

T.C. DOUGLAS: a biographical essay

Tommy Douglas started his career as a printer's devil in Winnipeg cleaning lead plates with gasoline. However, he soon returned to school and entered Brandon College (now Brandon University) where he received his B.A. in 1930. He later received his M.A. from McMaster University and did postgraduate work at the University of Chicago. In 1930 he married Irma Dempsey and they began their life together in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Douglas had by then entered the ministry, and had begun to work with the poor and unemployed. As the Depression deepened, he became more and more involved in politics and in 1935 was elected as a Federal Member of Parliament in the first federal CCF campaign. This was the beginning of thirty-five years in political life. He served nine years in the House of Commons, and then returned to Saskatchewan to lead the provincial CCF to its historic victory in 1944. This election established Saskatchewan as the beachhead of socialism in North America and the government went on to win five successive terms of office. In 1961 Douglas resigned as Premier of Saskatchewan to become the first national leader of the newly formed New Democratic Party. In this position his boundless energy provided the momentum which helped the NDP to double its share of the national vote during the ten years he served as its leader.

Thomas Clement Douglas was born on October 20, 1904, in Falkirk, in the county of Stirlingshire in the lowlands of Scotland, to Thomas and Annie Clement Douglas. Little Tommy, the first male grandchild, would sit by the hour listening to his grandfather, whose name was also Thomas, relate the tales of the family, often bouncing the little boy on his knee while quoting from Tam O'Shanter:

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!

Grandfather Thomas was an iron moulder by trade, as were all eight of his sons. His house was full of laughter and lively debate on every topic - politics, religion, philosophy. Old Thomas was an excellent public speaker and was always asked to address Burns banquets and other festive affairs. He was usually accompanied by a healthy glass of Scotch. That was the Presbyterian side of the family. Douglas' mother's side of the family was Baptist. No liquor would be found in the house except when his father came home from the foundry and had a cold bottle of beer. Annie Douglas encouraged the artistic side of her son. As he remembers her:

When we were small she would read aloud a few chapters from Dickens or Scott on a Sunday evening, then the book would be put away until the next Sunday. She read beautifully and with imagination. The characters became alive. I believe she was largely responsible for my great interest in English literature and in dramatics.

At the age of six Tommy Douglas immigrated to Canada with the rest of his family. His father had seen the British class system from the under side and he wanted no more of it. He had gone to fight the Boer War and had returned sorely disillusioned. He often wondered who ever won these wars, for it was certainly not the people. So the Douglas family moved to Canada and were soon settled in Winnipeg.

Shortly after his arrival in Canada, Tommy Douglas came close to losing one of his legs when he suffered a recurrence of osteomyelitis from an early injury to his knee and he spent his first few years in Canada on crutches. His boyhood friends often had to haul him to school in a wagon. Since his father had difficulty finding regular work, the best medical care seemed far beyond the family's means and there was fear that the leg would have to be amputated. Fortunately, an excellent surgeon selected the boy from a public ward for an experimental treatment at no fee and the leg was saved. T. C. Douglas was not to forget this experience and it undoubtedly helps explain his later determination to make medical care available to all.

When the war broke out in 1914 Thomas Douglas sent his family back to Scotland and he enlisted in the Canadian army. After his return to Scotland Tommy Douglas was as energetic as ever, playing all kinds of sports. When he was only thirteen years old, in Scotland, he helped the family's finances by working at a most

unlikely job - burning the brand names into whisky bottle corks. When the family returned to Canada in 1919, they ran into further financial difficulties and Tommy left school to work as a printer's devil. He was soon the youngest journeyman apprentice in Canada but he was not satisfied with this occupation for long. He soon came in contact with the All Peoples' Mission which J. S. Woodsworth directed in Winnipeg. It offered educational and recreational programs, particularly to working-class immigrants and young people. This influence, coupled with the advice of his parents and friends, soon led Douglas to a decision to enter the Baptist ministry. This required six years' training at Brandon College to attain the necessary qualifications. Douglas preached on week-ends and during the summers throughout Manitoba in order to pay his way. Once he was asked to officiate at the closing of a Baptist church. Douglas preached a sermon chastising the congregation for denying their children access to a religious education. By the end of his sermon the congregation agreed that they should maintain the church but only on the condition that Tommy Douglas be their preacher! Douglas served there two years before he was transferred to another pastorate in Carberry, Manitoba. It was here that he met Irma Dempsey, whose father was active in the Manitoba co-operative movement. They were married just after he graduated, by his brother-in-law, Mark Talney, with Stanley Knowles serving as the best man. The Douglases have two married daughters, Shirley and Joan, and five grandchildren.

At the beginning of the thirties, there were many young men available to fill vacant parishes. One such vacancy occurred in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles, now the distinguished House Leader of the New Democratic Party, both applied for the position. As the NDP newspaper, *Commonwealth*, was to remark later, this "handed the Calvary Baptist people a tough decision. Both would-be ministers were equally acceptable to them. The all-important question was put to a vote and all that John E. Powers, one of the deacons, will say today of that poll, is that the margin of voting was 'mighty close.' " Douglas was elected and in the late summer of 1930, he and his new wife arrived in Weyburn.

