

Herald March 10/79. Biog. - Manning, Ernest
Memories of 63 in 63

On June 18, 1963, clear blue skies greeted another four years of Social Credit rule in Alberta.

Only 56 per cent of the province's eligible voters had gone to the polls in perfect, early summer weather to give Premier Ernest C. Manning a slightly larger majority than he had received in the 1959 provincial vote.

When the legislature dissolved May 9, Manning's Socreds had held 60 seats in a 65-seat assembly. After a five-week campaign they were back under the dome, again holding 60 seats in a redistributed 63-seat house.

Socred candidates who had called for 63 in '63 had not been far off the mark.

The leaders of three other provincial parties were defeated, including flamboyant Progressive Conservative Milt Harradence, who had blazed a campaign trail across Alberta in his blue Mustang fighter aircraft and lost by more than 1,000 votes in the riding of Calgary West.

Mike Maccagno, the lone Liberal MLA in the old legislature, was re-elected, and was joined by former Calgary alderman Bill Dickie, the newly-elected Liberal MLA from Calgary Glenmore.

Nick Taylor, then Liberal party president, ruefully commented on election night: "I know we doubled our seats, but I still feel as though we've been steamrollered."

The NDP candidate in Edmonton Northwest, Grant Notley, placed last in a field of four.

CLARK:

*re-elected
in 1963 in
Old-Didsbu-
ry riding
and given
youth minis-
try portfolio*



The Socred Olds-Didsbury incumbent Bob Clark was re-elected and would be given the youth ministry in the new Manning government.

A Calgary lawyer, Peter Lougheed, had recently retired as corporate counsel for the Mannix group of companies and had never attended a political meeting.

During the election campaign, the opposition parties had worked hard to discredit Social Credit's record.

They attacked "arrogant, one-man government," and called Calgary's hospitals inadequate.

One candidate claimed supposedly autonomous school boards couldn't build a single classroom without the province's permission.

All, apparently, to no avail.



LEAVITT:
*Election
 results
 prove Alber-
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 for than
 against
 something*

On election night, Lee Leavitt, the victorious Socred candidate in Calgary Queen's Park, said: "This election proves the people of Alberta would rather vote for than against something."

One of only three unsuccessful Socred candidates, Ross Lawson, lamented that it was "too bad the people of Calgary Glenmore will not have a member on the government side of the house."

The Herald in its post-election editorial warned that "too much success for a political party is a mortal enemy of good government."

"Sixty seats out of 63 once again places this province in the category of a single-party state. Three men will lend feeble credence to the concept of parliamentary government."

In Edmonton, Manning, who had just won his sixth provincial election as premier and his eighth as a Socred MLA, told party supporters crowding his campaign headquarters that his government was "deeply conscious of its tremendous responsibilities."

sponsibilities.

But responding to critics' cries for a larger opposition, Manning said voters in a democracy elect governments, not oppositions.

In a column analysing the Manning win, Herald publisher Frank Swanson wrote: "It would seem that as long as Mr. Manning chooses to retain the reins of leadership, Social Credit in Alberta will continue to go back in. If the election was nothing else, it was a ringing endorsement of the man who has been the leader of the party for 20 years."



LOUGHEED:
*retired corporate
counsel who
four years
later would
lead Tories
out of elec-
toral wilder-
ness*

Four years later, in 1967, Lougheed was to lead the Conservatives from the electoral wilderness to gain six seats in the legislature.

From that beachhead, the Tory leader was to go on — after Manning's retirement — to win the election in 1971 and in 1975 to establish a governing majority rivalling that once held by the Socreds.

Update: Manning mandate

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ERNEST MANNING
... decline in '68

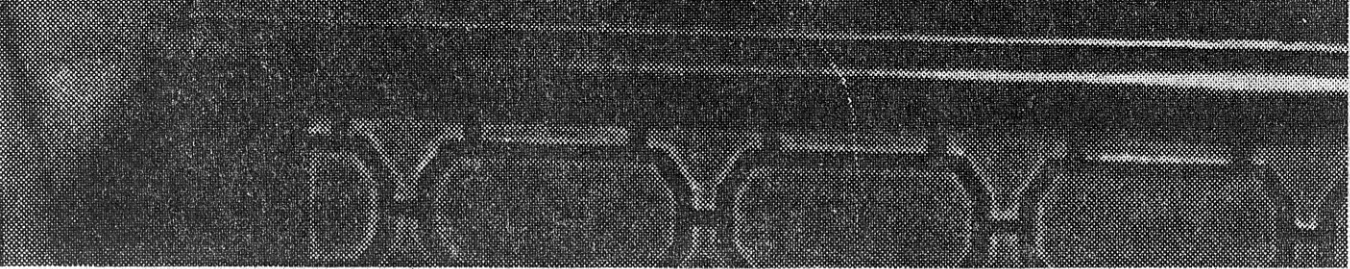


MILT HARR
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Herald file photo

ERNEST MANNING SIGNS LEGISLATURE LOG BOOK FOR FIFTH TIME IN 1953
. . . 10 years later Socreds were still flying high with 60 of 63 seats in house

Under general supervision of the Risk and Insurance Manager