

The CCF in Saskatchewan

A Study of Continuity and Change

A. Setting the Background

Prior to working with students to establish context of this political movement, some background knowledge could be provided.

- History 30 curriculum : Unit 3 pages 340-348
https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curricula/English/Social_Studies/History_30_1997.pdf
- Saskatchewan's 1944 CCF Election: a virtual exhibit:
<http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/election/en/index.htm>
- The Canadian Encyclopedia: Co-operative Commonwealth Federation:
<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/co-operative-commonwealth-federation/>
- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation: Included in this learning package, courtesy of University of Regina Press.
- Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan: The Regina Manifesto: Included in this learning package, courtesy of University of Regina Press.

B. Understanding and Working with Continuity and Change

Review the criteria for understanding and working with **continuity and change**.

- Continuity and change exist together. Expressing **chronology of events** helps to reveal this.
- The **varying pace and direction** of change, as well as **turning points**, can be identified.
- **Progress and decline** are recognized, understanding that progress for one may be decline for another.
- **Periodization** helps us organize our thinking about continuity and change.

**** Adapted from The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013)*

C. Working With The Resources

1. Tap Prior Knowledge

Ask students to brainstorm ways the government of Saskatchewan is involved in providing services to the people of the province today.

Ideas generated might include:

- SGI car insurance
- Sask Power, SaskTel and Sask Energy
- Liquor stores
- Hospitals and clinics
- Schools and universities

Continue by asking students to think about cooperatives they can identify in the province:

- Co-op gas stations, grocery stores and hardware
- Co-operators insurance
- Credit unions
- Daycares and playschools
- Housing cooperatives
- Grain growers and elevators (more historic example...)

These examples are legacies of what was envisioned for Saskatchewan by the CCF in Saskatchewan as far back as the 1930's. When they came into power as a government in 1944, they started putting into practice their ideas that were shared in speeches, platforms and manifestos that were shared with the people as speeches, platforms and manifestos at political rallies, in public speeches, in radio broadcasts and in printed publications like pamphlets and flyers.

2. Introduce the **Change Frame** graphic organizer and the thinking it helps develop.

Show students the **Change Frame** organizer (individual copies or shared copy projected to the class).

Note that the study of history involves stories of people who deal with change and address problems.

Remind students that **change** can be thought about when thinking about:

- **Population** – increase or decrease, change in composition
- **Technology** – innovations or inventions that change how things are done
- **Environmental** – changes to physical geography
- **Economic** – changes to making a living and standard of living
- **Political** – changes in type of government, leaders, elections, laws, wars
- **Beliefs** – changes in what people believe and value

Point out that the **Change Frame** organizer is asking them to consider

- **Groups** of people
- **Problems** they might have had
- **Solutions** to help address the problems
- **Actions** that were taken
- **Changes** that took place as a result

3. Consider the historical documents for what they reveal about the CCF platform.

Ask students to review the following resources carefully.

- **“The Regina Manifesto”** (S-G2.1933.6)
- **“The CCF and Co-operatives: Radio Broadcast by T.C. Douglas, February 2, 1943** (S-B7, Cooperative Commonwealth Federation collection, File VI.5. Radio Addresses: T.C. Douglas, 1935-1953)
- CCF 1944 Election Materials
 - **“What is it? Who is it? What will it do?”** (S-G1.1944.21)
 - **“The New Order”** (S-G1.1944.25)
 - **“CCF Land Policy”** (S-G1.1944.6)
 - **“The CCF Policy on Money”** (S-G1.1944.8)
 - **“The Farmer and the CCF”** (S-G1.1944.13)
 - **“Where’s the Money Coming From?”** (S-G1.1944.23)
 - **“Citizens of the Kelvington Constituency Meet Your CCF Candidate: P.A. Howe”** (S-G1.1944.12)
 - **“Voters of Melville Constituency Win With the CCF: W.J. Arthurs”** (S-G1.1944.20)

You may choose to assign a document to individual students, or in small groups so that everyone has a document to work with.

