive movements.

North Dakota was settled chiefly by people who came from the Republican states of the Middle West.<sup>19</sup> The foundations of Republicanism as stated by Adam Schweitzer are:

Republicans have been Republicans, at least in name, because their parents belonged to the Party of Abraham Lincoln. Their parents belonged to the Republican Party because the Act which gave them their homes had been passed by the Republicans; the men who administered the Act were Republicans; the railroads which brought the settlers and their supplies to their homes and shipped their grain to Eastern markets had been made possible by a

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<sup>19</sup>Schweitzer, p. 12.

generous Republican administration. With the exception of the two terms of President Cleveland, the state was settled and grew up in a Republican era. Living in an environment shaped by Republicans, the new immigrants and other arrivals in the state could not help but have been influenced.<sup>20</sup>

The above reasons provide an influence for the foundation of the Republican tradition. It will be necessary to explore some of the factors behind the continuance of Republicanism.

The state came into being under the control of Republican boss Alexander McKenzie, and remained under his control until the Non-Partisan League was formed in 1916.

Control of the office of governor was lost in 1906 by the stalwart Republicans (i.e., those loyal to the McKenzie faction of the Party) due to a movement of insurgent Republicans who wished to decrease the power of the machine but not at the expense of losing Republican identification.<sup>21</sup> The discontent of the insurgent Republicans was enough to give the Democrat Burke control of the office of governor but not enough to give up the other state offices to the Democrats.<sup>22</sup>

A study by Robert L. Morlan indicates the discontent which led to the formation of the Non-Partisan League (League or NPL). The League has in various periods changed

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>21</sup>Glaab, The North Dakota Quarterly, XXIV, 108.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

the character of the Republican Party. Strong opposition to the machine control of the Republican Party developed from 1912 to 1915. Opposition developed from the discontent over the wheat exchange prices, excessive freight rates, elevator grading and dockage, and opposition to the excessive rates of interest charged by the banks. The people felt the state government could do much to correct these problems. Seventy per cent of the population was composed of farmers who favored the establishment of a terminal elevator. An amendment ratified by the people in 1914, called for the establishment of such a terminal elevator; however, the legislature of 1915 took no action to appropriate funds for such purpose in spite of the fact that the Equity Society convention was meeting in Bismarck for the purpose of influencing such legislation.<sup>23</sup> The discontent greatly enhanced the opportunity for the creation of the League.

Some of the founders of the League, such as A. C. Townley, came from the ranks of the North Dakota Socialist Party (NDSP). The platform of the League had many of the features of the NDSP, but avoided the socialistic taint.<sup>24</sup> Included in the League platform were the following:

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<sup>23</sup>Morlan, pp. 20-21.

<sup>24</sup>Jackson Putnam, "The Role of the NDSP in North Dakota History," The North Dakota Quarterly, XXIV (Fall, 1956), pp. 115-22, at p. 121.

State ownership of terminal elevators, flour mills,  
packing houses, and cold storage plants.  
State inspection of grain and grain dockage.  
Exemption of farm improvements from taxation.  
State hail insurance on the acreage tax basis.  
Rural credit banks operated at low cost.<sup>25</sup>

Economic pressure and the political indifference of existing parties created a condition favorable to the formation of the League.<sup>26</sup> The success of the League was further enhanced by the salesmanship of Townley, the Ford automobile, and an organization based on paid up membership.<sup>27</sup> A large wheat crop and a business boom enabled members to pay the dues they had earlier pledged.<sup>28</sup> The above conditions provided a favorable climate for the birth and development of the League.

While the League was designed to cross party lines to gain control of state government, the reasons for filing in the Republican column should be evident from a statement by Robert L. Morlan. He states:

The Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) and the Farmers Alliance had tried to operate primarily as pressure groups and on the balance of power principle of helping their friends and defeating

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<sup>25</sup>Herbert E. Gaston, The Non-Partisan League (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), p. 60.

<sup>26</sup>Lloyd B. Omdahl, The Insurgents (Brainerd: Lakeland Color Press, 1961), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup>Gaston, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>Edward C. Blackorby, "Prairie Rebel: The Public Career of William Lemke" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Department of History, University of North Dakota, 1958), p. 107.

their enemies. Finding success in this manner extremely limited, agrarian protest elements next moved to Populism, an attempt at political action through a third party, only to be swallowed by the Democratic Party when all hopes were pinned in 1896 to the panacea of "free silver." The Equity Society and other cooperatives had endeavored to function outside the political arena and to seek salvation in control of specific economic enterprises that closely affected the members. The Nonpartisan League was a return to the belief in the necessity of political action, if effective control of the economy was to be achieved, but it recognized both the inadequacy of balance of power tactics and the numerous failures of third parties. Cooperation, it felt, was useful but doomed to a minor role unless accompanied by political dominance.<sup>29</sup>

The state's tradition of voting Republican made it desirable to file in the Republican column. The League was born out of a progressive movement and League members came eventually to form the progressive wing of the Republican Party.<sup>30</sup> The delegates to the first NPL convention consisted of ninety-eight Republicans, twenty-one Democrats, and two Socialists.<sup>31</sup> The use of the primary election made it possible for the League to gain control of the Republican Party. For many years, the elections were determined by which group controlled the Republican nomination.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Morlan, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup>Key, American State Politics, p. 252.

<sup>31</sup>Morlan, p. 59.

<sup>32</sup>Key, American State Politics, p. 252.

All candidates endorsed by the League in 1916 won the Republican nomination in the primary election.<sup>33</sup> The League controlled the state administration until 1921. Opposition to the League developed in 1918. A study by Schweitzer indicates the conservative Republicans met in Minot in 1918 and organized the Lincoln Republican Club. This organization was later changed to the Independent Voters Association (IVA) with the hopes of attracting conservative Democrats. The IVA Republicans controlled the administration during the 1920's. The League was returned to power with the election of William Langer in 1932.<sup>34</sup>

It has been previously stated that John Moses came to office in 1938 with the support of conservative Republicans. The election of Moses indicates the differences of opinions which were held by conservative Republicans and the NPL Republicans. The anti-NPL Republicans disliked supporting NPL-Republican nominees for state office.<sup>35</sup> Both the NPL and the conservative Republicans supported the national Republican Party on foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> Leaguers often voted with Democrats

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<sup>33</sup>Omdahl, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup>Schweitzer, p. 10-11.

<sup>35</sup>Key, American State Politics, p. 252.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

on domestic issues and with the isolationist Republican wing on foreign policy.<sup>37</sup>

The Leaguers who remained in the Republican Party had a liberal voting record on domestic issues. Robert P. Wilkins writes:

Since 1940 Burdick, Lemke, and Langer have championed the cause of organized labor, favored improving and extending federal social and welfare legislation, and opposed the Mundt-Nixon and Mundt-Ferguson anti-subversive measures.<sup>38</sup>

The above pertains to the voting record of Leaguers on the national level. The League was in control of the state government from 1916 to 1920 and from 1932 to 1938.

These movements of progressivism have not extended to foreign policy. North Dakota politicians have long been known for a conservative attitude on foreign policy. Wilkins asserts that in North Dakota a man can be a liberal and not support an internationalist foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

On the attitude of North Dakotans toward isolationism, E. C. Blackorby writes:

Distance was credited with providing security - a security that was actually due to a world situation. There was the feeling of deep peace, the effort to forget Old World problems. The environment provided an ideal medium for the

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Robert P. Wilkins, "Middle Western Isolationism: A Re-examination," The North Dakota Quarterly, XXV (Summer, 1957), pp. 69-74, at 74.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.



growth of the attitudes that would later support an isolationist approach to the problems of foreign policy.<sup>40</sup>

Some of the reasons for the North Dakota isolationist attitude and the shaping of foreign policy are very aptly stated by V. O. Key:

The foreign policy issues of national politics came to divide the voters of the state in a different manner than did the early economic cleavages of state socialism. The NPL draws heavy support from the so-called Volga Germans of the state who happen also to be concentrated mainly in marginal agricultural areas. Enterprising railroad promoters sold both transportation from Bremen to Bismarck and semi-arid lands in North Dakota to Volga Germans. The baptism of political fire undergone by the NPL at the time of World War I hardened the loyalties of the followers of the League. Its leaders attacked the war as an adventure fostered by the plutocracy, while its enemies assailed the League as socialist and disloyal.

As the Democratic Party nationally came to be associated with a policy of alliance with Britain and France against Germany, the national Republicanism of North Dakota was re-enforced. At the time of World War I Scandinavians, who seem to lean somewhat more toward the anti-NPL wing of the Republican Party in state affairs, tended to share the foreign policy impulses of their fellow North Dakotans of German origin. The events leading up to World War II again activated the foreign policy question and deprived the National Democrats of their depression-born gains in the state. Despite the fact that the impact of national issues drove Republicans of varied ethnic origins loyally to the national ticket, the NPL and anti-NPL groups fought bitterly for control of the government of the state and came to form fairly well-crystallized competing electoral groups with organizational apparatus much like that of a political party.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Blackorby, pp. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup>Key, American State Politics, pp. 250-51.



Conservative Republicans met in 1943 and established the Republican Organizing Committee (ROC). This replaced the IVA as the conservative wing of the Republican Party.<sup>42</sup> A movement began in the late 1940's for a more progressive NPL. This movement resulted in a split in the 1950's between the older Leaguers (Old Guard) and the younger Leaguers (Insurgents).<sup>43</sup> The split was complete in 1956 when the Insurgents carried the League to the Democratic ballot. Many of the Old Guarders had joined with ROC.<sup>44</sup>

The preceding study indicates the combination of Democrats and Leaguers could produce a winning team. The combination failed to produce any major victory in 1956. A study of recent elections will be made to help determine if the above movement created a trend away from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party.

Henry J. Tomasek lends support to the theory that a trend had been established by 1956. Tomasek brings attention to an increase for Democrats in the legislature from less than ten per cent for many years to over forty per cent in 1956.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Omdahl, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>45</sup>Henry J. Tomasek, "North Dakota's Advent as a Two Party State," The North Dakota Quarterly, XXX (Summer, 1962), pp. 57-61, at p. 59.

There have been Democratic increases in the legislature since 1941. In 1941, no Democrats were elected to the state legislature.<sup>46</sup> In 1943, there were only eleven Democrats in the legislature.<sup>47</sup> The 1956 elections seated twenty-eight Democrats.<sup>48</sup> As a result of the 1958 elections, sixty-three Democrats were elected to the legislature.<sup>49</sup>

The votes cast for governor in 1956 indicate a slight increase for the Democrats. As stated above, the mean percentage of Democratic gubernatorial candidates in general elections from 1914 to 1952 was 39.9. The Democratic candidate, Wallace Warner, received 41.2 per cent in 1956.<sup>50</sup>

A slight increase for the Democrats in 1956 is evident in the senatorial elections. As stated above, the mean percentage of total vote from 1950 through 1956 was 30.6. The Democratic senatorial candidate received 36.0 per cent in 1956.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Blue Book 1961, pp. 185-88.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 189-90.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-08.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 208-10.

