

**Peace, Progress and Prosperity:
A Biography of the Hon. Walter Scott**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of History
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon**

**by
Gordon L. Barnhart
Fall 1998**

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SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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Fall 1998

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Peace, Progress and Prosperity: A Biography of the Hon. Walter Scott

This thesis is a biography of Walter Scott, first Premier of Saskatchewan. He was a populist and had a vision for the new province, the fastest growing province in the Dominion. Agricultural and educational institutions were created to serve this growing population. Walter Scott combined his ability to collect strong people around him with his talent to sense the public mood.

Scott was a newspaperman, entrepreneur, land speculator, and distributor of federal Liberal patronage in the North-West before being elected to the House of Commons in 1900. By 1905, Scott became leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party and Premier. Contrary to currently held beliefs, this thesis argues that the four months between when Scott became Premier and the first election, the government was neither restructured nor was it rife with patronage. This was a time for campaigning. The political machine was built much later.

After the 1905 election, the Scott government embarked on a program to build the new province's infrastructure such as the Legislative Building and the University of Saskatchewan. For Scott and his government, agriculture was the vital component in the fabric of Saskatchewan life. By including farm leadership in cabinet and creating a political climate founded on agriculture, Walter Scott built a power base that withstood the United Farmers' Movement that unseated governments in neighbouring provinces. During the First World War, which created a climate of social change in Saskatchewan, the Scott Government banned the bar and established female suffrage.

This thesis also examines when Walter Scott first exhibited signs of mental illness. His health became a primary focus as he searched for a cure for depression. It will be argued that it

was the battle with Rev. Murdock MacKinnon over minority rights in the school system that brought Scott's mental health to the point that he had to resign.

After his death, the memory of Walter Scott faded. Yet his legacy of democracy, education and agriculture continue until today. The fruits of Walter Scott's labours continue to be harvested in Saskatchewan but few remember who planted the original seeds.

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"The Lost Road to Senate Reform." Politics Canada, edited by Paul W. Fox and Graham White. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1995.

Sentinel of the Prairies, November, 1987. Pictorial history of the Legislative Buildings of Saskatchewan.

"Saskatchewan - Building a New Land." The Parliamentarian, 3 (1985).

"The Saskatchewan Table." Canadian Parliamentary Review, 3 (1985).

"The Prairie Pastor E. H. Oliver." Saskatchewan History, 3 (1984).

"Student Minister 1964." Harvest of Memories: A History of Rural Wilkie. Wilkie, SK: Eighty Year History Society, 1984.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a biography of Walter Scott, first Premier of Saskatchewan. He was a populist and had a vision for the new province, the fastest growing province in the Dominion. Agricultural and educational institutions were created to serve this growing population. Walter Scott combined his ability to collect strong people around him with his talent to sense the public mood.

Scott was a newspaperman, entrepreneur, land speculator, and distributor of federal Liberal patronage in the North-West before being elected to the House of Commons in 1900. By 1905, Scott became leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party and Premier. Contrary to currently held beliefs, this thesis argues that the Scott administration neither restructured the government nor filled the public service with patronage appointments during the four months between Scott's appointment as Premier and the first general election. This was a time for campaigning. The political machine was built much later.

After the 1905 election, the Scott government embarked on a program to build the new province's infrastructure such as the Legislative Building and the University of Saskatchewan. For Scott and his government, agriculture was the vital component in the fabric of Saskatchewan life. By including farm leadership in cabinet and creating a political climate founded on agriculture, Walter Scott built a power base that withstood the United Farmers' Movement that unseated governments in neighbouring provinces. During the First World War, which created a climate of social change in Saskatchewan, the Scott Government banned the bar and established female suffrage.

This thesis also examines when Walter Scott first exhibited signs of mental illness. His health became a primary focus as he searched for a cure for depression. It will be argued that it was the battle with Rev. Murdock MacKinnon over minority rights in the school system that brought Scott's mental health to the point that he had to resign.

After his death, the memory of Walter Scott faded. Yet his legacy of democracy, education and agriculture continue until today. The fruits of Walter Scott's labours continue to be harvested in Saskatchewan but few remember who planted the original seeds.

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I am deeply grateful to Dr. Ted Regehr for his friendship and guidance over the last four years. I want to thank my friends and family for their encouragement and advice throughout this journey, particularly my long time friend and partner, Elaine. Her wisdom, support and skill made this project a very positive one.

A Note on Spelling and Punctuation

This dissertation is based primarily on Walter Scott's own papers. Even though most of the letters and documents were typed, there were many typographical errors, missing commas and American spelling of words such as "labor." The original punctuation and spelling in the quotations have been maintained.

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Chapter 1 A Leader for a New Province

Thomas Walter Scott was born and raised in rural Ontario. He left home and headed West while still in his teens to seek his fortune and to find a new beginning. His career in western Canada coincided with a period of unprecedented growth, expansion and seemingly unbounded optimism. As Saskatchewan's first Premier, serving from 1905 until 1916, Scott's name is indelibly linked with the confidence and optimism of those times. Yet Scott's personal life, like the history of the prairie region he represented and served, had very dark and tragic elements. Scott's death in a mental asylum, suffering from severe depression, in 1938, was also a time of great tragedy and depression for the people and the province he had served in happier, indeed ebullient and excessively optimistic times.

When he first came West, Scott quickly found work in the newspaper business, eventually buying one newspaper in partnership and two more on his own in the rapidly growing North West Territories. He achieved financial security and independence through astute real estate and other financial investments, and became friends with two prominent Liberals, C. J. Atkinson and Jim Ross. Those friendships, and his growing stature in Regina society, led to active participation in political activities. As a result, Scott became a candidate and was elected a Member of the House of Commons for Assiniboia West, North West Territories, in 1900.

With the creation of the Province of Saskatchewan in 1905, the local Liberal

Party sought a personable and popular leader to defeat Frederick Haultain, leader of the non-partisan territorial government for fourteen years but a supporter of the federal Conservatives.¹ The Liberals selected Walter Scott as their leader. Lieutenant Governor A. E. Forget subsequently named Scott as premier in September 1905, and he continued in that post through three general elections. As the province's first premier, Scott set the political foundations which kept his party in power continuously for thirty-nine years, with only one five-year interruption. The power and influence of the Liberal Party during these years in government took on mythical proportions, to the point that it was called a "machine."

The Scott government formulated policies and established institutions which still influence the province. Those policies were based on the expectation that agriculture would dominate the provincial economy. Scott himself predicted that Saskatchewan would have a population of ten million people by 1920. With a farm family on every quarter section of land, and urban centres springing up to serve the agricultural industry, it was necessary for the government to establish and maintain close ties with farm leaders. The organization of government departments and agencies, the construction of an appropriate legislative building, the formulation and implementation of sound agricultural policies, and the establishment of a school system and of a university that

¹ There is some debate as to when Haultain actually became premier of the Northwest Territories. He was chosen Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1891, which, in effect if not in name, meant that he was premier. Others argue that Haultain became premier with the formal recognition of responsible government in 1897. Haultain was premier for either fourteen or eight years, depending on the definition of the term "Premier." Grant MacEwan, Frederick Haultain: Frontier Statesman of the Canadian Northwest, (Saskatoon, Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 67 & 105.

would rank among the best in the nation, were the main concerns and accomplishments of the Saskatchewan government during Walter Scott's premiership.

Scott, a successful politician, investor and businessman, followed a fairly cautious course in public policy. He did not advocate radical changes, even though he had a vision of continued growth and expansion for Saskatchewan. He was a populist leader who was sensitive to the public mood and carefully tested new policies, implementing them only when he was convinced that the public was ready for change. He was a pragmatic, not a dogmatic, political leader, but his administrations reflected a mood of optimism and confidence which was typical of the times.²

There was, however, a dark shadow which hung over, and eventually destroyed Walter Scott's life and political career. He suffered from mental illness, specifically manic depression. The illness resulted in many lengthy absences from the province, and in his retirement, at the age of forty-nine years, from provincial politics. Scott was, in fact, only able to hold office as long as he did because he had the loyal support of his able deputy, J. A. Calder, and other capable cabinet colleagues.

The shadows and the suffering in Walter Scott's life were, in one sense, unique and personal. But they also mirrored the manic-depressive history of western Canada, and specifically of Saskatchewan. The years of seemingly unbounded optimism during the years when Walter Scott was Premier of Saskatchewan, the increased doubt and instability of the western economy after 1911 at which time Walter Scott experienced

² See page 168 of the dissertation for a discussion of the growth of the province and the resulting unlimited optimism.

increasingly serious mental problems, and the desperately depressed conditions in the province in 1938 when he died, are aspects of both individual and regional histories.

Walter Scott's illness has made the writing of a biography more difficult, but also more interesting and revealing, than it might otherwise have been. The provincial Liberal Party skilfully kept Scott out of public view when he was in the depths of depression, thus safeguarding his reputation as a popular and capable administrator and leader and the confident and optimistic tone of his government. When Scott's illness required more radical treatment, his "political friends" ensured his institutionalization for the last two years of his life. After his death in 1938, the Liberal Party showed no inclination to keep Scott's memory alive or even to admit the cause of his illness and death. The Liberal Party of Saskatchewan seemed incapable of admitting or dealing with their former leader's personal problems of depression, just as it seemed incapable of admitting and dealing effectively with the problems of the Great Depression. There has consequently been no thorough examination of all aspects of Walter Scott's life, until now.

This biography will add new information to the political history of the first two decades of this century.³ It will explain why the Scott government reacted the way it did

³ The following scholars have researched and written on the Liberal party in the prairie West: D. H. Bocking, "Premier Walter Scott, a study of his rise to political power." Unpublished MA thesis, History Department, University of Saskatchewan, 1959. James William Brennan, "The Public Career of Charles Avery Dunning in Saskatchewan." Unpublished MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1968. D. J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: The Young Napoleon, 1861-1900, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981). D. J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: A Lonely Eminence, 1901-1929, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985). David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-1971, (Toronto: University of

to the turbulent and tumultuous times at the creation of the new prairie province of Saskatchewan. It will be a personal, psychological and political biography of a man who had a vision for his new province, but endured much hardship due to mental illness. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it will be shown that Scott was an effective and popular leader. He used his Liberal ties with Prime Minister Laurier to win concessions for Saskatchewan, but was prepared to advance regional and provincial interests even if that resulted in criticism of federal policies. This is the biography of the man who led the Saskatchewan Liberal Party through the first eleven years of a Liberal dynasty. It is also the biography of a man who shared and personified the spirit of confidence and optimism during the years of western Canada's spectacular settlement era, but who, like the region he served, later fell victim to severe depression. This is the story of one man. His experiences, achievements and suffering were unique, but they are also representative of his time and of the experiences of all Saskatchewan people of his generation.

Historians writing about these times have reflected the changing moods. Those writing at the time when Walter Scott was in his prime and the western economy was expanding at a phenomenal rate, documented the optimism of their day. It was a time of new beginnings and seemingly unbounded optimism. Progress, growth, development, the arrival of many immigrants and prospective farmers, and construction of the necessary economic, political, educational and cultural infrastructure, dominate the

Toronto Press, 1975). The Bocking thesis was on a specific period in Scott's political career. This dissertation will expand on Bocking's work to cover Scott's entire career and will reveal new information about Scott's early life and his mental illness.

works of historians of that time. Thus, in 1913, Norman Fergus Black wrote one of the first general histories of the prairies.⁴ He shared the confidence of his contemporaries, but also raised some questions regarding the kinds of immigrants admitted to the prairie West. He argued that “the tide of immigration had set strongly toward Canadian shores, and the problem was no longer to induce, but to safeguard and assimilate.”⁵ Black’s concern was that the settlers from southern and eastern Europe might not be capable of achieving the high ideals of Canadian/British culture, customs and values. Slavic immigrants, according to Black, tended to settle in groups, often in urban centres, causing “difficulties of those entrusted with the maintenance of law, order and proper hygienic conditions.”⁶ This view of a glorious future, possibly threatened by the immigration of people who did not understand it, was a theme repeated in other histories, and documented attitudes which Walter Scott faced during his premiership.

Two legislative librarians, John Blue of Alberta and John Hawkes of Saskatchewan, wrote survey histories of their respective provinces in the 1920s.⁷ They sought to record the achievements of the people in provinces which had then been in existence for only two decades. Their histories, later confirmed by the writing of other historians, documented the mood of seemingly unlimited optimism in the prospects of

⁴ Norman Fergus Black, History of Saskatchewan and the North-West Territories, two volumes, (Regina: Saskatchewan Historical Company, 1913).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 725.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 727.

⁷ John Blue, Alberta Past and Present, (Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1924). John Hawkes, The Story of Saskatchewan and its People, (Regina: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1924).

future developments in the prairie West. Settlers had flooded into the prairies to take up homesteads and to till the land. New towns and villages had sprung up along the railway branch lines. Wheat was king, and agriculture was an important staple industry on the Canadian and world stage. This, moreover, was only the first stage in what Blue and Hawkes believed was an exceptionally glorious future for the Canadian prairies.

Another example of this kind of optimism can be found in the two volumes devoted to the prairie provinces in Canada and its Provinces, edited by Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, which were published in 1914 at the height of the expansionist boom.⁸ The twentieth century belonged to Canada, and particularly to western Canada. Continued growth, development and prosperity were assured.

The pre-1920s historians of western Canada showed particular interest in the achievements of pioneer community, religious and business leaders. Several of the historians of that era referred to above, provided short biographical sketches of prominent men (and occasionally women) of that time. These complement the biographical dictionaries, numerous biographical sketches in the Canadian Annual Review, the care and attention devoted to Who's Who in Canada entries, and lengthy, almost always laudatory, obituary, anniversary and other biographical material published in the popular press. That early fascination of the chroniclers of early Canadian history with the lives and work of great Canadians is particularly evident in

⁸ Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, ed. Canada and its Provinces, The Prairie Provinces, vols 19 and 20, (Toronto: Glasgow Brook, 1914).

the popular “Makers of Canada” series.⁹

Interest in the usually laudatory biographies of prominent Canadians weakened in the 1920s, as historians began to write more thematic works. Histories of western Canada written in the 1920s retained a strong sense of optimism, but also sounded a new tone of anger and frustration. Harold S. Patton, W. A. Mackintosh and William Irvine noted that national tariff, railway and related policies had unnecessarily and unfairly increased farmers’ operating costs.¹⁰ They pointed to efforts by western farmers, including those of the Scott government in Saskatchewan, to solve their economic problems through co-operative action in economic matters and to address some of their political problems by electing Progressive or Farmer candidates. The freight rate and branch line policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) came in for particular criticism by these historians. A detailed history of that company, written by Harold A. Innis, a political economist at the University of Toronto, was published in 1923.¹¹ Innis argued that the CPR contributed to Canadian growth and was a political and economic necessity, but that western Canada was forced to pay an unfairly high price for policies designed to foster national development. Regional interests had been sacrificed,

⁹ The Makers of Canada series, Parkman edition, is a twenty volume set of biographies published by Morang and Company Limited, Toronto between 1906 and 1909. Each volume is a biography of a particular leader or “maker” of Canada such as Bishop Laval, William Lyon Mackenzie and Samuel de Champlain.

