

JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER:  
THE POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP  
OF A SASKATCHEWAN POLITICIAN, 1925-1940

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## ABSTRACT

John G. Diefenbaker is most often described by historians and biographers as a successful and popular politician. His uninterrupted presence in the House of Commons, and pursuit of the top political post within his party, and the country following 1940, testify to his lifelong ambition to represent the "common man." But for all the time that he spent in Ottawa, he spent a significant amount of time and energy as a political failure in Saskatchewan. For fifteen years prior to 1940, Diefenbaker struggled in Saskatchewan to win public office in federal, provincial and civic politics.

This era of Diefenbaker's political career, more accurately referred to as his political apprenticeship, has been largely overlooked by historical and political analysts. Whether by oversight or design, they instead focus on his post-1940 achievements. When they give a cursory glance to his pre-1940 political endeavours, other factors and forces such as the impact of the Great Depression on the Conservative party, strength of the Liberal machine in Saskatchewan, and internal divisions within the provincial party are blamed for causing his failures to obtain public office. But what about the man himself?

Closer scrutiny of Diefenbaker's participation in the 1929 provincial election, in which his party went on to form

the government with the help of the Progressives, Independents and moral support of the Ku Klux Klan, and the 1938 provincial election, in which Diefenbaker led the party into saw-off negotiations with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, implicate him as a major contributor to his political failures and those of his party. Diefenbaker was more than just a political casualty, prior to 1940; he must share the blame for fifteen years spent as a political apprentice in Saskatchewan politics.

The principal sources of information for these findings lay in primary material from the personal and party collections housed in the Diefenbaker, National and Provincial Archives. Supplemental material came from Diefenbaker's biography and numerous secondary materials covering the political lives and circumstances of Saskatchewan politics prior to 1940.



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To the loving memory of my parents,  
Fred and Mildred Diakow,  
for their loving support and endless  
encouragement to "get and education."

### Introduction - The Crusader

Canadians who are asked about John George Diefenbaker, Canada's thirteenth prime minister, often prompts memories of a popular and successful politician from Saskatchewan. Stories and anecdotes from Saskatchewan's senior generation abound. They remember him with pride. As evidence of his popularity, Diefenbaker was the first politician to be sworn into twelve successive Parliaments. He died in 1979 shortly after being sworn in for the thirteenth time. The Saskatchewan politician's popularity was also evident as thousands of Canadians lined the railway tracks to pay their last respects as the train carrying his body made its way from Ottawa, Ontario to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for interment.

Diefenbaker was always eager to listen to Canadians, especially those in rural areas, and was able to hold their attention when he spoke. He was able to understand the common voters' needs and concerns. As such, an impenetrable myth has risen around the man they call "the chief," earning him the title "the best vote-getter in the [Progressive

Conservative] party."<sup>1</sup> His longevity in federal politics and "one Canada" philosophy only added to the myth that Diefenbaker was a great politician working to give Canadians their own sense of national identity.

Propagation of the myth surrounding Diefenbaker is partially explained by the material included and excluded from his autobiography and political or historical biographies. Commentators and analysts have tended to focus on his successes in federal politics, including leadership of the national Progressive Conservative party and prime ministership of Canada. Although he spent a long time at Ottawa representing his constituents and the people of Canada, he spent a significant amount of time trying to get elected. His repeated political success after 1940 was preceded by five failed attempts in two federal elections (1925 and 1926), two provincial elections (1929 and 1938) and a civic election in Prince Albert (1933) -- all of which have received little study or consideration.

Questions arise from the shortage of published material on Diefenbaker's period of apprenticeship. Why was he an also-ran for fifteen years, then unyielding in defending his riding regardless of the circumstances or opponents? More importantly, why did he, his biographers and historians alike by-pass his political failures in favour of focusing

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<sup>1</sup>J. Allan Ross, Grassroots Prime Minister (Don Mills: Thorn House, no date), p. 2. [An election publication in preparation for the 1962 or 1963 federal election.]

on his post-1940 political career? What impact did repeated failure have on him, the Saskatchewan Conservative party and Saskatchewan politics? Historians have given little more than a cursory glance at Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship from 1925 to 1940, and when they have other factors or forces are assigned the blame for his defeat at the polls rather than his own actions. They cast him as an unfortunate casualty of the political, economic and social turmoil that encompassed Saskatchewan and the Conservative party during the Great Depression.

Standard explanations for the Saskatchewan politician's prolonged apprenticeship of fifteen years have emphasized the popularity and strength of his Liberal opponents, poor party finances, and representing the Conservative party in a constituency prone to voting Liberal.<sup>2</sup> However, Diefenbaker was not your average candidate. He was actively involved with the Saskatchewan Conservative Association (SCA) from 1933 to 1936, and as leader of the provincial party from 1936 to 1940. His participation in two

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<sup>2</sup>An excellent summary of this position can be found in Andrew Milnor, "The New Politics and Ethnic Revolt, 1929-1938," Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, eds., Politics in Saskatchewan (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968). Milnor argues that the Conservatives won in 1929, with the help of the Progressive and Independent parties, because the electorate grew tired and restless after twenty-four years of Liberal government. As the party in power when the Depression hit, they were automatically disqualified from contention in 1934 and again in 1938 because they symbolized the drought and economic hardship that followed the financial market crash.

provincial elections, 1929 and 1938, cannot be ignored. He must share the blame for the fifteen years he spent as an apprentice without political victory and, therefore, he should be scrutinized accordingly.

It was said of John Diefenbaker that his only vice was politics.<sup>3</sup> An abstainer from tobacco and alcohol, he was stimulated by an overwhelming ambition to obtain public office. Born on September 18, 1895, John Diefenbaker was greatly influenced in childhood by his father's love for politics and the political process in Canada. The eldest son of William and Mary (nee Bannerman), Diefenbaker was determined to become a famous politician not unlike those his father often observed in the House of Commons and recounted in detail to the young boy growing up in Ontario before the family moved to the prairies in 1903. While other young boys and girls living in Saskatchewan aspired to be teachers or farmers, Diefenbaker aspired to be the head politician in the country, and told his mother so at the age of eight or nine.<sup>4</sup> The young, impressionable Diefenbaker was also determined at an early age to pursue the lifelong dream of his father's "...highest, although never voiced,

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<sup>3</sup>Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup>John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, the Crusading Years 1895 to 1956 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 66.  
[Following citations refer to this volume unless otherwise specified.]

ambition" to be a politician.<sup>5</sup> Aside from his father, John's political ambitions were fuelled by an encounter with Sir Wilfrid Laurier: he sold the Prime Minister a newspaper on his 1911 western election campaign tour.<sup>6</sup>

His political ambitions were first manifest while attending the University of Saskatchewan. Diefenbaker joined the College of Arts debate club, which conducted its meetings like a non-partisan mock parliament, in his last year as an undergraduate in 1914-15.<sup>7</sup> Diefenbaker participated in an underdog role that would become common to him in later years: leader of the opposition. His non-partisanship existed in title only, however; he has been described by one author as being a Liberal at heart.<sup>8</sup>

A brief stint in the army, during the Great War, deepened his dedication to king and country. After being discharged for medical reasons, John completed a law degree in 1919. He set up practice in Wakaw, Saskatchewan, a town largely populated with immigrants of his own German ancestry. His legal reputation grew quickly and in 1924 he decided to open an office forty miles north in

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>Wilson and Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-1.



Saskatchewan's most northern city, Prince Albert.<sup>9</sup> The thriving community offered both professional and political opportunities.

As an ambitious lawyer wanting to hold public office, since the one often accompanied the other, Diefenbaker initially decided to work for the same party his father admired: the Liberals. The party also had an admirable track record in the city. In 1925, Diefenbaker preferred to run as a Liberal in Prince Albert, but circumstances prevented him from doing so. The local candidate in the 1925 provincial election, Thomas Clayton Davis, welcomed Diefenbaker's participation as a party worker, but thought the young lawyer was too inexperienced to take on more responsibility. Craving the publicity a nomination would bring and finding his way blocked by Davis to represent the Liberals in the 1925 federal election, Diefenbaker looked for another outlet to fulfil his political ambitions. The Prince Albert Conservative Association was looking for a candidate and in John Diefenbaker it saw a capable, articulate and willing nominee. The political apprenticeship of a Saskatchewan politician had begun. Defeat in 1925 did not prevent Diefenbaker from trying again in 1926, 1929, 1933 and 1938 to obtain public office.

The fifteen years prior to 1940 were truly a period of

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<sup>9</sup>For a thorough review of Diefenbaker's legal accomplishments consult Wilson and Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence.

apprenticeship for Diefenbaker. Few historians, however, have examined his early political apprenticeship in detail. Even Diefenbaker makes few references to his political activities prior to 1940 except to blame circumstances and others for his failures to obtain public office. References to the pre-1940 era usually consist of comments on how he held to certain beliefs, like "one Canada" and inherent rights for all Canadians, including freedom of religion, speech, assembly and political preference. Remaining references to his early political involvements focus on blaming the Depression, the Liberal machine or others for political failures; there is no evaluation of his own contributions.

Historical works on Diefenbaker's early political career tend to agree with Diefenbaker's own assessment. They focus on the external forces and factors facing him rather than his responses to them. Most political historians altogether ignore Diefenbaker's efforts to obtain public office prior to 1940, while biographies of his prairie contemporaries, like Tommy Douglas of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Jimmy Gardiner of the Liberals, make little if any mention of Diefenbaker, even when he was leader of the SCA from 1936 to 1940. Others have begun to examine his participation in Saskatchewan's pre-1940 political life, but to date (1995), no comprehensive examination exists. Most Diefenbaker

historians instead focus on his successes in the House of Commons as national Progressive Conservative leader in 1957 and prime minister from 1957 to 1963.

A case in point is Thomas Van Dusen's The Chief, published in 1968. Van Dusen was concerned with salvaging the Tory's reputation and defending his friend's vision of Canada after Diefenbaker lost the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative party. Few comments on Diefenbaker's early political efforts were made. He instead emphasized Diefenbaker's lifelong belief in "equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed or geography" and explained that "his concept of Canada was in direct conflict with those theories which would establish divisions between Canadians."<sup>10</sup> Van Dusen wanted to let Canadians know that Diefenbaker, with a great nationalist view and a belief in the individual rights of every Canadian, was a popular and successful representative of his constituents throughout his political career.

Evelyn Eager's Saskatchewan Government, published in 1980, provided an overview of provincial politics from the turn of the century to the 1970s. She, like others, attributed the rise of the Saskatchewan Conservative party in 1929 to its identification with Ku Klux Klan sentiments of anti-British immigration and pro-British culture, language

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<sup>10</sup>Thomas Van Dusen, The Chief (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 79.

and religion.<sup>11</sup> She associated the party's rapid decline in popularity after forming the government in 1929 with its inability to deal with the Depression and massive provincial debt that resulted from lost revenues and increased relief costs.<sup>12</sup> Diefenbaker, however, did not receive mention as either a candidate in the 1929 election or as provincial party leader from 1936 to 1940, leaving unanswered questions surrounding his contribution to the party's embarrassment in the 1938 provincial election. As dynamic and successful a politician as he was after 1940, his pre-1940 involvement in Saskatchewan politics did not even receive a footnote.

Other examiners of Saskatchewan politics during the Depression, like Norman Ward and David Smith's Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal, shifted from provincial to national politics when Gardiner made the jump to the latter in 1936 -- the same year Diefenbaker became leader of the provincial Conservatives. Their examination of the Conservative party likewise ended just prior to Diefenbaker's acclamation as leader of the SCA. Therefore, no mention was made of Diefenbaker as a candidate, a member of the SCA executive, or leader of the party.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Evelyn Eager, Saskatchewan Government (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), p. 53.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>13</sup>Norman Ward and David Smith, Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Other commentators have contributed bits and pieces to the understanding of Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship. S.M. Lipset discussed the failed attempt by the CCF to cooperate with the Social Credit and Conservative parties prior to the 1938 election, but no discussion followed on the role taken by Diefenbaker as Conservative party leader.<sup>14</sup> Kenneth D. Andrews, in an unpublished Master's thesis, outlined the provincial leadership of Diefenbaker. He blamed local constituency associations for the Conservative party's poor showing in 1938 because they unilaterally arranged saw-offs<sup>15</sup> with anti-Liberal parties.<sup>16</sup> Diefenbaker escaped being implicated. Julian Sher, Patrick Kyba and William Calderwood discussed the Klan in Saskatchewan and its apparent ties to leading members of the Conservative party. But while many Conservatives successfully utilized the emotional issues raised by the Klan to their advantage and won in 1929, Diefenbaker failed to secure enough votes from the electorate in Prince Albert.

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<sup>14</sup>S.M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), revised and expanded edition, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup>Saw-offs refer to an arrangement between two or more parties in which they negotiate to remove candidates in ridings agreed to be left to the other party. The objective is to defeat incumbent candidates and their government by not splitting the anti-government votes.

<sup>16</sup>Kenneth David Andrews, "The Politics of Reform: Provincial Politics in Rural Saskatchewan, 1935-1938" (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979), pp. 69-70.

As a failed political hopeful, Diefenbaker received little notice. Diefenbaker was not a Klansman, but during the 1928 Arm River by-election and 1929 general election, he, like many of his Conservative colleagues, tried to take advantage of the emotions raised to a feverish pitch by the policies and objectives of the Klan in an effort to obtain office.

Recent works on Diefenbaker's early political career come from Garrett and Kevin Wilson, and Patrick Kyba. The former's Diefenbaker for the Defence, published in 1988, focused on the Conservative lawyer's murder cases, intertwined with information on Diefenbaker's political activities. While their work attempts to examine Diefenbaker's personal and professional characteristics as they were at the time, they continued the pattern of blaming defeat at the polls on factors other than Diefenbaker. Diefenbaker cannot take all the blame, but his decisions and activities certainly were major contributors to his failures and apprenticeship.

Patrick Kyba examined Diefenbaker's leadership of the Conservative party in the 1938 provincial election and his failure to win a single seat in the second consecutive election. Kyba's reasons for Diefenbaker's failure to win his own riding or how he came to support negotiations to saw-off with the CCF were first introduced in his 1989 biography, Alvin: A biography of the Honourable Alvin Hamilton PC and later expanded in his article "From

Contender to Also-Ran: John Diefenbaker and the Saskatchewan Conservative Party in the Election of 1938." Kyba recognized that while standard interpretations (such as the Liberal machine, poor Conservative funding and Saskatchewan's Depression) explain the Conservative party's failure to form the government in 1938, responsibility for its shut-out from the legislature partially rested with Diefenbaker's pursuit of saw-offs with the CCF. In addition to traditional explanations, Kyba argued that "John Diefenbaker and the Conservative party were to some degree the authors of their own misfortune."<sup>17</sup> Although the Conservative involvement with the CCF was no more important than other reasons for its poor showing in 1938, according to Kyba, "... it does help to explain why the party lost so badly, and should not be ignored."<sup>18</sup> This aspect of Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship will be examined in greater detail in the thesis.

The importance of this apprenticeship warrants full consideration on its own merit. In a career filled with success, Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship at first glance may seem insignificant. Those fifteen years, however, were longer than most politician's entire political

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<sup>17</sup>Patrick Kyba, "From Contender to Also-Ran: John Diefenbaker and the Saskatchewan Conservative Party in the Election of 1938," Saskatchewan History, volume 44, no. 3, (Autumn 1992), p. 108.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

career. They were the formative experiences that shaped the Tory from Prince Albert into a popular and successful politician. In an effort to provide a step-by-step analysis of Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship in the 1929 and 1938 provincial elections, primary material from the John G. Diefenbaker Centre Archives, Saskatchewan Archives Board and National Archives of Canada are used to trace Diefenbaker's contribution to his and the Saskatchewan Conservative party's political failures. The combination of the Diefenbaker papers with those of R.B. Bennett, Robert Manion, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation of Saskatchewan provide important insights into Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship.

He was more than a victim and an unfortunate casualty of the Depression and Liberal party machine in the provincial elections of 1929 and 1938. He made mistakes above and beyond being young and politically inexperienced, and pursuing political ambitions in an era when the Conservative party was unpopular. But would Diefenbaker have failed no matter under which party banner he ran? Did he have an impact, either positive or negative, on his own political aspirations and those of his party in 1929 and 1938? Was his participation in the politics during the Depression a learning experience that made him into a successful politician after 1940, or had he already



established his political philosophy? Only a thorough evaluation of his early political failures in securing a seat in the provincial legislature can explain John G. Diefenbaker's contribution to his political apprenticeship in Saskatchewan politics.

## Chapter One - In a Rickety Orange Tub

As the Prince Albert constituency polling stations closed on the June 6, 1929 provincial election, John Diefenbaker fully expected to win his third attempt at public office, after he was unable to obtain a seat in the 1925 and 1926 federal elections. But as the ballots were counted, Diefenbaker's hopes were dashed. He expected to receive votes from Prince Albert constituents who were concerned with the religious and immigration issues already raised to an emotional high by the Ku Klux Klan since its organizers arrived in the province in 1927. Declining support for the Liberal government after twenty-four years in office also helped the Tory campaign. But while twenty-four Conservatives were elected to the provincial legislature, Diefenbaker was not among them.

Considerable attention has been given to the strength of the Liberal party in Prince Albert as the predominant reason for Diefenbaker's failure to obtain public office. He was an unfortunate casualty in a constituency that offered little hope for a Conservative victory. But the 1929 general election in Saskatchewan was a contest that engulfed more than the political issues of the province's

control over its natural resources, public ownership of utilities, and questionable administrative practices of the Liberal government. The election focused on the type of immigrants admitted to Saskatchewan and whether or not Saskatchewan should change its policies concerning religious influences in public schools. Diefenbaker was attracted by calls for one language, one Protestant religion and a restricted immigration policy. But while promoting emotional issues may have helped some Conservatives win in other parts of the province, it had the opposite effect for Diefenbaker in Prince Albert.

The promising young lawyer remained a political apprentice in 1929, left to analyze his campaign and learn from his mistakes. And there were mistakes. Diefenbaker advanced his opponent's hopes for victory when he aggressively advocated Tory policies that were perceived to be offensive to some of the Prince Albert constituents. Diefenbaker overestimated urban voters' anti-immigrant sentiments and underestimated rural immigrant constituents' resolve not to tolerate any apparent prejudice against them. The Liberals did not fail to publish Diefenbaker's speeches in the provincial Liberal newspapers for their own gain and smiled at their good fortune to have been given an opponent who readily offered them the ammunition needed to shoot him down. When he announced his intentions to run for public office, every personal and political activity of Diefenbaker

was scrutinized and many of them became a damning testimonial to his defeat at the polls in 1929. His outspokenness in support of Conservative policies to restrict "foreign" immigration to protect local labour, to remove religious influences from public schools, and to promote one language did not go unnoticed by his political opponents or the Prince Albert voters. Diefenbaker, in essence, made a major contribution to his failure to win the Prince Albert constituency in 1929 because he misjudged the ethnic and religious components in the community.

The Prince Albert riding had a long and well established political history that Diefenbaker failed to take into consideration as he prepared to run for public office. It was one of the first settlements on the prairies to attract immigrants from the British Empire and other Canadian provinces during the Tory reign of Sir John A. Macdonald. Grateful for free land and a chance at a new life, immigrants initially tended to vote for Conservatives at election time. In the territorial election of 1883, the community showed an "overwhelmingly Conservative temper."<sup>1</sup> Even after the territory became a province in 1905, and the Liberal political dynasty in the province began, Prince Albert temporarily elected Tory representatives to the Legislature in Regina, but under the name of the Provincial

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<sup>1</sup>Gary W.D. Abrams, Prince Albert: The First Century 1866-1966 (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1976), first edition, p. 44.

Rights party.<sup>2</sup>

As large numbers of new arrivals settled in the rural Prince Albert area under Laurier's immigration policy, Tory support in the constituency began to fade. Provincial Liberals also gained momentum in the northern community by combining its two seats -- one encompassing Prince Albert proper and the other the surrounding rural area -- in 1917. Redistribution of the two provincial seats quickly evaporated any hopes for another Conservative victory in Prince Albert. Support for the Tory candidate in the election also dissipated when the federal Conservative government of Robert Borden announced its intention on May 18 to impose conscription -- an unpopular policy with western agrarian voters -- just six weeks prior to the provincial election in Saskatchewan. Borden's Wartime Elections Act also had an impact on the party's support base, for it disenfranchised all newcomers to Canada since 1902, if they were from a country fighting with the Axis.

Borden's coalition with western Liberals in the Union party swept Saskatchewan, including Prince Albert, in the 1917 federal election, but the controversy over conscription

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<sup>2</sup>The Provincial Rights party would later evolve into the Conservative party. Conservatives would complain in later years that the party's demise in the province was predictable because it lent its support to an alternative party prior to 1912 rather than running its own candidates, (National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), R.B. Bennett Papers, MG 26 K (hereafter Bennett Papers), microfilm, reel #1474, p. 519401, Frank W. Turnbull to R.B. Bennett, 16 June 1938).

led to the temporary end of the provincial Conservative party in the constituency. By 1921, support for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan had declined to the point where the Liberals won seventeen seats in the provincial election, including Prince Albert, without being contested in any way, shape or form by the Conservative party.<sup>3</sup>

Moving to Prince Albert in 1924, Diefenbaker stepped into the midst of a well oiled and greased Liberal political machine run by the Davis family. When the Liberal member in the provincial legislature for Prince Albert, Charles McDonald,<sup>4</sup> retired in 1925, Diefenbaker saw it as an opportunity to pursue his political ambitions. A campaign would give him much desired publicity and notoriety within the community. However, he was unable to get support from the leading Liberal in Prince Albert, Thomas Clayton Davis, who wanted the nomination for himself.

T.C. Davis was well entrenched as the Liberal kingpin in Prince Albert by 1925. His father, Thomas Osborne Davis, had won the local federal riding in 1896 and 1900 before being appointed to the senate by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in

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<sup>3</sup>Evelyn Eager, Saskatchewan Government (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Diefenbaker eventually ended up challenging McDonald who ran in the 1925 federal campaign when the Liberals had difficulty finding a suitable candidate. McDonald resigned the seat to permit William Lyon Mackenzie King to run in a by-election after he lost in North York.

1904.<sup>5</sup> The elder Davis took control of all patronage in the Prince Albert constituency and ran the local Liberal organization with the precision of a machine until his death in 1917. The reins of power and control were then handed down to his son, who exercised his political influence by becoming mayor of Prince Albert in 1921.

With the 1925 nomination in the hands of T.C. Davis, Diefenbaker chose to support the Liberal candidate rather than convert to the Conservatives, who happened to nominate a joint candidate with the Progressives.<sup>6</sup> By supporting Davis in the provincial campaign, Diefenbaker hoped to receive the nomination for the Liberal party in the upcoming federal election. Davis, however, had other aspirants in mind. Whether he was flatly refused the opportunity or became disillusioned with Davis' control over the constituency, Diefenbaker had to consider his political options. Davis left little room for Diefenbaker to run as a Liberal in 1925, and Diefenbaker was too ambitious to wait any longer for his turn. On June 19, less than three weeks after supporting Davis in the provincial election, Diefenbaker was the main speaker at the Prince Albert Conservative organizing meeting for the upcoming federal

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<sup>5</sup>Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), p. 45.

<sup>6</sup>Abrams, p. 266.

campaign.<sup>7</sup> The Conservative party in Prince Albert was pleased to utilize his youthful zeal and oratory skills.

On August 6, 1925, just seven weeks before the federal election, Diefenbaker let his name stand and was unanimously chosen as the Conservative flag-bearer to contest the Prince Albert federal riding. Receiving the nomination was the easy part for Diefenbaker. He had a lot of hard work ahead of him, however, if he hoped to get elected. In the 1921 federal election, the Prince Albert Conservative candidate, David Wilson Paul, was a distant third behind the Progressive and Liberal candidates, polling only fifteen percent of the votes.<sup>8</sup> In the 1925 provincial campaign, the Conservatives backed the Progressive candidate who lost by more than 1,300 votes. On a positive note, the cooperation between the Progressives and Conservative parties increased their overall support to almost thirty-

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<sup>7</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 52. Diefenbaker came close to not having a seat to contest when the Liberals proposed a saw-off with the Conservatives in which the Liberals would not run a candidate in Bert Keown's Melfort constituency if the Conservatives kept out of Prince Albert so that each could run unobstructed against the Progressives (John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers (hereafter JGD), Newspaper Clippings, vol. 1274, Jan-Sept 1925, Prince Albert Herald, 20 June 1925). The proposal was rejected, probably due to Diefenbaker's interest in running for the Conservatives in 1925.

<sup>8</sup>Library of Parliament, Information and Reference Branch, History of Federal Electoral Ridings, 1867-1980, volume 1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1981), Prince Albert, 6-12-21 election results.



seven percent in a two-way contest with the Liberals,<sup>9</sup> which Diefenbaker hoped would once again to vote Conservative as it had done in 1912. The odds of victory for Diefenbaker, however, must have seemed insurmountable when the Progressives decided to run their own candidate against him and the Liberals in the 1925 federal campaign.

The Liberal party in Prince Albert viewed Diefenbaker's choice of parties in 1925 as something of a joke. It accused him of being overly ambitious and not able or worthy of representing Prince Albert constituents in Ottawa. Davis stated that Diefenbaker should "start at the bottom of the political ladder and prove his political worth before seeking the highest election honour in the gift of the people."<sup>10</sup> Diefenbaker's shift from Liberal red to Tory blue raised questions concerning his sincerity as a candidate for Prince Albert: was he concerned with the people or was he more concerned with his own ego and political ambitions? Andrew McDonald, a possible relation to Diefenbaker's Liberal opponent, asked:

Why is he running for office while the old guard leaders of the Conservatives in Prince Albert remain in

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<sup>9</sup>Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970 (Regina: Queen's Printer, 1971), p. 129.

<sup>10</sup>Wilson and Wilson also report Davis referring to "Diefenbaker as a fallen-away Liberal," p. 53. Diefenbaker is reported to have responded to Davis that: "I was a Liberal, but I could not help but see the failures of the Liberal government in carrying out its promises" (*Ibid.*, pp. 53-4).

the background? Simply because the old leaders realize that there is no chance of a Conservative being elected to represent Prince Albert in parliament and they are content to let a young man bear the brunt of a failure to be elected.<sup>11</sup>

Diefenbaker, however, believed he stood on the moral high ground, running not so much in support of the Conservative party as he was running against the magnates of the Liberal party and its first lieutenant, T.C. Davis, who prevented him from running under his first choice of political parties.

Leading Conservatives expected the young lawyer with well-known public speaking skills to give the Tories a much-needed boost in the constituency. The 1925 federal election gave Diefenbaker an opportunity to make an entrance onto the Prince Albert political stage and to gain public exposure in the community. Diefenbaker also saw the election as an opportunity and a milestone in his career:

I passed my thirtieth birthday during the contest. I had come of age politically, and my candidacy was a public declaration of my political faith.<sup>12</sup>

Not even his disagreement with some of the policies in the Conservative party platform deterred Diefenbaker from seeking public office.

He campaigned on two primary issues -- completion of

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<sup>11</sup>JGD, Newspaper Clippings, vol. 1274, Jan-Sept 1925, Prince Albert Herald, 9 October 1925.

<sup>12</sup>John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable J.G. Diefenbaker, the Crusading Years 1895-1956 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 140.

the Hudson Bay Railway and an emphasis on Canadian nationalism -- both of which were immediate concerns to Prince Albert constituents, but not the national Conservative party. National Conservative party leader Arthur Meighen publicly rejected any plan to spend more money to finish the railway when there were already two transcontinentals in operation. Liberal candidate Charles McDonald (the same man who Diefenbaker wanted to replace in the 1925 provincial election) handily defeated the Progressive and Conservative candidates in the 1925 federal election. Diefenbaker lost by nearly 2,900 votes.<sup>13</sup> His party's popular support dropped to twenty-three percent, an increase over the federal returns in 1921, but a decline from the provincial election earlier that year. Diefenbaker lost his deposit.

Rather than look at his own contributions in the election to explain the outcome, Diefenbaker established a lifelong pattern as he blamed other factors and forces for defeat at the polls. In 1925, Meighen's threat to abrogate the Crow's Nest Pass rail rate and refusal to complete the Hudson Bay Railway were the centre of his attention.<sup>14</sup> Diefenbaker also noted that voters cast their ballots based on ethnicity. He reported that in the non-English speaking

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<sup>13</sup>See Appendix E for full details.

<sup>14</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 142.

districts the results were hopeless.<sup>15</sup> Diefenbaker concluded that there was little hope for the Conservative party in the district until the party controlled the editorial comment in at least one western-German newspaper to counter claims made by the Liberals that the Conservative party was solely responsible for the disenfranchisement of aliens in 1917.<sup>16</sup> On one hand, this belief had some merit, but at the same time, Diefenbaker's promotion of policies unsanctioned by the party's national leader must have reduced his credibility with some voters in Prince Albert.

Losing in 1925 to the Liberals, however, did not stifle Diefenbaker's political ambitions. He decided to contest the 1926 federal election when the customs scandal forced William Lyon Mackenzie King to resign and the Governor General to call on the Conservatives to call an election soon after forming the interim government. This time Diefenbaker's opponent in Prince Albert was the national Liberal leader and former Prime Minister, W.L.M. King.<sup>17</sup> It was an opportunity for Diefenbaker to once again test the political pulse of the Prince Albert constituents and to

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<sup>15</sup>JGD, Pre-1940 Series, volume 2 (hereafter all references to JGD will refer to Pre-1940 series unless otherwise specified), p. 001311, Diefenbaker to Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, 3 November 1925.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>King lost his seat in North York in the 1925 general election. McDonald gladly gave up Prince Albert for King and a by-election was held in February 1926, without Conservative opposition.

increase his notoriety among them by running against the leader of the Liberal party. The contest had all the excitement of David taking on Goliath.

The campaign was a great honour and challenge for the young Conservative. Diefenbaker revelled in the local and national publicity. Although the likelihood of victory was dim, Diefenbaker accepted the challenge, hoping the people of Prince Albert would vote against King and what he saw as a corrupt government. The moral fibre of the Liberal government was Diefenbaker's primary issue in the campaign, but the Liberals in Prince Albert found others handcrafted for the local riding. They focused on local fears of non-British immigrants, such as those stated in the Ukrainian Voice newspaper "...that the Conservative party stood for the principles of depriving all naturalized Canadians of their right to vote."<sup>18</sup> The Conservative government of Robert Borden had taken away their rights in 1917, and many of them had yet to have them returned. The Liberals in Prince Albert were actively stirring up anxiety among voters that it could happen again if the current Conservative party were to form a majority government. Diefenbaker's actions prior to the campaign added political fuel to the fire set by the Liberal party.

Diefenbaker misread the concerns of the local electorate and prior to the 1926 federal campaign

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<sup>18</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 149.

unknowingly contributed to the fears raised by the Liberal propagandists. As a member of the Orange Order, Diefenbaker took part in the July 12, 1926 Orange celebration at Macdowall. He gave an animated speech, arguing that all Canadian citizens should be:

equal, united, proud and strong. A nation and a province can only be built on the foundations of good citizenship -- a corner-stone of Orangemen.<sup>19</sup>

Great nations cannot be built on hyphenated Canadianism, argued Diefenbaker; he therefore recommended that all immigrants -- French, German, Irish, Scotch -- must suppress the urge to follow the social and political structures of their homeland in exchange for becoming Canadian. The social and political realities for the immigrants, however, were significantly different than those of Diefenbaker.

Although the Prince Albert Daily Herald was favourable toward Diefenbaker's speech on citizenship and his protestations for keeping the Union Jack as the Canadian flag, the Catholic Muenster Messenger was outraged. It could not understand how Diefenbaker intended "to make Canada all Canadian and all British" when Canada was made up of immigrants from all over the globe.<sup>20</sup> "The imperialism advocated by Mr. Diefenbaker," the article stated, "is a

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<sup>19</sup>JGD, Speeches, volume I, "July 12, 1925." Newspaper reports of Diefenbaker's speech at Macdowall clarify the date to be 12 July 1926; Prince Albert Daily Herald, 13 July 1926, Muenster's St. Peter's Messenger, 11 August 1926.

<sup>20</sup>JGD, vol. 2, p. 001381, "Prince Albert's Conservative Candidate," Muenster St. Peter's Messenger, 11 August 1926.

strictly Orange principle. But it won't work."<sup>21</sup> The paper suggested that Diefenbaker "broke his own political neck" in 1925 by appearing on the platform with two fanatical ministers -- Reverends Canon Strong and R.R. McDougall -- making a beautiful trio capable of singing the famous ditty: "One Country, One Flag, One Language."<sup>22</sup> It concluded by warning Diefenbaker that in 1926 "he will discover that to ride the stormy seas of politics to Ottawa, in a rickety Orange tub, is an impossible task in Saskatchewan."<sup>23</sup>

Matters only worsened for the Tory candidate as the election neared when his own German ethnicity received the attention of local Liberal organizers. They had used the same approach in the previous election to obtain the support of immigrants in Prince Albert's rural areas. The pressure forced Diefenbaker to adjust to the situation. In 1925, he stated: "I was not a German, not a German Canadian, but a Canadian."<sup>24</sup> In 1926, to deflect any damage that might recur, he disguised his German ancestry as Dutch.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 001381-82.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 001382.

<sup>24</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 141.

<sup>25</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 30. During the campaign, Diefenbaker is quoted as saying; "And suppose I was a German, does it make for a united Canada to knock settlers?" p. 57.

Eastern Conservatives, like Matthew Duncan, made matters worse for Diefenbaker when they hurled insults at King for "...running in a riding among the Doukhobors up near the north pole where they don't know how to mark their ballots."<sup>26</sup> Diefenbaker was left to defend the statements without success. This time, Goliath beat out the underdog David. Diefenbaker lost by nearly 4,100 votes as King took a majority of the urban and rural polls.<sup>27</sup>

Diefenbaker was not willing to accept the loss in Prince Albert as a vote against him, but rather as a vote for the Liberal party based on their influence over "alien" immigrants. Fault was also placed with the Conservative platform and its inability to attract western agrarian interests. Most of all, Diefenbaker blamed the statements made by Conservatives in the East for destroying any chance he had of winning.<sup>28</sup> Diefenbaker's assessment was fair, but incomplete without considering his own contributions to defeat at the polls. He would not accept responsibility for the impassioned statements made at the Orange meeting in

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<sup>26</sup>"Insults Prince Albert", Prince Albert Herald (some citations may also refer to the same newspaper as the Prince Albert Daily Herald), 11 September, 1926.

<sup>27</sup>Returns of the Chief Electoral Offices, Dominion of Canada, Annual Departmental Reports 1925-26, volume IV (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1927), pp. 456-8. King won nine of the sixteen polls in Prince Albert and ninety-six rural polls to Diefenbaker's thirty, with two ties. See Appendix F for complete details.

<sup>28</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 150.



Macdowall and his inability to anticipate their impact on a majority of the non-British Prince Albert electorate.

For the next year and a half, Diefenbaker focused on his law career while waiting for the next opportunity to pursue public office. In the interim, he watched as the Liberal government's dynasty in Saskatchewan began to slip over its handling of key political issues. Its lack of response to the questions of provincial control over natural resources, immigration concerns, sectarian influences in public schools and patronage became leading topics of discussion in the local cafes and around the supper tables in Saskatchewan. Each in turn became an issue in the 1929 provincial election campaign.

The acquisition of Saskatchewan's natural resources had been an issue ever since the province was created in 1905. Ottawa held onto the prairie provinces' crown land rights and resources to pursue its settlement policies without provincial interference. After months of negotiations, which ended prior to the election, Premier Jimmy Gardiner officially declined to accept for Saskatchewan the terms offered to Alberta, leaving the issue open for debate during

the 1929 campaign.<sup>29</sup> The Conservatives, under the leadership of Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, promised to solve the issue by obtaining a fair settlement for Saskatchewan if they were elected.

Another major issue in the 1929 general election concerned patronage and the Liberal "machine." After twenty-four years as the governing party in the province, the Liberal party was a master at greasing the wheels that kept it in power. It was not uncommon for civil servants like highway inspectors to perform political as well as provincial duties during and between elections. Conservatives were able to raise the issue to prominence as an aspect of Liberal government corruption.

The school question was the third issue in the 1929 election. One of the primary objectives of Saskatchewan's education system was to teach the children of immigrants about the local political, social and economic culture. Education policy became an issue long before the 1929 campaign because provincial autonomy in 1905, which permitted minority rights in education, gave concessions to the education of alien children in their own tongue and

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<sup>29</sup>Patrick Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Crosses," Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, eds., Politics in Saskatchewan (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), p. 117. Kyba states that: "The federal government agreed to transfer the lands and resources to provincial control, but only if the province would accept in perpetuity a subsidy of \$375,000 less than the province could expect under the existing compensation scheme."

religion. Soon after, questions were raised concerning standardization of the province's public school system, the elimination of first-year instruction in a language other than English, the removal of religious emblems, and the prevention of Catholic nuns from teaching in public schools while dressed in their traditional garb. In short, "British" voters demanded one and only one school system with no sectarian influence and only one language of instruction. The implementation of one public school system was seen by many as the only road to follow if Saskatchewan was to remain Protestant and British in politics and societal values. Prince Albert's religious and immigrant demographics, with the urban centre dominated by British and Protestant voters and the rural areas that were home to many non-British and Catholic immigrants, made it a prime location for just such a debate.

