PENNSYLVANIA'S LITTLE NEW DEAL

By Richard C. Keller*

As PENNSYLVANIA entered the fourth decade of the twentieth century, conditions of industrial feudalism still existed within the Commonwealth. Private industrial police kept the workers docile both on and off company property; the existence of the company town frequently prevented the laborer from enjoying his leisure hours free from the watchful eye of his economic masters; women worked up to 54 and fourteen-year-old children up to 51 hours per week for incredibly low pay; union labor received few rights and little protection from legislatures submissive to the industrial interests.1

These same interests dominated the political life of the Keystone State. The Republican political machines of Simon Cameron, Matthew Quay, and Boies Penrose, allied with the barons of industry, had controlled the state since the Civil War, but the death of Senator Penrose on the last day of 1921 resulted in a struggle for control, since he had trained no successor. Three centers of power now emerged in Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia the Vare brothers had built a political machine through an alliance with banking and industrial interests, including W. W. Atterbury of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and they hoped to win control of the state.2 Outside the two largest cities of the Commonwealth, the strongest figure in the Republican party was Joseph R. Grundy, who was, in the words of Penrose, "the best money collector and the worst politician since Julius Caesar."3 His position as head of

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the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association enhanced his influence with the dominant interests in the smaller cities and towns, and many leaders of the "courthouse gangs" in the rural counties gave heed to his advice.

At the other end of the state, the city of Pittsburgh came under the rather loose control of the Mellon interests in the 1920's. Grundy had perhaps inspired this situation and certainly encouraged it, for a third power was needed in state politics because of the struggle between Vare and Grundy. Thus with Grundy's assistance, William L. Mellon, nephew of the secretary of the treasury, became Republican state chairman in 1926.¹

The only real challenge to domination of Pennsylvania by these industrial interests came from an old-line Progressive who had decided to make the Keystone State his bailiwick. Gifford Pinchot had run for office in Pennsylvania as early as 1914; failing then, Pinchot won the governor's chair in 1922 with the support of Grundy, who was both unable to find a suitable candidate of his own and unwilling to see William S. Vare take over the state patronage.⁵

Factionalism continued to plague the G.O.P. in the gubernatorial year of 1930. Vare chose Francis Shunk Brown, former attorney general of the state, as his candidate for governor, while the Grundy-Mellon forces selected the York countian Samuel S. Lewis for the race. But again Gifford Pinchot caused the Republican chieftains to alter their plans. By announcing his candidacy for a second term, Pinchot frightened Mellon into abandoning Lewis, for the Pittsburgh leader hated Pinchot and did not want to see him win the nomination merely because of a split in the Republican ranks.⁶ Lewis, reluctant from the start, withdrew from the race, and this event served to revivify one of the strangest alliances in politics, that of Pinchot and Grundy. Only a few months earlier, the Milford forester had written to the Wilkes-Barre Telegram a letter in which he had described Grundy as the greatest enemy of organized labor on this continent. Despite this,

Grundy, who was running for the Senate, linked his name with Pinchot's on sample ballots in some counties. Pinchot remained the silent partner, for he did not utter a word on behalf of the Senator, though he did not come out for his opponent.\footnote{Letter from Gifford Pinchot to Wilkes-Barre Telegram, December 19, 1929. Pinchot MSS, Box 1940, Personal Subjects; Philadelphia Public Ledger, April 4, 1930; Philadelphia Inquirer, April 13, 1930.}

If the primary contest had been between just two men, Pinchot and Brown, the forester probably would have lost. But the spectre of prohibition haunted politicians in 1930, and a third candidate who stood uncompromisingly for repeal drew 281,000 votes, most of which would have otherwise gone to Brown, who straddled the issue; and the dry Pinchot won by 20,000.\footnote{The Pennsylvania Manual, 1931, 596-597.} Even though Vare and Mellon desperately threw their support to the Democratic candidate in the general election, Pinchot was inaugurated in 1931 for his second term as governor.\footnote{Philadelphia Inquirer, October 11, November 5, 1930.}

