

Provincial Election Supplement

This Magazine invades every Electoral District in the Province.

I have the honour to submit herein the "pleadings" of the three Parties -- Liberal, Progressive, Conservative, now seeking your suffrages.

It follows that the views expressed are not necessarily those of The Torch and Western Teacher.

J. MacKorrie Hill,
Editor

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The Record of the Government is its Title to the Continued Confidence of the People

THE fifth legislature of Saskatchewan, elected in June, 1921, has been dissolved and its successor is to be chosen on the second day of June next. During the past four years the government of the province has been supported by a substantial majority in the legislature, a majority of about three to one. In the course of this period nine by-elections have occurred in the province. All were won by Liberal candidates. The government has therefore reason to think that it retains the confidence expressed by the electorate as a whole in 1921. It appeals for continued confidence on the ground of its record. The present article is a survey of what has been done for Saskatchewan by the government and by its predecessors. Every government of the province since it was created in 1905 has been Liberal.

Because personal qualities are of great consequence in politics, it is worth while noting the calibre of the men in charge of Saskatchewan's affairs, particularly of the leader of the government. Hon. Charles Dunning, Premier of the province, is widely recognized as the West's outstanding public man. No one ever accused Mr. Dunning of vacillation, insincerity or weakness of the knees. His opinions on public questions are clearcut and he has taken the province into his confidence about them. He prefers bluntness to buncombe. No opponent of the Premier would deny him that. Indeed, the fault found with Mr. Dunning is that he "domineers." As everyone knows who has just read a little political history, that is the stock complaint against public men of unusual energy and capacity.

Mr. Dunning has been a farmer and for a time he was general manager of the greatest farmer-owned co-operative enterprise in the country. He knows the basic industry of the West and understands its needs. In addition, he has remarkable ability in finance. As provincial treasurer, he has brought Saskatchewan a reputation for soundness such as no other Western province enjoys.

Of the seven members of the Provincial Cabinet, five including the Premier have experience of life on the land. The other two, necessarily, are professional men. A physician is minister of health. A barrister is attorney-general. Most of the private

members who support the government in the legislature are farmers, equipped for public life by training in municipal office.

Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario have all experience of Farmer governments, owing their power to class-conscious economic organizations and entirely subservient to these organizations. Saskatchewan has never had such a government but Saskatchewan has a government of men who understand agriculture intimately, who are supported by farmers and who make the assistance of the men on the land a primary concern. How should it be otherwise since 70 per cent. of Saskatchewan's people live on farms and since farming is the basis of the province's economic life and progress?

Provincial business is of a more routine character than national business. Great questions of policy, like the choice between free trade and protection, do not arise so often in provincial capitals as in Ottawa. Demands are undoubtedly made upon the vision and statesmanship of provincial ministers. But in the main their job is to provide certain services of a clearly defined character, just as town and city councils are expected to build streets, maintain police forces and so on.

Given ordinary business capacity, one group of men will do this sort of work about as efficiently and well as any other group. How then are the merits of a provincial government to be gauged, its merits as a creator of highway systems, as a builder of bridges and generally speaking as a provider of utilities wanted by the public. Obviously, by its economy of the public money it spends. If one government can get a court house built for \$50,000, while it costs another \$100,000 to build exactly the same court house, the former government is clearly the better. Again, if one government can do its work with one or two simple and fair taxes, while another needs all manner of imposts and levies, the former is by all odds the better.

It happens that the Government of Saskatchewan is the superior of governments in neighboring provinces on both these counts and others as well. Saskatchewan people pay no income tax, no gasoline tax, no amusement tax and no personal property tax to their provincial government. British Columbia collects all four, Manitoba the first three, and Alberta the first two. In