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The labourites enjoyed their greatest success in Glace Bay, the largest of the coal towns, and in New Waterford, the newest and most isolated of the towns. When the ILP named a full slate of candidates in New Waterford in 1918, all four candidates were elected with large majorities. James Ling, an ILP leader whose sons worked in the mines, became Cape Breton's first labour mayor; Ling was re-elected four times as mayor; later Patrick G. Muise won the labour nomination and served frequently as mayor until 1953. In Sydney Mines, however, the ILP ran fewer candidates and never captured control of the council. Unlike Dominion Coal in the southern part of the coalfield and unlike its predecessors on the northside, the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company (which took over from the General Mining Association in 1901) had not become directly involved in town politics; none of the Scotia mine managers served in public office. As a result middle-class politicians, such as Mayor Alex McCormick (1915-26, 1932-45), were able to remain in office without opposition from labour candidates. Mayor McCormick often relied on the coal miners' vote in Sydney Mines and pursued policies similar to those of the labour councils in the other mining towns. Although the election of Mayor O'Neill in 1918 had demonstrated the importance of the miners' vote in Glace Bay, the labourites in this town failed to nominate a candidate for mayor until 1922. A hoist operator at No. 10 colliery, councillor Hector MacDonald twice declined to run because he was not prepared to sacrifice time and wages to take office. After O'Neill's two terms in office, the miners supported E. M. Forbes, a young barrister often hired by the miners' union; with the miners' support, Forbes served two terms as mayor. The most important labour politician to emerge in Glace Bay was Dan Willie Morrison. An early supporter of the UMW, Morrison had also served as an elected checkweighman at the Caledonia colliery and as a town councillor in 1914; following his wartime service in the army, he was re-elected to both positions. In 1920 Morrison won election to the provincial assembly as a labour and veterans' candidate. In 1922 Morrison won a large majority over two opponents and became the town's first labour mayor. A popular individual who was also district president of the UMW for fourteen years, Morrison remained mayor (with the exception of one term in the 1930s) until his retirement in 1950. Class-conscious and civic-minded workers, the labour councillors of the 1920s believed that their towns were best governed by men representing the working-class majority of the population. Ideologically, the labour councillors were rarely known as radicals or revolutionaries. It was with more licence than accuracy that an observer (Stuart McCawley) in 1925 claimed that "The Communist Party" controlled three town councils and "can elect town councillors in the mining districts any time it wants to"; indeed the New Waterford council passed a resolution objecting to this report. Nominated by ILP meetings and endorsed by union locals, the labour councillors of the 1920s were usually men active in a variety of local organizations: the miners' union, the veterans' association, the cooperative stores, the labour newspaper, the hospital boards, and the fraternal societies. In their nominations the labourites often



deferred to ethnic and religious shibboleths in local politics in order to avoid divisions at the polls. In New Waterford the selection of candidates involved a careful attempt to provide an ethnic balance. One ILP activist recalled: "We would nominate a Frenchman, a good Protestant, another man who would represent the middle outfit (Scottish and Irish Catholics)... There was never any conflict about religion or anything else here; we kept that in the background." Typically the labour platform proposed few unusual measures: "more efficient service, more judicious use of money, regular returns for your money, proper enforcement of all laws for the protection of life, property and moral conditions." But at the heart of the appeal for labour votes was the belief that local politics were linked to broader working-class concerns. In 1922 the Maritime Labor Herald urged: "It is the duty of every labouring man and of every citizen who wishes Glace Bay to progress, to vote for the men who represent the wealth-producing element of the community and whose platform of principles lays down the guiding principle that to labor should belong the wealth labor creates." Similarly, the labour platform in New Waterford in 1925 stressed the importance of maintaining working-class solidarity in that critical year of the industrial conflict:

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