During this administration Gifford Pinchot both laid the foundations and gave the initial impetus to the Little New Deal in Pennsylvania. He had been a candidate willing to attack the utilities monopoly, willing to proclaim the rights of labor, willing to denounce the corrupt alliance between business and politics. In fact, one of the campaign speeches made by Pinchot in 1930 contained a prophetic utterance. “Is it not time for a new deal?” he asked. “Is it not time to have the affairs of the Republican party... administered by public servants who are not willing to serve solely their own selfish interests?”\footnote{Ibid., October 29, 1930.}

In his requests to the legislature, Pinchot included up-to-date labor legislation, old-age pensions, teacher tenure, equalization of taxation, and effective regulation of utilities.\footnote{Harrisburg, Pa., Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, “Executive Minutes, January 1, 1931, to December 31, 1935,” 15.} The Pinchot forces tried to carry out these progressive ideas in the 1931 session, for they controlled the House of Representatives. Their failure resulted in large measure from their defeat in the Senate Republican caucus, where the anti-Pinchot faction chose the candidate for president pro tem by two votes.\footnote{Philadelphia Record, January 6, 1931.} With control of the Senate in the hands of the conservatives, Pinchot was able to
force only a few watered-down reforms through the Assembly. However, this amounted to more social reform than any governor had achieved in a number of years. He obtained the first old-age pensions; improvement in the child labor law, in addition to ratification of the federal amendment; and the outlawing of the yellow-dog contract. One of Pinchot’s greatest contributions was his exposure of flagrant abuses by the public utilities and the sweatshops.\(^3\)

The remaining years of the Pinchot administration were dominated by the effects of the depression in Pennsylvania; in his attempts to deal with these problems, he found that even the majority in the House deserted him. The depression had had a staggering impact upon the economy of Pennsylvania. The value of production of the state’s industrial plants had dropped by well over 50% between 1929 and 1932, and income from wages and salaries by almost as much; by the latter year approximately one-third of the population of the Commonwealth were entirely without income from their wage earners.\(^4\) Pinchot wanted to act vigorously to meet this threat, but the cost of his proposals shocked the rural legislators who had previously been his chief supporters in the Assembly. They spurned most of the governor’s plan to cope with the emergency and then proceeded to enact make-shift legislation designed primarily to keep down costs. About the only bright spot in this picture was the establishment of the State Emergency Relief Board, which took much of the job of dispensing relief out of the hands of the archaic and inefficient poor boards. The legislature took this step only because the national government insisted that the money it was providing the state be handled in this way.\(^5\) Pennsylvania’s effort to lend assistance to its needy ranked above that of most other industrial states, but it came about only because the governor was aided not only by the Democrats in the legislature but also by the law-makers of his own party from the industrial and mining regions, who were under heavy pressure from their constituents. This foreshadowed a shift in the political complexion of the state.

\(^5\) Pinchot, _Final Message_, 5, 27, 33-34.
\(^3\) Pinchot, _Final Message_, 8.
In January of 1935 Governor Pinchot made his farewell address to the Pennsylvania Assembly, and, after reciting the list of his proposals which they had rejected, declared with an air of self-justification: "It is well within the truth to say that if the General Assembly had enacted these measures as they were laid before it, or a majority of them, the next Governor of Pennsylvania would have been a Republican and not a Democrat." Pinchot was able to charge his party with dereliction of duty because a Democrat had been chosen as the state's chief executive for the first time in over forty years. The Democratic party had been transformed in a few years from a perennial also-ran into a winner. For decades Democratic gubernatorial candidates had been losing by hundreds of thousands of votes; in 1926 Eugene Bonniwell failed to carry a single county in his bid for the governor's chair. As late as 1930 the Democratic candidate could not win even with substantial Republican support.