The Depression was just beginning when Douglas first arrived in Weyburn in 1930, but the economic collapse had not yet weakened the confident practicality of the prairie farmer. However, as the thirties wore on drought plagued the province year after year, causing crop failure and low prices. Many prairie families faced ruin.

Douglas spent the summer of 1931 doing post-graduate work at the University of Chicago. In Chicago he watched with horror the full effects of the Depression and worked in the Chicago slums where 75,000 were jobless and hungry. On his return to Canada, he found similar conditions developing back home in Weyburn, and soon became outraged at the suffering which he saw around him and the apparent inability of the various levels of government to take decisive remedial action. From his pulpit and from any other available platforms, he drew attention with growing indignation to the monstrous injustices he saw about him. He took to going to the police court daily to advise and comfort young boys and girls. One typical day eleven delinquent youngsters were to appear before the police magistrate. Douglas recalls one day when he took custody of eleven boys who had been involved "in just about every conceivable trouble that boys can manage." Douglas took them home, to a more than surprised wife, and they were soon issued baths, haircuts, and clean clothing donated by members of Douglas' congregation. They also soon became involved in the church's athletic program. Things were going well when a local store-keeper reported he had been robbed of chocolates, soft drinks, cigarettes, and candy. Douglas caught "his" boys red-handed with their loot, and threatened to have them all recommitted to the magistrate. He then delivered "my very best lecture." The boys were soon in tears and promised to return the stolen goods and that it would never happen again. Then, as they left his office, one came back to Douglas' desk. Nearly forty years later the NDP leader still remembers the boy: "He was the toughest of the lot. He could pick a lock with a hair-pin and he could fight anything his size." Slowly, with an effort that was against all his instincts, the boy began to empty his pockets. "There was my watch, my pen-knife, my fountain pen and several other items," Douglas recalls. "It was all there -everything he'd stolen from my desk during the last half hour."

In addition to his work with young delinquents, Douglas was also soon involved with the thousands of unemployed in Weyburn. He began to help them organize. An Unemployment Association was formed and

people were asked to contact the Association for any work they wanted done. The Association charged twenty-five cents an hour or fifty cents a day. The community responded enthusiastically, and the Association soon expanded to include the employed as well as the unemployed, and became the Weyburn Labour Association. Douglas then considered bringing the farmers into the Association, and consulted M. J. Coldwell, then a Regina alderman, about the need for an alliance between the farmers and labour. Soon the Weyburn Labour Association joined Coldwell's Independent Labour Party, and Douglas became the first president of the Weyburn branch of the ILP. The next step was the amalgamation of the Independent Labour Party and the United Farmers of Canada into the Farmer-Labour party in 1932.

That same year, an even broader consolidation of Canadian socialism was also developing. The fourth conference of the western labour political parties met in Calgary on June 30, 1932. This meeting was planned in anticipation of a meeting later that summer of the Western Conference of Labour Parties and the UFA, with their farmer and labour groups attending. The aim of this Calgary conference was to form a new national political party - a coalition of labour and farm groups. At the joint meeting one month later, M. J. Coldwell spoke for the labour political parties in a resolution calling for united farmer-labour action. His resolution was passed and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was born. Its purpose was clear:

The establishment of a co-operative commonwealth, in which the basic principle regulating production, distribution and exchange, will be the supplying of human needs instead of the making of profits.

A very general eight-point working plan was drawn up that called for nationalization of all public utilities and natural resources, socialization of banking and a transition from the welfare state into a socialist commonwealth. The conference elected J. S. Woodsworth as president of the first National Council. The following year was spent working out the constitution of the new party, to be adopted the following summer at Regina. Much of the real force of direction came from a group of Ontario intellectuals in the League for Social Reconstruction, which modelled itself on the British Fabian Society. It was a member of this group, Frank Underhill, who wrote the original draft of what became the Regina Manifesto. It was adopted with minor changes by the Regina Convention in 1933.

By now Douglas was committed to politics as the best way for him to tackle the country's ills. He ran in the provincial election of 1934 as the farmer-labour candidate in Weyburn but was defeated. The following year he entered the race again in Weyburn, this time as the CCF candidate in the federal election, and was elected along with J. S. Woodsworth, M. J. Coldwell, A. A. Heaps, Angus MacInnis, C. Grant MacNeil, and J. S. Taylor. In Ottawa Douglas became the external affairs critic of the CCF caucus, and also worked with M. J. Coldwell on the CCF agricultural policy.