Along with the question of schools there arose the issue of what to do about immigration. This issue became Diefenbaker's personal crusade in preparation for the 1929 campaign. The increasing number of "aliens" was seen by the province's "British" population as a threat to their vision of Canada. In parkland communities like Prince Albert, where a long-standing British community was being surrounded by non-British immigrant towns and villages, the issue was an immediate concern. Protestant and British Empire settlers feared that Catholics and foreigners were

conspiring to take over Saskatchewan, and Canada.<sup>30</sup> The sentiments were reflected in the battle cry of some Conservatives in the province:

The fact is that the [Conservative] Party is aggressive and that there is more enthusiasm and more in the way of organization than for years. The fact also is however that this enthusiasm is purely Protestant and anti-Catholic.<sup>31</sup>

Murdock A. MacPherson, a prominent Regina lawyer and leading Conservative, argued that Catholics could not blame the predominantly Protestant Conservatives for "endeavouring to profit by the religious cry" because Catholics had done it for years by supporting the Liberal party since 1905.<sup>32</sup>

Rumours of a non-British and Catholic invasion were fuelled by increasing numbers of "conspirators" settling as groups in rural Saskatchewan, where they resisted assimilation and flexed their political muscle by pressing for separate schools.<sup>33</sup> Data from the 1926 census, however, showed that of the province's population of 820,000, over 624,000 were born in the British Commonwealth,

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<sup>30</sup>Martin Robin, Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada 1920-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 53. The supposed objective of the Catholic conspiracy, centred in Rome and Quebec, was "to colonize the country through political penetration - at the federal and provincial levels - immigration inundation, and the expansion of the rights, power, and number of the Catholic population."

<sup>31</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, p. 24998, M.A. MacPherson to Bennett, 7 April 1928.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 24999.

<sup>33</sup>Robin, p. 50.

including 361,000 in Saskatchewan and 161,000 in other Canadian provinces.<sup>34</sup> By 1929, it was estimated that twenty-five percent of the Saskatchewan population was Catholic and about the same proportion was foreign born.<sup>35</sup> In 1931, more than fifty percent of the population was of European ancestry while only just over forty-seven percent were of British ancestry.<sup>36</sup> In the Prince Albert area, where a higher percentage of the population was not Protestant or from the Commonwealth, the gap between Protestants and Catholics, British and alien immigrants, was even more prevalent. Data from the census closest to the 1929 provincial election, taken in 1931, shows that in division fifteen's, including Prince Albert and the surrounding area, over forty-four percent were either Greek Orthodox or Roman Catholic.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Norman Ward and David Smith, Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 94.

<sup>35</sup>Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Crosses," p. 105. Gardiner approximated the Catholic population of the province at about twenty percent (Ward and Smith, p. 100). See also Robin, p. 54, where the figure of 233,000 out of the provinces population of 850,000 appears.

<sup>36</sup>Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Seventh Census of Canada, 1931 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1936) volume I, pp. 718-19.

<sup>37</sup>Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Seventh Census of Canada, 1931 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1936), Bulletin No. XXI, Population of Canada, 1931, by Religious Denominations, pp. 27-8. The provincial average of Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic to other religious affiliations in Saskatchewan was just under twenty-nine percent.

Diefenbaker and others hoped to make the situation work to their advantage in the next election to change immigration and education policies. The battle lines were drawn and nearly everyone in the community took sides, including Diefenbaker. The Prince Albert area became "home to a politically active Catholic population and a militant Orange Order."<sup>38</sup> As an active Orangeman, Diefenbaker spoke to the concerns of his fraternal brothers. Local Anglican Bishop George Exton Lloyd contributed to the debate as an outspoken critic of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe and he formed the National Association of Canada to "press...for restrictive immigration policies."<sup>39</sup> He was a "tireless cleric who campaigned against the 'dirty, ignorant, garlic-smelling, non-preferred continentals.'"<sup>40</sup>

Although the official issues in the campaign were the control of natural resources, the Liberal machine, education and immigration, the emotionalism expressed by Bishop Lloyd was another significant factor. Anti-immigrant sentiments had been stirring throughout the province since 1927 when the Ku Klux Klan migrated north of the forty-ninth parallel

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<sup>38</sup>Robin, p. 43.

<sup>39</sup>Robin, p. 52. See also NAC, William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers, MG 26 J1 (hereafter King Papers), volume 151, p. 129024, T.C. Davis to King, 29 May 1928.

<sup>40</sup>Regina Star, 29 May 1929, as quoted by William Calderwood, "The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1968), p. 187.

and set up shop in Saskatchewan. The ultra-Protestant "social club"<sup>41</sup> came to take advantage of the fears already prevalent in a society racked with growing pains. The Klan neither created the emotional issues nor was it responsible for them; it merely fanned the flames of fear already evident in the province to suit its own ideology of one nation, one flag, one language and one Protestant religion. An anonymous author in the Queen's Quarterly noted:

Today, you have no moral right to say that Canada is still a British possession. Less than forty-seven percent of the people living in Canada today are of British descent....Then do you wonder why the Klan has been called into being? To awaken the conscience of Canada, that is what the Klan is trying to do, to awaken the conscience of the Dominion; make you realize and face those dangers as men.<sup>42</sup>

It came as no surprise that the Klan hoped to make a few dollars for its organizers while it promoted values such as:

Protestantism, White Supremacy, Gentile Economic Freedom, Just Laws and Liberty, Separation of Church and State, Pure Patriotism, Restrictive and Selective Immigration, Freedom of Speech and Press, Law and Order, Higher Moral Standard, Our Public Schools, [and] Freedom from Mob Violence.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Robin, p. 47. The purpose of the Klan was reported to be "an excuse for ordinary people - gentile, white, and Protestant - to get together, to socialize and attend meetings small and big, where crosses were burnt, speeches heard, and patriotic anthems or hymns sung, like 'The Maple Leaf Forever,' 'The Old Rugged Cross,' 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' and 'God Save the King.'"

<sup>42</sup>An Observer, "The Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," Queen's Quarterly, 1928, p. 597.

<sup>43</sup>SAB, Gardiner Papers, Box 15, p. 12081, Gardiner to Reverend Dr. John L. Nicol, 11 February 1928.

Not all of the Klan's goals were transplantable to Saskatchewan's ethnic, social and religious make-up, but the overpowering fear for Protestants and their social fraternities in Saskatchewan focused on the province being overrun with Catholic and foreign-speaking immigrants. In sufficient numbers, they could control political parties and even the government. At the very least they would adversely affect the country's British future and culture. The large numbers of European immigrants in Saskatchewan and their religious influence in the public schools were examples given to prove that they were making progress already. According to the Klan, problems in Saskatchewan's society resulted from nuns teaching while dressed in their traditional religious garb, permitting crucifixes to adorn public school walls, and teaching French beyond the legislated limit of a half-hour per day. For many Conservative candidates the support they needed to get elected rested on harnessing the emotional flame fuelled by the Orange Order and its "lunatic but equally natural fringe" the ultra-Protestant Ku Klux Klan.<sup>44</sup>

The Klan was a popular and growing force in the province and its influence was not lost on leading Conservatives who saw their ticket to the legislature by taking advantage of the emotions raised by the Klan. The province's Conservative leaders, Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, J.F.

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<sup>44</sup>Ward and Smith, p. 93.



Bryant, legal counsel to the Klan on several occasions, and J.W. Rosborough, temporary leader of the Klan in 1927, quickly recognized the possibilities for a political windfall for the Conservative party. Many provincial Conservatives evidently "...welcomed the Klan's arrival, appreciated its ignition potentials, gloated over prospects of a political windfall, yet resisted identifying publicly with Saskatchewan's hoodless day-riders."<sup>45</sup> Saskatchewan's Liberal Premier, Jimmy G. Gardiner, however, quickly accused the Conservatives of cooperating and collaborating with Klan leadership not in the open, but in the back rooms of hotels and in the private homes of Conservatives.<sup>46</sup> Gardiner had every intention of using the information at his disposal to connect the activities of the Klan to the Conservative party

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<sup>45</sup>Robin, p. 68.

<sup>46</sup>SAB, James G. Gardiner Papers, R1022 (hereafter Gardiner Papers), box 15, p.12217, Gardiner to R.C. Hall, Secretary of the Wapella Liberal Association, 18 May 1928, p. 5. Gardiner states: "I am also given to understand from a declaration made by Emmons [leader of the Klan in 1927] before his solicitor which was placed in my hands last night, that the impression which Dr. Anderson seeks to leave that he never at any time had any connection with the Klan in this Province is entirely wrong. Dr. Anderson, according to sworn declaration and evidence sworn in court by Emmons, met him not only once, but a number of times in different places in order to give to Emmons information against the Government and which would assist in building up an organization in the Klan that would be antagonistic to the Government." Dr. Anderson reportedly met with Klan organizers in hotels at Simpson and Imperial, Saskatchewan on the same day the Klan organized there.

at the appropriate time.<sup>47</sup>

The opportunity came when Gardiner called a snap by-election in Arm River for October 25, 1928 to test his government's popularity in the province. The seat had gone solidly Liberal since its creation in 1908, thereby making it as good a testing ground as any, and an indication of what to expect the following year in the general election.<sup>48</sup> The by-election not only tested Liberal support, but also that of the Klan for the provincial Conservative party's ability to take advantage of the emotionalism raised by the Klan. The province-wide debate over sectarian influences in public schools and immigration also intensified Diefenbaker's resolve to run for public office a third time -- this time as a provincial candidate.

In Arm River, Gardiner planned to focus the campaign on a rational discussion of the facts surrounding school and immigration issues and how his government had addressed the problems. The Klan's involvement in social and political matters, and the Conservative party's willingness to use the

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<sup>47</sup>SAB, Gardiner Papers, box 15, p. 12057, Gardiner to Bruce R. MacKay, 4 February 1928. Gardiner believed that leading Conservatives were prepared to take advantage of Klan sentiments in Saskatchewan. He was unreserved in telling Liberals that "when the proper time comes we can make it a point to make known the information which we have and I feel quite sure that not only you but a great many others will be fully convinced that there is a very close relationship between this organization and the active opponents of this government."

<sup>48</sup>Ward and Smith, p. 89.

fears raised by the Klan to obtain voter support, however, turned the campaign into a battle of emotions that drew politicians from outside the riding, including Diefenbaker, into the campaign.<sup>49</sup>

Although the Conservatives put forward Stewart Adrian to challenge Arm River Liberal incumbent Thomas Waugh, the real combatants in the constituency were Premier Gardiner and Dr. Anderson. Both sides used popular political speakers in the constituency to support their party's position. Diefenbaker, as an excellent orator and vocal defender of the Conservative party's stance on sectarian influences in public schools and immigration policies, was called upon by Dr. Anderson to champion Conservative party policy at Liberal political meetings in the constituency. Diefenbaker was in attendance at just such a Liberal gathering in Loreburn on the Thursday before the 1928 by-

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<sup>49</sup>Evidence indicates that the Klan had a strong impact on the Conservative party and vice versa. Delegates to the 1928 Conservative convention included the "King Kreagle" and his secretary from Regina, along with J.J. Hawkins - leader of the Saskatchewan Klan (Julian Sher, White Hoods: Canada's Ku Klux Klan (Vancouver: new Star Books, 1983), p. 54). A Klan pamphlet was distributed at the door to all delegates even though J. Harvey Hearn, a Protestant delegate from Saskatoon, protested against the action. The pamphlets were distributed until practically every delegate entered the hall (NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, pp. 25987-8, J. Harvey Hearn to Bennett, 28 March 1928). Hearn, therefore, accused the convention organizers of a "deliberate attempt" to have every delegate become members of the Klan to help support the immigration and education resolutions, and to make the party appeal to the Protestant voters in the same way that the Liberal party appealed to the Catholic voters.

election, attended by Gardiner and his minister of agriculture, C.M. Hamilton. The Prince Albert Tory sat at the back of the hall, but was invited to address the crowd of approximately 300 after he persistently heckled Hamilton.<sup>50</sup>

Diefenbaker accepted, took the platform and stated that he was not interested in "mud throwing." He did, however, want to hear how the Liberal policy would deal with sectarian influences in public schools.<sup>51</sup> He personally "was opposed to the crucifixes or the nuns being in public schools" but agreed that Catholics in Saskatchewan had the undoubted right to direct their children's education.<sup>52</sup> Diefenbaker's involvement in the campaign suggests the importance of the issue to him and the Conservative party. His questions were pointed at capitalizing on the emotional nature of the debate rather than enlightening matters of policy. He hoped to embarrass the Liberals when he asked:

Was it the policy of the government to allow the Catholic Church to encroach upon the Public Schools and convert them into Roman Catholic schools through the use of nuns in the schools and the placing of crucifixes in the schools?<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 157. Diefenbaker mistakenly states the exchange took place at Hawarden. Dr. Anderson sent him to "interrupt if either [Gardiner or Hamilton] made any statements of questionable truth."

<sup>51</sup>SAB, Gardiner Papers, p. 12800, Liberal organizer's report to Gardiner on the event.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 12801.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

Gardiner responded by quoting the public school policy of the Conservative party and chastised Diefenbaker, stating that he "had better spend his time converting his own party to his views before starting to clean up the back yard of the Liberal party."<sup>54</sup> As for Diefenbaker, Conservative party, and Klan accusations that public schools were being run by nuns in "garb" with crucifixes on the walls instead of Union Jacks, Gardiner had stated earlier that of the 8,114 teachers in the province, only sixty-four were nuns teaching in public schools. Of 4,822 school districts, only forty-three employed nuns,<sup>55</sup> and they taught only 7,081 of

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 12812. The provincial Conservative party strove to improve its popularity among the electorate. At the Conservative policy convention convened in mid-March, 1928, at Saskatoon, the party put forward radical changes to its education and immigration policies. Dr. Anderson chastised Premier Gardiner for "pitiable" reforms and an unwillingness to formulate an aggressive immigration policy that put support for British Empire immigration ahead of non-British Empire immigration (NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, p. 25136, Manifesto and Platform, Saskatchewan Conservative Party, p. 2). As a former inspector for the Department of Education, Dr. Anderson viewed education as a means for changing immigrants' allegiance from their country of origin to Canada. The party's position on educational reforms stated that "all text books with a denominational bias and with unpatriotic sentiments are [to be] kept out of the public schools of Saskatchewan" (Ibid., p. 25137). Text books, according to Dr. Anderson, should instead "inculcate patriotism and love for Canada and Saskatchewan." The crowning provision called for the prohibition of all religious emblems in public schools and the end to holding public school in buildings used for religious purposes, except where necessary on a temporary basis (Ibid.). In short, the abolition of sectarian influences in public schools. See Appendix A for complete details of the 1928 Conservative platform.

<sup>55</sup>Ward and Smith, p. 100.

the provinces estimated 225,000 pupils,<sup>56</sup> a far cry from the highly publicized numbers propagated by the Klan and utilized by the Conservative party. For all his statistical evidence, Gardiner had a difficult time countering the emotionalism raised by the Klan and referred to by Conservative candidates.

The Liberals won a close fought contest in the Arm River by-election, but their majority was reduced to fifty-nine votes, down from 308 in 1925.<sup>57</sup> The Conservative party was encouraged by the improvement. Tories continued to push their immigration and education policies into 1929 and the Klan continued to assist them by stirring the emotions of concerned voters. For the first time in nearly a quarter century, the Conservative party was hopeful in its bid to oust the Liberals from power.

Diefenbaker was also encouraged by the results in Arm River. Before he was named the Conservative banner-bearer for Prince Albert, he was sparring with T.C. Davis in the newspapers over nuns and crucifixes in public schools. Five days before the Conservative nominating convention Davis stated that he intended to be "perfectly candid and frank in discussing [the schools question]...as it is one which is to become an issue in this election if it can be made so."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Robin, p. 59.

<sup>57</sup>SAB, Saskatchewan Executive..., p. 91.

<sup>58</sup>Prince Albert Daily Herald, 24 April 1929.

Three days later, on April 27, Diefenbaker denounced Davis publicly for discussing only the separate schools while ignoring public schools.<sup>59</sup> The campaign offered Diefenbaker the opportunity of having a vocal and well publicized debate with Davis -- publicity he could never afford to purchase on his own. But in the end, it was this publicity that led to Diefenbaker's downfall.

Diefenbaker's official entrance into the 1929 general election campaign was a reflection of his personality, in addition to his political beliefs and aspirations. He refrained from declaring his nomination to run in the campaign until the last possible moment to heighten the climax and newspaper coverage. Only two hours remained until nominations closed before Diefenbaker announced he would let his name stand. Diefenbaker easily defeated Prince Albert Mayor Samuel J. Branion for the job -- the man who nominated Diefenbaker to run as the federal candidate for Prince Albert in 1925.<sup>60</sup> The Prince Albert Daily Herald recorded that Diefenbaker had no ambition to become a member of the legislature, but if letting his name stand advanced the Conservative cause, he was glad to do so.<sup>61</sup> As a last-minute entrant, Diefenbaker could argue that he was there at the invitation of the constituency and not to

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 27 April 1929.

<sup>60</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 53.

<sup>61</sup>Prince Albert Daily Herald, 29 April 1929.

further his own ambitions. He expected the changing tide that began in Arm River to sweep across the province, including Prince Albert. But while twenty-four Conservatives went on to win their seats in 1929, Diefenbaker was noticeably absent from the provincial legislature.

Traditional explanations for Diefenbaker's defeat in Prince Albert focus in part on the strength of the Liberal incumbent, T.C. Davis, heir to the Liberal party's control over patronage in the Prince Albert constituency and Liberal Premier Gardiner's attorney general. They argue that Diefenbaker was not ready to challenge the family which had been a key part of the political, professional and business elite of Prince Albert since the 1880s.<sup>62</sup>

Considering the benefits to the constituency from a Liberal cabinet minister, some argue that Prince Albert was expected to vote Liberal in 1929. The sanatorium was well under construction -- providing jobs -- and the Liberal government was given credit for much of the city's prosperity.<sup>63</sup> Liberal party supporters were given civil service jobs in return for their support and promotion of the Liberal cause in Saskatchewan.

In all fairness to Diefenbaker, the well-greased Liberal machine in Prince Albert would have been difficult

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<sup>62</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 43.

<sup>63</sup>Abrams, p. 278.



for any Conservative candidate to beat since it was prone to swallow anyone who could potentially influence others or help the Liberal cause. For example, Liberal party executives actively pursued graduating law students to set up their practice in a riding chosen by the Liberal party. In exchange, the students were promised work from clients who supported the Liberal party.<sup>64</sup> The Liberal party also had road inspectors serve as district organizers for the party.<sup>65</sup> The inspectors were so politically active that Diefenbaker thought they "might aptly be termed 'Highwaymen' since according to his calculations they apparently received exorbitant sums" for their services while little of it had anything to do with improving provincial roads.<sup>66</sup> Homestead inspectors were especially important to the Liberal political machine since their "political influence was used to full advantage among non-English speaking immigrants, who were the most reliant on government personnel for advice."<sup>67</sup> Liquor store managers were also

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<sup>64</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, pp. 24893-94, Franklin W. Turnbull to Bennett, 28 January 1928. Turnbull describes his personal experience in 1910 when the Justices of the Peace and Notary Republics would be advised to turn business his way. Bank solicitorship would be secured for him, even though a Conservative lawyer was already established in the community, if he would "look after the Liberal cause there."

<sup>65</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 128.

<sup>66</sup>Prince Albert Daily Herald, 17 April 1929.

<sup>67</sup>Eager, Saskatchewan Politics, p. 69.

placed in charge of individual ridings and in rural areas practically every government employee was a Liberal party "healer."<sup>68</sup>

Although 1929 was a Conservative year in the rest of the province, the Prince Albert constituency returned T.C. Davis to the legislature with a majority of 415 votes, down from 1,345 against the Progressives in 1925.<sup>69</sup> Although Davis' majority was reduced in 1929, his overall support increased by more than 400 votes over the previous election, many as a result of increased immigration and re-enfranchisement of aliens who had lost the right to vote during the Great War.<sup>70</sup> Nearly seventy-eight percent of the eligible voters in the constituency cast their ballots. Diefenbaker won twenty of the constituency's forty-nine

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<sup>68</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 128. Healer refers to Liberals who promoted the party's interests as employees of the province.

<sup>69</sup>SAB, Saskatchewan Executive..., p. 129.

<sup>70</sup>Andrew Milnor, "The New Politics and Ethnic Revolt: 1929-38," Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, eds. Politics in Saskatchewan (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), p. 168. Following the Great War, "enemy aliens," especially Ukrainians, Russians, Austrians and Germans, had their naturalization period extended ten years beyond 1919. The federal government's restrictions on naturalizing enemy aliens were dropped in 1923 and the way was left open to become citizens after the designated five-year waiting period. Because many East Europeans in Prince Albert were able to vote for the first time in the 1929 provincial election, it was a monumental opportunity for them to strike back, *en masse*, against the Conservative party (the party many of them blamed for their disenfranchisement) with the help of the Liberal party. They took advantage of their newly acquired right to vote against the provincial Conservative party even though the federal government was responsible for withholding their citizenship.

polls.<sup>71</sup> He received a majority in the city's east end, which were predominantly English-speaking and Protestant, while T.C. Davis was more successful in the west end where the bulk of the population was non-English speaking, French or Catholic.<sup>72</sup> Davis' real strength showed in the rural polls -- especially those populated by non-British immigrants.<sup>73</sup> The divisions reflected the sides taken by Diefenbaker and Davis in the school and immigration questions in the campaign.

Unable to admit that he contributed to his failure to win public office in 1929, Diefenbaker blamed the Liberal party's influence over continental European immigrants for his loss. He argued that Clifford Sifton's immigration program "brainwashed" the newcomers into voting for the Liberal party.<sup>74</sup> Immigrants gave their support because, according to Diefenbaker, the Liberal party constantly inundated them with the idea that "Liberal" was synonymous with "liberty" and "Conservative" was synonymous with the "tyranny of land-owning autocrats."<sup>75</sup> Central European

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<sup>71</sup>JGD, vol. 3, Conservative Party - Saskatchewan - Convention 1932, p. 002759, "Electoral Division of Prince Albert Election Held June 6, 1929." See Appendix G for complete details.

<sup>72</sup>Abrams, p. 279.

<sup>73</sup>See Appendix F for poll-by-poll break down of 1929 election results in Prince Albert.

<sup>74</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 126.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

immigrants, therefore, generally voted Liberal for the same reasons that they left their homelands: personal and political freedom. The Liberal party encouraged immigrants' fears by pointing out the Conservative party's support for the Union government's Wartime Elections Act of 1917, which deprived naturalized Canadians and immigrants whose ancestors or homeland supported the Axis in the Great War of their right to vote.

Diefenbaker also blamed his failure on the Liberals' ability to incorporate agrarian concerns into their party platform. In a province almost totally dependent on agriculture, the electorate often supported the party most associated with agrarian concerns. The support of prominent members of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association in the Liberal cabinet made the party that much more powerful and influential with Saskatchewan farmers who expected to profit by having one of their own at the same table as the premier.<sup>76</sup>

The Liberal political machine also received mention

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<sup>76</sup>From 1905 until 1918, the Liberal government's minister of agriculture was W.R. Motherwell, the Saskatchewan Grain Grower Association's (SGGA) first president and one of its founders (Eager, p. 47). In 1921, Premier William Martin brought J.A. Maharg, new president of the SGGA, into the cabinet as minister of agriculture in a concerted effort to gain the support of the association's membership (*Ibid.*). Grit ties to the SGGA continued under Charles A. Dunning, Saskatchewan's premier in 1922. Dunning was vice-president of the SGGA and former general manager of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company (Diefenbaker, p. 127).

from Diefenbaker in 1929. Diefenbaker believed that "once James Gardiner took over the machine, it became a vicious instrument for the personal destruction of political opponents."<sup>77</sup> Since Diefenbaker was no friend of Gardiner, especially after his involvement in the 1928 Arm River by-election, he became a target. According to Diefenbaker, "everyone who opposed Gardiner, his policies, and the viciousness of his machine, was tarred with the dirty brush of Klan fanaticism."<sup>78</sup> Some historians argue that while Diefenbaker was unlikely to break the stranglehold that Davis and the local Liberal organization had on Prince Albert, regardless of what he did or promised, the fact that Diefenbaker ran for the Conservative party provided Davis with an easy victory. Diefenbaker's political activities prior to and during the 1929 contest made him an easy target for Liberal propaganda.

While the reasons given by Diefenbaker contributed to his failure, so too did he directly contribute to the extension of his political apprenticeship. His contributions accordingly deserve more than a footnote in the annals of history. He was not an unfortunate casualty in 1929, as some argue, standing on the sidelines while the Grits controlled the Prince Albert constituency. He was an active participant prior to and during the campaign, and he

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<sup>77</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 128.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

must be assigned some of the blame for his defeat at the polls.

The split in support that occurred in Prince Albert proper among Protestants and Catholics, British and non-British immigrants, for Diefenbaker and Davis respectively did not suddenly materialize when voters stepped behind the curtain to vote in 1929. It also was not exclusively the result of the Klan's presence in the province or the strong Liberal history in Prince Albert. With so much of the campaign centring on religious issues, voters were conscious of their candidate's position. Prince Albert was a constituency with a long history of well defined religious lines, and any anti-Catholic or anti-immigrant statement made by Diefenbaker squarely placed him on side with the Orange Order and its fanatical fringe: the Klan. Even though he distanced himself from the Klan, Diefenbaker, like other Conservatives, seemed prepared to take advantage of emotions raised by the Klan. While it worked for some Conservatives in Saskatchewan, it backfired on Diefenbaker.

Appearing on a political platform with Orangemen in 1925 and 1926, and with known Klansmen in 1928 and then running in the 1929 provincial campaign encouraged voters and his Liberal opponent to question Diefenbaker's political motivation. While on the hustings in 1928, he sat on the same platform as Bryant and spoke against nuns in garb and

crucifixes on public school walls.<sup>79</sup> He actively campaigned to revise the sectarian influence in public schools in 1929. He believed that non-sectarian schools were the way to unite the country, with all its diversity, not to divide it.<sup>80</sup> He joined Bryant at a North Battleford political meeting prior to the 1929 election and assured the crowd that he was not a believer in bigotry, "but in the face of change it is necessary to speak frankly."<sup>81</sup> And frank he was. He raised the crowd's emotions by describing a school in the Prince Albert constituency where:

teachers were put out and nuns brought in and the crucifixes erected in the school. An altar and crucifix were installed in every room. Protestants were forced to send their children there. Ask any Catholic, is that fair? Would you wish to send your child to a school presided over by an Orangeman in regalia or a Klansman in a nightshirt?<sup>82</sup>

Word quickly spread back to Prince Albert of his political activities. Instead of uniting all immigrants under his party's banner, Diefenbaker's statements polarized the community by strengthening the non-British Empire voter's opposition to his political ambitions.

Word of his support for the removal of nuns and

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<sup>79</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 81.

<sup>80</sup>Prince Albert Daily Herald, 9 May 1929.

<sup>81</sup>Diefenbaker, as quoted in Wilson and Wilson, p. 83.

<sup>82</sup>Quote is attributed to Diefenbaker in Wilson and Wilson, p. 83. No specific citation is provided to indicate the date, but the speech was given between the Arm River by-election and the 1929 provincial election.

crucifixes from Prince Albert public schools was easily made available to the press and thereby known to the electorate. Immigrants in the riding, however, were not the only ones to sit up and take note of Diefenbaker's partisan statements in the campaign. The Klan invited the Prince Albert Conservative candidate to address a celebration at Prince Albert on May 24.<sup>83</sup> The celebration was eventually held in Melfort and it witnessed one of the largest Klan rallies held in Saskatchewan with an estimated attendance of five to ten thousand.<sup>84</sup> Diefenbaker declined the invitation. Attending might have validated Liberal accusations that he was a supporter of the Klan. He preferred instead to avoid any direct association. He did, however, continue to attack sectarian influences in public schools and the Liberal government's apparent avoidance to take action on the issue.

Although not a Klansman, Diefenbaker's vocal position on the school and immigration issues left the door open for Liberals to accuse him of associating with the ultra-Protestant propaganda churned out by the Orange Order and the Klan. His support for Conservative education and immigration policies put non-British Empire voters on the defensive. His personal desire may have been to represent every constituent, but his campaign literature and speeches

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<sup>83</sup>JGD, vol. 14, no page number, D. Parker to Diefenbaker, 6 May 1929.

<sup>84</sup>Calderwood, p. 107.



attracted the support of British and Protestant voters whether they were anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant or somewhere in between.

The evidence appears in Diefenbaker's campaign literature, in which he called for an immigration policy based on the needs and requirements of industry. Restricted admittance of central Europeans was necessary because by working for cheaper wages they took jobs away from hard-working British immigrants.<sup>85</sup> Diefenbaker's stance on the removal of sectarian influences in public schools subsequently resulted in accusations that he was anti-Catholic. He objected to being characterized as a "monster of intolerance and the father of a plot to undermine the Roman Church," challenging anyone who said so.<sup>86</sup> The image of Diefenbaker as a bigot remained in the minds of voters, however, often as a result of his own activities and statements which were described in detail by Liberal newspapers.

In all fairness, Diefenbaker's statements were often misrepresented by the Liberal Daily Herald in Prince Albert. The Davis campaign organizers would take every opportunity to exaggerate the Tory's statements -- something that Diefenbaker accused the Liberals of doing in an advertisement:

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<sup>85</sup>Prince Albert Herald, 30 May 1929.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1929.

The Prince Albert Herald is controlled by the Davis interests and its columns during this campaign are biased to the advantage of the Honourable T.C. Davis. Articles, and advertisements inserted therein by the Liberal committee are deliberately garbling Conservative utterances to such an extent that the electors have no opportunity of judging fairly the merits of the issues of this campaign....Electors, beware of the befogging of the issues by prejudiced editorials and advertising. Determine your choice by facts and not by biased propaganda which shuns the light of open discussion.<sup>87</sup>

The Liberals were playing for keeps, using every device at their disposal, a trait not yet in Diefenbaker's repertoire of political tricks.

In the same May 22 issue, Diefenbaker's position on immigration was published in the local newspaper. It stipulated that he agreed with the province's right under the British North America Act to control immigration, and called for a "preponderance of British in Saskatchewan, and continental Europeans will be welcome so long as they are not brought in in such large numbers."<sup>88</sup> He continued the attack in a second advertisement printed on June 5, which stated that "a vote for the Gardiner candidate will ensure a continuation of indiscriminate dumping of immigrants into Saskatchewan with resulting workless days and lower wages for you."<sup>89</sup> The Conservative slogan was "no immigration

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<sup>87</sup>Conservative advertisement in Prince Albert Herald, 3 June 1929.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1929.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 5 June 1929.

when our own workers cannot find work at a fair living wage."<sup>90</sup> Diefenbaker's advertisements in the Prince Albert newspaper could hardly be expected to earn the admiration of the riding's Catholic, French and European voters.

His campaign literature on the schools question also had an impact on his potential support in the riding. It encouraged the electorate in Prince Albert to:

Vote for the Conservative candidate, J.G. Diefenbaker, if you believe in **A PUBLIC SCHOOL FREE FROM SECTARIAN INFLUENCES.**

**BY YOUR VOTE YOU WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF SASKATCHEWAN'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**<sup>91</sup>

His newspaper advertisements stated that a vote for Davis was support for "sectarian interference in public schools" while pleading with voters not to "barter your principles to the detriment of future generations."<sup>92</sup> Protestants and English-speaking voters may have supported this kind of rhetoric, but Catholics and non-British immigrants could hardly swallow Diefenbaker's cure for the riding's social and economic ills.

Davis and the Liberal organization did not lose the opportunity given to them by Diefenbaker. They made every effort to associate him with the Klan, Orange Order and anything else that might brand him intolerant to Europeans and Catholics. T.C. Davis' younger brother, Clifford Sifton

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 84. Diefenbaker's emphasis.

<sup>92</sup>Prince Albert Herald, 5 June 1929.

Davis, went so far as to accuse Diefenbaker of being a Klansman because "it is only necessary to go into Mr. Diefenbaker's committee room and you will find the heads among them there."<sup>93</sup> Diefenbaker refused to dignify the claims with a response, except to state that he was out for "bigger game."<sup>94</sup> C.S. Davis believed that Diefenbaker's evasiveness confirmed his affiliation with the Klan.<sup>95</sup>

The younger Davis kept up his attack in support of his brother by asking if J.J. Maloney, current leader of the Klan in Saskatchewan, had ever been in Diefenbaker's Prince Albert office, and did Diefenbaker ever:

draw an affidavit, published in the Freedman [the Klan paper], stating that a wealthy Protestant had been tortured in a Roman Catholic Hospital in Prince Albert, or was it published with his knowledge and consent and how did it get out of his files?<sup>96</sup>

The incident occurred in May, 1928, when the Protestant in question, Thomas Williams, took ill and was placed in the Holy Family Hospital in Prince Albert. Informed that he was about to die, Williams requested that the hospital send for Canon Strong of the Anglican Church. The hospital told him Reverend Strong could not be found and therefore substituted

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<sup>93</sup>Abrams, p. 279, and Prince Albert Herald, 4 June 1929.

<sup>94</sup>Prince Albert Herald, 4 June 1929. Diefenbaker focused on T.C. Davis. He was not interested in debating C.S. Davis over issues he considered nonsense.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 25 May 1929.

a Catholic priest who administered "certain sacraments, and apparently caused him to become a member of the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>97</sup> When Williams momentarily recovered and communicated the situation to his sister, he pleaded with her to "get me out of here; they are killing my brain."<sup>98</sup> The Sister Superior of the hospital, however, refused and prevented Williams' sister from visiting her brother. The question of how the affidavit, prepared by Diefenbaker, was published in the Freedman a year later remained unsolved. Diefenbaker and his secretary signed affidavits attesting that the files on Williams went missing from his office without their knowledge and then reappeared a few weeks later.<sup>99</sup> The importance of the documents lay in their publication, and the Liberal party's ability to use the situation by branding Diefenbaker a Klansman in the 1929 election campaign.

Accusations by the Davis family of Diefenbaker's connections to the Klan, ethnic attitude towards non-Commonwealth immigrants and bigotry towards Catholics, no matter how tenuous or exaggerated, were heightened by Diefenbaker's own participation in the campaign. On June 5,

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<sup>97</sup>JGD, Legal series: vol. 17, Request for Assistance, Williams, Thomas, deceased, 19-28-29, p. 15417. Affidavit taken by Diefenbaker of Jessie Dyment, sister of Williams, 1 June 1928.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 15418.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 15420-1. Signed by Diefenbaker and his secretary on 28 May 1929.

1929, just one day before the Prince Albert voters had to make their choice between Davis and Diefenbaker, the Prince Albert Daily Herald predicted a Gardiner government with an even larger majority than 1925.<sup>100</sup> Although the Liberals ended up with twenty-six seats, Conservatives twenty-four, Independents six and Progressives five (with two northern seats yet to vote),<sup>101</sup> Dr. J.T.M. Anderson formed the Cooperative government with the support of the Independents and Progressives on June 6, based on prearranged negotiations.<sup>102</sup> Diefenbaker faced Davis in a two-cornered contest, but he was unable to win.

Traditional explanations for Diefenbaker's defeat at the polls in 1929 have focused more on the strength of the Liberal party in Prince Albert than on Diefenbaker's contributions. Arguments in favour of the Liberal party's long standing popularity in Prince Albert, their redress of farmers' issues and political patronage have ignored or downplayed any contributions Diefenbaker made. But the

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<sup>100</sup>Prince Albert Daily Herald, 5 June 1929.

<sup>101</sup>SAB, Saskatchewan Executive..., pp. 51-52.

<sup>102</sup>On April 28, 1929, R.B. Bennett was notified that eight Progressive candidates were supported by the Progressive and Conservative parties while three Progressives were endorsed by Conservatives. One day later, Dr. Anderson confirmed that he would avoid three-cornered contests and that he expected few to occur (NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, pp. 25236, 25245-46, Dr. Anderson to Bennett). MacMillan, President of the provincial Conservative Association, informed Bennett that "...there are a number of Independent candidates running. In practically every case these are our men." Ibid., p. 25293.

participation of Diefenbaker made a Liberal victory doubly sure. Diefenbaker was partly to blame for his failure in 1929 to gain the confidence of the electorate. While the Liberals hammered a few remaining nails into Diefenbaker's political coffin, he willingly dug the grave. Public statements made by Diefenbaker prior to and during the campaign and his advertisements made him an easy candidate for Liberal accusations.