As yet no section of the state could be called normally Democratic. The ten most Democratic counties of the 1920's and early 1930's included a smattering of mining areas—but not the most important ones—with agricultural counties comprising the remainder. Even these counties did not always return a Democratic majority. Until 1934 not one important industrial county appeared among the Democratic top ten. The labor force in the state, largely unorganized except for the miners, apparently saw no reason to give support to the Democratic party. The Negro and nationality groups formed the backbone of the Vare machine in Philadelphia and of such Republican organizations as John Fine's in Luzerne County. Where the Democrats did well in elections, they apparently did so on the basis of local issues or of unusually attractive candidates in the region. The party could not depend upon solid support in any section of the state, nor from any important group.

16 Ibid., 6.
As will any perpetual minority in politics, the Democratic party in some areas had begun to function as an adjunct of the dominant group. As one political columnist said, "In Pennsylvania the Democratic organization is hardly more than the morganatic wife of the Republican." As a concomitant to their minority role, the Democrats had the problem of developing the leadership necessary to lift their followers out of the doldrums and to win new adherents. Occasionally the Democrats had to fight elements within their own party in order to re-establish themselves. In Philadelphia, John O'Donnell held sway over the Democratic party, but he not only would not fight Vare for control of the city but actually survived on the patronage crumbs thrown his way by the Vare machine. By this arrangement Vare registered enough of his men as Democrats to help swing the primary vote to the O'Donnell faction, while the latter did not work hard to bring out the Democratic vote in the general election. O'Donnell reputedly admitted to J. David Stern, the Philadelphia editor: "Vare's my best friend and patron. He gave me my job and has been supporting the Democratic party for years. Bill Vare, himself, pays the rent of our headquarters." 

At the other end of the state, a factional fight in the Republican party in Allegheny County in 1931 caused the regular organization to support Democratic County Chairman David L. Lawrence for the position of county commissioner to keep the office from falling into the hands of a Pinchot leader. Though the maneuver failed, and there is no evidence to indicate that Lawrence was other than an unwitting pawn, the Republicans apparently believed they had nothing to fear from their political opposition. 

Throughout the front rank of the Democratic party, irregularity was the order of the day. In the 1922 gubernatorial race the party's candidate, John A. McSparran, a prohibition enthusiast, expressed delight at the selection of Gifford Pinchot as the Republican standard-bearer. Some of his campaign speeches sounded
as if he wanted the voters to select Pinchot instead of himself. Then, during Pinchot's second administration, McSparran completed his apostasy by accepting a cabinet post as secretary of agriculture. Another highly-placed Democrat, Judge Eugene C. Bonniwell, who had run for governor in 1926, supported Pinchot against his own party's candidate in 1930. By 1934 Bonniwell was again seeking the Democratic nomination.22

Nothing demonstrated more clearly the value placed by the Democrats on nominations to state office by their party than the events which took place early in the year 1930. Both candidates selected to run for the top state offices turned down the assignments. Party leaders first chose Lawrence H. Rupp, an Allentown lawyer, to make the race for governor. Nearly a month later he withdrew in order to seek the position of Grand Exalted Ruler of the Elks. Friends, he insisted, had warned him not to attempt both campaigns at once. The designee for lieutenant governor, W. C. Brambrick of Chambersburg, also declined to run.23 Rank-and-file Democrats could be pardoned for wondering when a leader would appear who could unify and rebuild the party.

Actually, such a person had been on the scene for some time; he needed only the right conditions in which his talents could operate. After the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, Joseph F. Guffey and two other young men won control of Pennsylvania's Democracy. Guffey's power was confined to the western part of the state, where his organization struggled through a series of losing causes for many years. In 1931, however, in a bold move, Guffey abandoned his previous support of Al Smith, and announced that most of Pennsylvania's delegation to the Democratic National Convention the next year would back Franklin D. Roosevelt for the presidential nomination. At the convention Guffey watched proudly as his state cast more votes for Roosevelt than did any other delegation.24 After the election, no doubt remained as to who dominated the Democratic party in Pennsylvania. When James A. Farley gave him control of the federal patronage in the state, Guffey proceeded to build a powerful organization. One of the

23 Philadelphia Record, March 21, 25, 1930.
24 Joseph F. Guffey, Seventy Years on the Red-Fire Wagon (privately printed, 1952), 75.
most important cogs in his machine was David L. Lawrence, who became Allegheny County Democratic chairman in 1920, and moved into the position of state chairman in 1934.