<sup>50</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 6, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

A more complete study will be made of elections to House of Representatives in recent years. Table 1 below presents an accounting of votes received by the Republican and Democratic candidates for the House from 1946 through 1956. Table 2 gives the percentage received by candidates from both parties in the above elections. The average vote for Democratic candidates in House elections from 1946 through 1956 was 26.2 per cent. The election of 1956 gave the Democrats 37.7 per cent of the total vote. This represents a gain of 4.8 per cent over the election of 1954. The gain over the mean percentage for the years cited would be 11.5 per cent.

The increase in the percentage of Democratic votes, as of 1956, indicates a trend had been established. The trend existed in 1956, but it was 1958 which gave meaning to this trend.

The trend was more firmly established by the House elections of 1958. Quentin Burdick out-pollled all other candidates with a total of 99,652 votes.<sup>52</sup> The nearest Republican candidate, Don L. Short, received 97,862 votes.<sup>53</sup> The other Republican candidate, Orris G. Nordhougen, polled a total of 92,124 votes.<sup>54</sup> The second

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<sup>52</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 4, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

Table 1

The Total Votes for Republican and Democratic  
Candidates for the House of Representatives  
from 1946 through 1956

	1946	1948	1950	1952	1954	1956
Republicans	205,292	260,797	229,681	338,047	231,186	279,517
Democrats	71,054	58,460	95,268	49,829	113,272	169,027
Total	276,364	319,257	324,949	387,876	344,458	448,544

\*Computations for the combined votes for each party were made from: North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, National and State, 1946-1954.  
North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 6, 1956.

Table 2

The Percentage of Votes Received by all Republican Candidates  
and all Democratic Candidates for the House of  
Representatives from 1946 through 1956

	1946	1948	1950	1952	1954	1956
Republican	74.2	81.4	70.7	87.2	67.1	62.3
Democratic	25.8	18.6	29.3	12.8	32.9	37.7

\*The percentages in Table 2, were computed from  
Table 1.

Democratic candidate, S. B. Hocking, received a total of 79,889 votes.<sup>55</sup> The Democratic candidates received 48.6 per cent of the total vote. The 1958 vote was an increase of 10.9 per cent over the 1956 vote. It was an increase of 22.4 per cent over the mean percentage from 1946 through 1956.

Election statistics and other facts presented in this chapter indicated a trend away from Republican tradition as of the 1956 elections. The trend was firmly established in 1958 with the election of Quentin Burdick. Other Democratic candidates made strong gains in 1958. The Democrats in the legislature increased from twenty-eight in 1956 to sixty-four in 1958.

Chapter II will present a survey of the election results for Quentin Burdick for 1946, 1956, and 1958. A more complete survey will be made of Burdick and other candidates for the House of Representatives in 1958.

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<sup>55</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 4, 1958, p. 1.

## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF ELECTION RESULTS

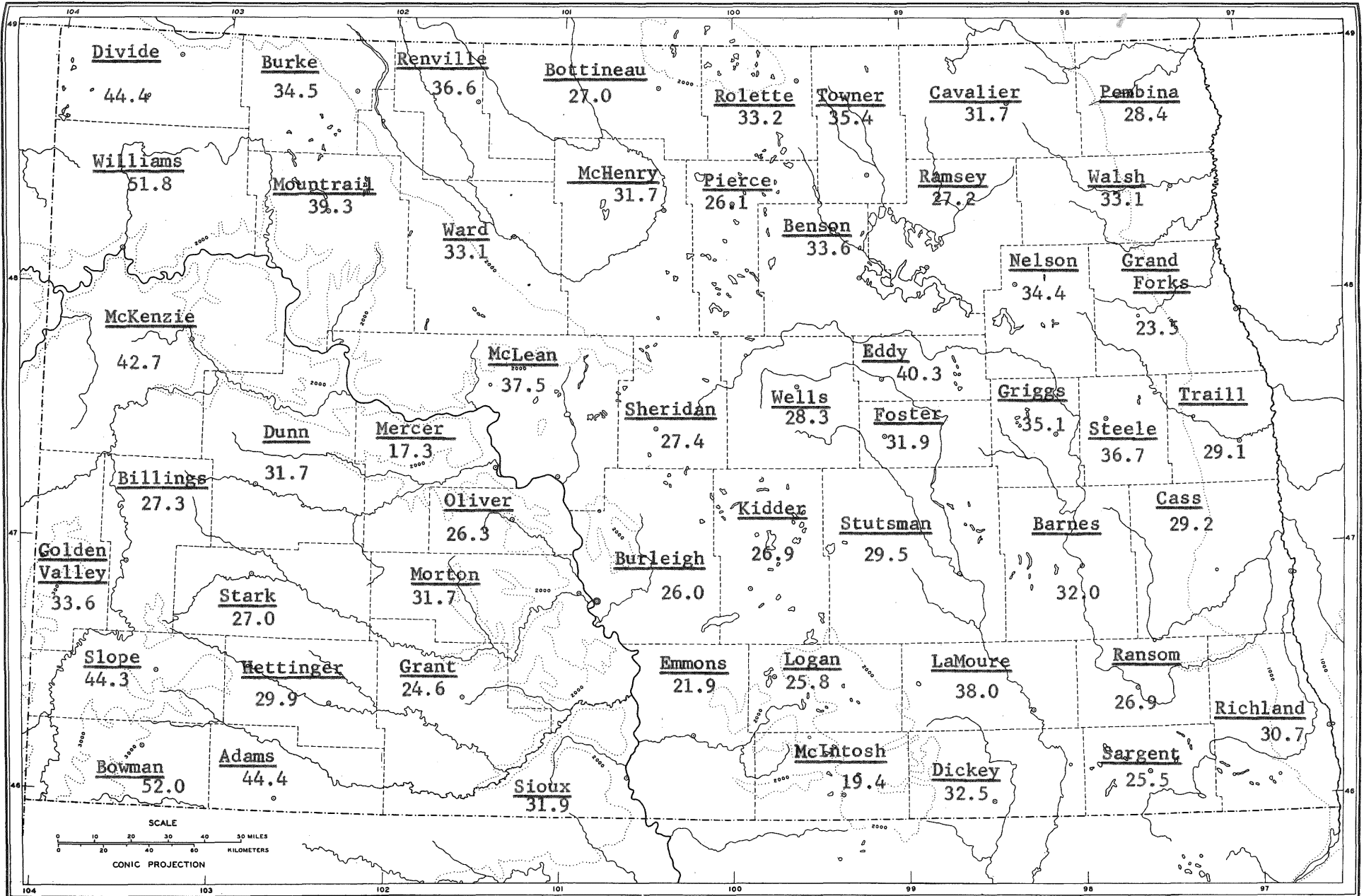
This chapter will provide an election survey of counties and economic areas of North Dakota. The results of the elections of the years 1946, 1956, and 1958 will be used. These are the years in which Quentin Burdick was a candidate for public office. It is intended to determine in which counties and in which economic areas Burdick received the support of the electorate.

In 1946, Burdick campaigned for the office of governor on the Democratic ticket. The Republican candidate was Fred G. Aandahl. The general election of November 5, 1946 resulted in a decisive victory for Mr. Aandahl, who polled 116,672 votes, while Burdick received 52,719 votes.<sup>1</sup> Burdick thus received 31.2 per cent of the total vote.

A map, providing the per cent of the total vote received by Burdick in each county, will be found on page twenty-one. Burdick received a majority vote in only two counties, Bowman and Williams. The majority vote received

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<sup>1</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Compilation of Election Returns, 1954.



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GOODE BASE MAP SERIES  
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 HENRY M. LEPPARD, EDITOR

Figure 1  
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Percentage of County Vote Received by Quentin Burdick - 1946

Prepared by Henry M. Leppard

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by Burdick in the latter county is likely related to the fact that it is the home county of the Burdick family. The above election indicates a degree of strength in five counties; Adams, Divide, Eddy, McKenzie, and Slope, which gave Burdick over forty per cent of their vote. Extreme weakness is indicated in Emmons, Grand Forks, McIntosh, and Mercer counties, where he received less than twenty-five per cent of the total vote.

In 1956, Burdick was a candidate for the United States Senate. His opposition was the incumbent, Milton R. Young. Young received 155,305 votes to 87,919 votes for Burdick.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of total vote that he received had increased from 31.2 in 1946 to 36.1 per cent in 1956.<sup>3</sup>

The percentages of county vote received by Burdick will be found on page twenty-three. Burdick did not receive a majority vote in any county even though his percentage of total state vote increased over 1946. Fifteen counties gave Burdick over forty per cent of the vote.<sup>4</sup> Counties

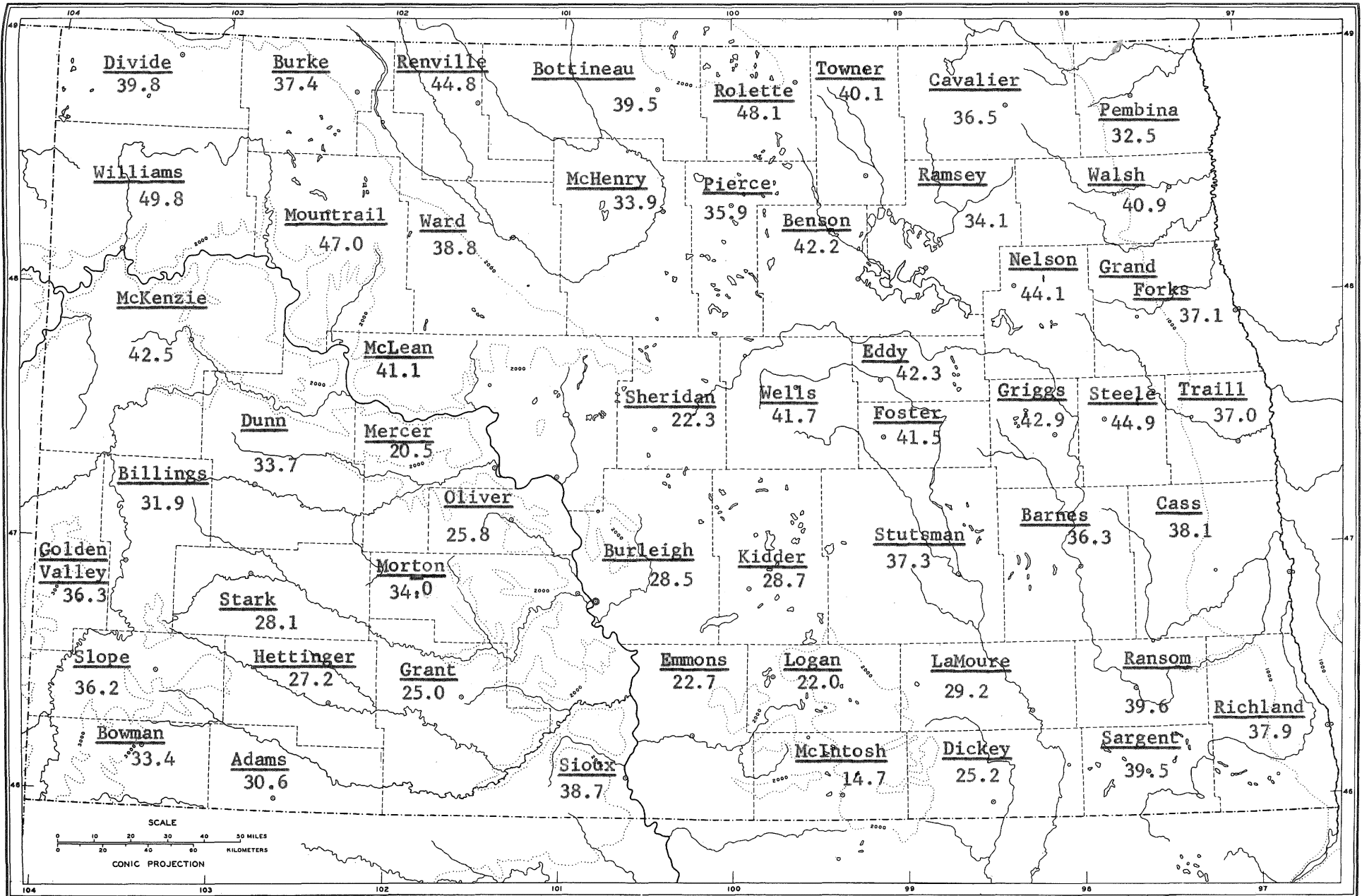
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<sup>2</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 6, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>The percentages of vote do not include the votes of A. C. Townley, who received a total of 937 votes.