¹⁰ William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, first published in 1921). W. A. Mackintosh, Agricultural Co-operation in Western Canada, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924). Harold S. Patton, Grain Growers’ Co-operation in Western Canada, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

¹¹ Harold A. Innis, A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1923).

resulting in regional protest. That too was a theme Walter Scott returned to again and again when he was Premier of Saskatchewan.

The stock market crash in 1929 and a decade of drought in the prairie West led to an economic and collective psychological depression that lasted throughout the 1930s. That resulted in a reassessment of the history of western development. A more realistic and sometimes much more pessimistic view of the world replaced the earlier mood of almost unlimited optimism. A series of eight books, collectively called the Frontiers of Settlement Series, illustrates the changing interpretations.¹² The general theme of the series was that some prairie lands, which were too dry to sustain agriculture in years when there was little precipitation, had been settled in the boom years. This had resulted in much unnecessary suffering by those who had followed government invitations to establish homesteads in areas of inadequate rainfall. It had also caused serious ecological damage which could only be corrected if the settlers in the drought stricken areas were resettled and the land returned to grass.

The author of the first volume in the series, W. A. Mackintosh, reflected the changed mood.¹³ Where earlier historians had painted a rosy picture, Mackintosh declared that the explorer, John Palliser, had been right when he described large portions

¹² One example from this series is Arthur S. Morton and Chester Martin, History of Prairie Settlement; and Dominion Lands Policy, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series, Vol II, (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1938). The Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series had its roots in the American Geographical Society Series which investigated and tried to find solutions for the pioneer settlers in North America. The Canadian authors in this series published their own books pertaining specifically to the Canadian experience.

¹³ W. A. Mackintosh, Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Setting, Canadian Frontier of Settlement Series, Vol. 1, (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1935).

of the southern prairies as an extension of “the great American desert.” Such land should never have been settled, and the prairie grass in that region should not have been plowed. Other authors in the series documented various aspects of the settlement process, but the entire series is a good example of how the depressed economic times affected the themes in written history. A new respect for nature and the environment, and the frailty of human endeavour, replaced the unlimited optimism and strident confidence of an earlier generation. Human misery caused by the dry winds and clouds of dust became a common theme. The “dust bowl” had replaced the “bread basket.”

There were other costs associated with the settlement process. In 1936, George F. G. Stanley published his Birth of Western Canada.¹⁴ It was one of the first carefully documented major works dealing with the political agitations in western Canada led by Louis Riel. Stanley interpreted those events as an inevitable clash between primitive or savage societies and civilization, but expressed considerable sympathy for the plight of those whose way of life was destroyed and who were pushed to the margins of western society. The settlement story was not one of unqualified progress and prosperity. There were also tragic victims.

Historians writing in the 1940s about western Canadian development during the first two decades of the twentieth century were more balanced than the optimists writing before 1930 or the pessimists writing in the 1930s. Vernon C. Fowke’s work on

¹⁴ George F. G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions, (London: Longans, Green and Company, 1936).

agricultural policy and economics, published in 1946, set the new tone.¹⁵ Fowke had lived through the “dirty thirties” and had experienced hardship personally. In his work, he carefully documented the national purposes which had always determined the course of Canadian agricultural policy, but also pointed to the ways in which western Canadians had adapted or modified those policies so they would better serve the needs of farmers, particularly prairie grain farmers. In the same year, C. C. Lingard published his thorough and detailed history of the struggle in the North-West Territories for responsible government and eventually provincehood.¹⁶ His work is still a useful guide in understanding the settlement era in western Canada, and the way in which western Canadians attained increased power in the formulation and direction of policies of local concern.

In the 1950s, the focus of much historical writing about the prairies shifted to detailed examinations of the new political parties which came to power provincially in Saskatchewan and Alberta during the ten lost years of the Great Depression. There was a ten volume series on the background and rise of the Social Credit movement and a major study of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Many of these studies provided new insights into the events of the early decades of the century, which are the primary focus of this thesis. There was, for example, a volume on the history of the Liberal Party of Alberta, while Seymour Lipset devoted a good deal of time to a

¹⁵ V. C. Fowke, Canadian Agricultural Policy: the Historical Pattern, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946).

¹⁶ C. Cecil Lingard, Territorial Government in Canada: The Autonomy Question in the old North-West Territories, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946).

discussion of the background of agrarian radicalism in Saskatchewan when explaining the success of the CCF.¹⁷

The mid 1950s marked the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of Saskatchewan as a province. Numerous local histories, mostly of the celebratory type, were written. There was also an official anniversary history, written by J. F. C. Wright.¹⁸ Wright's account stressed the theme of cooperation and noted the biggest and best achievements of the province's business, political, educational, and religious élites. It also addressed problems associated with the assimilation of immigrants from countries without British parliamentary traditions and with different social and cultural values than those cherished in Canada.

An important new book on the development of responsible government in the North West was published by Lewis H. Thomas in 1956.¹⁹ Thomas documented the struggle involved in the achievement of a freely elected Legislative Assembly with an elected leader of the government, as opposed to the federally appointed Council and Governor as had existed in the earlier years of the North West Territories. While those events happened shortly before Walter Scott became active in politics, they shaped the form of the governments over which he presided.

¹⁷ S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2nd edition, 1971).

¹⁸ J. F. C. Wright, Saskatchewan: The History of a Province, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1955). For the seventy-fifth anniversary: John Archer, Saskatchewan: A History, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980).

¹⁹ Lewis H. Thomas, Struggle for Responsible Government in the North-West Territories, 1870-1897, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956 and 1978).

Canadian historians regained an interest in the biographies of prominent Canadians in the 1950s. The new biographies, however, were more scholarly and based on more extensive research in primary sources that had not been the case with earlier biographical studies which, according to Carl Berger, had usually “commemorated rather than explained their heroes.”²⁰ Historian Donald Creighton became known as the father of modern Canadian biography with the publication of his two-volume biography of Sir John A. Macdonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada.²¹ Creighton, a well-known historian at the University of Toronto, helped the reader see the world through the eyes of Macdonald. Determined to portray the man and the times in which he lived, Creighton did not have just a litany of the events in his life but also gave a personal side to the story. This became known as the balance of “character and circumstance.”

Historian Robert Craig Brown, in his Canadian Historical Association (CHA) presidential address, said that: “The most arresting feature of his [Creighton’s] two volumes was that an entire age and its political history were not merely ordered around Macdonald, but that readers saw the whole scene through his eyes alone.”²² Brown argued that the “biographer’s task is to attempt to understand and recreate the life of his

²⁰ Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900, 2nd edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 218.

²¹ Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1952) and Donald Creighton, John A. Macdonald, The Old Chieftain, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1955).

²² Robert Craig Brown, “Biography in Canadian History.” Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers: Communications Historiques, 1980, 4.

subject in all its parts.”²³

Creighton believed that the research phase of a historical project was to be scientific but that the composition was to be “literary and artistic.”²⁴ In combining circumstance and character, Creighton added an artistic flare to his work to create an interesting account of the subject’s life and to make history into an art form. At the end of the second volume of the Macdonald biography, Creighton’s description of the St. Lawrence River was symbolic of Macdonald’s life and the new country. Through biography, Creighton was able to give the reader a picture of Macdonald and the politics of his time. He was also able to describe the beginnings of a new nation. Creighton’s first discipline was the English language, as is shown in his ability to write.

His combination of character and circumstance has become a model for other biographers. One of Creighton’s colleagues, J. M. S. Careless, wrote a two-volume biography of George Brown, the leader of the Reform movement in Canada and the founder of the Globe.²⁵ Like Creighton, Careless was able to create a readable biography. Work by Creighton and Careless represents a time of national histories with insight into Canadian history. Setting high standards for biographers, they created the golden age of biography in Canadian history.

Biography in western Canadian history was thriving and evolving as well. There

²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴ Berger, Writing, 233.

²⁵ J. M. S. Careless, Brown of the Globe: Voice of Upper Canada 1818-1859, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1959) and J. M. S. Careless, Brown of the Globe: Statesman of Confederation, 1860-1880, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1963).

was progression from Chester Martin's heroic-villain treatment of Lord Selkirk in 1916 to the more scholarly biography of Selkirk by John Morgan Gray in 1963.²⁶ In the same year as Gray's work on Selkirk, George Stanley, known for his analysis on the North-West Rebellion, wrote a biography of Louis Riel.²⁷ These examples show the evolution and the development of biographies of western Canadian leaders that was along a parallel path with Canadian biography.

Historical writing about events and people living in western Canada during the early decades of the twentieth century became much more prolific and diverse in the 1960s. The rapid expansion of graduate programs in history at Canadian universities resulted not only in the training of more historians but also in some new perspectives. Students at graduate schools outside of Toronto and Montreal began to examine the impact of national policies on their regions, and to study themes and topics of more regional than national interest. Examples of such work include the theses written by Ernest Forbes, T. W. Acheson and T. D. Regehr who examined Maritime and western reactions to federal economic and railway policies, while Richard Allen wrote a thesis on religion and social reform which sought to address social problems that were most obvious in western Canada. Allen was particularly interested in the role of the social gospel movement when it became evident that there were serious flaws and injustices in the new society being built in western Canada. His book provides a very important

²⁶ Chester Martin, Lord Selkirk's Work in Canada, (London: Oxford University Press, 1916). John Morgan Gray, Lord Selkirk of Red River, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1963). See Gray's "Note on Sources" for an illustration of his in depth research on the 5th Earl of Selkirk. 344.

²⁷ George F. G. Stanley, Louis Riel, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963).

analysis of social reform movements in the Canadian West. All of these theses were subsequently published, albeit sometimes in revised form.²⁸

Several popular writers also turned their attention to early twentieth century western Canadian developments. James Gray, a former journalist, wrote several books on the impact of whisky, prostitution, and drought on the prairie West, while Pierre Berton wrote popular histories on the construction of the CPR and on the settlement of the West.²⁹ These books brought Canadian history to the common people in a language and colourful descriptions they could understand. They documented the optimism, and at least some of the darker aspects of the pre-World War I western Canadian settlement boom.

A major initiative in the 1960s was the launching of a new multi-volume history of Canada which would commemorate the centennial of Canadian confederation. The volume dealing with the early decades of the twentieth century was written by R. C.

²⁸ Two of these books that had particular relevance to western Canadian history are: Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) and T. D. Regehr, The Canadian Northern Railway: Pioneer Road to the Northern Prairies, 1895-1918, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1976).

²⁹ James H. Gray, The Winter Years: The Depression on the Prairies, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1966) and Men Against the Desert, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1967). Gray continued his string of popular books by tackling prairie social issues such as prostitution and prohibition. James H. Gray, Red Lights on the Prairies, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971) and Booze: The Impact of Whiskey on the Prairie West, Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972). Pierre Berton wrote many popular histories but the two that stand out for western prairie history are: The National Dream: the Great Railway, 1871-1881, (Toronto: Macmillan and Stewart Limited, 1970) and The National Dream: The Last Spike, (Toronto: Macmillan and Stewart Limited, 1974).

Brown and Ramsay Cook.³⁰ It was a work of synthesis combining the insights of previously published material, and the new work, often still only in thesis form, by younger scholars. It clearly demonstrated, however, that the rapid population growth in the West due to immigration created a new society there. “The growth of the western prairies, exuding their own brand of Canadianism, altered and made significantly more difficult that balancing act which characterizes political leadership in Canada. To linguistic and religious differences was added sectional conflict. That had always existed, of course, but force of numbers now gave it greater significance.”³¹ The West, as portrayed in the Canadian centennial history volumes, was Canadian, but with a “special flavour.”³²

None of these histories said much about Walter Scott. His name appears only once in Brown and Cook’s work, while Pierre Berton only mentions that Scott was not chosen to succeed Clifford Sifton as Minister of the Interior and instead went on to become Liberal leader in Saskatchewan. These books, nevertheless, provide a great deal of information about events and conditions, and particularly the excessive confidence and optimism in western Canada during the time of Scott’s premiership. Scott, of course, disappears entirely from these histories with his resignation from the premiership in 1916.

The interests of many Canadian historians also changed. Instead of focusing on

³⁰ Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1991).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² *Ibid.*, 82.

national themes and leaders, some younger historians, influenced by new approaches in British, French and American historiography, were more interested in the lives and problems of ordinary people, including peasants, women, workers, and members of racial or ethnic minority groups. Traditional history, they argued, had neglected the lives and experiences of the great majority of Canadians, documenting only the lives and achievements of a very small and élite minority. Biographies, of course, were a primary target since they usually dealt with the careers, achievements and problems of leaders and other members of the social élite who had left sufficient personal or public archives to make possible the writing of a biography.

At the time of the apparent decline of biography, Professor Desmond Morton, in his CHA Presidential Address in 1979, raised the alarm about the apparent death of national history and the study of national political leaders. Speaking about Canada in the times just before the 1980 Quebec Referendum, Morton saw a decline in the vision for the Canadian nation. He realized that Quebec had an understanding of its history and culture, but he did not see the same sense of purpose in the Canadian people as a whole.³³ Morton called on Canadian historians to combine the new social history with a broader sense of national history, including biographies of national leaders, to remind Canadians of their common heritage.

Michael Bliss, a younger Canadian historian, echoed Morton's concerns. In the Creighton Centennial Lecture at the University of Toronto, 1991, Bliss provoked a

³³ Desmond Morton, "History and Nationality in Canada: Variations on an old Theme." Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers: Communications Historiques, 1979.

firestorm of debate over the role of social history versus national history by accusing the social historians of dividing Canadian history into small compartments and, in so doing, losing the total picture of Canadian history. Bliss drew a parallel between the decline of the Canadian sense of nation and the constitutional malaise gripping the country with the rise of specialized study of regional, ethnic or gender history.³⁴ Bliss accused the modern historians of writing for, and speaking to, an audience composed of people just like themselves without communicating with the general public. Even though the Canadian taxpayer was contributing large sums of money each year to universities, the academics, according to Bliss, were ignoring the public and concentrating on their own concerns. Bliss described Canadians as a people not knowing “who they were, and where they had come from, whither they were going.”³⁵

Michael Bliss argued that historians have a role to play in helping the Canadian public see the whole picture of their country and in guiding them in a direction for the future based on the past. Critics of Bliss accused him of wanting to return to the “old style” history with politics and a study of the élites. Bliss, however, reassured his critics that he did not want to return to the history practised by his predecessors. There is a need for national history, but it would not be complete unless it included a strong influence of social history. The Canadian nation includes aboriginals, women and ethnic groups, all of whom are part of the history of Canada and must be included in the account of the nation. Historians have to write and speak to a wider range of people who

³⁴ Michael Bliss, “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada.” Journal of Canadian Studies, 26, n.4, winter, 1991-92, 5-17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

want to know where the country should be going.

