

New Party Takes Shape

Calgary Herald

Jan 20, 1968

Alberta Group Forms

(See other stories Page 12)

By **DON SELLAR**
[Herald Staff Writer]

EDMONTON — An independent, Edmonton-based group has taken the initial steps toward formation of a new federal political party based upon Premier Manning's Social Conservative doctrine.

The Social Conservative Society, incorporated recently under the Alberta Societies Act, now is in the throes of developing a set of national public policies which, its members hope, will:

- Form the foundation for the emergence of a new political party, an answer to the premier's call for political realignment in Canada;

- Provide the vehicle by which "conservatives" in Canada could unite in a modern political organization dedicated to blending humanitarian ethics with reformed free-enterprise ideals, and

- Involve a large segment of Canadian voters who Social Conservative Society members say are disenchanted with the multi-party federal system and who want a chance to involve themselves in national affairs.

OUTSIDE PARTY

The SCS, whose 15-man board of directors includes a mixture of business men, professional people and university personnel, has sprung up outside the Social Credit party.

Its sudden and dramatic formation is the strongest reply yet to Mr. Manning's frequent calls for national political reconstruction, and SCS members say privately they are hoping to draw the 59-year-old premier into their development plans.

There already are strong connections between the SCS and Mr. Manning — the most obvious being the fact that the premier's 24-year-old son, Preston, who did research for his father's political realignment best-seller, is being invited to join the SCS board of directors.

FEW NAMES KNOWN

A list of directors is not available because the group doesn't intend to announce its existence until next month, but other members include: Bill Johnson, an Edmonton lawyer defeated as a Social Credit candidate by Tory Lou Hyndman in last May's provincial election; Don Hamilton, a young Edmonton business man who is supervisor of the Alberta Service Corps in the Alberta department of youth; Erick Schmidt, 27-year-old University of Alberta doctoral candidate in sociology who is co-ordinator of research for the Alberta government's human resources program and Owen Anderson, 23-year-old U. of A. political science graduate student who is now a member of the Alberta Advisory Council in the human resources program.

Both Mr. Anderson and Preston Manning have worked for the National Public Affairs Research Foundation, an independent research group which has contributed to the Alberta government's human resources program.

Other SCS directors, predominantly in the 25-40 age group, are said to include engineers, architects and doctors.

LEAGUE HAS PLANS

At the same time as these Social Conservatives are arranging financial support necessary to formation of a public affairs or embryo political

party, the Social Credit League itself is going full steam ahead with separate plans for attainment of the same cause.

A Social Credit League committee — including Premier Manning, two cabinet ministers, league president Orvis Kennedy and three other Socreds — now is organizing the modern, computer-oriented Alberta Social Conservative Association as part of the Socred party's renewal program.

The ASCA, formed at the League's Edmonton convention last November, is going to be a modern policy research and federal or provincial organizational arm for the party.

MERGER POSSIBLE

Mr. Kennedy says the creation of this new Social Conservative Society could result in a marriage between the two groups, because Alberta Socreds support the same set of ideals now shared by both the SCS and ASCA.

He agrees with the theory that this union could be an effective way of shifting Social Credit support to an outside organization which otherwise might be hampered by strong Social Credit affiliation in its drive for realignment.

The common ideology — four Social Conservative "ideals" and twenty fundamental "principles" — were laid down by Premier Manning in his book *Political Realignment: A Challenge to Thoughtful Canadians*. The book, published Aug. 4 last year, has sold 30,000 copies across Canada.

One SCS director describes the new public affairs body as a group of men primarily interested in activating the bulk of Canadians who either have dropped out of political involvement or who never before were active in politics.

ALBERTA FIRST

Initially the SCS will operate only in Alberta, presumably supporting current Socred efforts to field Social Conservative candidates in the next federal election.

"We're not a political party — not yet," says one SCS director, who claims conventional parties have committed themselves to a course of action which places a higher priority on political expediency than on party principles and policy formation.

Another member says the Canadian public is tired of leaders who feel they have the authority to set policy without paying heed to desires of party members or to the fact they have no expertise whatsoever in most policy fields. "The Canadian public has developed a sheep complex," he says.

POLICY STUDY

The SCS is hoping to draw members in two categories. The first would consist of persons interested in carrying out basic policy research and organizational work. The board of directors thus far has delineated 150 federal policy areas for study.

The second category of membership would be for persons desiring "associate" status, those who would pay \$1 a year for a membership card which would correspond to memberships sold by existing political parties.

One of the main SCS aims is to involve Canadians — regardless of educational background or abilities — in politics.

Everyone has talent which could be useful to building a modern political organization, says one SCS spokesman, and the SCS is prepared to give necessary training to persons who feel they want to be active in politics but who feel they are hampered by lack of education.

The SCS is known to be formulating a public awareness campaign as a method of attracting members, but no target data for this program has been set.