<sup>4</sup>Counties giving Burdick over forty per cent of their vote were: Benson, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, McKenzie, McLean, Mountrail, Nelson, Renville, Rolette, Steele, Towner, Walsh, Wells and Williams.





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Figure 2  
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Percentage of County Vote Received by Quentin Burdick - 1956

which gave Burdick less than 25 per cent included three of his weakest counties in 1946.<sup>5</sup> The 1956 election demonstrates a trend, which became more evident in the 1958 election.

Burdick received the largest number of votes for the United States House of Representatives in the general election held November 4, 1958. The total votes of the state were as follows: Burdick 99,562, Short 97,862, Nordhougen 92,124, and Hocking 78,889.<sup>6</sup> The Democratic combination of Burdick and Hocking polled nearly 49 per cent of the total vote. Burdick and Short each received 27 per cent of the total vote. Nordhougen's share of the vote was 24 per cent. Burdick's Democratic running mate, Hocking, received 21 per cent of the total vote.

The total vote for candidates to the House of Representatives was shared by four candidates. The two candidates with the highest number of votes are elected to that office. Since the vote is divided four ways, 25 per cent is considered an equal share of the vote. The strength of each candidate is determined by comparing

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<sup>5</sup>Counties giving Burdick less than 25 per cent of their vote were: Emmons, Logan, McIntosh, Mercer, and Sheridan.

<sup>6</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 4, 1958, p. 1.

his percentage of vote with an equal share of 25 per cent. Twenty-five per cent of the vote is comparable to 50 per cent of the vote when two candidates share the vote.

The map on page twenty-six indicates the percentage of vote received by Burdick in each county.<sup>7</sup> Burdick received the highest number of votes in thirty-two counties.<sup>8</sup> Logan, McIntosh, Mercer, and Sheridan counties gave Burdick less than 20 per cent of the vote. The above counties have been consistent in their strong opposition to Burdick.

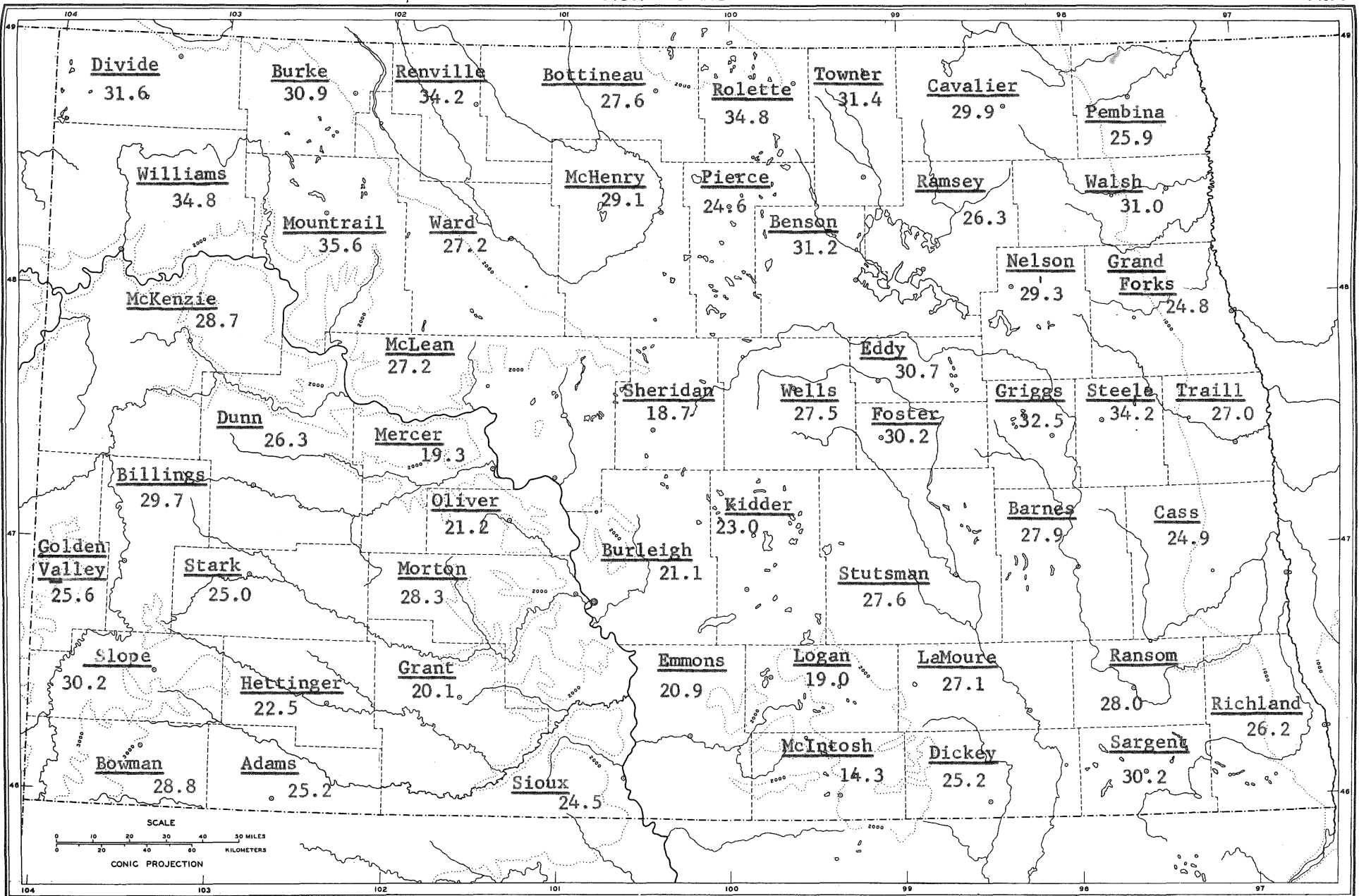
Short received his strongest support in the southern counties, and the more urban counties of Burleigh, Cass, and Grand Forks. The northern, central, and certain eastern counties gave Burdick his strongest vote. A discernable, but slight, trend was indicated in most of these counties in 1956. The share of the vote received by Burdick in 1958 was nearly double the percentage received in his two previous candidacies.

For survey purposes the state has been divided into four economic areas. These areas are patterned after the

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<sup>7</sup>The map on page twenty-six must be considered in relation to the equal share of the vote, which is 25 per cent.

<sup>8</sup>The thirty-two counties in which Burdick received largest number of votes were: Barnes, Benson, Billings, Bottineau, Bowman, Burke, Cavalier, Divide, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, McHenry, McKenzie, McLean, Morton, Mountrail, Nelson, Ramsey, Ransom, Renville, Rolette, Sargent, Slope, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Traill, Walsh, Wells, and Williams.



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Percentage of County Vote Received by Quentin Burdick - 1958

economic areas designated by the Bureau of the Census. A consideration for the economic conditions of each area will involve: a limited survey of the per farm income, approximate population percentages of the state, relationship of the population to agricultural and urban living, farm tenancy, and farm labor. These considerations shall be limited to general statements for determining an economic pattern.

The income of the classes of farms are as follows: class I over \$25,000, class II between \$10,000 and \$24,999, class III between \$5,000 and \$9,999, class IV between \$2,500 and \$4,999, class V between \$1,200 and \$2,499, and class VI from \$250 to \$1,199.<sup>9</sup>

The largest number of area I farms falls within the class IV income. It has the least percentage of farm tenancy of all areas. Labor per farm is equal to the state average.<sup>10</sup> Slightly over 60 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture. The area contains about 17 per cent of the state's population.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State and County Economic Areas, 1954, p. 22. Sub-areas are not shown.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 111, 159.

<sup>11</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State Economic Areas, 1951, pp. 21-22.

Area II follows closely the pattern of area I, with most of its farms falling in the class IV income. It has a slightly higher percentage of farms above the class IV income than area I. Farm tenancy is about equal in areas II, III, and IV. The amount of farm labor is about equal to area I.<sup>12</sup> This area contains about 19 per cent of the state's population, with slightly over half of the population engaged in agriculture.<sup>13</sup>

Area III has the largest number of its farms coming within the class IV income, but with a greater percentage of farms higher than class IV income than either area I or area II. This area has the lowest per farm labor of any area.<sup>14</sup> The percentage engaged in agriculture is about the same as area II. About 43 per cent of the state's population live in area III.<sup>15</sup>

The largest number of area IV farms come within the class IV income. Labor per farm is higher than the first three areas.<sup>16</sup> This area contains about 21 per cent of

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<sup>12</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State and County Economic Areas, 1954, pp. 112-13, 160-61.

<sup>13</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State Economic Areas, 1951, pp. 21-22.

<sup>14</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State and County Economic Areas, 1954, pp. 114-15-16, 162-63-64.

<sup>15</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State Economic Areas, 1951, pp. 21-22.

