# GRAVE SITES OF SASKATCHEWAN PREMIERS

# Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers

**Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers**
Photos on the front cover (left to right) are courtesy of the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB):

Thomas Walter Scott: SAB, R-A2470
William Melville Martin: SAB, R-B4621
Charles Avery Dunning: SAB, R-A631(1)
James Garfield Gardiner: SAB, R-A632(2)
James Thomas Milton Anderson: SAB, R-A629(1)
William John Patterson: SAB, R-A2670
Thomas Clement Douglas: West's Studio Collection SAB R-WS13228(1)
Woodrow Stanley Lloyd: SAB, R-A22815
Wilbert Ross Thatcher: SAB, R-A8359

Unless otherwise noted, all photos in the text are courtesy of the Heritage Resources Branch, Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation.

For additional copies of this booklet, or for further information about Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers, contact:

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# Message from the Lieutenant Governor

In the 1905 election campaign, Walter Scott promised "Peace, Progress and Prosperity." Through pragmatic and visionary leadership, he fulfilled his promise. Despite suffering from painful mental illness, Scott established policies, governmental infrastructure, and institutions that shaped the future of Saskatchewan. Sadly, his remarkable contributions, like his untended tombstone, have been largely forgotten.

Walter Scott said, "This is a great country. It needs big men with large ideas." The ideas and achievements of Saskatchewan's citizens and leaders are impressive, indeed. Tommy Douglas, one of our best-known Premiers, improved labour standards, enhanced the cooperative sector, modernized the province through the Crown Corporations, and laid the groundwork for Canada's first Medicare system.

All of Saskatchewan's late Premiers were dedicated public servants who helped to create a province that embraces diversity, exemplifies decency, prizes innovation, and values community service. Thanks to them, our future is full of promise. The Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers program honours their memory and cherishes their extraordinary legacies.

His Honour the Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

# Message from the Premier

Saskatchewan is a great province today due to the combined efforts of our citizens and our leaders. Throughout our history, we have been served by Premiers who not only cared deeply about Saskatchewan, but also were resourceful, innovative, and committed.

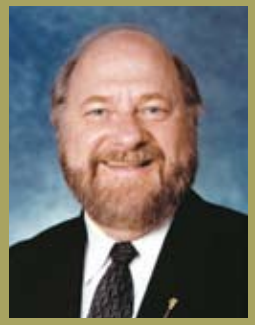
The Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers initiative commemorates the resting places of Saskatchewan Premiers who brought their own special blend of talent, vision and leadership to the highest elected office in the province. Each person contributed to the character and composition of the Saskatchewan we celebrate today.

I believe present and past residents of Saskatchewan and others interested in the history of our province will enjoy the personal profiles contained within these pages. The brief biographies reflect the life and times of both the person and our province.

The Saskatchewan we know and love has been shaped by these individuals. By commemorating their final resting places, we honour their lives.

Lorne Calvert
Premier of Saskatchewan

# Message from the Minister



Saskatchewan has been blessed with able and dynamic leaders who had a personal vision for our province and its place in the world.

Their commitment to public service influenced the direction and development of Saskatchewan.

It is significant that a program to commemorate grave sites of Saskatchewan Premiers came to the forefront during planning for the province's centennial celebrations.

I recognize the Heritage Resources Branch of Culture, Youth and Recreation and the Protocol and Honours Office of Government Relations for coordinating this initiative. I would also like to acknowledge the Saskatchewan Remembers Committee and the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation for their support.

This booklet is dedicated to nine individuals who have, in the role of Premier, guided the people and the development of Saskatchewan. The commemoration of their grave sites is a symbolic way to remember and celebrate their lives, and to show our appreciation and respect for their contributions to this province.

Glenn Hagel
Provincial Secretary
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation

# Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers

Since the creation of the province in 1905, Saskatchewan has been led by a series of exceptional individuals who, as Premier, shaped the development of the province and its institutions. Our Premiers have advanced innovative and often trail-blazing solutions to the unique social and economic challenges Saskatchewan has faced. Under their leadership, the provincial government facilitated the incorporation of Canada's earliest agricultural cooperatives, designed innovative social programs, and helped frame the constitution. These men, each from different backgrounds, and each with different ideals, principles and styles, left a lasting mark, not just on Saskatchewan, but on Canada as well.