Religion, language, and immigration issues were neither unique to the electorate of Saskatchewan in 1929 nor to the Conservative party. Bigotry and outward expressions of anti-immigrant sentiments lay dormant until the Klan stoked the spark in Protestant hearts as easily as it set aflame crosses across the province. Statements made by Diefenbaker prior to and during the 1929 election helped the Liberals tar Diefenbaker with Klanatacism. The allegations were compounded by the Klan's participation in Conservative affairs. The Invisible Empire became increasingly visible in 1929. Diefenbaker, faced with a brick wall of Liberal control and influence over the immigrant vote in Prince Albert, hoped to capitalize on British and Protestant voters' concerns with sectarian influences in public schools and the origins of immigrants sweeping into the province. And it cost him dearly. Riding in a "rickety orange tub" steered by the hoodless day-riders of the Saskatchewan Klan led Diefenbaker not to Ottawa in 1925 or 1926, or Regina in

1929, but into the political wilderness.



## Chapter Two - Into the Wilderness

Shortly after the June 6, 1929 provincial election the Progressives and Independents joined the Conservatives and announced their decision to band together under Conservative leader Dr. J.T.M. Anderson to form the Cooperative government. To consummate the coalition, Dr. Anderson brought the leaders of the other two parties into his cabinet. He made Independent A. Carl Stewart the minister of highways and Progressive Reginald Stipe a minister without portfolio. Although unable to form their own majority government, Conservatives across the province celebrated the ousting of the Liberals from power for the first time since the province was created in 1905. While John Diefenbaker failed to defeat T.C. Davis in Prince Albert, he joined the festivities. The celebration, however, was short-lived.

Within five months of the election, and less than two months after they assumed power, the Conservative victory was soured when the New York Exchange plummeted. The crash on October 29, and the drought that soon followed, carried with it economic hardship for the people of Saskatchewan and political tragedy for the Conservative party in 1934. The

bottom began to fall out for the provincial Tories much earlier from internal rather than external factors. Schisms appeared when Saskatchewan Conservative Association (SCA) president Dr. D.S. Johnstone publicly attacked the party's leader and Premier for refusing to support national Conservative leader R.B. Bennett in the 1930 federal election. Diefenbaker, for his part, showed his support for Dr. Anderson by serving on the party's executive as an advisor for the northern constituencies, the intention was to fill the SCA with supporters of Dr. Anderson to keep Johnstone in line with the leader's policies. Diefenbaker's relationship with the provincial Conservative leader soon soured, however, when attempts were made to expand the Cooperative government to include the Liberal party after the socialist Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) -- at that time known as the Farmer-Labour group -- banded together in 1932 and contested the 1934 provincial election. By that point, Diefenbaker's political ambitions shifted to climbing up the party's executive ladder in preparation for Dr. Anderson's fall from grace as the party's leader. And this strategy finally paid off in 1936. Acclamation to the leadership of the party provided Diefenbaker with an opportunity to again pursue public office and end his political apprenticeship.

For Diefenbaker, defeat in 1929 came as a mixed blessing. Dr. Anderson had promised to give the ambitious

lawyer the portfolio of attorney general if he had won in Prince Albert. It would have been a fitting reward for Diefenbaker to defeat T.C. Davis and take his portfolio in the government. But had he won, one of Diefenbaker's first responsibilities would have been to draft legislation, passed in 1930, that secularized public schools. This legislation stated in part:

No emblem of any religious faith, denomination, order, sect, society or association, shall be displayed in or on any public school premises during school hours, nor shall any person teach or be permitted to teach in any public school while wearing the garb of any such religious faith, denomination, order, sect, society or association.<sup>1</sup>

It was legislation that fulfilled the election promises of those in the Conservative party who ran in 1929. The changes fell in line with Diefenbaker's statements during the campaign even though his recollection of the event was somewhat different in his memoirs.<sup>2</sup> By failing to defeat Davis in 1929, however, Diefenbaker's political career was not tarnished with the "religious and racial bigotry of the

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<sup>1</sup>National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC) R.B. Bennett Papers, MG26 K, microfilm (hereafter Bennett Papers), reel #1282, p. 351003, Dr. J.T.M. Anderson to Bennett, 12 December 1930.

<sup>2</sup>John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable J.G. Diefenbaker, the Crusading Years 1895-1956 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 150-1. [Following citations refer to this volume unless otherwise specified.] Diefenbaker saw himself as "fortunate, in the light of subsequent events" that he lost to T.C. Davis. Even though he states that he opposed the legislation when it was introduced, he admits he might not have had the courage to resign as attorney general over its passage.

period"<sup>3</sup> that followed the Conservatives throughout the 1930s. Diefenbaker, reminiscing about the election, later stated:

If I had introduced that legislation I would have been destroyed for all time to come because not one of the Cabinet members elected in '29 ever again were elected provincially or federally except Carl [Stewart].<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, Diefenbaker almost suffered the same fate.

His fortune in failure also came in other forms. Dr. Anderson was quick to reward those who worked hard to elect the party and its new partners, the Progressives and Independent Members of the Legislative Assembly. It was customary for defeated candidates of the new government to distribute patronage in their constituency. Within ten days of Dr. Anderson being sworn in as premier, Diefenbaker was approving applications for commissioners of oaths -- the lowest of all patronage appointments in Prince Albert.<sup>5</sup> Diefenbaker also awarded Samuel J. Branion, mayor of Prince Albert and prominent Conservative, the responsibility as agent for the attorney general for all criminal prosecutions

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>4</sup>John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers (hereafter JGD), Memoirs series, vol. 4, Interviews with Neville and Smith, June 27 - September 26, 1969, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup>With the introduction of relief during the Depression, Diefenbaker would also have his hand in appointing local men to work in the Prince Albert National Park after Bennett won the 1930 federal election.

in the district.<sup>6</sup> Diefenbaker received his just reward in turn on January 1, 1930. The new attorney general, Murdock MacPherson, gave Diefenbaker the coveted distinction of King's Counsel to increase the young lawyer's reputation in the courtrooms of Prince Albert and Saskatchewan.

Inflating Diefenbaker's personal and professional ego was not the only benefit resulting from his new political responsibilities. Shortly after taking office, J.F. Bryant, one-time legal counsellor to the Klan and the minister of public works, telephones and telegraphs in 1929, began to investigate charges that the Liberal party had, during its twenty-four years in power, interfered in police activities and the administration of justice for political reasons.<sup>7</sup> The investigation that followed was concerned in part with accusations that the commissioner of the police force, C.A. Mahoney, was instructed by Davis to investigate the Ku Klux Klan and report on its political involvement with the Conservative party. The Liberals wanted to embarrass the Conservative party and its candidates who ran in the 1929 general election.<sup>8</sup> In February 1930, Bryant presented his material to the Saskatchewan Legislature. The Cooperative

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<sup>6</sup>Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), p. 126.

<sup>7</sup>Norman Ward and David Smith, Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 82.

<sup>8</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 130.

members subsequently demanded a full investigation, which was commissioned in June. Three judges were appointed to head the commission, while two Conservative and two Liberal lawyers were appointed to represent the Crown and defence respectively. Diefenbaker's connections to Bryant in the 1928 Arm River by-election and his assistance with the Commission's investigation resulted in his appointment as junior council to C.E. Gregory for the Conservatives in August 1930.<sup>9</sup>

Diefenbaker busied himself with the commission preparations rather than running for office in the July 28, 1930 federal election in Prince Albert against the Liberal incumbent, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who previously defeated him in 1926. Prince Albert, however, was not the only seat available to Diefenbaker. The Long Lake (later named Lake Centre) Conservative Association asked Diefenbaker to carry the Conservative banner for their riding. Diefenbaker declined, citing "illness" and plans to convalesce in Ontario during the campaign.<sup>10</sup> A political animal through and through, he refused to run in Lake Centre because three political losses in a row made him question the timing to run again. For the moment, he was satisfied to pursue his ambitions in the politically motivated Bryant

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>10</sup>JGD, Memoirs series, vol. 4, Interviews with Neville and Smith, 1970-72, Interviewed by Peter Stursberg, p. 3.

Commission.<sup>11</sup> Uncomfortable running as a parachute candidate in Long Lake, he would be patient and wait for another provincial election rather than face defeat again at the hands of King in Prince Albert. Three consecutive failures in Prince Albert seemed to have taught Diefenbaker to review the local political situation prior to accepting nomination.

Appointment to the Bryant Commission gave Diefenbaker an opportunity to avenge losing to T.C. Davis in 1929 and expand his reputation in Prince Albert. He could parade the abuses of the Liberal party before the entire province since the commission's work attracted province-wide newspaper coverage. As the previous government's attorney general and current member for the Prince Albert constituency, Davis was Diefenbaker's personal target. If Davis could be embarrassed by the commission's findings, Diefenbaker's chances of defeating him in the next provincial election would greatly improve. He had visions of eliminating once and for all the Liberal stranglehold in Prince Albert. Findings of wrongdoing might also push Davis to resign,

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<sup>11</sup>Not running in Long Lake proved to be a missed opportunity for Diefenbaker because the Conservative candidate defeated the Liberal incumbent by 194 out of 12,476 votes polled (Library of Parliament, Information and Reference Branch, History of the Federal Electoral Ridings 1867-1992, Volume 2 - Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon and Northwest Territories (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1993), Second Edition). Seven other Conservatives, out of twenty-eight Saskatchewan ridings, were on their way to Ottawa with a total of thirty-nine percent of the popular vote. The Conservative party under R.B. Bennett formed the government.

forcing an immediate by-election. Either way, Diefenbaker saw the commission as a useful vehicle for his political ambitions.

His hopes, however, quickly faded. Instead of condemning the former Attorney General, the commission's preliminary report cleared Davis of any wrongdoing in the investigation of the Ku Klux Klan and credited his actions as attorney general.<sup>12</sup> Little else became of the commission since it was prematurely closed after fifty-five days of hearings in time to report to the January, 1931, sitting of the legislature. It did not resume. With the commission's hasty demise, Diefenbaker looked elsewhere to improve his political exposure. He found ample opportunity when internal strife began to divide the Conservative party soon after Dr. Anderson took office, which only widened as the Depression's grip on the province increased. As an up-and-coming Tory, Diefenbaker was swept into the fray.

Soon after Dr. Anderson formed the Cooperative government, SCA president Johnstone and his henchman, Tom A. Anderson (no relation to J.T.M.), criticized Dr. Anderson

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<sup>12</sup>Ward and Smith, p. 82.



for abandoning the Conservative party.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Anderson had taken control of all Conservative finances and funding, and left the SCA virtually penniless and without leadership. Johnstone also believed the "bastard government"<sup>14</sup> was forcing the Conservative party to implement policies that lacked the general public's support. The "true blue"<sup>15</sup> faction of the Tory party wanted the Conservatives to maintain their identity within the government as a separate party or have Dr. Anderson resign. It consequently denounced Dr. Anderson's Cooperative government in an attempt to embarrass him into again representing the

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<sup>13</sup>Within months of Dr. Anderson forming the Co-operative government, disunity within the Saskatchewan Conservative Association began to surface. As the federal election of 1930 approached, Dr. Anderson refused to support the Conservative organization in federal seats except in constituencies where Conservatives ran in the last provincial election (NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel C926, p. 25373, L. Williamson to Bennett, 29 October 1929). The situation worsened when Dr. Anderson left the province for Atlantic City, only returning a few days prior to the election (NAC, Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Papers, MG 28 IV 2 (hereafter PCPC), Vol. 57, P-450-A, "TEN YEARS OF J.T.M. ANDERSON," November 1, 1938). Dr. Anderson refused to take part in the election unless his government was attacked. His increasing dedication to the Co-operative government rather than the Conservative party would eventually be blamed by fellow Conservatives for the "true blue" and "cooperator" factions that soon appeared in the party.

<sup>14</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel #1251, pp. 307338-39, Johnstone to Bennett, 16 February 1932. Term used to describe Dr. Anderson's Co-operative government.

<sup>15</sup>True blue referred to those Tories who wanted nothing but Conservatives representing the Conservative party in the legislature. Any cooperation or collaboration with other parties was unacceptable and expected to dilute support for the Conservative party in future elections.

Conservative party in the legislature and implementing its policy platform. Failing that, it hoped to force his resignation as leader of the Conservative party. The seriousness of the situation was confirmed by Frank Turnbull, dominion organizer for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, who informed national Conservative leader and Prime Minister R.B. Bennett that in the next provincial election Dr. Anderson would go to the electorate as leader of the Co-operative government and not as leader of the Conservative party, "which does not meet with the approval of a large body of Conservative opinion."<sup>16</sup>

The bickering between Johnstone and Dr. Anderson became so severe as to warrant Bennett's intervention. He warned Francis Reilly, president of the local Regina Conservative Association where much of the trouble originated, that the present divisions could not continue with his approval or acquiescence: "my efforts have been too great and the expense too large to permit our party to be governed by

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 307575, Frank Turnbull to Bennett, 4 April 1931.

inconsiderate actions on the part of any one."<sup>17</sup> The party's schism had far reaching ramifications for many Conservatives, including Diefenbaker. The party that "Diefenbaker had chosen as promising the fastest political advancement suddenly and unpredictably became a victim of fate, and a liability to an ambitious man."<sup>18</sup> He was left either to help save the party or abandon his political ambitions for an indefinite period. The latter was quickly rejected.

Diefenbaker's involvement with the SCA executive was both instinctive and deliberate. As an ambitious young man looking to meet his political goals under the banner of the Conservative party, he came to the aid of its leader when internal problems threatened to embarrass the party publicly. He had, after all, been the recipient of Dr. Anderson's trust and patronage. As for deliberate involvement, Diefenbaker's relationship with leading

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 307317, Bennett to Francis B. Reilly, president, Regina Conservative Association, 13 March 1931. Bennet did not support Dr. Anderson's partiality to organize the province along Cooperative lines to the exclusion of the SCA executive's knowledge. See also Larry A. Glassford, Reaction & Reform: the Politics of the Conservative Party under R.B. Bennett 1927-1938 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 88. Bennett had invested \$70,000 in the 1930 federal election and subsidised the provincial office with \$300 a month for federal party organization in twenty-one constituencies. By October, 1929, Bennett also invested \$344,000 in the Regina Daily Star to promote the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, effectively ending the Liberal monopoly on daily news coverage (Ibid., p. 69).

<sup>18</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 141.

Conservatives like Colonel C.E. Gregory, Diefenbaker's senior partner at the Bryant Commission, enabled him to learn what was going on behind the scenes. Gregory was upset with Johnstone's public campaign to embarrass the party:

Anybody occupying that position who will make speeches in public and give interviews to the press criticizing his leaders and the policy followed by the party that he is supposed to support is not a fit man to occupy the position of president of the Association, and as you know Mr. T.A. Anderson backs him up in all he does.<sup>19</sup>

Party policy prevented the president's removal before the next general convention of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association, expected in the fall of 1932, but Gregory asked Member of Parliament (MP) W.D. Cowan if Bennett might interfere and apply pressure on Johnstone to resign his political post -- since he also worked as a civil servant for the federal government.<sup>20</sup> Unable to remove Johnstone, Gregory hoped to get as many interested Conservatives as possible involved in the party executive. Diefenbaker's chance came in mid-1931.

At an executive meeting of the Conservative party on June 29, 1931, D.L. Burgess resigned from the north west district advisory board, one of four districts advisory boards in the province, to accept an appointment as

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<sup>19</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel #1251, pp. 307309-10, C.E. Gregory to Dr. W.D. Cowan, M.P., 8 June 1931.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 307309-15.

secretary to the federal minister of agriculture.

Diefenbaker was appointed to replace him, becoming one of two advisors for the district, which also carried with it the title of vice-president to the Association -- the highest appointed position, one step below the elected president and vice-president at large.<sup>21</sup> Diefenbaker's popularity among leading Conservatives in the province was reflected in their trust of his ability to give advice to the party's leaders. In service to the party, Diefenbaker was expected to support the current leader of the government and the Conservative members of the Legislature.

Diefenbaker, for one, had a lot at stake in the party and he was prepared to work in support of the arrangements between the Conservative party and the Cooperative government.

In mid-1931, Diefenbaker had no reason to oppose Dr. Anderson's leadership of the Conservative party in the Cooperative government. On the contrary, he benefitted by appointment to the Bryant Commission, received the distinction of King's Counsel, and enjoyed the personal pride associated with replacing T.C. Davis as the distributor of patronage in the Prince Albert Constituency. He was prepared to continue his political involvement within the Conservative party executive until such time as better political and economic conditions enabled him to run for

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 307329, Minutes of the Executive meeting of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association in Regina, 29 June 1931.

public office. For Diefenbaker, the best preparation for an ambitious Conservative outside of the government during the Depression was in the Saskatchewan Conservative Association executive. As support for Johnstone's presidency waned, opportunities for quick advancement seemed promising for the young lawyer. The economy, however, did not improve and neither did the political conditions for the Conservative party.

The Depression continued to drag the Saskatchewan economy into a downward spiral in 1932 and Dr. Anderson's failure to deal with its effects only made true blue critics like Johnstone more vocal of Dr. Anderson's leadership. In the March 30, 1932 edition of the Regina Leader Post, Johnstone stated that the people of Saskatchewan had never seen "such an exhibition of government mismanagement and incompetence as they [the Co-operative government] have shown during the past two and a half years."<sup>22</sup> He then went on to beg the government, more pointedly Dr. Anderson, not to drag the Conservative party into the mess. Johnstone's attacks resulted in newspaper editors commenting that the Conservative party was more critical of its own leader than were the Liberals.<sup>23</sup> Following his attack in the papers, Johnstone prophesied that the Conservative party in Saskatchewan was "*finis*" unless the differences of

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<sup>22</sup>Regina Leader Post, 30 March 1932.

<sup>23</sup>"Light Needed," Regina Leader Post, 31 March 1932.

opinion between the provincial government and the party were resolved.<sup>24</sup>

To settle the dispute between true blue Conservatives and supporters of Dr. Anderson, a special convention of the SCA was called for June 2, 1932. Among the issues were that of Johnstone's presidency and Dr. Anderson's leadership of the Conservative party.<sup>25</sup> The convention supported Dr. Anderson and ousted Johnstone. It was reported to Bennett that the new president, Dr. E.W. Myers, and the SCA executive would work in "the most complete harmony and accord" with the government.<sup>26</sup> Diefenbaker's term as an

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<sup>24</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel #1251, p. 307354, Dr. Johnstone to Bennett, 7 April 1932.

<sup>25</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 002648. In his presidential address, Johnstone denounced the Conservative members in the legislature and placid support by the Saskatchewan Conservative Association for the party's utter state of degradation, and its dependency on compromise with other parties to remain in power. Maintaining a Conservative identity was more important to Johnstone than bastardizing the party's beliefs just to hang onto power. He questioned the trading of principles and discarding policy "in the vain hope of gaining a place in the sun." At the end of the convention the resolution committee resolved that "this convention has listened with feelings of pleasure and regret to the reading of the address of the President, Dr. D.S. Johnstone. We recognize the enthusiasm and energy with which he has thrown himself into the work of his high office, and express pleasure with the excellent work done by him on behalf of the Conservative Party, but we are compelled to repudiate those portions of the address referring to Saskatchewan affairs, as not expressing the views of the Conservative Party, as represented by this convention" (*Ibid.*, p. 002644, Minutes, Provincial Liberal Conservative Association Convention, Clause 6).

<sup>26</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel #1251, p. 307375, MacPherson to Bennett, 7 June 1932.

advisory board member was extended but his support for Dr. Anderson's leadership of the Cooperative government soon turned to quiet opposition as the Conservative leader pursued cures for economic and political ills that Diefenbaker could not swallow.

With the removal of Johnstone from the executive, Dr. Anderson turned his attention to the political threat that national and provincial Conservatives feared most -- the Farmer-Labour group. Socialism was on the rise in Saskatchewan as growing numbers of Depression-stricken voters saw it as the solution to the province's economic, social and political problems. A united voice from those who could not or would not support the Liberal or Conservative parties began to form under the Farmer-Labour group that became the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in July 1933.

Real or imaginary, the socialist activities of the "communists" or "reds" in Prince Albert concerned Diefenbaker. He thought the red political activities might hinder his ambitions for public office by altering the political make-up of the community prior to the next election. The socialists might also draw the "immigrant" vote away from the Liberal party unless something was done by the Conservatives to intercept it. Diefenbaker's approach, like many of his counterparts, was to take action against the so-called reds. He petitioned the attorney



general of Saskatchewan to appoint police officers in his constituency to investigate "and combat the spreading of communism in non-English Districts in this Province."<sup>27</sup>

Diefenbaker was concerned that immigrants in Prince Albert, whom he deemed politically naive and vulnerable to socialist promises, would easily fall prey to the propaganda, which would effectively result in his remaining a political apprentice.

Frank Turnbull, Bennett's primary advisor for Saskatchewan, advised the national Conservative leader that some type of "arrangement" with the Liberal party prior to the next election might prevent the province from going red.<sup>28</sup> This information was passed on to Saskatchewan. Dr. Anderson agreed.<sup>29</sup> Over the course of the next twelve

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<sup>27</sup>JGD, vol. 1, p. 000239, Diefenbaker to M.A. MacPherson, Attorney General of Saskatchewan, 29 July 1931. He wrote: "In so far as the Red element is concerned, it is gaining strength among the Ukrainian and Polish Districts north east of Prince Albert and in the Hafford District, and unless efforts are made to combat it, a difficult problem will be on the hands of the Government in a few years."

<sup>28</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm, reel #1251, M-514, p. 307616, Turnbull to Bennett, 13 October 1931.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., reel #1282, p. 350854, J.T.M. Anderson to Bennett, 2 September 1932. Dr. Anderson spoke to Bennett at the train station concerning the possibility of a coalition government with the Liberals: "In event of your approval of this....I feel also that if a government was formed in the manner I have outlined, we could go to the Province and secure nearly all the seats, if not all. The Farmer-Labour party would get nowhere in the face of a union between Liberals and Conservatives and I am confident also that it would be in the interests of our Federal party in this Province."

months the leader of the provincial Tories took up the idea and executed it.<sup>30</sup>

Arranging saw-offs was a long-standing tradition on the prairies. Saskatchewan Liberals proposed saw-offs with the Conservatives in the 1925 federal election in Melfort and Prince Albert to prevent Progressives from taking the seats. Similar plans were in effect at the provincial level in Manitoba. Through the spring and summer of 1932, and

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<sup>30</sup>Dr. Anderson's plan was dependent on enticing Liberal leader Jimmy Gardiner away from provincial politics, since he expected the Liberal leader to adamantly oppose any effort for coalition, by arranging to have him appointed the President of the University of Saskatchewan (NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1282, p. 350854, Anderson to Bennett, 2 September 1932). Gardiner suspected that Bennett was behind the coalition efforts, trying out his National government ideas in the province since Saskatchewan would go to the polls before Bennett's term in office expired (SAB, Gardiner Papers, King 29-34, V 2.C., pp. 17668-70, J. Gardiner to King, 4 September 1932). Nothing came of the negotiations because Gardiner refused any form of union with the Co-operative government after King advised him that "any coalition formed by the Tories at this time, you may be perfectly sure, will leave a preponderance of control somehow, somewhere, in Tory hands, and will carry on only until times improve when some excuse will be found for freeing the coalition of its Liberal members. I do hope that our friends in...Saskatchewan will 'beware of the Greeks as they come bearing gifts'" (*Ibid.*, p. 17675, King to Gardiner, 10 September 1932). The leader of the Opposition took Mackenzie King's advice and came to his own conclusion that continual proposals for coalition were a decoy "for the purpose of catching the Liberals unprepared" in the next election (*Ibid.* p. 17893, Gardiner to Christopher Sutton, Secretary of the Outlook Conservative Association, 23 January 1933.). Unlike Dr. Anderson, Gardiner was totally confident in the outcome of the election to come: "The Conservatives so far out played their hand in both the Federal and Provincial elections that they will find it difficult to win for many years to come. In their coalition proposals they have admitted to us all that they are defeated" (*Ibid.*).

especially in August 1933, after the Regina Manifesto was adopted by the CCF,<sup>31</sup> Dr. Anderson decided to follow the example of Manitoba Premier John Bracken, who successfully established a Progressive-Liberal coalition just prior to that province's 1932 provincial election.<sup>32</sup> The thought of coalition with the Liberals in Saskatchewan sickened Diefenbaker and made him think twice about his support for the leader of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan. Diefenbaker's concern over the rising influence of the socialist movement was not motivation enough for him to join forces with his old adversary in Prince Albert, T.C. Davis. Dr. Anderson, however, thought otherwise.

Diefenbaker's lack of enthusiasm for the coalition resulted in his banishment from Cooperative government inner circles -- an event that did not go unnoticed by Liberals in Prince Albert.<sup>33</sup> Although Diefenbaker quietly distanced himself from the Cooperative government, unlike Johnstone's

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<sup>31</sup>Lipset, p. 114.

<sup>32</sup>Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. 401.

<sup>33</sup>SAB, Gardiner Papers, V, 4, Anderson and Coalition, p. 17826, Julius Androwchowicz to Gardiner, 29 August 1932, states that "...John G. Diefenbaker from Prince Albert will be replaced in cabinet." Diefenbaker was not in the Cooperative government cabinet, but as an advisor for the northern district, he was in their confidence. Diefenbaker may also have been upset over the Cooperative government's refusal to pay the legal costs for the Bryant Commission.

open criticism,<sup>34</sup> he resolved to wait quietly in the wings of the SCA for the moment when Dr. Anderson was disgraced and the party looked for a new leader.

In mid-October, 1933, Diefenbaker got a chance to expand his influence over the SCA when the party met for its biennial convention in Saskatoon. The agenda, for the most part, focused on Dr. Anderson and his leadership of the Conservative party in the Co-operative government. In an effort to determine his support in the party, Dr. Anderson offered his resignation. When no one was willing to nominate an alternative leadership candidate, he was reaffirmed by a "great ovation."<sup>35</sup> Diefenbaker was not ready to openly challenge Dr. Anderson while he remained willing to continue on as leader. Diefenbaker preferred to strengthen his position for the time being in the party executive.

Vice-president at large, the number two position in the SCA, became his immediate goal. As popular as Diefenbaker thought he was in the party, it took three ballots before he

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<sup>34</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1251, Johnstone to Bennett, 7 November 1932. A rambling letter that calls Dr. Anderson's government a "brigade of political racketeers" and "the most immoral, incompetent and corrupt, of any administration which has disgraced the annals of Political History in this country...."

<sup>35</sup>"Dr. Anderson Resigns and is Re-elected," Saskatoon Star Phoenix, 13 October 1933,

was declared the victor.<sup>36</sup> His ambition, no doubt, was bigger than the support he anticipated. No record remains to indicate why no one, especially Diefenbaker, won on the first or second ballot. The results, however, suggest that Diefenbaker was not the delegates' obvious choice for the position. His refusal to support Dr. Anderson's Liberal-Conservative coalition may have had something to do with the hard-fought affair.

With his position in the party established for another two years, Diefenbaker decided to increase his political presence in Prince Albert by running in the 1933 civic election. He entered the mayoralty race with only eight days remaining in the November 1933 contest, calling into question his lack of sincerity for the job. He faced only one other candidate, Harold J. Fraser, a Liberal and local lawyer who served as an alderman for six years.<sup>37</sup> It was not uncommon for politicians to use civic elections as a springboard for provincial or federal campaigns. A victory would give Diefenbaker confidence to run locally again in the next provincial campaign.

Diefenbaker's campaign strategy for mayor was simple. In addition to demanding more public works from the federal government, he would seek a one percent interest reduction

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<sup>36</sup>JGD, vol. 3, Conservative party: Saskatchewan - conventions, 1933, p. 002845, Minutes of the Convention.

<sup>37</sup>Gary W.D. Abrams, Prince Albert: The First Century 1866-1966 (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1976), p. 317.

on the city's outstanding debentures since forty-five percent of the city's tax revenue went to pay the interest on the city's debt.<sup>38</sup> He also promised to investigate the city's finances, thereby threatening to expose the improprieties of local financiers who supposedly profited by buying city debentures low and selling them high.<sup>39</sup> Although the polling was heavy, Diefenbaker lost by forty-eight votes. True to character, Diefenbaker blamed defeat on the financial magnates of Prince Albert who feared he might investigate them. Fraser's backing from the Davis family and newspaper also worked against the local Tory. Regardless of the reasons, Diefenbaker was faced with his fourth political defeat in Prince Albert. The local economic and political circumstances prompted him to give serious consideration to running elsewhere in the future in an effort to end his political apprenticeship.

As the Cooperative government's mandate came to a close, Diefenbaker weighed his options. The likelihood of three-cornered contests again faced the Conservative party as the 1934 provincial election neared. Previous experience suggested that Conservatives had a difficult time beating the Liberals and an additional candidate in Saskatchewan ridings. The Depression and declining popularity for Dr. Anderson's Cooperative government were also factors in

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<sup>38</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 155.

<sup>39</sup>Abrams, p. 317.

Diefenbaker's decision not to run. Diefenbaker did not agree with the enthusiasm of provincial cabinet ministers who believed the electorate would cast their ballots for Conservative rather than CCF or Liberal candidates. He sided with those in the party with a less biased opinion, like Frank Turnbull, who believed "...that their chances of re-election next summer are quite slim."<sup>40</sup> There was no use running in Prince Albert or any other riding. Diefenbaker decided not to enter the campaign.

During the 1934 provincial election campaign Diefenbaker did his part as vice-president of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association to support Dr. Anderson's leadership and the party's candidates. Although unwilling to run himself, he still had a duty to perform. He spoke at political gatherings about the Conservative record in office and the implementation of relief efforts and make-work projects. Diefenbaker had been at odds with Dr. Anderson over efforts to bring Liberals into the Cooperative cabinet, but since it failed, all was forgiven. The usual round of patronage appointments was made prior to the election, and Diefenbaker's commitment to the party did not go unnoticed. He was offered a chance to change sides in the courtroom when he was appointed crown prosecutor for the Prince Albert district after Samuel Branion resigned to

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<sup>40</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1282, p. 351183, Turnbull to Bennett, 7 September 1933.

run as a Conservative candidate.<sup>41</sup> It was, however, a brief appointment for Diefenbaker. When the Liberals formed the government on June 19, 1934, Diefenbaker resigned before T.C. Davis returned to his old ministry as attorney general and had the pleasure of firing the Prince Albert Tory.

Diefenbaker's absence from the election as a candidate mirrored his lack of faith in the party's popularity with Saskatchewan voters. He knew that the task of overcoming the party's association with the Depression was formidable since "the Liberal party in this province has been stirring up trouble and searching for something to criticize for months, but had to resort finally to a world condition and blame that on the present government."<sup>42</sup> The Cooperative government's misfortune of taking office just prior to the Depression was seen as more than just bad timing by some in the province. Father Jacob Wilhelm of Regina Beach believed the Depression was a curse from God on Dr. Anderson's anti-sectarian legislation to remove crucifixes from public schools:

In like nature and manner it was a much greater offense to the infinite Majesty of our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ. For this great infamy against our Creator and Redeemer our whole Province has been punished since this time by great poverty and poor crops and a general depression, of this I am

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<sup>41</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 157.

<sup>42</sup>Quote attributed to Diefenbaker in Wilson and Wilson, pp. 157-8.



convinced.<sup>43</sup>

Others may not have felt the same way about the legislation but were just as happy to turf the Anderson government from office.

Gardiner had a much easier time making promises for better economic conditions under a Liberal government. He could promise the sun, the moon and the stars since he was in the less responsible role as leader of the opposition.<sup>44</sup> Diefenbaker concluded that Gardiner would have an easy time in the campaign as he "was prepared to sit back and blame the Conservatives for the depression, while privately thanking his personal deities that he was out of office for the worst of it."<sup>45</sup> Liberals were sitting back and counting their blessing that it was not them in power when the Depression hit.

Diefenbaker was also glad that he sat out the election

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<sup>43</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1112, p. 297449. Declaration made by Father Jacob Wilhelm at Regina Beach on 10 June 1934 and sent to Bryant, which was forwarded to Bennett.

<sup>44</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1282, p. 351457, J.T.M. Anderson to Bennett, 29 June 1934. According to Dr. Anderson, Gardiner promised to raise old age pensions, increase mother's allowances, reduce taxation, abolish income tax, repeal school legislation, restore maternity grants, cancel relief notes signed by rural residents, establish free homesteads, provide for \$1.00 wheat and thirty cents a dozen for eggs, cash grants for relief instead of vouchers in rural centres and provide employment to everyone out of work in the midst of the worst depression ever to hit the province.

<sup>45</sup>Diefenbaker, pp. 170-1.

because the Conservatives did their own part to reduce their chances for success. Johnstone once again went on the offensive four days prior to the election when he wrote an open letter to newspaper editors criticizing the SCA executive:

The Conservative party in this province has become demoralized. Its executive officers, in a majority, have been corrupted by jobs, contracts, whiskey and beer agencies, judgeships, senatorships and huge legal fees. They have consented to allow the Co-operative group to use the party, not for any legitimate purpose, but to help return to power men who have been false to all their pledges, who have betrayed their friends, their party, and finally, they have betrayed the state also.<sup>46</sup>

In Johnstone's eyes, the evidence rested in Dr. Anderson entering the campaign with only forty Conservative and thirteen Independent candidates. The rumour mills within the party quickly expanded the facts, which

lent colour to the story that if successful, the new Government would be an alliance of Conservative, Independent and CCF. That would be a sufficient explanation in itself for mortgage companies, machine companies and the Church to throw its weight into the Liberal scale.<sup>47</sup>

The predictions were accurate, even beyond the wildest fears of leading Conservatives like Turnbull or Diefenbaker. Not one Conservative or Conservative-backed Independent was elected to the provincial legislature on June 19, 1934, even

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<sup>46</sup>Prince Albert Herald, 15 June 1934. Letter by Johnstone to the editor.

<sup>47</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1251, p. 307392, Bryant to Bennett, 17 July 1934.

though they obtained twenty-seven percent of the total votes cast.<sup>48</sup>

In Diefenbaker's traditional riding of Prince Albert, Samuel Branion obtained only twenty-three percent of the ballots cast, down from Diefenbaker's forty-seven percent in 1929, and placed a distant second to Liberal T.C. Davis. The central explanation for the Tory shut-out rested with the Conservative party's "faculty of staying together when in the Opposition and of fighting when in power."<sup>49</sup> The Liberals did not have to say much when Conservatives tended to be critical of their own leader and members in the Cooperative government. The Conservative party in Saskatchewan failed from the inside out. The resulting instability and calls for an overhaul of the party's leadership were just what Diefenbaker was waiting for to advance his political influence and position.

Saskatchewan Conservatives had little time to lick their wounds before R.B. Bennett called an election for October 14, 1935. The opportunity once again to contest a seat required Diefenbaker to evaluate his political popularity. Even though no provincial Conservatives were returned to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1934, the fact that one out of four electors voted Conservative gave

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<sup>48</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1282, p. 351457, J.T.M. Anderson to Bennett, 29 June 1934.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 351412, Bryant to Bennett, 20 June 1934.

Diefenbaker a small glimmer of hope. Diefenbaker was also encouraged by the political activity of the provincial Liberals following their return to power:

Prospects are brighter every day -- wholesale dismissals from the Civil Service in the Province do not aid the Liberal party, and those on relief in general claim they are getting treated unfairly -- the reaction in the electorate is evident, but in my opinion the election should be held off to the very latest possible date.<sup>50</sup>

Delaying the election would give Diefenbaker and other Conservatives more time to prepare and mount a campaign.

Diefenbaker contemplated entering the campaign, but his ambitions suffered a serious setback in March, 1935. He had initially expressed an interest in the Saskatoon riding, but he received a cool response from the local Conservative association. The situation in Prince Albert was little better. Although a number of his supporters in Prince Albert called on him to stand, the local newspaper had begun to attack Diefenbaker, even before he was nominated. Its characterization of him in the editorial section was less than flattering and an indication of things to come should he decide to run:

He has great confidence in the people -- just now. What will he do if they disappoint him again? He will probably attribute their evil ways to the crooked tree

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<sup>50</sup>JGD, vol. 1, Conservative Party: National Leader 1935-39, pp. 000455-6, Diefenbaker to Hon. Robert Weir, 10 January 1935.

in the National Park....<sup>51</sup>

The news that ultimately dissuaded him came from Arthur Kendall, a federal organizer for the Tories in Saskatchewan. He informed Diefenbaker that any chance of success in the province was greatly diminished because chief federal organizer Earl Lawson and provincial party organizer Frank Turnbull "...seem to have tossed Saskatchewan to the dogs...[and] requested me to stop all work here as they are unable to secure finances."<sup>52</sup>

On July 22, 1935, the Prince Albert Herald recorded that Diefenbaker was nominated along with eleven others to represent the Prince Albert constituency, but though pressed to remain in the running he dropped out:

I think this is a time for us to have a farmer as a candidate. A farmer might unite us and then we could get some place.<sup>53</sup>

In retrospect, Diefenbaker argued that he withdrew his name because "as far as politics was concerned, I felt I would

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., vol. 5, Saskatchewan - Organization - Prince Albert - 1932-1939, p. 004614, no date or indication as to which paper the editorial came from but Diefenbaker clipped out the article and saved it prior to the federal campaign of 1935. Diefenbaker's reputation of blaming factors other than himself for defeat at the polls in previous elections was known in Prince Albert. The newspaper editor, most likely from the Prince Albert Daily Herald, speculated that Diefenbaker might be running out of explanations, and might have to look to blame the crooked tree in the federal park if he should lose again in 1935.