<sup>16</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State and County Economic Areas, 1954, pp. 117, 165.



the state's population, with approximately 40 per cent engaged in agriculture. The percentage of urban population is much higher than in the first three areas.<sup>17</sup>

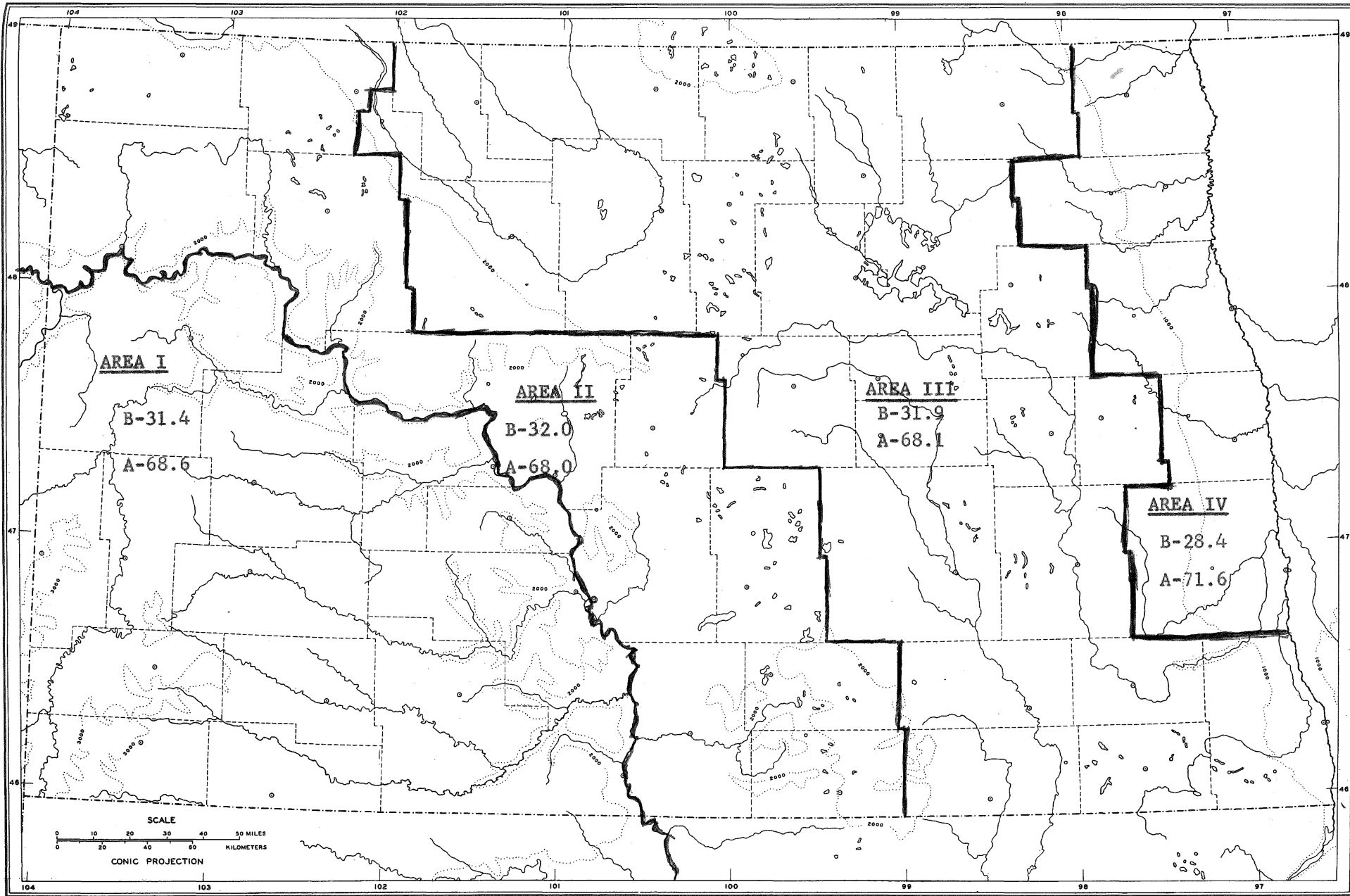
The above mentioned facts indicate an improvement of farm economic conditions from western to eastern North Dakota. Population is more concentrated in the eastern portion of the state. Starting with area I and moving to area IV, there is a progressive increase in farm income and an increase in urban population. The strongest source of Democratic strength is area III. Statements that Democratic vote increases in areas less favorable to farmers could not be accepted as true in North Dakota. This study indicates that area I, with the least favorable conditions, tends to be more strongly Republican.

The map on page thirty indicates the percentage of vote received for the gubernatorial election of 1946.<sup>18</sup> The state has been divided into four economic areas. The letter "B" represents the votes received by Quentin Burdick, and the letter "A" indicates the votes received by Fred Aandahl. Aandahl received overwhelming majorities in all areas. In area I, Burdick received 8,291 votes

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<sup>17</sup>United States, Bureau of the Census, State Economic Areas, 1951, pp. 21-22.

<sup>18</sup>This writer has computed the area vote and percentages from official election returns, which have been previously listed.



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Figure 4  
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Percentage of Vote Received in Economic Areas - 1946

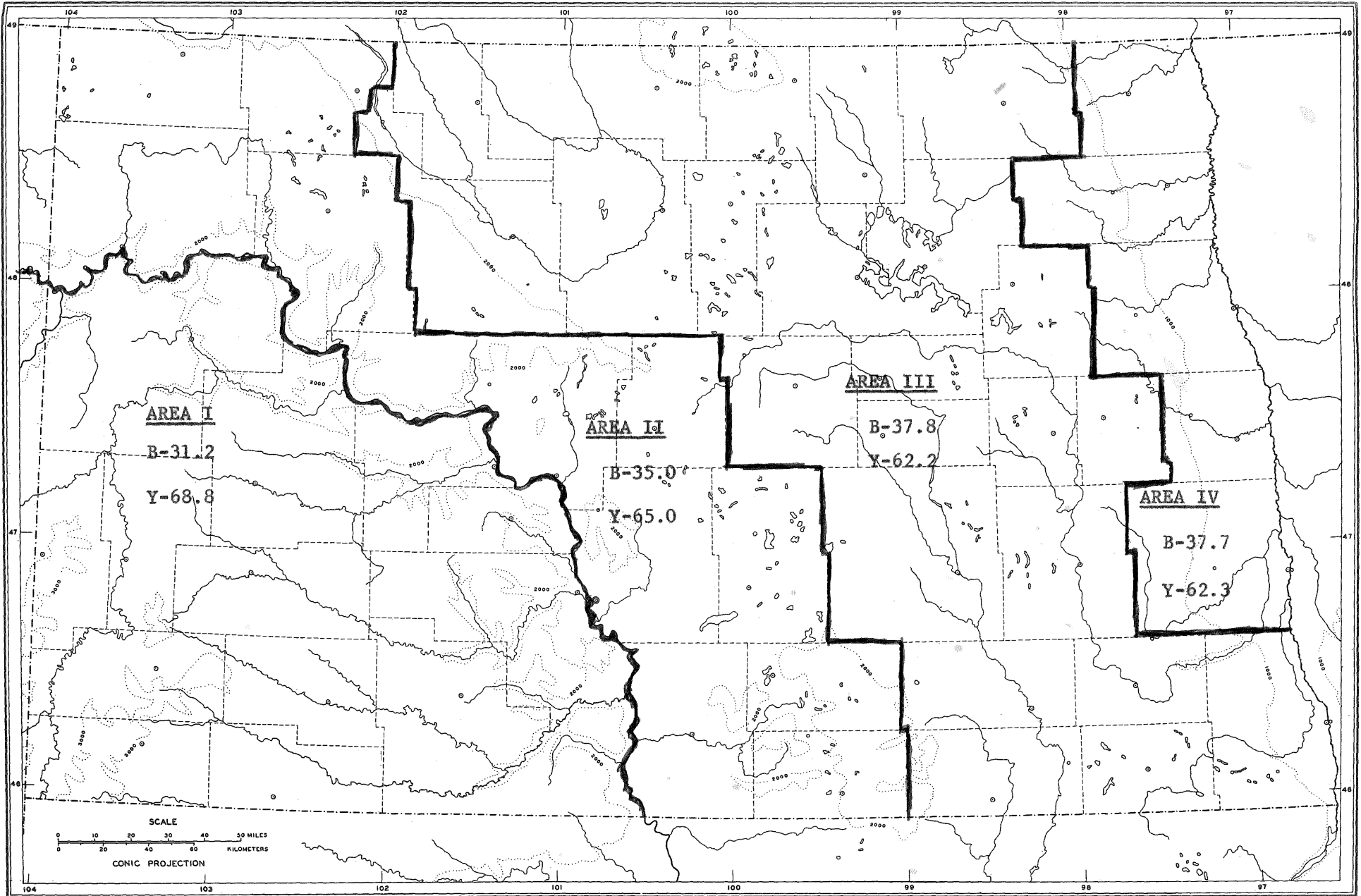


to 18,078 for Aandahl. In area II, Burdick polled 10,680 votes and Aandahl received 22,709 votes. The area III electorate gave Burdick 23,815 votes and Aandahl 50,844 votes. Area IV gave 9,933 votes to Burdick and 25,041 votes to Aandahl. Burdick received 31.2 per cent of the total state vote. A study of the map will indicate that only area IV gave Burdick less than the percentage he received from the total state vote. The variance of percentage from one economic area to another is too slight to venture an explanation. Burdick's vote was very weak in all areas with area IV being slightly less than the first three areas. Later election results demonstrate a more discernable source of strength by economic area.

The map on page thirty-two represents the election percentage of the senatorial campaign of 1956 by economic area.<sup>19</sup> The percentage of the vote received by each candidate is indicated on the map by a "B" for Quentin Burdick and the letter "Y" for Milton Young. Burdick's share of the vote increased over the 1946 election. The percentage of the total state vote received by Burdick increased to 36 per cent. In area I, Burdick received 11,140 votes to 24,521 votes for Young. Area II gave 16,613 votes to Burdick and 30,792 votes to Young. Burdick polled 38,930 votes in area III to 63,924 votes for Young.

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<sup>19</sup>All area votes and percentages have been compiled from statistics previously stated.



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Figure 5  
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Percentage of Vote Received in Economic Areas - 1956

The area IV results gave Burdick 21,789 votes with Young receiving 36,068 votes. Area I gave Burdick approximately the same share of vote which he received in 1946. A gain of 3.0 per cent was made in area II. Area III increased its percentage of vote for Burdick by 5.9 per cent. The greatest increase was made in area IV. In area IV Burdick's percentage increased by 9.3 per cent.

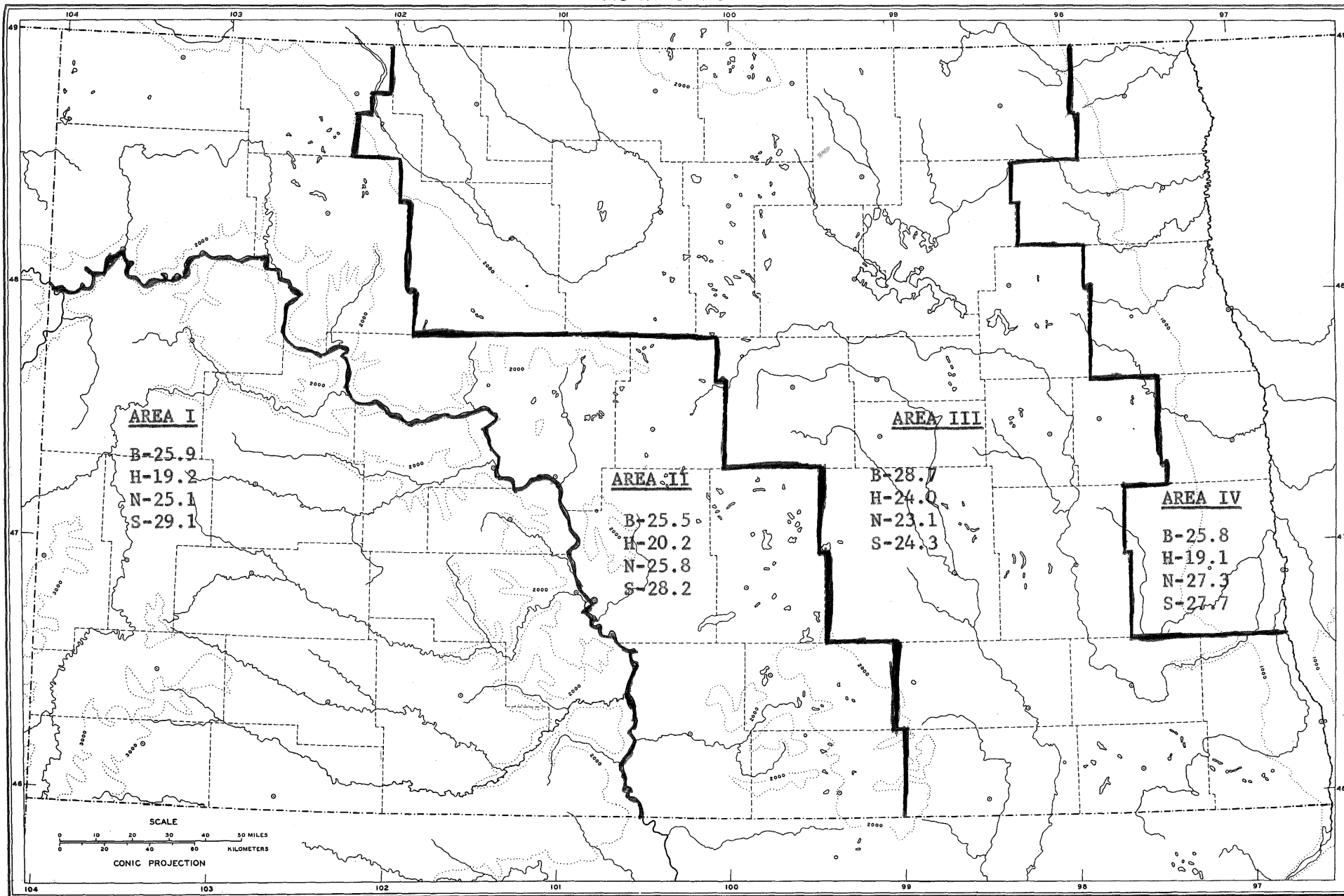
The compilation of vote by economic area for 1956 indicates an increase in areas II, III, and IV. This increase indicates a slight trend, which is strongly reinforced in the results of the 1958 election.