The four years prior to the outbreak of World War II were ones of increasing alarm for Tommy Douglas. As external affairs critic for the CCF he was one of the few members of Parliament who warned the Canadian government that its inactivity was aiding the fascists' rise to power. Douglas was quick to point out Canada's hypocrisy in shipping nickel to Italy to be used in helping it build up its armaments, while at the same time condemning Italy's involvement in Ethiopia. Later, Canada also exported nickel to Japan during the Manchurian campaign. Douglas foresaw that the day would come when Canadian nickel would be used to kill Canadian citizens. This issue became a personal agony when some of his own close friends were killed in the Japanese attack on Hong Kong. The Canadian government would display the same hypocrisy in the 1960's and Douglas would again point out the immorality of producing millions of dollars' worth of material for the American war in South-East Asia while supposedly maintaining an officially neutral stand on the war.

The Spanish Civil War and the rise of Hitler in Germany were the major issues of the time. After reviewing the situation in 1936, Douglas prophesied in the House:

I am convinced that within two years we shall have to go to war; or sacrifice Czechoslovakia, in which case we shall only postpone the war for another one or two years.

What policy did he advocate? Douglas believed that Canada should either fulfil its obligations under the Charter of the League of Nations, or else make it clear that she would not participate in the coming war. If Douglas' position had been accepted, it would have required a Canadian commitment to an international police force or to complete neutrality. As it was, his resolution was defeated and Canada drifted placidly towards the coming holocaust.

In 1939 the nightmare that Douglas had foreseen began. With the exception of J. S. Woodsworth, who remained committed to pacifism, the CCF members supported the declaration of war against fascism. As Douglas remembers it:

I feel now that we were right, that if Hitler had triumphed we would have had the black night of barbarism for centuries to come, that Hitler had to be stopped, even if it meant war and the loss of life. So the debate was completed and we supported the war.

However, the CCF asked for, and got, a 5 per cent limitation on war profits. C. D. Howe later rescinded this order when businesses refused to produce under this provision.

In 1940 Mackenzie King introduced his National Resources Mobilization Bill, which included conscription. Douglas condemned the government for its failure to provide for mandatory conscription of the country's wealth to prosecute the war. He predicted that as usual it would be the working man who was conscripted.

Late in 1941 Hong Kong fell. Many of Douglas' friends and neighbours were in the Winnipeg Grenadiers, which was garrisoned there. Douglas attacked the government, producing evidence so damning that the Prime Minister was forced to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the questions of the government's incompetence raised by Douglas. The Canadian troops, with only week-end training, had been dispatched to Hong Kong on a freighter travelling at sixteen knots, while all their weapons were put on another boat lumbering along at only eight knots. Why did the government send ill-trained, unequipped men 5,000 miles to defend a major outpost of the British Empire only weeks after the Japanese initiative in Pearl Harbor? Many condemned Douglas for publicly criticizing Canada's war effort, which appeared to play into the hands of the enemy. However, he dismissed these charges by saying:

If there was inefficiency and incompetence at Hong Kong there is no point in keeping it from the Japanese. They know all about it.

In 1942, Douglas again took an unpopular stand after the Dieppe raid. Why were the aerial and naval bombardments called off but the men sent in to be butchered? The answers were never clearly given. At one point, Douglas so incensed Colonel Ralston, the Minister of Defence, that Ralston pulled out a folder and said, 'Vell, if you really want the information, let me read.' The Prime Minister silenced him before he gave the Opposition, and Canadians, the full story. Douglas had his own ideas on the Dieppe disaster:

This was the battle, of course, that every Canadian government has had. We had it in the First World War, when Borden had to fight constantly to keep Canadian troops under the command of Sir Arthur Currie. In the Second World War the Canadian government had the same battle to keep the troops under the command of General McNaughton. In the Dieppe case they were taken away from him completely. I doubt if he knew anything about the use to which his troops were being put!

Between sessions in Ottawa Tommy Douglas was busy in Saskatchewan organizing for the CCF. He spent his days at poll meetings and in the evenings he attended constituency meetings and public receptions. He also travelled throughout the province setting up CCF Youth groups. But party morale was low, and in 1940 the situation became critical. George Williams, the provincial leader, went overseas and membership in the party slipped to an all-time low. Douglas then began organizing in earnest. In 1941 he was elected President of the Saskatchewan CCF and later in the same year he became leader of the provincial party. The Liberals

were expected to call an election in 1942 and CCF organizing went into high gear. The new leader set up a shadow cabinet to formulate the policies of the CCF. The shadow cabinet was composed of committees corresponding to the Cabinet departments of resources, welfare, agriculture and municipal affairs, finance, and education. In addition to this, each of the eleven M.L.A.'s already in the legislature took responsibility for three constituencies. Douglas appointed C. M. Fines to preside over the organization. A school teacher before entering politics, Fines had been involved in the CCF from its inception.

Douglas soon succeeded in reactivating the party so completely that he was left free to work in Ottawa while the provincial CCF grew in competence and confidence. By the time the Liberal government finally called an election in 1944, the CCF was ready for the battle and eager for victory. Douglas resigned from the House of Commons and returned to Saskatchewan in May, 1944. In the election that followed, the CCF overwhelmed the Liberals by winning forty-seven seats; the Liberals managed to hold only five and the Conservatives none at all.