<sup>52</sup>JGD, vol. 5, Conservative Party: Saskatchewan - Organization, Battlefords, 1935-39, p. 004033, Arthur Kendall to Diefenbaker, 15 June 1935.

<sup>53</sup>Prince Albert Herald, 22 July 1935.

devote myself entirely to the law."<sup>54</sup> But this was not the full story. He had little hope for victory. In previous campaigns where lack of funds existed, Conservatives fared poorly. A well established Liberal opponent and the rising popularity of the CCF encouraged Diefenbaker to allow someone else to run in Prince Albert. There was more than enough work in the SCA to keep him occupied and politically active. He would be patient and wait for a clean shot at victory. His time would come.

Diefenbaker's refusal to accept the nomination for Prince Albert did not prevent him from once again accepting federal patronage in the dying days of the Conservative government. In August, 1935, Diefenbaker was told that he would receive a judgeship to the Court of King's Bench if a vacancy occurred. No judges vacated their positions to run in the federal election, however, and as a consolation Diefenbaker was offered a District Court judgeship.<sup>55</sup> He turned down the offer because "he was not interested in the far less prestigious District Court position."<sup>56</sup> The president of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association, J.A.M. Patrick, was not so proud. On August 10, 1935, he

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<sup>54</sup>JGD, Memoirs series, vol. 4, Interview with Neville and Smith 1970-72, Interview by Peter Stursberg, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 177.

accepted R.B. Bennett's offer,<sup>57</sup> vacating the office of SCA president, which made Diefenbaker the interim president until a convention was called to elect a new executive. But with the federal election just two months away and with limited finances, the decision was made to cancel the regular biennial convention planned for that fall. Not everyone in the party was pleased with Diefenbaker's cost-saving decision. Some saw it as a way for him to control the party unconstitutionally.<sup>58</sup> Diefenbaker's immediate concern, however, was the 1935 federal contest.

Lorten Williamson, general secretary of the SCA, advised Diefenbaker that the party was making an "awful mistake" by not having a Conservative in every federal riding in the province.<sup>59</sup> "Too many of our supporters," argued Williamson, "are willing to say, 'Well cannot we saw

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<sup>57</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 177.

<sup>58</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 57, P-450-A, TEN YEARS OF J.T.M. ANDERSON, pp. 1-2, 1 November 1938. The anonymous description of the Saskatchewan Conservative party stated that "by the time the federal election came round in 1935, there was only a remnant of the Executive left--about 1/3, 2/3 having been given jobs, been made Judges or otherwise were in the Executive. The Constitution calls for an election of officers every two years failing in which they were automatically out of office. This one third of an executive headed by J. Diefenbaker hung on to office by the usurpation method, long after they were automatically out and refused again and again to hold a convention."

<sup>59</sup>JGD, vol. 4, Conservative party: Saskatchewan organization, Executive, 1932-36, pp. 003071-72, L.W. Williamson to Diefenbaker, 28 August 1935.

off with somebody.'"<sup>60</sup> Although Williamson knew there was no money to support candidates, he urged Diefenbaker to stand up to those, such as Dr. Anderson, who wanted to "cheapen" themselves and the party by pursuing hybrid agreements with others. Diefenbaker did not respond one way or the other.

As acting president, Diefenbaker did little to change the direction of the Conservative campaign Dr. Anderson and J.A.M. Patrick set out. The two leading men in the party had been responsible for the federal party's organization in Saskatchewan prior to the 1935 federal election and Diefenbaker could not make changes even if he wanted to. He was faced with an association that seemed to lack any reasonable organization and one that was nearly devoid of funds.<sup>61</sup> Poor financing for the federal election and little hope for improvement forced Diefenbaker to sit back and examine the best route to take the SCA after the 1935 federal election. He felt helpless to reverse the declining popularity of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan so close to the election. Subsequently, his involvement in the 1935 election was, to say the least, minimal.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>JGD, vol. 3, Conservative Party: National Organization, Saskatchewan, 1935, p. 001587, Lorten W. Williamson, General Secretary of the SCA to Diefenbaker, no date, but shortly after he became acting president.

<sup>62</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 177.



The results of the federal election were similar to the provincial party's showing a year earlier. The Conservatives returned only one candidate to the House of Commons, Ernest E. Perley from Qu'Appelle. The party's popular support across the province also suffered, dropping to nineteen percent from thirty-eight percent in 1930.<sup>63</sup> The death knell had rung again for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan. Once again calls for a leadership change were heard throughout the province.

With only one seat for Saskatchewan Conservatives in the House of Commons, Diefenbaker was seen by some in the party to "...preside over the demise of his party."<sup>64</sup> Open criticism was levelled against him for refusing to call a convention or make any preparations for the federal campaign, which meant that "all the fine organization of 1930 was lost to the Party."<sup>65</sup> W.W. Lynd, a fellow lawyer and Tory from Regina, advised Diefenbaker to seek out a leader for the province that could unite the different factions and rebuild it from the foundation to ensure the party's survival. Lynd also suggested the adoption of a "radical" policy platform that would appeal to the people, and "that very serious effort should be devoted to bringing

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<sup>63</sup>Howard A. Scarrow, Canada Votes: A Handbook on Federal and Provincial Election Data (New Orleans: The Hauser Press, 1962), pp. 76-7, 90.

<sup>64</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 179.

<sup>65</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol 57, "TEN YEARS...", p. 2.

about an amalgamation of all parties in Saskatchewan that are in opposition to the Liberal party and I see no reason why policy could not be evolved that all these parties could support."<sup>66</sup> Diefenbaker agreed that the party executive should meet at once to discuss thoroughly the question of leadership and policy.<sup>67</sup> Although uncertain about the prospects of cooperating with other parties to defeat the Liberal government, no option was ruled out. As for a new leader, Diefenbaker did not look far for an aspirant willing to reform the party platform: he saw the best candidate in himself.

A party convention was planned for the summer of 1936 to elect a new leader and executive. The newspapers reported that Diefenbaker was making a strong bid for the position.<sup>68</sup> Diefenbaker focused on the leadership rather than continued involvement in the executive because support for him as president of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association was not secure. His decision was influenced by Arthur Kendall, prominent federal Conservative and organizer, who warned Diefenbaker in May, 1936, to be cautious of running for president. Kendall wrote: "...you are just the understudy who was promoted to leading man when

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<sup>66</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 001595, W.W. Lynd to Diefenbaker, 21 October 1935.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 001597, Diefenbaker to Lynd, 26 October 1935.

<sup>68</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 208.

the star performer got a better job, and if the show flops you will be held responsible and might find it difficult to get a spot when a new show is put on."<sup>69</sup> Kendall encouraged Diefenbaker to call off the convention until the party could be reorganized to unite it successfully behind one man. To ensure his future in the party, Diefenbaker decided to run for the leadership, but only if other "leading men" in the party withdrew from the contest. To better his chances Diefenbaker took Kendall's advice and made sure the "dirty linen of the party might be washed and ironed" before an open convention was held.<sup>70</sup> Disunity within the party would haunt the new leader unless he could successfully draw attention away from the party's past failures. If he could smooth over some of the divisions among the factions, he might just win the convention.

Support for Dr. Anderson was waning fast as the summer of 1936 approached, thereby accelerating Diefenbaker's manoeuvres to take over. The ambitious Tory from Prince Albert asked Nat Given, an old friend and Conservative MLA in 1929, in what direction a new leader should take the party. Given responded that he was unsure but it was his observation that it was the Conservative party and not the Liberals who were losing supporters to "...the dictates of

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<sup>69</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003475, Arthur Kendall to Diefenbaker 26 May 1936.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

Coldwell, and Woodsworth, Aberhart, or some other fly by night [parties] who are looking for an opportunity to get into power."<sup>71</sup> On the subject of Dr. Anderson remaining leader, Given stated:

honestly Jack [Diefenbaker's nickname] he will never make a Politician, does not know the ground work, has never been educated as to what is required to make a politician. Mighty good fellow but so many of the boys throughout the country know that he is not qualified to combat the cunning of the old school of liberalism in Saskatchewan.<sup>72</sup>

When Given asked Diefenbaker if he aspired to lead the provincial party, Diefenbaker avoided giving a straight answer, but stated he was concerned about Dr. Anderson's ability to provide effective leadership into the next provincial election. A week later, Given agreed that the party would be better off without Dr. Anderson because the man "cannot leave that damnable [sic] booze alone."<sup>73</sup> If the party was to continue, a new leader would have to be chosen. Diefenbaker was encouraged.

Diefenbaker remained cautious about how he approached the question of leadership even though he knew Dr. Anderson and other potential leadership candidates were not likely to accept nomination. Care was taken not to appear overly anxious for the job, which might result in Dr. Anderson's or

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 003483, Nat Given to Diefenbaker, 2 July 1936.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 003493, Nat Given to Diefenbaker, 9 July 1936.

some other potential leader's supporters pushing them into opposing Diefenbaker for the position. Diefenbaker played a careful game of cat and mouse when questioned about his bid for the job. Three weeks before the convention, he was expressing his support for Dr. Anderson, or Murdock MacPherson, if they decided to run even though the present leader had already announced his departure.<sup>74</sup> He also enquired into the support for other possible candidates to determine their chances of accepting nomination. Conservatives in Saskatoon notified Diefenbaker that Frank Turnbull expressed interest, but that he should be kept out of the leadership if at all possible because "if he is elected leader there will be a large majority of the workers who will immediately cease to be workers."<sup>75</sup> The information comforted Diefenbaker.

With Dr. Anderson out of the running, MacPherson unlikely to enter it and limited support for Turnbull even if he did, Diefenbaker pushed forward. Rather than appear eager and ambitious about letting his name stand, Diefenbaker gave the impression that he would do so only at

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<sup>74</sup>NAC, PCPC, P-450-A, "Ten Years of J.T.M. Anderson," 1 November 1938. Whether in hindsight or at the time, some in the party believed Diefenbaker was Dr. Anderson's choice as his successor and it was reported to Bennett that "Dr. Anderson loaned his cloak of Office to John Diefenbaker, which is which, at the moment you can make your own choice-- i.e. who is General and who Adjutant."

<sup>75</sup>JGD, vol. 3, Conventions, 1936, p. 002917, Ken Hicks to Diefenbaker, 7 October 1936.

the request and for the benefit of his party and not himself:

I have been asked over and over again whether I will let my name stand at the Convention, and I have decided to do so providing that there is a substantial request from Conservatives in the Province that I do so. I would sooner stay at my profession as I know what a sacrifice it will be on my part, but I am prepared to take a try at it if, and only if the Party would unite behind me.<sup>76</sup>

Diefenbaker was encouraged by recent manifestations of peace among factions within the party and attributed these occurrences to his leadership of the scaled-down executive. The last meeting of the SCA party, which he chaired, was the first in ten years "...where argument was absent and nothing of an unpleasant nature arose."<sup>77</sup> He would do everything possible to ensure that the upcoming convention ran in conjunction with his ambitions for the leadership of the party. As president, he was able to control the agenda and to some extent the resolutions put before the party. Diefenbaker was prepared to block the efforts of true blue Conservatives to put forward a resolution "...supporting [its] view point during the past seven years...."<sup>78</sup> No resolution that encouraged the opening of old wounds would be permitted if Diefenbaker could help it.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p.002909, Diefenbaker to Hanbridge, 2 October 1936.

<sup>77</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 002909, Diefenbaker to Hanbridge, 2 October 1936.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

A week before the convention Diefenbaker began lining up delegates for his leadership bid. The response was mixed. Bert Keown, Diefenbaker's old friend from Melfort, withheld his endorsement.<sup>79</sup> He was not the only one. Getting someone to nominate Diefenbaker at the convention proved difficult.<sup>80</sup> At the October 28 Conservative leadership convention in Regina, Diefenbaker asked for nominations for vice-president so he could hand over the chair to allow his name to stand as a leadership candidate. A delegate wanted to know why a vice-president was necessary when there already was one in the chair. Diefenbaker stood in embarrassed silence until Frederick B. Bagshaw, K.C., relieved Diefenbaker of the chair.<sup>81</sup>

A total of eleven names were put forward for leader, including Dr. Anderson, F.R. MacMillan, Murdock MacPherson, W.W. Lynd and R.L. Hanbridge. There existed, however, a general lack of interest in accepting nomination. The party was still wrought with division, low morale and almost no

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<sup>79</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 210.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

finances.<sup>82</sup> All, therefore, declined except Diefenbaker.<sup>83</sup> At the age of forty-one, Diefenbaker became the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association by acclamation.

Diefenbaker's acceptance speech outlined his objectives for the Conservative party, which were remarkably similar to those suggested to him by Lynd in October 1935. First and foremost was Diefenbaker's desire to develop a new platform that would bring back to the party Conservatives who had transferred their support to the Liberal or CCF parties in 1934:

The people of the Province want definite leadership, and, in my opinion, all those in opposition to the Liberal government now in Power, will fall in behind us if we take a definite stand on the many problems requiring solution, and, without it, the possibilities of being victorious are anything but hopeful.

Progressive it [the party's platform] must be - I think you will all agree, and radical in the sense in which that word was used in reference to the reform policy of the Right Honourable Mr. R.B. Bennett, but bearing too far to the left may prove a mistake as history has proven that quick cures for political ills are in the main quack cures.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>To improve the financial situation and organize the province, arrangements were made in July, 1936, to have C.P. Burgess organize the provincial constituencies (JGD, vol. 4, p. 003144, C.H. Burrows to Diefenbaker, 15 August 1936, minutes of meeting held on 14 July 1936 in Regina between W.T. Read, James Rutley, C.H. Burrows and C.P. Burgess). Bennett instructed his representative at the Regina Daily Star to pay Burgess \$50.00 a month to promote circulation of the paper while travelling the province drumming up support for the Conservative party. Bennett had considerable financial investment in the paper, which promoted Conservative policy in the province.

<sup>83</sup>Wilson and Wilson, p. 211.

<sup>84</sup>JGD, Speeches, vol. 4, Conservative party - Sk., Convention, Regina Sk., 28 October 1936.



In short, only under a Conservative banner would it be safe for the provincial electorate to vote for radical reforms. Diefenbaker was prepared to champion the cause.

Not everyone supported Diefenbaker's acclamation. Some leading Conservatives wanted someone a little more prominent and a little more experienced, but only Diefenbaker seemed to have the personal financial security to carry the party during the Depression while it searched for funding. He could afford to provide the time, energy and money needed to promote the party's interests by travelling the province.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, Diefenbaker's acclamation to lead the party was not an expression of unequivocal support for him. Enthusiasm for Diefenbaker's new direction was tempered by the political realities facing the party. Alex H. Reed, along with congratulations, wondered "...if a compromise choice, such as yours, is not fraught with danger and difficulty."<sup>86</sup> Reed advised the new Conservative leader that the financial strain facing party workers might make it difficult for them to follow a "modern" program even if they agreed with Diefenbaker's radical policy platform. Reed tempered his criticism by stating that he was "lock, stock, and barrel" behind the new leader, but he was just being

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<sup>85</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003144, C.P. Burgess to Diefenbaker, 5 September 1936. As of July, 1936, the party's treasury had about \$5.00 in it, which led the provincial organizer to lament "What a hope!"

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, Conventions, 1936, p. 002980, Alex H. Reed to Diefenbaker, 2 November 1936.

honest about the party's political situation.<sup>87</sup> He encouraged Diefenbaker to make the best of the situation since "the Grits are on the run, the others are lost in the wilderness, we, alone, have the Moses to bring us to the promised land."<sup>88</sup> It was a mixed message of hope and despair for Diefenbaker who was himself still wandering around in the political wilderness.

After failing to secure the support of the Prince Albert voters in 1929, Diefenbaker was able to prosper from the patronage of the Cooperative government. Distributing patronage in Prince Albert and appointment to the Bryant Commission were temporary rewards used to raise his popularity in the northern riding above his long-time political opponent in provincial politics, T.C. Davis. But as the Conservative party split over Dr. Anderson's leadership of the Cooperative government and his pursuit of a Liberal coalition, Diefenbaker realized that provincial Tories would have a difficult time in 1934 until the economy improved and political winds changed. Running in the federal constituency of Prince Albert in 1935 was also avoided since King beat him twice in 1925 and 1926. To protect his political investment in the Conservative party and to end his political apprenticeship, Diefenbaker took it upon himself to take control of the party from those who had

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 002980-81.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

led it to complete exile from the provincial legislature, and scattered its supporters. Rising through the ranks of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association executive, Diefenbaker was able to prepare the way to run for the leadership of the party. Some thought him to be a Moses, able to lead them out of the political wilderness with promises of a united party, a new radical platform and a prosperous future as a party concerned with the average Saskatchewan voter. But over the next two years, until the provincial election of 1938, Diefenbaker would follow the path of his predecessors with the intention of winning seats for himself and a few other provincial Conservatives rather than do everything possible to form a Conservative majority government.

### Chapter Three - Road to the Promised Land

Just as the Israelites exiled in Egypt put their hopes for deliverance from Pharaoh into the hands of Moses, the Conservatives in drought-stricken Saskatchewan in the mid-1930s put their hopes for an end to the party's exile from the legislature into the hands of John G. Diefenbaker. Conservative party supporters wanted deliverance from the political shame that followed them after the 1934 provincial election and Diefenbaker was the man they expected to help change their political fortunes. He willingly accepted the mantle. The task required nothing short of a miracle and Diefenbaker was expected to execute the necessary rituals. The challenge fed his desire for publicity and notoriety. As leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association (SCA) he also expected to end his political apprenticeship and exile from public office.

While Moses was given ten inviolable commandments written in stone to lead God's people, Diefenbaker had only one: victory at any cost. His intention was to run only Conservative candidates supported by a new and radical

platform<sup>1</sup> aimed at drawing the electorate back to the Conservative party. Lack of finances and a party divided over which policies to put forward, however, quickly altered Diefenbaker's planned route of deliverance. With other reform parties like the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Social Credit in the field to lure voters their way, Diefenbaker was persuaded by leading Conservatives in Ottawa and Saskatchewan to follow the route of his predecessor to win seats: saw-offs with other anti-Liberal forces. While Diefenbaker actively involved his party in negotiations with the CCF, standard interpretations of the party's continued failure under his leadership mainly focus on the party's lack of funding and poor organization in the June 8, 1938 provincial election. These standard interpretations generally reflect on the Depression's severe impact on the provincial economy, the popularity of the Liberal party, and the participation of third parties such as the CCF and Social Credit in provincial politics. In contrast, some Conservatives and local newspaper editors at the time focused blame on Diefenbaker's leadership of the provincial party -- blame that has gone unnoticed by most of

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<sup>1</sup>The platform eventually arrived at by Diefenbaker primarily focused on providing sound government devoid of patronage and abuse, which it accused the Liberals of doing. It did, however, have a number of social reforms considered to be radical in the 1930s. Among these were a plan to introduce health insurance, State medicine and hospitalization, extensive work relief programs and a system of contributory unemployment insurance. See Appendix B for complete details on the 1938 Conservative party platform.

his biographers. He did not lead the party to the promised land as hoped, but instead led the party deeper into the political wilderness. As went Diefenbaker so went the party.

On the eve of Diefenbaker's acclamation as leader of the SCA the party had no finances to turn the rusty wheels of Conservative organization. There was no office to speak of, no staff and no candidates in waiting for the next provincial election. After a decade of neglect under Dr. J.T.M. Anderson's leadership, the Conservative's coffers were nearly bare. Approximately \$100,000 marked for Conservative party organization after 1929 instead went to fund Dr. Anderson's Cooperative alliance between the three contributing parties.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Anderson not only refused to fund the SCA, he also refused to run straight Conservative candidates in the 1934 provincial election. In 1935, he refused to campaign on behalf of the federal Conservatives leaving the SCA unable to run its own campaign effectively.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of how much money was supposed to be in the Conservative accounts, it was not there when

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<sup>2</sup>John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers (hereafter JGD), Pre-1940 series, volume 4, p. 003502, R.L. Hanbridge to Diefenbaker, 4 November 1936.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Anderson was likely trying to keep funds away from true blue Conservative critics like former party president Dr. D.S. Johnstone and Tom Anderson, but his activities affected the entire party, which partially explains its shut-out from the 1934 provincial legislature and its retention of only one seat in the 1935 federal House of Commons.

Diefenbaker took over and there was no organization in place to raise more. The \$300 monthly allowance from the federal party in the early 1930s had long since dried up and Conservatives who continued to support the party during the lean years of the Depression did so in words but seldom with deeds or financial contributions. Low party morale and economic hardship made the collection of membership dues nearly impossible and a one dollar annual subscription fee for a proposed weekly Conservative newspaper along the lines of the Saskatchewan Liberal was considered prohibitive for many cash-strapped supporters of the SCA during the Depression.<sup>4</sup>

Although there were better-suited candidates for the party's head position, Diefenbaker succeeded without opposition because he was a compromise between the true blue and cooperative backers in the province. Provincial Conservatives had put their collective hopes into the hands of Diefenbaker because he was young, an excellent speaker and most important, "free from any entangling alliances with either of the [true blue or traditional Conservative] lines of thought in the community."<sup>5</sup> Regardless of what Diefenbaker did during his tenure as leader, he was expected

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<sup>4</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003503, Hanbridge to Diefenbaker, 4 November 1936.

<sup>5</sup>National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), R.B. Bennett Papers (hereafter Bennett Papers), microfilm, reel #1474, p. 519486, Frank Turnbull to Bennett, 4 December 1936.

to draw the party together to provide a united front against the Liberal government. He was also untainted, like many other provincial Conservatives who won in 1929, with the apparent help of the Ku Klux Klan or with the party's embarrassing loss in 1934.

While most Conservatives congratulated Diefenbaker on his appointment to the head position in the party, the same could not be said of the Liberals. His arch-nemesis in Prince Albert, T.C. Davis, gave an unsolicited observation of the new Tory leader to Jimmy Gardiner, who had since moved over to federal politics to become Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's minister of agriculture in October, 1935:

You will have noted that Deifenbaker [sic] was selected as Tory Leader yesterday, as all others refused to permit their names to go forward. I know him well and he will never get them anywhere. There is absolutely nothing to him and he is all front. His proper place would be as a third-rate vaudeville performer in a four-a-day vaudeville house. In addition to this, he is extremely selfish and concerned with only his own welfare and, furthermore, is not personally honest, so we do not need to be much concerned about him.<sup>6</sup>

Gardiner cautioned Davis not to underestimate Diefenbaker:

"He speaks well, and may put considerable energy into a campaign if he can get support from somewhere else."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), James G. Gardiner Papers, R1022 (hereafter Gardiner Papers) VII 5, T.C. Davis, 1936-37, p. 41289, Davis to Gardiner, 29 October 1936.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 41291, Gardiner to Davis, 4 November 1936.



Diefenbaker's ambition and willingness to fight for the Conservative party led Gardiner to believe that the federal Conservative organization might come to the provincial leader's rescue, especially when Diefenbaker appeared to have R.B. Bennett's personal and financial backing.

As leader, Diefenbaker's first task was to canvass leading Tories across the province for advice on how to revitalize the Conservative party, reform its platform, regain the support of voters who turned to the Farmer-Labour or Liberal parties in the 1934 provincial and 1935 federal elections, and reconcile the factions within the SCA. In an effort to unite the party under one cohesive banner, Diefenbaker hoped to consult with as many Conservatives as possible. He expected radical policy suggestions to solve the party's dilapidated state and the province's economic, unemployment and social problems that accompanied the Depression. Considering the Conservatives were without a seat in the legislature and the popularity of the CCF was rising, no reform seemed too radical to Diefenbaker if it brought supporters who voted Liberal or CCF (formerly Farmer-Labour) in 1934 back to the party. He was, however, cautious not to lean too far to the left of the political spectrum. The newspapers, picking up on Diefenbaker's direction, speculated that the new direction from the leader of the Conservative party would lean "left", but how far

left was yet to be determined.<sup>8</sup>

To keep the SCA united over which reforms to adopt, Diefenbaker was advised to establish a strategy board hand-picked by himself and not necessarily from the party executive.<sup>9</sup> In essence, Diefenbaker was advised to surround himself with men who would agree with him to reform the platform to meet his political philosophy: centralized control in effect.<sup>10</sup> While Diefenbaker put on the face of consultation with his party's membership, the direction of the party and its platform was in essence his and nothing but his. He would take the credit for its successes and, in true Diefenbaker fashion, blame others for its failures.

From the outset, Diefenbaker's objective was to develop a "modest" platform that was easily understood by ordinary citizens.<sup>11</sup> It was a sentiment reflected in the initial

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<sup>8</sup>Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, no date, as quoted in Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1990), p. 213.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>The party platform was written by Diefenbaker and then rubber-stamped by the executive of the SCA. Following Diefenbaker's request for party supporters to provide policy suggestions, little in the way of changes or discussion surrounding the adoption of the platform's main points took place and there was little discussion of the platform at a provincial party convention where delegates had an opportunity to vote on the party's policies. Subsequently, the platform was Diefenbaker's to develop and defend.

<sup>11</sup>John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, the Crusading Years 1895 to 1956 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 173. [Following citations refer to this volume unless otherwise specified.]

responses from Conservatives who suggested he pursue policies that met the needs of the average Saskatchewan voter. An old friend from Oxbow, W.O. Fraser, advised Diefenbaker that "if unemployment is still as bad and it looks as if it will be, we will have to have a plank that will definitely show how to find work or we better not try to run an election."<sup>12</sup> In short, Diefenbaker should make an effort to regain the confidence of the people by giving them what they wanted most of all: dignity and self-worth through employment, not hand-outs from government. E.L. Elliott, a Conservative lawyer from Assiniboia, advised Diefenbaker that "it might not be wise to announce a complete platform at the present time but I think we might easily agree on one or two things at least."<sup>13</sup> Although eager to increase the popular support for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, Diefenbaker:

refused to try to outbid the Liberals for the support of the people; to attempt to buy the people with their own money is hardly a commendable, though a frequent, course in politics.<sup>14</sup>

He would provide options, but only those he expected to deliver on if the Conservative party formed the government. Promises were made by Diefenbaker to provide good government

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<sup>12</sup>JGD, vol. 7, p. 005316, W.O. Fraser to Diefenbaker, 16 November 1936.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., vol. 5, p. 004046, E.L. Elliott to Diefenbaker, 12 June 1937.

<sup>14</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 173.

in addition to good politics.

Although leading Conservatives encouraged Diefenbaker to reform the platform to reflect the social and economic conditions in Saskatchewan, the bulk of advice suggested that Diefenbaker needed to be "open-minded" and realize that concessions needed to be made with other parties to consolidate the political forces opposed to the Liberal government.<sup>15</sup> In short, they advised Diefenbaker to negotiate with the CCF to arrange saw-offs whereby the Conservatives would not nominate a candidate in ridings where the CCF was stronger and vice versa. The consensus among respondents was that it would be useless for the Conservative party to enter the next provincial election unless all parties opposed to the Liberal government cooperated. Diefenbaker's advisors either believed the Liberals were too strong to beat on their own or that rising third parties would steal votes away from them. The Conservative party platform would, therefore, have to keep Conservatives working to elect Conservatives while attracting the attention of voters regardless of who they voted for in 1934. A platform that did not align the party with the platforms of its prospective political partners might scuttle any hopes for saw-offs, and victory.

While Diefenbaker mulled over reforming the party

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<sup>15</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 002974, John T. Roper to Diefenbaker, 2 November 1936.

platform and the possibility of saw-offs, Frank Turnbull, provincial organizer for national party leader R.B. Bennett, was approached by Rev. Tommy Douglas, the 1934 Farmer-Labour candidate in Weyburn, to discuss "the topic of an understanding."<sup>16</sup> Turnbull was aware that an increasing number of leading Conservatives in Saskatchewan and Ottawa were coming to the conclusion that reform might not be enough to win the next election, even though the Liberals were said to be declining in popularity.<sup>17</sup> With the existence of an already popular reform party in the name of the CCF, the addition of another might only split the vote between them, letting the Liberals sweep into power again. Turnbull believed the only difference between the Conservative and CCF parties was the latter's insistence on public ownership and a planned economy, therefore,

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<sup>16</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, p. 519393, Frank Turnbull to Bennett, 29 January 1937. Turnbull initially saw two problems with the concept of arranging saw-offs with the CCF. "First, that in asking for the support of Conservatives, he was asking them to vote for the nationalization of practically everything in Canada, which was absolutely contrary to their belief, and that he [Douglas] as a Minister could not very well ask Conservatives to vote against their conscience. In the second place the Conservative party was national in reality as well as in name and it was asking a great deal to ask them to drop the word "Conservative" and with it the historical background. I suggested that if they were prepared to consider the dropping of their nationalization policy and accept the name Conservative with perhaps the name Progressive attached to it, that the field might be open for discussion as far as I was concerned."

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

cooperation might be possible, and necessary.<sup>18</sup> Little else, according to Turnbull, prevented CCF leaders such as Tommy Douglas, Member of Parliament (MP) for Weyburn, and M.J. Coldwell, national leader of the CCF and MP for Rosetown-Biggar (previous leader of the Saskatchewan CCF, 1932-35), from running against Liberals without Conservative opposition or for Conservatives to run against Liberals without opposition from the CCF in prearranged ridings.<sup>19</sup> Cooperation worked for Dr. Anderson in 1929, so why not for Diefenbaker in 1938 and the federal Conservatives in elections to follow? Little attention was given to the fact that Dr. Anderson's Cooperative government was shut-out in the 1934 election.

Some type of mutual understanding between the two parties was considered possible because both had invited other parties at their annual conventions to assist with defeating the Liberals. The CCF convention in 1936 abandoned any reference to socialism, and extended an invitation to all other "progressive-minded" groups to work with it to defeat the government.<sup>20</sup> A similar offer to cooperate was adopted by the Conservatives in 1928 -- and no

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 519487, Turnbull to Bennett, 4 December 1936.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>S.M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), revised and expanded edition, p. 141. "Progressive" referred to the Conservatives, p. 142.

changes had since been introduced.<sup>21</sup> Following the 1934 Saskatchewan election in which no Conservatives were elected, any conceivable opportunity to improve the chances of the party in the next election was considered.

The meeting with Douglas at the end of January 1937, raised Turnbull's enthusiasm because he also believed the Liberal party in Saskatchewan was losing support daily. It had disappointed the electorate by not fulfilling its election promises to reduce taxation, reduce the provincial debt, expand highways, improve relief, provide dollar wheat and increase mother's allowances.<sup>22</sup> Unless the Conservatives took advantage of the voters' current disfavour with the Liberal government and put on a good show of the party's vitality in the next election campaign, Turnbull feared their support would likely end up in the CCF camp. Not enough funds were available for a straight Conservative fight, so cooperation, which would allow the party to focus its resources on a few rather than every seat, was considered a viable alternative. To do so would require the assistance of Saskatchewan's provincial party leader, John Diefenbaker.

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<sup>21</sup>Paragraph 26 of the Conservative Platform adopted at the Saskatchewan Conservative convention in March, 1928, stated that "the Conservative party invites the support and co-operation of all parties, groups, and individuals opposed to the present Liberal administration." NAC, Bennett Papers, reel C926, p. 25142.

<sup>22</sup>NAC, Bennett papers, reel #1474, p. 519392, Turnbull to Bennett, 29 January 1937.

It was imperative that Turnbull enlist Diefenbaker's support in negotiating saw-offs with the CCF. As leader of the provincial party, Diefenbaker was responsible for organizing the province's provincial and federal ridings and approving the nomination of candidates. If Diefenbaker objected to saw-offs, he could scuttle any arrangement by simply nominating Conservative candidates in seats negotiated by federal Tories and the CCF.

The importance of Diefenbaker's involvement in the negotiating process cannot be underestimated. His participation, however, has received only cursory consideration by scholars. Diefenbaker, his biographers and historians alike have, instead, focused on the provincial economy, the party's woeful financial situation and inability to present popular policies in 1938 to an electorate gripped by the Depression. According to one account, Diefenbaker was opposed to any arrangement between the Conservative and CCF parties. Any action taken by individual Conservatives at the local constituency level without the approval of the SCA's executive and leader to arrange their own saw-off was considered inappropriate.<sup>23</sup> Some argue that cooperation was pursued by executives of the two parties, but few details of the participants were

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<sup>23</sup>Kenneth David Andrews, "The Politics of Reform: Provincial Politics in Saskatchewan 1935-38" (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979), p. 69.



provided.<sup>24</sup> Others state that a group, led by the party's former leader, Dr. Anderson, proposed a union with the CCF in late 1937, which Diefenbaker was able to forestall by agreeing to investigate the possibility of saw-offs with the CCF.<sup>25</sup> A close examination of materials held in the Diefenbaker, CCF, Bennett and Progressive Conservative Party of Canada papers indicate that Diefenbaker approved of and directed his representatives to negotiate with the CCF -- to arrange saw-offs for his benefit along with that of a few other select Conservatives in Saskatchewan -- and not just to forestall those who called for union or fusion with the CCF. He wanted strictly Liberal and Conservative contests in as many seats as possible to elect a few Conservatives and most importantly himself by arranging to have the CCF avoid the seat.

D.L. Burgess, an old political confidante of Diefenbaker in Prince Albert, encouraged the provincial Conservative leader to arrange saw-offs with the CCF:

While the True Blues (that name is very apt) may be opposed to saw-offs and other methods of using ones head to beat the Grits, there are more who are holding

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<sup>24</sup>Lipset, pp. 143-45.

<sup>25</sup>Patrick Kyba, Alvin: A Biography of the Honourable Alvin Hamilton, P.C. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1989), p. 29. Diefenbaker could not have been informed of Dr. Anderson's proposal because Diefenbaker was not in contact with Dr. Anderson about co-operation until much later, probably because Diefenbaker did not care to have the former leader's involvement or advice. How could he trust the man he replaced to follow through with an arrangement that failed in 1929-34?

back waiting to be assured that we are going to employ tactics calculated to ensure that no seat will be contested by three or more candidates where it is considered inimical to the interests of the Tory party to do so especially if it entails the election of a Grit.<sup>26</sup>

Diefenbaker's initial response to suggestions of cooperation can best be described as lukewarm. The marriage of convenience in 1929 with Progressives and Independents was one thing. To cooperate with the CCF in 1938 was another in light of his dislike for their policies. Besides, cooperation and the Depression were blamed for the poor Conservative showing in 1934. Diefenbaker preferred to run independent Conservative candidates, but circumstances beyond his control dictated otherwise. The provincial party's empty treasury and the national party's inability to help fund provincial campaigns jeopardized Diefenbaker's desire to run straight Conservative candidates without saw-offs. A review of previous election results suggested to Diefenbaker and others that a combined Conservative and CCF vote would have defeated many Liberal candidates in earlier

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<sup>26</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003511, D.L. Burgess to Diefenbaker, 23 February 1937.

elections.<sup>27</sup>

There was more to arranging saw-offs than just preventing a split among anti-Liberal voters in 1938. Diefenbaker was also faced with the practical aspects of cooperation. Since the southern half of the province was more adversely affected by the Depression than the north, less financing was available there to pay organizers or fund candidates.<sup>28</sup> Few constituency organizations were motivated to spend the few dollars that surfaced on speaking tours or nominating conventions when the much cheaper and promising route of cooperation was available. Conservatives were already talking about the impracticality of running candidates where little chance of success existed. Robert L. Hanbridge, Conservative MLA for Kerrobert and Cooperative government Whip in 1929, wrote of his local constituency executive's unwillingness to organize because so many staunch supporters of the Conservative party looked to the

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<sup>27</sup>Howard A. Scarrow, Canada Votes: A Handbook of Federal and Provincial Data (New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962). In 1929 the Conservatives received a minority of province-wide electoral support, but in combination with the Independents and Progressives they outnumbered the Liberals by nearly 21,000 votes. In 1934, when the Conservatives lost every seat held in 1929, if they had combined their 114,936 votes with the Farmer-Labour votes of 103,050, they would have out polled the Liberals by nearly 12,000 votes. Many Conservatives, therefore, blamed the CCF for taking votes away from Conservative candidates in the province.