**The Office of Premier of Saskatchewan**

The Premier is the leader of the political party which has the largest number of representatives elected to the Legislative Assembly. Invited by the Lieutenant Governor to form the provincial government, the Premier then selects cabinet ministers and assigns their responsibilities. Through the Premier's leadership and direction, government policies and programs are formed, and decisions are made that will often have a lasting effect on the character and development of the province.

In addition to leading the provincial government, the Premier is also the most visible advocate of the province's interests within the Canadian federation. Saskatchewan's Premiers have fought for provincial control over natural resources, cultivated federal support for social programs, and played key roles in Canada's constitutional negotiations. In bringing these issues to the national stage, they have made important contributions to the growth and development of Canada.

**Recognizing the Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers**

In 2005, the Government of Saskatchewan initiated a program to commemorate the grave sites of the province's Premiers. Through this program, and in consultation with cemetery personnel and the families of deceased Premiers, the graves sites of all Premiers will be marked and maintained in a dignified manner. A bronze plaque will be placed near the grave site of each Premier of Saskatchewan indicating his term in office. This booklet has been prepared to help remember and honour the lives and achievements of Saskatchewan's first nine Premiers.

The Grave Sites of Saskatchewan Premiers program is administered by the Heritage Resources Branch of Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation in collaboration with the Office of Protocol and Honours, Saskatchewan Government Relations.

# Terms of Office

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T. Walter Scott | Liberal | September 5, 1905 | - | October 20, 1916 |
| William M. Martin | Liberal | October 20, 1916 | - | April 5, 1922 |
| Charles A. Dunning | Liberal | April 5, 1922 | - | February 26, 1926 |
| James G. Gardiner | Liberal | February 26, 1926 | - | September 9, 1929 |
| J.T.M. Anderson | Co-operative | September 9, 1929 | - | July 19, 1934 |
| James G. Gardiner | Liberal | July 19, 1934 | - | November 1, 1935 |
| William J. Patterson | Liberal | November 1, 1935 | - | July 10, 1944 |
| Thomas C. Douglas | CCF | July 10, 1944 | - | November 7, 1961 |
| Woodrow S. Lloyd | CCF/NDP | November 7, 1961 | - | May 22, 1964 |
| W. Ross Thatcher | Liberal | May 22, 1964 | - | June 30, 1971 |

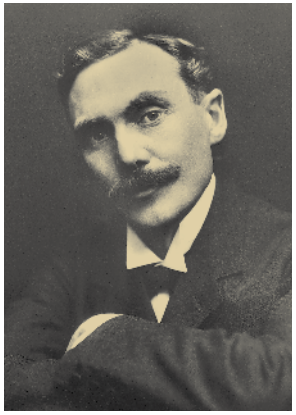
# Thomas Walter Scott

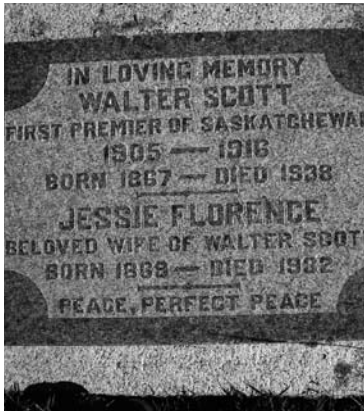
## premier 1905-1916

Born on October 27, 1867, near Strathroy, Ontario

Died on March 23, 1938, Guelph, Ontario

Royal Oak Cemetery, Victoria, British Columbia






As the first Premier of Saskatchewan, Walter Scott was instrumental in establishing many of the province's institutions.