Philadelphia presented a problem, however. The Democratic National Committee had tried to deflate O'Donnell's power in 1928 by placing party affairs in the hands of a special campaign committee, but when O'Donnell backed Roosevelt in 1932, the party had to stick with him for a time. J. David Stern, editor of the pro-Democratic Philadelphia Record, provided the impetus for the removal of O'Donnell. He went to John B. Kelly, a former bricklayer who had become a wealthy contractor, and persuaded him to try to oust O'Donnell. Kelly formed a team with another Philadelphia contractor, Matthew H. McCloskey, Jr., who contributed the idea of the $100-a-plate fund-raising dinner to American politics, and with the support of the state organization, they entered a slate of candidates against O'Donnell's in the 1933 primary. Vare faced a challenge on his own ticket that year and could not permit so many of his men to register as Democrats to help his ally; so the Kelly slate won a smashing victory. O'Donnell retained his position as city chairman until the next year, but his reign was clearly ended.23

There is no question, however, that the most important reason for the revivification of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania was the New Deal in Washington. Because of its activities new leaders came into the party and many important groups in the population swung to its banner. As early as 1932, Robert L. Vann, editor of a Negro newspaper in Pittsburgh, offered Joseph Guffey his loyalty and promised to help move others of his race into the party. He did so by advising Negroses to turn Lincoln's picture to the wall, for, as he said, that debt had been paid in full.24 Though Vann had some effect on the Negro vote in Pittsburgh in 1932, the real switch of this group came only after the New Deal had swung into operation. The change was felt in Pittsburgh first, for many Negroses were employed in heavy industry there, and the depression had affected them greatly. By 1934 the Negro areas

24 Pittsburgh Courier, September 17, 1932.
of Philadelphia had begun to change; surprisingly, the upper and middle class Negroes moved quickly into the Democratic column, while those in the depressed river wards followed more slowly. Vare had stronger control in the latter regions, which may account for this phenomenon.\textsuperscript{27}

The Negroes made no secret of the reason for their shift. One of them, who had voted Republican all his life, admitted: “I didn’t pay no attention to the party. I saw Roosevelt’s picture and I know what he done for me when I was hungry. Anybody that has that picture beside him can get my vote.” Many others singled out Roosevelt’s picture, of which the Pennsylvania Democrats had made lavish use, as the determining reason for their votes. A Negro Republican ward leader lamented: “I can beat the Democrats, but that d—– Roosevelt has taken Lincoln’s place.” By the late 1930’s Negroes in the most depressed areas had become overwhelmingly Democratic, while those who were better off had begun to slip away from the party.\textsuperscript{28}

Along with the Negroes, the so-called hyphen groups, the nationality blocs, began to desert to the Democratic party. This movement had begun as early as 1928, when Al Smith’s candidacy produced an upsurge in the Democratic strength in the largest urban areas. The activities of Catholic Democrats such as Lawrence in Pittsburgh and Kelly in Philadelphia gave strength to the change, but again the work of the New Deal in lending assistance to those affected by the depression turned the tide into a flood. The Italian sections of Philadelphia shifted from 22.6% Democratic in 1932 to 52.2% favoring that party in 1934. Among Italians, as among Negroes, the districts highest in economic status went Democratic more quickly than those with more poverty. By 1936 the Democrats carried virtually every ward in Philadelphia with a foreign-born majority; in many of them they gained a higher percentage of the vote than in the city as a whole, but this did not happen in a single ward with a native-born majority.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Miller, “The Negro,” 190, 229-230.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 228, 190.
One more link completed the chain which led to Democratic victory. Leaders of organized labor, accustomed to Republican domination of Pennsylvania politics, had not previously given support to the Democratic cause. Only the G.O.P. had been in a position to advance the objectives of labor through legislation; consequently the Republican candidates had generally gained the endorsement of labor groups. As late as 1930, when the Democrats had a fighting chance of victory because of important Republican support for their gubernatorial candidate, labor headquarters still remained silent.