<sup>28</sup>SAB, Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970 (Regina: Queen's Printer, 1971). Of the twelve constituencies in Southern Saskatchewan, Conservatives eventually contested only two in 1938: Moosomin and Qu'Appelle-Wolseley.

Liberal government for support during the winter, therefore making them think twice before they became politically involved against the governing party.<sup>29</sup> If the CCF and Conservatives could combine forces against the Liberals, then why contest a riding and split the anti-government votes so that the Liberals won with a minority?

The political reality of Conservative hopes in Saskatchewan began to weigh heavily on Diefenbaker's shoulders by the fall of 1937. His desire to have a candidate in every constituency was quickly fading. Even J.F. Anderson, a provincial organizer and personal friend of R.B. Bennett, believed that Diefenbaker "...had almost a hopeless task to fight the machine he is up against without the support and friendly cooperation from the Leader at Ottawa."<sup>30</sup> To get that support, Diefenbaker would have to give something in return. In 1937, that consisted of support for saw-offs with the CCF.

Diefenbaker needed the financial and organizational support of the federal Conservative party if he hoped to gain any ground over his party's dismal showing in 1934. Ottawa wanted his help to arrange federal saw-offs to

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<sup>29</sup>JGD, vol. 5, Conservative party: Saskatchewan, Organization, Kerrobert/Kindersley, 1935-39, p. 004149, Hanbridge to Diefenbaker, 7 July 1937.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, Conservative party: National organization, Saskatchewan, 1937-38, p. 001599, copy of letter from J.F. Anderson to Bennett, sent to Diefenbaker on 10 August 1937.

overcome its loss of support in 1935. Without Ottawa's intervention, Diefenbaker would be left either to abandon the party or carry the financial burden of organizing and directing the campaign out of his own pocket; neither of which he was prepared to do. In late 1937, Diefenbaker asked the national party leader to help fund a trip to attend a meeting of Conservatives in Ottawa from across Canada since "every effort has been made to raise finances, but the amounts secured have been negligible...."<sup>31</sup> Diefenbaker complained that "party finances in this province do not exist. We have no money. We have no organization, and therefore I have to continue to be both leader and organizer."<sup>32</sup> While in Ottawa, Diefenbaker hoped to discuss further the Saskatchewan political situation and obtain national party funding for the provincial election in 1938.

After meeting with Bennett, Diefenbaker returned to Saskatchewan to assist with arranging saw-offs with the CCF. Since cooperation would likely continue even without his support, Diefenbaker decided to get more involved, hoping at least to influence if not control the agreement's impact on provincial ridings such as his own. Support was also

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 000490, Diefenbaker to Bennett, 31 December 1937.

<sup>32</sup>Diefenbaker to Bennett, 31 December 1937, as quoted in Larry A. Glassford, Reaction & Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party under R.B. Bennett 1927-1938 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 212-13.

expected to result in at least some cash flow from eastern Conservatives to Saskatchewan.

Coming to an agreement with the CCF, however, was difficult. The situation in Saskatchewan prior to the 1938 provincial election was complicated by an arrangement consisting of provincial and federal trade-offs. There were also personality clashes between the two provincial leaders involved in negotiations. Provincial leader of the CCF, George Williams, insisted on having the upper hand in negotiations, based on his protestations that the CCF was more popular than the Conservatives in Saskatchewan. Williams was prepared to negotiate with the Conservative party as early as June 1937, but on his terms, as indicated in a confidential memorandum to C. Stork, CCF executive member and provincial organizer.<sup>33</sup> Because of limited organization and poor support, Moosomin would be left to the Conservatives and Liberals to "fight it out," and "if they [Conservatives] do not play the game we will nominate."<sup>34</sup> Even though Williams considered Diefenbaker's traditional riding in Prince Albert to be hopeless for the CCF, the local organization was to be kept active "in case we again threaten the Conservatives that we will nominate unless they

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<sup>33</sup>SAB, Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Papers (hereafter CCF), GS 87, volume 84, pp. 9002-04, Williams to C. Stork, Confidential memorandum, 9 June 1937.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 9003.

play ball."<sup>35</sup> In Qu'Appelle-Wolseley, the only federal seat held by the Conservatives in Saskatchewan after 1935, Williams promised to support Conservative MP Ernest E. Perley -- who quickly became one of the key Tory negotiators -- in the next federal campaign in exchange for Conservative support for CCF candidates in other provincial ridings yet to be determined. Because Qu'Appelle-Wolseley was at the centre of the arrangement, Williams recommended that no nominating convention be held in that constituency.

In contrast, Diefenbaker had little with which to bargain. No seats in the province and an empty treasury pressured him to be subservient to Williams in the negotiations. Declining popular support in the province for the Conservative party and its policies kept him at the bargaining table even though he had little with which to force the CCF to keep its word or to negotiate fairly.

As winter set in on the province in 1937, Diefenbaker insisted on approving every step taken in the secret negotiations by federal Conservative negotiators Perley and Turnbull.<sup>36</sup> In December 1937, discussions focused on which seats each party would withdraw from and the division of power when, and if, the parties were able to form a government together. The party with the most elected

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003536, E.E. Perley to Diefenbaker, 21 November, 1937.

members after the forthcoming election would name the leader while cabinet posts would be based on the percentage of each party's representation in the legislature. The CCF and Conservative party leaders agreed that the first session would pass legislation for the "alternative vote"<sup>37</sup> and set dates for the next election.<sup>38</sup> The arrangement to form a coalition government would terminate at the dissolution of the legislature, enabling each party to maintain its own identity in the following election. In short, cooperation was a marriage of convenience between the CCF and Conservative parties to defeat the Liberal government. Once the Liberals had been defeated, the electorate were expected to choose between the CCF and Conservative parties to form the next provincial dynasty in Saskatchewan.<sup>39</sup> Both sides,

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<sup>37</sup>Alternative vote, although not specifically defined by the Conservative party, generally refers to voters receiving a ballot on which voters rank their choice of candidates. If no majority is obtained in the election, the candidate's votes are distributed to the other candidates based on the second preference expressed on the ballot until a majority is obtained. The motivation behind alternative ballots is often to prevent "radical" candidates from getting elected with a minority of votes (Mark Dickenson and Thomas Flanagan, An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1986), pp. 259-60). In the case of Saskatchewan's provincial politics in the 1930s, the Conservative party hoped to defeat not a radical party but the Liberal party with the alternative vote.

<sup>38</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, p. 519574, Perley to Bennett, 10 December 1937.

<sup>39</sup>The plan failed to take into consideration the resurgence of the Liberal party should the saw-off arrangements place the CCF and Conservative parties in power in 1938.



however, privately hoped saw-offs would have the long-term effect of either one party absorbing the other or at least gaining the support of its followers while that party's organization sunk into disrepair and oblivion.

To reassure Bennett that Diefenbaker would participate in negotiations, Perley made it perfectly clear that "all has been done so far with Diefenbaker's approval and he is agreed, but before a formal decision is made, he, Diefenbaker, would like to have your approval."<sup>40</sup> Two days after Christmas 1937, Perley informed Diefenbaker that Bennett had sent a handwritten letter to protect the integrity of the confidential negotiations, even from other Conservatives, "approving of the course we have taken."<sup>41</sup> To calm Diefenbaker's paranoia that news of the negotiations would leak to the newspapers or the Liberals, Perley marked his letters private and confidential and expressed confidence in his secretary to keep their correspondence secret.

Blessed with Bennett's approval, Diefenbaker was finally prepared to share the necessity and hope expected from cooperation with leading Conservatives not involved in

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<sup>40</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, p. 519573, Perley to Bennett, 10 December 1937.

<sup>41</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p.003556, Perley to Diefenbaker, 27 December 1937. Perley asked for a handwritten letter to ensure confidentiality. Diefenbaker was so self-conscious of the negotiations and what might happen if it became common knowledge that he did not want even Bennett's private secretary to know what was going on.

the negotiations, but who had a stake in the result. But what was spoken to individuals in private was not always extended to the party in general. He told leading provincial Tories that "nothing of a final nature has been arrived at, but there is every indication that those opposed to the Government are as anxious as our own that the opposition be undivided by a multiplicity of candidates."<sup>42</sup> At the regional council meeting for the southern constituencies held in Regina in mid-January, however, Diefenbaker was careful to promote a strong independent Conservative organization to keep party supporters, who were less inclined to accept saw-offs, faithful and working prior to the election. He told the council that:

there should be no amalgamation with those parties opposed to the Government, rather that straight Conservative candidates should be nominated at once in all possible seats and this course had been adopted by the [northern constituency] meeting.<sup>43</sup>

He already knew that southern constituencies were unwilling and under financed to run candidates and instead preferred saw-offs. But when a motion was put forward by two true blue representatives of the Regina constituency in favour of instructing every riding to nominate a Conservative candidate, Diefenbaker had to act quickly to protect the saw-offs already under way.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 003568, Diefenbaker to Hanbridge, 10 January 1938.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

Before a vote on the motion was called, Perley came to Diefenbaker's rescue by adding an amendment that a committee of five be appointed, along with the leader, to evaluate each constituency as to the feasibility of nominating a candidate.<sup>44</sup> His rationale for the committee was to ensure that the Conservatives did not nominate where they had no chance and therefore waste scarce resources.<sup>45</sup> The amendment would also put control of organizing back into the hands of a select few, including Diefenbaker. The provincial Conservative leader asked to adjourn for lunch, which gave him an opportunity to discuss an appropriate strategy with Perley concerning the true blue motion and to ensure things went his way on the vote on the resolution and amendment.

Following lunch, Diefenbaker spoke to the resolution. No transcript of the discussion remains but the outcome suggests that Diefenbaker informed the council that it was more prudent to appoint two men who understood the overall situation of the party rather than nominate five men plus himself to decide which seats were worth contesting. The amended motion passed. Perley and vice-president N.C. Craig of the SCA were appointed and given authority to select the

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 003243.

<sup>45</sup>Party funds were so short that Diefenbaker was prevented from distributing the new party platform that was approved in October, 1937. Each constituency would have to raise finances to purchase and distribute it on its own.

other members of the committee. They chose F.C. Kent, Frank Turnbull and R.M. Balfour (each was known to Perley and Craig as supporters of saw-offs). Diefenbaker had avoided a potential threat to the saw-off negotiations by blocking the appointment of true blue Conservatives to the constituency reorganization committee. Averting a possible catastrophe with representatives from Conservative constituency organizations from across the province, Diefenbaker had new hopes for an end to his political apprenticeship.

Diefenbaker's enthusiasm for success in 1938 was evident:

I am very hopeful (and this is in confidence) that a feeling of unity now exists generally in the Province, which will result in very few three-cornered fights taking place....Everything possible will be done to have a united opposition in each Constituency, although without in any way permitting any of the opposition party to lose its individual identity.<sup>46</sup>

Perley also encouraged Diefenbaker to continue working for an arrangement. Both of them would be the first to benefit from an agreement since their constituencies were at the heart of the saw-offs. He also emphasized the fact that saw-offs were the only solution and that they "must go through with the arrangement and nothing must be left undone in carrying it out."<sup>47</sup>

Diefenbaker, however, became uneasy when the CCF

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<sup>46</sup>JGD, vol. 13, p. 10696, Diefenbaker to F.B. Bagshaw, 28 January 1938.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., vol. 4, p. 003572, Perley to Diefenbaker, 28 January 1938.

nominated in constituencies without first consulting the Conservatives. Nominating conventions were supposed to take place only in ridings assigned to that particular party. Coldwell and Douglas reassured Perley that the conventions to nominate in seats supposedly left to the Conservatives were "for the purpose of informing their group who they were to support and they expected to be able in all cases such as this, to have a motion put through, not to nominate, but to support the Conservative candidate."<sup>48</sup> Diefenbaker and others, however, believed Williams was insincere about negotiations by telling the Conservatives one thing while undertaking the opposite.

While Diefenbaker watched and expected Williams' activities eventually to derail negotiations, the greatest threat of sabotage appeared from within the ranks of the Conservative party. In early 1938, Frank Turnbull had a change of heart about negotiating with the CCF. Turnbull was known as a bit of a "hot-head" who went about "half-cocked" when the CCF began nominating.<sup>49</sup> He was genuine in his dedication, but prepared to fight to the bitter end to do what he thought best for the party. Perley told Diefenbaker that he was concerned Turnbull would not continue to approach the negotiations with the give-and-take

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 003574, Perley to Diefenbaker, 28 January 1938.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

necessary to reach an understanding.<sup>50</sup> SCA president Bert Keown also commented on Turnbull throwing a "monkey wrench" into the negotiations.<sup>51</sup> A stalemate between both parties ensued. Perley was called upon to smooth over the hard feelings and to reassure Diefenbaker that Turnbull would be forced to toe the line. Turnbull, at the insistence of Johnstone, decided to present a new twist on saw-offs to the man who made the decisions for the future of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, John Diefenbaker.

Johnstone, who attacked Dr. Anderson's leadership of the Conservative party in the Cooperative government, insisted that Turnbull outline the possibility of fusion with the CCF to Diefenbaker before anything else occurred. Johnstone had met with "leading gentlemen" of the CCF party

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 003593, Bert Keown to Diefenbaker, 10 February 1938.

and was given the impression that fusion could be arranged.<sup>52</sup> This was a significant turn-about for the former president of the SCA who earlier had lambasted Dr. Anderson in the newspapers for cooperating with the Progressives and Independents in 1929. Was he trying to force Diefenbaker's hand or did he honestly believe that the Conservative party was finished in Saskatchewan, and survival dictated fusion with the CCF?

Turnbull personally advocated union if Diefenbaker concluded that there was little strength remaining in the provincial Conservative party to fight an independent

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 003612, Frank Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 21 February 1938. The move was inconsequential since the CCF leader clearly outlined his opposition to fusion with the Conservatives or anyone else. CCF constituency executives were informed of a resolution passed at the 1937 CCF convention, reaffirming "its belief in the wisdom and necessity for cooperation between progressive and democratic groups in the political field." They could cooperate but not fuse or unite with other parties to put forward a "unity" candidate. The president of the provincial arm of the CCF, George Williams, stated that no official alliance, amalgamation or merging of parties would be permitted. Any presentation of joint meeting between parties was discouraged because "this tie-up would be disadvantageous to the CCF...." (SAB, CCF, vol. 258, Social Credit, 1937-38, pp. 27091-2, Williams to provincial constituency presidents and secretary-campaign managers, 4 October 1937). But, if a local constituency organization wished to cooperate with another party, it could proceed provided the CCF platform was not compromised (Ibid., vol. 86, Cooperation with other Groups, pp. 9270-73, G.H. Williams to J. R. Mayhew, Secretary, Willowbunch Constituency, 13 September 1937).

campaign.<sup>53</sup> Union, however, was an admission that the Conservative party was dead in Saskatchewan. He, therefore, outlined both sides of the union/fusion issue in a memorandum to Diefenbaker.

Turnbull's arguments in favour of union primarily focused on the uncertainty of a saw-off arrangement for the Conservative party. Neither party had enough candidates to form the government on its own and by uniting forces it was one way to defeat at least a few Liberals and hopefully enough to remove them from office. Fusion would give some confidence to the electorate that the anti-Liberal coalition would be stable after the election. In contrast, saw-offs rather than fusion would result in voters having no assurance of what to expect after the Liberal government was defeated by the cooperating parties.<sup>54</sup> There was also no guarantee that, with saw-offs, voters who supported the Conservative party in previous elections would actually vote for CCF candidates instead of Liberals and there was no guarantee that other third parties could be kept out of the field.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., vol. 4, p. 003612, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 21 February 1938. If Diefenbaker decided to follow through with union, Turnbull saw the need for a new party name. The "Conservative Progressive Party" was mentioned as was the "Provincial Party" with candidates running as Provincial Conservatives, Provincial CCF, Progressives and possibly Provincial Social Credit (Ibid., Memorandum: Arguments for Union, pp. 003559-60).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 003559.



Turnbull's arguments against fusion with the CCF focused on the organizational problems that would follow saw-offs if the participants formed the government. The possible break-up of the present party organization of both the CCF and Conservative parties was expected to accompany fusion.<sup>55</sup> Difficulty with policies and the question of leadership would have to be addressed along with the division of the provincial from the federal Conservative party.<sup>56</sup> Even though he realized the declining strength of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan, Turnbull believed that fusion would eventually result in the absorption of the CCF by the Conservative party.

In response, Diefenbaker stated that he was "entirely opposed to any question of fusion or union, and, as far as this question is concerned, there will be no change in my mind."<sup>57</sup> Diefenbaker instead continued to negotiate saw-offs because he hoped they would result in Conservative representation in the Legislature without compromising the party's identity. Agreements to cooperate had already been reached in Wilkie and Weyburn. Negotiations were also

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 003560, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 21 February 1938.

<sup>56</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, p. 519397, Bennett to Turnbull, 12 March 1938. Bennett did not support fusion and indicated that Turnbull should stop considering such ideas.

<sup>57</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003613, Diefenbaker to Turnbull, 26 February 1938.

complete in some other constituencies, but no announcements had yet been made.<sup>58</sup>

Diefenbaker's success at warding off threats to arranging saw-offs by independently minded Conservatives who wanted to pursue fusion was insignificant compared to the threat rising outside of his circle of influence. In February, 1938, "Bible Bill" Aberhart's Social Credit movement began to spill over the Alberta border into Saskatchewan. He promised to sweep the province of its old line parties. With Social Credit entering the political fray, the Conservatives and the CCF had to consider additional negotiations to avoid three-cornered contests. CCF organizers approached Aberhart to join saw-off negotiations with the Conservative party, but the path to cooperation with Alberta's governing party was beset with thorns. Mr. M.J. Haver, Saskatchewan's provincial organizer for the Social Credit party, "emphatically repudiated" cooperation with the CCF.<sup>59</sup> The probability of three-cornered contests began to worry the Tory leader in Saskatchewan. Diefenbaker feared that "there would be little use of making an arrangement with the CCF and then

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<sup>58</sup>SAB, CCF, p. 0050503, Williams to L.L. Lloyd, 14 February 1938.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 9328, Williams to Joe Pachota, 7 March 1938.

have the SC [Social Credit] come in and gum it up for us."<sup>60</sup> The sticky situation officially materialized in March when Aberhart announced he would run candidates in the upcoming provincial election because support for "Social Credit is sweeping the province of Saskatchewan like a Prairie fire."<sup>61</sup>

Diefenbaker began to doubt the wisdom of negotiating with the CCF, but he chose to continue with the arrangements rather than run Conservative candidates against Liberals and the CCF because there was no alternative without considerable out-of-province funding. Provincial and federal arrangements were dependent on each other for success.<sup>62</sup> By March 1938, a new agreement was worked out which left twenty seats to the Conservatives to contest

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<sup>60</sup>JGD, vol. 4, pp. 003605-06, Diefenbaker to Hanbridge, 17 February 1938

<sup>61</sup>Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 14 March 1938.

<sup>62</sup>A CCF executive member from the Tisdale constituency sent a letter to Williams, informing him that "in the Provincial field we have the strongest organization and our best chance of winning and I have been given good grounds for believing that the Conservatives and Social Credit in Tisdale Constituency will leave the field for us if in return we agree "unofficially of course" to stay out of the Federal field but I don't know the situation in Melfort & Kinistino and if we were to agree to this we should have a free hand in those two Provincial Constituencies as well (SAB, CCF, p. 9329, P.E. Wright to Williams, 2 March 1938). Williams responded that he had no authority to trade federal seats for provincial seats, but only to decide whether or not they will run in certain constituencies: "On this basis, there are some constituencies that we intend to stay out of, and we hope that other political parties will be equally reasonable" (Ibid., p. 9332, Williams to Wright, 7 March 1938).

without CCF opposition, while twenty-one seats were left to the CCF; fourteen had yet to be negotiated.<sup>63</sup> Turnbull warned Diefenbaker, however, that the arrangements were tentative since the Liberals were expected to redistribute the province's constituency boundaries prior to the election, which was expected to "upset the whole works."<sup>64</sup>

As the snow began to melt on the Saskatchewan prairie in 1938, so too did Diefenbaker's enthusiasm for a cooperative agreement with the CCF and any hope of challenging the Liberals in half the province's ridings without the presence of another party. A large part of the problem centred on Williams' continued efforts to negotiate with other political forces. Less than two weeks after the tentative agreement, Turnbull was approached and asked for his party's support for Labour Progressive Group candidates in Regina's two seats. This candidate would also have the support of the CCF, Social Credit, Civic Labour and Communist parties.<sup>65</sup> Turnbull approached Diefenbaker, who in no uncertain terms told Turnbull that "...there must be no suggestion of cooperation with Communists or those

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<sup>63</sup>JGD vol. 4, p. 003625, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 10 March 1938. See Appendix C for full details.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 003630, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 19 March 1938.

associated with Communists."<sup>66</sup> The Tory leader was bound and determined to stick with the opening statement of the party's 1938 platform, which stated:

the Conservative party pledges itself to maintain the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press, reaffirms its implicit belief in democracy and democratic institutions, and its absolute opposition to the principles of both Fascism and Communism.<sup>67</sup>

With the knowledge that Regina's Conservative constituency organization was the root of the true blue faction, there was no way Diefenbaker would rekindle the flame of disunity within the party by supporting the Labour Progressive group.

CCF betrayal of its arrangement with the Conservatives, in Diefenbaker's eyes, occurred on the ides of March 1938. An overanxious CCF MLA from Gull Lake, H.H. Kemper, announced in the closing session of the legislature that his party would contest nearly every seat in the province, and would win enough seats to form the next government.<sup>68</sup> Diefenbaker was outraged. How could the CCF extend an open invitation to cooperate on one hand and yet hold a political dagger against the throat of the party with the other? In an effort to calm Conservative organizers and keep them working in their ridings, Diefenbaker called on

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 003631, Diefenbaker to Turnbull, 22 March 1938.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., vol. 7, p. 005237, Platform of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party, 1938.

<sup>68</sup>Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 15 March 1938.

Conservatives across the province to organize nominating conventions of their own in every constituency.<sup>69</sup> Even though he was only trying to encourage Conservatives not to give up *en masse* to the CCF, the newspapers made it look as if he was directly challenging Kemper and the CCF party to an open fight in every constituency. The political marriage of convenience arranged in Ottawa for the CCF and Conservative parties in Saskatchewan was quickly unravelling.

National party organizers in Ottawa responded quickly to salvage negotiations. Douglas got in touch with Williams and encouraged the provincial CCF leader to be more sensitive to the political situation. Cooler heads prevailed as Williams announced that the CCF would not contest seats where little chance of success was evident. He would instead seek the support of other progressive-minded parties without sacrificing any principles of the CCF.<sup>70</sup> The comment momentarily satisfied Diefenbaker. He too was struck by the reality that bickering with the CCF would only benefit the Liberals. The Star-Phoenix reported the Tory leader's apologetic comments that "there should be a spirit of give and take between the progressive parties opposed to the Liberal party."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 17 March 1938.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 22 March 1938.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 25 March 1938.

The truce between the provincial leaders, however, was short-lived. Diefenbaker received information that Williams was not interested in cooperating with the Conservatives to any appreciable extent and was only prepared to concede seven or eight seats while pursuing three-cornered contests in eighteen seats without any fear of the consequences from federal CCF negotiators in Ottawa.<sup>72</sup> Douglas made it clear to Williams that he expected the cooperation of the provincial CCF during negotiations:

If we make it too tough for fellows like Perley and Diefenbaker who are, I believe, sincere, we may well have a Conservative in almost every constituency, with strong financial backing from the group here, who are endeavouring to get the Conservative party on its feet again. Such an action, in view of the gerrymandering of the seats, would in our opinion, almost certainly result in the Liberals sliding in again.<sup>73</sup>

Perley also encouraged Diefenbaker to remain calm and not do anything rash. The news was hardly a revelation to Diefenbaker or other Tories involved in negotiations. A number of saw-offs had been arranged, but with the passage of the provincial boundary redistribution bill late in the 1938 spring session, negotiations had to begin all over again. Diefenbaker was concerned with the practicality of continuing to negotiate saw-offs with the CCF when an election was expected in early June.

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<sup>72</sup>SAB, CCF, p. 10189, Douglas to Williams, 26 March 1938. Perley passed information to Douglas after receiving a telephone call from Diefenbaker.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

Announcements of CCF nominations continued to pour into Diefenbaker's office. Alex Reed, an old lawyer friend from Turtleford, advised Diefenbaker that the Conservative party was being double-crossed by the CCF holding conventions in almost every riding. He prophesied that unless something was done to counter the CCF, the Conservative party would find itself "on the edge of a great precipice, politically, and that the next jump is oblivion."<sup>74</sup> Reed questioned Williams' sincerity even though he had been reassured, as was Diefenbaker, that the CCF nominating conventions in constituencies supposedly left to the Conservatives were merely to tell the local CCF organizations that they were not to nominate candidates and instead support the Conservative candidate. Promises were made that the CCF candidates would be pulled in time for the election but Reed's opinion of Williams was "I think I smell that little fellow with the striped back."<sup>75</sup> Diefenbaker also smelled the stink in it. With Williams acting like a maverick, out of Douglas' and Coldwell's influence, he also wanted to pull out of negotiations.

A new agreement, however, had been worked out among the federal organizers and Perley wanted Diefenbaker to stick to it. The tentative agreement stipulated that Conservatives,

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<sup>74</sup>JGD, vol. 4, p. 003704, Reed to Diefenbaker, 5 April 1938.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.



subject to local approval, would stay out of Elrose, Cutknife, Gull Lake, Wadena, Biggar, Humboldt, Kelvington and Willow Bunch. In return, the CCF would avoid Milestone, Lumsden, Rosetown, Melfort and Battleford while discussions for a few more seats continued.<sup>76</sup> Turnbull, still upset with Williams, informed Diefenbaker that the provincial leader of the CCF continued to stipulate his party's dominance in the negotiations, which left Turnbull with the distinct impression that Williams did not intend to leave many seats wide open for the Conservatives.<sup>77</sup> Turnbull's impression of the situation was that "it is hard to negotiate with a man without any balance."<sup>78</sup> But Diefenbaker's hands were tied.

Diefenbaker increasingly wanted to voice his dislike for the provincial CCF leader and attack the policies of the CCF openly. He lashed out at Perley, stating that "Williams attitude has made it quite impossible to do anything."<sup>79</sup> But lack of funding prevented Diefenbaker from doing more than complain to his closest advisors. J.F. Anderson recommended Diefenbaker inform the powers that be in Ottawa

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 003687, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 2 April 1938.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., Supplemental, Conservative Party - Saskatchewan - Organization p. 003683, Diefenbaker to Perley, 2 April 1938.

that "you want to know what in hell the party is going to do to stand behind you....To do it and raise hell is the only way you will get any action."<sup>80</sup> Turnbull also complained to Diefenbaker about lack of funding and advised the provincial leader to use Aberhart's threat to flood the province with candidates as a means to gain financial support from Bennett and the federal party. Turnbull wanted Diefenbaker to play on Bennett's fears that the only way to combat an unavoidable multi-contested campaign was with money for publicity, speakers, and candidates:"if the avalanche is to be held back, assistance must be forthcoming at once."<sup>81</sup> None came.

Diefenbaker concurred with Turnbull's assessment of economic conditions in Saskatchewan and their impact on the political future of the Conservative party, but he also recognized the difficulty of obtaining candidates because of these same conditions:

I am having a difficult time to get candidates because of the fact that every one seems fearful of a three-cornered fight, and this fear is being instilled in the minds of so many of our supporters, that I am afraid that there is a distinct movement towards having CCF candidates, and the result will be that only a comparatively small percentage of the seats will have Conservative candidates in the field. This would be a

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 003698, 003700, J.F. Anderson to Diefenbaker, 4 April 1938.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 003688, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 5 April 1938.

very bad position for the Party, as I see it.<sup>82</sup> As insightful as Diefenbaker was of the political environment, he did little to convey that in the party's policies.

Diefenbaker's party platform, failed to raise the hopes of Conservatives in the province. He promised changes to debt adjustment legislation, introduction of State run health insurance, reductions in government expenditures and the cost of automobile licenses, unemployment insurance, relief projects to increase employment, abolition of the education tax, a lower age requirement for old age pensions, enforcement of the Minimum Wage Act, support for separate railway systems and a promise to pay teachers their full salaries, which seldom occurred during the Depression while the Liberals were in power.<sup>83</sup> For the agriculture community, concerns over weed and insect control, reduction in transportation costs for farm products and machinery, and the sale of products at fair prices were addressed. More importantly, he supported the advantages of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, encouraged voluntary co-operatives in buying and selling of commodities, and active operation of

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 003706, Diefenbaker to N.R. Craig, 5 April 1938.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., pp. 005236-39, Platform of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party, 1938. See Appendix C for complete details of the 1938 Conservative platform.

the Canadian Wheat Board.<sup>84</sup>

The promises were appealing, especially to supporters of the CCF, who advocated many of the same issues. But with no voice in the Legislature and the province's newspapers favouring the Liberal party in the campaign, it was difficult for Diefenbaker to get his platform across to voters. In an effort to reach the electorate, Diefenbaker turned to the latest source of media coverage, the radio, to "put over" a few weekly broadcasts.<sup>85</sup> But newspaper coverage was needed because so few radios existed in drought-stricken Saskatchewan. Only the Conservative Regina Daily Star gave the platform a positive review: it was enthusiastic about the platform's main emphasis on "the welfare of agriculture and labour."<sup>86</sup> It certainly caught the attention of Tommy Douglas who liked Diefenbaker's stance on farm debt, social services and public works.<sup>87</sup> Conservatives were not so optimistic and they showed it by

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 003506, Diefenbaker to Lawson, 15 January 1937.

<sup>86</sup>Regina Daily Star, 22 January 1938.

<sup>87</sup>Thomas H. McLeod and Ian McLeod, Tommy Douglas: The Road to Jerusalem (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987), p. 99. Douglas later concluded that Diefenbaker's forward-looking platform was simply opportunistic: "He fastened on to anything that seemed to appeal to the public mood. If somebody had found out during the campaign that people were in favour of abolishing individual ownership of the home, he [Diefenbaker] would have looked at it very carefully" (interview by the authors with Tommy Douglas, 23 May 1985).

refusing to gamble as candidates in 1938.

To avoid the appearance of a no-show campaign, Diefenbaker took out a personal bank loan to put up deposits for twenty-two candidates. Money for Diefenbaker's own expenses came from Bennett in the form of a \$2,500 "wedding present".<sup>88</sup> But with only twenty-four Conservatives running in a total of fifty-two seats, too few to form a government in the event that they all succeeded, the sincerity of the Conservatives as a viable opposition to the Liberal party was questionable. To many in the province, and especially newspaper editors, the few candidates nominated by the Conservatives supported rumours that the CCF and Tories were working together in the campaign to form another cooperative government -- something few voters wanted after they so cleanly ousted Dr. Anderson's Cooperative government in 1934.

To quash rumours of Conservative involvement in another cooperative government and to encourage Conservative workers to continue organizing in designated ridings, Diefenbaker

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<sup>88</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 166. Diefenbaker refers to a meeting with Bennett in Ottawa when the National Conservative Convention met on March 4 and 5, 1938, at which Bennett announced his resignation as party leader. Diefenbaker reports that Bennett asked if the provincial leader was married, and if he had received a wedding present from Bennett. Diefenbaker responded that he was married for eight years and had not received a gift from Bennett, and that one was not necessary. On his return to Prince Albert three weeks later, Diefenbaker was surprised to find that Bennett sent him \$2,500 as a wedding gift. This was Bennett's way of funding Diefenbaker's election campaign.

was advised to tell the upcoming Conservative convention, which met two weeks prior to the June 8 election, that there was no deal between the Conservative party and the CCF, only informal discussions to avoid seats where the other was stronger.<sup>89</sup> He could convey the information "truthfully" since:

there was no agreement as to sawing off seats, and there is nothing to prevent the Conservatives putting a candidate in every seat in the Province that they think they can win. You could also add that there is not and will not be any agreement for the formation of a Co-operative Government after the Elections.<sup>90</sup>

At the convention, Diefenbaker rallied the party to keep working while his negotiators continued to arrange saw-offs. Negotiations with the CCF after the Liberals redistributed the provincial ridings left approximately fifteen uncontested seats to the Conservatives: Arm River, Moosomin, Qu'Appelle, Regina (2), Moose Jaw (2), Saskatoon (2), Hanley, Cumberland, Athabasca, Rosthern, Maple Creek and Yorkton. Prince Albert was noticeably absent from the list.<sup>91</sup>

The CCF nomination in Prince Albert, previously left to

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<sup>89</sup>JGD, p. 003762, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 21 April 1938.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 003761. Initially Prince Albert was also on the list, but withdrawn when the CCF nominated there. The Conservatives agreed to stay out of Elrose, Cutknife, Gull Lake, Wadena, Biggar, Humboldt, Kelvington, and Willow Bunch.

the Conservatives, was said to have "put Mr. Diefenbaker up in the air and makes that seat now hopeless from a Conservative point of view."<sup>92</sup> It is difficult to determine if Diefenbaker intended to run in the constituency, which he had contested in three previous elections, but at least he would have preferred the choice rather than have the CCF make it for him. The CCF nomination in the riding of the Conservative party leader showed bad faith, and Diefenbaker took the challenge personally. Two months earlier, in February, 1938, Diefenbaker was informed that the CCF would stay out of Prince Albert and support Diefenbaker if he chose to run in the seat.<sup>93</sup> Williams defended the recent actions of the Prince Albert CCF constituency organizers by stating that Diefenbaker had not committed to where he would run in the upcoming election.<sup>94</sup>

Diefenbaker was not willing to let Williams bully the Conservative party out of Prince Albert without a fight even though Diefenbaker decided to take a safer seat for himself in Arm River "because no one could ever hope to be elected as a Conservative in Prince Albert and Arm River was the

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<sup>92</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, pp. 519681-2, Turnbull to Bennett, 22 April 1938.

<sup>93</sup>JGD, p. 003614, Dr. Anderson to Diefenbaker, 22 February 1938

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 003761, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 21 April 1938.

best seat in the Province."<sup>95</sup> Diefenbaker chose Arm River because it was generally accepted that if the Grits could not be beaten anywhere else, at least they would be defeated in Arm River.<sup>96</sup> It also had a larger commonwealth-based immigrant population in comparison to Prince Albert. To strike back at the CCF for nominating in Prince Albert, Diefenbaker decided to hold a Conservative nominating convention. His actions received the expected response from the CCF. Its organizer for Prince Albert told Williams that it was hopeless with the Conservative in the field, and that Diefenbaker should be threatened that the CCF would nominate in Arm River unless he withdrew the Conservative nominee.<sup>97</sup> Williams was told that Diefenbaker stood alone on the decision among his executive to run a man in Prince Albert and was therefore more likely to withdraw the Conservative nominee if a little pressure was applied on him. Diefenbaker remained adamant in his conviction that if the Conservatives were not going to have a chance at Prince Albert, then neither were the CCF. He was out for revenge and could not be reasoned with. The Conservative nominating convention was called and Reverend Kennedy H. Palmer was

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<sup>95</sup>JGD, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, Interviews with Neville and Smith June 27 - September 26, 1969, p. 29.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., vol. 5, p. 003899, Hutcheon to Diefenbaker, 1 May 1938.

<sup>97</sup>SAB, CCF, p. 57101, J.J.F. MacIsaac to Williams, 29 April 1938.



nominated as the Conservative candidate for Prince Albert.<sup>98</sup>

The confrontation with Williams over Prince Albert tempted Diefenbaker to use the newspapers to attack the CCF leadership as untrustworthy. Perley disagreed with the provincial leader. He warned Diefenbaker that even though saw-offs were not as satisfactory as hoped for, there was still time for Douglas to come through by getting CCF nominees to withdraw from seats like Regina and Prince Albert. According to Perley, there was no other hope for the Conservative party in Saskatchewan to win seats except if they could avoid three-cornered contests. He advised Diefenbaker not to confront the CCF in the newspapers or over the radio, or to promote nominations in every constituency:

A statement from you along the lines suggested, at this time would certainly mean a CCF in every constituency, and I do think it is quite possible for us to have at least ten or twelve seats left to us without a CCF candidate.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 003786, Keown to Perley, 3 May 1938. Diefenbaker knew that Reverend Palmer had close ties to the Ku Klux Klan, but approved his nomination. J.J. Zubick wrote Diefenbaker on May 6: "By the way, he [Maloney] told me that the Conservative candidate in P.A. is a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, and a minister. I am sorry to hear this. If it gets to be known that he was a 'Kluxer,' it will be used against him; and while I have no prejudice against preachers, as such, I consider them out of place in politics, particularly when they bring their own special brand of religion into it" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, Aberhart, William 1936, 1938-39, p. 000007).

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 003771, Perley to Diefenbaker, 23 April 1938.