Born on October 27, 1867, near Strathroy, Ontario, Scott moved to Saskatchewan in 1886 to further his career in the newspaper business. By 1896, he had acquired both the *Regina Leader* and the *Moose Jaw Times*, which provided him a forum to enter politics. Scott was elected to the House of Commons in 1900, where, as a backbencher in the Wilfrid Laurier government, he influenced the development of the autonomy bills, which created the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

On September 5, 1905, the day following the province's inaugural ceremony, Lieutenant Governor A.E. Forget appointed Walter Scott as interim Premier to form a government until the first general election could be held. Winning the first provincial election on December 13, 1905, Scott continued to develop the province by cementing Regina's place as the provincial capital, personally overseeing the construction of the Legislative Building, and establishing the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

As Premier, Scott fostered a close relationship between the government and the province's most powerful lobby group, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. He appointed prominent farm leaders to cabinet and acted on many of the association's concerns, most notably providing government loans for the creation of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and providing government assistance for local telephone exchanges.

Scott also supported many social reform causes. In 1915, he introduced partial prohibition which restricted the sale of alcohol to government-run outlets. A believer in the suffragist movement, Scott's government also enfranchised women in 1916, establishing Saskatchewan as one of the first provinces to give women the vote.

In October 1916, Scott resigned as Premier. His increasingly difficult battle with mental illness, a bitter disagreement over educational policy with prominent Protestants, and accusations of government corruption contributed to his departure from politics. He retired to Victoria, British Columbia, where he lived for much of his remaining life. Scott died in Guelph, Ontario on March 23, 1938.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB, R-A2470
Informal: SAB, R-A6008
Grave site: Courtesy Stephen Olson, Royal Oak Cemetery

**Further reading**

Barnhart, Gordon L. "Walter Scott" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 1-38. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

Barnhart, Gordon L. "*Peace, Progress and Prosperity*" *A Biography of Saskatchewan's First Premier, T. Walter Scott.* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2000.

Bocking, D.H. "Premier Walter Scott: His Early Career." *Saskatchewan History*, v.13, n.3 (Winter 1960): 81-94.

# William Melville Martin

## PREMIER 1916-1922

Born on August 23, 1876 in Norwich, Ontario

Died on June 22, 1970 in Regina, Saskatchewan

Regina Cemetery, Regina, Saskatchewan

As a Member of Parliament, Premier of Saskatchewan and jurist, William Martin shaped many provincial institutions.

Martin was born on August 23, 1876, in Norwich, Ontario, where he also received his primary education. He attended the University of Toronto where he earned a degree in classics and received a teaching certificate. After teaching for two years in rural Ontario, he returned to Toronto in 1901 to study law at Osgoode Hall and, in 1903, moved to Regina to practise.

Active in the Liberal Party, Martin contested and won a seat in the House of Commons in 1908. He represented Regina for eight years and distinguished himself as an influential advocate for Saskatchewan's interests.

In 1916, with Walter Scott's Liberal government facing serious accusations of corruption and impropriety, Martin was selected to succeed Scott, in part, because he was not involved in the scandal.

Premier Martin's government brought in a number of reforms, such as restricting liquor sales, overhauling the juvenile justice system, introducing compulsory education for children under the age of 14, and establishing English as the sole language of education.

Falling grain prices after the First World War hurt Saskatchewan farmers and caused serious political agitation throughout the prairies. Martin tried to alleviate the crisis, in part, by promoting farmer-run cooperatives, but this was not enough and farmers threatened to abandon the provincial Liberal Party. They had already left the federal Liberal Party and started their own political movement called the Progressives. Criticizing the popular federal Progressive Party in 1922, which included most if not all his provincial supporters, Martin was forced to resign in order to prevent his fragile party from splintering.

Martin was appointed to the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan shortly after his resignation. He became Chief Justice of Saskatchewan in 1941, a position he held for 20 years. Martin died in Regina on June 22, 1970.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB, R-B4621
Informal: SAB, R-B3730
Grave site: M. Pedersen

**Further reading**
Regehr, Ted. "William M. Martin" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

# Charles Avery Dunning
## Premier 1922-1926

Born on July 31, 1885 in Leicestershire, United Kingdom

Died on October 1, 1958 in Montreal, Quebec

Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal, Quebec

As an activist for farmers, and subsequently Premier of Saskatchewan and a federal cabinet minister, few people influenced the development of Saskatchewan's agricultural industry as much as Charles Dunning.