Gender historian Veronica Strong-Boag, in her Presidential Address in 1994, picked up on Michael Bliss's theme. She emphasized the need to study the various groups in the nation. She argued that there can be no meaning in a national history without knowing about the common people, but she also argued that the whole picture has to be included. National history has a place in Canadian history. Strong-Boag took a conciliatory stance between Bliss and the social historians, reminding them that there was a need for both types of history: "Together they make sense of our past; in isolation they add only to our collective and individual confusion."³⁶ She argued that political history had to give up its position of monopoly and had to incorporate elements raised by social historians. Woven together, political history should include an understanding of the women of that time and their role within the political development of the nation. Bliss and Strong-Boag came to a compromise position where national historians and social historians need each other and must work together to give the whole picture of a nation.

There are two aspects to this interesting debate between Bliss and Strong Boag. The most obvious concerns the importance of national history compared to regional histories. Related to this debate is the discussion of the worth of biographies of elite leaders as opposed to the study of the experiences of "ordinary Canadians." This biography of Walter Scott straddles the line in these debates.

³⁶ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory." Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, 1994, 6.

This study is a return to biography, and specifically the biography of an élite member of Saskatchewan society. It is also an examination of one particular Canadian region. The life of Walter Scott, however, transcends the bounds of personal and élitist biography. Scott was a representative, a spokesman, of the triumphs and tragic failures of his age and of western Canada. His biography has intrinsic interest in that it documents the triumphs and struggles of one individual. It also has broader relevance because Walter Scott's life was always more than an individual sojourn. He was a product and a representative of his time and his region.

This thesis will not only give a picture of the individual, Walter Scott, and explain why he was away from the province for half of his premiership, but will also add to the above-mentioned literature on the issues facing the new Saskatchewan government. The biography of Walter Scott will be an addition to the rather sparse collection of prairie biographies. To date, Saskatchewan has had thirteen premiers but only five have been the subject of biographies.³⁷ Even though several other biographies have been written on political leaders other than premiers, there is much work to do yet in this area.³⁸ Because of my own twenty-five years experience working in the

³⁷ Thomas H. McLeod, Tommy Douglas: the Road to Jerusalem, (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987), Norman Ward and David E. Smith, Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Dale Eisler, Rumours of Glory: Saskatchewan and the Thatcher Years, (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987), Dennis Gruending, Promises to Keep: A Political Biography of Allan Blakeney, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990) and James William George Brennan, "The Public Career of Charles Avery Dunning in Saskatchewan." Unpublished MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1968).

³⁸ Several excellent biographies of Saskatchewan figures are: MacEwan, Haultain, David R. Murray and Robert A. Murray, The Prairie Builder: Walter Murray of Saskatchewan, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1984), Denis Smith, Rogue Tory: The Life

parliament, provincially and federally, I have been able to offer insight into the political life of Premier Scott. Since I have written the Journals of the Legislative Assembly and the Senate from 1969-1994 and have worked with legislative documents, I have an advantage in researching the public records of the Scott era. I have some insight into some of the challenges facing members after having worked with them during my career. This experience in the inner workings of Saskatchewan politics and the Legislative Assembly will make this biography unique.

Even though biography has experienced an ebb and flow in Canadian historiography, interest in studying and writing about particular individuals has continued. One example of this dedication to and continuing interest in biography is the Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)- Dictionnaire Bibliographique du Canada.³⁹ While the first volume in this collection of biographies was published in 1966, the latest volume (XIV) was completed in 1998. To date, a total of 7,790 biographies of men and women have been published. Some of the subjects of these biographies are amongst the élite while others represent the “common Canadian” from various regions of the country who have made a distinct contribution to their society. Peter Waite called the DCB, a

and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker, (Toronto: MacFarlane Walter and Ross, 1995) and C. B. Koester, Mr. Davin M. P.: A Biography of Nicholas Flood Davin, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980).

³⁹ Dictionary of Canadian Biography- Dictionnaire Bibliographique du Canada, general editor Ramsay Cook, (Toronto and Quebec City: University of Toronto Press and Les Presses de l'Université Laval), XIV (1998). See also P. B. Waite, “Journals through Thirteen Volumes: The Dictionary of Canadian Biography.” Canadian Historical Review, 76, no. 3 (1995): 464-481.

“massive enterprise.”⁴⁰

Unlike other biographical dictionaries, which are organized in alphabetical order, the subjects in the DCB are arranged chronologically. Each volume covers a specific time period. When the editors began this enterprise, they expected that the entire series would be composed of eighteen to twenty volumes. The biographies are based on original research and fair treatment for each subject. Since the series of fourteen volumes has been written over a period of thirty-two years, each volume is a “reflection of the historiography of the time.”⁴¹ The energy and resources devoted to this project demonstrate a very strong and continuing interest in biography. The new life story of Walter Scott is in step with at least some aspects of contemporary Canadian historiography.

Every biographer faces a unique challenge: he/she must not only trace the observable events in the subject’s life but must try to understand and show their psychological state of mind. However, biographers are divided on whether psychological information should be used. One of King’s biographers, H. Blair Neatby, downplayed psychobiography: “when political biographers try to explain the behaviour of their subjects, they rely more on the influence of depressions and wars than on toilet training.”⁴² Yet to understand truly the subject of biography, historians have to take more than wars and depressions into account. How a subject reacts to these events is

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 471.

⁴² H. Blair Neatby, “Character and Circumstance: Political Biography in the 1990s.” Acadiensis-Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region, 22, no. 2 (1993): 155.

dependent on his or her own psychological health and outlook on life. As will be shown, Walter Scott's psychological health became a major influencing factor in his political career.⁴³

Biographer James L. Clifford described five levels of biography ranging from a straight recitation of facts to the use of much imagination in recounting the events in the subject's life.⁴⁴ Clifford preferred the middle option for biography, which he called "artistic scholarly biography." He argued that more than a mere recitation of facts is needed to create an interesting biography. After an exhaustive search of the material, the biographer, according to Clifford, has to use some creative artistry to weave the story together. The biographer cannot validly make up events or conversations but can interpret letters and events and meld them together into an interesting life story. Clifford cautioned that a biographer cannot totally hide his or her true feelings: some subjectivity will creep into the account.⁴⁵ It would be a dull story if the biographer remained above the story and recited only the "facts." After considerable research, the biographer will

⁴³ For good examples of how a biographer can weave the psychological behaviour of a subject into the work, see: P. B. Waite, The Loner: Three Sketches of the Personal Life and Ideas of R. B. Bennett, 1870-1947, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) and P. B. Waite, The Man From Halifax: Sir John Thompson, Prime Minister, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

⁴⁴ James L. Clifford, From Puzzles to Portraits, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970). The five levels of biography, according to Clifford, are: 1) objective biography (all the facts without interpretation), 2) scholarly-historical biography (some selection of evidence but no attempt to interpret subject's personality), 3) artistic scholarly biography (exhaustive research but biographer takes on role of an imaginative creative artist), 4) narrative biography (running narrative with some subjective imagination), and 5) imaginative biography (relying on secondary sources with biographer filling in the gaps with imagination).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

feel that he or she knows the subject and can write the account of that life through the subject's eyes. Clifford called biography "life writing." He wrote: "the conviction held by some historians of the possibility of complete objectivity in the selection of evidence is an illusion. Every re-creation of character represents subjective judgement on the part of the creator, and this is good."⁴⁶

A dilemma that confronts every biographer is what personal information should be left out of the biography? Every person has his or her secrets hidden from the general public and often from his or her own family. In searching through the subject's documents, the biographer may discover secrets. Some biographers have argued that these secrets should remain private and be buried with the subject. Most recent trends in biography, however, lean towards including all of the relevant details in giving an accurate picture of the subject.⁴⁷ The biographer should not include these details only to induce the reader to become a voyeur. On the other hand, to give the whole picture, the biographer has to give the intimate details of a life. The most salient goal of a biographer is to find "historical truth." Clifford concluded: "It is all very well to protect other people's feelings, though not if it means any real distortion of history. Everything still

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁴⁷ A comparison of H. Blair Neatby's biography of William Lyon Mackenzie King to C. P. Stacey's illustrates the point on inclusion of personal information. Neatby did not include much of the personal information on King that Stacey did. H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King. The Lonely Heights, 1924-1932, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963). H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) and C. P. Stacey, A Very Double Life: the Private World of Mackenzie King, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977).

depends on the biographer's conceptions of his duty to posterity."⁴⁸

The ultimate goal of a biographer is to get inside the subject's mind and to view the world through his or her eyes. Although desirable, this is not entirely possible. A psychiatrist may assist a patient to look inside his or her own mind and in so doing catch a glimpse of what the other person is feeling or thinking. Yet this is sometimes difficult for a trained person to do with a subject who is still living. It is much more difficult for a biographer to see inside the mind of a subject who is dead. Even though the biographer may have many letters to review and the advantage of hindsight, it is still a difficult task to reveal the innermost workings of another person. Clifford, however, remained optimistic: "No one can ever succeed in getting inside the mind of another person, though sometimes it is possible, with the help of other evidence, to speculate with comparative certainty."⁴⁹

Biographer Marc Pachter described a good biographer as one who is able to find a balance between being too critical and too complimentary about the subject. The goal should be a "candid portrait." It is the duty of a biographer to probe deeply and to find "the whole truth about a life."⁵⁰ Biography is thus one aspect of the historian's attempt to discover the past and to tell the story as it occurred. Biographers probe the inner self of the subject but also describe the events that happened around the subject. Such a study would involve the tools used by social historians. A study of the leaders who brought

⁴⁸ Clifford, 123.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁵⁰ Marc Pachter, "The Biographer Himself: An Introduction." Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art, Marc Pachter (editor), (Washington: New Republic Books, 1979), 6.

about significant social change makes possible a better understanding of these societies.

It is thus the goal of this biography to reveal the inner workings of the mind of Walter Scott, a complex but interesting man. Due to his struggle with depression, it will be necessary to use some psychological analysis to explain his actions. As with all people, Walter Scott preserved some private information in his correspondence, the examination of which will show a more complete portrait of the man.

The primary sources for the biography are extensive. Scott was a conscientious letter writer, except during his periods of severe depression. It appears that he kept all of the letters he received as well as copies of his outgoing correspondence. Not only did he keep newspaper clippings about political events in his own life and the province but also clippings on world events and sports stories that interested him. Scott's autobiography, which was used extensively by the media for background on his early life, gives us an insight into the man.⁵¹ As will be shown, though, much of the autobiography was untrue and written to cover secrets in his personal life. Scott's account of his own life, as he wanted it to be seen, is nonetheless a valuable research source. Other primary sources used in this biography to discover the personal side of Scott, are census records, Henderson's directories, telephone books, land holding maps, cemetery records and psychiatric health records. In addition, Scott's descendants from the Telfer, Scott and McDonald families were interviewed.

Scott hoarded his records, which include brochures of all the ships on which he cruised, and information about the hotels where he stayed. His financial

⁵¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85059-85156.

records and his will are available for review. It was through good fortune that the records are as complete as they are. Walter Scott's daughter, Dorothy, was concerned about protecting her deceased father's image. She was determined to have his records preserved for posterity in an archives but did not want just any researcher to be able to review them. As an example of her concern over her father's image, Dorothy tried to have the Department of Public Works "touch up" the official portrait of her father or to have a new portrait commissioned.⁵² Her concern for preserving the correct image extended to his files as well. In conjunction with the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Dorothy had the files reviewed by Dr. Roger Graham, a noted historian at the University of Saskatchewan and biographer of Arthur Meighen. She insisted that Graham pull three categories of documents from the files before they were donated to the archives: correspondence regarding personal matters, private business affairs, and the MacKinnon affair.⁵³ Graham agreed to pull documents of an "intimate or private character which have no interest for the student of history."⁵⁴ Graham felt that matters of an intimate nature had to be handled with care and sensitivity. Dorothy was particularly concerned that her father not be held up to ridicule by his old political foes.

Why then has not a biography been written on Walter Scott? In the early 1950s, Dorothy wanted to commission one and approached Dr. Hilda Neatby, a highly

⁵² SAB, internal accession files. These files have not been catalogued as part of the main collection but are held by the Archivist.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Report by Dr. Roger Graham to the Provincial Archivist, May 24, 1951.

respected historian from the University of Saskatchewan.⁵⁵ Although Dr. Neatby showed some interest in this project, she did not write the biography due to other time commitments. Earl G. Drake, a history graduate student, also wanted to write Scott's biography. However, he found that Dorothy wanted to be involved in setting the tone of anything written about her father. The result was that no one wrote the biography.

When Dorothy died in 1956, the Saskatchewan Archives Board retrieved the protected Scott files and added them to the main collection. It is hard to imagine writing this biography without these private files. Graham, after reading the Scott papers, wrote a newspaper article in which he described Scott as an "intense, conscientious, and industrious and rather combative man who inspired trust by his obvious competence. But like all successful public men in a democracy, he took political life pretty much as he found it and adapted himself to the limitations and requirements it imposed."⁵⁶

Since Scott was a political leader, published sources such as newspapers, Legislative Journals, and the Statutes provide further information about the man. Unfortunately no Hansard of the legislative debates exists for the Scott era. Scott's cabinet colleagues, such as Calder and Motherwell, did not keep extensive correspondence files which would have provided a more comprehensive view of Scott through his colleagues' eyes. There are no records of the discussions in cabinet and many of the key decisions were made by Scott and his ministers during face-to-face conversation. One can find mention of these conversations in the correspondence, but

⁵⁵ SAB, internal accession files. These files have not been catalogued. Lewis H. Thomas, Provincial Archivist, to Dr. Hilda Neatby, March 14, 1952.

⁵⁶ The Regina Leader Post, November 7, 1951.

with an air of secrecy. There is no record of what was actually said or the tone of the debate. If there was internal strife in cabinet or if Scott's ministers were negative toward Scott in conversation, no record of this now exists. The secondary sources were most useful in studying the background to a particular issue or the provincial or national events but few offered personal insights into Scott.

Jessie Read Scott, Walter's wife of forty-two years, was a figure in the shadows during their lives together. She wrote letters, but, as often happened, did not make copies of handwritten letters. I found few letters pertaining to Jessie Scott, but the surviving correspondence provides a sense of her personality and character. She purposefully shunned publicity and was content to live in her husband's shadow. Thus, to portray her as anything else would require falsification of the records that are available.

This biography will add to the existing literature on the settlement and expansion of the West and the development of an agricultural economy, schools and political institutions in the new land. It will show Walter Scott's plans for the province and will evaluate how immigration, agriculture and education influenced Scott's public policies. Scott's Liberalism and his belief in the value of patronage will be examined as well as his personal accomplishments, and his role within his own community. Even though Scott held certain principles and was prepared to take a stand on them, he was a practical politician who knew how to read the public will, and how to capture the votes for the next election. The fact that he garnered larger majorities each election is proof of his ability to lead the people where they wanted to go.