The map on page thirty-four divides the congressional vote of 1958 into economic areas. It must be remembered that the total vote is shared by four candidates and therefore an equal share of the vote is 25 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The letters on the map indicate the first letter of the candidates last name. The letters are "B" for Quentin Burdick, "H" for S. B. Hocking, "N" for Oris Nordhougen, and "S" for Don L. Short. The number following each letter is the percentage of the vote that candidate received in that area.

The area vote is as follows: in area I, Burdick 13,629, Hocking 10,259, Nordhougen 13,916, and Short 15,532; in area II, Burdick 19,421, Hocking 15,135, Nordhougen 19,322, and Short 21,141; in area III, Burdick 45,088,

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<sup>20</sup>An explanation for the division of votes for the House of Representatives was made on pages twenty-four and twenty-five.



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Figure 6  
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Percentage of Vote Received in Economic Areas - 1958

Hocking 37,704, Nordhougen 36,302, and Short 38,245; in area IV, Burdick 21,424, Hocking 15,791, Nordhougen 22,584 and Short 22,944.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1958 election, Burdick received the highest number of votes in the state, but only in area III did he receive a higher vote than any of the other candidates. Burdick received 27 per cent of the total state vote. In determining the strength of vote in an area, consideration should be given as to whether the percentage is above or below Burdick's percentage of total state vote. Burdick received about 26 per cent of the vote in areas I, II, and IV. In area III, he received 28.7 per cent of the vote. The Democratic combination of Burdick and Hocking received 45.1 per cent of the vote in area I, 45.7 per cent of the vote in area II, 52.7 per cent in area III, and 45 per cent in area IV. Area III is the greatest source of Democratic strength in the 1958 election. Since area III has better farm economic condition than area I, or area II, it must be determined that Democratic strength in North Dakota did not come from areas with less favorable farm conditions. The Democratic strength did not come from the area with the best economic conditions, which would be area IV. Area I and area IV gave about the same support to the Democratic candidates, and area I has the poorest farm conditions and area IV the best. The voters varied their support among

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<sup>21</sup>All area votes and percentages have been compiled from statistics previously stated.

the candidates and did not vote closely along party lines.

The areas of Democratic strength and weakness are evident from the study made of the county and area vote. The reasons for the vote which elected Burdick will be considered in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER III

### POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE ELECTION RESULTS

This chapter will be concerned with possible reasons for Quentin Burdick's election to the House of Representatives in 1958. Consideration will be given to (1) the value of the name, Burdick; (2) quality and quantity of newspaper service; (3) value gained from the strength of NPL and Democratic groups; (4) support by individuals and organizations; (5) the campaign; and (6) the character and personality of the candidate.

Consideration must be given to the fact that Quentin Burdick's father, Usher L. Burdick, had been elected to the House of Representatives ten times with very strong majorities. It had been stated in the newspapers that it was feared the name "Burdick" would give unwarranted support.<sup>1</sup> State political leaders have voiced the same opinion. One political leader stated: "The name Burdick is worth many votes."<sup>2</sup> Some felt the name "Burdick"

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., Grand Forks Herald, November 2, 1958, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Halvor Rolfsrud, Past NPL Chairman, April 23, 1960.



would not help. W. B. Allen writing in the Grand Forks Herald stated:

His friends lay stress in the efficacy of the name Burdick. But it would seem from past elections that voters were able to distinguish between the father, Usher L. and the son, Quentin Burdick.<sup>3</sup>

The above differences of opinion make it necessary to make a comparison of the voting strength of Quentin Burdick to that of Usher L. Burdick. The comparison is made to determine whether the voting pattern was similar for the two Burdicks. The percentage of votes received by Quentin Burdick in the 1958 election will be compared to the percentage of votes received by Usher L. Burdick in the election of 1956. In 1956, Usher L. Burdick received 31.3 per cent of the total vote of the four candidates.<sup>4</sup> Quentin Burdick received 27.1 per cent of the vote in 1958.

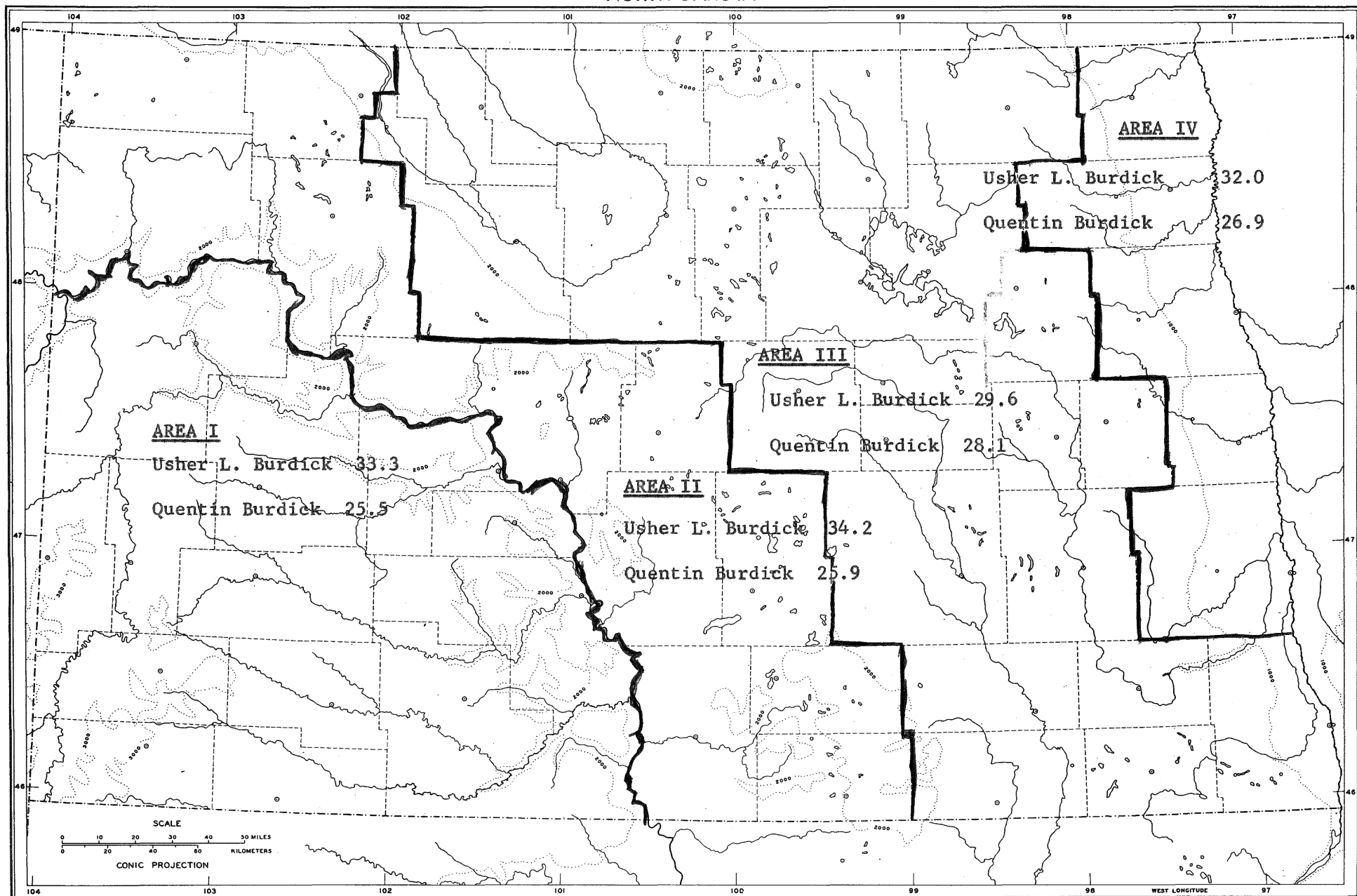
The map on page thirty-nine indicates the per cent of vote received by each candidate according to economic area.<sup>5</sup> A study of this map will indicate the areas of strength are not the same for both candidates. The difference becomes more evident if a comparison is made of the percentage of total state vote of each candidate. In areas I, II, and IV, Usher L. Burdick received a higher share of the vote than his total percentage of 31.3.

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<sup>3</sup>Grand Forks Herald, November 2, 1958.

<sup>4</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 6, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Computations were made from statistics stated elsewhere in this paper.