Born on July 31, 1885, in Leicestershire, England, Dunning immigrated to Canada with few possessions and farmed near Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Economic adversity led to his involvement in the farmers' movement, but political talent would fuel his meteoric rise in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. He championed the establishment of farmer-run, cooperative grain handling companies and helped form the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, serving as its first General Manager. Over the course of four years, he transformed the cooperative into the largest grain handling company in the world.

Entering the political arena in 1916, Dunning served as Provincial Treasurer before assuming the role of Premier in 1922. During his four years as Premier, Dunning fought for the re-establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board, encouraged the development of the province's resource sector, and oversaw the creation of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Subsequently active in federal politics, Dunning served as Minister of Finance from 1926 to 1930, and from 1935 to 1939. During the Second World War, he chaired the National War Loans Committee and coordinated the sale of Victory Bonds across the country. He was also named Chairman of Allied Supplies Ltd., a federal Crown corporation that produced munitions for the United Kingdom.

After the war, his effective business skills brought him appointments to the boards of many of Canada's largest corporations. In 1940, he was appointed Chancellor of Queen's University. Dunning died in Montreal on October 1, 1958, due to complications from kidney surgery.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A631(1)
Informal: SAB R-B29
Grave site: Courtesy Danny Hum, Mount Royal Cemetery

**Further reading**
Brennan, J. William. "C.A Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives: 1922-1925." *Saskatchewan History*, v.22, n.1 (Winter 1969): 1-12.

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# James Garfield Gardiner

## Premier 1926-1929 & 1934-1935

Born on November 30, 1883 in Farquhar, Ontario
Died on January 12, 1962 in Lemberg, Saskatchewan
Lemberg Cemetery, Lemberg, Saskatchewan

One of Saskatchewan's longest-serving politicians, James Gardiner held elected office, first in the Saskatchewan Legislature from 1914 to 1935, and then in the House of Commons from 1935 to 1958.

Born on November 30, 1883, on a farm in southern Ontario, Gardiner came to the prairies as a farm labourer in 1901. After graduating from the University of Manitoba, he became a school teacher and later a farmer, purchasing land near Lemberg, Saskatchewan.

Gardiner entered politics and was elected to the Provincial Legislature in 1914, where he served as a backbencher for eight years until being appointed Minister of Highways in 1922. During this time, Gardiner proved to be a talented political organizer and quickly became a key figure in the provincial Liberal Party.

With the departure of Charles Dunning in early 1926, Gardiner took over as Premier. While in office, he initiated negotiations with the federal government to transfer jurisdiction over Crown land and resources to the province. Following the 1929 election, Gardiner's Liberals attempted to form a minority government, but his government lasted for only a few months.

As Leader of the Official Opposition, Gardiner criticized Premier J.T.M. Anderson's government for their seeming inability to respond to the economic crisis that gripped Saskatchewan during the early years of the Depression. In June 1934, Gardiner and the Liberals returned to power with an overwhelming majority. In November 1935, however, he resigned as Premier to join Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's government as Minister of Agriculture. He held this position for 22 years, becoming the longest serving federal cabinet minister in one portfolio. During the 1940s, Gardiner fought for the construction of a dam on the South Saskatchewan River. The dam, which provided much needed irrigation to vast tracks of farmland, as well as hydro-electric power, was eventually completed in 1967 and named after Gardiner.

After the federal Liberals were defeated in 1957, Gardiner returned to the opposition benches. He lost his seat in the House of Commons in 1958 when Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservatives captured an overwhelming majority. Retiring from politics, Gardiner returned to Lemberg where he farmed until his death on January 12, 1962.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A632(2)
Informal: SAB R-A6030
Grave site: B. Flaman

**Further reading**
Smith, David. "James G. Gardiner" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 89-108. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

Smith, David & Norman Ward. *Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

# James Thomas Milton Anderson

## Premier 1929-1934

Born on July 23, 1878 in Fairbank, Ontario

Died on December 28, 1946 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Woodlawn Cemetery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

As Premier of Saskatchewan during the depths of the Depression, J.T.M. Anderson faced the worst economic crisis in Saskatchewan's history.