The Liberal campaign slogan in the December, 1905 general election was “Peace, Progress and Prosperity.” This represented Scott’s master plan for the province during his eleven years as premier. He promised the people that if he was elected, he would bring peace with the federal government over the terms of provincial autonomy. Scott offered progress at a time when the agricultural industry was booming and new villages and towns were springing up throughout the province. The new atmosphere of peace and progress would bring prosperity to all Saskatchewan citizens. This thesis will trace the eleven years of Scott’s government as he attempted to achieve this peace, progress and prosperity for his province. Ironically, he was not able to find his own peace in his sad and lonely years in retirement. How he changed his environment and how his society affected him will be the theme of this story.

Chapter 2 The Early Years

Walter Scott, grew up in late nineteenth century rural Ontario where he formed his basic beliefs and views of society. Scott accepted many of these rural Ontario values such as being able to live in a closely knit family. Because he did not have this family environment initially, he felt that he did not meet the standards of society around him. At the age of eighteen, he joined many thousands of other rural Ontario people in a westward migration to a new settlement frontier on the prairies. Scott became a leader and builder in the newly created province of Saskatchewan. He and many other westward bound Ontario migrants worked hard to incorporate into the new society cherished aspects of the communities of old Ontario life while avoiding some of its darker aspects. It is, therefore, appropriate to examine Walter Scott's Ontario roots, and the reasons for, and details of, his move to the West.

There was a hint of frost in the air in rural Ontario when Thomas Walter Scott was born on October 27, 1867, the birth year of the new nation called Canada. That, surely, was an auspicious beginning for this young baby, the son of George Scott and Isabella Telfer Scott.¹ Walter Scott was born in his grandmother's house at lot twenty-nine, concession nine, approximately half way between Strathroy and London, Ontario. This section of rural Ontario was agricultural with small 100-acre plots of rich land

¹The official description of the events in Walter Scott's early life is from Scott's autobiography, the parliamentary guide, and from newspapers of the day.

carved out of the forest. The farm houses were located near the main roads and less than a quarter of mile apart. It was a close knit community with the key families being the Telfers, the Scotts, the McDonalds, the Robsons and the Baties.²

Unfortunately for Walter, according to his autobiography, his father died before he was born. Throughout his life, Walter Scott wrote to friends lamenting that he never knew his father. He had “no recollection of a father, he having passed away before my birth.”³ Scott lived for the first four years of his life with his mother, Isabella Telfer and his grandmother, Mary Telfer. On December 27, 1871, Isabella Telfer married John A. McDonald, a neighbouring farmer who lived across the road from the Telfers. Over the next nine years, the McDonalds had four children: Minnie (born [b] March 12, 1873), John Adam (b. September 7, 1875), Maggie Jane (b. June 5, 1878), and Willie (b. August 17, 1880).⁴ Walter Scott continued to live with his mother and his step father. From all accounts, it was a happy household with Walter and his half brother, John, becoming particularly close friends. This was a friendship that would last their lifetimes.

In closer examination of the autobiography, several inconsistencies become apparent. The 1871 census report shows that there were three residents on lot twenty-nine, concession nine in the township of London, County of Middlesex, Ontario: Mary

² The Historical Atlas of Middlesex County, Ontario, (Toronto: H. R. Page and Co., 1878). The 100-acre plots exist today with many of the farm yards still in place. A tour of the Telfer cemetery confirms the long and interwoven histories of these five families in the district.

³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85139. The Regina Leader Post, March 23, 1938, reported that Walter Scott’s father died when Walter was only a baby.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 85142 & 85143.

Telfer (age sixty-five and a widow), Isabella Telfer (age thirty and single) and Thomas W. Scott (age three).⁵ If Isabella was a widow as Walter later claimed, why was this not shown on the census report? In reviewing the records for George Scott (Walter Scott's alleged father), it is apparent that he was married to Ann Telfer Scott, Isabella's cousin. George Scott actually lived until 1896, not 1867 as claimed by Walter Scott.⁶ As further proof that Isabella Telfer was single when Walter was born, a wedding announcement in the London Advertiser for January 4, 1872, shows that "Miss" Isabella Telfer married John A. McDonald on December 27, 1871, four years after Walter's birth.⁷ This was Isabella's first marriage. She had been single at the time of Walter's birth. This then made Walter a "bastard child," as was the expression at that time. Certainly a scandal in the community must have erupted when an unmarried woman gave birth to a child.

Andrew Blaikie, a demographer who studied the effect of illegitimate births in Scotland in the last century, has shown that unmarried mothers often lived with their mothers or other members of the family. "Most pre-marital conceptions were followed by marriage, although not always to the same men and often after several years had elapsed."⁸ In Victorian England, and one can surmise that conditions were similar in

⁵ Census records for East Middlesex (Township-Canton), 1871, 13. Nominal return of the living. John Blackwell, enumerator.

⁶ The Batie Family History: The Descendants of Thomas Batie and Margaret Robson (ca 1720-1994), second edition, 1994. Edited and published by Howard F. Batie, Sterling, Virginia, USA, 85.

⁷ The London Advertiser, January 4, 1872.

⁸ Andrew Blaikie, Illegitimacy, Sex, and Society Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 24.

Ontario in the last two decades of the 19th century, there was a double standard whereby society viewed the unmarried mother as the cause of her own misfortune and the man was let go free without having to bear any of the responsibility for the birth.⁹ Whether Walter Scott was the subject of discrimination is debatable but the perceived and real stigma of his illegitimacy became a factor in his mental health in later life.

The family and neighbours in Strathroy and area knew about Walter Scott's beginnings in life. He claimed throughout his life that George Scott was his father. By 1867, Ann Scott had left her husband, George Scott, and was living with her daughter, Jane Heslop Scott and her family. George and Ann were ultimately reunited and subsequently moved to Oak Lake, Manitoba, in 1870.¹⁰ One can only speculate that the scandals over Walter Scott's birth caused this marital disruption and the move West.

But was George actually the father of Walter Scott? In letters that Walter Scott wrote to his cousin, G. A. Scott, in Davidson, Saskatchewan in 1906, Walter refers to his own "grandmother" being ill.¹¹ In writing to James Balfour of Regina, Walter mentioned his grandmother having died at Davidson and being buried in Oak Lake, Manitoba in 1906.¹² This grandmother was Ann Telfer Scott, wife of George Scott. If she was Walter's grandmother, then George had to be Walter's grandfather and not his father.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁰ *Batie*, 86.

¹¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to George A. Scott, Davidson, November 7, 1905, 6660 and January 8, 1906, 19742. Also in letters at page 21572 of the Walter Scott papers.

¹² *Ibid.*, W. S. to James Balfour, September 30, 1918, 78766.

Who then was Walter Scott's father?

When Walter Scott was born, two people left the Telfer community on very short notice. Jim Scott and his older brother Adam, sons of George and Ann Scott, went to Kansas to find work. Adam never did return to Ontario. According to Helen Scott (a niece of Adam Scott) and Oliver Fenwick (his mother was a Telfer), the oral history that was passed down through the families over the generations indicates that Walter's father was actually Adam Scott and that this was the reason he left the country in a hurry.¹³

Although his beginnings in life were controversial, his early years were quite mundane. Walter Scott attended Telfer school which was approximately one quarter of a mile up the road from home. Telfer corner was the site of the school, the United Presbyterian Church, the post office, the antiburger Presbyterian Church and a cemetery. Telfer corner became the focus for Walter Scott in his first formative years with regular attendance at both school and the United Presbyterian Church. According to his reminiscences later in life, Scott had a strict upbringing within the church. Sunday was reserved for going to Church and Sunday school. No pleasurable activities were allowed on Sunday.¹⁴ Scott grew up in a predominantly Presbyterian community which had three Presbyterian churches within five miles of his home. The area surrounding Strathroy, composed mainly of British settlers, had been settled just thirty years before his birth.¹⁵

¹³ Interviews with Helen Scott, Ottawa and Oliver Fenwick, Ilderton, Ontario, conducted June, 1996.

¹⁴ SAB, SHS Collection, file SHS 57, W. S. to Reverend John Gibson Inkster, June 22, 1935.

¹⁵ Judging from the tomb stones in the Telfer cemetery, the most common family names were Scott, McDonald, Telfer, and Batie. All of these families were from

Scott spent the first four years of his life with his mother and grandmother who provided a strong maternal influence. Women in the 1860s in Ontario were subordinate to men and could not vote. There were serious impediments for married women to own real estate. A woman was to be “submissive, amiable, and virtuous; she was to celebrate her subordination to men and find fulfilment and happiness in the private world of her home.”¹⁶ A few single women or widows did own property but this was rare. Scott’s grandmother was one of these exceptions because she, as a widow, did own a small farm. One can speculate that Scott’s grandmother was a person of determination and strength as she farmed and cared for her daughter and grandson. At age four, Scott, along with his mother, moved to the John A. McDonald farm nearby and had to learn to live with a stepfather and eventually four half brothers and sisters. He started school in the fall of 1871 and had the habit of being somewhat mischievous.¹⁷ On one occasion, when Walter Scott was in trouble with his teacher, he claimed that he was innocent and bolted for home. He was sent back after lunch with no punishment to follow.¹⁸ The surviving records do not explain the nature of the offence or the reason why there was no punishment.

England and Scotland. Most families showed Presbyterian on the census records with the odd family being Methodist. In a thirty-two square mile area surrounding Scott’s home, there were approximately 600 persons living on the farms.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Jane Errington, Wives and Mothers. School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790-1840, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 235.

¹⁷ *SAB*, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85140.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Scott's favourite school teacher, a woman by the name of Miss Langford, prepared him for his high school entrance exams. Scott passed these exams but quit school after he had completed his eighth grade, a decision he lived to regret. Even though he succeeded in his newspaper and political careers throughout his life, he felt that he had to work harder than most in order to compensate for his lack of education. Scott suffered from asthma and missed many days of school. He left home on July 2, 1883 at the age of fifteen to work for neighbouring farmers. One and a half years later, he followed the migration to the North-West.¹⁹

As has been mentioned, Scott grew up in a Presbyterian and British community. Judging by the elected representatives for the area, Scott lived during his formative years among Reform Liberals. His member of the House of Commons was George W. Ross, a "thorough Reformer" and a worker within the temperance and prohibition movement. The provincial member of the Ontario Legislature for Middlesex West, which included Strathroy, was J. Watterworth who was a "Liberal and supporter of Mr. Mowat."²⁰ Since the majority of the voters in Middlesex West supported Reform/Liberal candidates, one can conclude that Scott was influenced by Liberal thought even though there is no evidence to show that he was actively involved in partisan politics before he left Ontario.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 85141.

²⁰ Canadian Parliamentary Companion and Annual Register, edited by C. H. Mackintosh, (Ottawa: Ottawa Citizen Printing and Publishing Company, 1882). This companion was the forerunner to the Parliamentary Guide which included biographical information on all provincial and federal elected Members and Senators. George W. Ross was first elected in 1872 and reelected in 1874 and 1878. John Watterworth was also elected in 1872 and reelected in 1875 and 1879.

Another indicator of the political milieu that Scott lived in was that Edward Blake was born in a log cabin near Strathroy in 1833.²¹ In 1867, Blake was elected to both the provincial Legislative Assembly and the federal House of Commons. He continued to serve in this dual capacity becoming Ontario's first Liberal premier in 1871. A year later, due to the passage of a law preventing men from sitting in both provincial and federal parliaments, Blake resigned as premier but continued to serve as a Member of the House of Commons and later as a member of Prime Minister Mackenzie's cabinet.

On October 3, 1874, Blake spoke at Aurora, Ontario and delivered what later became known as the famous "Aurora Speech." In this address, Blake outlined his definition of Liberalism and as will be shown, became a model for Scott's brand of Liberalism. At Aurora, Blake condemned the Macdonald government's failed railway policy. He pushed for Senate reform and proportional representation. Blake opposed Macdonald's Americanization of Canada and preferred to look to Britain for new ideas. In his speech, Blake opposed high tariffs yet feared free trade with the United States. Some years later, Blake joined Wilfrid Laurier in opposing the hanging of Louis Riel. Blake and Oliver Mowat, his successor as Liberal premier in Ontario, favoured more provincial rights and a looser union within the Canadian Confederation. Blake even converted J. W. Dafoe, a Manitoba journalist and a life long friend of Walter Scott, to Liberalism. Scott and Blake were born in the same community and developed a similar

²¹ Frank H. Underhill, "Edward Blake." Our Living Tradition: Seven Canadians, edited by Claude T. Bissell, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 6.

brand of Liberalism.

It was thus in the spring of 1885 that Scott left his family and headed for Portage La Prairie. His roots were from a Presbyterian, Anglo-Saxon and Liberal community which helped to form his beliefs and values. However, upon leaving Ontario, Scott did not consciously proclaim his intention to make the West in Ontario's image. Scott left his home community because of his illegitimacy. He had no chance to inherit the family farm. His two half brothers were in line for their father's land. In his autobiography, Scott used asthma and the lure of fresh air as his excuse to leave because he could not admit his illegitimacy. The fresh air may have been a factor but the chance of a new beginning and to leave his past behind motivated him to move.

There is much literature on the reasons people joined this trek to the Canadian North West. Historian Louis Hartz argued that Canadian society was composed of fragments of Europe, particularly France and Britain.²² As each fragment tore off from the mother country, it established a similar society in the new world. Likewise, in Canada, this fragment theory was applied to the settlers from Ontario moving to the North West Territories. Each new group that moved west, according to this theory, brought with it customs and values from the society they had just left. Walter Scott brought with him, many of the values that he had learned as a youth in Ontario.

²² Louis Hartz, The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South America, Canada and Australia, (New York: Harcourt, Braie and World, Inc., 1964). See also J. E. Rea, "The Roots of Prairie Society." Prairie Perspectives: Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference, edited by David P. Gagan, (Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1970).

Historian S. F. Wise, in a collection of essays on political thought, wrote that Ontario felt it was the centre of Canadian Confederation. “The Confederation movement, to an important extent, stemmed directly from the dynamic of the political culture of Ontario. Both parties (the Macdonald Conservatives and Brown Liberals) saw the development possibilities that a national federation would create; both perceived the significance of the West as an area for provincial expansion.”²³

In Paul Voisey’s book on Vulcan, Alberta, he noted the number of people who had moved West, to the wilderness, to make a new beginning and to escape from the past.²⁴ This was a past that Walter Scott never seemed to forget and constantly tried to cover. As late as 1935, Walter Scott wrote to one of his best friends, Rev. John Gibson Inkster, formerly of Victoria and then Toronto, that his father had died before he was born. Even to a “man of the cloth” and a close personal friend, Scott could not disclose the truth.²⁵

However, Ontario society did have an influence on Scott. He was raised in rural Ontario and worked on several farms. He gained a knowledge of agriculture and its importance to the economy and the life style of the people. Scott believed that the secret to success on the farm was hard work. Honest labour could overcome even poor soil and weather conditions. This belief in agriculture and its importance affected Scott’s later

²³ S. F. Wise, God’s Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada, edited by A. B. McKillop and Paul Romney, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

²⁴ Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 20.