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Figure 7  
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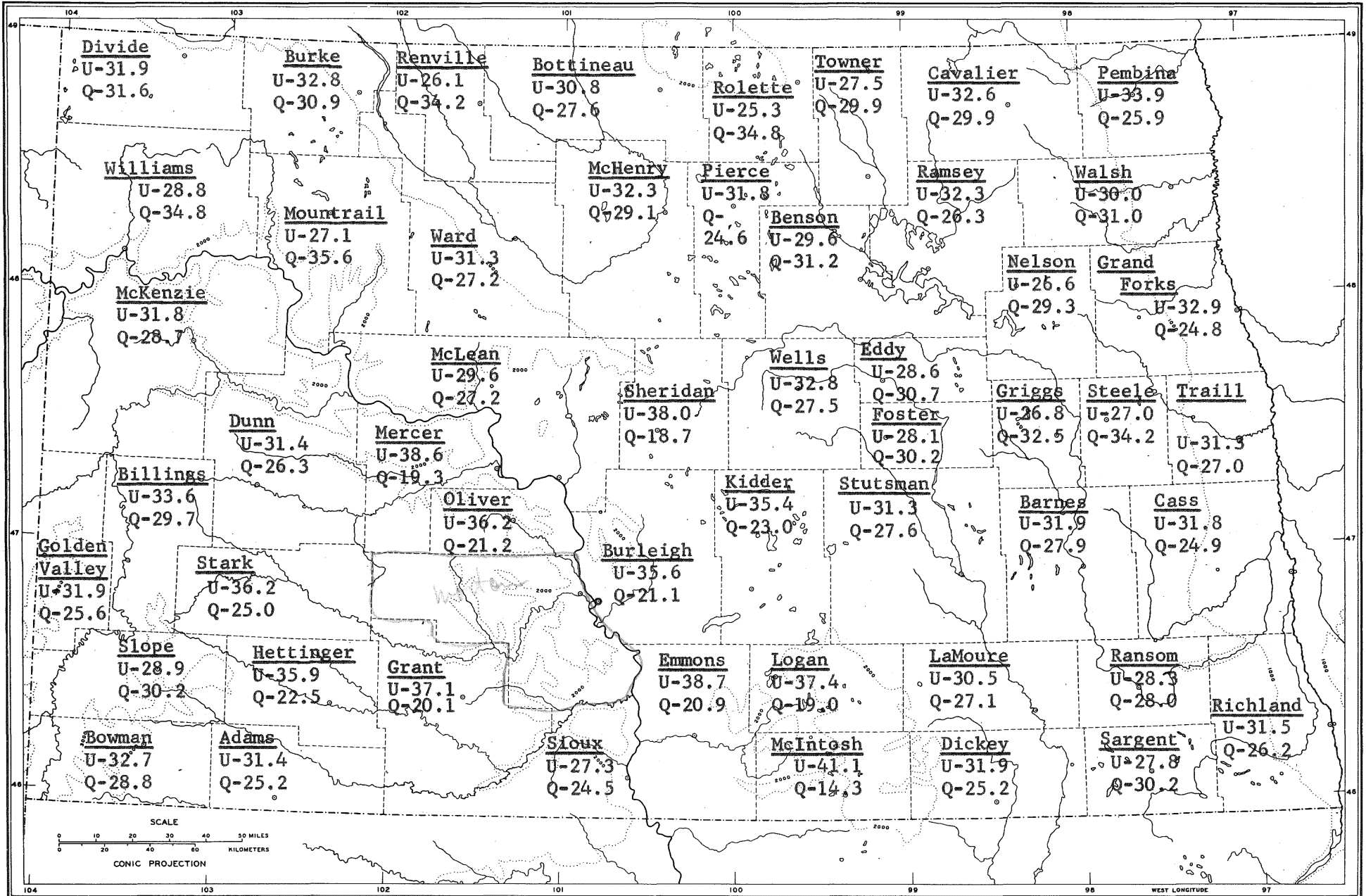
Comparison of Vote Received by Quentin and Usher L. Burdick in Economic Areas

This indicates that Usher Burdick's strongest areas are I, II, and IV. Quentin Burdick received a higher percentage of votes in area III than he received from the total state vote. The concentration of strength for Quentin Burdick was area III. Area III was Usher Burdick's weakest area. It is improbable that Quentin Burdick would receive the strongest support in Usher Burdick's weakest area if Quentin had been elected on the Burdick name.

A more complete demonstration of the opposite areas of voting strength is indicated by a study of the county vote. The map on page forty-one indicates the county vote by percentages.<sup>6</sup> On this map Quentin Burdick's percentage of votes is prefixed with the letter "Q" and Usher Burdick's percentage is indicated with the letter "U". An extreme example of opposite areas of electorate support is evident in McIntosh County. Usher Burdick carried 41.1 per cent and Quentin carried 14.3 per cent. Counties in which Usher Burdick carried a higher percentage than his state average contrasted with a lower than average vote for Quentin. The strongest support for Usher Burdick came from the German-Russian triangle, which has traditionally been Non-Partisan League. This is an area rising from the

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<sup>6</sup> Computations were made from statistics stated elsewhere in this paper.



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Comparison of County Vote Received by Quentin and Usher L. Burdick

southern tier of counties to a triangular peak in Pierce County.<sup>7</sup> This area voted in strong opposition to Quentin Burdick. Quentin Burdick's strongest vote came from the northern counties. The eastern counties, with the exception of Cass and Grand Forks Counties, gave Quentin a strong vote.

The percentage of votes received by Quentin Burdick in each county was correlated with the percentage of votes for Usher Burdick.<sup>8</sup> A perfect relationship between the vote of Quentin and Usher Burdick would be 1.0. A perfect inverse relation would be -1.0. The correlation between the 1956 election of Usher Burdick and the 1956 election of Quentin Burdick was -.85. This indicates an inverse relationship. There was no positive relationship between the vote of Quentin and Usher Burdick.

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<sup>7</sup>Joseph B. Voeller, "The Origin of the German-Russian People and Their Role in North Dakota" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of North Dakota, 1940), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup>The correlation was made with the assistance of the Political Science Department and computed by the University of North Dakota's International Business Machine Computer. The formula listed below was used in the computation.

$$r = \frac{\sum xy - \frac{(\sum x)(\sum y)}{N}}{\sqrt{\left[ \sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N} \right] \left[ \sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N} \right]}}$$

For further explanation see: V. O. Key, A Primer of Statistics for Political Scientists (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1954), pp. 120-24. See also: Morris Zelditch, Jr., A Basic Course in Sociological Statistics (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1959), pp. 100-102.

The above comparisons and correlation demonstrate Quentin did not receive the support of the same electorate as Usher Burdick.

The use of the newspaper must be considered in determining possible reasons for the election results. The press may be used as a potent force to aid or hinder a particular candidate in his campaign. A study of the press made in this chapter is an attempt to determine whether the more prominent newspapers in this state proved to be beneficial to the election of Quentin Burdick.

Many of Democratic and NPL leaders have stated their opinions on the press in North Dakota. Some stated that the newspapers were Republican. Certain individuals stated that the press gave inadequate coverage to the Democrats. The NPL chairman and the campaign chairman stated the press was inadequate.<sup>9</sup> The Democratic chairman gave the press a rating of fair.<sup>10</sup>

Four daily newspapers were studied for the period covering the campaign preceding the general election in 1958. Many of the leading Democratic candidates received coverage for most of their speeches. Burdick was often listed among the candidates scheduled to speak, but very

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<sup>9</sup>Interview with Halvor Rolfsrud, April 23, 1960.  
Interview with LeRoy Blaylock, Campaign Chairman, June 1, 1960.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Abner Larsen, Democratic Chairman, June 1, 1960.



little was found in later papers of the content of those speeches.

Favorable coverage was found on page five of the Grand Forks Herald on November 1, 1958. One article gave Burdick's opinion on bushel allotment and diversion. On the same page, the Associated Press coverage, gave a brief biography of Burdick. The Fargo Forum of October 19, 1958 gave favorable coverage to a speech made by Usher L. Burdick which was very critical of the GOP. Coverage was also given to statements made by Quentin Burdick at the same rally in Strasburg. The Bismarck Tribune of November 1, 1958, gave a political biography of Quentin Burdick. This article presented a factual account of Burdick's past candidatures, but it is questionable as to whether this article was beneficial to Quentin. The Minneapolis Morning Tribune published articles covering the general campaign in North Dakota. Many of these articles were favorable to the Democratic Party. Little mention was made of Burdick's campaign until November 5, 1958, when an article appeared by Ted Kolderie, which stated Burdick was leading in North Dakota. The above articles were those found to be most favorable to Burdick.<sup>11</sup> The coverage given other

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<sup>11</sup>The possibility exists that this writer has failed to cover all the favorable articles. Papers other than those mentioned were reviewed but no significant change or endorsement appeared. The information gathered is intended to form a consensus on the value of the press in the campaign.



Democratic candidates was far superior to the coverage given Burdick.<sup>12</sup> It is recognized that the articles covering issues and Democratic speeches should be considered favorable to Burdick, but would not provide a campaign advantage over other Democrats.

It is believed by this writer that articles with negative connotations appeared often enough to be injurious to Burdick's campaign. Gifford Herron predicted in the Fargo Forum that the GOP would win, but that some Democratic gains would be made. Herron also stated that the value of the name "Burdick" and the Democratic issue with the Benson program would be softened by favorable crop results.<sup>13</sup> The Fargo Forum carried articles of Republican speeches which brought attention to the fact that Quentin was not Usher L. Burdick.<sup>14</sup> An editorial advocated the support of the Republican gubernatorial candidate.<sup>15</sup> The endorsement of John Davis, Republican candidate for governor, places the paper in the Republican camp. Burdick's opponents

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<sup>12</sup>It is not intended that the press be criticized for failure to give more coverage to Burdick's speeches, since he did not speak from a prepared text it would be difficult for the press to give full coverage.

<sup>13</sup>Fargo Forum, October 26, 1958, p. C-1.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., October 25, 1958, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., November 2, 1958, p. A-4.

Don L. Short and Orris Nordhougen were not endorsed, but it was the governor's office which appeared to be in the greatest danger of passing into Democratic hands.

Considerable attention was given to articles questioning the source of Democratic funds.<sup>16</sup>

The Bismarck Tribune appeared to be more neutral than the Fargo Forum in editorializing the campaign. The paper did not endorse any candidate. Burdick made very little news in the Tribune, but on November 3, 1958, he was given some chance of winning the election. Coverage of speeches made by Don L. Short had a negative value to Burdick. Statements by Short indicated that Burdick was married to the farm policy of the Farmers Union.<sup>17</sup>

The sentiment of the Grand Forks Herald appeared to be Republican and anti-Burdick. The Republican sympathies of the Herald are indicated by an editorial which stated:

For anyone who views the record sanely and simply listens to rabble-rousers, it must be apparent the GOP Administration, as of now, is an improvement over the Democratic reigns economically, except for the Roosevelt and Truman periods drenched with the blood of war.<sup>18</sup>

Statements appeared in the Herald by W. B. Allen which indicated that Burdick could not be elected.<sup>19</sup> An editorial appearing just before the election urged the

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., October 26, 1958, p. C-9.

<sup>17</sup>Bismarck Tribune, October 29, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>Grand Forks Herald, October 12, 1958, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

approval of all Republicans, and brought attention to the fact that the name on the ballot was that of Quentin Burdick, and not that of his father, Usher L. Burdick.<sup>20</sup> The Herald became vociferous in its opposition to the Democrats as the election date grew closer. Articles which explained the reasons behind Burdick's election appeared after Burdick was elected. These articles did not credit Burdick with any winning qualifications. The explanations behind Burdick's election were the discontent of the minority, Democratic money spending promises, and lack of Republican organization.<sup>21</sup>

The Minneapolis Morning Tribune was very neutral in the coverage of the campaign. Nothing was found to be unfavorable to Burdick, but very little attention was focused on the Burdick campaign.

No extensive coverage of the Burdick campaign was made by any of the newspapers. The Fargo Forum openly supported the Republican candidate for the office of governor. Many more articles appeared in the Forum covering the campaign of the opposition than appeared covering Burdick's campaign. The Grand Forks Herald openly opposed the Democratic Party and gave no support to Burdick.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., November 9, 1958, p. 7.