It was not a quiet election. Douglas himself was elected in Weyburn with a majority of 2,000 votes. In reminiscing about these days, the NDP newspaper, *Commonwealth*, has recalled that Douglas often risked bodily harm in heated arguments with the hot tempered. It was sometimes more prudent "to avoid the main street in order to reach a meeting hall unmolested."

Douglas immediately began a major reorganization of the provincial government. Three new departments were created, the Department of Labour, the Department of Co-operatives, and the Department of Welfare. In order to pay the extra ministers needed to direct the new departments, all Cabinet ministers took a pay cut from \$7,000 to \$5,000 a year. In spite of criticism at the local level the CCF refused to fire any civil servants who had been Liberal supporters.

Between July 10 and October 19, 1944, over one hundred pieces of legislation were prepared. The new government brought in experts from around the world to help plan these social reforms. The major health schemes which were the over-riding concern of Tommy Douglas himself were developed with the advice of the Health Services Planning Commission. Dr. Henry Sigerist came to Saskatchewan from Johns Hopkins University to head this Commission. In the area of economics, the government established the Economic Advisory and Planning Board. It was composed of the ministers of finance and natural resources as well as technicians and was chaired by men with training in business and economics. It served to advise the Premier directly and, through him, the Cabinet as a whole. The CCF Cabinet was considered responsible as a body for the economic development of the Province, a change from the traditional system in which each minister tended to battle for his own department's budget, even at the expense of over-all development.

Among the new legislative measures passed, which made Saskatchewan the social laboratory of North America in the eyes of many, were ones which put an end to the foreclosing of mortgages on farms and encouraged small communities by assisting local and municipal governments which were in financial difficulties. The Crown Corporations Act opened the way to some of the Douglas government's most exciting achievements. A Saskatchewan Government Airways was created to link the remote areas of the province, and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company brought bus service to all areas. The Timber Board took control of lumbering, so that the industry could prosper without destroying the forests. The establishment of the Power Corporation was another landmark. In 1944 only 300 farms in the province had electricity; by 1964 over 65,000 homes (90 per cent) were serviced. The Corporation also helped attract new industry to the province.

In the field of labour relations, the Douglas government initiated many reforms. One of the most basic, the Trade Union Act, which made collective bargaining mandatory, was described by Walter Reuther as "the most progressive piece of labour legislation on the North American continent." It made the Saskatchewan civil service the first in Canada to receive collective bargaining rights. Other legislation established standards for workmen's compensation, minimum wage levels, mandatory holidays, and a Labour Relations Board, by which an employer who consistently violated the orders of the Board could have his plant expropriated by the

government. Trade union membership in the province soared -increasing 118 per cent in four years, in contrast to a national increase of only 25 per cent for the same period.

Equally important to the population as a whole were the changes in health and education. The 1944 election slogan was "Humanity First," and the first CCF budget reflected this emphasis by devoting 70 per cent of its expenditures to health, welfare, and education legislation. The most basic change in the field of education was the creation of larger school districts, which, in spite of local opposition, could provide students with better trained teachers and a more modern curriculum. Teachers' salaries were raised and regional disparities minimized as a result of these changes. The University of Saskatchewan was expanded to include a medical school, the first in the province. This step tied in with the revolutionary changes being made in the fields of health and welfare. In 1944 old age pensioners were granted free medical, hospital, and dental services, and the cost of treatment of certain diseases such as cancer, tuberculosis, mental illnesses, and venereal diseases was taken over by the government. In 1947 the first universal hospitalization plan in Canada was implemented. A government operated air ambulance service made emergency hospital care available to all.

Another "first" for Saskatchewan was the introduction in 1946 of a government operated compulsory automobile insurance plan. This was the first "no fault" accident plan in North America. The Government Insurance Office, which administered the plan, later expanded into other types of automobile, fire, and casualty insurance and forced some of the private companies to reduce their premiums by as much as 50 per cent!

The Douglas government was determined to be one based on active citizen participation. Live broadcasts of the debates of the legislature, inaugurated in 1945, and other efforts to make full information about the government available to all, were aimed at making the people of Saskatchewan feel involved in and part of the government of their province. The CCF party had already achieved a phenomenal measure of participation from the public during the years it was formulating its policies. In 1944 over 8 per cent of the electorate were members of the CCF, compared to an average of 1 per cent for the "established" parties. The extension of the franchise to those over eighteen, another "first" for Canada, brought an even wider segment of the population into direct contact with their government.

The CCF was re-elected in 1948 but with a smaller number of seats, since the Liberals and the Conservatives did not oppose each other in the same ridings. This election saw the emergence of a new direction in the CCF program. Douglas had always been firm in advocating a mixed economy made up of private, public, and co-operative enterprises. The disastrous droughts of the thirties had also shown the need for less dependence on agriculture as the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy.