²⁵ SAB, SHS Collection, File S7, W. S. to John Gibson Inkster, June 22, 1935.

views as premier of Saskatchewan. The combination of Scott's rural roots and Saskatchewan's big skies and open spaces led him to believe that the future for this province was unlimited.

Scott did not lose his belief in British ties, something he learned as a boy, but he did not become a supporter of the narrow view that the people in the West had to be forced into becoming Protestant and English speaking. Philosophically and in order to maintain political strength, Scott supported minority rights as was shown in the school debates of 1905 and 1913-1916. Scott would be satisfied if, over time, those minorities adopted the Protestant religion and English language on their own.

Many people in the community who left for the West sent back reports that it was a rugged land but a land of opportunity. Those willing to work hard could make their fortune in the West and Walter was able to convince his mother that the move West would be beneficial to his asthmatic condition. He boarded the train on March 17, 1885. His plan was to go to Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, to live and work with his Uncle James Telfer, his mother's twin brother. By the time Scott arrived at Portage La Prairie, the Riel Rebellion had broken out and his Uncle James had already left for the North-West to help suppress the rebellion.²⁶ A change of plans was thus necessary so Scott worked for the Strome Henderson General Store as a delivery boy at a salary of \$20 per month. After paying his room and board, he had \$10 left for living.²⁷ Scott recorded in his autobiography that he did not suffer from asthma during the summer of 1885. It

²⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85146.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 85147.

seemed as if the fresh western air was the cure he needed.

After five months at the general store, C. J. Atkinson, owner and editor of the Manitoba Liberal, offered Walter Scott a job as a “printer’s devil.”²⁸ This meant doing miscellaneous jobs around the print shop, including lighting the fires in the morning and sweeping the floor.

Meeting Mr. Atkinson was one of the monumental events in Scott’s young life. This was the beginning of a newspaper and a political career, two occupations that he would follow for the remainder of his working life. There is no record of any political activity in Scott’s early life before coming to Portage La Prairie, however, meeting Atkinson set him on the road to becoming a Liberal. Scott soon moved from printer’s devil to try his hand at typesetting and printing jobs.

The Manitoba Liberal was a four page weekly which was started in April, 1883 by C. J. Atkinson. The editorials were critical of all the Manitoba Members of the House of Commons for failing to represent the interests of the North West. Atkinson called these members “Manitoba’s misrepresentatives.”²⁹ An editorial on April 17, 1884 showed Atkinson’s colours by openly supporting the “great Reform party” and the principles proclaimed by Edward Blake.³⁰ One month later, Atkinson openly supported Edward Blake, federal Leader of the Opposition, in his criticisms of the rising costs of building the CPR. Atkinson believed that the western section of the CPR should be built

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Manitoba Liberal, April 8, 1884, 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, April 17, 1884, 2.

only when there was sufficient traffic to cover the operating costs of the line.³¹

The Manitoba Liberal echoed Blake's criticisms of the Canadian Senate opposing the appointment process and called it an "asylum of political hacks."³² Atkinson called for either reform or abolition of the Canadian upper chamber. The editorials proudly proclaimed a belief in social reform and advocated more provincial rights.³³ The National Policy was a "millstone" around the necks of the people living in the North West.³⁴ With the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion, Atkinson laid full blame on the federal government.³⁵ The editorial policy of the Manitoba Liberal followed a pattern set by Edward Blake. With Walter Scott's Ontario roots, it is easy to see how he could form a close friendship with C. J. Atkinson.

When Scott arrived in Manitoba, John Norquay was the premier. Even though Norquay was seen as a Conservative on the federal scene, he resisted partisan politics on the provincial level. He had been first elected premier in 1878 and served in that capacity until December 1887. Two issues dominated Manitoba politics: freight rates (including the need to break the CPR monopoly) and education. Premier Norquay devoted his time to breaking the CPR monopoly by encouraging the construction of

³¹ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1884, 2.

³² *Ibid.*, May 29, 1884, 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, August 22 and October 10, 1884, 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, November 7, 1884, 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1885, 2.

branch lines and a main line to the Hudson Bay.³⁶ He was re-elected in 1886, but due to a disagreement with Prime Minister Macdonald in 1887 over the building of the Red River Valley Railway to the United States, Norquay resigned as premier.

Newspapers in the late nineteenth-century were part of the fabric of political life. Not only the editorials, but the news stories, carried a particular bias in favour of one or the other of the political parties. Journalists and editorial writers, usually also the owners of the newspaper, made no pretense of writing a balanced and unbiased report. The parties, in turn, made a point of owning or at least controlling newspapers in the main centres to ensure influence over the reading public.

Key sources of revenue, often vital for the continuance of the paper, were government printing contracts. These contracts were handed out by the government to the newspaper which had shown their support in the past. For Scott to enter the newspaper business meant that he was going into the world of politics. Even the names of the newspapers, such as the Manitoba Liberal, clearly indicated the political preference of the owner. Even though Walter Scott was a newcomer to the province, he sensed a new political partisan mood that was blossoming in Manitoba. Under the wing of C. J. Atkinson at the Manitoba Liberal, Scott had a direct entrée into the world of western partisan politics. It is not known exactly when Scott became a Liberal but the fact that he grew up in an Ontario Liberal environment and he found work with Liberal employers meant that he was naturally drawn into Liberal politics.

³⁶ Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 213.

By the summer of 1886, Atkinson left Portage for Regina to start a new newspaper, the Journal. In December of that same year, Scott followed Atkinson to Regina and to the Journal. The scene that greeted Scott when he arrived in Regina was a small centre of less than 900 people living in shanties arranged with no apparent plan.³⁷ The 1886 harvest had been poor and the economy seemed unpredictable.³⁸ The North West Mounted Police depot, situated several miles from the town site, was the centre of cultural activities and musical shows.³⁹ One can imagine the long cold and dark walk home in the winter to Regina from the depot after a dance. However, the cold winters brought a welcome reprieve from the sea of mud that plagued the citizens for the other three seasons of the year. From 1889 to 1891, Regina's population grew from 997 to 1681. By the 1901 census, Regina had grown to 2645 and in 1907, to 8000.⁴⁰

The Regina newspaper that Scott joined was as large as the Manitoba Liberal, but "much spicier."⁴¹ The first issue of the Journal hit the Regina streets on October 8, 1886. This eight page weekly was dedicated to the issues of the North West such as the tariff, railways, freight rates and the conduct of public officials.⁴² The newspaper claimed to be an advocate of reform, "social and moral well-being," temperance and

³⁷ Earl G. Drake, Regina, The Queen City, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1955), 56.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 71, 110 and 131.

⁴¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85151.

⁴² Journal, October 8, 1886, 4.

Senate reform. C. J. Atkinson had not changed his moral, social, or political beliefs from his days as editor/owner of the Manitoba Liberal.

Scott covered for the Journal the 1887 federal election in the Assiniboia West constituency where Nicholas Flood Davin and Jim Ross were the combatants. As a journalist and owner of the Regina Leader, Davin received the nomination for the Conservatives. The bearer of the Liberal banner was Jim Ross, a rancher from Moose Jaw. The Conservatives in Assiniboia West had hoped for a nonpartisan election in order to have Davin elected by acclamation but to no avail.⁴³

On local issues, there was little difference between the Ross and Davin platforms. If elected, Davin promised to push the federal government for a fully elected Territorial Legislature and an abolition of the duty on lumber and agricultural implements.⁴⁴ Jim Ross proposed a similar platform. It was on the national issues that there were differences between the two candidates. It was the Grits and the Tories; Blake supporters against the Macdonald team. Davin praised the National Policy while Ross called for a change in government. The campaign became somewhat personal, with C. J. Atkinson of the Regina Journal attacking Davin.⁴⁵

The year 1886 was influential for Scott because he met J. H. (Jim) Ross, a

⁴³ C. B. Koester, Mr Davin M. P.: A Biography of Nicholas Flood Davin, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1980), 78.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

prominent Liberal organizer in the Regina and Moose Jaw communities.⁴⁶ Ross later went on to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the North West Territories, a Member of the House of Commons for the Yukon, and ultimately a Senator. Ross was influential in Scott's decision to make a career in the Liberal Party. Up to this point, Scott had not taken a high political profile, but during the 1887 election campaign, he referred to Ross as "the Liberal, and our candidate."⁴⁷ Even though "his candidate" was defeated by Davin, it was apparent that Scott had developed a taste for politics. Through his newspaper work, he was able to rub shoulders with the prominent politicians from all parties and could not help but be influenced by his boss, C. J. Atkinson.

During the federal election campaign in February/March, 1887, the editorial policy of the Journal clearly supported J. H. Ross.⁴⁸ Even though Ross was defeated on March 15, the Journal proclaimed that he was a man of the people who had been defeated by the forces of government, the mounted police, the railways and land companies.⁴⁹ Atkinson wrote that an ideal political candidate should have "sterling worth, uncompromising integrity and straightforward independence."⁵⁰ The editor did not believe that Davin, the Conservative candidate for Assiniboia West, had these qualities.

⁴⁶ SAB, Saskatchewan Historical Society (SHS) Collection, file S7, Walter Scott (W. S.) to Rev. John Gibson Inkster, Knox Church, Toronto, June 22, 1935.

⁴⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85152.

⁴⁸ Journal, February 17, 1887, 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, March 17, 1887, 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, November 5, 1886, 4.

Nicholas Flood Davin had his own way of combatting Atkinson's criticisms. Davin was owner and editor of the Regina Leader. In contrast to Blake's and Laurier's support of Louis Riel, Davin praised the Canadian troops for having "broken the back of the rebellion."⁵¹ Davin supported Macdonald in his role of stopping Riel. After Riel's trial and execution, Davin wrote that Riel had a poor defence and had shown his blood-thirstiness in leading two rebellions. The federal government was correct in not commuting Riel's sentence. "The truest mercy to both (Indians and half breeds) is to show them unmistakably and if necessary, sternly, that no man can attempt to destroy the authority of the government of this country in any part of it unless at the peril of his life."⁵²

But life was not all newspapers and politics for the young Walter Scott. He attended picnics and summer events where the local young men could meet the local young women. It was at one of these picnics at Wascana park in the summer of 1887 that Walter met Jessie Florence Read, daughter of E. B. Read, of Regina. They dated through that winter. He escorted her to "several assemblies" and went skating and tobogganing.⁵³ Scott had been increasing his earning power as he became a typesetter and later a reporter at the newspaper, but he had increased his spending even more due to high living. He found that he was continually in debt. With his attraction to Miss Jessie Read, Walter decided to gain control of his finances. He had "learned a lesson" on

⁵¹ Regina Leader, May 19, 1885, 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, November 19, 1885, 2.

⁵³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85153.

indebtedness.⁵⁴

On May 14, 1890, Jessie and Walter were married by Reverend Leonard Dawson in St. Paul's Church, Regina. It was a small ceremony, Walter reminisced that it was the "most auspicious event of my life."⁵⁵ The Journal, extended its congratulations to the young couple on their marriage.⁵⁶ The Regina Leader noted that Walter Scott was receiving congratulations from "his many friends" on the joining "in the holy bonds with Miss Jessie Read."⁵⁷

In his first few years in Regina, Scott worked for the Journal, and then, in the hope of career advancement, he shifted to the Leader. By fall of 1892, Scott decided it was time to stop working for others in the newspaper business and to strike off on his own. With the town of Regina expanding at a dizzying pace and new settlers arriving each year, the newspaper business along with general printing seemed to be the way to make a fortune.

On September 17, 1892, Walter Scott went into equal partnership with J. K. McInnis to buy The Standard. Their company was called The Standard Printing Company.⁵⁸ There is no indication in the Scott papers as to how he accumulated enough money to buy half of The Standard, but one can surmise that because he had a good job

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ The Journal (Regina), Thursday May 15, 1890, 8.

⁵⁷ The Regina Leader, May 20, 1890, 8.

⁵⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Autobiography, 85155.

as a reporter and his share of the partnership would have cost no more than \$500, he could afford to launch his newspaper career through this partnership. The records do not indicate what percentage of their profits came from the sale of papers and what from advertising and printing contracts. It is safe to assume, however, that these three sources of revenue increased as Regina grew. Business was so good that within less than two years Scott bought the Moose Jaw Times at a discounted price of \$600, a decision prompted by Jim Ross and A. Hitchcock, a Moose Jaw banker. Scott noted that the purchase was a “good bargain.”⁵⁹ Scott owned the Moose Jaw Times until he died. It was a money maker for him over the years, and a vehicle to spread his own political philosophy. Scott initially announced in the paper that he would not be taking sides in the political battles but would be giving the readers balanced reports with plenty of local news.⁶⁰ In an editorial, Scott surprised many by supporting N. F. Davin, the Conservative Member.⁶¹ Scott noted though that Davin was “off colour,” apparently from alcohol, but hoped that Davin was “not losing his power of eloquence, for if facility of expression left him he would not be Mr. Davin at all.”⁶²

Thus by 1894, nine years after leaving Ontario, Walter Scott was the owner of one newspaper and half owner of another, becoming a prominent citizen in the community. Scott and McInnis had agreed that Scott would move to Moose Jaw to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 85156.

⁶⁰ The Moose Jaw Times, June 29, 1894, 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1894, 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*

operate the Times, while McInnis would stay in Regina to look after their interests at the Standard.⁶³ It was not much longer before Scott expanded his newspaper empire even further.

On August 22, 1895, Scott bought the Regina Leader from Davin.⁶⁴ This was a sign of the arrival of a new generation and the changing of the guard. By this point, Davin was interested in lightening his load as newspaper owner and as a Member of the House of Commons. As part of the deal in selling his newspaper, Davin had Scott's agreement that Davin would write or at least control the contents of the first two editorials each week. Davin seemed to have won the best part of the bargain, as he had lightened his load and at the same time knew he had the support of the largest newspaper in the district. Scott gained as well by increasing his hold over the newspaper industry in Regina and district.

This was not to be a stable arrangement as Scott found it more and more difficult to support Davin. Initially Scott and Davin were friends and newspaper colleagues but with Davin sitting as a Conservative member and Scott under the tutelage of Liberals such as Atkinson and Ross, the partisan political differences were hard to mask and their personal friendship began to crumble. In May, 1896, with the federal election set for June 23, Scott temporarily leased the Regina Leader to several of Davin's friends so as

⁶³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, agreement between W. S. and J. K. McInnis, July, 1894, 95.