Anderson was born on July 23, 1878, in Fairbank, Ontario. After completing high school in Toronto, Anderson found work as a teacher in Gimli, Manitoba. He became interested in the education of immigrants, completed a PhD on the subject, and established himself as the leading Canadian expert in the field. Anderson was hired by Saskatchewan's Department of Education in 1911 and was eventually appointed Director of Education of New Canadians. Anderson's position was abolished in 1922 and his subsequent demotion led him to join the Conservative Party. After becoming leader of the Conservative Party, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1925.

Although the Liberals won the 1929 provincial election with a minority, Anderson persuaded the Independent and Progressive Party Members of the Legislative Assembly to co-operate with his Conservatives. The coalition defeated Premier James Gardiner's government on a confidence motion a few days into the first session, and when Gardiner resigned, Anderson formed what became known as the Co-operative government.

Once in power, Premier Anderson was beset by a host of problems caused by the deepening economic depression and a severe drought. While the government's main challenge during this period was to keep the province solvent in the face of the overwhelming crisis, Anderson successfully obtained jurisdiction over Crown land and resources in 1930. This ended the province's second-class constitutional status by affording Saskatchewan the same rights that the other provinces already enjoyed. He also developed a public service commission, limited the influence of religious organizations in the educational system, and established Saskatchewan's first School for the Deaf.

Anderson's government, however, was overwhelmingly defeated in 1934 without a single government supporter being re-elected. Anderson resigned from the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1936 and became a regional manager for the Crown Life Insurance Company. In 1944, he was appointed Superintendent of the School for the Deaf, a position he held until his death in Saskatoon on December 28, 1946.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A629(1)
Informal: SAB R-A27549(1)
Grave site: M. Pedersen

**Further reading**

Kyba, Patrick. "J.T.M. Anderson" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 109-138. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

Russell, Peter A. "The Co-operative Government's Response to the Depression, 1930-1934." *Saskatchewan History*, v.24, n.3 (Spring 1971): 81-100.

# William John Patterson

## Premier 1935-1944

Born on May 13, 1886 in Grenfell, Northwest Territories
Died on June 10, 1976 in Regina, Saskatchewan
Regina Cemetery, Regina, Saskatchewan

The first Saskatchewan-born Premier and Lieutenant Governor, William Patterson led Saskatchewan through two of its greatest challenges: the Depression and the Second World War.

Born on May 13, 1886, in Grenfell, in what was then the Northwest Territories, Patterson was largely self-schooled. He began his working life with the Dominion Bank, and was later appointed a superintendent for the Department of Telephones and Telegraphs where he oversaw the rapid expansion of telephone services across rural Saskatchewan. In 1916, Patterson enlisted in the Canadian Light Horse Regiment. After being wounded in France, he returned to Saskatchewan in 1919 and established an insurance business in Windthorst.

Patterson first contested political office in 1921, winning as a Liberal in the constituency of Pipestone. He was appointed Provincial Treasurer and Minister of Telephones and Telegraphs in 1926. When the Liberal government was defeated in 1929, he served one term on the opposition benches. When the Liberals returned to power in 1934, Patterson was reappointed Provincial Treasurer.

With the departure of Premier James Gardiner in 1935, Patterson became Premier and inherited a province in financial crisis. Nearing bankruptcy due to the complete collapse of agriculture, Patterson's government fought to keep the province solvent while providing support to the unemployed.

In 1939, the situation changed dramatically with the onset of the Second World War. Remembering the problems of the 1930s, Patterson continued to seek ways to avoid future depressions. As a strong supporter of the Rowell-Sirois Commission, which called for a more interventionist state, he pressed the federal government to create and support minimum standards for government services across the country.