The Premier began to travel throughout Canada and the United States encouraging new businesses to locate in Saskatchewan. Many businessmen feared that the CCF would nationalize any industry once it started to make money, and Douglas had to be his most convincing to reassure them that he was not about to fence Saskatchewan off from the rest of North America. As investors grew more confident, Tommy Douglas encouraged an influx of developers to Saskatchewan. The next decade saw the development of Saskatchewan's tremendous primary resources. Oil, gas, uranium, copper, zinc, salt, and potash all became important sources of wealth and production, and the government was able to lower the sales tax as royalties from the sale of resources rights filled the provincial coffers.

The vast flow of development capital into the province was not allowed to threaten the rights of the people of Saskatchewan, as was the case in so many other areas of Canada. The Canadian Pacific and Hudson's Bay Company had held mineral rights to huge areas of the province for years, but had never bothered to develop them. Douglas made it clear that unless they began to take a few risks, spend some money, and start development, they would lose their rights. Within months the companies began explorations. The gas and oil industries were granted exploration rights on a checkerboard pattern in order to facilitate public development of the resources in the future.

Meanwhile, the Crown corporations were expanding into new fields. These included the Fish Marketing Board and the Fur Marketing Service, designed to give the fishermen and trappers a better cash return and free them from the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Fish Marketing Service soon became a co-operative operated by the fishermen themselves. Other enterprises included a box factory, a woollen mill, a seed-cleaning plant, a shoe factory, a tannery, a brick yard, and a sodium sulphate plant. Most of these were existing businesses which the government took over when the operations got into financial difficulties. They varied in the degree to which they succeeded, as the government experimented with different ways to diversify the province's economy. The Industrial Development Office, which was set up to assist private investors in starting new industries, helped develop a potash mine, a steel mill, and a pipeline company, as well as encouraging the development of the province's oil and natural gas resources.

The Douglas program of economic development was extremely successful. In 1941, the provincial revenue from resources was \$1¹/₂ million; by the time the CCF went out of power it was over \$45 million. In 1944, 80 per cent of Saskatchewan's economy was agricultural; by 1957, although over a million more acres were under cultivation, 65 per cent of the province's production was non-agricultural.

By the 1950's Saskatchewan was enjoying a period of unparalleled prosperity and it was fitting that the province's golden jubilee was celebrated in 1955 during this optimistic period of her growth. That year the province hosted the North American Figure Skating Championships, the Dominion Drama Festival, and over fifty national conventions. One of Tommy Douglas' pet projects was a collective history of Saskatchewan - each community was urged to write its own history and the schools encouraged essay contests. It was a time of proud reassertion of the prairie tradition.

In 1958, after years of federal inaction, Douglas was successful in getting the South Saskatchewan River Development Project signed. The new project would cost \$165 million, creating a lake over one hundred miles long and five miles wide, which could be used for hydro-electric power and irrigation. The project was officially opened in 1965, another milestone in the progressive era which the CCF had initiated in Saskatchewan.

Tommy Douglas had always taken a particular interest in improving the health services available to the people of Saskatchewan, and when he first became Premier he also held the Health portfolio. In a speech to the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union many years later he described the evolution of the health programs which put Saskatchewan in advance of most countries in this area: "within six months of taking office, we had started out by providing free care and treatment and surgery for all persons suffering from cancer." The government also provided free care for all the mentally ill, including free psychiatric treatment and schools for the mentally retarded. Old age pensioners, those on mothers' allowances, widows, orphans, and the blind and disabled received "blue cards" which entitled them to free medical care, including surgery, glasses, dental care, and a large percentage of their drug costs. Free care was also extended to all those suffering from poliomyelitis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Three years after taking office the Douglas government introduced the first complete hospital insurance program in North America, at a cost of \$5.00 per year to the individual. As he explained, "I am not trying to kid you, we don't get this for nothing. It is paid out of the treasury. The only difference is, instead of the burden of paying those hospital bills falling on sick people it is spread over all the people." He added, "That is what St. Paul meant, I think, in his letters to the Romans: 'They that are strong ought to help bear the burdens of the weak.'"

On December 17, 1959, Douglas announced on the radio the introduction of a complete medicare program for Saskatchewan and specified the five features he felt such a program had to include: it had to be universal, it had to be a pre-paid plan, it had to be publicly administered, it had to provide a high quality of medical care, including preventative, not purely curative, medicine, and, finally, it had to be accepted both by those providing the services and those receiving it.

In May, 1960, Douglas told the Toronto Star that what he wanted was "a program of complete medical care without a price tag. And that is what we aim to achieve in Saskatchewan by 1961 - the finest health service available to everyone in the province, regardless of ability to pay. This is our goal..." Douglas was well aware that it had taken far longer than he had hoped to reach this goal. In 1944 he had promised the people of Saskatchewan a complete system of health services financed through taxation, and in 1954 the Opposition charged that after ten years he had still failed to keep this pledge. Douglas replied: "We don't need the opposition to remind us. I made a pledge with myself long before I ever sat in this House, in the years when I knew something about what it meant to get health services when you didn't have the money to pay for it. I made a pledge with myself that some day if I ever had anything to do with it, people would be able to get health services just as they are able to get educational services, as an inalienable right of being a citizen of a Christian country."