⁶⁴ Historical Directory of Saskatchewan Newspapers, 1878-1983. Prepared by Christine MacDonald. Published by the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina and Saskatoon 1984, 61. The title of this newspaper varies. It was the Regina Leader, March 1883 to November 1905 and became the Morning Leader, November 10, 1905 to April 1930.

to ensure that the newspaper was supportive of Davin.⁶⁵ In the 1896 campaign, it was Davin, the Conservative candidate against J. K. McInnis, an independent who favoured the Patrons of Industry.

Even though the Standard was owned by McInnis and Scott, McInnis set the editorial policy. During the 1896 election campaign, McInnis hired Mr. Trant to operate the Standard. Nonetheless, the paper was still critical of Davin for voting along party lines instead of defending the interests of the West.⁶⁶ Davin had publicly stated that he opposed the remedial legislation which would have restored Roman Catholic interests in the Manitoba schools. When it came time for the vote in the House of Commons, Davin voted with the Conservatives and in favour of the Remedial Bill. In an editorial, the Standard criticized Davin for being drunk, offensive and for not having tried to amend the National Policy.⁶⁷ One week later, Davin responded that farmers were lightly taxed and that they paid tax only on alcohol and tobacco.⁶⁸ This was a reference to farmers not being over taxed by the tariffs under the National Policy.

Meanwhile, McInnis supported Wilfrid Laurier as long as he favoured Patrons of Industry principles such as freer trade and policies favourable to the farmers.⁶⁹ McInnis

⁶⁵ For a detailed examination of the negotiations between Davin and Scott over the sale of the Regina Leader, see D. H. Bocking, "Premier Walter Scott, a study of his rise to political power." Unpublished MA thesis, History Department, University of Saskatchewan, 1959.

⁶⁶ Standard, May 21, 1896, 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, May 28, 1896, 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

claimed that parliament would be stronger if more independent members were elected. He also favoured the construction of a rail line to Hudson Bay to assist the farmers in their export of grain.⁷⁰

The Regina Leader, operated by Davin's friends, took an equally partisan stance but in favour of Davin. For both Davin and McInnis, the tariff, the National Policy, and the Manitoba School Question were the key issues of the election. On June 23, 1896, Laurier formed a majority government and Davin was elected to the opposition benches. Two days after the election, Scott was back at the editor's desk of the Regina Leader. He wrote that his newspaper would not claim to be independent but would not be under the control of any political party. He promised, in an editorial, that he would judge each issue on its merits.⁷¹ He then congratulated Laurier on his victory. Scott believed that issues of the election were trade, the Manitoba School Question and honesty in government. He believed that Laurier would solve all of these problems.

Two years later on January 10, Scott's ties to the Liberal party were strengthened when he was unanimously chosen by the party "to dispense the patronage of this [Moose Jaw] district" and along with Jim Ross and L. B. Cochran was appointed to a committee to arrange speakers for political meetings in the area.⁷² The combination of newspaper ownership and influence over the patronage levers for Moose Jaw and district meant that Scott had much political and financial control over the events in the community. This

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, June 11, 1896, 1.

⁷¹ Regina Leader, June 25, 1896, 4.

⁷² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. W. Bole, Secretary Treasurer, Moose Jaw Liberal Association, to W. S., January 11, 1898, 180.

patronage was limited to the federal sphere but included the allocation of printing and public works contracts and appointments with the federal government. To obtain a federal public service job, one had to have the backing of the local Member of Parliament particularly if that member happened to be from the party in power. Since Davin (Conservative) was the Member of the House of Commons for Moose Jaw and area with a Liberal government in Ottawa, the coordination of the letting of contracts and appointments in the area rested with the local patronage boss, who in this case was Walter Scott. The stage was set to enter politics as an elected member.

One problem loomed in Walter Scott's mind. The circumstances of his birth might become politically embarrassing. In an effort to address this issue, Scott wrote an autobiography. It was written somewhat as a diary, but well after the fact, in three or four sittings over a period of thirteen years from 1887 to 1900. In the autobiography, Scott claimed George Scott as his father to explain why he had the "Scott" surname. He wrote that his father died before he was born thus explaining how his mother could marry John A. McDonald in 1871. George Scott was named as his father because, by the time Walter published his autobiography, George Scott was dead and could not come back from the grave to contradict Walter's story. This account also protected Adam who lived until 1938. Moreover, it was unlikely that Adam would tell the world about his youthful indiscretion and his refusal to support his child, Walter. By the time Scott published his autobiography, Adam had married and was living in Oak Lake, Manitoba.

After moving West, Scott lived in dread of the day that someone from Strathroy would come and reveal his secret. Once he was in the midst of his political career, he

could not afford to have anyone know about his past or he would be damaged politically. Even though there were hints in the Western Conservative press from time to time about Scott being a bastard, it is not clear that anyone truly knew about his past. In political circles of the day, it was common for political opponents to store up “dirt” on each other to be used at strategic moments. Scott’s fear of exposure, and his repeated and continual denial until his death, were signs that his illegitimacy was a troublesome thread throughout his life. Hence, it was a carefully guarded secret.

Scott, however, was not the only Western politician with a secret. Frederick Haultain, territorial premier from 1891 to 1905 and leader of the opposition until 1912, had had a secret fondness for Marion Mackintosh, daughter of Lieutenant Governor Charles Herbert Mackintosh. Marion did not return Haultain’s attentions but instead married Albert Castellain of Bath, England. They moved to England and had one daughter. Then the marriage dissolved, ending in divorce. On a trip to England, Haultain met Marion Mackintosh Castellain and they renewed their relationship. On the spur of the moment, they married in March, 1906.⁷³ It was decided however, that since Marion was a divorcee and somewhat emotionally unstable, she would continue to live in England until her health improved before making any marriage announcement to the Saskatchewan people. Unfortunately, Marion never did recover and thus did not return to Saskatchewan.

⁷³ Lewis H. Thomas, “The Political and Private Life of F. W. G. Haultain.” Saskatchewan History, 23, no. 2 (1970): 56. Grant MacEwan, Frederick Haultain: Frontier Statesman of the Canadian Northwest, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 165.

As the years went by, it became increasingly difficult for Haultain to admit to the people that he had been secretly married and had not told them. Marion Haultain eventually died at Homewood Sanitarium in 1938. After thirty-two years of marriage, Haultain never did tell his electors and friends in Saskatchewan about her. This was his secret which, if revealed, could have hurt him politically.

But Scott knew Haultain's secret. As early as 1901, Scott began to receive tips that Haultain was having a relationship with a young woman. Mr. Culligan, a supporter of the Liberal Party, reported that if Haultain did not go to see his girlfriend every day while they were in England, she would be in a "terrible state." Scott was advised that all he had to do was "set the match" and "everything would go itself."⁷⁴ Reverend D. L. Oliver, a Scott supporter in Moosomin, reported that one of Haultain's supporters was embarrassed at the mention of Haultain's private life.⁷⁵ Scott wrote to J. H. Haslam: "He [Haultain] was surely hobbled by some handicaps."⁷⁶

Scott knew that he could have damaged Haultain politically but chose not to. If he revealed Haultain's secret, could or would Haultain reveal his opponent's secret? Scott did not know for sure whether Haultain knew about his background but he could not take a chance. It was a conspiracy of silence between the political rivals. It was only after both men had gone to their graves that researchers discovered the truth of these two politicians. Both men had been subject to life's experiences that were beyond the norm

⁷⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. H. Culligan to W. S., March 5, 1901, 523.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Rev. D. L. Oliver to W. S., Moosomin, June 16, 1906, 7331.

⁷⁶ SAB, Haslam Papers, W. S. to J. H. Haslam, July 12, 1918.

for that day and could not reveal their secrets to the public.

Walter Scott had been raised in nineteenth century rural Ontario with a strong influence from the Presbyterian church and the Liberal Party. Although he did not go West to spread these values in the new land or to model the West on Ontario, he could not forsake or forget his Ontario roots. He went West to leave the stigma of his illegitimate birth, the lack of birthright and to make a new beginning.

As the new century approached, Scott was on the verge of entering the political arena. He owned two newspapers and had equal partnership in a third. He covered elections and moved in political circles. He had some patronage influence for the Moose Jaw area and he associated with people such as Atkinson and Ross, two of the Liberal leaders in the North-West. The combination of newspapers and politics was a comfortable fit. Walter Scott had come to the North-West to make his fortune and was well on his way to achieving his goal. He made good use of his opportunities. Fifteen years after arriving in the North-West, he launched his political career.

Chapter 3 Member of Parliament (1900 - 1905)

Walter Scott was involved in politics as a journalist, newspaper owner and Liberal Party activist soon after he arrived in Regina in 1886. In 1900, however, he became a candidate for elected office when he accepted the Liberal nomination for the federal constituency of Assiniboia West. In the ensuing election, Scott defeated his former friend, Nicholas Flood Davin, and thus began a five year political apprenticeship during which he learned much from old political masters in Ottawa. He would subsequently apply those lessons in Saskatchewan when he became that province's first premier in 1905.

It is not known what drew Scott into the Liberal Party. It may have been a combination of political conviction along with the personal magnetism of Jim Ross, a Moose Jaw Liberal who became a lifelong friend. Upon writing to a constituent in 1903, Scott admitted that he was not inclined to be in politics. "I should never have been in it [politics] and would not stay in it at all but for Ross."¹

Scott was not the first western politician to transfer his newspaper skills and contacts to politics. Nicholas Flood Davin, Member of the House of Commons for Assiniboia West; Clifford Sifton from Brandon and Minister of the Interior from 1897 to 1905; and Frank Oliver of Edmonton and later federal Minister of the Interior; were all

¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to L. Hanmer, Elm Springs, NWT, November 26, 1903, 1823.

owners and/or editors of newspapers in their areas.

When Scott accepted the nomination for the Assiniboia West federal riding on May 28, 1900, the constituency was a vast geographical rectangle stretching from the American border north to Saskatoon and from east of Regina to the west side of Medicine Hat. In the campaign, Scott battled the Conservative candidate, Nicholas Flood Davin. By 1900, it became apparent that the friendship between Davin and Scott had soured over Davin's stance on the Manitoba School Question some years before. The Manitoba Act of 1870, which created the province, confirmed the educational provisions of Section 93 of the British North America Act. The provincial legislature was given exclusive powers in relation to education, subject to the provision that provincial laws must not prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of person may have by law in the province at the time of union. Manitoba had privately funded Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic schools in 1870, but in 1871 the provincial government passed The Manitoba School Act which created a dual system of publicly funded Protestant and Roman Catholic schools.

The Manitoba government amended the Manitoba School Act in 1890, creating a publicly funded "national" school system, and withdrawing public funding for all denominational schools. Denominational schools were not abolished, but their supporters became subject to a system of double taxation. They had to bear the costs of operating their denominational schools, and also pay taxes to the public system.

Ten days after the passage of the amendments to the School Act, Archbishop

Taché petitioned the federal government to disallow the Greenway government amendments. Taché believed in the rights of the minority to organize Catholic schools which would be supported by the government. Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell ordered Premier Greenway to restore Roman Catholic rights to have their own schools and be exempt from state school taxation.²

On June 17, 1895, Premier Greenway, seconded by his Attorney General, Clifford Sifton, moved a motion in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly refusing to fulfill the Prime Minister's order. In the dying days of the Tupper government in Ottawa, a Remedial Bill was introduced to reverse most of the Greenway School Act legislation of 1890.

Originally opposed to remedial legislation, Nicholas Flood Davin changed his mind and voted along Conservative Party lines, in favour of the Bill at Second Reading. The Leader of the Opposition, Wilfrid Laurier moved an amendment that "the bill be not now read a second time but six months hence."³ In the end, the remedial legislation did not pass the Canadian Parliament before the federal election. Four years later, Walter Scott raised this issue in his newspapers and in the 1900 federal election campaign against Davin. Scott followed the Liberal Party line in opposing the remedial legislation and accused Davin of saying one thing and doing another. The issue of religious schools

² *Ibid.*, 190. For a detailed examination of the Manitoba Schools Question and particularly the negotiations between the Catholic Church and the politicians, see Roberto Perin, Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

³ C. B. Koester, Mr Davin MP: A Biography of Nicholas Flood Davin, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 137.

would resurface during the debate on the Alberta and Saskatchewan Acts in 1905.

In the 1900 federal general election campaign, Scott promised that if elected, he would be independent of party lines and would defend the interests of the constituency.⁴ In the next sentence, Scott said that he was loyal to Laurier and supportive of the Liberal government's policies and program. Scott had dual loyalties. He knew that to be elected and subsequently reelected, he had to represent the local interests and serve his constituents. However, in order to earn concessions for his constituency, it was advantageous for Scott to serve within the governing Liberal Party and be loyal to its leader. Philosophically, Scott accepted the basic principles of the Liberal Party. He openly supported a reduction in tariffs and urged more free trade. Scott claimed that he had not campaigned for the nomination but if elected, he promised to do his best. This disclaimer would be heard again five years later when he was chosen leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party.

Photographs of Scott in early life, show a good looking man, well dressed with a flare for the latest fashions, with a felt hat as a constant item in his wardrobe. His opponent, Davin, had the reputation for being a colourful speaker, especially when he had been drinking alcohol. Even though Scott did not have a reputation of over imbibing, he was able to speak well. His years of choosing his words carefully for the editorials in his newspapers had been good training. Because of Scott's sense of humour and personal appeal, the electorate could and did identify with him. Scott appeared to

⁴ Regina Leader, June 28, 1900, 1. Open letter from Walter Scott to W. T. Finlay, Chairman of the West Assiniboia Liberal Convention.

take an interest in everyone he met, knew their backgrounds and conveyed a concern for their individual condition. He was optimistic about the future of the West and its people.

In the 1900 federal election campaign in Assiniboia West, the two newspapers in Regina, The Leader (owned by Scott) and the Regina Standard (owned by J. K. McInnis) both supported Scott. When Davin sold the Leader four years earlier, he lost one of his primary mouth pieces. Some of the issues in the campaign were transportation, tariffs and sound fiscal policy. The Liberal government, according to the Regina Leader, in implementing the Crow's Nest Pass agreement, had lowered freight costs for farmers.⁵ Scott acknowledged that the government needed the tariff for revenue but promised to work for freer trade.

The Regina Leader, in an editorial on October 18, urged voters to support the Liberal government and not go back to the Conservatives who had "for a long time plundered and blundered, meddled and muddled."⁶ In a supplement to that same issue of the Leader, Scott wrote an open letter to the voters in Assiniboia West predicting that "provincial establishment" would likely arise in the next parliament. Scott believed that the North West would need a strong representative during this period of change and promised he would give his constituency the necessary leadership. He said he would serve the needs of Assiniboia West before those of the party, unlike Davin's desertion of his constituents over the remedial legislation on the Manitoba School Question.⁷ Four

⁵ *Ibid.*, October 11, 1900, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, October 18, 1900, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Supplement.

days before the election, the Regina Leader proclaimed in a front page headline: "Vote for Scott- Low Tariff, No Monopolies, British Preference, and North West First, Last, and Always."⁸

The Regina Leader's usual competition, the Regina Standard, strongly supported Scott's candidacy as well. The paper promoted the Patron's of Industry principles such as "tariff reform, reduced freight rates and abolition of monopolies," a platform similar to Scott's.⁹ An editorial in the Standard on October 17 described Scott as "thoroughly reliable," but the editor was not totally unbiased.¹⁰ In an open letter from the owner/editor, J. K. McInnis on October 24 mentioned his business friendship with Scott and predicted that Scott would be a man of deeds rather than words.¹¹ In contrast, he blasted Davin for deserting the interests of his constituents over the remedial school legislation.