The Minneapolis Morning Tribune and the Bismarck Tribune were quite neutral in the campaign. The lack of coverage may be related to the fact that no money was expended on any of the daily newspapers for political advertising on Burdick's behalf.<sup>22</sup>

The above facts indicate strong sympathies on the part of the press for the election of Republican candidates. It is not intended to indicate, by the above statements, that the press carried out an anti-Burdick campaign. The study of the above-mentioned newspapers indicates that little favorable coverage was given to Quentin Burdick and that the sympathy of the papers was not with the Democratic Party.

Another factor of consideration is the strength of the NPL and the Democratic Party. Many of the party leaders have stated they felt Burdick received strong support from both groups. Burdick believed good support was received from both the NPL and the Democratic Party. Burdick stated:

I believe I had the support of the NPL leaders in the primary and NPL and Democrats in the fall. I had no Democratic endorsement in the primary. I know of no wide party defection in that election. There were no doubt individual defections, but not significant.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

As stated in Chapter I, there are three main political factions in North Dakota. The ROC, NPL, and the Democratic Party individually have not been able to win elections. The Democratic Party should have won the elections of 1956 and 1958 since it had the support of the NPL. The main reason the Democrats were unable to control these elections was that the NPL did not come to the Democratic Party in full force.

An examination of the source of the NPL move to the Democratic column was made to determine the effect, if any, on Burdick's election. The following information was taken from a letter written by a person with first-hand knowledge of the movement.

The younger element of the NPL became restless in 1946 and 1948. In 1948 a strong drive by the Farmers Union brought about the nomination of a fairly liberal NPL state ticket. The Farmers Union was impressed with the idea of the Progressive Party as a third party and was instrumental in forming the Progressive Alliance to carry out the campaign in 1948. Ervin Schumacher, the candidate for governor, was defeated by 10,000 votes in the Republican Primary.

By 1950 the feeling had developed that the NPL should file its candidates in the Democratic column. A motion was made on the floor of the convention in 1950 to file in the Democratic column and the motion received forty votes. This was the convention in which Bill Langer and Frank Vogel decided to run Vogel for governor to stop the insurgent Leaguer, Wally Warner, from getting the nomination for governor. Wally would have won the 1950 election if he had been nominated.

In the 1951 legislative session, Halvor Rolfsrud won the caucus vote for speaker of the House. The old guard of the NPL rumped and made a deal with the ROC to place Walter Bubel as speaker of the House. Then in 1952 Elmo Christianson, the

Attorney General, was caught by the federal boys for conspiring to bring gambling in North Dakota.

In 1954 the ROC nominated candidates to run against only insurgent leaguers on the ROC cards. This series of events led middle-of-the-road leaguers into believing that the only way the NPL would stay liberal was to join the Democratic Party. The big switch developed in 1955 - to everyone's surprise. This was not a convention but a stockholders meeting of the Leader Publishing Company. Oscar Zetter, Gerald Saxerud and Bill Simons were trying hard to sell Leader shares to insurgent leaguers with the idea of taking over the Leader by throwing out the old guard directors. With only a few hours left on the deadline for buying new shares these three came up with approximately 100 shares which later proved to be a margin of victory.

The Leader Credentials Committee fought for ten hours before any voting actually started and an attempt was even made to abscond with the credentials and only some muscle work by Bill Simons and Oscar Zetter prevented this from taking place.

The insurgents were able to take absolute control of the Board from the old guard. This broke the old guard hopes to the point that they did not even appear at the precinct, county, or state League conventions in 1956 so the insurgents had full run of all conventions. In the 1956 campaign, the League nominated a slate of candidates at their convention and the Democrats accepted this slate of candidates.<sup>24</sup>

This was an insurgent movement and many long time Leaguers, such as William Langer, chose to stay with the Republican Party. The split in the NPL weakened the effect of their movement to the Democratic ticket. The insurgents took with them the title of Leaguers and a

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<sup>24</sup>Letter, August 18, 1960, The writer of the letter has requested anonymity.



considerable number of prominent Leaguers, but this was insufficient to win in the election of 1956.

The League was openly accepted by the Democratic Party in 1956. In 1958, the Democrats chose to nominate some of their own candidates for public office. Quentin Burdick was the nominee of the NPL in the primary election of 1958. The Democrats nominated and gave moderate support to Ralph Dewing and S. B. Hocking. Burdick and Hocking carried the primary election.

The combined strength and efforts of the NPL and Democratic Party must be examined to determine the effect of each in the election of Burdick. A joint campaign headquarters was established in Bismarck with LeRoy Blaylock as campaign chairman. Most of the party leaders have stated they felt Burdick received strong support from both groups. A few Democratic leaders felt the NPL campaigned mostly for Burdick.<sup>25</sup> This statement is supported by the fact that prominent Leaguer Francis Daniels campaigned and solicited funds in all parts of the state for Burdick's election. Daniels was not paid by the League or any organization, but was to receive compensation from funds collected for the campaign.<sup>26</sup> The efforts of Daniels and

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<sup>25</sup>Interviews Blaylock and Larsen, June 1, 1960.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Halvor Rolfsrud, Past NPL Chairman, April 23, 1960.



the endorsement of Burdick by the NPL indicate the League strongly supported Burdick. The efforts of the NPL were certainly a factor in the election of Burdick.

Members of both the NPL and the Democratic Party have stated the campaign of 1958 was very well organized. The Democrats placed high hopes on the 1958 election because at this time the Republicans on the national scene were at low tide. It was a year for the Democrats in 1958. The election results of 1958 found the Republicans in control of only fourteen governorships and only seven of the legislatures.<sup>27</sup> The time was ripe for Democratic victory. Former President Harry S. Truman came to North Dakota to assist the Democrats in their campaign.

It has been stated by Democratic Party officials that the campaign of John Lord, Democratic candidate for governor, was very helpful in the election of Burdick.<sup>28</sup> John Lord polled 98,763 votes and Burdick polled 99,562 votes.<sup>29</sup> Since John Lord did not carry his own election and did not poll as many votes as Burdick, it can not be safely stated that Lord carried the election for Quentin Burdick. This does not mean that Lord's campaign might or might not have

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<sup>27</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making of the President: 1960 (New York: Atheneum House Inc., 1961), p. 62.

<sup>28</sup>Interviews with LeRoy Blaylock and Abner Larsen, June 1, 1960.

<sup>29</sup>Official Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election Held November 4, 1958, p. 1.

been favorable to Burdick. The number of votes received by Lord does indicate an increase in the strength of the Democratic Party. Strong increases made by the Democratic Party are evident by the increased number of seats in the State Legislature, and by the increased support of all Democratic candidates. The Democratic campaign chairman stated that a strong and effective campaign was conducted by all of the Democratic candidates.<sup>30</sup> Burdick stated that the cooperation from fellow candidates was excellent in every case.<sup>31</sup> On the cooperation and value received from campaign headquarters, Burdick states:

State campaign headquarters cooperated well, but they placed greater accent in time and money toward the election of John Lord. I received little direct help from the headquarters, and shared in two half-hour television shows where the entire ticket appeared. Balance of TV was purchased by myself or the committee. However, the campaign for Lord, gave me valuable assistance, since it brought people to the Democratic column.<sup>32</sup>

The campaign was effective in aiding the Democratic ticket and undoubtedly was essential to the election of Burdick.

Consideration must be given to Burdick's association with the Farmers Union of North Dakota. Burdick had been employed as an attorney for the Farmers Union, and it is generally accepted that the Farmers Union gave support to

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<sup>30</sup>Interview with LeRoy Blaylock, Campaign Chairman, June 1, 1960.

<sup>31</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

the campaign. Party leaders disagree as to the value of Farmers Union support. Certain leaders felt that the Farmers Union had a negative connotation and association with it was detrimental.<sup>33</sup> Other officials stated that the campaign of Farmers Union members on a local level had been helpful.<sup>34</sup> Both of these statements are true, but the value of the support must be determined.

The political principles of the Farmers Union are very similar to those of the Democratic Party. The principles the members believe in are the family type farm, adequate farm income, grass roots democracy, human conservation, free enterprise, a voice in world affairs, anti-authoritarianism, and the organization of labor.<sup>35</sup> The Farmers Union was interested in the election of most Democratic candidates in 1958. The history of the Farmers Union in politics indicates their influence was ineffectual. In 1950, the Farmers Union endorsed the defeated candidate Obed Wyum in the Democratic primary. The Farmers Union rallied behind Schumacher in the general election of 1950 only to be out-pollled by the Republican candidates by nearly two to one.<sup>36</sup> There are other examples of candidates

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Abner Larsen, June 1, 1960.

<sup>34</sup>Interview with Halvor Rolfsrud, April 23, 1960.

<sup>35</sup>Ross B. Talbot, "The Politics of Farm Organizations in North Dakota" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, 1953), p. 75.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 185-190.

backed by the Farmers Union only to go down in defeat. Ross Talbot, in his study of the Farmers Union, found the organization had little effect on State Politics. He states: "The North Dakota Farmer will change his party only under the most dire type of emergencies."<sup>37</sup> The Farmers Union has about 36,000 dues paying members.<sup>38</sup> The members of this organization have mixed loyalties and would as likely support one Democratic candidate as another. The open support of Quentin Burdick in 1956 was considered to be "the kiss of death."<sup>39</sup> The opposite forces tend to balance out and the Farmers Union support of Burdick was not a determinable factor in his being elected.

It was stated that Burdick did not fully cooperate with the general campaign, and that he often did not follow the general campaign schedule.<sup>40</sup> The heavy schedule of the campaign often made it impossible to attend all rallies. Any attempt at disassociation with the Democratic Party may have aided Burdick in certain areas, but was not sufficient to give him the margin of election. The increase in votes for Democratic candidates indicates that Burdick had to appeal to many of the same voters as did the other Democratic candidates.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>39</sup>Interview with Abner Larsen, Democratic Chairman, June 1, 1960.

<sup>40</sup>Anonymous interview. It is necessary that a degree of anonymity be afforded certain political leaders.

The personal expenditures of Quentin Burdick were very moderate. Burdick filed a statement of personal expense for the primary campaign of \$250.00.<sup>41</sup> The expenses for the campaign in the general election totaled \$753.86.<sup>42</sup> Other expenses were paid by the Democratic Party and the "Friends of Burdick Committee." Expenses paid by the Democratic Party were from general campaign funds and were not intended to favor any candidate. The amount expended by the Democratic Party in Burdick's behalf was not determinable, but the amount and value received by Burdick would not be above that of any other candidate. The "Friends of Burdick Committee," headed by Mrs. Helen Pepple of Fargo, spent approximately \$3,000.00 in direct support of Burdick's campaign.<sup>43</sup> The "Friends of Burdick Committee" was an advantage which Burdick enjoyed over the other candidates.

The campaign took Burdick to all parts of the State. The candidate made appearances before many Chamber of Commerce meetings. Very often these meetings were held with the opposing candidates or their representatives being present. Many speeches were made to rural audiences and

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<sup>41</sup>North Dakota, Secretary of State, Candidates Statement of Expenses and Promises, June 28, 1958.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., November 17, 1958.

