

Brief history of political parties in Canada

The following second excerpt from Professor Robert Jackson's paper, *Political Parties in Canada*, is a brief outline of the history of the federal New Democratic and the Social Credit parties. In last week's issue, the *Progressive Conservative* and the *Liberal* parties were featured. The paper expresses views which are Dr. Jackson's own.

The New Democratic Party (CCF)

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, an assortment of Fabian socialists, Marxists, farm and labour groups under the leadership of J.S. Woodsworth, met for their first annual convention in 1933. The party they formed had a predominantly western rural backing, and in the ensuing 28 years never attracted more than 18 per cent of the popular vote in a federal election. When organized labour decided to openly espouse a political party the CCF was the logical choice, and consequently in 1961, the old Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was dissolved and a new party, with a democratic socialist platform, was born. The New Democratic Party retained many CCF leaders.

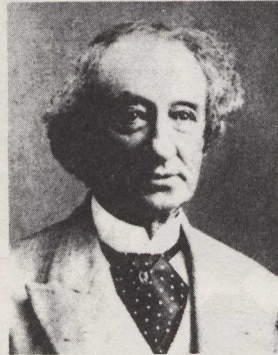
Vigorous leadership by Tommy Douglas in the early years and later by David Lewis was never enough to overcome the lack of funds and ideological divisions which kept the New Democratic Party federally below 31 seats in the House of Commons, and left them a very restricted territorial base. David Lewis, who won the 1971 leadership convention, was replaced by the current leader of the party, Edward Broadbent in 1975.

The NDP has played a larger role in Canadian politics than its numerical count in Parliament would indicate. Its effects were apparent during the 1972-74 minority government when NDP support was vital to the Liberals. Support for the NDP is greatest in western Canada and Ontario. In 1979 it forms the provincial government in Saskatchewan; NDP governments have lost power in British Columbia and Manitoba in the last few years. It has no strength to speak of in Quebec, and very little in the Maritimes....

The Social Credit Party

The only other minor party of national significance also originated in western Canada. In the early 1930s during a time of economic depression and agricultural failures, a charismatic preacher, William Aberhart, captured the imagination of Albertans with the financial theories of Major C.H. Douglas, a retired British

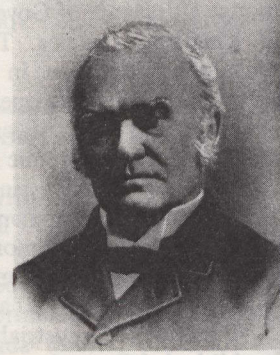
army engineer. In a 1935 election, Social Credit members flooded the Alberta legislature and maintained a Social Credit provincial government for the following 36 years.... Since 1965, no Social Credit Member has been elected to the federal Parliament from western Canada, but the Quebec wing, *Le Ralliement des créditistes*, until 1974 maintained a small re-



Sir John A. Macdonald



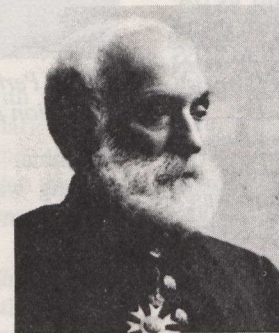
Hon. Alexander Mackenzie



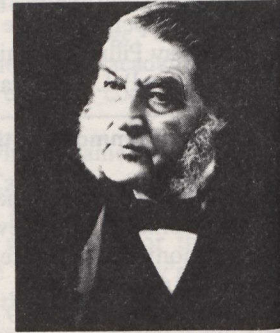
Sir John J. C. Abbott



Sir John S. D. Thompson



Sir Mackenzie Bowell



Sir Charles Tupper

Canadian Governments since Confederation

Election	Party in power	Prime Minister
1867	Conservative	Sir John A. Macdonald
1872	Conservative	Sir John A. Macdonald (resigned)
	Liberal	Alexander Mackenzie (1873)
1874	Liberal	Alexander Mackenzie
1878	Conservative	Sir John A. Macdonald
1882	Conservative	Sir John A. Macdonald
1887	Conservative	Sir John A. Macdonald
		Sir John J.C. Abbott (June 1891 – November 1892)
		Sir John S.D. Thompson (December 1892 – Dec. 1894)
		Sir Mackenzie Bowell (December 1894 – April 1896)
		Sir Charles Tupper (May 1896 – July 1896)
1896	Liberal	Sir Wilfrid Laurier
1900	Liberal	Sir Wilfrid Laurier
1904	Liberal	Sir Wilfrid Laurier
1908	Liberal	Sir Wilfrid Laurier
1911	Conservative	Sir Robert L. Borden
1917	Unionist	Sir Robert Borden
		Sir Arthur Meighen (1920-1921)
1921	Liberal	William Lyon Mackenzie King