On November 7, 1900, Walter Scott defeated Nicholas Flood Davin by a majority of 232 votes, becoming the new Member of the House of Commons for Assiniboia West.¹² J. A. Calder, a man who would become Scott's close friend and right hand man, was the returning officer in Assiniboia West during the 1900 election.

Scott did not enter the political field with great confidence. His perceived lack of

⁸ *Ibid.*, November 3, 1900, 1.

⁹ Regina Standard, September 19, 1900, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, October 17, 1900, 6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, October 24, 1900, 1.

¹² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, 278. Return to the Writ.

formal education and experience had “blighted” his hopes for an illustrious career.¹³

Scott was quick to compare his qualifications for the job with Frederick Haultain who had nine years of experience as Territorial leader and Flood Davin, who had thirteen years as a Member of the House of Commons. Both Haultain and Flood Davin had university degrees. Scott knew that he was up against able debaters, yet he tackled the task with enthusiasm and with the assistance of able campaigners such as Jim Ross.

Despite his feeling of inadequacy, something he did not express publicly, Scott was off to Ottawa and it took some time for him to gain a sense of confidence in the House.

During his first Session, according to the Honourable Clifford Sifton, Scott asked not to be the mover, or the seconder of the Address in Reply motion, a sought after prize by most new members. He felt that this was a trial he did not want to undergo.¹⁴

When first elected, Scott promised his constituents that he would represent them in a neutral and unbiased manner. He would speak on behalf of the Territories before respecting party lines. Even though he ran as a Liberal, politics, especially at the local level, was nonpartisan. Scott viewed Frederick Haultain, the nonpartisan leader of the territorial government, as a friend and colleague.¹⁵ During the 1902 territorial election, Scott wrote, “I hope there may be no doubt about Haultain’s return [re-election].”¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Rev. J. A. Carmichael, Winnipeg, November 24, 1904, 3308 and SAB, Haslam Papers, W. S. to J. H. Haslam, July 12, 1918, 3.

¹⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Clifford Sifton to W. S., December 17, 1900, 450.

¹⁵ D. H. Bocking, “Premier Walter Scott, a study of his rise to political power.” Unpublished MA thesis, History Department, University of Saskatchewan, 1959, 96.

¹⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. H. Heffernan of the NWMP, May 15, 1902, 852.

Haultain was misguided but “not a bad fellow.” Scott felt that he and Haultain got along well, finding that Haultain was fair but a “keen fighter.”¹⁷ Haultain was re-elected and together with Scott, continued the battle in the defence of the North West Territories. Haultain’s biographer, Grant MacEwan, states that Haultain was the best debater in the West, a force to be dealt with.¹⁸

Scott greatly admired Haultain as a public speaker, who did not seem to have to work as hard on his speeches. Rather than being a flamboyant speaker, Scott was able to make his points with less flare but with no less effectiveness. Scott, while still a neophyte politician, regarded Haultain as a role model. In the Regina Leader, he described Haultain as “punctiliously honest.”¹⁹ To a Liberal colleague Scott wrote, “In my opinion there has never been in the Assembly, excepting Mr. Ross, a man who approached Haultain in point of ability to carry on efficiently and economically the affairs of the North-West.”²⁰

The personal and political friendship between Haultain and Scott began to show some cracks after the territorial Conservative convention in Moose Jaw on March 25, 1903. The convention agreed to a resolution urging the party to run Conservative candidates in the next territorial general election. Partisan politics had been avoided up

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 853.

¹⁸ Grant MacEwan, Frederick Haultain: Frontier Statesman of the Canadian Northwest, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 125.

¹⁹ Regina Leader, September 30, 1897.

²⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mr. Wilkie, Disley, NWT, April 30, 1902, 1206.

to this point, based on the logic that the territories would have better lobbying power with the federal government if the territorial government was not aligned with a party in opposition to the federal government. The only sure way to avoid this conflict was to have a nonpartisan territorial legislative system.

The territorial Conservative convention in Moose Jaw was the first break with this nonpartisan tradition. The convention went even further in naming Frederick Haultain as the honorary president of the party.²¹ He quickly proclaimed his opposition to the party's stance on running candidates in the next election but he did not give up the title of honorary president, a fact that Scott publicly criticized. As a result, this was the beginning of a rift between Scott and Haultain. To George Brown, a Territorial Member who became a lifelong political friend, Scott reported that before the convention, Haultain still seemed to be nonpartisan. Yet Haultain's reassurance after the convention of not following the convention's resolution "fell a little short." Scott could see that Haultain did not want to offend his Conservative political friends but felt a sense of frustration with Haultain's apparent slide into partisan politics.²²

In these times, Scott claimed that it was acceptable to be partisan at the federal level while remaining nonpartisan at the territorial level. Scott expected Haultain, as territorial government leader, to maintain and proclaim his nonpartisanship but in Scott's opinion, Haultain had not done this. Doug Bocking concluded, "In the end, it

²¹ MacEwan, 130.

²² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to George Brown, May 1, 1903, 1356.

was conflict of party interest which caused the break between Haultain and Scott.”²³

Haultain’s biographer, Grant MacEwan described Scott as “lean and deceptively frail in appearance” but very able. “He [Scott] became an astute politician as he had become an excellent journalist, but the early friendship with and admiration for Haultain seemed to dissolve in the corrosive acid of political partisanship.” And further “Scott ... was first and last a Liberal while Haultain, who could recognize some need for party organizations at the federal level, was as insistent as ever that party politics had no useful place in a provincial legislature.”²⁴ Scott would have disagreed with MacEwan arguing that Haultain had not maintained this nonpartisan stance after the Moose Jaw convention.

The gap between the two men widened and they became political rivals until retirement from politics. Perhaps if Haultain had become a partisan Liberal, Scott may have been more accepting. The criticism of Haultain was in part a sign of Scott’s increased partisanship. Scott claimed to support nonparty local politics but was looking to blame the Conservatives for being the first to show party colours. This in turn would open the door for Liberal partisanship.

Although Haultain was proclaiming his nonpartisanship, he was gradually becoming more closely allied to the Conservative Party. The Liberals, including Scott, publicly chastised Haultain for his shift to partisan politics but privately were pleased with these developments. The Liberal Party wanted to run candidates in the first

²³ D. H. Bocking, “Saskatchewan’s First Provincial Election,” Saskatchewan History, 17, no. 2 (1964): 75.

²⁴ MacEwan, 155.

provincial election, but did not want to be blamed for being the first party to introduce partisan politics at the local level.²⁵ By publicly noting Haultain's involvement at the Conservative territorial convention in Moose Jaw, the Liberals tried to shift this blame onto Haultain. As it turned out, in 1905, the Liberals ran party candidates while Haultain tried to maintain a nonpartisan facade by leading the Provincial Rights Party.

As Scott was balancing federal and territorial politics, what was his family's reaction to his election as a Member of the House of Commons? Walter's mother, Isabella Telfer McDonald, wrote: "Dear Walter my dear boy." She had read his "lectures" from the election campaign and felt that he must be "quite a publick [*sic*] speaker." She concluded her letter: "Well Walter, I little thought when you left that cold March morning to go to the North West you would some day be in parlement [*sic*].... I sincerely hope the Lord may still be with you and prosper you in all your undertakings and that you may acknowledge him in all your ways."²⁶ Walter Scott maintained a closeness with his mother, corresponding frequently. He signed his letters to her as, "Your affectionate son."²⁷ Walter stopped at his home district near Strathroy on many of his trips between Regina and Ottawa.

Jessie Scott, accompanying her husband to Ottawa during Session, lived in rented rooms not too far from Parliament Hill. Walter reported to a colleague that Mrs.

²⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to T. O. Davis, Prince Albert, November 14, 1903, 1584; W. S. to Clifford Sifton, November 27, 1903, 2699 and W. S. to T. M. Bryce, Yellow Grass, November 26, 1904, 3209.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Isabella Telfer McDonald to W. S., November 9, 1900, 367 & 368.

²⁷ *Ibid.* W. S. to Isabella Telfer McDonald, November 25, 1904, 4085.

Scott (he always referred to her by her family name rather her given name) was not impressed with Ottawa at first but was getting used to it.²⁸

Since federal politics in the early decades of this century was not fulltime for the members, Scott did not let politics become his sole occupation. Session lasted approximately six weeks each winter with long breaks for work in the constituency. As a result, Scott maintained his ownership of, and direct involvement with, both the Moose Jaw Times and the Regina Leader. The newspapers were not only a source of income but also a way of spreading the “word” to the voters in the constituency. The Leader, for example, reported faithfully on Scott’s speeches in the House of Commons as he defended territorial interests. The paper portrayed him as the humble servant of his constituents. According to the Leader, Scott said: “I am nothing Mr Speaker, but a poor man whom the electors of West Assiniboia have honoured by sending me here as their representative.”²⁹

According to the paper, Scott raised concerns about shoddy workmanship in the construction of railway lines in the North West, a problem caused, of course, by the previous Conservative government.³⁰ In the same week, Scott spoke in favour of pay increases for the men in the North West Mounted Police.³¹ Overall, the general theme of Scott’s speeches was to raise concerns on behalf of his constituents and for the improved

²⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Walter Bole, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 1, 1902, 646.

²⁹ Regina Leader, May 18, 1904, 4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

federal service to the North West. His newspaper ensured that constituents knew about these valiant efforts of the member for Assiniboia West.

It was important to have as many newspapers as possible in Liberal hands, and, in Scott's mind, to have Liberal newspapers in the language of the new immigrants, particularly German. This enabled these voters to maintain their traditionally close ties with the Liberal Party.³² If Scott could not afford to buy a newspaper, it was important to arrange for someone loyal to the party to buy it so that the newspaper would not fall into "enemy" hands.

In spite of his initial shyness, Scott settled into his role as the elected member for Assiniboia West. He spoke on issues germane to the North-West, particularly agriculture and autonomy for the North West Territories. In May 1903, George W. Brown, territorial Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a barrister with Mackenzie and Brown in Regina, wrote that autonomy should be delayed because the Liberals were in disarray and Haultain was becoming more partisan for the Conservatives.³³

One year later, Scott wrote to political colleagues that as long as federal funding was adequate, the people in the territories would likely be content to stay as a territory.³⁴ On the other hand, Haultain, as leader of the territorial government, made provincehood for the territories the central issue in the 1902 territorial election. The territorial politicians argued that their government was not given enough money from the federal

³² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Paul M. Bredt, Regina, NWT, April 25, 1902, 656-659.

³³ *Ibid.*, George W. Brown to W. S., May 5, 1903, 1359.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to George W. Brown, Regina, NWT, May 17, 1904, 3172-3178.

treasury to pay for the necessary infrastructure (roads, bridges or schools) to meet the needs of the new settlers. Provincial status would allow the provincial government to raise revenue and to borrow money to cover the increasing costs. Scott and the Liberal Party initially delayed autonomy, an issue they deemed as not being urgent. Scott wrote to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, that “so long as the schools and roads and bridges requirements [*sic*] are being met, the people express no desire for haste with the provincial establishment.”³⁵

Scott shared Brown’s concern over Haultain’s growing partisanship. By November 1904, Scott had lost confidence in Haultain believing that he “has been controlled by the Conservative party interests.”³⁶ Scott could see though that autonomy was inevitable but as long as the Liberal Party was disorganized in the West, provincial status would be avoided. The Liberals knew that the residents of settlements along the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) who came West under a Conservative government tended to be Conservative-minded, while the new settlers, brought in by the Liberal Government, were more inclined to vote Liberal. With careful organization, time was on the side of the Liberals as more settlers poured into the prairie West. Within two years, Scott believed that the circumstances had changed sufficiently to warrant provincial status for Saskatchewan and Alberta. Even though he had changed his stance on provincehood within two years, Scott had been consistent in his belief that autonomy should not come until the Liberal Party had a reasonable chance of being elected

³⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, November 23, 1903, 2693 and W. S. to W. T. Finlay, MLA for Medicine Hat, July 30, 1903, 1683.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. M. Bryce, Yellow Grass, NWT, November 26, 1904, 3209.

government in the new province of Saskatchewan.

One of the major points of contention between Scott and the Laurier government was tax exemption for CPR land. The Macdonald government had granted twenty-five million acres of land to the CPR as a partial payment for the construction of the main rail line across Canada. Macdonald had promised that the land selected by the railway would remain untaxed for twenty years or until sold, whichever came first. Laurier refused to budge from this promise, even though it was a Conservative promise, because “a promise was a promise.” Both Laurier and Scott knew, however, that if the government broke the contract with the CPR, the government would have to pay compensation to the CPR. If Scott could not have the exemption removed, reimbursement to the territorial government for lost revenue was an acceptable alternative. Publicly Scott supported the removal of the exemption but privately he lobbied for financial compensation.

Scott spoke in the House of Commons on this point on several occasions. For example, on October 14, 1903, Scott, in debate, said that since many millions of acres were exempt from taxation, the North-West would be “simply crazy at present to accept autonomy.”³⁷ By October 1904, in an open letter to his constituents, Scott reaffirmed his stance against autonomy until the tax exemption was resolved: “I shall oppose the granting of autonomy until we know exactly where we stand in this tax exemption matter, or unless Parliament in giving autonomy makes us free from the burden and the handicap which perpetual exemption from taxation on the CPR roadbed and all

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 54631. Excerpts from the House of Commons Debates.

appertenances [*sic*] would mean in a province.”³⁸

Meanwhile, Scott was using his persuasive influence to gather more funding for the territories. He lobbied W. S. Fielding, the federal Minister of Finance, for larger federal grants. In the end, the federal parliament granted to the territorial government in June 1903, \$250,000 to cover a previous overexpenditure and in addition to their annual budget, the territorial government was to receive a further grant of \$250,000 for the fiscal year 1903. The territorial government could claim repayable advances from time to time for local improvements from a capital account of \$250,000.³⁹ If Haultain was going to work against the Liberals, the best way to undercut him was for the Liberals to maintain the federal grants to the territories at a high level. Haultain would then have “no excuse for complaint.”⁴⁰ Scott wrote: “My position is that the greater likelihood there is of Haultain endeavouring to use the North-West Government against the interests of the Liberal Party, the greater reason there is to prevent him stating with truth that the North-West is being starved by the Liberal Party.”⁴¹ Scott had learned the art of

³⁸*Ibid.*, 54632. Open letter from W.S. to the electors in Assiniboia West, October, 1904.