Although his government was defeated in 1944, Patterson remained a Member of the Legislative Assembly until 1949, after which he was appointed to the federal Board of Transportation Commissioners. In 1951, he became Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, serving until 1958. Patterson died in Regina on June 10, 1976.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A2670
Informal: SAB R-A10420
Grave site: M. Pedersen

**Further reading**
Bilson, Beth. "William J. Patterson" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 139-160. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

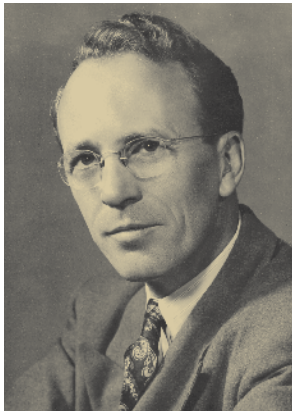
# Thomas Clement Douglas

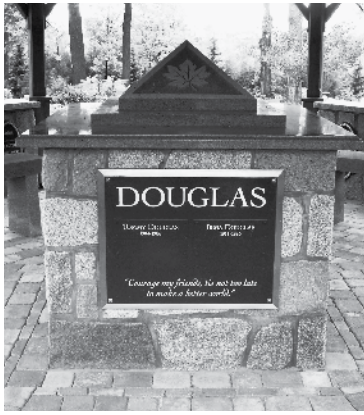
## premier 1944-1961

Born on October 20, 1904 in Falkirk, United Kingdom

Died February 24, 1986 in Ottawa, Ontario

Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, Ontario






Perhaps Saskatchewan's best known politician, Tommy Douglas is remembered most for introducing Medicare and for leading the first social democratic government in Canada.

Born on October 20, 1904, in Falkirk, Scotland, Douglas came to Canada in 1910. Settling in Winnipeg, the heart of Canada's social reform movement at the time, Douglas decided early on to devote his life to the cause of social reform. After extensive education in the social sciences, Douglas entered the Baptist ministry, and in 1929, moved to Saskatchewan to serve as minister at the Calvary Baptist Church in Weyburn.

Douglas became actively involved in politics, and joined the newly-formed Independent Labour Party, an early precursor to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In 1935, he was elected to Parliament where he distinguished himself as a gifted orator. He left federal politics to lead the provincial CCF, which won a decisive victory in the Saskatchewan provincial election of 1944.

As Premier for the next 17 years, Douglas dramatically altered the face of government in Saskatchewan and in Canada. Under his leadership, Saskatchewan overhauled labour laws, reformed the educational system, promoted the development of the oil industry, and brought electricity to every corner of the province. However, his most lasting accomplishment was the gradual reforming of the medical system that led to the establishment of universal health care in Canada.

Douglas introduced legislation to establish Medicare in Saskatchewan in 1961. Before the bill was passed, he resigned as Premier and re-entered federal politics to assume the leadership of the newly formed New Democratic Party (NDP). He remained leader of the national NDP until 1971 and a Member of Parliament until 1979. He retired in Ottawa and died there on February 24, 1986.

**Photography credits**
Formal: West's Studio Collection
SAB R-WS13228(1)
Informal: SAB R-B12762
Grave site: J. Bisson

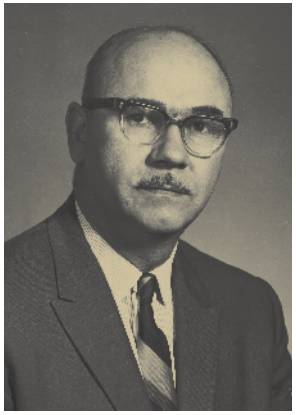
**Further reading**
Macleod, Thomas H. & Ian McLeod. "T.C. Douglas" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 161-212. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

McLeod, Thomas H. & Ian McLeod. *Tommy Douglas: The Road to Jerusalem.* Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987.

# Woodrow Stanley Lloyd

## PREMIER 1961-1964

Born July 16, 1913 in Webb, Saskatchewan
Died April 7, 1972 in Seoul, South Korea
Memorial: Wascana Park, Regina, Saskatchewan



During his more than 25 years in provincial politics, Woodrow Lloyd reformed many of the province's economic and social structures and, in doing so, improved life for the average Saskatchewan citizen.