- A. Have them **first survey the document to determine the groups that are the focus of the material**. Model for them this process by “thinking aloud” as you work through a sample document with them. Help them determine who the “players” are and who is being discussed. Aim for generalized groups rather than specific individuals. You might find these in your work with the documents provided.
- Financiers / Bankers
 - Corporations / Business Owners / Business Magnates / Industrialists
 - Old line political parties (Liberal Party, Conservative Party)
 - Common People
 - Farmers
 - Labourers
 - Producer cooperatives / Consumer cooperatives
 - Federal government
 - Provincial government

- B. Next, have them **read through their document again, this time looking for clues about problems the groups are facing**. Students may discover that some groups are causing problems that other groups are having to deal with.

They may wish to use a blank **Change Frame** organizer to help them summarize what they can identify from their document related to **the identifiable groups, the problems** in SK that it identifies, and **solutions or changes that were proposed** as ways to deal with the problems.

4. Explore changes that came about as a result of the problems and solutions presented.

The last part of the lesson is to **consider the changes that were made as a result of the problems and proposed solutions suggested by the CCF** prior to the 1944 election.

You may need to present them with a summary of the changes that came about while the CCF was in power to help them more fully determine which of the solutions were acted upon and how quickly it took to make those changes. The following documents summarize much of the CCF's record, from both the CCF's perspective and from the Liberal Party's perspective:

- CCF and Liberal 1960 and 1964 Election Materials
 - **CCF Calendar 1964: "CCF: 20 Years of Progress"** (S-G4.1964-1)
 - **"Keep Saskatchewan Strong" newsletter** of the CCF Saskatchewan Section of the New Democratic Party, March 1964 (S-G4.1964.9)
 - **"CCF Platform Cards Since 1944: 'The CCF is the only party that dares to talk about the promises it made in previous elections'",** 1960 (S-G4.1964.11)
 - **"The Key to Progress: The Liberal Program"**, 1960 (S-G7.1960.1)
 - **"The Liberal Platform"**, 1964 (Political Pamphlet Collection – Regina: XII.212)
 - **"Why Vote Liberal"**, 1964 (Political Pamphlet Collection – Regina: XII.214)

Some of the response could have them consider back to the opening task of identifying how much government involvement is still part of our political landscape and how "normal" that seems compared to when these ideas were first proposed.

When exploring the area of change on the **Change Frame** organizer, reflect with your students:

- What changed?
- How much did it change from how it used to be?
- How quickly did it change?
- How long lasting was the change? Can we still see evidence of the change today?

5. Make connections about what they learned about group concerns, problems, solutions and changes.

Use the Change Frame¹ connecting stems (can cause, affect and take action) to help students create statements that summarize what they learned about the connections between the ideas. These can be written summaries, or provide a place for whole group sharing and discussion.

¹ *Change Frame organizer and teaching sequence adapted from Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning. 3rd ed by Doug Buehl (International Reading Association, 2009).*

Discuss and explore how progress for one group also likely means decline and more negative impacts for others.

- Who at this time would have seen the proposed solutions and actualized changes to be progress and beneficial?
- Who would have seen and experienced them as decline? Why is this so?

6. Extend the learning

Some suggestions for possible places to extend the ideas and concepts further include:

- Using ideas of the CCF platform that were then used and shared beyond Saskatchewan to consider changes that affected not just our province but the entire country. This extends the conversation around change to include how many people were impacted by the change and helps students consider its historical significance not just to Saskatchewan but the nation. **Could the CCF coming to power in 1944 be considered a turning point?**
- Compare what the CCF was promoting as the problems and solutions in 1944 to what their Liberal opponents viewed were the concerns and possible solutions.
 - To compare, see **“Election Manifesto by the Government of Saskatchewan, May 16th, 1944”** for details the platform of Saskatchewan’s Liberal Government of Premier W.J. Patterson. (S-G7.1944.5)
- Research more extensively the changes that took place in the province in relation to the different areas of change in the years the CCF was in power:
 - Population
 - Technology
 - Environment
 - Economy
 - Politics
 - Beliefs

