

Preface

Except for Escott Reid's article, 'The Saskatchewan Liberal Machine before 1929,' published in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* in 1936, little attention has been paid to the Liberal party in Saskatchewan. The reasons for this neglect are not at all clear, although they may be related to the general Canadian interest in protest parties as opposed to the older, major parties.

From any of several points of view, each of which is important for Canadian politics, the Liberal party in Saskatchewan warrants close study. First, few prairie political parties can approach its record of electoral success and longevity. Secondly, for much of its history the party was unrivalled in its mastery of organization, so much so that it earned the reputation of a 'machine.' Although the term has been indiscriminately used, the subject of machine politics has received little attention in Canada and the history of the Liberal party in Saskatchewan offers an opportunity to begin such an examination. Thirdly, during this century the Saskatchewan Liberals have transformed their relations with the federal Liberals. From a position which in earlier decades resembled devotion to the national Liberal cause they emerged in the late 1960s as amongst Ottawa's most strident critics. The reasons for this change are not to be found in personalities alone but to a large extent are due to the evolution in federal-provincial relations which affects all provinces. An analysis of the Liberal party in Saskatchewan as a case study in federal-provincial politics should reveal some of the factors that have maintained, as well as altered, Canadian federalism in this century. Finally, Saskatchewan remains the only

province in Canada where one of the old major parties has for any length of time competed for electoral support in a two-party system with one of the protest parties. The contrast between bourgeois and socialist attitudes as apparently represented by the two provincial parties and the effect of this contrast upon political perspectives and policies deserve scrutiny.

Chapters 1 through 5 analyse the period of one-party dominance from 1905 to 1929 and suggest reasons for the eventual eclipse of Liberal pre-eminence. Chapter 6 deals with the period from 1929 to 1944 and details the rise of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Liberal response to the development of major party competition. Chapter 7 examines the Liberal party in opposition beginning in 1944 and considers the difficulties the party had adjusting to this unaccustomed role, while chapter 8 looks at the party realignment brought about by the selection of W. Ross Thatcher as Liberal leader in 1959, the Liberal election victories of 1964 and 1967, and the defeat of June 1971. The defeat of the Thatcher government was a timely, if inappropriate, ending to this study of the Liberal party in Saskatchewan, occurring as it did at the completion of the research for the book. Since that date, the sudden death of Mr Thatcher, the selection of a new leader, and the federal campaign of 1972 have wrought changes to the province's politics. But they have not fundamentally altered the conclusions about Saskatchewan parties and politics presented in chapter 9.

Research for this study, which took place over a two-year period, included interviews with fifty-two of fifty-nine Liberal and New Democrat party members of the sixteenth Legislative Assembly, with twenty-six of forty-two former Liberal MLAs, with a number of current and former officers of the Saskatchewan Liberal Association, and with many Liberals throughout the province of Saskatchewan and elsewhere. I wish to thank all of these persons for their assistance and their insights and reflections upon the province's politics and the Liberal party in Saskatchewan. Virtually everyone approached agreed to be interviewed, and most of those interviewed agreed to be quoted. All of the interview schedules are deposited in the Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon, and may be studied with the permission of the respondent and the author.

Most, but not all, of the research material used for this study originated in Saskatchewan. Until now, investigators interested in the politics of Saskatchewan, or of the West generally, have neglected the wealth of information to be found in provincial sources.

Archival research was carried out at the Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon, where I gratefully received assistance from D.H. Bocking and

L. W. Rodwell. For the earlier period of this study I was able to examine the papers of Liberal premiers (Walter Scott, W.M. Martin, and C.A. Dunning) and ministers (J.A. Calder, W.R. Motherwell, W.F.A. Turgeon, and S.J. Latta). One significant segment of archival material not examined was the Gardiner papers. These papers are closed at the present time while a biography of J.G. Gardiner is being written. There are no Liberal premiers' papers after 1935. And after extensive inquiries I have concluded that there are also no accessible records of the Saskatchewan Liberal Association for any period of the province's history, except as they appear in collections of other papers.

Most of the material for the later period is derived from study of the records and papers of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), deposited in the Saskatchewan Archives and open to researchers, and CCF party files, deposited in the same archives, to which I was given access by the Executive of the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. The latter material is invaluable to an understanding of Saskatchewan politics in the 1930s and 1940s and I am much indebted to the New Democratic Party for its assistance. I wish also to express my appreciation to the National Liberal Federation of Canada which, through its former national director, T.J. Wylie, permitted me to see portions of its records for the period after 1944 deposited in the Public Archives of Canada. Without the help of both of these political parties this book could not have been written.

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Notwithstanding these contributions, those mistakes of fact or interpretation which remain are mine alone.

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER