

# ABERHART



# MANNING

A contemporary account of the life of the late Premier of Alberta, leader of the world's first Social Credit Government, with a public declaration of policy by his successor in office, the Hon. Ernest Manning, 11th June, 1943, reprinted by permission of the proprietors of *The Edmonton Bulletin*, in whose pages appeared these two documents concerning the fight for

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## SOCIAL CREDIT IN ALBERTA

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## WILLIAM ABERHART

**L**EADER of the world's first Social Credit Government, the Hon. William Aberhart, Premier of Alberta, died on May 23, 1943, at Vancouver, at the age of 64 years. He was seventh Premier of the Province, and the first to die in office.

The following account of his life appeared in the chief Edmonton daily newspaper, *The Edmonton Bulletin*, of May 24. The newspaper is not a Social Credit organ. Its biography, an outstanding example of accurate and sympathetic treatment, is, like its report of the public declaration of policy by the Hon. Ernest Manning, Aberhart's successor in the Premiership, which follows it, republished by permission of the proprietors, which is gratefully acknowledged.

After presenting the news of Aberhart's death and an account of his sudden fatal illness, the writer said:—

His was one of the most colorful, varied and intense careers in Canadian public life. It was a far cry, and a long road from parental Aberhart farm near Kippen, Huron County, Ontario, through the town of Egmondville to which his family moved, and from which he had to walk two and one-half miles to school every day to Seaforth, to obtain his education, to the premiership of a province.

From his arrival in Calgary in 1910 until 1932 he was known mainly as a diligent, faithful and excellent school teacher and high school principal who taught thousands of Alberta's men and women of today. Also he was known as a standout Bible Class teacher who had raised the funds to build, and who had become dean of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute.

But from 1932, when he first became interested in Social Credit, until his death, he became a figure of international prominence.

During his regime the public debt was reduced by several millions of dollars and no new bond issues were made.

Staunch advocate of interest reduction and monetary reform and champion of the doctrine of social security for all, Premier Aberhart had one of the most colorful, varied and at the same time one of the stormiest political careers in Canadian history.

Unexpectedly and suddenly precipitated into the whirlpool of politics from his quiet, well-routined post as principal of the Crescent Heights High School, Calgary, he headed the first, and to date the only Social Credit government in the world.

An expert mathematician and thoroughly familiar with human psychology through his years of teaching and contact with school children, he brought to bear on his political life the same shrewd, carefully-prepared plans that he had used in the schoolroom.

He made few mistakes. His political sagacity was conceded by all. He was a hard fighter. He received no quarter from his adversaries and he never received any consideration from them. He hit hard himself and never pulled his punches in dealing with opponents.

### **Intense Campaigns**

The victim of some of the most intense campaigns of opposition, taking many and varied forms, of any public man in Canadian history, he survived them all and when, after five years in power, he sought re-election in 1940, his government was returned to power, with a reduced, but still commanding majority.

He was a tremendous worker. He never spared himself, and he expected others to deliver work in tremendous volume. His desk was cleared at the end of each day and he insisted on prompt decisions and action.

Among his followers he insisted on 100 per cent fidelity and application to duty.

At all times he reserved to himself the right to have in his cabinet those whom he desired. He exercised that right and in cases where he felt there was a deflection of adherence he did not hesitate to ask a cabinet minister for his resignation, as he did in the case of J. W. Hugill, K.C., his first attorney-general, and W. N. Chant, his first minister of agriculture.

He was born December 30, 1878 near Seaforth, in Huron County, Ontario, the son of William Aberhart of German birth, who had come to Canada when he was seven years old, and of Louisa Pepper, an English woman.

Attending school he went to Seaforth schools, then to the



Chatham Business College, and the Hamilton Normal School. He was graduated from Queen's University, Kingston, with a degree of bachelor of arts.

On July 30, 1902, he was married to Jessie Flatt, daughter of George Flatt of Galt, Ontario. They had two children, Ola Janet, now Mrs. Charles MacNutt of Vancouver, and Khona Louise, now Mrs. James Cooper, also of Vancouver.

He taught school first at Wingham, Ontario, and after obtaining his first class teacher's certificate, he taught at Brantford from 1905 until 1910, when he came west. From 1910 to 1915 he taught school in Calgary and in 1915 was appointed principal of the Crescent Heights High School, a post he held until 1935 when, on his taking over the premiership of the province, he was given leave of absence by the Calgary school board.

Thousands of Alberta men and women, many of whom have now settled in far-flung parts of the world, received high school instruction at his hands. All testify to his capacity as a teacher, his patience in imparting knowledge and his ability to bring forth the best in the pupils.

Always devoted to the church, he carried on a Bible class at church, to which many young Calgarians went.

In the early summer of 1932 Mr. Aberhart became interested in the theories which, three years later, were to sky-rocket him into worldwide publicity and to the premiership of Alberta.

It was a hot summer day, a typical Edmonton summer day, and Mr. Aberhart was up here marking examination papers, having come at the invitation of the provincial education department.

A member of the Victoria High School staff, C. M. Scarborough, asked Mr. Aberhart if he had read Maurice Colbourne's book, *Unemployment or War?* the author being a well-known English actor, who had toured Canada on several occasions.

At that time, Mr. Aberhart had not heard of the book, but he went to the provincial normal school library and obtained it. The book set forth the theories on Social Credit as advocated by Major C. H. Douglas, noted British economist.

Overnight, Mr. Aberhart become converted to the new theories. He determined to attempt to do something about them. He had received hundreds of letters from those who had listened to him on the radio.

Canada was in the midst of a deep depression and Alberta was feeling it as acutely as any part of the country. The seriousness of the situation had been deeply impressed on him by

reason of a large number of pupils having to leave school. Some had become emaciated with hunger and their parents could provide neither food nor education.

### The Solution

To Mr. Aberhart the implementing of Social Credit was the solution of the ills. He began an intensive study of Social Credit. In the seclusion of his own library he studied all material on Social Credit to which he could put his hands. Gradually there took shape a plan which he felt confident could be implemented and successfully operated in this province.

He commenced to expound his theories to the people of Alberta by means of his radio addresses from the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, opened in 1927, and which had been built in his home city at a cost of \$65,000. As his plan developed, he explained each point in succession with the utmost care and in complete detail.

As the weeks went by he explained the intricacies and difficulties of price control, credit, circulation and the control by the people of a nation's goods and resources.

Then he came to the point where he expressed his belief that by the control of national credit and resources, the government, could pay every man, woman and child a monthly basic dividend of \$25. This point, in the final analysis, proved to be the major plank in his platform and the one that made the greatest appeal to the public mind.

At that time, he said in one of his addresses that "I am satisfied the problem is not to be found in the question of the number of hours per week the laborer must work. I am also convinced the problem is not bound up wholly in the matter of exports and I believe that sabotage for the purpose of increasing prices is really criminal.

"The question as I see it finds its greatest focus in connection with the lack of purchasing power found in the hands of consumers. Social Credit attacks the problem at that point."

The response to Mr. Aberhart's exposition of the Social Credit theory made such an instant impact that organization on a political basis was commenced. Admittedly an expert in the line of organization, Mr. Aberhart soon had a province-wide organization that embraced subsidiary organizations in every constituency.

He placed candidates in every constituency and when the election was announced, he re-doubled his efforts. He spoke in many sections of the province.

## Swept to Power

The election on August 22, 1935 saw the Social Credit forces swept into political power in this province, in the greatest victory in Alberta's history. Social Credit candidates captured 56 of the 63 seats. The United Farmers of Alberta party, which had held the reins of government since 1921 was completely obliterated, not one member being returned. Of the seven opposition members elected, five were Liberals and two Conservatives.

Much of the success of his political campaign could be traced back to his deeply religious nature.

While teaching at Brantford, soon after the turn of the century, Mr. Aberhart developed his religious nature. Already committed to an educationist's career, and unusually well trained for it, he decided to change his course and become a minister of the Presbyterian church, of which he was then an adherent.

However, the local presbytery could not at that time guarantee him, a married man, a salary for the two years he would require to take a divinity course at Knox College. He felt he could not afford to take a chance. He left for Calgary, and once there, he founded the Bible Class, with the help of the radio, that developed for him a vastly larger parish and congregation than he had ever dreamed of as an ordained minister.

This Bible class which led to the construction of the Prophetic Bible Institute and to the radio addresses which expounded Social Credit, were direct highways leading to the Legislative buildings.

Mr. Aberhart had appeared before the legislature to give evidence before the house agricultural committee in April, 1934, when the U.F.A. government brought Major Douglas here to address members on Social Credit and to answer questions regarding same. After the hearing the government offered him office space in the legislative buildings to work on his plan and to formulate a prospective system of social credit for this province, but he declined.

However, he continued his crusade by the radio and in the election campaign, for relief on behalf of the people.

Elected on August 22, Mr. Aberhart and his cabinet colleagues were sworn into office on September 3. For the first time in the history of the province, a premier and his cabinet were sworn in at a public ceremony.

This ceremony, colorful and impressive, took place in the legislative chamber. Galleries were filled and the whole event attracted a tremendous amount of interest.

Mr. Aberhart took office under adverse economic conditions. The depression was still here. The U.F.A. government had reached the end of its political and financial career. It found difficulty in financing. Prior to leaving office, R. G. Reid, the last U.F.A. premier, had stopped payment on provincial savings certificates.

The Social Credit government came into office with little in the treasury and faced with the difficulty of financing.

Mr. Aberhart had said that Social Credit could be implemented within 18 months. But in the meantime money was required, so he and a delegation of ministers visited Ottawa and negotiated a loan from the government.

Soon after taking office, Mr. Aberhart declared that "Social Credit is in reality a scientific method of distributing the goods and services which we have in abundance in our province to the greatest advantage of every one of our citizens. The co-operation of the banks will be sought as an efficient instrument in the carrying out of the business of the province. We have no quarrel with these institutions. The fault is in the economic system." He continued by stating that Social Credit would be brought about by the method of basic dividends issued monthly, so that every *bona fide* citizen would be assured of at least food, clothing and shelter. He declared that the province would set up a system of price control and continued credit circulation throughout Alberta.

### Early Difficulties

Difficulties soon made themselves apparent. In January, 1936, a bond issue became due. The province defaulted on the payment, but said coupon payments would be kept up to maintain the bonds valid.

On June 1, 1936, by order-in-council, the province decided that the coupon-rate of interest on all its bonds and debentures, would be reduced by 50 per cent., including bonds in default. Subsequently this order, ratified by legislation, became the subject of a court action which had its final hearing before the privy council. The privy council decided that the province was without its power in ordering an interest reduction, but in spite of this, Mr. Aberhart continued his policy of paying one-half the coupon rate.

The same policy has been adopted on all bond issues in default. Despite strong opposition and criticism Mr. Aberhart continued his fight on necessity of reducing interest to ease the burden on the depressed taxpayers of this province. Since



THE HON. WILLIAM ABERHART  
*Premier of the Province of Alberta, Canada, 1935-1943*



1935 the province has met none of its bond maturities and in each case the issue is kept alive by payment of the one-half interest rate.

During 1936 the government instituted a system of "prosperity certificates" which were taxable on each transaction. It was proposed to pay large crews of men engaged in road work by means of this medium. However, this experiment was abandoned when merchants, banks and traders declined to accept them as negotiable.

Early in 1937 Mr. Aberhart encountered his main difficulties. Charles Cockroft, his first provincial treasurer was asked to resign, in January. In his stead was appointed Hon. Solon E. Low, the present provincial treasurer. Resignation of Mr. Cockroft was the opening gun in a barrage of trouble aimed at Mr. Aberhart. As Mr. Cockroft left the government only a short time before the opening of the session, the date for that event was set back in order to allow Mr. Low time to prepare his budget.

It was when that budget came into the house that Mr. Aberhart faced the greatest troubles of his career. The session opened calmly enough and the debate on the speech from the throne wended its weary way to a conclusion. But all the while, in a room at a city hotel some members of the Social Credit party were meeting nearly every night.

These members, not all the party, but about 20 in all, were aided, assisted, goaded and generally encouraged by interests in opposition to the government, whose agents included both volunteer and paid workers.

In the budget debate, the subject of the meetings was revealed. An insurgency had broken out. The Social Credit members associated with this move charged that the government had brought into the house an orthodox budget, and not a budget based on the credit of the province, and providing for the payment of the basic dividend of \$25 a month. One after another the insurgents rose and flayed the orthodox budget and demanded implementing of Social Credit.

It was now 18 months after his election, and Mr. Aberhart had said that it would require 18 months to put Social Credit into effect.

He had said that "Our basic premise is that it is the duty of the state through its government to organize its economic structure in such a way that no *bona fide* citizen, man, woman or child, shall be allowed to suffer for bare necessities of food, clothing and shelter."

He had promised that once elected he would engage competent experts to operate Social Credit in Alberta. He maintained that every citizen had a "cultural heritage" in the natural resources of the state, that a right to share in these resources now manipulated by financial "big shots" would be provided by Social Credit. Statistics proved that Alberta was sufficiently wealthy to provide for this distribution. It was into this cultural heritage that he dove-tailed the basic dividend.

On one occasion he declared that "To enable each citizen to secure the bare necessities of food, clothing, and shelter, each of them will receive a pass-book in which, at the beginning of each month, will be entered the basic dividend of that month, say \$25. This is supposed to provide for food, clothing and shelter whether he works or does not work, and he shall not be required to pay it back or work it out. The only stipulation is that the individual must co-operate in every way possible."

Those who worked would receive their salaries, wages, or commissions over and above the basic dividend.

But 18 months had passed since he was elected and the basic dividend was not paid. His opponents worked on this point by every means they could devise.

### Considerable Growth

His own members were demanding on the floor of the house that a Social Credit and not an orthodox budget be passed. The insurgency grew to considerable proportions. Several recorded votes sustained the government by a small majority. The insurgents never accepted Mr. Aberhart's challenge to call for a vote of non-confidence on the floor of the house. The uprising, however, did grow strong enough to hold up passage of the budget. Three months supply was granted, other business of the house was hurried through, and the legislature adjourned for three months—until June.

In the meantime it had been decided to summon Major Douglas, the father of Social Credit to come and assist in working out a plan. Glen H. MacLachlan, who had been named chairman of the Social Credit Board which had been formed out of the insurgency, went to England to try and induce Major Douglas to come out here.

Major Douglas declined, as he had done previously by cable, but he nominated as his own selections for the post, George F. Powell and L. D. Byrne, the latter at present filling the post of technical adviser to the Social Credit Board. They arrived in time for the re-convening of the legislature in June.

Publication of the personnel of a "shadowed cabinet" had shown many insurgents who thought they might win cabinet posts that they were to be left out. Their enthusiasm for the rapidly-dwindling insurgency rapidly waned.

By the time Messrs. Powell and Byrne arrived there was ample time for the insurgents to think things over. The whole matter was patched up and with the exception of five members the insurgents re-affirmed their fealty to Mr. Aberhart and his policies and from that time on he held the reins of government more firmly in his hands than ever.

When the session re-convened, the rest of the budget was rapidly passed and the session soon ended.

It did not end without the dismissal of another cabinet minister. J. W. Hugill, K.C., attorney general, under questioning from the opposition, said he believed a specified act was unconstitutional and had so advised the government.

That evening after the house rose, Mr. Aberhart asked for Mr. Hugill's resignation. Mr. Aberhart, though not a lawyer, was sworn in as attorney general, a portfolio he held until the end. When criticized on this matter he pointed out a similar instance in another province and also to the fact that few ministers of health in Canadian provinces were doctors.

It was about the same time that Mr. Aberhart dismissed W. N. Chant, his minister of agriculture. Mr. Chant had declined to accede to Mr. Aberhart's request to resign and remained in office until an order-in-council had been signed removing him from office.

Further trouble came for Mr. Aberhart. A pamphlet was issued in which several persons were collectively described as "bankers' toadies." Persons concerned took legal action and after protracted court proceedings, Mr. Powell and Joseph H. Unwin, then Social Credit member of the legislature for Edson, were sentenced respectively to six and three months in Fort Saskatchewan jail.

This whole incident intensified the fight of the Social Credit party against the "big shots."

In 1938 Mr. Aberhart took part in the provincial general election in Saskatchewan and his campaigning was emphasized and accentuated by disturbances, turbulence and the appearance of a special body-guard to quell heckling.

### **Treasury Branches**

In September of 1939 the government instituted its treasury branch system, which is still in operation. This system handled

cash deposits and also provides a clearing house for treasury vouchers. The civil service and cabinet ministers accept part of their salaries in treasury vouchers, while the Social Credit members of the legislature take part of their indemnities also in vouchers. These are negotiable at most stores for goods and the stores in turn, pass them on to the wholesalers who are enabled to return them to the treasury branches and receive cash. The treasury branches also provide for a bonus on the purchase of Alberta-made goods, the bonus being credited on the basis of purchases. This bonus was instituted as a stimulus to, and the establishment of, new Alberta industries.

### **Recall Act**

In the 1935 election campaign one of the main planks of the Social Credit platform was the enactment of a recall act, by which the electorate by a signed petition signed by 66 2/3 of the qualified voters in the constituency could recall a member.

By a strange turn of fate, Mr. Aberhart was the first to come under the act. Recall proceedings were instituted against him. He had not been a candidate in the 1935 election, but had said that if his party was elected he would seek a seat in the house in a by-election. He ran in the Okotoks-High River constituency and was elected by acclamation.

The Recall Act was passed by the legislature at the first session after the Social Credit government took office. The Okotoks-High River constituency is one of the lowest-vote constituencies in the province. A recall petition was commenced. It was noted that many signatories had been in the area only long enough to become qualified voters.

Social Credit members, on the floor of the legislature, charged that the immigration to the constituency was for the sole and express purpose of unseating the premier, and the act was repealed before the required number of signatures was obtained. A long altercation took place over the return of the deposit required under recall proceedings. The government declined to refund the money until the petition forms were returned. Those sponsoring the petition did not want the government to obtain the names. Finally the forms were forwarded to the clerk of the legislature, and a special committee was appointed to supervise the burning of the petition—without anyone seeing the names. When this was done the deposit was rebated.

In 1939 the New Democracy party was formed. Hon. W. D. Herridge, former Canadian minister to Washington and a brother-in-law of Viscount Bennett, came to this province, and

made a series of addresses on monetary reform and in the field of Dominion politics, the Social Credit party became known as the New Democracy party. One large meeting was addressed by both Mr. Aberhart and Mr. Herridge in the Camrose area. Mr. Herridge ceased to continue his activities on behalf of the party, and outside of Alberta the New Democracy movement had little impetus.

The government having lived the span of its life by law, a general election was due in 1940.

A re-distribution bill was passed reducing the number of seats from 63 to 57. The election, in the last week of March, saw Mr. Aberhart again lead his party to victory. In a house of 56 seats he won 36 as against 56 out of 63 seats in 1935.

### **Solid Opposition**

The victory was gained over the combined forces of all the major opposing parties. Mr. Aberhart himself did not again stand in Okotoks-High River, but ran in his home city of Calgary. "I am picking up the gauntlet thrown at my feet by those who have said, 'Aberhart is afraid to let his name appear on a ballot in Calgary for fear of defeat.'"

In 1941, at Winnipeg, a conference was held at which the Democratic Monetary Reform Organization was founded, with Mr. Aberhart as its national leader. Delegates from all provinces were invited and most provinces were represented.

In the same year he was the victim of circumstances arising in the provincial government controlled University of Alberta. A special committee of the board of governors, headed by Dr. W. A. R. Kerr, president of the University, recommended Mr. Aberhart for the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws and he was invited to deliver the annual convocation address. When the recorded vote was taken it was found that the recommendation had been rejected. As it was determined that some of his own professors had not supported him, Dr. Kerr resigned his post as president. Mr. Aberhart did not then accept the invitation to give the address.

Toward the end of last year Mr. Aberhart commenced a series of weekly addresses on monetary reform and social security, and continued these until laid low with his last illness. The transcriptions were heard in Quebec and elsewhere.

Early in 1936 he commenced a series of Sunday night addresses in the Strand theatre here under the auspices of the Edmonton Prophetic Bible Conference. He spoke here and



at the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, on alternate Sundays. The Edmonton meetings were discontinued in 1938.

Mr. Aberhart always laid the blame on the Dominion government and the courts for blocking the implementing of Social Credit. In support of this are 13 acts passed by the Alberta legislature which were declared *ultra vires* by the courts or invalidated by the Dominion government. The Dominion retains for itself the power of vetoing any provincial statute, providing such power is exercised within 12 months of receipt of copies of the act to which assent was given.

### Acts Disallowed

The disallowed acts were Credit of Alberta Regulation Act; Bank Employees Civil Rights Act; Judicature Act Amendment Act; Home Owners Security Act; Securities Tax Act; Limitation of Actions Act 1935, and Amendment Act 1939; Debt Proceedings Suspension Act 1941; Limitation of Actions Act 1935 and amending Act 1941; Orderly Payment of Land Debts Act; Debt Adjustment Act and Land Sales Act 1942 and amendment Act of 1943, and the Accurate News and Information Act.

While he laid the blame for inability to implement Social Credit on the dominion government, after assurances had been given that it would adopt a "hands off Alberta" attitude, Mr. Aberhart, as late as the 1943 session of the legislature said that he still hoped to institute a system of Social Credit.

Mr. Aberhart and his government ran into dominion opposition when at a three-day special session in August, 1937, legislation was adopted to license bankers and place them under close government control. The three bills passed were disallowed by the dominion government and Mr. Aberhart called another special session in September to deal with the new situation.

No dominion government had exercised the power of disallowance since 1924, when an act of the Alberta legislature imposing a tax on mineral lands was disallowed without reason given. The power was used frequently in the early days of Confederation, but rarely since the turn of the century.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King declared the constitution responsibilities placed upon the dominion government by the British North America Act left no other course than to disallow the acts. He emphasized the provisions of the Alberta statutes deprived the individual of his right to access to the courts.

Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe described the statutes as "an unmistakable invasion of the legislative field assigned to

parliament." He said "they conflict with dominion laws and virtually supplant dominion institutions."

New banking legislation together with an act "to insure the publication of accurate news and information," was enacted at the September session, but Lt. Gov. J. C. Bowen reserved assent, decision being put up to the governor-general-in-council.

One of the banking bills increased from one-tenth to one-half of one per cent. the tax on paid-up capital of the banks and imposed a new tax of one per cent. on the reserves and undivided profits of banks. The other, replacing disallowed legislation, was the act to amend and consolidate the Credit of Alberta Regulation Act, providing for licensing of credit institutions and establishment of one or more local directorates to govern credit policy.

### **To Privy Council**

The banking bill and the press control act were carried to the judicial committee of the privy council after they had been invalidated by the Supreme Court of Canada.

The privy council declined to hear argument on the appeals regarding the measure to regulate credit and the press bill, allowing the judgment of the supreme court, which declared the bills unconstitutional, to stand. Their lordships based their decision on the ground the acts were inoperative and of no practical interest, they were ancillary to the Alberta Social Credit Act repealed in April, 1938.

The judgment added : "It is contrary to the long-established practice of this board to entertain appeals which have no relation to existing rights created or purported to be created."

In declining to hear the argument their lordships declared that they did not intend to intimate any doubt as to the correctness of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada as regards them.

In dismissing the appeal regarding the act taxing chartered banks Lord Maugham in a written judgment declared there was no escape from the conclusion that it invaded the authority of the parliament of the Dominion as laid down in the British North America Act. The judgment said the bill was merely "part of a legislative plan to prevent operation within the province of those banking institutions which have been called into existence and given the necessary powers to conduct their business by the only proper authority—the parliament of Canada."

## Press Bill

The press bill known as "Accurate News and Information Act" would have compelled Alberta newspapers to print corrective or amplifying statements on government policies at the direction of the chairman of the Social Credit board.

Protest against the press bill was levelled by daily and weekly newspapers of Canada who declared it was in reality "an act to control the press and to require it to publish Social Credit propaganda as prepared by a government press bureau."

Soon after coming into power Mr. Aberhart commenced rehabilitating the civil service. Some officials were dismissed, branches and departments re-organized and expenditures reduced.

The late R. J. Magor, who had put Newfoundland's government on a better business and administrative basis, was engaged to come here and advise on financial policy and business administration. He served for several months.

Mr. Aberhart, on occasions unjustifiably was accused by opponents of being unpatriotic. Those who knew him best testify to his deep-rooted love of freedom and British traditions. He was meticulous about doing the right thing, and in insuring that the conduct of the legislature, of his ministers, and members was in accordance with the highest traditions of British parliamentary procedure.

When the war broke out the Alberta government was the first to give civil servants leave of absence to join the armed services, with positions and seniority guaranteed. In some cases grants were given to men enlisting. Also Alberta was the first to pass legislation protecting soldiers' property for the duration and for a year after.

Alberta co-operated to the fullest extent with the Dominion in the war effort, loaning road-building equipment, taking over the full burden of unemployment relief and in acceding to every request by the Dominion.

When Their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth came in 1939 he had all preparations most carefully supervised. In observing holidays and occasions concerned with tribute to the crown or constituted authority he was most painstaking.

## Improved Conditions

Although frustrated in his efforts to bring about Social Credit, he gave a lead in bringing about improved conditions. Social legislation was improved under his administration.

As a former school teacher it was natural that he should combine the duties of minister of education with those of premier. He brought about many reforms in the school system, which the previous government had considered, but had declined to carry through in the face of opposition. Over-riding objections Mr. Aberhart put these reforms into effect and praise of them now is heard on all sides.

Free treatment of cancer, improved mother's allowances and other measures testify to the interest he took in social welfare.

He was an expert mathematician. He seldom spoke in the legislature, stating that he felt he should speak only when he had something that was necessary to the progress of the business of the house. He often said that the business of the house would be expedited if others felt the same.

His words were chosen carefully. He drew a fine distinction in the meaning of words, selecting his synonyms with a view to obtaining the exact shade of meaning desired. This, coupled with the failure of his opponents to quote or deliberate intention to omit a whole sentence or paragraph of a context, led him into many altercations with other persons and with various publications. He had many disputes with newspapers and magazines and often claimed he was misquoted.

He fought opposing press hard and the press, or that section of it opposed to him fought him. But in spite of all the criticism in print and verbally, he never took exception to it unless he genuinely felt that his words were being twisted or that his full quotation and meaning had not been given. He never took exception to criticism as criticism—only when he thought it unfair.

Yet, with the newspapers and newspapermen whom he felt he could trust, he was frank, open, cordial and made them confidantes. Frequently he sought their advice. His chosen friends among the newspapermen he would invite to ride to and from the legislative buildings, and freely gave them information ahead of time as to his intentions. Also he inconvenienced himself on many occasions to allow newspapermen with their typewriters, to come into his room and write stories.

He was always "big" news and more especially in the hectic days of 1935-1939 when the passage and disallowance of acts, insurgency and "bankers' toadies" incidents were prominent. The legislative press gallery, in the declining and last years of the U.F.A. regime was well populated with representatives only from two Edmonton daily newspapers.

But in the first few years of the present government's administration there were 20 regular members of the gallery with several transients sitting in every day. Telegraph companies were kept working overtime to clear copy and 35,000 words formed the budget sent out in one day during a highlight of legislative activities. This was an all-time peak in telegraphing from the press gallery.

Newspapers of international repute sent staff men here to interview Aberhart. *The New York Times*, for instance, sent John MacCormac one of its peak foreign correspondents here to interview him. News of his death was carried on the B.B.C. world news broadcast from London on Sunday.

While in this city, he lived simply and quietly in a two-room suite at the Macdonald hotel, furnished as any other suite in the hotel, but always with a homey atmosphere.

He was a diligent reader of the best literature. He was fond of music and discussed it in a manner that testified to his general knowledge and appreciation.

Always fond of his home, he was content to get back from his office and enjoy such time there as he could snatch from his manifold duties. Mrs. Aberhart, he always considered one of his inspirations and greatest helps, and he valued her advice and assistance beyond measure.

He was an abstainer from both alcohol and nicotine. He was fond of chess and the harder the game the better he liked it. In his younger days he had been an ardent football player.





THE HON. ERNEST C. MANNING  
*Premier of the Province of Alberta, Canada, 1943—*

## ALBERTA GOVERNMENT POLICY

**A** *SPEECH of the Hon. Ernest Manning, successor to the late William Aberhart as Premier of Alberta, delivered at Edmonton on June 11, 1943, defining Alberta Government policy.*

In view of all that has transpired during the past few weeks it seemed a right and proper thing to my colleagues and myself that I should address this special message to you, the citizens of Alberta. I am deeply conscious of the fact that I am speaking to thousands to-night in whose hearts will dwell for many a day a sense of irreparable loss. The solemn truth of the poet's words has been brought home to us all:—

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave  
Await alike the inevitable hour:—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave!

It is unnecessary for me to repeat the countless tributes to the life and work of Premier William Aberhart that have poured in from all over Alberta and Canada, and even from the far corners of the world. The sentiments expressed in those tributes may be summarised in a few simple words. In his passing the people of Canada, and especially of Alberta, have lost a brilliant statesman, a great reformer, a courageous public servant, and a faithful and true friend. The Grim Reaper, whose command all must obey, has stilled in death a voice which gave fearless and eloquent expression to the crying needs and the just rights of the under-privileged and oppressed. One voice that spoke with the clarity and the certainty of unshakeable conviction amid the din and babble of political confusion and strife—one voice which all the combined opposition of men could not silence or cause to waver in its expression of those things which he knew to be true and right. Truly, the cause of human freedom has lost a valiant champion.

But it is not my purpose to-night to make this message a eulogy to his memory or to his great work. Let that be expressed throughout the years in deeds, rather than words, in the lives of those thousands who will be stronger and better men and women

because of the great and good influence of his life, of his Christian ministry, and of his public service.

He fought a good fight—He finished his course—He kept the faith. Now to us the torch is thrown.

My desire, therefore, is to talk humbly and simply to you, the citizens of this great province, of those matters which concern your welfare, both now and in the days to come.

It has fallen to my lot to assume at the invitation of His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, the high office of the premier-ship in the government of your affairs. I assure you that I feel and appreciate more deeply than words can express, the honour which has thus been conferred upon me. Particularly do I cherish and appreciate the confidence which was so generously expressed by the Social Credit members of the legislature in the unanimity of their request that I should assume the leadership of the government. Their attitude as your representatives in this matter is something which I will always remember. It has already been to me a treasured source of confidence, encouragement and strength. May I take this opportunity to express my humble, but sincere thanks to the hundreds who have so graciously wired or written me their congratulations and good wishes and the assurance of their co-operation and support.

Both my colleagues and I appreciate your kindness very much indeed. But more than the honour which attaches to the office to which I have been called, I am conscious of the great responsibility to you, the people of this province, which it is my solemn duty to discharge. That duty will never be treated lightly. It will be my constant and earnest endeavour to discharge it faithfully and efficiently, ever keeping in mind your best interests and the good and welfare of this province as a whole. To that end I have enlarged and reorganised the executive council, and have redistributed the work of the various departments of government in such a manner as best to ensure the maximum of efficiency in the administration of your affairs.

But what I want particularly to say to you is that my colleagues in the cabinet and myself, together with all of your elected representatives on the government side of the house, are in complete and absolute agreement in our unshakeable determination to adhere to the three-fold policy of government which we are convinced represents the will of the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this province.

### **Phases of Policy**

May I outline briefly the three phases of the policy which we

are determined to follow :

1. We regard it as our prime duty to the citizens of this province and to Canada and the Empire as a whole, to do everything in our power to assist in the successful "all-out" prosecution of the war. To that end we will bend our every effort and will continue to co-operate in every way possible with the federal authorities for the furtherance and intensification of the national war effort. I do not mean by this that we will blindly acquiesce in all matters which arise in respect to the conduct of the national war effort. If and when proposals are advanced or policies advocated which, in our honest opinion, would be detrimental, rather than advantageous, we will not hesitate to point out wherein they fall short of what the citizens of this country have a right to expect in the prosecution of a war in which their very existence is at stake.

2. On the "home front" we are determined to continue unrelentingly, and with renewed vigour the fight to secure for each and every citizen of this province the permanent social and economic security and freedom which are rightfully theirs. Let there be no misunderstanding about this. If there are those who cherish the vain hope that the people or the government of Alberta will now turn back in their crusade for social justice and economic security, let me disabuse their minds.

As long as my colleagues and I have anything to do with the government of this province we will see to it that Alberta continues to lead the world in the great fight to secure for every man, woman and child complete and permanent freedom from fear and worry and from social and economic insecurity. I am satisfied that the issues involved in this matter daily are becoming clearer to an ever-increasing number of people throughout the entire dominion.

Canada's vast war time production has proven beyond question that the productive capacity of this country is sufficient to provide every one of our people with a standard of living far above anything which the average family enjoyed in the pre-war years.

No one would dare to question the ability or the initiative of Canadian workmen to continue and, if necessary, to still further increase that production after the war. The only barrier that remains to prevent the people of Canada from enjoying in the post war era the high standard of living made possible by their productive genius and their initiative is the scarcity of money in the hands of the people as a whole. That this chronic shortage of purchasing power is unnecessary has been amply demonstrated

during the war years. That such a condition exists in peace time is due entirely to the monopolistic control of the monetary system by private interests who deal in money as a commodity and who, therefore, regulate its volume and distribution in terms of financial gain, rather than in terms of public need.

### **“We will never give up”**

We are determined to continue to do everything in our power to break this vicious monopoly in accordance with the mandate given to us by the citizens of Alberta in 1935 and again in 1940. We will fight it in Alberta and, if necessary, we will carry the fight across the entire Dominion of Canada, but we will never give up until effective control of the monetary system has been restored to the democratically elected representatives of the people themselves, and is being used for the purpose for which a monetary system should exist, namely, to provide every man, woman and child with sufficient purchasing power to enable them to enjoy a secure standard of living, commensurate with the productive capacity of the country of which they are citizens. Only thus can we hope to enter the post war era without a repetition on a far greater scale of the disastrous years which followed the last war and preceded the present conflict.

And so I give fair warning to those who still champion the old order of “poverty amidst plenty”—the old order of excessive rates of interest—of combines and of monopolies. My colleagues and I do not intend to stand idly by and see a repetition of pre-war conditions foisted on the men and women of our fighting forces, when they return from risking their lives that tyranny and oppression in any form might be banished from the earth.

And so we solemnly pledge ourselves to pursue with unabated and renewed vigour, as a duty to our country and our province, the great crusade for social justice initiated and carried forward by our late beloved leader with such inspired devotion, courage and faith and for which in the end he gave his life.

I now come to the third phase of government policy. While we are carrying forward the fight for permanent social justice and economic security, it is our fixed intention to give you the very best possible administration of your public affairs. You have my unreserved assurance that it will be our earnest endeavour to give you the very best in good, sound, honest and efficient administration in every department of government, and to conduct your business at all times on a high plane, in accordance with your



collective will, and in the best interests of the province as a whole.

We are not here to *rule* over you. We are here to *serve* you, faithfully and to the best of our ability. You may not always agree with my judgment. I do not expect you to, but please be assured of this—every decision that I make which concerns you will be that, which, in my honest conviction, and in the light of all the facts and circumstances, is in the best interests of the people of Alberta as a whole. And now may I make one important request of you?

### **An Example to the World**

I want to ask for your active co-operation and assistance in making this province an example to the rest of Canada, and to the world, of a properly functioning democracy. In other words, let us unite to make Alberta a province in which you, the people, will get the results you want from the management of your affairs. To that end may I ask each and every one of you to take an active and personal interest in the important public issues of the day. Study them, analyse them, not from a restricted or selfish individual viewpoint, but rather from the broad aspect of the good and welfare of each and all. May I particularly commend this request to those of you who are members of various representative organisations whether it be farmers, labourers, industrialists, merchants, professional men, business men, or women's organisations. Urge your organisation to take an active interest in public affairs. Then let me have your views regarding those matters which you have considered carefully and which, in the opinion of your organisation, should have the attention of the government.

I want to take this opportunity to say a special word to the young people of Alberta. Being a young man, myself, it is only natural that I should have a particular interest in you and in your problems. I want your help to make Alberta a province in which every young man and young woman will have the opportunity that should be his for a bright, promising and successful future. Let no one forget that upon the shoulders of those who are the young people of to-day will rest the responsibility of coping successfully with the problems of the coming post war years. Youth never had a greater opportunity to safeguard its own future. Now is the time for young people to make their weight felt by taking an active part in the preparation for the post war era which must be undertaken *now* if we are to avoid chaos in the future.

And so I earnestly appeal to every citizen of this province, both young and old, to broaden their horizons, to rise above all the petty bickerings of party politics, and to unite together for the purpose of attaining the results which, collectively, you desire from the administration of your affairs. Only thus can we hope to establish a truly effective democracy.

My colleagues and I will do all in our power to co-ordinate your wishes with those of your fellow citizens, and to formulate government policy in accordance with the greatest common measure of your desires. You may be assured that we will give no quarter in our fight against any and all influences which, in principles or action, are opposed to these fundamentals of true democracy.

To this end we will continue to fight relentlessly against dictatorship in any form, whether it be financial, bureaucratic, socialistic, or any other variety of combine or monopoly.

And now as I bring this address to a close, may I remind you that there is still a hard fight ahead, not only in the world-wide military conflict, but here on the "home front" as well. Never forget that it is possible to win a war and then lose the peace. Upon us who must remain at home while our loved ones risk their lives for our survival, rests the grave responsibility of seeing to it that their sacrifice is not in vain. It matters not if our names are forgotten when the record of Canadian history is penned. What does matter to us all is that in the years to come when men and women look back to these fateful days they may be able to say in truth that this was Alberta's greatest era of development and progress; the time in which her people waged a successful fight to win for every man, woman and child the social justice and the economic security to which free men are entitled.

Therefore speaking to you as Canadians, as well as Albertans, and with an eye to the important part which I am convinced this province is destined to pay in the future of this country, and the Empire, may I close with those words of Abraham Lincoln's which seem to me appropriate at this time.

"With malice towards none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."