When he introduced the idea of a complete medicare program late in 1959, Douglas knew that he had fired the first volley in what turned out to be a vicious battle. The medical profession, backed by the Liberal party and the Chamber of Commerce, quickly organized in opposition and launched an attack on the government which continued unabated until a settlement with the doctors was finally reached in July, 1962.

In 1960 the Douglas government went to the people for its fifth mandate. The campaign which followed was particularly bitter. The doctors fought on every level-with full-page advertisements, costly publicity kits, and open letters to their patients. Each member of the medical association was assessed \$100 to finance the campaign and doctors who opposed the tactics used were ostracized by their profession. Douglas and his supporters retaliated with a campaign of public information, and Douglas himself travelled throughout the province preaching a peoples' movement as he had in the thirties and forties.

The Douglas government was returned with increased representation. On November 17, 1961, the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act received royal assent. T. C. Douglas had resigned as Premier of Saskatchewan to become the first National Leader of the New Democratic Party ten days earlier. The new act brought his seventeen years as Premier to a fitting climax and fulfilled his pledge to the people of Saskatchewan that they should be permanently freed from the terrible anxiety of medical expenses.

Unfortunately, the battle was far from over. When the legislation came into effect on July 1, 1962, the doctors of Saskatchewan went on strike, continuing their opposition to the law. Their publicity campaign reached new heights of hostility. The government countered with an airlift of doctors from Britain and young doctors from across Canada, including Dr. Ted Tulchinsky, now the Douglas' son-in-law, came to Saskatchewan to provide services during the crisis. A final settlement was reached with the doctors on July 23, 1962 - when a mediator worked out a settlement agreeable to both sides. Since then the Saskatchewan Medical Services Act has paved the way for the Medicare legislation in most Canadian provinces.

While the provincial CCF was occupied in transforming the government of Saskatchewan, the federal party seemed to be floundering. An increasing number of members felt the party needed a new image, a new vocabulary, and a new emphasis. In 1956 this group was responsible for the passing of the Winnipeg Declaration, which attempted to adapt the aims of the Regina Manifesto of 1933 to the reality of Canada in the fifties.

Tommy Douglas was fully in favour of this change in emphasis. He felt that socialism was still the end but that the means to bring it about had been altered. At the 1960 CCF convention in Regina he pointed out that the capitalism with which the men of the 1960's had to cope was different from that of the generation of the 1930's. They had faced a capitalism of exploitation; now the problem was managerial capitalism, which had been tempered by the new economic influence of the state and by the development of social welfare. The task of the new socialists was to adapt to these changing circumstances and to devise ways to build a "living democracy."

In April, 1960, the Canadian Labour Congress adopted a resolution to participate in the establishment of a new political party with which the labour movement would be formally affiliated. In August, 1960, M. J. Coldwell, the retiring National Leader of the CCF, moved the adoption of a resolution at the CCF convention which expressed gratitude to the C.L.C. and authorized the Council and Executive of the CCF to participate in a National Committee for the New Party which was to plan a founding convention.

The following summer the Founding Convention of the New Party was held in Ottawa. Tommy Douglas was an obvious choice as the leader of the new party. His personal inclination was to stay in Regina, where he was deeply involved in the medicare dispute, but the repeated persuasion and pressure of many party members, and particularly his old friend, M. J. Coldwell, finally convinced Douglas to ask the CCF Provincial Council and the caucus to decide if he should run. After several months of consideration they gave their assent. Douglas was too busy in Saskatchewan to campaign for the position and was opposed by Hazen Argue, who had taken over the leadership of the CCF on Coldwell's retirement in 1960. Yet, in August, 1961, Douglas was elected National Leader of the New Democratic Party, with 1,391 votes to Argue's 380.

Obviously, Douglas had become much more than just another Premier of Saskatchewan in the eyes of many Canadians. The *Toronto Telegram*, commenting on the large attendance at Douglas meetings, suggested the people came with "perhaps a little hope."

The *Toronto Star* described Douglas as "the most engaging political personality in the country" and praised his contribution of "able and progressive government" to Saskatchewan. Douglas was quoted in *Maclean's*: "I've realized that it's possible to plan an economy without owning it." He concluded the interview by saying: "If the New Party doesn't succeed, it will mean that for the next twenty-five years there'll be no left-of-centre political party in Canada." The *Telegram* noted that Douglas "invited analysis. He intrigues your intelligence and tugs your emotions." Douglas was described as "a formidable figure on the national scene."

In the 1962 federal election Douglas decided to run in Regina rather than in his old constituency of Weyburn. As luck would have it, the Conservatives swept the province, leaving only one Liberal seat, after a heated campaign in the midst of the medicare dispute.