To keep the young Conservative leader from demolishing what remained of the arrangement, Perley asked that Diefenbaker inform him before any attacks were made against the CCF:

We have carried out our agreement with them & let's continue for awhile to play the game as I realize that three-cornered fights will be sure to elect the Liberals.<sup>100</sup>

Perley also reassured Diefenbaker that if saw-offs fail because the CCF did not live up to its end of the agreement, there would be opportunity after the 1938 provincial election to respond:

We [must] endeavour to carry out the arrangements as far as possible and say nothing or do nothing that will throw a monkey wrench into the works. There will be lots of time later on, if found necessary to make any statements with respect to this co-operation and if you then think they have not been carried out 100%.<sup>101</sup>

But it was almost too late. Negotiations, while advancing in Ottawa, were being sabotaged in Saskatchewan.<sup>102</sup>

Perley did everything possible to keep the provincial leader in check, even passing on confidential information from Douglas and Coldwell that if the understanding was followed, and if the CCF elected the most seats out of the

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., pp. 003799, Perley to Diefenbaker, 29 April 1938.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, p. 003815, Perley to Turnbull, 13 May 1938. Some local constituency executives had nominated their own candidates, pushing Perley to admit that "it looks to me as if both of us are losing control of the constituency executives." See Appendix D for full details of his report.

two parties, Coldwell would take over the Saskatchewan CCF party and Williams would be forced to resign. Diefenbaker took comfort in knowing that Williams was out of favour with his party, and that he would not have to work with him to hold the government together in case of a minority situation, but he lost all desire to continue negotiating while Williams remained leader of the CCF. To those Conservatives who continued to write him recommending cooperation, Diefenbaker responded:

There are two groups of the Conservative party - one group led by Dr Johnston[e] which condemns me for not having a candidate in every field, and the other group to which you belong which believes in co-operation. The result of this cleavage makes it necessary to leave the matter to each Constituency for decision, and so the matter now remains.<sup>103</sup>

There was no drive, no fire in his heart for the last two weeks of the 1938 campaign. In short, he abandoned the party and left each constituency to fight the campaign on its own.

In the final few weeks of the campaign, Diefenbaker self-destructed as an effective leader of the Conservative party. He did, however, focus his efforts on winning over the Arm River constituents. While Diefenbaker lost interest in leading the campaign, the Liberal party went on the offensive against Diefenbaker the leader and Diefenbaker the candidate. A rumour was circulating throughout Regina that

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 003818, Diefenbaker to H.B. Hall, 23 May 1938.

"if the Conservative party is returned to office every Catholic in the civil service would be dismissed."<sup>104</sup> When Diefenbaker joined the debate and accused the Liberal government of not being able to act without Gardiner's consent, the door was opened for the Liberals to raise their own accusations of puppetry against the Tory leader:

...in several seats of the province Mr. Diefenbaker cannot act without first consulting the CCF, a socialist party. In some seats the Conservatives and the socialists are cooperating to defeat the government. The proposal is to defeat the government and then form a Conservative-CCF government. Which is a rather strange business in itself. But if Mr. Diefenbaker wants to run with the CCF nobody can stop him.<sup>105</sup>

The Saskatchewan Liberal noted that "the colour that may result from this varied mixture will undoubtedly be very painful to the eyes and probably also nauseating."<sup>106</sup> The provincial electorate, it seemed, agreed.

Diefenbaker's inability to get enough candidates to contest every seat led the Liberals to conclude that "it becomes obvious that the Conservatives have no hope of forming the next government of Saskatchewan" even though Diefenbaker previously made such claims.<sup>107</sup> An editorial

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 004717, A.P. Hughes to Diefenbaker, 4 May 1938. Hughes believed the rumour was started by Doug Munroe, one of the Liberal organizers.

<sup>105</sup>Regina Leader Post, editorial, 14 May 1938.

<sup>106</sup>Saskatchewan Liberal, vol. VI, no. 12, 19 May 1938, from JGD, vol. 13, p. 10754.

<sup>107</sup>Regina Leader Post, editorial, 19 May 1938.

in the Liberal-run Leader-Post concluded that because some Conservative party members attacked the CCF while others supported co-operation, "in this queer way the Conservative organization seems to be preparing to have Dr. Anderson and Mr. Diefenbaker take the party in 1938 where Dr. Anderson took it alone in 1934 -- into oblivion."<sup>108</sup> Conservatives also began to grumble over Diefenbaker's leadership of the party. Johnstone renewed his demand for a true blue Conservative party campaign rather than cooperation with the CCF:

Our left-wing Conservatives must be having rather a dizzy time of it, trying to think up new stunts to keep themselves in the limelight. The wind their leaders sowed in 1928 and '29 has gone beyond the whirlwind stage and grown into a veritable tornado....The complete suppression of Conservative views over the past ten years has brought about the disappearance of that party in so far as anything conservative is concerned....If there is any difference among these groups it is only in the distance they have travelled along the broad highway that leads to communism and dictatorship.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid. Dr. Anderson began asking questions about cooperating with the CCF in early 1938. To prevent the doctor from expanding his enquiries to persons not involved, Perley advised Diefenbaker to inform Dr. Anderson that "something is being done" (JGD, vol. 4, p. 003600, Perley to Diefenbaker, 14 February 1938). Diefenbaker had not informed the previous leader of the arrangements with the CCF, no doubt due to his mistrust of Dr. Anderson's over-zealous penchant to co-operate with anybody, including the Liberals in 1932. Nonetheless, Dr. Anderson was informed and his confidence in Diefenbaker's approach to saw-offs materialized in receiving the nomination for one of the two Saskatoon ridings. There is also evidence to suggest that Diefenbaker used Dr. Anderson as an advisor during negotiations.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 21 May 1938.

The provincial Liberal party newspapers took advantage of the attack on Diefenbaker and printed Johnstone's public remark that if the CCF and Conservatives did collect more seats than the Liberals, then the Premier should be determined by holding a hog-calling contest with the winner chosen from the one heard the farthest.<sup>110</sup>

The Liberals easily preyed on the Conservative party's disunity and Diefenbaker's support for co-operation:

"observers of the present campaign say that the Conservatives may again fail to win a seat and that the Conservative campaign had little chance from the beginning."<sup>111</sup> Their prophecies of the Conservative outcome were correct. Not one Conservative was elected to the legislature. In Arm River, Diefenbaker put up a good fight, but he lost by 190 votes and only was successful in twenty-four of the fifty-one polls.<sup>112</sup>

The June 8 election results reflected Diefenbaker's see-saw attitude on saw-offs. His inconsistent leadership in the campaign resulted in fewer votes for Conservative candidates. Not sticking to the arrangement and allowing local executives to nominate without his approval split the vote among the Conservatives and CCF parties in a number of

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<sup>110</sup>Craik Weekly News, 26 May 1938, from JGD, vol. 5, p. 003920.

<sup>111</sup>Regina Leader Post, editorial, 23 May 1938.

<sup>112</sup>JGD, vol. 5, pp. 003935-36, statement of returning officer. See Appendix H for complete details.

ridings. Conservatives placed second in only two ridings and won just over twelve percent of the votes cast -- down from nearly twenty-seven percent in 1934 when they were also shut-out of the legislature. Across the province they finished in fourth place behind the Liberals, the CCF, and the new arrival, Social Credit.<sup>113</sup> The Moses of the Conservative party led it to the precipice of total collapse instead of out of the political wilderness that Dr. Anderson had guided it into from 1929 to 1934.

Long standing explanations for the embarrassing showing of the Conservative party in the 1938 election -- which emphasize lack of funding to run a successful campaign, a poor economy due to the Depression that prevented provincial Conservatives from supporting their local party or running as candidates, a strong Liberal opponent, and third party candidates as a result of Social Credit and the CCF entering the field -- remain viable but incomplete. While existing arguments attest to the difficulties facing Diefenbaker as he led the party into the 1938 election, they do not explain why the Conservatives lost so badly under his leadership or why Diefenbaker again failed to end his own political apprenticeship. Diefenbaker's participation in the campaign had an immediate impact on the party's prospects and his

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<sup>113</sup>Patrick Kyba, "From Contender to Also-Ran: John Diefenbaker and the Saskatchewan Conservative Party in the Election of 1938," Saskatchewan History, volume 44, no. 3 (autumn 1992), p. 103.

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Rather than fight a campaign with the limited resources available and attempt to raise even minimal funds through party membership or solicitation after he became leader in 1936, Diefenbaker chose saw-offs with the CCF as the avenue for Conservative victories. Most of all, he was concerned first and foremost with ending his own political apprenticeship through the negotiations. He not only allowed federal Tories to dictate political activities and organization in the province, but for a time in late 1937 and early 1938, Diefenbaker embraced their desire to cooperate with the CCF at both provincial and federal levels. By negotiating saw-offs, Diefenbaker expected to get elected in Arm River and arrange a similar outcome for a few other select Conservative candidates in a few ridings. The good of the party and the effect of cooperation on its future were secondary considerations. By following Ottawa's lead, the provincial leader stifled local Conservatives who were prepared to work and fund a pure and independent Tory campaign. Others were disappointed with his failure to continue negotiations effectively when difficulties with Williams appeared. The party needed committed leadership either in support of or in opposition to saw-offs with the CCF prior to the 1938 election. It received neither. Instead, Diefenbaker sat on the fence and tried to have it both ways at one point or another in the campaign. He see-



sawed between making an arrangement with the CCF and running as many Conservatives as possible. In May, when negotiations fell apart, Diefenbaker left the local constituencies to fend for themselves. When they did so, he found opportunity for criticizing them for not supporting his leadership of the party.

He also made an easy target for Liberal organizers to criticize his prophecy of a "sweep" as unrealistic. They saw that his efforts at co-operation would "in all probability leav[e] the party out on the same limb where it found itself after its previous affiliation with various strange gods."<sup>114</sup> Even when Diefenbaker attempted to counter the accusations of the Liberal newspapers with some comment on policy, such as repealing the education tax and increasing social services, he was met with scepticism. Liberal newspaper editors attacked his statements as ludicrous and not to be "taken seriously" since he had only twenty-four candidates in the field and therefore no hope of forming the government.<sup>115</sup> By see-sawing on saw-offs he failed to provide the leadership necessary to pull the party together. By hedging, Diefenbaker earned the wrath of those within his party and that of the electorate. He was, therefore, partially to blame for his and the party's no show in the 1938 election campaign. His leadership of the

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Regina Leader Post, editorial, 4 June 1938.

provincial Conservative party to the promised land instead led it further into the political wilderness.

#### Chapter Four - Elections and Horse Races are Very Uncertain

In 1938, John Diefenbaker gambled on saw-offs with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), thinking it would pay off for him and the party with victory in at least a few seats. It did not. Falling short of winning even a single seat in the provincial legislature proved to Diefenbaker that a shortage of funds and the strength of his opponents were not acceptable excuses for the pursuit of saw-offs with other like-situated parties. He was quite certain that the future of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan rested with Conservatives fighting on their own with a reformed party platform that reflected the changing social and economic realities facing the country. The Conservative party would need to draw the electorate back to it with a platform worthy of its attention. He had the platform in 1938, but he was unable to utilize it fully in the campaign because of pressure from federal Tories to saw-off with the CCF. He was determined not to make the same mistake twice as he considered the next step to ending his political apprenticeship.

As provincial party leader, responsibility for federal organization in Saskatchewan for the upcoming federal

campaign fell to him. He subsequently tried to influence federal party organizers not to follow through with the saw-off arrangements for federal ridings, but federal party organizers would hear nothing of it. Instead, efforts were made to silence Diefenbaker's call for a Conservative in every riding. When conventional wisdom failed to influence Diefenbaker to cooperate, E.E. Perley enticed Diefenbaker to join the federal campaign as a candidate in a riding promising a Conservative victory. Diefenbaker received the nomination for the federal riding of Lake Centre in exchange for his cooperation and silence. Even though he opposed the principle of cooperation, Diefenbaker did not prevent Perley from trying to have the CCF withdrawn from Lake Centre and his own riding of Qu'Appelle. When Diefenbaker won the seat, defeating the Liberal and CCF candidates, he was convinced that saw-offs blocked rather than enhanced political opportunities for Conservative candidates. As one of only a few Conservatives elected in 1940, Diefenbaker ended his political apprenticeship and began his lonely crusade to battle the political forces of evil, including those within his own party, to do what he thought was right for himself, his party and the people of Canada. In essence, campaigning without compromise.

Poor results in the 1938 provincial election raised questions among leading Conservatives as to Diefenbaker's ability to continue leading the party. A post-mortem of the

campaign convinced some in the party to question Diefenbaker's approval of negotiations to cooperate and others to question why negotiations failed. Few in the party seemed to be happy with Diefenbaker's see-saw on saw-offs. Diefenbaker defended the party's results under his leadership arguing that while Dr. Anderson had fifty seats contested in 1934, polling 114,000 votes, Diefenbaker polled slightly more than half that with only twenty-four candidates. Diefenbaker's arithmetic supported his argument that he fared as well if not better than Dr. Anderson.<sup>1</sup>

To fend off personal attack Diefenbaker was quick to blame the party's failure on lack of funds and an inability to get candidates into ridings.<sup>2</sup> He was also careful, at first, not to blame cooperation since negotiations were secretly carried out under his authority. The failure of cooperation was too closely associated with him, but his ego prevented him from accepting blame. After all, he organized the province for seventeen months without any salary and "no assistance from the East, other than generous personal help from Mr. Bennett."<sup>3</sup>

Turnbull defended Diefenbaker's actions to Bennett,

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<sup>1</sup>John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers, Pre-1940 series (hereafter JGD unless another series is specified), vol. 1, pp. 000360-61, Diefenbaker to G.S. Thorvaldson, 18 June 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, p. 001629, Diefenbaker to Denton Massey, 10 June 1938.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

stating that:

business voters in Regina, the banks, financial houses, insurance companies, implement houses and such like, appear to have been definitely instructed by their Head Offices to see that they, and their employees, voted Liberal. The instructions were followed.<sup>4</sup>

Eastern Conservative supporting financiers preferred a Liberal because of an "undercurrent of fear of a Social Credit Government stampeding the electorate."<sup>5</sup> The voters, according to Diefenbaker, also voted Liberal because of an elaborate scheme to distribute seed wheat and oats in the last few days of the campaign:

In one case a farmer had completed all his seeding on the day before the election and had received his quota, but there was delivered to him an extra one hundred bushels of wheat and seventy-five bushels of oats, which the day after the election he hauled into the elevator [to sell].<sup>6</sup>

Diefenbaker, on the other hand, had little in the way of incentives worth voting for.

Poor economic times were a fact of life for the Conservative party in 1938, but what about cooperation? Little was said by Diefenbaker immediately following the election concerning his role in arranging saw-offs except

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<sup>4</sup>National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC) R.B. Bennett Papers, MG 26 K (hereafter Bennett Papers), microfilm, reel #1474, pp. 519399-400, Frank Turnbull to Bennett, 9 June 1938.

<sup>5</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 001629, Diefenbaker to Denton Massey, 10 June 1938.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 000348, Diefenbaker to Fred Kent, member of the five-man constituency organization committee, 16 June 1938.

that "elections and horse races are very uncertain."<sup>7</sup> At the October 26, 1938 provincial Conservative convention, nearly four months later, he partially blamed the local constituency organizations for the party's poor showing. He argued that he had tried to get something going in every constituency, but in some it was believed that the best thing to do was defeat the Liberal candidate by getting behind the CCF. Diefenbaker "could not overcome that feeling" of betrayal.<sup>8</sup> His selective memory had forgotten all about his abandonment of the constituency organizations in the last days of the campaign when they wanted him to nominate Conservative candidates and he wanted to fulfil his promise to Ottawa and keep to the arrangement.

Only in hindsight did Diefenbaker acknowledge the error in cooperating with the CCF. Turnbull put the party's general thoughts into words:

We have fought three elections in Saskatchewan with the idea that our main objective is the defeat of the Liberals and the destruction of the machine. With that end in view we have driven our Conservatives to vote for a Social Credit Candidate in Melville; Unity Candidates, consisting of CCF, Social Credit and Conservative in other points, and CCF candidates in others. We have encouraged the idea that it is not advisable to be a Conservative, but that it is advisable to be anti-liberal.

We have nursed third parties in this Province

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<sup>7</sup>JGD, volume 6, p. 004721, Diefenbaker to W.L. McGovern, Regina, 10 June 1938.

<sup>8</sup>Regina Leader-Post, 26 October 1938. See also Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), p. 221.

ever since Sir Frederick Haultain started his "Provincial Rights Party" in the early years of the century. We have lent them our voters so steadily since the rise of the Progressive Party in 1921 that they have become a gift instead of a loan.<sup>9</sup>

Diefenbaker was of the same mind and hoped the leader of the national Conservative party would agree to break the cooperative mould within the party as the federal election neared. Bennett, however, was preparing to leave politics and leave the national party's direction to his replacement.

Robert Manion won on the second ballot of the July 7, 1938, federal Conservative leadership convention in Ottawa. Diefenbaker hoped that the new national leader would introduce reforms to undercut the rising popularity of the CCF and bring the Conservative party into the present age of social and economic thinking:

There is also the question of evolving a policy that will be in keeping with present day conditions, as my opinion is that the traditional policy of the Party (however blessed it may be with age) must be brought up to date, otherwise it will not appeal to the public. This would be considered a form of treason by the Old Guard and the reactionary elements in the Party who intend to make a fight at the Convention for a return of the Party's principles of forty or fifty years ago.<sup>10</sup>

A return to traditional party values or negotiations with the CCF would, according to Diefenbaker, permanently harm the party. Diefenbaker believed that the CCF absorbed many

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<sup>9</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, reel #1474, p. 519401, Turnbull to Bennett, 16 June 1938.

<sup>10</sup>JGD, vol. 3, pp. 001632-3, Diefenbaker to George A. McGillivray, 21 June 1938.



of Saskatchewan's Conservatives following Dr. Anderson's defeat in 1934 and his in 1938, but if Manion could convince the farmers and labour that the federal Conservative party stood for reform, many of the strays would return.<sup>11</sup>

Ernest Perley, however, still believed that if Manion could get the likes of Diefenbaker and Turnbull to refrain from making statements like "we should organize in every seat and fight the CCF," then there was hope that an agreement could be reached with the CCF executive before the next federal election, which was expected during the summer of 1939.<sup>12</sup> J.M. Robb, the chief organizer for the national Conservative party, agreed that there were several seats that should not be contested in Saskatchewan because the expense would be futile.<sup>13</sup> Robb agreed with Conservatives like Diefenbaker that cooperation was not the best thing for the party, but he saw no alternative if federal seats were to be gained in Saskatchewan.

While Robb and Perley plotted their strategy for the federal campaign in Saskatchewan, Diefenbaker took it upon himself to organize his own way. He publicly attacked the CCF, stating that there were "many thousands of honest and

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<sup>11</sup>NAC, Robert Manion Papers, MG 27, III, B7 (hereafter Manion Papers), volume 17, Diefenbaker to Manion, 3 September 1938.

<sup>12</sup>NAC, Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Papers (hereafter PCPC), microfilm, reel #421, O-P, p. 3, E.E. Perley to J.M. Robb, 24 November 1938.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Robb to Perley, 1 December 1938.

sincere people in its ranks, but amongst its leadership are men who are out to destroy the Conservative party."<sup>14</sup>

Diefenbaker was convinced that George Williams and the CCF negotiated saw-offs in 1938 to keep the Conservatives from nominating and organizing in every riding. His conviction was based on their nomination tactics and their winning seats while the Conservatives were shut out. Diefenbaker did not trust them, preferring to gamble his future political success on being able to "hit the CCF very hard."<sup>15</sup>

Diefenbaker was not alone in his sentiments. Other Conservatives in Saskatchewan saw the error of their ways over the previous ten years. According to Turnbull:

the Liberals in Saskatchewan are not the real enemies of the Conservative Party. We are not losing votes to them, while we are battling Socialism. The Socialists are growing stronger at our expense.<sup>16</sup>

Alex Reed, one of Diefenbaker's backers for no truck or trade with the CCF, argued that:

it is better to fight valiantly for what you believe to be right than to snivle [sic] before the CCF or Social Credit parties, both of which represent nothing but discontent and protest against Climate and Geography.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Regina Leader Post, 6 December 1938.

<sup>15</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 169, S-S-3a, Keown to Robb, 16 December 1938.

<sup>16</sup>NAC, Manion Papers, M-700-T, p. 2, Turnbull to Manion, 1 February 1939.

<sup>17</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 001701, Alex Reed to Diefenbaker, 13 February 1939.

But while Conservatives in Saskatchewan wanted to run straight Conservatives in the next election, federal organizers thought otherwise.

Robb believed that the Liberals had to be beaten at any cost. No truck or trade with the CCF was impractical if the federal party had any hope of winning four or five Saskatchewan seats in the upcoming federal election.<sup>18</sup> Cooperating with the CCF was the best and possibly the only avenue for some semblance of victory in Saskatchewan considering the party's financial situation. According to Robb, "the whole danger [of failed negotiations] would be avoided if nobody mentioned anything at all about the CCF, either pro or con, and confined their talk to a severe castigation of the Liberal regime."<sup>19</sup> Robb, no doubt, had the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association (SCA) in mind.

Since federal organization in Saskatchewan was the responsibility of the provincial wing of the party, saw-off critics like Diefenbaker had to be silenced. If Robb could not get Diefenbaker's support during the campaign then he would look for ways of getting around it. President Bert Keown of the SCA had a solution. Conservatives who stood in

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<sup>18</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 167, Moose Jaw (confidential), Robb to W.A. Munns, President, Moose Jaw Conservative Association, 15 December 1938.

<sup>19</sup>NAC, Manion Papers, vol. 54, J.M. Robb to J.W. Hair, 17 January 1939.

the way of an arrangement and did not wish to support the party's cooperative activities could be persuaded to follow the federal organizer's plan: "when they find that there are no monies to assist them we think they will be guided by our advice."<sup>20</sup> The limited financial resources that were available would be distributed among a few seats where saw-offs were negotiated.

No matter what Diefenbaker thought, the federal office was going to continue in its efforts to arrange saw-offs with the CCF in Saskatchewan. In February 1939, Robb began to circumvent the jurisdiction of the provincial leader. While passing through the prairies on his way to the coast, Robb stopped off at Moose Jaw to convince the local Conservative organization to consider the necessity of co-operating with the CCF. Although Keown accepted the necessity of saw-offs, he disapproved of Robb's efforts to sabotage the provincial party's traditional right to organize the province for the federal election:

It is a certainty that Diefenbaker cannot continue to be retained as the Leader of the Party in this Province and yet not have a thing to do with it. I am very opposed to Ottawa endeavouring to run this Province [and] if we are to adopt that attitude we might just as well become a part of the CCF Party.<sup>21</sup>

As the duly elected officers in Saskatchewan, the provincial

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<sup>20</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 169, S-S-3a, Bert Keown to Robb, December 16 1938.

<sup>21</sup>JGD, vol 3, p. 001717, Keown to Perley, 27 February 1939.

executive reserved the right to run the federal campaign, subject to but not restricted to Robb's advice.<sup>22</sup> Anxious to arrange saw-offs in Saskatchewan because an election was expected within months, Robb realized that he would have to work with the provincial organization under Diefenbaker. He would also have to find a way to get Diefenbaker to change his mind to support saw-offs.

Diefenbaker was not the only provincial leader to have difficulty with the federal wing of his party leading up to the election. Saskatchewan's CCF leader, George Williams, was not impressed with the ongoing efforts of M.J. Coldwell and Tommy Douglas to come to an arrangement with the Tories. In fact, Williams admonished Douglas for thinking that cooperation could benefit the CCF, telling him to:

leave this business of cooperation and unity entirely alone....Had we not been through the experience of having tried cooperation and having had it fail, and in the face of that failure having demonstrated the strength of the CCF by doubling our membership in the [Saskatchewan] House [sic]. [T]here might be some excuse for trying it now but having tried it and having proved it to be a failure, the average CCF'er that has any stability will not follow or lead in that direction again but rather will resent it and resent it bitterly.<sup>23</sup>

Williams' attitude towards saw-offs was evident at the 1938 summer convention of the Saskatchewan CCF when it passed a

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<sup>22</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 169, S-S-3a, p. 2, Keown to Robb, 7 March 1939.

<sup>23</sup>Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Papers (hereafter CCF), B7 II, volume 97, subfile 1931-52, G.H. Williams to Tommy Douglas, 27 March 1939.

resolution not to make any more deals with other parties. The practice, however, was hard to stop.<sup>24</sup> Throughout 1939, the federal organizers of the CCF and Conservative parties continued to negotiate.

Robb's opportunity to block Diefenbaker's influence over federal organization in Saskatchewan came in May 1939, when he was informed that the best hopes for a Conservative victory in the province was Lake Centre. Robb immediately asked Bill Turner, a federal organizer, what he thought of Diefenbaker as a candidate in Lake Centre and what Diefenbaker's chances would be for success.<sup>25</sup> Robb hoped that, if Diefenbaker were to accept the nomination, the provincial Tory would have to subject himself to the federal organizer's strategy. Because Lake Centre encompassed most of the provincial riding of Arm River, Turner thought the people would accept Diefenbaker's candidacy.<sup>26</sup> To encourage Diefenbaker to run in the next federal election, Turner contacted Diefenbaker and told him of the excellent opportunity for victory in the constituency, if he would let

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<sup>24</sup>Thomas H. McLeod and Ian McLeod, Tommy Douglas: the Road to Jerusalem (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987), p. 100. In the 1940 federal election, "Tommy Douglas and Ernie Perley agreed to a saw-off. The CCF stayed out of Qu'Appelle, and the Conservatives stayed out of Weyburn. Both incumbents won."

<sup>25</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 169, Robb to Bill Turner, secretary of Regina Conservative Association and provincial organizer, 1 May 1939.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Turner to Robb, 8 May 1939.

his name stand. Turner baited the hook by confiding in Diefenbaker that even with the CCF in the field, he believed that a Tory could take the seat handily.<sup>27</sup> After five losses Diefenbaker was tempted by talk of an easy victory. But Diefenbaker approached the opportunity with caution, looking for a second opinion before he would commit to running again so quickly after defeat in the same area -- even though he lost by only 190 votes.

Diefenbaker asked the other provincial organizer, Arthur Kendall, for his opinion of a Conservative victory in Lake Centre. Kendall told Diefenbaker that a Tory could win "hands down" in a straight fight against either a Liberal or the CCF, but that such an easy contest was unlikely.<sup>28</sup> Diefenbaker was not discouraged by the mixed messages. Either way a Conservative victory seemed likely. On June 15, he went to the nominating meeting "very anxious to stand" as the Conservative candidate for Lake Centre.<sup>29</sup> He refused, however, to accept the invitation of the constituency's Conservative executive unless there was unanimous support for him, which posed a problem when all possible candidates withdrew at the convention with one

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<sup>27</sup>JGD, vol. 3, p. 001766, Turner to Diefenbaker, 9 May 1939.

<sup>28</sup>JGD, vol. 1, p. 000592, Arthur Kendall to Diefenbaker, 12 May 1939.

<sup>29</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 167, S-L-1a Lake Centre (confidential), Perley to Robb, 15 June 1939.

exception: a local farmer and president of the Lake Centre Conservative Association, W.B. Kelly. Diefenbaker withdrew his name when Kelly announced he was in the running. Before Kelly's nomination was finalized the local association called a recess to convince the aspiring politician that he had no chance of victory in the constituency, and that it wanted Diefenbaker. Kelly then withdrew, and Diefenbaker was nominated.<sup>30</sup>

Following Diefenbaker's nomination, Perley and Kendall worked to have the CCF candidate for Lake Centre withdrawn to allow a clear fight between the Liberal and Diefenbaker. With the federal organizers focused on getting Conservatives elected, Perley advised Diefenbaker:

there is a possibility of the CCF candidate being withdrawn and I want to advise you to be very careful in the first few speeches you make not to attack [W.R.] Fansher personally or go after him too strong. If we can get him out of the field, I think it would make your election certain. Keep this in the strictest of confidence and await developments.<sup>31</sup>

Kendall informed Robb on July 1 that "with the assistance of Mr. T.C. Douglas, I am personally negotiating with key men in the [Lake Centre] Constituency and the prospects for a

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<sup>30</sup>Diefenbaker, pp. 180-2, and Wilson, pp. 231-2. Two weeks after Diefenbaker accepted the Lake Centre nomination, T.C. Davis resigned from the provincial Prince Albert riding. Although he wanted to run in the upcoming by-election, Diefenbaker was committed to run in the federal election. He had waited fifteen years for Davis to retire from politics only to miss the opportunity to replace him when it came.

<sup>31</sup>JGD, vol. 1, p. 000632, Perley to Diefenbaker, 23 June 1939.



C.C.F. withdrawal look good at the moment."<sup>32</sup> Diefenbaker neither welcomed nor rejected the offer to arrange a saw-off on his behalf. He was convinced that he could win the seat whether the CCF stayed or withdrew from the riding. At least that was the impression he gave local organizers. What he said to federal organizers was quite different.

Set to contest Lake Centre, Diefenbaker did not change his attitude towards saw-offs as Robb had hoped by approving the nomination. Diefenbaker continued to state that the only way to get Coldwell, Douglas and Williams to realize that the Conservative party would not be a "cat's paw" was to nominate Conservatives in every federal seat in the province. Then and only then, argued Diefenbaker, would it "be possible, before election, to make arrangements for withdrawing some of our candidates in return for like consideration by the CCF in other constituencies."<sup>33</sup> Diefenbaker had tempered his opposition to saw-offs with the condition that Conservatives be nominated in all seats before negotiations with the CCF began. In this way the Conservative party could reinstate withdrawn candidates if the CCF refused to bargain fairly, or if it was trying to trick the Conservatives by keeping them out of a number of seats as Diefenbaker suspected was the case in 1938.

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<sup>32</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 167, extract from Arthur Kendall letter, 1 July 1939.

<sup>33</sup>JGD, vol. 3, pp. 001790-91, Diefenbaker to Robb, 20 July 1939.

Without informing national headquarters, and still acting in the capacity as head organizer of the federal campaign in Saskatchewan, Diefenbaker undertook a province-wide speaking campaign "calling upon party members to nominate a candidate in every federal constituency for the forthcoming election."<sup>34</sup> The response from federal organizers was predictably negative to Diefenbaker's misdirected enthusiasm.

Perley was furious with Diefenbaker's willingness to permit an arrangement in Lake Centre, while simultaneously crusading for nominations in every riding:

...it was with difficulty that we got him the nomination and he expressed himself before accepting it that it would be much better if the CCF were out of the field and he had clear sailing with the Liberals....But now Diefenbaker has thrown a monkey wrench in the works and if Fansher [the CCF candidate] sticks, Diefenbaker can't be elected.<sup>35</sup>

Perley believed that progress was being made with Douglas and Coldwell to arrange saw-offs in four or five seats, but "now this statement will make it almost impossible for us to have any further dealings with the CCF."<sup>36</sup> Robb was asked to contact Diefenbaker immediately and stop him from promoting Conservative nominations in every riding. The

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<sup>34</sup>"Ask Complete Conservative Nomination, Diefenbaker Opposed to Unity Move," Prince Albert Daily Herald, 25 July 1939.

<sup>35</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 168, S-O-Ia Qu'Appelle, Perley to Robb, 26 July 1939.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

only way to stop Diefenbaker from further damaging the Conservative campaign in Saskatchewan was for Robb to go to Regina and call the key men of the province together to set up a committee of two or three to take control of campaign arrangements. Hopefully, this would "prevent Diefenbaker and any others from making statements similar to that made...."<sup>37</sup> If Diefenbaker continued unchecked, the results would likely mirror those of the provincial election when Diefenbaker led the campaign: not one Tory victory.

Unwilling to usurp Diefenbaker's right to organize the province for fear the provincial party would further split from the national organization, or worse yet, start up its own party, Robb preferred a less threatening approach. He personally contacted Diefenbaker and pointed out the scarce finances available to support the provincial leader's campaign strategy and the likelihood of electing Liberals in many ridings if funds were divided among the twenty-one federal seats in Saskatchewan. Robb knew what had to be done for the party to have a slim chance for victory in even one Saskatchewan seat. But with a full slate of candidates, he asked Diefenbaker "...would it not be judicious not to express a public opinion on this question at all?"<sup>38</sup> The scolding upset Diefenbaker. He was slow to respond.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>JGD, vol 3, p. 001802, Robb to Diefenbaker, 28 July 1939.

As a man who did not take criticism well, Diefenbaker went on the defensive, stating that "there is no use pampering the CCF for in doing so it destroys the identity of our party."<sup>39</sup> He also wanted to make it clear that he was upset over being robbed of his right as provincial leader to organize:

I have at no time been consulted by them [Perley or Kendall] or any one else in reference to Organization, nor my attitude towards the CCF and I wish this clearly understood so that if repercussions occur later on there will be no responsibility to me.<sup>40</sup>

So upset was Diefenbaker that he decided to meet with Robb in Ottawa at the end of the week "to have things threshed out."<sup>41</sup> Robb did not know what to expect next from Diefenbaker.

On his way to the National Bar Convention in Quebec, Diefenbaker stopped over in Ottawa to speak with Robb about cooperating with the CCF and how many Conservatives should run in Saskatchewan. The brief encounter left Robb with the impression that Diefenbaker was confused and somewhat arrogant in his attitude towards saw-offs:

I think he was a little annoyed at what I said regarding the CCF but there is no use in him laying down a general rule for the Province that we should have our own candidate in each riding and at the same

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 001803, Diefenbaker to Robb, 9 August 1939.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

time saying the CCF should be withdrawn against him.<sup>42</sup> Diefenbaker was proving to be harder than expected to control even after efforts were made to get him the Lake Centre nomination. The solution to Robb's dilemma was clear: Diefenbaker had to be immobilized as organizer of the province.

Before Robb could act, Britain and France declared war against Germany on September 3, 1939, and seven days later Canada followed. The election was delayed and a truce between political parties enacted to ensure the country's war effort was well under way before the political contest continued. All political activities of the national Conservative party were curtailed. When organizing resumed in the spring of 1940, Kendall continued to arrange a saw-off in Lake Centre -- if not for Diefenbaker's sake, then for the good of the party. To complicate matters, Perley informed Robb that "Diefenbaker...is giving us a little trouble in this respect [to saw-offs] as he is threatening to blow off over the air and threatening to put a Conservative against everyone of the CCF that we have negotiated with."<sup>43</sup> Lake Centre remained open for negotiations because the CCF candidate in the constituency was in serious financial difficulties after getting involved

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<sup>42</sup>NAC, PCPC, vol. 168, S-Q-1a Qu'Appelle, Robb to Perley, 14 August 1939.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Perley to Robb, 14 February 1940.

in a "wildcat" mining scheme, and "would listen to a proposal to withdraw if some security was offered in the way of a permanent job, or position."<sup>44</sup> Robb "could see no reason why, if our party is successful, some consideration might not be given to any request he [Fansher] might make."<sup>45</sup> Diefenbaker, however, would have nothing to do with the arrangements. Forgetting what he had done in 1938, he denounced Conservatives, especially Perley, who were willing to "sell out all other ridings in the province" in the hope of winning their own.<sup>46</sup> Diefenbaker was now deeply entrenched in the conviction that there should be no talk of co-operation when such an obvious opportunity for victory existed.<sup>47</sup>

Diefenbaker also upset national organizers by making promises not sanctioned by the national Conservative Party in an effort to take votes away from the CCF in his riding:

we intend to enact legislation to raise the price of

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., vol. 167, Kendall to Robb, 12 March 1940.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Robb to Kendall, 13 March 1940.

<sup>46</sup>JGD 3, p. 001846, Diefenbaker to Keown, 15 February 1940.

<sup>47</sup>In times requiring patriotism such as war, Diefenbaker believed the electorate would vote for the traditional policies of the Conservative party. Diefenbaker believed the success of the Conservative party in 1917 supported his contention to contest the election without the cooperation of the CCF. He made no reference, however, to the fact that it was a Union government that formed in 1917 when a number of Liberals joined with Conservatives to run as union candidates and not straight Conservatives or Liberals.

your [farmers'] produce at least 40 per cent....The farmers today pay too much for what they buy in proportion to the price paid to them for their produce. We intend to equalize prices and give the farmers a break.<sup>48</sup>

The Conservative party had had just about enough of John G. Diefenbaker. It, however, needed candidates at a time when few were available.

Diefenbaker's maverick attitude finally caught up with him as the March 26, 1940, election approached. In an era when those who spoke on his behalf were just as important as what they said, many of his political peers refused to assist him in Lake Centre during the campaign. According to Diefenbaker, he was shunned because he refused to "consider the heresy of...saw-offs."<sup>49</sup> Aside from forcing him to stand firm against co-operation, the lack of speakers forced him to stay in his own constituency. By concentrating his efforts in Lake Centre, with six consecutive radio broadcasts over Regina's CKRM, fifty-seven meetings in the riding and sending out 8,700 personal letters,<sup>50</sup> Diefenbaker did more for himself with hard work than if he had obtained a saw-off with the CCF. Diefenbaker recognized the situation for what it was: his success depended on his

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<sup>48</sup>Quote attributed to Diefenbaker in Wilson and Wilson, pp. 250-251.