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) had a significant impact on Saskatchewan in the 20th century. Its history can be divided into three parts: the Great Depression years of the 1930s; the Douglas era during the 1940s and 1950s; and the move into the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the early 1960s. The Saskatchewan CCF was born amidst the devastation of the Great Depression. In 1932 the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section (UFC) and the provincial Independent Labour party (ILP) met jointly in Saskatchewan and created the Farmer-Labour party. Its program emphasized protection against foreclosures, socialization of finance, and a public health system. In 1934 it became a part of the newly formed national CCF and was now the Saskatchewan CCF. The party was unsuccessful in the 1934 and 1938 provincial elections. During this formative stage, the CCF was primarily a radical agrarian response to an economic crisis that left an indelible imprint on the province. M.J. Coldwell, a labour spokesman, was the party's first provincial leader, but the UFC was the focus of party activity. George Williams, Frank Eliason and Louise Lucas played especially critical roles; in 1935 Williams became CCF leader.

Support for the CCF in Saskatchewan increased after 1940. A comprehensive policy was formulated, and party organization was strengthened. The abilities of the new leader, T.C. Douglas, became especially apparent in the 1944 election as he led the CCF to a landslide win. Four more electoral victories followed, in 1948, 1952, 1956 and 1960. Under Douglas the CCF faced the realities of power, and moved beyond the combination of despair and idealism which had given rise to the party in the 1930s. Both public and private enterprise played important roles as resources were developed, electricity brought to farms, and a system of social services established. CCF leaders such as the provincial treasurer, C.M. Fines, typified the Douglas era, as did a group of indispensable public servants including A.W. Johnson, Tommy Shoyama, and Allan Blakeney. The Douglas years drew to a close with plans to implement universal public health insurance in Saskatchewan.

The national CCF became a part of the New Democratic Party in 1961. Premier Douglas left Saskatchewan to lead the new party. Although the Saskatchewan CCF supported the move into the NDP, it did so with reluctance and hesitancy; to preserve its identity it temporarily maintained the CCF name, and candidates ran under that label in the 1964 provincial election. The party, led by Woodrow Lloyd, was defeated, and the CCF era in Saskatchewan thus ended. However, the party was not gone: the Saskatchewan NDP, in all but name, was the old CCF. Also, during the next generation many would identify the NDP with Canadian medicare, a program conceived and delivered by the Saskatchewan CCF.

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Further Reading

Johnson, A.W. 2004. *Dream No Little Dreams: A Biography of the Douglas Government of Saskatchewan, 1944–1961*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; Lipset, S.M. 1950. *Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan*. Berkeley: University of California Press; McLeod, T.H. and I. McLeod. *Tommy Douglas: The Road to Jerusalem*. Edmonton: Hurtig.

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Regina Manifesto

During the Depression of the 1930s, the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR), a left-wing intellectual think-tank, emerged in the east while a new political party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), was born in Calgary. The Regina Manifesto, initially penned by LSR academics, was approved by the delegates attending the first full national CCF convention in 1933. It suggested that social and economic equality could be achieved by a new workers' party—the CCF—a federation of farmer, labour and socialist organizations. The opening clauses noted that capitalism's class domination and exploitation produced "inherent injustice" and "glaring inequalities." Addressing human needs, not just making profits, should be society's goal, achieved through a planned and socialized economy. The Manifesto's fourteen-point program included planks on public ownership, socialization of finance, and increased funds and crop insurance for farmers. The Manifesto sought a national labour code, the right to unionize, and more social rights including insurance for accident, old age and unemployment. The CCF prophetically envisioned state-financed medicare available to all, and favoured increased public expenditure on housing, hospitals, and relief payments. In foreign affairs, the Manifesto reflected a distrust of military entanglements, and favoured disarmament and a revitalized League of Nations. While the CCF replaced the Regina Manifesto with the more moderate Winnipeg Declaration in 1956, the Manifesto anticipated many of the features of the modern Canadian welfare state.

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