

# SASKATCHEWAN ELECTIONS: A HISTORY

## DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 1905

Saskatchewan's first election took place three months after becoming a province. The Liberal Party, led by Walter Scott, formed the province's first elected government. Scott was a Member of Parliament representing the area of Saskatchewan in Wilfred Laurier's federal government. Frederick Haultain, the former premier of the Northwest Territories, led the Provincial Rights Party. Haultain was linked to the Conservative Party and had advocated for Alberta and Saskatchewan to be one province named Buffalo. He begrudged Laurier for creating two provinces, and fought Saskatchewan's first election by opposing federal interference in provincial areas of jurisdiction.

### Results:

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Walter Scott	25	16	52.25%
Provincial Rights	Frederick Haultain	24	9	47.47%
Independent		1	-	0.28%
Total Seats			25	

## AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup>, 1908

The number of MLAs expanded to 41, reflecting the rapidly growing population. The Liberals ran 40 candidates in 41 constituencies: William Turgeon ran in both Prince Albert City and Duck Lake. He won Duck Lake but lost Prince Albert. At the time it was common for candidates to run in multiple constituencies to help ensure their election. If the candidate won in two or more constituencies, they would resign from all but one. By-elections would then be held to find representatives for the vacated constituencies. This practice is no longer allowed.

### Results:

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Walter Scott	41	27	50.79%
Provincial Rights	Frederick Haultain	40	14	47.88%
Independent-Liberal		1	-	0.67%
Independent		2	-	0.66%
Total Seats			41	

## JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 1912

The Provincial Rights Party morphed into the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, and continued to campaign for expanding provincial jurisdiction. Only 53 members were elected out of the 54 seat legislature. Results in the constituency of Cumberland were declared void and a by-election was held at a later date to fill the seat.

### Results:

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Walter Scott	53	45	56.96%
Conservative	Wellington Willoughby	53	7	41.98%
Independent		5	1	1.06%
Total Seats			54	



**JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1917**

Walter Scott resigned due to mental health challenges and allegations about receiving kickbacks from government contracts. Scott's replacement, William Martin, was new to the provincial Liberals and distanced the party from previous scandals. Importantly, this was Saskatchewan's first provincial election where women could vote. The right was granted in 1916, and not long after that women were able to vote in a provincial plebiscite on prohibition.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	William M. Martin	58	51	56.68%
Conservative	Wellington Willoughby	53	7	36.30%
Non-Partisan League		7	-	3.87%
Independent		10	1	2.36%
Labour	William G. Baker	2	-	0.79%
Total Seats			59	

**JUNE 9<sup>TH</sup>, 1921**

The Conservative Party fell into disarray, hindered by a growing anti-party mood in the province. It split into several pieces, with many party members running as independents. This fray benefited the Liberals. Meanwhile, William G. Baker won the Labour Party's first seat in Saskatchewan, a party originally meant to represent working people's interests. Labour had great success in the United Kingdom, but fizzled in Canada. Labour candidates often ended up aligning themselves with Liberals upon election. Thus, Baker next ran as a Labour-Liberal in 1925. He eventually ran as a Liberal in 1938.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	William M. Martin	60	45	51.39%
Independent		35	7	25.73%
Progressive		7	6	7.52%
Conservative	Donald Maclean	4	2	3.94%
Independent Conservative		3	1	3.48%
Independent Pro-Government		1	1	Acclamation
Labour	William G. Baker	3	1	3.34%
Non-Partisan League		3	-	2.06%
Independent Labour		1	-	0.93%
Government		1	-	0.84%
Independent Non-Partisan		1	-	0.77%
Total Seats			63	



JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 1925

The Saskatchewan Liberals became unpopular under Martin’s leadership. Meanwhile, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association—a powerful group with ties to the provincial Liberals—was threatening to form its own political party. This spurred the Liberals into choosing a new leader, Charles Dunning. Dunning was the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company’s manager. The farmer-based Progressive Party formed official opposition.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Charles A. Dunning	62	50	51.51%
Progressive		40	6	23.04%
Conservative	J.T.M. Anderson	18	3	18.35%
Independent		6	2	3.51%
Labour-Liberal		1	1	1.90%
Independent Liberal		1	1	1.07%
Independent Conservative		1	-	0.62%
Total Seats			63	

JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>, 1929

Two governments followed the 1929 election. The Liberals won a minority, and were given the first chance to form a government. Three months after the election, the Liberals faced the legislature. They lost a vote of confidence, and the Conservatives and Progressives along with some independents formed a coalition known as the Cooperative government.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	James Gardiner	62	28	45.56%
Conservative	J.T.M. Anderson	40	24	36.44%
Independent		17	6	9.06%
Progressive		16	5	6.92%
Liberal-Labour		1	-	1.16%
Economic Group		3	-	0.54%
Independent Liberal		1	-	0.32%
Total Seats			63	



**JUNE 12<sup>TH</sup>, 1934**

The governing Conservative coalition was battered on many fronts. The Great Depression made their time in government difficult, and the president of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party Association campaigned against his own party, dissatisfied with Anderson's Cooperative government. Meanwhile, the Farmer Labour Party, the precursor to the modern-day NDP, emerged. It was created by the Saskatchewan section of the United Farmers of Canada and the Independent Labour Party. They campaigned for public health care and financial protections for farmers. The hard times and intense political interest pushed voter turnout to an all-time high of nearly 85%.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	James Gardiner	56	50	48.00%
Conservative	J.T.M. Anderson	52	-	26.75%
Farmer-Labour	M.J. Coldwell	54	5	23.96%
Independent		3	-	0.69%
Labour	William G. Baker	1	-	0.33%
United Front		3	-	0.24%
Independent Liberal		1	-	0.03%
Total Seats			55	

**JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>, 1938**

The Great Depression spurred all sorts of political movements. The Communist Party of Saskatchewan made its first election appearance: two candidates ran as independents while three others ran under the Unity Party banner. Meanwhile, the Social Credit movement, a right-wing populist party that governed Alberta from 1935 - 1971, elected its first members in Saskatchewan. The Farmer-Labour Party joined the national Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, becoming the Saskatchewan CCF. Despite the Conservatives, Social Credit, and the CCF agreeing not to compete against each other in several constituencies, the Liberals swept back to power.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	William Patterson	53	38	45.45%
CCF	George Williams	31	10	18.73%
Social Credit	Joseph Needham	40	2	15.90%
Conservative	John Diefenbaker	24	-	11.87%
Independent Labour		3	-	2.73%
Unity		3	2	2.24%
Labour Progressive		2	-	1.93%
Independent		2	-	0.91%
Independent Conservative		1	-	0.19%
Independent Social Credit		1	-	0.05%
Total Seats			52	



**JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>, 1944**

Because of World War II, the election was held six years after the previous one. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, which had aligned itself with the Liberals, lost clout with farmers, helping the CCF sweep to power. They formed North America's first socialist government. The Communist Party changed into the Labour Progressive Party due to being banned in Canada in 1940 under the *War Measures Act*.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
CCF	Tommy Douglas	52	47	53.13%
Liberal	William Patterson	52	5	35.42%
Progressive Conservative	H.E. Keown	39	-	10.69%
Labour Progressive		3	-	0.52%
Independent		5	-	0.18%
Social Credit	Joseph Needham	1	-	0.06%
Independent Liberal		1	-	0.00%
Total Seats			52	

**JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>, 1948**

The Liberals accused the CCF government of being Russian communists, following "a direct line laid down from Moscow." Liberals campaigned on the slogan Tucker or Tyranny, and attempted to consolidate the anti-CCF vote by having a handful of Liberals and Conservatives run as joint Conservative/Liberal candidates. Only one of these candidates won, Alexander McDonald. He joined the Liberal caucus.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
CCF	Tommy Douglas	52	31	47.56%
Liberal	Walter Tucker	41	19	30.60%
Social Credit		36	-	8.09%
Progressive Conservative	Rupert Ramsay	9	-	7.63%
Independent		5	1	2.23%
Liberal-PC		3	-	1.92%
Conservative Liberal		1	1	1.05%
Independent Liberal		1	-	0.66%
Labour Progressive		1	-	0.26%
Total Seats			52	



**JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>, 1952**

The Liberals were unsuccessful in trying to paint the CCF as Russian operatives, so instead they tried to paint the CCF as corrupt. The Minister of Finance, Clarence Fines, was their primary target. The tactic proved unsuccessful, as the CCF returned to office with their highest share of the vote ever.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
CCF	Tommy Douglas	53	42	54.06%
Liberal	Walter Tucker	53	11	39.27%
Social Credit		24	-	3.90%
Progressive Conservative	Alvin Hamilton	8	-	1.97%
Independent-PC		1	-	0.29%
Independent		3	-	0.28%
Labour Progressive		2	-	0.21%
Independent Liberal		1	-	0.02%
Total Seats			53	

**JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>, 1956**

The Social Credit party returned to the legislature, on the coattails of their rise to government in British Columbia. Social Credit flooded Saskatchewan with outside cash and Alberta and BC party members to bolster their cause.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
CCF	Tommy Douglas	53	36	45.25%
Liberal	Alexander McDonald	52	14	30.34%
Social Credit		53	3	21.48%
Progressive Conservative	Alvin Hamilton	9	-	1.98%
Independent		2	-	0.85%
Labour Progressive		2	-	0.10%
Total Seats			53	



**JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>, 1960**

Saskatchewan’s so-called medicare election saw the Canadian Medical Association vigorously campaign against the CCF proposal for universal health care. They spent \$100,000 on television, radio, and newspaper advertisements—the equivalent of over a million dollars today—and put leaflets in their offices filled with spurious claims like patients would be reassigned to new doctors based on their name, and the government would nefariously use private patient medical records. Except for Social Credit who were firmly opposed, all other parties held tepid stances on the medicare issue. 1960 also marked the first provincial election where Indigenous people could vote, a right Tommy Douglas granted without full approval of Indigenous people.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
CCF	Tommy Douglas	55	37	40.76%
Liberal	Ross Thatcher	55	17	32.67%
Progressive Conservative	Martin Pederson	55	-	13.95%
Social Credit	Martin Kelln	55	-	12.35%
Independent		3	-	0.21%
Communist		1	-	0.06%
Total Seats			55*	

\*one result was declared void so only 54 members were elected out of 55 seats.

**APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>, 1964**

Tommy Douglas resigned as premier in 1961 to lead the federal New Democratic Party. His successor Woodrow Lloyd successfully implemented medicare, but could not hold back the Liberals in the subsequent election. Ross Thatcher, a former CCF MP, led a Liberal campaign framed around expanding free enterprise. The Conservatives were asked by the Liberals to form an informal coalition against the CCF for the election campaign, but they declined. Their leader won the seat of Arm River, becoming the first Conservative elected to the legislature since 1929.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Ross Thatcher	59	32	40.40%
CCF	Woodrow Lloyd	59	25	40.30%
Progressive Conservative	Martin Pederson	42	1	18.90%
Social Credit	Martin Kelln	2	-	0.39%
Communist		1	-	0.01%
Total Seats			59	



**OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, 1967**

Prior to 1967, Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw were multiple-member-at-large constituencies. On a single ballot, people could vote for as many candidates as there were seats in the city. The top vote-getters would become MLAs. This changed so that Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw were divided into several separate constituencies. Shortly after the election, the CCF became the New Democratic Party.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Liberal	Ross Thatcher	59	35	45.57%
CCF / New Democratic	Woodrow Lloyd	59	24	44.35%
Progressive Conservative	Martin Pederson	41	-	9.78%
Social Credit		6	-	0.30%
Total Seats			59	

**JUNE 23<sup>RD</sup>, 1971**

With 45 of the seats available outside of Saskatchewan's three largest cities (Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw), Ross Thatcher tried to paint the NDP as more concerned with organised labour than with farmers. The tactic failed, the Liberals lost, and Thatcher passed away only three weeks later.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Allan Blakeney	60	45	55.00%
Liberal	Ross Thatcher	60	15	42.82%
Progressive Conservative	Ed Nasserden	16	-	2.13%
Independent		1	-	0.04%
Communist		1	-	0.01%
Total Seats			60	

**JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>, 1975**

Allan Blakeney easily won a second term for his government, claiming an established leader was needed for dealings with the federal government. However, the Progressive Conservatives began a comeback, arguing that "nobody can hate a party that's been out of office for four decades." Between the 1975 and 1978 elections, two Liberal MLAs (Gary Lane and Colin Thatcher) left the Liberals to join the Progressive Conservatives.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Allan Blakeney	61	39	40.07%
Liberal	David Steuart	61	15	31.67%
Progressive Conservative	Dick Collver	61	7	27.62%
Independent		5	-	0.64%
Total Seats			61	



OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 1978

The NDP argued for greater public control of resource development, while the other parties argued for greater private control. For the first time in the province’s history, not a single Liberal was elected to the legislature, set back by a messy leadership contest between Ted Malone and Tony Merchant along with the unpopularity of Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The Progressive Conservatives also suffered some disarray after the election. Dick Collver resigned as leader then broke away from the PCs to form the short-lived Unionest Party in 1980. The party advocated for western Canada to join the United States. A second PC MLA joined Collver, forming a two-seat caucus in the legislature. The party disbanded in 1982.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Allan Blakeney	61	44	48.12%
Progressive Conservative	Dick Collver	61	17	38.08%
Liberal	Ted Malone	61	-	13.78%
Independent		2	-	0.02%
Total Seats			61	

APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1982

The NDP campaigned on the theme Tested and Trusted to emphasize the province’s low unemployment and robust economy. The Conservatives countered that the NDP were tired and rusted, and promised lower taxes. Meanwhile, the Aboriginal People’s Party emerged but failed to elect any members despite an endorsement from the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The Western Canada Concept—a western separatist party—also failed to elect any members. Nevertheless, two MLAs elected as PCs switched parties to sit as WCC members, but they were never popular with the WCC membership and were soon expelled from the party.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Progressive Conservative	Grant Devine	64	55	54.07%
New Democratic	Allan Blakeney	64	9	37.64%
Liberal	Ralph Goodale	64	-	4.51%
Western Canada Concept	Ray Bailey	40	-	3.26%
Independent		8	-	0.30%
Aboriginal People’s Party		10	-	0.22%
Total Seats			64	



OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 1986

The NDP won more votes than the Progressive Conservatives, but the PCs won more seats. This marked the only time in Saskatchewan’s history that the winning party won a majority government while the official opposition won more of the popular vote.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Allan Blakeney	64	25	45.20%
Progressive Conservative	Grant Devine	64	38	44.61%
Liberal	Ralph Goodale	64	1	9.99%
Western Canada Concept	Hilton J. Spencer	9	-	0.08%
Independent		3	-	0.07%
Alliance		6	-	0.04%
Communist		1	-	0.01%
Total Seats			64	

OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 1991

1991 was a near-reversal of the 1982 election. The NDP returned to power, as the public balked at the enormous provincial debt and poorly-thought-out PC programs like Fair Share Saskatchewan, a plan to move 2,000 civil servants from Regina to rural areas. Despite Grant Devine urging people not to vote Liberal for fear of splitting the “free enterprise” vote, provincial Liberal support more than doubled under the leadership of Lynda Haverstock.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Roy Romanow	66	55	51.05%
Progressive Conservative	Grant Devine	66	10	25.54%
Liberal	Lynda Haverstock	66	1	23.29%
Independent		8	-	0.11%
Independence (Western Canada Concept)		1	-	0.01%
Total Seats			66	



**JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup>, 1995**

As part of the NDP's efforts to steer the province from the brink of bankruptcy, the legislature was reduced from 66 to 58 seats. The changes to the electoral map left some incumbents to fight nomination battles against colleagues from their own party in the redrawn constituencies. To distance themselves from their record in government and a constant drip of former PC MLAs being charged with fraud, the Progressive Conservatives branded themselves as The New PCs. The rebranding could not keep the Liberals from taking their place as official opposition, winning 11 seats and placing second in 41 others.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Roy Romanow	58	42	47.21%
Liberal	Lynda Haverstock	58	11	34.70%
Progressive Conservative	Bill Boyd	58	5	17.92%
Independent		4	-	0.17%
Total Seats			58	

**SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 1999**

In 1997, four of the five sitting Progressive Conservative MLAs aligned themselves with four disaffected Liberal MLAs to form the Saskatchewan Party. The Liberals carried on, but the PC's put their party into hibernation, merely running paper candidates to keep its official party status. The Saskatchewan Party gained the most votes but came in second in seat count. The NDP was reduced to a minority, and forged a coalition with the Liberals.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Saskatchewan Party	Elwin Hermanson	58	25	39.61%
New Democratic	Roy Romanow	58	29	38.73%
Liberal	Jim Melenchuk	58	4	20.15%
New Green Alliance	Neil Sinclair	16	-	1.01%
Progressive Conservative	Iris Dennis	14	-	0.40%
Independent		2	-	0.10%
Total Seats			58	



**NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2003**

The Liberals disavowed their coalition with the NDP and ran a full slate of candidates in an election where the Saskatchewan Party was considered the favourite. However, concerns about the Sask Party privatising crown corporations led to a fourth consecutive term for the NDP. The Liberals were shut out of the legislature.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
New Democratic	Lorne Calvert	58	30	44.68%
Saskatchewan Party	Elwin Hermanson	58	28	39.35%
Liberal	David Karwacki	58	-	14.18%
Western Independence	Bruce Ritter	17	-	0.61%
New Green Alliance	Ben Webster	27	-	0.55%
Independent		5	-	0.47%
Progressive Conservative	Iris Dennis	11	-	0.16%
Total Seats			58	

**NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2007**

With the economy entering a boom, the NDP promised to create a universal pharmacare program to ensure prescription drugs would be affordable for all citizens. Meanwhile, the New Green Alliance changed its name to the Green Party (though remained unaffiliated with the federal Green Party) and ran a nearly-full slate of candidates, the Marijuana Party made its only appearance in a provincial election, and the PCs actively campaigned for the first time since 1995. None of these factors could stop the Saskatchewan Party's rise to power.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	57	38	50.92%
New Democratic	Lorne Calvert	58	20	37.24%
Liberal	David Karwacki	58	-	9.40%
Green	Sandra Finley	48	-	2.01%
Progressive Conservative	Rick Swenson	5	-	0.18%
Western Independence	John Nesdoly	8	-	0.13%
Marijuana	Nathan Holowaty	5	-	0.11%
Total Seats			58	



NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2011

A resource-based economic boom helped push the governing Saskatchewan Party to the highest-ever share of the popular vote in a Saskatchewan general election. The Liberals continued to sink, and for the first time in their history placed fourth, behind the Greens. Even though the PCs placed fifth overall, of the four smallest parties they received the most votes per candidate.

Results:

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	58	49	64.25%
New Democratic	Dwain Lingenfelter	58	9	31.97%
Green	Victor Lau	58	-	2.87%
Liberal	Ryan Bater	9	-	0.56%
Progressive Conservative	Rick Swenson	5	-	0.33%
Western Independence	Dana Arnason	1	-	0.01%
Independent		1	-	0.01%
Total Seats			58	

APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2016

The popularity of Brad Wall’s Saskatchewan Party—especially in rural areas—helped make the 2016 election a foregone conclusion. However, this certainty in the election’s result also pushed eligible voter turnout down to 53.5%.

Results:

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	61	51	62.36%
New Democratic	Cam Broten	61	10	30.20%
Liberal	Darrin Lamoureux	61	-	3.59%
Green	Victor Lau	58	-	1.83%
Progressive Conservative	Rick Swenson	18	-	1.28%
Independent		5	-	0.39%
Western Independence	Frank Serfas	4	-	0.07%
Total Seats			61	



OCTOBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

The 2020 election was largely considered a foregone conclusion from the outset. Only seven seats switched hands, mostly in Saskatoon. The only notable changes were shifts in the votes of smaller parties. The Buffalo Party, another western independence party, came in second in four rural constituencies and third in 11 others, including a relatively strong show in Kindersley. Meanwhile the Progressive Conservatives and Greens came in third in 21 and 14 constituencies, respectively.

**Results:**

Party	Leader	Candidates	Elected	Popular Vote
Saskatchewan Party	Scott Moe	61	48	60.67%
New Democratic	Ryan Meili	61	13	31.59%
Buffalo	Wade Sira	17	-	2.54%
Green	Naomi Hunter	60	-	2.25%
Progressive Conservative	Ken Grey	31	-	1.89%
Independent		3	-	0.24%
Liberal	Robert Rudachyk	3	-	0.08%
Total Seats			61	