<sup>49</sup>JGD vol. 3, p. 001855, Diefenbaker to Lieutenant Mervyn Woods, 18 April 1940.

<sup>50</sup>JGD, vol. 13, p. 10622, Diefenbaker to R.L. Hanbridge, 8 April 1940.

own efforts and not the efforts of others. The use of radio to reach "the homes of many with whom I otherwise would have had no contact" in a campaign where radio was widely used for the first time also had a lot to do with his success.<sup>51</sup> His evangelical way of speaking came off better over the airwaves than it did in print. Diefenbaker ended up with 280 more votes than J.F. Johnston, the Liberal candidate, and 1,181 more than W.R. Fansher of the CCF.<sup>52</sup> The termination of his tenure as a political apprentice was just the opposite to his experience in 1929 when his party formed the government and he was unsuccessful. In 1940, Diefenbaker was only one of two Conservatives to win a seat in Saskatchewan.

Outside of a few seats, like Lake Centre, Diefenbaker concluded that "election night was A PARADE OF FALLEN HOPES" for the Conservative party.<sup>53</sup> He was one of only thirty-nine Conservatives elected from across the country, and only Perley joined him from Saskatchewan, to make it to the House of Commons. After fifteen years of defeat in two federal elections, two provincial elections and one civic election,

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<sup>51</sup>Diefenbaker, pp. 185-6.

<sup>52</sup>JGD, 1940-1956 series, vol. 45, pp. 035097-98, "Official Returns, Lake Centre." Report of the Chief Returning Officer, Nineteenth General Election, 1940 (Ottawa: King's printer, 1941. See Appendix I for complete details.

<sup>53</sup>JGD, vol. 2, p. 001052, Diefenbaker to W.D. McKay, 4 April 1940. Diefenbaker's emphasis.



Diefenbaker fulfilled his political ambition and obtained public office. The lessons learned along the way led Diefenbaker once and for all to put cooperation behind him in an effort to return the Conservative party to its former greatness. The traditional Conservative values such as those he defended in 1929, and the cooperation which he pursued in 1938, would be abandoned if a strong and independent Conservative party was going to survive in the changing social, economic and political environment of Canada. He would become a crusader for reform within the Conservative party. His formula for victory could hardly be contained as he boasted to others about his "efforts for years to convince many of our outstanding supporters of the necessity...[to oppose cooperation], but so concerned have they been to defeat the Liberals that they have succeeded in having the Party swallowed up by the CCF in many parts of the Province."<sup>54</sup> He was prepared to champion the cause of a small group of Conservatives, when the right opportunity presented itself.<sup>55</sup> He agreed with an up-and-coming young

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., vol. 3, p. 001855, Diefenbaker to Lieutenant Mervyn Woods, 18 April 1940.

<sup>55</sup>JGD, vol. 1, p. 000555, Robb to Diefenbaker, 28 March 1940. With Manion losing his riding and no Conservative house leader in the House of Commons, Robb writes: "In looking over the list, I can see no one any stronger than yourself. I hope you will not take offense if I just give you my opinion that if this matter of House Leader should be presented to you, I would give it very great care. It might be better to be patient and abide your time." Diefenbaker did wait and watch, ambitious the whole time to lead the party.

Conservative who argued that "we do not deserve power unless we can offer to the people a strong united Party with a definite set of principles which we do not prostitute for sake of office."<sup>56</sup> He was more than willing to share the lessons learned in fifteen years of political apprenticeship even if it meant he would be a lone Tory crusader in his party for years to come. His constituents continued to support him throughout the 1940s and it was not long before his party and the electorate of Canada did the same; the one electing him national leader of the Conservative party in 1956 and the other prime minister of Canada the following year.

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 000579-80, Russell Brownridge to Diefenbaker, 15 April 1940.

## Chapter Five - Apprenticeship of a Prairie Politician

Canadians, especially those in Saskatchewan, remember John Diefenbaker as a popular politician. He was seen as a defender not of corporate interests or lobby groups, but of the "common man" in both the law courts of Saskatchewan and the House of Commons. Historians and his biographers helped cultivate the myth that his political beliefs and motivation remained consistent throughout his entire political career, even during his fifteen years of failure from 1925-39. But what about his political apprenticeship? What impact did he have running for a party disorganized by internal upheaval and strife during the Great Depression? What impact did he have on the party as president in 1934 and as leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Association (SCA) in 1938 when it was unable to win a seat in two consecutive elections? The evidence demands that a much greater responsibility be placed on the Saskatchewan politician for his and the party's political failures in the 1930s.

An examination of Diefenbaker's period of political apprenticeship reveals that he was not the same politician that he became after 1940. During his fifteen years of political failure he was more interested in fulfilling his

personal ambitions than in representing the interests of common Canadians. He had personal opinions about the rights of individuals, but they mostly concerned matters of legal representation and not politics. From his earliest political involvements, John Diefenbaker's deeds and statements reflected his ambitions and they correspondingly changed with the political climate. He was a political animal first and foremost, willing to do whatever it took to obtain public office. The most important of these contests consisted of the 1929 and 1938 provincial elections.

In 1929, Diefenbaker called for the removal of religious emblems from public schools. However, he misread the constituents' opposition to his platform. In 1938, he followed the same practice as his predecessor to cooperate with other anti-Liberal forces, but this time he led the party into negotiating saw-offs with the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). With no funding to run a full slate of Conservative candidates, negotiations gave him a cheap alternative to defeat the Liberal candidate in his riding and those of a few other Conservatives across Saskatchewan. His only hope of forming the government in Saskatchewan was with the assistance and cooperation of the CCF. Failure in both elections pushed him to realize that the Conservative party needed to reform and reorganize to reflect the changing social, economic and political environment if it hoped to survive the threat of losing

votes to parties like the CCF and Social Credit. The Conservative party would also have to challenge the new parties successfully, as well as the Liberals, if it hoped to survive in Canadian politics. Diefenbaker would embark on a path less travelled by many within his party after 1940, alone and often against its old guard, to change the party's policies and direction.

Diefenbaker's memoirs reflect a willingness on his part to go against the direction of his party. The evidence contained in the Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan and National Archives suggests otherwise. Prior to 1940, Diefenbaker's actions suggested he was interested in public office for the status it brought and not so much for the service it required. Historians have characterized Diefenbaker as the defender of rights and freedoms for all Canadians regardless of race, creed or colour. Their characterization reflected the words of Diefenbaker that appear on the 1960 Bill of Rights:

I am a Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John G. Diefenbaker's One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, the Years of Achievement 1956 to 1962 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), Diefenbaker quote given in the House of Commons on 1 July 1960, and placed at the bottom of the Bill of Rights that appears on the inside cover.

They subsequently look through his political history with this view in mind. So too did Diefenbaker, who began in 1925, a "lifelong attack on hyphenated Canadianism."<sup>2</sup> One of the most frequent examples by Diefenbaker and others of his toleration for the plight of French-Canadians and non-Commonwealth immigrants in Canada refers to a 1922 legal case when he successfully defended two French school trustees in Saskatchewan charged with using the French language as the language of instruction during school hours. Under the School Act, "English shall be the sole language of instruction in all schools."<sup>3</sup> During the 1957 federal election, Diefenbaker's tolerance for French language rights and accusations of his involvement with the Ku Klux Klan and the schools question in 1929, became an issue in some Quebec ridings. The Member of Parliament for Quebec-Montmorency, Wilfred Lacroix, diagnosed Diefenbaker's apparent shift in politics: "As to the legal case referred to by the Conservative candidate and in which Diefenbaker was acting as lawyer, may I stress that there is a very great difference between an attitude taken in public and the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., One Canada: Memoirs of the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, the Crusading Years 1895 to 1956 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 140. [Following citations refer to this volume unless otherwise specified]

<sup>3</sup>Garrett Wilson and Kevin Wilson, Diefenbaker for the Defence (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), pp. 37-9.

practice of a professional.<sup>4</sup> But his pre-1940 political opponents characterised Diefenbaker as a politician willing to promote whatever it took to get elected.<sup>5</sup> He was more concerned with himself than with the people he wanted to represent.

This other less-known Diefenbaker was predisposed to compromising his political ideology to catch the changing political winds that swept Saskatchewan in the latter half of the 1920s. He was not immune to following the popular sentiments of the time. The 1929 general election proved pivotal in Diefenbaker's political apprenticeship, not because he was defeated, but for the reasons why he was defeated. The 1929 general election campaign was fought, in part, over emotional issues, such as religious emblems and nuns teaching in garb in public schools. His statements were branded as prejudicial by the Liberals. Diefenbaker was not a member of the Klan, but his defence of race, colour and creed took on a notable pro-British and Protestant slant in the 1929 provincial election campaign.

Accused of being a Klansman might have prevented any

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<sup>4</sup>National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Papers MG 28 IV 2 (hereafter PCPC), volume 333, Diefenbaker, Hon. John, Que. Acts on, 1956, REPLY TO THE DIEFENBAKER CANDIDATE IN QUEBEC-MONTMORENCY, p. 3, 26 December 1957.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas H. McLeod and Ian McLeod, Tommy Douglas: the Road to Jerusalem (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987), p. 99, and Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), James G. Gardiner Papers (hereafter Gardiner Papers), VII, volume 5, p. 41289, T.C. Davis to Gardiner, 29 October 1936.

Conservative from winning the largely immigrant Prince Albert constituency in 1929, but Diefenbaker's position on the school question made it easy for his Liberal opponents to tar the Tory with the brush of religious bigotry and prejudice. Diefenbaker prolonged his political apprenticeship while his party formed the government because he misread the political pulse of his own riding. The young, ambitious Tory, however, blamed other forces and factors for his defeat.

Satisfied to by-pass the 1930 federal campaign because he was reluctant to challenge William Lyon Mackenzie King again in Prince Albert, who defeated him once before in 1926, Diefenbaker focused on the politics of the SCA to keep him politically active until opportunity again presented itself to run for public office. Honing his political skills in the SCA enabled Diefenbaker to see that there was little hope for the Conservative party as the 1934 provincial election neared. The party was in trouble as it divided into the true blue and cooperator Tory factions over Dr. J.T.M. Anderson's pursuit of cooperation rather than an independent Conservative organization. Accused of neglecting its duties to deal properly with the Depression, and incapable of offering a reasonable challenge to the resilient Liberal party machine and the upstart CCF, the Conservative party was vulnerable, and Diefenbaker decided not to enter the campaign.



Following the dismal showing of the Conservative party under Dr. Anderson's leadership in 1934, Diefenbaker made preparations for the changing of the guard that was bound to follow. The challenge of resurrecting the party appealed to his sense of pride and ego. He thought he had what was needed to lead the party, not back to its roots, but to a new greatness based on a reformed policy platform directed towards bringing the party kicking and screaming into the twentieth century:

Too often have Conservatives in this country lost sight of the fact that change must take place to meet changing conditions, that the health of the tree is preserved by pruning the withered limbs.<sup>6</sup>

Diefenbaker believed that just such a platform would bring the electorate back to the sound social and economic principles of the Conservative party, especially from the camps of the CCF.

In 1936, Diefenbaker was acclaimed to the top post of the provincial Tories. As leader, he was expected to fulfil his promise to reform the party and lead it out of the political wilderness where Dr. Anderson left it. But few among the rank and file expected or knew that Diefenbaker would follow the path of his predecessor at the insistence of leading Conservatives in Saskatchewan and Ottawa -- to negotiate with his political opponents rather than challenge them in elections. Diefenbaker was, according to Tommy

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<sup>6</sup>Diefenbaker, p. 140.

Douglas, an opportunist.<sup>7</sup>

Diefenbaker agreed to cooperate with the CCF in 1937-38 because it was said that supporters of the CCF were Tories of another name or Tories in a hurry. After all, Dr. Anderson's failed Co-operative government from 1929 to 1934 encouraged many Conservatives to look elsewhere for political virility.<sup>8</sup> The decline of the Conservatives seemed to coincide with the rise of the CCF.<sup>9</sup> Diefenbaker wanted to woo the electorate back to the party with a reformed platform while other leading Conservatives wanted to use cooperation to obtain similar ends. The latter got their wish and Diefenbaker, unwilling to lose control, led the charge. Diefenbaker, however, lost the race to regain the electorate's confidence in 1938 as he led the party to its second consecutive shut-out from the provincial legislature.

Current explanations that the Depression, the Liberal machine, and the CCF resulted in Diefenbaker's failures in 1929 and 1938 are incomplete without an examination of his participation in those campaigns. Present and future

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<sup>7</sup>McLeod, p. 99. Douglas is reported saying that "he fastened onto anything that seemed to appeal to the public mood."

<sup>8</sup>John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers, Pre-1940 series (hereafter JGD, unless otherwise specified), volume 3, p. 003729. Diefenbaker to Hon. William D. Herridge, 20 April 1938.

<sup>9</sup>Evelyn Eager, Saskatchewan Government, Politics and Pragmatism, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), p. 66.

Diefenbaker historians should therefore examine Diefenbaker's period of political apprenticeship on its own merits rather than through the successes that followed the Saskatchewan politician's first victory in 1940, or as an unfortunate casualty of the 1930s political environment.

## Appendix A

**MANIFESTO AND PLATFORM<sup>1</sup>**  
Saskatchewan Conservative Party

To the Electors of Saskatchewan:

Mere desire for office on the part of a political party is not under any consideration a sound and valid reason for supporting that party. Mere criticism of a Government because of activities that are unimportant and do not relate materially to the public welfare should call for no support from an intelligent electorate, but if it can be shown that a political party is prepared to introduce reforms that will encourage greater progress and prosperity among the people; if the aims and ideals and objectives of this political party breathe the spirit of public interest and if they express an undeniable desire to place their country's welfare before private interests it should without question receive the support of the electors. It has always been the case throughout the history of Canada since the time of Confederation and such a course will always be followed. We may all look back with pride to the magnificent examples of public service shown in the lives of the great Canadian statesmen of the past. On the other hand we can all think of men whose extreme partisanship, whose selfish performance of public duties entrusted to them, give us as Canadian citizens no cause for pride.

Again we can look back over the history of Governments throughout the Dominion and we find that long tenure of office encourages selfishness and bureaucracy. Few will deny that it is not advisable that any Government should remain in office for too long a period. In the political history of the Province of Saskatchewan we find several dark pages. The scandals in connection with road building, with the erection of public buildings and with the handling of the liquor traffic, are fresh in the minds of most of us. We have seen in this Province how members of the Legislature have become corrupt and in some cases have been sent to prison. All this occurred under a Liberal administration. On each occasion when the facts were placed before the public new men were taken into the Government and the people were begged to allow them to carry on.

We believe that the time has at last come when the people of Saskatchewan are going to insist upon a change in Government. In 1925 the Hon. Charles Dunning begged the

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<sup>1</sup>NAC, Bennett Papers, microfilm #926, pp. 25135-42, Manifesto and Platform: Saskatchewan Conservative Party, March 14 and 15, 1928. Errors appear in the original.

people to return him to power, knowing all the time that in a few months he would leave Saskatchewan for Ottawa. The people were warned by the Conservatives that this would occur but the Dunning Government was returned although only fifty-six per cent of the electors voted in its favor. Then the Gardiner Government took office and no more conspicuous example of political blundering resulting in indecision and incompetency has ever been witnessed in any Province in this Dominion. There is one remedy, and one only and that is a change of Government. On behalf of the Conservatives of this Province I wish to state to the electors that we are prepared to introduce a policy, as shown by our resolutions, passed at the Saskatoon Convention, that will mean stricter economy in Government, greater encouragement of industrial development, a non-political civil service, a highway program that will meet our needs, educational reform so long overdue and all those other things that go to encourage progress and prosperity in this young Province.

Regarding the liquor traffic we believe in the strict enforcement of the present law as long as it is law, and that there should be no change in the system of handling liquor without a referendum of the people, and that when a vote of the people is taken it should be at a time other than at a Provincial election. We further promise that if returned to power we shall thoroughly investigate and let the people know the manner in which the liquor business has been conducted in the Province.

During the last session of the Legislature the Gardiner Government displayed its utter incompetency to deal with the great problems upon which our future depends. They refused to sanction reforms relative to the dairy industry, they refused to set forth any policy regarding power development, although it would appear that public opinion is endorsing the stand taken by the Conservatives and that the Government will have to declare a policy which will be along the lines suggested by the opposition. During this session they refused to place before the people facts and correspondence regarding the liquor traffic in the Province, and as regards educational reform the Premier, who is now Minister of Education, showed a weakness that was pitiable. As regards immigration they again showed that they had absolutely no grasp of the situation and were utterly unable and unwilling to formulate a policy on this as in other matters.

The Conservative Party if placed in power will remedy these conditions, and they will do so keeping in mind the interests of the Province as a whole rather than the

interests of their political party. In other words we are

Canadians before we are Conservatives.

J. T. M. Anderson,  
Leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party.

## **CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM**

1.

RESOLVED that the Saskatchewan Conservative Association in convention assembled reaffirms its belief in responsible representative government under the British Constitutional system, and pledges itself to assist in maintaining the principles thereof unimpaired, in all matters pertaining to the Government of the Province, and we hereby record our unswerving loyalty to His Majesty the King, and our firm belief that the best interests of the Dominion of Canada will be served by closer union with the British Empire.

2.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

THAT in the best interests of Confederation and the economic development of Saskatchewan, the Province of Saskatchewan should be granted its natural resources free from restrictions within the legislative competence of the Parliament of Canada but in compliance with the letter and spirit of the constitution and that the claims of this Province to compensation for loss of lands and resources alienated should be granted. AND in the event of no immediate satisfactory action that said claims be referred to the Courts for a final decision upon the rights of this Province with respect to said claims.

3.

### **ECONOMY**

RESOLVED that the Conservative Party in Saskatchewan pledges itself to a policy of economy and retrenchment, and is firmly of the belief that the present overwhelming burden of taxation has tended to depopulate our Province and discount our credit; and we record our earnest conviction that the cost of Government must be in a great measure reduced and for the encouragement of economy and for the reduction of taxation, we pledge ourselves to take action on the following matters:

(a) That no capital expenditure be made except where absolutely necessary and vital to the interests of the producers of our Province.

(b) That means be taken to co-operate with all public bodies charged with the expenditure of public money, such as municipalities, rural and urban, and school boards, with a view to the curtailment of borrowing, and the exercise of rigid economy in the case of administration and the discouraging of new forms of taxation.

(c) That means be taken to grant release from the

extreme penalties now unjustly imposed in connection with taxation and which have caused in many cases, the forfeiture of property and the loss of homes to unfortunate people.

#### 4. **AGRICULTURE**

RECOGNIZING agriculture as the basic industry of Saskatchewan, the Conservative party pledges itself to encourage agriculture by assistance in marketing products, and giving educational courses in the most profitable forms of husbandry; and further recognizing the marketing problem of our grain products as the paramount problem of our farming population, we pledge ourselves to encourage:

- (a) The fostering of diversified agriculture.
- (b) The most economic and direct means of transportation to market.
- (c) The establishment of plant breeding stations in different parts of Saskatchewan, to test out and develop hardy vegetables, flowers, fruits and grains suitable for Saskatchewan.
- (d) The establishment of Provincial nurseries and Forestry stations in different districts of Saskatchewan and to encourage thereby the planting of trees and hedges on every farm and in the villages, towns and along the roadways of the Province.
- (e) The initiation of a more progressive policy aimed towards a lessening of the great economic waste from the growth of weeds, the spread of insects, and the ravages of black stem rust on wheat.
- (f) A state-wide co-operative marketing programme for all farm products.
- (g) The extension of both home and export markets, based on the scientific study of the opportunities for such extension and the best means of accomplishing it.
- (h) The encouragement of improved production methods with increasing emphasis on quality production, and standardization of all farm products.
- (i) A rational policy of land settlement based on a survey of the unused lands of the Province.

#### 5. **LABOR**

RESOLVED that this Convention recognizes that a large proportion of our citizenship is composed of men and women in the ranks of labor, and pledges itself by all reasonable means to improve the conditions and standard of living of those so employed, and to give special attention to their needs and conditions of employment to the end that both hours and conditions of service shall be fair and reasonable as between the employer and employee. We pledge ourselves to do all in our power to encourage the production within Canada of Canadian goods by Canadian labor and we further favor the inclusion of a fair wage clause in every

government contract.

6.

#### EDUCATION

BELIEVING that our present educational system in Saskatchewan is too indefinite; is in many respects obsolete and out of date, and has not kept pace with educational progress throughout the world, the Conservative party pledges itself to revise the whole educational system with a view to providing as far as possible for:

(a) Equal educational advantages to all.

(b) The revision and simplification of the curriculum with a view to laying more stress on the essentials of education.

(c) The revision of the text books with a view to seeing that all text books with a denominational bias and with unpatriotic sentiments are kept out of the public schools of Saskatchewan.

(d) That text books be selected with a view to inculcating patriotism and love for Canada and Saskatchewan in the pupils of our schools.

(e) That the present system of school inspection be revised with the idea of providing more supervision.

(f) That the School Act be amended to prohibit the use of any religious emblems in the Public Schools of the Province, where there are pupils or ratepayers of mixed religious denominations and to prohibit the holding of the public school in buildings used for religious purposes except temporarily.

(g) The amendment of the Statute so as to make it possible for any Municipality to organize the schools in the said Municipality under municipal administration to the end that local differences may be eliminated, educational opportunities equalized, the cost of education reduced, the establishment of rural high schools fostered and the consolidation of school districts facilitated.

(h) Believing that the present system of winter high schools is inadequate in that the curriculum is intended to educate the student for the University or one of the professions, and thus has the tendency to educate the farm boy and girl away from the farm, the Conservative party pledges itself to take steps to provide for such a type of agricultural education for all beyond the public school age, wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity, as will fit the students for their life on the farm and give them a correct outlook on agricultural life, and will at the same time create a love for the soil and for the Province of Saskatchewan, and will instruct them in citizenship and in loyalty to British institutions. The courses in the proposed agricultural High Schools to include:

1. Thorough instruction in Canadian and British



- history, and civics.
2. Practical and theoretical systematic farming.
3. Hygiene and sanitation and health instruction.
4. Gymnastics; to build up the bodies of the students by systematic exercise.
5. Farm bookkeeping.
6. Practical instruction on every phase of farm and household life.
7. Domestic science in all its phases to teach the young women to take charge of and manage their farm homes, economically, efficiently and scientifically.
8. Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Soil Science, Biology, Mechanics, Animal breeding and Animal husbandry.
9. A thorough instruction in the history of, and the advantages arising from co-operative marketing and co-operative purchasing.
10. A well rounded out course in vegetable, and flower growing coupled with a practical and theoretical course on the raising of small fruits, apples, plums, cherries, and grapes in Saskatchewan.

7.

**IMMIGRATION**

We believe in an aggressive immigration policy which will promote a healthy flow of immigration to Saskatchewan from year to year, said system to be based on the selective principle and with that end in view the Conservative Party, if returned to power, will direct efforts to:

- (a) Repatriation of all Canadians now in the United States.
- (b) To take the fullest advantage of all assistance tendered by the British government to promote Empire Settlement.
- (c) That immigrants should be selected according to the needs of the different industries in Saskatchewan and all immigrants coming to this Province should be selected on a basis of fitness and adaptability.
- (d) That in selecting new immigrants relatives of present citizens of Saskatchewan should receive favorable consideration.
- (e) That great care should be taken in the admission and distribution of our new citizens, that proper supervision should be given to see that they are placed in conditions where they are most likely to succeed, and that every encouragement and assistance should be given to fit our new Canadians to undertake the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, and the Conservative party pledges itself to extend all possible friendly assistance to enable our immigrants

to attain that end.

(f) That special concessions be granted to Canadians to enable them to settle our vacant lands.

8.

WHEREAS certain unscrupulous members of the Saskatchewan Government are making use, in remote districts of the Province, of statements made by certain Eastern Conservatives and certain irresponsible individuals reflecting on our non-English electors, and are endeavoring thereby to incite racial hatred against the Conservative party:

WE HEREBY DECLARE that these parties do not represent the Conservative policy or the Conservative attitude towards our immigrants of non-English extraction and we deplore the use of such language by such individuals, and hereby repudiate it.

9.

#### **BALANCED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

BELIEVING that we cannot have a thoroughly rounded out and prosperous Province based on agriculture alone, the Conservative party hereby pledges itself to direct its energies towards and to give every encouragement to a balanced industrial development of agriculture, of such secondary industries as can profitably be established in this Province, and of our natural resources with special reference to the mining industry, the pulp industry, the lumber industry and forest conservation, and reforestation.

10.

#### **PUBLIC WELFARE**

The amalgamation and co-ordination of all public welfare services under one head, and the further co-ordination of all such activities whether under Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or private auspices in order to avoid overlapping.

A departmental survey of social welfare institutions with the object of providing more adequate accommodation for the aged and infirm, the deaf and dumb, and the blind, drug addicts, under-privileged children, and others whose mental or physical condition demands such assistance.

Inquiry into seasonable unemployment with the object of developing an industrial programme aimed to provide uniform opportunities for work at all seasons of the year.

A more sympathetic administration of all public welfare legislation.

11.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

WHEREAS the Convention of Conservatives of the Province of Saskatchewan recognizes as a subject of transcendent importance to our people the matter of the Public Health;

AND WHEREAS this convention is alive to the great advances in the field of Medicine, Surgery and Public Health

in recent years in the fields of diagnosis and research;

AND WHEREAS this Convention feels that to promote the greatest measure of happiness and contentment among our people, there should be available at a minimum cost the accumulated advances made in the general field of Medicine and Health Science;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by this Convention that it pledges the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan to a policy in the matter of Public Health which will make provision for:

(a) The establishment of a Public Health Commission independent of Political partisan interference.

(b) That this commission investigate thoroughly the desirability and feasibility:

1. of the establishment in strategic centres of the Province of institutions equipped to render service in the matter of diagnosis and treatment.
2. of the setting up in connection with such institutions of departments properly armed which will by research attention and the provision of facilities for bacteriological examination and the furnishing of necessary appliances for treatment, serve as an auxiliary to the effort of medical practitioners and the hospital authorities of our province.

And this convention pledges the Conservative Party if returned to power to implement by legislation any recommendations of such independent commission submitted after complete enquiry.

To conduct a thorough investigation of health laws and public health administration in other places, with the object of reducing the ever-increasing cost of remedial health work to the Province, lessening the social and economic waste through illness, and the encouragement not only of remedial but especially of preventive health measures.

12.

#### POWER RESOURCES

Recognizing that industry is yearly becoming more diversified in Saskatchewan, and appreciating as we do that it is in the interests of all of our citizens both rural and urban to secure electric power at the cheapest possible rate; and recognizing that we have great natural resources in the Southern Part of our Province in our great coal deposits and in the Northern Part of our Province in our great water powers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conservative party pledges itself to develop as a publicly owned and operated utility the generation of electrical energy from said coal deposits and water powers for the use of the people of this

Province, so soon as the population, wealth and industry of the Province will warrant same being done in any given area, and that in the meantime the power plants of the Province of Saskatchewan should be operated under rigid control and supervision of the Government.

13. **COAL**

The Conservative party pledges itself to do everything in its power to develop the coal fields of Saskatchewan, and further pledges itself to use nothing but Saskatchewan coal to heat Provincial Government buildings where location makes it economically practical.

14. **FISHING INDUSTRY**

WHEREAS the cold water lakes and streams of Northern Saskatchewan are teeming with fish of the finest quality, and whereas little or no effort has been made by our government to make this splendid food available for the people of Saskatchewan, and whereas large quantities of fish are imported into Saskatchewan annually;

The Conservative Party pledges itself to encourage the fishing industry within Saskatchewan, and to render substantial assistance in the development of home and foreign markets for the products of said industry.

15. **FUR TRADE**

Recognizing that there are exceptional opportunities for the development of the fur trade in Saskatchewan, the Conservative Party pledges itself to take all necessary steps to conserve the fur bearing animals and to assist in the development of fur farming and the fur industry particularly in the Northern areas of the Province.

16. **WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

RESOLVED that this Convention stands for the economic, civil and political equality of both sexes and pledges itself to support the policy of passing such amendments to our laws as may be necessary to that end.

17. **FARM LOANS**

RESOLVED that in the opinion of this convention the present Farm Loan Board should be reorganized and put on a business basis and its administration entirely divorced from politics; that sufficient funds should be provided to enable the Board to take care of a larger number of small loans at a lower rate of interest.

18. **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

WHEREAS there has been a general laxity in law enforcement in Saskatchewan, and a brazen violation of the laws of this Province during the last ten years under the Liberal regime, with the resultant loss of respect for law,

order and constituted authority;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we pledge ourselves and the Conservative Party to a strict enforcement of every law on the Statute Books of the Province, irrespective of who may be affected by its provisions, and to see that no transgressor is left unpunished.

19. **HIGHWAY COMMISSION**

RESOLVED that this Convention favors the creation of a Highways Commission, independent politically, to have jurisdiction over the building and maintenance of all roads and bridges constructed with or maintained out of Provincial funds, subject as to general policy to the Legislature and answerable to the Legislature only.

20. **CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES**

RESOLVED that encouragement should be given to Co-operative enterprises, such as mills, abattoirs, packing houses, and cold storage warehouses, among others, to the end that the products of the farm and livestock industries may be prepared as far as possible for sale to the ultimate consumer.

21. **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

RESOLVED that this Province should act, through the University and otherwise, in co-operation with all other similar organizations in active and adequate research with the objects, among others, of:

(a) Solving the problems of increased farm production by improved farming methods, soil treatment and otherwise.

(b) Ascertaining the best means of combating, weeds, insects, rust, rodents, and other harmful agents.

(c) Developing improved seed, with the best qualities and shortest germination period, thereby extending the grain growing area.

(d) Ascertaining the extent and quality of our coal areas and the best method of turning the same to use as fuel, and of obtaining therefrom useful and profitable by-products.

(e) Exploring the deposits of useful clays, soils, sodium sulphate, glass sand and other useful minerals, and ascertaining and reporting on the best methods of preparing same for market, or of further manufacture thereof either by themselves or in combination with other articles.

(f) Ascertaining the possibilities of producing commercial flax fibre and turning the same to account by sale or further manufacture.

(g) Ascertaining the most satisfactory method of grading grain and other farm products for market, so that the producer thereof may be able to receive more

nearly the real value of his product.

(h) To ascertain what secondary industries can be profitably established in the Province with a view to providing diversified and all-year employment.

And that all information so obtained be made available for the public to the end that these resources be developed in the interest of the Province.

22. **TELEPHONE DEPARTMENT**

RESOLVED that the receipts and expenditures of the Telephone Department should be printed in the Public Accounts so that the people who supply the money to provide and maintain this utility may know how such money is being utilized.

23. **PUBLIC CONTRACTS**

RESOLVED that all contracts of \$500.00 or over for the construction of public works and all contracts for the purchase of public supplies or of government printing should be awarded only after fair public tender therefor, and that this principle should apply also to the Telephone Department.

24. RESOLVED that all purchases for public use should be made as far as possible first: from goods produced in Saskatchewan, second; from goods produced in Canada, and third; from goods produced in the British Empire, and that all contracts let by the Government should contain this provision.

25. **CIVIL SERVICE**

WHEREAS it is common knowledge that employees in the Provincial Government Departments are habitually used as political agents, often against their wishes, in order to maintain the Liberal Party in office, and whereas appointments are made under the system of patronage and on the recommendation of duly appointed Chairmen of Patronage Committees or Liberal members of the Legislature:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Convention goes on record as favoring the appointment of government employees by the Civil Service Commission only, and advocates the principle that all selections shall be made on merit and efficiency and not be reason of political affiliations, by introducing the competitive examinations as a test for fitness for those who wish to enter the service. It further protests against the use of Government employees as political agents and workers by the Government.

26.

WHEREAS the administration of Public Affairs in this Province is causing the people of the Province serious concern on account of the excessively high expenditure in

administration and the partisan nature of public services in the Province:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Conservative party invites the support and co-operation of all parties, groups, and individuals opposed to the present Liberal administration.

27.

RESOLVED that the Conservative Party go on record that in licensing broadcasting stations that no restrictions be placed that would interfere in any way with free speech either political, religious or educational.

28.

WHEREAS there are many citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan who during the Great War served their country at great sacrifice; and whereas the Government of Saskatchewan has in its gift the employment of many civil servants:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by this Convention of the Conservative Party that in the matter of appointments to the Civil Service favorable consideration be given to the applications of returned soldiers and in particular to applications from disabled men and further that this principle should be invoked in the matter of all appointments to be made by the Liquor Board.

29.

Believing as we do that the owners of motor vehicles who use our highways to the greatest degree should pay a greater proportion of the revenue necessary for the proper maintenance of our highways than do those who use our highways for motor traffic but little;

And recognizing that it is not equitable to levy a tax on gasoline and still retain the full motor license tax;

We pledge ourselves to make a reasonable reduction in the present motor license tax and pledge ourselves to earmark the entire net motor license tax and the entire net gasoline tax for highway development.

30.

WHEREAS it is in the interests of the Province of Saskatchewan, and of dealers in livestock that the Province of Saskatchewan should be as far as possible free from tuberculosis in cattle.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this convention record its approval of the establishment of the Province of Saskatchewan as a free tuberculosis area to the end that Saskatchewan may be eventually completely free from bovine tuberculosis;

AND WHEREAS the destruction of reactors is the occasion of heavy loss to individual owners of such reactors, which

is only partly compensated for by the Federal Government.

NOW THEREFORE THIS Convention approves of payment to the owners of such reactors which may be destroyed of some remuneration in addition to the remuneration granted by the Federal Government.

31.

WE believe that education is much better than legislation along temperance lines and recommend that a greater emphasis be placed on the teaching of temperance in our public schools.



## Appendix B

**PLATFORM OF THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSERVATIVE PARTY, 1938<sup>1</sup>**  
 (as adopted by the Council of the Conservative Party  
 assembled in Regina, Saskatchewan,  
 on October 25th and 26th, 1937)

The Conservative party pledges itself to maintain the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press, reaffirms its implicit belief in democracy and democratic institutions, and its absolute opposition to the principles of both Fascism and Communism.

The Conservative party believes that the time is opportune for the amendment and revision of the British North America Act, so that it may be made applicable to present day needs and requirements; but the Conservative party objects to the recommendations for such revision being made by a Royal Commission, lacking representation of the various elements composing the social, economic and political life of Canada.

The provincial Conservative party views with regret the failure of the present Liberal Government in office in this Province to implement by legislation the plank in its platform to provide for the use of the single transferable ballot in provincial elections, and thus permitting by such failure the election of a Government by a minority of the electors; and thereby preventing proper representation in the Legislature of other minority groups; Therefore the Conservative party when elected pledges itself forthwith to enact legislation to provide for a system of voting in all future provincial elections commonly known as the single transferable ballot.

### Debt Adjustment

The Conservative party censures the Liberal Government for its failure to deal adequately with the overwhelming burden of debt which oppresses the people of the Province. Recognizing that continued drouth, insect ravages, hail, rust and abnormally low prices for farm products demand an equitable adjustment of existing debts, and believing in the principle that laws dealing with debt reduction should apply to all citizens alike whether residing in the country or in cities, towns or villages; and believing that homes or homesteads in which the owner has an equity should not be taken from him under mortgage or tax proceedings; the

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<sup>1</sup>JGD, vol. 7, pp.005236-9, Platform of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party, 1938. Errors appear in the original.

Conservative party pledges itself to a policy of debt adjustment legislation as follows:

1. Which shall apply to city, town, village and country residents alike;
2. Whereby debts shall be reduced so that the creditor shall share with the debtor the loss occasioned by crop failures and abnormally low prices;
3. Which shall prevent the home or homestead of any citizen residing in Saskatchewan being taken from him either by mortgage foreclosure or tax proceedings where the fair value of the house or homestead exceeds the amount of the mortgage debt and taxes if any;
4. To amend the law with respect to the seizure and sale by vendors of farm machinery, automobiles and other personal property so that undue harshness and inequities presently existing shall be removed.

The Conservative party further pledges itself to urge the Federal Government to amend the Farmers Creditors Arrangement Act so that its provisions shall henceforth apply to citizens residing in the cities, towns and villages as well as to those residing in the country.

### Finance

The Conservative party recognizing above all else that the people of Saskatchewan demand of their Government the most rigid economy in governmental administration, pledges itself when elected to office to immediately put into effect a policy of most rigid economy in every department of the Government.