Then came the depression, under a Republican administration, and this drove labor closer to the Democratic camp. The activities of the New Deal reflected a profound change in attitude toward labor by those in control of the government. In 1933 the legislative program announced by the minority Democrats in the Pennsylvania Assembly contained many proposals favorable to labor, and the 1934 platform went even farther; the first eight items in that document dealt exclusively with the working man. This attention to labor caused many union leaders in the Commonwealth to abandon the Republican party. Such men as John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers and John Phillips, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, began to cooperate with the Democratic organization. Perhaps the master stroke of the Democrats was the slating of Thomas Kennedy, secretary-treasurer of the U.M.W., for lieutenant governor in 1934. These events marked, as Joe Guffey said, the beginning of the alliance between labor and the Democratic party in the Keystone State. Before the mid-1930's, then, the Pennsylvania Democracy had broader support, better organization and finances, and top-level leadership, and could look for an early realization of their ambition to control the state government.

The Democrats reaped the harvest from these seeds in 1934, when they won their first gubernatorial election since 1890. In addition to the advantages just cited, the party had found a young, vigorous candidate who appealed to independents and liberal Republicans, in addition to being able to help finance his own

\(^{30}\)Guffey, 70e77 Years, 130-131; Platform Adopted by Democratic State Committee, February 10, 1934 (mimeographed).

\(^{31}\)Guffey, 70e77 Years, 130-131.
campaign. Joe Guffey had discovered this man, George H. Earle, III, in 1932 when the latter had contributed heavily to the Roosevelt campaign fund, thus attracting Guffey’s attention. The Pennsylvania chieftain obtained a ministerial position in Austria for Earle, where he gained favorable notice by his warnings on the dangers of Nazism. Called back to meet state Democratic leaders, he won their support for the nomination. The other top position on the ticket went to Guffey himself, who ran for the Senate.3

The fall election brought victory for Earle at the expense of his Republican opponent, William A. Schnader, Pinchot’s attorney general, and for Guffey over Senator Reed. The Democrats also won control of the state House of Representatives, with 116 members to 90 for the Republicans.3 With this degree of power the Democrats hoped to use the New Deal as a model and reproduce its image in Pennsylvania. Used at first as an epithet by unfriendly newsmen, the term “Little New Deal” caught on as a description of the Earle administration and was soon accepted by friend and foe alike. The phrase itself implied no more of a consistent philosophy than had appeared in Washington; the Pennsylvania Democrats also played by ear. An advantage they had, however, lay in the fact that the national New Deal had been in operation for two years and had provided something in the nature of a program for the Pennsylvanians to adopt.3 For the next few years, news stories publicized the Little Wagner Act, the Little A.A.A., the Little Brain Trust, and Little Fireside Chats, while the Democrats of the Keystone State tried to build a following that would keep them in power.

But while the governor and his forces could win easy approval for their program in the House, the Senate presented an entirely different picture. The nineteen Democrats there represented a substantial increase over the seven they had been able to muster for the previous session, but they still faced a phalanx of thirty-one Republicans. The Senate majority tightened its control in that chamber by revising the rules to require twenty-six votes to discharge a bill from committee; until this time a majority of those

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3 Interview with David L. Lawrence.
present had been able to do so. Thus, if the G.O.P. bloc held firm on legislative matters, the Democratic minority would have no more power in this Senate than in previous ones.

As the 1935 legislative session opened, the depression still hung like a pall over the lawmakers. Though unemployment figures had been falling steadily since March, 1933, some 836,000 persons, representing 22.5% of the total laboring force of the state, remained out of work. The plight of the needy demanded prompt action, for after January 14, 1935, the state's relief funds were exhausted. Though the federal government assumed the entire burden of relief in Pennsylvania and poured $68,000,000 into the state within the next 3 months, Harry Hopkins warned that the state must provide $5,000,000 a month after April 15, or federal funds would be cut off.

