

(including the abolition of titles).

In 1916 the socialistic Non-Partisan League moved north from the Dakotas and by the next year had 5,000 Saskatchewan members. The League called for the government operation of banks, coal mines, water power and forest resources. Its enemies said it was Bolshevistic, and the SGGG gave it only a vague endorsement. When it ran a slate of candidates in the provincial elections, it was badly defeated.

This was only a temporary setback. World War I was raging in Europe, wheat was in demand, and a coalition government, called the Union Party, was in control in Ottawa. The government set up a wartime Wheat Board to market grain, which gave the farmers a pleasant new sense of stability, but when the war was over the Wheat Board went out of existence and the Union government raised the tariff.

Ten western members of Parliament left the coalition and formed the Progressive Party, which swept the Prairies in 1921 and became the second party in strength in the House of Commons with sixty-five seats. The Progressives refused to join the coalition with Mackenzie King's Liberals and declined to be the official party of Opposition and were, as a result, ineffective. They lost forty seats in the 1925 election, and by 1926 the party was in fragments.

In the 1929 Saskatchewan provincial election the Liberals won twenty-eight seats, a plurality, but lost control of the government to the Conservatives who had twenty-five seats and who formed a coalition with the remnants of the Progressives and the Independents, who had five seats each. The Conservatives had also defeated the Liberals nationally, and their government in Ottawa gave the Prairies control of their own natural resources, including oil and minerals, putting them on a par with the other provinces

and providing (though no one knew it) the base for future wealth and power.

Hard times arrived first. The Great Depression began in 1929 and was accompanied in Saskatchewan by continued drought and a plague of grasshoppers. There were violent upheavals. In 1931 the RCMP was called in to control striking miners in Estevan, and three strikers were killed. Wheat and cattle prices hit bottom, and dust storms blew the top soil away. When prices improved in 1934 and 1935, the farmers had nothing to sell.

In 1932 the Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan and the United Farmers formed a new party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, with a platform calling for the nationalization of railroads, the abolition of the Grain Exchange and a moratorium on debts.

It took twenty-five per cent of the vote in 1934, and in 1936 it took ten seats in the Legislative Assembly to become the official party of Opposition. The hard times were still going on—in 1937, no rain fell in southern Saskatchewan—but the national economy had improved and World War II was about to begin.

In 1944 the CCF, led by Tommy Douglas, took forty-seven seats in the Legislative Assembly to the Liberals' five. It would soon dominate the province.

In 1961 the CCF, represented by Douglas, and labour union representatives met in Ottawa to form the national New Democratic Party. The Liberals, under Ross Thatcher (a former CCF Member of Parliament), gained a majority in Saskatchewan in 1964 but they were out again in 1971, replaced by Allan Blakeney and the NDP. Mr. Blakeney has been in office ever since, and the NDP has continued to shape the provincial government with its version of social democracy at work.



*In June, 1935, a train carrying 1,800 unemployed workers stopped in Regina en route to Ottawa to protest conditions in the relief camps. The men were given temporary shelter in Regina while the leaders went on to see Premier Bennett.*