Born on July 16, 1913, on a farm near Webb, Saskatchewan, Lloyd was educated as a teacher and taught for several years in west-central Saskatchewan. Belief in cooperative economic principles and social justice led Lloyd to become active in both the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in the 1930s.

Following an invitation by T.C. Douglas, Lloyd ran as the CCF candidate in Biggar in the 1944 provincial election. After winning his seat and being appointed Minister of Education, a position he held for 16 years, Lloyd proceeded to overhaul the provincial educational system. In order to ensure equal and consistent opportunities for Saskatchewan children, he amalgamated the province's many school districts; instituted a comprehensive, province-wide curriculum; and expanded teacher education.

In 1961, when Premier T.C. Douglas left provincial politics, Lloyd took over as Premier and quickly found himself embroiled in the public debate over the recently introduced Medical Care Insurance Bill (or Medicare). Faced with substantial public protest, which was later followed by a bitter strike by the province's doctors, Lloyd responded with firm resolve. His determination paid off as the doctors' strike was settled in July 1962, paving the way for the first Medicare system in Canada.

With his government's defeat in the 1964 election, Lloyd became Leader of the Official Opposition where he remained until 1970. After retiring from provincial politics in 1971, Lloyd became Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program in Seoul, South Korea. However, only a few months after his posting, he died unexpectedly on April 7, 1972. Lloyd was cremated and his ashes interred at his memorial in Wascana Park.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A22815
Informal: SAB R-A9178
Memorial: M. Thome

**Further reading**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Norton, Dianne Lloyd. "Woodrow S. Lloyd" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 212-236. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

# Wilbert Ross Thatcher

## Premier 1964-1971

Born May 24, 1917 in Neville, Saskatchewan
Died July 22, 1971 in Regina, Saskatchewan
Rosedale Cemetery, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

A champion of free enterprise, Ross Thatcher became Premier of Saskatchewan in 1964, ending 20 years of continuous Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government in Saskatchewan.

Born on May 24, 1917, in Neville, Saskatchewan, Thatcher grew up in Moose Jaw. After receiving his education at Queen's University, Thatcher worked as an assistant to the Vice-President of Canada Packers in Toronto. In the late 1930s, Thatcher returned to Moose Jaw to work in the family hardware business.

Thatcher entered civic politics and was elected to Moose Jaw City Council in 1942. After a two-year term, Thatcher entered federal politics and was elected as the CCF Member of Parliament for Moose Jaw in 1945. Thatcher served as an MP for almost 10 years, but by the early 1950s became increasingly critical of CCF policies. In 1955, he left the party over differences on corporate taxation policy, joining the Liberal caucus in 1956. After being defeated in the 1957 federal election, Thatcher shifted to provincial politics and was elected leader of the long-beleaguered Saskatchewan Liberal Party in 1959.

Thatcher injected new life into the Liberal Party. As a fiery speaker and adamant CCF opponent, he led the Liberals to a respectable second place in the 1960 provincial election. As Leader of the Official Opposition, Thatcher took the national stage during the 1961 Medicare dispute, leading the campaign against the controversial plan.

In 1964, the Liberal Party, with Thatcher still at the helm, defeated Premier Woodrow Lloyd's government. Convinced that CCF policies had stifled private industry, Thatcher focused on making Saskatchewan "open for business." Under his leadership, the government cut spending, privatized several Crown corporations, and encouraged private development of Saskatchewan's potash and forestry industries. Thatcher's government continued its fiscally conservative approach after being re-elected in 1967. However, increasingly dramatic cost-cutting measures, particularly in education and health, along with controversial hospital utilization fees, became widely unpopular.

The Liberal government was defeated in the June 1971 provincial election and Thatcher quickly stepped down as party leader. Just three weeks later, on July 22, Thatcher died unexpectedly at his home in Regina.

**Photography credits**
Formal: SAB R-A8359
Informal: SAB R-A2937
Grave site: M. Thome

**Further reading**

Eisler, Dale. "W. Ross Thatcher" in *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Gordon L. Barnhart, 237-270. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004.

Eisler, Dale. *Rumors of Glory: Saskatchewan and the Thatcher Years*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1987.

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Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation

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Government of
Saskatchewan