- (a) By making substantial reductions in the salaries of Cabinet ministers;
- (b) By reducing the number of the members of the Cabinet;
- (c) By reducing the number of the members of the Legislature;
- (d) By making substantial reductions in the salaries of the higher paid civil servants;
- (e) By co-ordinating to a greater degree the various departments of the Government;
- (f) By co-ordinating to a greater degree the services rendered in Saskatchewan by both the Federal and Provincial Governments, thus preventing overlapping and duplication and making possible the giving of the same services with the elimination of many travelling inspectors;
- (g) By eliminating unnecessary boards and commissions, thereby placing public administration in the hands of bodies responsible to the people;

(h) Whereas it is provided in the Judges Act that no judge shall receive any remuneration in addition to his judicial salary for performing any service on behalf of the Federal Government, other than travelling expenses and a fair living allowance; the Conservative party will discontinue the practice indulged in by the present Liberal Government of paying excessive living allowances and honoraria contrary to the intent and purpose of the said act;

(i) By ceasing the present practice of the Liberal Government of granting large sums as honoraria, such grants being based upon political considerations;

(j) By securing the co-operation of the Federal Government in having both Federal and Provincial income taxes collected by one agency, said agency to distribute said taxes in their proper proportion to the said Government;

(k) By preventing waste in all departments;

(l) By discontinuing altogether the practice indulged in by the present Liberal Government of wanton expenditure of public moneys for partizan and patronage purposes, resulting in the degradation of the public service, at a time when so many people in this Province are not able to provide food and shelter for themselves and their families;

(m) By reducing the number of inspectors now overrunning the Province, and by having necessary inspectors serve a number of departments instead of serving one department only as is the present practice.

The Conservative party pledges itself when elected to office to refund the provincial public debt at lower interest rates, and by necessary legislation to make it possible for municipalities and school boards in Saskatchewan to refund their bonded debt at lower interest rates. The Conservative party recognizes that high taxation strangles private initiative and enterprise and stifles agricultural and industrial expansion. It therefore places itself on record that its aim when elected to office will be to reduce and lessen taxation, having due regard to the ability of the people to pay, the necessity for sufficient revenues to pay for necessary services and by taxing luxuries and exempting as far as possible necessities.

#### **Passenger Auto Licenses**

The Conservative party pledges itself when elected to office to reduce automobile licenses on passenger cars to a flat rate.

#### **Abolition of Education Tax**

The Conservative party when elected to office pledges itself to abolish the so-called educational tax.

### Transportation

The provincial Conservative party believes that the transportation problem of Saskatchewan and of Canada can best be solved by maintaining the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railways as two separate competing systems under separate management and control; and therefore pledges itself to do everything in its power to prevent amalgamation of these two roads.

Recognizing that the continued popularization and development of the Hudson's Bay route means an increase in the income the farmers of this Province will receive for the products they sell; the Conservative party condemns the Federal and Provincial Liberal Governments for the lukewarm support they are giving to the development of increased traffic which is evidenced by the material decline in shipments over this route since the said Governments came into power and pledged itself to continue to use all means within its power to make this route the principal sea route for the products of the Province of Saskatchewan.

### Agriculture

Recognizing that agriculture is the basic industry of the Province, the Conservative party pledges itself to provide and maintain thorough scientific research designed to combat and curtail the spread of weeds and the destruction of crops by insects; to take all possible steps to lessen the costs of production including transportation costs of farm products and farm machinery; and to aid agriculture in every way to improve the quality of its products and the standard of its livestock. Until the farmers of the Province are enabled to produce and sell their products at a fair profit and thereby receive more than the bare necessities of life for their toil, the Conservative party realizes that there can be no progress or prosperity for Saskatchewan, and consequently every effort will be made to achieve this end, and remedy the present deplorable situation.

The Conservative party further pledges itself upon return to office:

1 -- To co-operate with the Federal Government to extend the operations and advantages of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act enacted by the Bennett Government, which provides for the undertaking of irrigation and water conservation projects.

2 -- To encourage the voluntary development of co-

operative organizations engaged in the buying and selling of commodities and in the production and marketing of agricultural products of all kinds.

The Conservative party deplores the recent forced depletion of the herds of the Province by compulsory sale at sacrifice prices, and pledges itself to assist farmers to re-establish their herds. The Conservative party condemns the Provincial Liberal Government for failing to even protest the betrayal and mutilation of the Wheat Board by the King Government; and reiterates its stand in favor of the active operation of a Canadian Wheat Board to afford the farmer an alternative market for his grain; and further that the operations of such board should be extended to include the handling of coarse grains.

The provincial council of the Conservative party is at present engaged in the study of the question of the feasibility of the introduction of a system of crop insurance or alternatively a system of acreage indemnity, into Saskatchewan.

### Education

The Conservative party deplores and condemns the present Liberal administration in not having implemented the promises made in 1934 by the Liberal party regarding education and solemnly pledges itself when in office, to give immediate attention to education reform with special consideration to:

(a) A fair, adequate and proper minimum salary schedule for all teachers in our primary and secondary schools, the Government guaranteeing such minimum salary.

(b) Payment of all arrears of teachers' salaries within one year.

(c) Retention and extension of the correspondence school and radio instruction, making the latter applicable to elementary and secondary schools through a carefully planned program.

(d) Lower price for all school books.

(e) Securing from the Federal Government as much as is necessary of the principal of the School Lands Trust Fund amounting to over \$18,000,000 for which the Province now holds Dominion of Canada debentures, in order to make available the means of providing financial assistance immediately necessary to enable school boards to erect necessary new buildings, to repair existing buildings, to replace wornout equipment, to pay arrears of teachers' salaries, and for other purposes for which finances have not been provided by the present Liberal administration.

(f) A revision of the course of study of elementary and secondary schools with a view to making them more

applicable to an agricultural Province and emphasizing the virtue and value of our democratic system of government with its freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom in the matter of religion.

(g) Provincial scholarships and revolving loans for bright pupils who would otherwise have no opportunity to continue their education in higher seats of learning.

(h) Amendment to T.S.A.

(i) To rid it of its present inequities having special regard for those who, through no fault of their own, were obliged to break the continuity of their service to the profession.

(ii) To place the superannuation plan on a sound actuarial basis.

### Highways

The Conservative party deprecates the lack of the Liberal Government of a highway policy and condemns the wasteful and extravagant expenditure of public moneys under the sporadic method of highway construction followed by the Liberal Government. The Conservative party pledges itself to institute an efficient and economical system of highway construction and maintenance designed to permit of the fullest possible use of farm teams and manual labor instead of machinery and with particular regard to construction of market roads to serve the farming population.

### Social Service

1. The Conservative party approves of reducing the age qualification for old age pensions from 70 years to 65 years.

2. The Conservative party pledges itself when elected to increase mothers' allowance and to raise the age of dependent children from 16 to 18 years.

3. The Conservative party pledges itself to increase grants to expectant mothers.

4. The Conservative party approves of the need for health insurance, State medicine and hospitalization, and undertakes to fully investigate the various forms thereof and to bring in legislation in accordance with the result of such investigation.

5. The Conservative party pledges itself to:

(1) The extension of public health services to combat cancer, mental and other degenerative diseases;

(2) The establishment of child guidance clinics;

(3) The provision of facilities to permit of a periodical medical examination of all individuals over the age of 35 years.

6. The Conservative party pledges itself to the adoption of a system of contributory unemployment insurance.

### Labor

The Conservative party recognizes the problems and difficulties facing labor and pledges itself:

1. To co-operate with organized labor in its efforts to improve the conditions of the working man.
2. To endorse the findings of the Geneva convention;
3. To amend and strictly enforce the Minimum Wage Act to the end that all employees will receive a fair wage for their labor.

### Unemployment

The Conservative party realizing and recognizing the plight of thousands of citizens who, through no fault of their own, have been unable to secure employment for several years, pledges itself when returned to office immediately to adopt a policy and practical measures in order that a permanent solution for unemployment may be accomplished. A work and wages program will be instituted providing for:

- (a) A housing scheme for rural and city, town and village residents;
- (b) The building of all-weather highways and colonization roads;
- (c) The making of a complete survey of our natural resources including a geological survey of mineral, petroleum and natural gas areas, by diamond and test drilling or areas recommended by competent engineers and geologists;
- (d) Water works, water conservation, and irrigation projects;
- (e) Development of provincial parks and resorts;
- (f) Afforestation and reforestation;
- (g) Development of pulp and lumber industries;
- (h) Development of hydro electric power on the Saskatchewan river;
- (i) Development of hydro electric power in the Estevan coal fields.

### Ex-Service Men

The Conservative party recognizes the sad plight of many ex-soldiers in the Province who are unemployed and pledges itself if elected:

- (a) To take steps as are necessary to remedy conditions among the unemployed ex-service men.
- (b) Reinstate all ex-service men unjustly discharged by the present Liberal Government.

The Conservative part realizes that army service has prematurely aged many of our best citizens and in view of the fact that the War Veterans Allowance Act provides for

such men only at a given age and because there are among them many unemployed ex-service men who do not qualify for grants under the War Veterans Allowance Act, thus being compelled to go on relief, we stand solidly behind having the act amended so that our unemployed ex-service men will all come under it regardless of age or place of service.

The Conservative party also pledges itself to the principle of having the Province assume the financial responsibility for the secondary education of needy children of ex-service men not already provided for.

### **Youth Problems**

Realizing that the future progress of our Province depends very largely upon our youth, and recognizing the unhappy conditions which now surround so many thousands of our young men and women through unemployment and adverse economic conditions, the Conservative party definitely pledges itself when in office to provide employment for our youths in the following manner:

- (a) Development of water power projects.
- (b) Development of our pulp and lumber industry.
- (c) Reforestation and afforestation.
- (d) Development of our fishing industry.
- (e) Protection of our forests.

These to be developed in co-operation with existing industrial employers or where necessary through Government enterprise.

(f) Adoption of a plan of apprenticeship to be carried out with the co-operation of industrial employers and tradesmen, with a view to training and absorbing a large number of our unemployed youth in trade, industry and business with Provincial Government financial and other assistance.

### **Relief**

The Conservative party definitely endorses a policy of relief administration under a non-political commission and believes that such a commission should be Federal in scope. It believes that so long as relief is necessary owing to crop failures and unemployment the whole matter should be one of Federal responsibility.

The Conservative party further deplores the action of the Provincial Liberal Government in abolishing the provincial relief commission and adopting a policy that too easily lends itself to political influence.

### **Coal Mining**

Recognizing that the Saskatchewan coal industry



situated in southern Saskatchewan expanded to the greatest degree in its history as a result of the assistance and encouragement given it by the Conservative Government between the years 1929 to 1934, the Conservative party places itself on record that it will again, when elected to office, still further assist and encourage with every resource at its command our coal industry to the end that more employment shall be given Saskatchewan people and more of our money will remain within the confines of our Province.

Appendix C  
(Report of Frank Turnbull to John Diefenbaker concerning the  
status of negotiations with the CCF)<sup>1</sup>

Tentative

(1)	(2)	(3)
Arm River	Bengough	Athabasca
The Battlefords	Bigger	Cannington
Francis	Bromhead	Gravelbourg
Hanley	Cut Knife	Humboldt
Kerrobert	Elrose	Lumsden
Meadow Lake	Gull Lake	Milestone
Melfort	Kelvington	Melville
Moose Jaw City (2)	Kindersley	Regina City (2)
Moosomin	Kinistino	Rosetown
Pheasant Hills	Last Mountain	Rosthern
Prince Albert	Maple Creek	Touchwood
Qu'Appelle-Wolseley	Moose Jaw County	Yorkton
Saskatoon City (2)	Morse	Souris-Estevan
Swift Current	Motukeau	
Thunder Creek	Pelly	
Turtleford	Shaunavon	
Watrous	Shelbrook	
Weyburn	Tisdale	
	Wadena	
	Wilkie	
	Willow Bunch	

Note: This division is tentative and the re-distribution might upset the whole works. Subject to boundary changes there would appear to be no reasons why conventions could not take place in Arm River, The Battlefords, Melfort, Moose Jaw City, Moosomin, Pheasant Hills, Prince Albert, Qu'Appelle, Swift Current, Thunder Creek, Turtleford and Watrous.

- (1) Conservative guaranteed seats.  
(2) CCF guaranteed seats.  
(3) Seats to be negotiated.

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<sup>1</sup>John G. Diefenbaker Centre, J.G. Diefenbaker Papers, Pre-1940 series, volume 4, p. 003625, Turnbull to Diefenbaker, 10 March 1938. [Errors appear in the original text.]

## Appendix D

O T T A W A<sup>1</sup>

May 13th 1938

Mr. F.W. Turnbull, K.C.  
 Western Trust Bldg.,  
 Regina, Sask.

Dear Frank;

## CONFIDENTIAL COPY

Since writing you this morning, I have had quite a lengthy conversation with our C.C.F. friends here. We have been pretty well all over the sea[t]s and the nominations as they are at the present time and after having covered the whole situation would like, as far as possible, to see the following arrangements carried out. I am going to take the seats in order. Any seat where we have complete agreement on I will indicate O.K.

Arm River - O.K. leave to Diefenbaker.  
 Athabaska - Open for either party to nominate.  
 Bengough - O.K. leave to Warren.  
 Battlefords - C.C.F. in, not much chance, you could negotiate to run a candidate if you so desire.  
 Biggar - O.K. to be left to C.C.F.  
 Cannington - O.K. to be left to C.C.F. not much hope either party.  
 Canora - O.K. may nominate, would desire us to stay out[t]. Not much hope anyway.  
 Cumberland - O.K. left to Conservatives.  
 Cut Knife - O.K. leave to C.C.F.  
 Elrose - O.K. leave to C.C.F.  
 Gravelbourg - Either party can run, no hope.  
 Gull Lake - O.K. left to C.C.F.  
 Hanley - O.K. leave to Conservatives  
 Humboldt - O.K. no hope, but would have no objections to us, as it is hopeless in any case.  
 Kelvington - C.C.F. not much hope. No objections to our nominating also.  
 Kindersley - left to either party, no hope.  
 Kinistino - Either party.  
 Last Mountain - C.C.F. nominated, would like us to stay out.  
 Lumsden - Leave for constituency arrangement.  
 Melfort - O.K. Left to Conservatives.  
 Melville - C.C.F. won't nominate, we can do as we like.  
 Meadow Lake - both are nominated, but C.C.F. will endeavour to have their man R. Paul withdraw.

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<sup>1</sup>JGD, vol. 3, pp. 003812-15, Perley to Turnbull, 13 May 1938. [Errors appear in the original text.]

Maple Creek - No nominations either party free, possibly three cornered fight.

Milestone - Horner nominated, C.C.F. endorsing.

Morse - C.C.F. nominated we are free to do as we like.

Moose Jaw - Conservatives to nominate two, C.C.F. stay out.

Notukeu - O.K. C.C.F. nominated, Conservatives stay out.

Prince Albert - C.C.F. nominated will try and have their man withdraw.

Pelly - C.C.F. O.K. nominated, Conservatives stay out.

Qu'Appelle Wolseley - O.K. Conservatives nominate C.C.F. out.

Redverry - C.C.F. not running, Con. do as they like.

Regina - C.C.F. & all - Coldwell and Douglas have written Connon today to try to persuade him to withdraw, that they will not give him their support in any case and will endeavour to have Ellison withdraw, but do not think this possible. They will consult with our Committee when they go west and see if the matter cannot be straightened out.

Rosetown - C.C.F. and Conservative nominated. They would like to see our man withdrawn but are not insistent.

Rosthern - C.C.F. indifferent, will not likely run decide what you like on that.

Saltcoats - C.C.F. nominated would prefer having no Conservative but if we insist on nominating it is O.K. with them.

Saskatoon - C.C.F. out. O.K.

Shellbrook - C.C.F. nominated, not very anxious if we nominate chances for either party not very good.

Souris-Estevan - C.C.F. nominated would like us to stay out.

Swift Current - O.K. C.C.F. nominated would like us to stay out.

Tisdale - C.C.F. nominated would like us to stay out.

Torch River - C.C.F. nominated, no hope of winning. If we nominated I think they would endeavour to pull out.

Touchwood - Both nominated - they are making an honest effort to get Tom Johnson out, but he is very obstinate.

Turtleford - Both nominated, they will try and have their man withdrawn.

Watrous - Both nominated, they will try and have their man withdrawn.

Wadena - Williams nominated would prefer us to stay out.

Weyburn - Here we have a very difficult situation some of the Conservatives are raising the devil and the

C.C.F. are raising the devil with the result that it may make it difficult for us in Milestone and Qu'Appelle-Wolseley. It would be better for us to withdraw in Weyburn in order to make sure of Wolseley Qu'Appelle and Milestone.

Wilkie - Immaterial - no hope.  
 Yorkton " "

Now this is the picture as we see it at this distance. When they go West in the campaign they will make every effort possible to have a number of men withdraw to carry out the arrangements in such a way that we will each have about fifteen or eighteen clear sailing seats at least. As this summary would indicate, we are pretty sure from this distance that we will have clear sailing in ten seats apart from Lumsden and the two Regina seats and they will endeavor to get their man out of Cumberland, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Touchwood, Turtleford, Watrous. If this can be accomplished, we would have sixteen seats with the two Regina Lumsden and Weyburn seats to still be negotiated.

The C.C.F. would have clear fights in Biggar, Cannington, Cut Knife, Elrose, Gull Lake, Last Mountain, Morse, Pelly, Souris-Estevan, Swift Current, Tisdale, Wadena - 16 Seats and if it is possible for our man to be withdrawn in Rosetown, Weyburn, this would give them fifteen clear seats leaving as I stated, before, Lumsden, Regina, and Weyburn to be negotiated.

There may be other nominations taking place that will change this a little, but there are some in which we will have to run three men in order for enough candidates so we could form a government.

This is as we would like to have it arranged from here. Of course, it is all subject to Social Credit entering every constituency and after making careful inquiry from the Social Crediters here, am led to believe they will have over forty candidates in the field.

Call in your committee and go over this and let me know what you think of it. In conclusion this is subject to both the C.C.F. and ourselves making an honest attempt to bring about withdrawals in constituencies I have mentioned above.

By the time you get this letter, Election date will no doubt be announced.

Yours very sincerely,

P.S. Since dictating the above I have noticed in "Star" the Con's. have nominated in Elrose. and Last Mountain, this will make further difficulties and I'm afraid it will be impossible to get all the withdrawals by either party. Advise you get your committee together and also get in touch with Diefenbaker. It looks to me as if both of us are losing control of the constituency executives.

Do your best. I'll write Diefenbaker tomorrow.

## Appendix E

PRINCE ALBERT RESULTS IN FEDERAL ELECTION<sup>1</sup>  
 Election held October 29, 1925

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>McDonald</u>	<u>Knox</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
Prince Albert			
Advance	22	4	7
1 East	35	27	87
2A Macdonald	91	42	100
B "	68	53	122
3A Woodman	81	23	110
B "	92	36	93
4A Centre	85	39	96
B "	92	25	84
5A West Centre	68	33	105
B "	77	21	66
6A West End	81	11	42
B "	88	10	45
7 McBeth	74	22	98
8A McGregor	48	19	71
B "	53	26	72
9A Bennet	92	66	52
B "	47	31	54
10 Halcro	19	20	7
11 Red Deer Hill	8	42	41
12 Gerrond	20	20	23
13 MacDowall	7	32	44
14 Garthland	36	2	4
15 Lily Plain	21	31	16
16 Kirkpatrick	27	45	17
17 Sheldon	12	9	6
18 Red Deer Creek	8	15	20
19 Davis	23	22	6
20 Puckahn	8	9	4
21 Colleston	12	50	6
22 Cecil	4	34	9
23 Steep Creek	8	28	2
24 Fanfard	3	23	6
25 Stanleyville	10	30	7
26 Claytonville	41	10	0
27 Springs	12	2	2
28 Riverside	27	13	3
29 Buckland	9	11	13
30 White Star	40	3	3
31 Kehoe	30	12	2
32 Alingly	9	41	10
33 Northside	5	39	20

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Fifteenth General Election, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1926), pp. 457-9.  
Poll No. & Name                      McDonald              Knox              Diefenbaker

34	Henribourg	54	27	21
35	Spruce Home	8	15	4
36	East Neuk	63	6	6
37	Honeymoon	82	4	2
38	Alberville	55	8	3
39	Alberville Hamlet	56	2	2
40	Fox	6	40	8
41	Paddockwood	13	34	7
42	Martin	10	3	7
43	Moyser	9	11	15
44	Christopher Lake	10	2	1
45	Montreal Lake	1	0	6
46A	Wakaw	50	4	9
B	"	55	16	23
47	Enns	34	4	3
48	Domremy	61	18	13
49	Miteau	21	30	1
50	Bremner	18	18	5
51	St. Julien	146	2	8
52	Sokal	61	4	6
53	Bellevue	76	16	6
54	Hoey	46	32	13
55	St. Louis	44	22	12
56	St. Laurent	31	6	1
57	Batoche	45	11	14
58	Fish Creek	66	6	5
59	Ukraine	61	9	3
60	Bergthal	38	7	0
61	La Plaine	52	14	2
62A	Duck Lake	86	22	34
B	"	65	16	32
63	Roddick	12	0	0
64	Wingard	10	9	7
65	Carlton	34	8	0
66	Rosthern Rural	29	20	0
67	Rosthern South	104	13	20
68	Rosthern North	105	22	20
69	Eigenfeld	36	14	9
70	Eigenheim	10	2	0
71	Ebenfeld	24	2	0
72	Tiefengrund	20	21	3
73	Laird	48	12	16
74	Springfield	0	11	1
75	Waldheim	40	10	2
76	Windom	11	0	1
77	Sand Lake	24	0	0
78	Harmonia	20	1	6
79	Brookhill	18	0	1
80	Slavaka	30	9	7
81	Balmoral	24	18	11
<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>		<u>McDonald</u>	<u>Knox</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>

82	Blain Lake	75	8	69
83	Blain Lake Rural	50	6	2
84	Windsor Lake	43	6	23
85	Marcelin	79	22	7
86	Marcelin Rural	91	23	12
87	Chellwood	49	23	3
88	Wandsworth	15	5	2
89	Silver Grove	18	10	8
90	Skipton	26	23	6
91	Leask	75	54	27
92	Aldina	32	4	5
93	Royal	28	3	8
94	Soldiers Settlement	26	22	5
95	Kilwinning	19	22	10
96	Yankee Valley	9	11	0
97	Brightholme	19	50	1
98	Whaling	16	19	4
99	Parkside	19	15	8
100	Parkside Rural	32	34	10
101	Goose Lake	16	12	6
102	Avebury	19	14	12
103	Hawkeye	25	12	5
104	Mistawasis	19	18	6
105	Ordale	20	16	0
106	Hilldrop	9	44	2
107	Shellbrook	56	50	31
108	Shellbrook Rural	38	45	24
109	Holbein	22	23	6
110	Crutwell	8	4	7
111	Briarlea	10	26	30
112	Wild Rose	12	44	15
113	Rozilee	25	74	0
114	Clonfert	5	14	1
115	Canwood	54	17	18
116	Canwood Rural	50	43	6
117	Mont Nebo	16	5	9
118	Linwood	15	11	4
119	Polworth	4	24	3
120	Valbrand	26	29	7
121	Foxdale	27	11	5
122	Decker	19	7	1
123	Sturgeon Valley	21	16	3
124	Sturgeon River	27	3	1
125	Omega	11	6	2
126	Sugar Hill	17	1	2
127	Millard	0	5	1
128	Silent Call	3	2	0
129	Mattes	24	7	3
130	Debden	57	1	2
131	Debden Rural	56	10	4
<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>		<u>McDonald</u>	<u>Knox</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>



132 Eldred	34	20	6
133 Ormaux	51	16	2
134 Dumble	9	1	2
135 Bodmin	20	1	12
136 Big River	115	14	12
137 Ladder Lake	16	1	1
138 Spruce River	9	9	0
Total	<u>5,301</u>	<u>2,638</u>	<u>2,412</u>

## Appendix F

PRINCE ALBERT RESULTS IN FEDERAL ELECTION<sup>1</sup>

Election held September 14, 1926

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
Prince Albert		
Advance	45	18
1 East	58	72
2A MacDonald	116	111
B "	115	136
3A Woodman	97	103
B "	103	104
4A Centre	118	66
B "	99	87
5A West Centre	103	110
B "	89	78
6A West End	175	98
7 McBeth	97	127
8A McGregor	73	77
B "	76	75
9A Bennett	111	91
B "	69	60
10 Halcro	24	34
11 Red Deer Hill	33	59
12 Gerrond	36	65
13 MacDowall	54	63
14 Garthland	30	43
15 Lily Plain	37	79
16 Kirkpatrick	64	77
17 Sheldon	26	39
18 Red Deer Creek	20	50
19 Davis	34	26
20 Puckahn	26	20
21 Colleston	10	22
22 Russellville	32	23
23 Cecil	3	35
24 Steep Creek	48	23
25 Fanford	28	27
26 Stanleyville	20	29
27 Claytonville	38	12
28 Springs	8	6
29 Riverside	21	16
30 Buckland	23	29
31 White Star	85	19
32 Kehoe	30	11
33 Alingly	58	35
34 Northside	44	46

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Sixteenth General Election, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1927), pp. 456-8.  
Poll No. & Name                      King                      Diefenbaker

35	Henribourg	134	32
36	Spruce Home	20	27
37	Honeymoon	56	27
38	Garden River	114	2
39	Alberville	88	26
40	Fox	19	24
41	Paddockwood	30	56
42	Martin	8	9
43	Moyser	16	39
44	Christopher Lake	17	9
45	Montreal Lake	5	4
46A	Wakaw	82	32
B	"	100	37
47	Ens	89	19
48	Domremy	120	27
49	Miteau	80	17
50	Bremner	49	7
51	St. Julien	192	22
52	Sokal	124	25
53	Bellevue	176	12
54	Hoey	106	38
55	St. Louis	86	38
56	St. Laurent	36	11
57	Batoche	47	42
58	Fish Creek	103	51
59	Ukraine	98	11
60	La Plaine	111	4
61A	Duck Lake	109	82
B	"	81	61
62	Roddick	22	6
63	Wingard	68	24
64	Rosthern	88	22
65	Rosthern	135	35
66	Rosthern	145	30
67	Enright	80	5
68	Eigenheim	68	3
69	Ebenfeld	112	5
70	Tiefenground	77	25
71	Laird	145	24
72	Waldheim	182	5
73	Windom	78	5
74	Sand Lake	79	8
75	Harmonica	57	35
76	Brook Hill	31	10
77	Slavanka	45	17
78	Balmoral	37	44
79	Blain Lake	72	96
80	Blain Lake	76	16
81	Windsor Lake	79	30
82	Marcelin	101	31
<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>		<u>King</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>

83	Marcelin	126	20
84	Chellwood	60	53
85	Wandsworth	18	34
86	Silver Grove	29	46
87	Skipton	58	45
88	Leask	99	77
89	Aldina	46	24
90	Royal	62	18
91	Bramshott	41	28
92	Kilwinning	45	37
93	Yankee Valley	13	22
94	Brightholme	73	23
95	Whaling	36	31
96	Parkside	39	18
97	Parkside	88	34
98	Goose Lake	44	9
99	Avebury	26	18
100	Hawkeye	36	6
101	Mistawasis	39	34
102	Ordale	67	6
103	Hilldrop	47	32
104	Shellbrook	91	73
105	Shellbrook	81	66
106	Holbein	58	19
107	Crutwell	9	4
108	Briarlea	56	43
109	Wild Rose	56	36
110	Rozilee	76	36
111	Clonfert	16	9
112	Canwood	66	33
113	Canwood	129	62
114	Mont Nebo	11	11
115	Linwood	14	13
116	Polwarth	11	20
117	Valbrand	61	5
118	Foxdale	38	40
119	Decker	38	10
120	Sturgeon Valley	54	30
121	Sturgeon River	46	9
122	Sugar Hill	44	6
123	Grant Lake	5	13
124	Millard	1	5
125	Mattes	4	8
126	Debden	54	8
127	Debden	100	15
128	Eldred	53	14
129	Dumble	5	2
130	Bodmin	18	21
131	Big River	107	54
132	Ladder Lake	12	6
<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>		<u>King</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>

133 Spruce River	12	3
134 Omega	10	10
135 Ormeaux	56	1
Total	<u>8,933</u>	<u>4,838</u>

## Appendix G

PRINCE ALBERT RESULTS IN PROVINCIAL ELECTION<sup>1</sup>  
 Election held June 6, 1929

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Davis</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
1 East Pr. Albert	65	110
2A MacDonald	73	131
B "	119	124
C "	50	96
3A Woodman	132	143
B "	114	140
4A Centre	146	147
B "	120	105
5A West Centre	128	107
B "	106	46
C "	68	60
6A West End	142	50
B "	102	45
7 McBeth	158	122
8A McGregor	97	83
B "	93	71
9A Bennett	112	120
B "	81	102
10 Halero	37	36
11 Red Deer Hill	43	73
12 Gerrond	35	70
13 MacDowall	60	99
14 Garthland	26	57
15 Lily Plain	44	34
16 Kirkpatrick	74	75
17 Island Lake	35	40
18 Red Deer Creek	32	34
19 Colleston	30	20
20 Cecil	19	49
21 Steep Creek	44	41
22 Tanford	34	33
23 Stanleyville	17	33
24 Puckhan	18	20
25 Garden River	94	15
26 Honeymoon	77	17
27 Springs	19	12
28 Riverside	49	9
30 Buckband	26	22
31 Kehoe	54	14
32 Alingly	56	40
33 Northside	51	47

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<sup>1</sup>JGD, vol. 3, Conservative party - Saskatchewan -  
 Convention 1932, Electoral Division of Prince Albert, p.  
 002759. These are Diefenbaker's copy of the results.

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Davis</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
34 Henribourg	72	65
35 Spruce Home	38	33
36 Albertville	80	3
37 Fox	15	27
38 Paddockwood	48	45
39 Martin	21	15
40 Moyser	45	51
41 Claytonville	36	24
42 Christopher Lake	26	16
43 Davis	36	38
44 Meath Park	110	15
45 Melba	44	16
46 Russellville	14	32
47 North Pr. Albert	29	7
48 Spruce River	7	12
Special Poll	28	43
	<u>3,578</u>	<u>3,163</u>

## Appendix H

ARM RIVER RESULTS IN PROVINCIAL ELECTION  
Election held June 8, 1938<sup>1</sup>

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Danielson</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
1 Droderick	73	46
2 Grunerud	45	59
3 Glenside	107	98
4 Pedersen	49	55
5A Kenaston	55	81
B "	47	32
6 Aikens	52	47
7 Chatham	19	67
8 Sweet Hills	48	58
9A Simpson	54	108
B "	64	95
10 Flanderdale	36	68
11 Watertown	48	36
12A Imperial	59	101
B "	45	73
13 Devils Creek	51	48
14A Maple Valley	43	61
B "	68	102
15 Bladworth	71	74
16 Palmer	10	14
17 Hawarden	114	91
18 Riverside	68	37
19 Bonnie View	32	18
20 Strongfield	83	79
21 Loreburn	91	61
22 Pebble Beach	26	31
23 Willner	21	21
24A Davidson	114	86
B "	134	93
25 New Deloraine	52	15
26 Trenton	54	23
27 Bermuda	26	34
28 Stalwart	71	69
29 Ohio	20	14
30 Liberty	121	110
31 Sunny Knoll	37	41
32 Girvin	114	95
33 Reber	43	38
34 Rosebrae	26	28
35 Rosemae	42	14
36 Elbow	133	92
37 Woodmere	38	10

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<sup>1</sup>JGD, vol. 5, pp. 003935-6. Statement of Returning Officer, Arm River, June 8, 1938. Diefenbaker's copy.



<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Danielson</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>
38 Eildon	62	20
39 Sunkist	26	38
40A Craik	109	129
B "	88	121
41 Penzance	99	123
42 Smith's	30	26
43 Aylesbury	91	111
44 Holdfast	171	93
45 Lakeside	116	21
	<u>3,295</u>	<u>3,105</u>

## Appendix I

LAKE CENTRE RESULTS IN FEDERAL ELECTION<sup>1</sup>  
Election held March 26, 1940

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>	<u>Fansher</u>	<u>Johnston</u>
1 Sherwood	36	11	59
2 Grand Coulee	28	36	19
3A Pense	84	13	47
B "	89	26	41
4 Belle Plain	55	17	21
5 Keystown	52	7	43
6 Grand Coulee Village	52	28	38
7 Maple Creek	29	6	52
8 Greendyke	25	17	30
9 Dundonald	31	25	20
10 Cottonwood	31	24	31
11 Fairville	39	35	47
12 Waldorf	40	55	44
13 Disley	44	52	57
14 Lumsden	28	41	35
15A Lumsden East	30	17	39
B Lumsden West	40	31	62
16 Tregarva	17	27	36
17 Kennell	31	15	5
18 Craven	86	13	65
19 Dundee	31	23	28
20 Regina Beach	52	31	40
21A Bethune	52	27	72
B "	57	34	55
22 Sheppard	45	36	38
23 Watkins	42	17	29
24 Smith	21	5	33
25 Chamberlain	60	39	75
26 Findlater	56	30	46
27 Dilke	67	50	80
28 Kedleston	55	35	44
29 Sifton	86	69	54
30 Glenbrae	15	47	59
31A Earl Gray	28	61	52
B "	42	65	40
32 Gibbs	44	60	19
33 Marieton	40	45	14
34A Bulyea	46	71	31
B "	59	52	26
35 Pengarth	45	52	16
36 Lakeside	26	35	85

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Nineteenth General Election, 1940 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1941), pp. 549-51.

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>	<u>Fansher</u>	<u>Johnston</u>
37A Holdfast	32	21	100
B "	55	35	66
38 Aylesbury	95	23	77
39 Elbow	64	39	103
40 Woodmere	8	9	28
41 Eildon	18	20	39
42 Sunkist	21	18	13
43A Craik	99	42	73
B "	83	53	77
44 Penzance	98	63	79
45 Ravinside	18	32	17
46A Strasbourg	91	54	95
B "	43	125	69
47 Butterson	1	74	18
48 Mountain Chase	15	44	26
49 Duval	58	47	38
50 Lake Centre	21	36	28
51 Liberty	48	91	76
52 Sunny Knoll	28	20	15
53 Girvin	77	42	58
54 Keeney	18	29	14
55 Rosebrae	10	23	29
56 Rosemae	20	15	14
57 Loreburn	78	58	63
58 Bonnieview	9	32	15
59 Carson	25	92	35
60 Strongfield	65	44	71
61 Pebble Beach	13	14	21
62 Willner	22	5	10
63A Davidson	89	21	100
B "	65	37	91
64 New Deloraine	27	7	30
65 Trenton	27	3	33
66 Bermuda	40	2	23
67 Stalwart	49	35	64
68 Ohio	9	8	9
69 Arlington	28	40	22
70 Cymric	35	75	66
71 Dunkeld	17	90	10
72 Ashleaf	30	86	15
73A Govan	68	60	42
B "	72	44	67
74 Taylorboro	16	23	19
75A Imperial	84	13	47
B "	96	11	47
76 Watertown	53	23	29
77 Hatfield	10	85	28
78 Tate	69	46	41
79A Semans	86	46	38
B "	82	66	35

<u>Poll No. &amp; Name</u>	<u>Diefenbaker</u>	<u>Fansher</u>	<u>Johnston</u>
80A Nokomis	74	42	48
B "	54	43	61
81 Richland	40	21	19
82A Simpson	86	26	43
B "	83	27	34
83 Sweethill	33	37	18
84 Devils Creek	26	14	21
85 Maple Valley	19	18	23
86 Pickwick	11	16	5
87A Bladworth	82	14	62
B "	64	20	73
88 Larson	5	10	7
89 Hawarden	87	38	89
90 Glenside	59	74	67
91 Dahl	8	60	29
92 Broderick	33	34	67
93 Avonlea	39	23	32
94 Smilesville	17	20	17
95 Kenaston	81	33	67
96 Aikens	20	50	36
97 Horseshoe Lake	24	62	19
98 Meuse	20	48	9
99 Nary	15	37	24
100 Hamre	17	14	26
101 Borhson	36	11	23
102 Zid	22	22	42
103 McCraney	16	38	21
104 Hillcrest	30	29	16
105 Renown	49	36	27
106 Amazon	51	28	33
107 Venn	45	47	36
108 Urdora	19	11	15
109 Ambassador	50	43	67
110 Haliburton	30	15	14
111 Lockwood	62	33	98
112 Thornfield	13	18	18
113A Watrous East	79	35	66
B " "	87	21	57
114C " West	49	20	51
D " "	40	28	54
115 Buchanan	31	69	36
116A North Regina	50	37	57
B "	46	48	67
Active Service Votes			
Within the United Kingdom	27	9	20
Within Canada	24	13	30
Total	<u>5,974</u>	<u>4,793</u>	<u>5,694</u>

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