To support this and his other programs, Earle recommended that the legislature adopt new and increased taxes totaling $203,000,000. In line with the philosophy of the Little New Deal, the levies proposed by the governor indicated a shift in the base of taxation from the beleaguered home owner to those better able to pay. Earle asked for increases in the utilities tax, the gasoline tax, and the personal property tax, plus new taxes on the net income of corporations, chain stores, amusements, cigarettes, and natural resources.

Upon hearing this list, Republicans and business groups exploded in a storm of protest. M. Harvey Taylor, G.O.P. State Chairman, termed Earle's tax program "a sock on the jaw for business," and a spokesman for the Chamber of Commerce commented that it seemed as if the sun and the air would be made targets for taxation. Republicans in the Assembly denied that the state needed to put up so much money for relief and demanded a meeting with Hopkins, whom they hoped to convince of the
soundness of their position. Earle agreed to set up such a conference, but took steps to insure the result he wanted by phoning Hopkins to stand firm.\textsuperscript{39} When Hopkins did not budge from his demand, Republican ranks split asunder, and eight G.O.P. senators joined the Democrats in calling for passage of the administration program. Under this pressure, Republican leaders met with Earle and worked out a compromise in which the governor won his major points.\textsuperscript{40}

The reform aspect of the Democratic platform of 1934 presented even greater difficulties. When the House passed measures dealing with labor and other reforms, the Senate leadership handed them to a committee whose chief function was to bury them. The few bills of this nature which did emerge from committee greatly altered the Democratic proposals, and the conference committees applied the \textit{coup de grace} by failing to agree. Only two labor measures successfully passed the gantlet of the Senate Committee on Labor and Industry and the Senate itself. One of them provided for the abolition of the coal and iron police, an organization long hated by labor. In reality, this amounted to kicking a dead horse: Governor Pinchot had refused to sign commissions for such officers during the last few years of his administration, and Earle had continued the precedent. Though this type of police legally went out of existence when Earle signed the bill, a companion measure to prevent employers from paying the salaries of deputies appointed by county sheriffs failed to pass. Thus, a strike could be broken as easily as before.

The outstanding accomplishment of the 1935 legislative session was a more stringent child labor law. Two years previously the Pennsylvania Assembly had approved child labor amendment to the federal constitution; now the lawmakers enacted a bill which safeguarded minors under twenty-one years of age from dangerous occupations, protected those under eighteen from excessively long hours of labor, and discouraged withdrawal from school. Other reforms approved by this session included a bill to protect milk

\textsuperscript{39}Harrisburg Telegraph, May 1, 1935; “Mr. Hopkins’ Telephone Conversation with Governor Earle and Mr. Kalodner,” April 18, 1935, National Archives, Record Group 69, Federal Emergency Relief Administration State Files 248, 1933-1936, Pennsylvania 400.

\textsuperscript{40}Philadelphia Record, May 2, 1935; Lancaster Intelligencer Journal, May 9, June 5, 1935.
producers from the distributors, an equal rights bill, and one to prevent party raiding.  

As the session closed, Democrats looked upon the results with mixed emotions. Their tax and relief programs had been generally approved, but only for one year; the drive for liberal labor legislation had resulted in almost complete failure, and only a few other reforms had passed. Democratic leaders realized that if the Little New Deal were to become a reality, it would have to come quickly, for periods of active reform are usually short. If the Pennsylvania Democrats could not capitalize on the spirit of the times and soon gain effective control of the government at Harrisburg, their opportunity might well be gone.

The year 1936, then, looked like the year of decision, for not only would a President be elected, but the entire Pennsylvania House of Representatives and half the state Senate as well. The Pennsylvania Democrats hoped that Roosevelt’s coattails would be broad enough to carry them to victory in both legislative chambers. In achieving this objective, the party received considerable assistance from the G.O.P., which had nominated among its candidates for the state Senate two convicted criminals, a third candidate who had been tried twice for election fraud, and a fourth who had been disbarred. Democratic State Chairman David L. Lawrence predicted that his party would win ten Senate seats, enough to give them a bare majority in that chamber. The election results, however, exceeded their wildest expectations, for in Roosevelt’s sweep of the state, the Pennsylvania Democrats won a lopsided majority in the state house and captured 18 of the 25 contests for the Senate, giving them a two-thirds majority.