<sup>43</sup>Letter, D. J. Scott, November 21, 1961.

to the State Federation of Labor. Other meetings were political rallies which were usually held at the county seat.<sup>44</sup>

The campaign included paid political advertisements on radio and television stations. Inexpensive spot announcements were used extensively on all television stations. The spot announcements consisted primarily of the slogan "Be for Burdick". The television speeches were short and not in excess of three to five minutes.<sup>45</sup>

Newspaper advertising was confined to county papers. The advertisement consisted of one column one inch ads carrying the phrase "Be for Burdick" in reverse black type.<sup>46</sup> The lack of advertising in the daily papers may be a factor in decreasing the desire of larger paper staffs to give the Burdick campaign full coverage.

The issues covered by Burdick in his campaign were mostly of the general Democratic platform. The campaign centered on the inability or lack of desire of the Republican administration to adequately handle the farm problems, improve the national economy, or assume proper leadership in world affairs. Burdick's entire campaign was centered on the farm issues. The candidate was very

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<sup>44</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

critical of Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson. Reference was often made to the lower farm incomes and increased farming costs. The candidate pledged himself to the support of farm programs which would best assist in maintaining the family type farm. The development of the Missouri diversion project was another strong plank in Burdick's platform.<sup>47</sup>

The strategy of the campaign did not vary from one area of the state to another. The fact that the campaign did not vary in different areas indicates there was no attempt to appeal to particular organizations, social groups, or religions. The campaign was broad enough to cover each section of the state. The candidate's campaign differed very little from the general Democratic campaign and the statements made by other candidates.<sup>48</sup>

Attention must be given to the personal qualities of Quentin Burdick. Political leaders considered Burdick's moral character to be above reproach. Many leaders were impressed with his sincere consideration for his family.

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<sup>47</sup>The speeches made by Burdick were without script and copies are not available. This writer was in attendance at several political rallies during the campaign of 1958. The above statements on the campaign issues are in line with a blanket statement by Burdick that he dealt exclusively with the farm problem.

<sup>48</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.



After the death of his wife, he placed the decision of his candidacy before his children.<sup>49</sup> The candidate's political affiliations in 1948 have served as a base for political smear campaigns. Quentin attended the Progressive Party's convention in Chicago. This convention was infiltrated with Communist sympathizers. As soon as Burdick was aware of conditions existing there, he returned home.<sup>50</sup> Since Quentin was elected, this attempt to smear his character served no purpose. Past campaigns served as a training ground for the poise needed to create favorable impressions. Fellow candidate Hocking stated: "There is little doubt, of course, that Quentin is a very able individual and that he made a fine impression wherever he appeared."<sup>51</sup>

The type of support sought and apparently received in the election was very well summed up by Burdick.

Burdick wrote:

Majority of farm and labor groups for me. Majority of business groups against me. I could see no religious divisions, or nationality divisions, except in some of the former strong League Germanic counties, such as McIntosh, Logan, Emmons, and Sheridan, where there is ingrained Republicanism.<sup>52</sup>

Studies made by this writer affirms the above statement.

The counties mentioned by Burdick are a part of a group of

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<sup>49</sup>Interview with Abner Larsen, Democratic Chairman, June 1, 1960.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Letter, S. B. Hocking, June 16, 1960.

<sup>52</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.

counties forming a nationalistic triangle. As previously stated this area was the center of isolationist thought which found expression in the Republican Party. Democratic officials agree with Burdick as to which groups supported and which groups opposed him.

This chapter indicates Burdick had many of the same advantages and disadvantages of his fellow candidates. Conclusions will be made in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to determine, on the basis of the preceding chapters, the most important factors involved in the election of a Democratic candidate in a traditionally Republican state. As previously stated, Quentin Burdick was the first Democrat to be elected to the House of Representatives in the history of North Dakota. In 1958, Burdick was the only Democratic candidate elected by a state-wide electorate. An examination of the reasons for Burdick's election was made in Chapter III. Conclusions made in this chapter will be based on the studies made in this paper and this writer's personal experience in the 1958 campaign.

The history of North Dakota indicates that a combination of two of the three political groups, the ROC, the NPL, and the Democrats, is usually necessary for the election of a candidate in North Dakota, yet the NPL and the Democrats combined in 1956 and failed to win a major election. This combination did make gains in the number of Democratic seats in the state legislature. In 1958, the Republican tradition and the "waving of the bloody shirt" defeated all major candidates except Burdick.

This chapter is concerned with the process of determining what assets Burdick possessed when the rest of a similarly backed ticket were defeated.

Considerable attention has been called to the value of the name Burdick. Democratic and NPL officials have stated there is value in the use of Quentin's last name. Political writers in North Dakota newspapers have also called attention to this fact. It has been stated by NPL and Democratic officials that the name Burdick was worth many votes, and that the Party sought to use this advantage by the use of a campaign slogan, "B." for Burdick.

As a result of the emphasis on the popularity of the name Burdick, a comparison was made of the votes received by Usher L. Burdick in 1956 to the votes received by Quentin Burdick in 1958. The results of this comparison, made in Chapter III, indicate that little value was gained from the name. A comparison of the vote was made in each of the four economic areas of North Dakota. Quentin Burdick received his strongest support in area III. Area III was the weakest area for Usher Burdick. A comparison of the percentage of vote received in each county also indicates that each candidate received support from opposite areas. The results of correlation computations demonstrates an inverse relationship.

The newspapers of North Dakota often made mention of the difference between the father and son. Republican candidates also called attention to the fact that Quentin

Burdick was a Democrat. The voters of North Dakota were made keenly aware that Quentin Burdick was a Democratic candidate and that former Republican Congressman Usher L. Burdick was not a candidate.

In consideration of the above facts, this writer believes that any vote received by Quentin Burdick as a result of the name would be negligible. The name Burdick must be eliminated as an influential factor in the election.

A survey of North Dakota newspapers was made in Chapter III for the purpose of determining their effect on the campaign and election of Burdick. The purpose of the survey was to determine if the press was of greater value to Burdick than to the rest of the Democratic candidates. The study revealed that Burdick received less coverage than other candidates. The Minneapolis Morning Tribune and the Bismarck Tribune were quite neutral in their coverage of the campaign. The Fargo Forum showed Republican leanings by its endorsement of Republican candidate for governor John Davis. The Grand Forks Herald carried editorials which were openly anti-Democratic. The review of other North Dakota papers revealed little change from the papers mentioned above. The opinion of NPL and Democratic leaders were that the press did not serve as an advantage. The press cannot be considered a political advantage of Burdick's as he received even less and certainly no more favorable publicity than his fellow Democratic candidates.

The Democratic Party of North Dakota showed definite increase in its political importance in 1958. The elections across the United States in 1958 demonstrated growing dissatisfaction with the Republican Party. The joint forces of the NPL and Democratic Party were thrown into the campaign of 1958. All Democratic candidates conducted a strong and effective campaign.<sup>1</sup> Democratic congressional candidates Burdick and Hocking polled nearly 49 per cent of the total vote. Many have stated that the campaign of fellow candidates greatly aided in Burdick's election. It is true that all candidates cooperated well and supported one another. John Lord conducted a particularly strong campaign. Lord received a strong vote in the election, but not enough to defeat the incumbent John Davis. The campaign of Lord and fellow candidates was effective in strengthening the Democratic Party and was certainly beneficial to Burdick. There is no reason to believe the campaign of Lord did more to benefit Burdick than other candidates. All candidates benefited from an efficient campaign organization. It is certain that Burdick could not have won without the support of the Democratic Party and the strong campaign of fellow candidates, but it is equally sure that this did not account for his margin of vote over other candidates.

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with LeRoy Blaylock, Campaign Chairman, June 1, 1960.

A source of controversy within the political group behind Burdick was the value of the Farmers Union support. There is no doubt that the Farmers Union was behind Burdick as it was behind the other Democratic candidates. The principles that most Farmers Union members adhere to are similar to those of the Democratic Party and it is quite natural that a large number of Farmers Union members should be attracted to the Democratic Party. The study of the Farmers Union made in Chapter III shows a dismal failure on the part of any Farmers Union candidate to be elected. The study of the history of Farmers Union politics do not reveal that the 36,007 dues paying members combine to control the balance of political power.<sup>2</sup> A study by Ross Talbot demonstrates the little effect of the Farmers Union on state politics.<sup>3</sup> The Farmers Union provides no unified political front. The socialistic stigma which has been attached to the Farmers Union, by certain North Dakota politicians, tends to make their political association as much of a liability as it would an asset. As stated in Chapter III, the open support of the Farmers Union was politically "the kiss of death". Political opponents of

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<sup>2</sup>Ross B. Talbot, "The Politics of Farm Organizations in North Dakota" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, 1953), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 185-90.



Burdick's sought to discredit Quentin by associating him with the Farmers Union. A study of the election results in Chapter II indicates the Democrats were moderately successful in their appeal to the farmers, and it matters little whether the farmers were members of the Farmers Union or not. The support the Farmers Union, as an organization, gave Burdick and other Democratic candidates is not considered a determining factor. Hocking, with similar support, received considerably less votes than Burdick.

The concern of various governing bodies over the amount of campaign expenditures indicates the importance of large amounts of money in a campaign. As stated in Chapter III, the personal expenses of Burdick were \$250.00 in the campaign for nomination and \$753.86 for the campaign preceding the general election. This amount is very moderate even by North Dakota standards. The Democratic Party in its campaign expended no more in Burdick's behalf than for any other candidate and perhaps even less than was spent on John Lord.<sup>4</sup> The amount expended by Burdick and the Democratic Party on Burdick's campaign was certainly not an advantage over other Democratic candidates.

The campaign of Quentin Burdick was similar to that of other Democratic candidates. Quentin appeared in all

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<sup>4</sup>Letter, Quentin Burdick, United States Senator, August 24, 1960.

parts of the state and spoke to many different types of audiences. The campaign organization was modernized under the direction of LeRoy Blaylock. Lloyd Omdahl writes:

Up until 1958, campaigning in North Dakota was restricted to banquets, picnics, a little radio and television, guidecards and outdoor posters. Blaylock geared up his office for the modern age, bringing in a battery of six automatic typewriters that could pound out hundreds of personal letters each day.<sup>5</sup>

The issues of the campaign were of a general nature based on the platform of the Party. A slight deviation was the attempt to capitalize on the name Burdick. The use of the name was determined insignificant. The general campaign appeared to be of no greater value to Burdick than the other candidates.

The fact that Burdick was elected indicates an advantage over the other candidates. It has been concluded that the advantages did not rest with his name, newspaper coverage, support by the Farmers Union, the amount expended by Burdick and the Democratic Party for campaign purposes, or that his margin of victory rested with the campaign of fellow Democrats. It has been stated that other Democratic candidates had advantages and disadvantages similar to those above.

Burdick undoubtedly faced weaker candidates than did John Lord in the governor's race and Raymond Vendzel did in

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<sup>5</sup>Omdahl, The Insurgents, p. 166.

the senatorial election, but he faced the same candidates as S. B. Hocking.

The above reasons have been eliminated as being more advantageous to Burdick than other Democratic candidates. Quentin had the advantage of the support of the "Friends of Burdick Committee". The personal attributes of a candidate could be a factor in the campaign. Since other reasons have been eliminated as determining factors in Burdick's margin of victory, this writer concludes the advantages rested with Quentin Burdick's personal ability to draw votes and the support of the "Friends of Burdick Committee".

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