The Tories did not run a candidate, urging support of the Liberals, and the medical profession contributed heavily to Douglas' opponent. The tactic was successful; but with typical optimism Douglas said on election night:

I am hurt but I am not slain.

I'll lay me down and bleed a while, Then I'll rise and fight again.

The NDP member for Burnaby-Coquitlam soon resigned his seat to allow Douglas to run in the by-election and by November, 1962, he was back in the House of Commons after almost twenty years.

Ottawa was going through the last months of the Diefenbaker regime when Douglas returned. The missile crisis in Cuba soon drew Canadians' attention to Canada's defence agreements with the United States. General Lauris Norstad, the NATO Supreme Commander, held a press conference in Ottawa and told Canadians that Canada was not living up to its commitments. The country was thrown into a turmoil. Had Canada embarked on an agreement to arm Bomarc missiles with nuclear warheads? Lester Pearson maintained that it had and reversed the previous Liberal policy against Canadian nuclear weapons to campaign for acceptance of the warheads. Diefenbaker tried to stall and urged everyone to wait until NATO met in May, 1963, to decide the matter. Douglas and the NDP members were firm: Canada should not accept any nuclear warheads. As Douglas pointed out: "other parties have all agreed in varying and confusing degrees to equipping Canadian forces with nuclear warheads. The New Democratic Party stands alone in unqualified opposition to nuclear arms." He challenged the other leaders to debate the issue with him but there were no takers.

An election was called for April 8, 1963. During the campaign Douglas told a crowd of 16,000 supporters in Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto: "More and more people are realizing that the NDP is the only party in the country which knows where it is going and how it is going to get there." The 1963 election results gave convincing proof that the NDP was consolidating its position as a permanent force in Canadian politics; it took 13 per cent of the vote. Eric Kierans (then President of the Montreal Stock Exchange) was to say afterwards: "During the last Federal election campaign only the New Democratic Party knew what it was talking about when it came to economics."

The lack of national direction in Ottawa during the midsixties was well demonstrated in the government's reaction to the 15 per cent interest equalization tax which President Johnson introduced in the United States to cut back on the American capital outflow. This would mean less direct investment coming into Canada, thus cutting down on American ownership in Canada. Douglas took the position that the equalization tax was not a disaster but could, on the contrary, be beneficial: "This is a golden opportunity for Parliament to enact the establishment of a Canadian Development Fund to generate private capital." Instead of using this opportunity to emphasize national autonomy and independence Pearson solicited Washington to exempt Canada from the tax. Johnson agreed, but only on the condition that Canada would not allow its reserves to rise above \$2.6 billion. Pearson followed a tight money policy which, in fact, speeded up the foreclosures of Canadian-owned industries while the better financed American firms increased their expansion in Canada but now did so with Canadian money! Earl McLaughlin, the Chairman and President of the Royal Bank of Canada, confirmed that NDP economic thinking was on solid ground: "It is impossible to meet these externally imposed conditions, and at the same time protect the Canadian dollar by monetary restraint; an economy built on concessions is far more vulnerable than it ought to be."

The election of 1965 was a further success for Douglas and the NDP. The party jumped from 13 to 18 per cent of the popular vote. Its largest previous vote was 15 per cent, when the CCF took twenty-eight seats in 1945. Across the provinces the increases were impressive: in British Columbia from 30.3 to 37.5 per cent; in Saskatchewan from 18.2 to 26.2 per cent; in Manitoba from 16.7 to 24.7 per cent; and in Ontario from 16 to 21 per cent. The party made its greatest gains in the large urban centres: in Toronto 29 per cent of the vote was NDP, in Vancouver 36 per cent, and in Winnipeg 31 per cent.

Between the 1965 and 1968 elections Tommy Douglas continued to play a major role in the debates in the House of Commons, particularly on issues related to Canada's position in external affairs. He advocated Canada's recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China, the establishment of a UN police force, and Canada's membership in the Organization of American States. He also believed that Canada should get out of NORAD, and of NATO, unless it was made an instrument of the UN. He continued to press for increased foreign aid contributions and the creation of a voluntary service corps to staff co-operative aid schemes in developing countries.

The war in Vietnam was a particular concern of the NDP leader. In 1967 he told the House: "What is happening in Vietnam is shocking the conscience of the world more than anything that has happened since Hitler tried to exterminate the Jews in Europe." Douglas and the NDP members have also continually stated that Canada should stop selling war materials to the United States for use in Vietnam, pointing out the hypocrisy of Canada's supposed stand of neutrality on the war.

In July, 1967, the NDP held a National Convention in Toronto. Speaking to the convention, Douglas charged that "the policy of successive Canadian governments has been one of continental drift." Control of the Canadian economy had been allowed to fall more and more into American hands, and at the same time the degree of United States' political influence in Canada was increasing. The present challenge was to bring about a "democratic socialist society," and to do so it was necessary to extend democratic control of the economy through the elected government. The most urgent problems for the future were to plan for better development of the country's resources, to arrive at a fairer distribution of income, to revamp the

constitutional framework, to achieve greater economic independence, and to play a more decisive role in world affairs. "Time is on our side," he concluded.