The 1937 legislative session, in contrast to the bitter struggles of the previous few years, showed a harmony which was almost anticlimactic. With such heavy majorities in both houses, the administration got substantially what it wanted from the Assembly. The Little New Deal was now completed as Governor Earle exhorted the legislators: “We have before us a tremendous responsibility and an unprecedented opportunity. Liberal forces control


*Harrisburg Evening News*, November 4, 1936.
both Executive and Legislative branches of our state government for the first time in 91 years. It is now our duty to translate that liberalism into positive effective action."

The legislature responded with the most sweeping reform program in Pennsylvania's history. Among the more notable achievements were the creation of a permanent Department of Public Assistance in place of the system of poor boards; a minimum wage-maximum hour law for women—one passed for men, also, but was declared unconstitutional; the regulation of industrial homework; a vastly improved workmen's compensation law, plus the first occupational disease compensation act in the state; the Little Wagner Act; the abolition of privately paid deputy sheriffs; the replacement of the Public Service Commission by a Public Utilities Commission with greatly enlarged powers; the Little A.A.A.; and the first teacher tenure law. Most of these measures were enacted over the intense opposition of the Republican minority, which declared the Democratic program to be costly, class legislation. Democratic party chairman David L. Lawrence countered by terming the program "the most constructive, liberal, and humane in generations."

With their successes in welding together a coalition of minority groups into an electoral majority and in enacting a sweeping reform program of vital interest to those groups, it is perhaps surprising that the tenure in office of the Democratic party was not longer. And yet the 1938 election brought them smashing defeat.

Among the many reasons for this repudiation at the polls was the fact that success had caught up with the Democrats. The party's nomination was now worthwhile, and many aspiring leaders discovered their latent talents. A bitter primary fight developed, with Joe Guffey and David Lawrence leading opposing factions in battling for the gubernatorial nomination for their candidates. Other intramural squabbles rent the party: the practical politicians versus the reformers, and the AFL versus the CIO.

In the midst of the primary campaign, perhaps the fatal blow was truck. Earle's attorney general, the former Republican Charles

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44 "Executive Minutes, January 3, 1936, to December 31, 1943," 89.
46 Harrisburg Telegraph, June 7, 1937; Lancaster Intelligencer Journal, May 12, 1937.
Margiotti, was seeking to become the Democratic candidate for governor, and his campaign was getting nowhere. In desperation, Margiotti charged that Lawrence and a dozen other prominent Democrats had, among other crimes, received bribes for passing legislation. Although in the end no one was convicted on Margiotti's charges, the damage had been done for the fall campaign. With the Margiotti affair hanging over their heads, and with the party split not entirely healed by the general election, the Democrats lost control of the state government in the 1938 elections—which were not too successful for the party across the nation. A conservative Republican group would now come into power in Pennsylvania, and the Little New Deal had ended.

As Pennsylvania returned to its traditional Republican pattern, it became clear that the Little New Deal had been an aberration, caused partly by the shifting tides of national politics. Union labor and other previously neglected groups, drawn to the Democratic banner by the events of the early 1930's, had seen their demands met with astonishing speed. Having become satiated, these forces, who were unfamiliar with the exigencies of power, saw little reason for fighting to keep the Democrats in office. Better off economically and dismayed by the charges of corruption against the Earle administration, many people who had helped the Democrats to power now reverted to their normal Republicanism.

In the succeeding Arthur H. James administration, however, no sweeping reversal of the Little New Deal took place. Some laws were emasculated by amendment, administrative inaction reduced the effectiveness of others, but most of the progressive measures of the Earle administration remained on the statute books. The importance of the Little New Deal is that it initiated a shift of power in Pennsylvania in the direction of greater access to government for long-neglected groups. This shift could not easily be reversed, though it became stalled for a time. A new response to industrialism had been set in motion in the Keystone State.

47 Philadelphia Inquirer, April 26, 1938; interview with William A. Schnader.