Less than a year later the NDP faced the challenge of Trudeaumania in the federal election of June, 1968. The NDP rallied to fight a vigorous campaign in every federal riding, and Tommy Douglas faced the exhausting prospect of yet another coast-to-coast election battle. It was no longer enough to kiss babies in this election: at one meeting in Regina a huge Ukrainian farmer crushed Douglas in a bear-hug and kissed his cheek. Douglas quickly recovered and said: "You'd better be careful. Those changes in the Criminal Code are not in effect yet!" Douglas somehow withstood the gruelling physical pace of campaigning, usually sustained on poached eggs, toast and honey, and hot chocolate. True to his Baptist heritage Douglas rarely, if ever, touches liquor - except by mistake. Late one evening, at a reception after an exhausting day, he was handed a Manhattan cocktail. Deep in conversation, he accepted the glass without looking at it and downed the contents in one gulp. Exhaling sharply, he asked "What was that?" When the ingredients were explained, he replied: "Well, I knew it wasn't hot chocolate." Douglas thrives on campaigning and his handshake somehow stays as firm and his smile as warm at the last meeting of the day as they have been at breakfast. Coupled with a phenomenal memory for names and faces, he is a natural politician.

The 1968 election brought one disappointment. Douglas' constituency, Burnaby-Coquitlam, had been expanded by redistribution and now included a large chunk of solid Liberal territory. Although Mrs. Douglas stayed in the constituency, organizing the local campaign while her husband was traveling to support NDP candidates throughout the country, the Liberals nominated a former Liberal leader in British Columbia and mounted an extensive campaign against Douglas. Douglas lost the constituency by 154 votes, although across the country the party won 17.2 per cent of the national vote, and held 22 seats in spite of Trudeaumania.

Douglas was now sixty-four years old. He had spent over thirty years in active political life. Several universities were offering attractive positions which would allow him time to write his memoirs. However, one month after the June election, Douglas' old friend, Colin Cameron, who had just been reelected in Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands in British Columbia, died suddenly, leaving an opening in the House of Commons. After some debate Douglas decided to run in the by-election. The campaign drew devoted NDP workers from across Canada to work in one of the country's most picturesque but inaccessible ridings. Douglas won handsomely and was soon back in the House of Commons. One of his first attacks was directed towards the Liberal's anti-inflationary policies, which he believed so often struck the weakest segments in the population: the elderly and those on pensions. As Douglas noted in a more lighthearted moment: "A recession is when your neighbour has to tighten his belt. A depression is when you have to tighten your own belt. And a panic is when you have no belt to tighten and your pants fall down." In Douglas' mind, the Liberals were in a state of panic.

Another major issue which attracted the attention of Douglas and the NDP was the increasing domination of Canada's economy by foreign capital. This was not a new problem. It was an increasingly urgent one. It was also a question of conscience, for the continued sales of arms to the United States, which were inevitably destined for Vietnam, were a particularly horrifying result of this domination. Tommy Douglas believes that the domination of the Canadian economy will be the central issue of the 1970's. In October 1970 he told the House: "The time will come very soon when the Canadian people will no longer allow a cynical and supine government to barter away our birthright in the name of continentalism."

Throughout the 1960's Douglas had expressed repeated concern for what was going on in Quebec and how the legitimate aspirations of the people of Quebec could best be met within the framework of a Canadian Confederation. This concern resulted in the adoption of a policy of "particular status" for Quebec by the NDP at its 1967 convention. This policy was a major issue in the 1968 election and, although it may have cost the NDP votes, to Douglas it was simply a matter of recognizing the basic human rights of a people to determine their own destiny. This same concern for civil liberties led him to one of the most unpopular positions of his long career in the fall of 1970 - criticism of the government's imposition of the War Measures Act. In the ensuing months, the tide of hostility has turned, as the rationality of Douglas' stand has become apparent to more and more Canadians. In the House Douglas said: "We are prepared to support the government in taking whatever measures are necessary to safeguard life and to maintain law and order in this

country. . . . We are not prepared to use the preservation of law and order as a smokescreen to destroy the liberties and freedom of the people of Canada."

Douglas could easily have made an identical speech on many occasions in his long career in Canadian politics: in the 1930's, when he demanded that those of Oriental ethnic origin in British Columbia be given the vote; or in the days after Pearl Harbor, when the Canadian government agreed to the brutal relocation of Japanese Canadians.

But these are only two of a long list; it is much too soon to try to write a full biography of one of Canada's outstanding political figures. As he retires as the National Leader of the NDP anyone can predict that when a biography of Tommy Douglas is written it will reflect the outstanding themes of his career - consistency and integrity; and, above all, the theme on which he won the 1944 election: "**Humanity First.**"