³⁹ On December 17, 1902, A. L. Sifton, Territorial Treasurer, submitted a budget to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, in the amount of \$880,000 for 1903 which did not cover the overexpenditure or the further grant for 1903. One of the main reasons for the overexpenditure was that 140 bridges had been washed out due to flooding. The Territorial Treasurer argued that he had gone as high as he could on direct taxation and thus was requesting assistance from the Federal Government. *Journals of Saskatchewan, 1903*, 53. See also SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to George Brown, Regina, NWT, May 20, 1903, 1365-1366.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. H. Ross, June 11, 1903, 2549.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to H. V. Bulyea, May 13, 1903, 1445.

compromise. He pressed his point on tax exemption but settled for compensation, and with this compromise, he was able to stay within the Liberal Party.

In the midst of the debate over autonomy and funding for the territorial government, a controversy arose over whether the Liberals were trying to buy off the Territorial leader and appoint him as a judge. Grant MacEwan, when describing the incident, wrote that Jim Ross offered a judgeship to Haultain, an action that was unsolicited by Haultain.⁴² Historian D. J. Hall argued that one of the ways to solve the Liberal problem with Haultain in the West was to buy him off, but the attempt failed.⁴³ Walter Scott had a very different interpretation of events. He wrote to Jim Ross suggesting that it was Haultain who had asked for the judgeship. In fact, Haultain was talking about the appointment so much, Walter Scott was worried that “the common impression will be that the Ottawa Government was trying to get him [Haultain] out of politics.”⁴⁴ Clifford Sifton wrote to Scott saying that he was not surprised that Haultain had backed out on the appointment.

By June 14, 1904, it was clear to Scott that Haultain was to blame for the mess. “He (Haultain) got Ross and I to arrange his appointment to the Bench, and then wouldn’t accept appointment.”⁴⁵ There are obviously two interpretations to the events,

⁴² MacEwan, 134.

⁴³ D. J. Hall, “A Divergence of Principle: Clifford Sifton, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the North West Autonomy Bills, 1905,” Laurentian University Review, v.7, n. 1, November, 1974, 4.

⁴⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. H. Ross, Regina, December 8, 1903, 2575.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to John Hawkes, Carnduff, NWT, June 14, 1904, 3785.

Haultain's and Scott's. It is likely that, in conversation, Haultain mentioned to Ross that he might be interested in getting out of politics after so many years if a suitable appointment was available. The Liberals, seeing Haultain go to the Conservatives and becoming a thorn in their sides, were anxious to accommodate him and to neutralize him politically. It appears as if Haultain got "cold feet" and declined the offer once it had materialized. The Liberals were embarrassed at the failed attempt to neutralize their political foe, so the gloves were certainly off for the next political battle.

By 1903, Scott had become a seasoned and valued team member in the Liberal Party. Clifford Sifton, the most powerful federal politician for all of the North West, relied on Scott as a loyal hard working party member. Sifton wrote to Scott about an area in southern Alberta where there had been some political feuding requiring organization: "I think you should go down there for a few days . I have no one else to depend upon, and it will not do to leave it too late."⁴⁶

As in many political matters, issues can change rapidly. With the 1904 federal election campaign underway, and with Haultain taking a more partisan approach to politics, Scott began to change his mind regarding the urgency of autonomy. During the campaign, Laurier promised that if his government was re-elected, it would open autonomy talks with the Territorial Government.⁴⁷ This campaign promise would undercut any gains made in the West by Haultain and the Conservatives. Therefore, the moment for autonomy had arrived for the Liberals.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Clifford Sifton to W. S., November 27, 1903, 2699.

⁴⁷ C. Cecil Lingard, Territorial Government in Canada: The Autonomy Question in the Old North-West Territories, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 102.

After the 1904 re-election of the Laurier Liberals, including Scott, the stage was set for the autonomy talks. The first point of contention was whether to divide the territories into one or two provinces. Haultain had been pushing for one large province from Manitoba's western boundary to the Rocky Mountains. This included four districts in the existing Territories which could be directed by a central provincial government. According to Haultain, one province would provide economical and efficient government. Since it had already been administered for several decades by one local government, it was clearly not too big to be a province. Supporters of the two province concept believed that one large province, due to its size, would "result in jealousies and frictions detrimental to Canadian unity."⁴⁸ Furthermore, two provinces would provide more patronage opportunities.

The second major issue surrounding autonomy was the transfer of Crown land to the new provinces. On October 13, 1903, Scott stated clearly in the House of Commons that he favoured a transfer of Crown land to the provinces: "it is only fair, just and proper that the lands, timber and mineral resources in that province should be handed over to the people dwelling there to be managed and owned by them."⁴⁹ By 1905, Scott admitted that he had changed his mind (another compromise) and that he favoured the federal government maintaining ownership of the land so as to ensure proper funding to the provinces: "it is absolutely better for the people of those new provinces to have the lands administered here [Ottawa], so long as the provinces obtain a sufficient sum in lieu

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, House of Commons Debates. 85808.

of lands to place them in an equitable position to carry on their educational system, their public works, and generally, their local affairs.”⁵⁰ Scott believed that the public lands should be in the national interest which was necessary for the provinces to survive.

The federal government retained administration of the public lands in Saskatchewan and Alberta not just for railway construction but also to ensure continuity of the federal government’s homestead policy. In lieu of control of the land, the provinces were granted compensation. The formula for the acreage and price was set arbitrarily.⁵¹ In Saskatchewan and Alberta, twenty-five million acres were identified at a cost of \$1.50 per acre, which established a fund of \$37,500,000 per province. Since a sliding scale of interest on this fund, based on population, was set, this was an “interest payment upon this compensation fund which the Dominion proposed to grant in return for lands retained for the ‘purposes of the Dominion.’”⁵²

With the acceptance of this compensation package, Scott accepted the Laurier party line. It was better for the federal government to administer the land in order to ensure the continued rapid immigration policy for the development of the West. If the provinces held the land, they would not have cash at hand for the necessary public

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 85890. House of Commons Debates. Scott confirmed this point of view in a letter to W. A. Burton of Medicine Hat on March 9, 1905. *Ibid.*, 5355.

⁵¹ Chester Martin, “Dominion Lands” Policy. (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1938), 211. Martin’s book was the second volume in the “Canada Frontiers of Settlement” series, edited by W. A. Mackintosh and W. L. G. Joerg.

⁵² With a population of 250,000 to 400,000, the payment was one per cent of the fund or \$375,000 per year. The rate went to 1.5% with a population of 400,000 to 800,000 and 2% for 800,000 to 1,200,000. Above that, the rate went to 3%. *Ibid.*, 211 & 212.

works. There was also the concern by the Liberals that the provinces might disrupt the immigration policy that was just showing results in the number of immigrants flooding into the North-West. Furthermore, the provinces would have to be involved in the promotion of immigration on an international basis if they held the Crown lands. Scott took the long view when he wrote that he could not see a time when “there can ever be financial advantage to the Province in taking over the lands.”⁵³ When the immigration policy was at its logical end and the land was all settled, the federal government might then want to turn the land over to the provinces, but for what advantage to the provinces?

Why then did Scott do an about face on the crown lands issue? By 1905, with two elections under his belt, Scott was less inclined to strain on the party leash and more inclined to follow Laurier’s policies on immigration. Scott had learned the benefits of playing with a team. Clifford Sifton’s aggressive recruitment of newcomers to the Canadian North-West was paying dividends in the rapid growth of this prairie region.⁵⁴ Canada had become one of the fastest growing countries in the world and Scott supported rapid settlement in the West.⁵⁵

This debate over the advisability of turning the Crown lands over to the

⁵³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. A. Aikin, editor of The Phoenix, Saskatoon, September 13, 1909, 8694.

⁵⁴ D. J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: A Lonely Eminence, 1901-1929, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 63.

⁵⁵ A recurrent theme in Scott’s letters was how much the province had grown and the increase in wheat production. This praise of growth was echoed in the speeches from the Throne at the Opening of each new Session of the Legislature.

provinces has raged on ever since. The three prairie provinces were the only provinces that, on joining confederation, did not receive their lands and mineral resources, which created a sense of dependency and western alienation. Chester Martin, a Canadian historian and an adviser to the Manitoba government on the land question, argued that because the federal government kept the land, it became a large empire in its own right, thus disrupting the concept of equality of provinces.⁵⁶ The federal government was prepared to sacrifice the local interests for the sake of the country as a whole. Martin concludes however, that the Dominion Lands Policy was good for the West in the long term because the arrangement provided speedy yet controlled development of the western land. The question is whether the provinces, starved for cash, would have avoided cultivation on non-arable land as much as the federal government had. Even though the provinces were provided with cash, in lieu of the land, feelings of alienation were prevalent.

The final and most contentious issue in the autonomy debate pertained to separate schools. In Canadian politics, for the first four decades in the history of the new nation, religion and education were inflammatory issues, especially when mixed together. In 1875, with the passage of the North-West Territories Act by the federal parliament, Roman Catholics and Protestants collectively but not as individual denominations, gained the right to establish their own public or separate schools and to set and collect taxes for these schools. In 1885, with the passage of an ordinance by the Territorial Assembly, all education in the Territories was put under one board of

⁵⁶ Martin, 467.

education with two sections for the separate and public schools. In 1892, by passage of ordinance #22, the Council of Public Instruction replaced the board of education. The council was composed of representatives of the government and of the separate and public school systems. The effect of this major change was that neither the representatives of the separate nor the public school systems had a vote in the Council. Control of the school system, both public and separate, rested with the government. Even though the minorities could still establish separate schools and set their own tax rates, the Council of Public Instruction had the authority to regulate the curriculum of public and separate schools, teacher training and the selection of school text books.⁵⁷

In 1901, a further territorial ordinance centralized the school system under a board of education headed by a commissioner (minister). Quebec protested to Ottawa about these changes, but the federal government refused to interfere.⁵⁸ Even though the ordinance reserved one half hour at the end of the school day for religious education, the board of education set the curriculum and the standards which were uniform throughout the system for public and separate schools. The candidates did not debate the “schools question” in the 1904 election campaign. Both parties wanted to avoid the resulting clash if the subject came up. Only the Toronto News raised the issue but this was not enough to inflame a wider debate.

Once the autonomy bills came before the House of Commons on February 21, 1905, the members could not avoid the separate school issue any longer. Scott was quick

⁵⁷ Lingard, 157.

⁵⁸ Sissons, 256 & 257.

to state his position: "It is my intention to support a continued guarantee of exactly the same force as has existed in the NWT constitution since 1875."⁵⁹ These words are remarkably similar to Laurier's words when he spoke in the House of Commons at second reading of the Bill. It was not clear what these words meant. Did that mean the system of separate administrations for the two school systems as existed in 1875 or the combined system established by the Territorial Assembly by way of Ordinance in 1901? Scott supported the separate schools as they existed: "I shall support precisely the guarantee now possessed by minorities and no more."⁶⁰ If that meant, "as existed" in 1901 or 1905, why then did he specifically refer to the date 1875, a date before the Territorial amendments? He was somewhat more specific in a letter to J. G. Black when he wrote on February 27, 1905: "We can stand for separate schools as we have them under strict public control but we cannot stand for a separate system of schools as exist in Ontario and such as existed in Manitoba until 1890."⁶¹

Scott followed a thin line in the school clauses debate. He described himself as a "violent" opponent of private schools, yet favoured the protection of the rights of minorities. The final version of the Bills satisfied Scott's distinction between the rights of the minorities and a full public school system.⁶² The Liberal Party faced a tough dilemma over the school clauses. Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867

⁵⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to T. J. Ashley, Maple Creek, NWT, 5064.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5065.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. G. Black, 72957.

⁶² *Ibid.*, House of Commons Debates, March 31, 1905, 85894.

specified that each provincial legislature “may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education,” subject to certain conditions.⁶³ One of the conditions was that a province could not pass a law which would “prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union.”

In line with the Edward Blake and Oliver Mowat tradition, the Liberals were the defenders of provincial rights but in like manner believed in the individual rights of the minorities to have their own “denominational schools.”⁶⁴ They had taken pride in opposing the Conservative stance of forging a strong centralized government for Canada. Nevertheless, in 1905, Laurier’s autonomy Bills safe guarded the rights of Roman Catholics to have separate schools supported by public taxation as had been defined by law in 1875. Those who opposed Laurier’s Bill wanted no special protection of minority rights enshrined in the constitution of the new provinces. Others would accept only recognition of the diminution of minority rights as had evolved between 1875 and 1904. The Liberals ultimately favoured the continuation of the school system that had existed just prior to the formation of the two new provinces in 1905. The citizens of Ontario and Quebec, the battle ground for ultraprotestants and the Roman Catholics, debated the school question more than the people in western Canada.

The issue of separate schools was important for the Liberals because they relied on Roman Catholic support both in Quebec and in the territories. Historian Manoly

⁶³ Statutes of the United Kingdom, 30-31 Victoria, Chapter 3.

⁶⁴ Frank H. Underhill, “Edward Blake.” Our Living Tradition: Seven Canadians. Edited by Claude T. Bissell. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 23.

Lupul wrote much later that Laurier had promised Monseigneur Sbarretti, the Papal Delegate of the Catholic Church, that if he did not raise the separate school issue in the 1904 election, Laurier would be inclined to grant greater religious freedom in the school system in the new provinces that were about to be created.⁶⁵ The negotiations behind the scenes regarding the school clauses in the autonomy bills were complex but the Liberals were determined to avoid another Manitoba schools crisis. On January 14, 1905, Wilfrid Laurier invited Jim Ross and Walter Scott to his office to discuss provisions of the autonomy bills. The Prime Minister sought the advice of two prominent Liberal members from the territories. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, having seen an early draft of the Bills, left for the southern United States, content that the Bills met with his approval. Laurier had not mentioned the school clauses before Sifton left.

On January 14, 1905, Scott wrote that he was not sure about some of the provisions in the bills: "I have had very little chance to talk to other Ministers about Autonomy." Yet Scott doubted that anything would proceed until Sifton's return.⁶⁶ Both Scott and Sifton were in the dark as to the actual provisions of the Bills. They did not become aware of these details until Prime Minister Laurier introduced the Bills in the House of Commons. It became apparent that Sbarretti and Charles Fitzpatrick, Minister of Justice, both Roman Catholics, had been involved in drafting the school clauses of the

⁶⁵ Manoly Lupul, The Roman Catholic Church and the North-West School Question: a Study in Church-State relations in Western Canada, 1875-1905, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 168.

⁶⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to John Hawkes, Whitewood, NWT, January 14, 1905, 5783.

bill.⁶⁷ When word reached Sifton that the Bills had been introduced, he returned to Ottawa. Scott believed that the bills were satisfactory until Sifton returned home and raised the alarm. "Until the row started we were not aware of any distinction and were ready to accept Section 14 [*sic* 16]. Sifton thinks there is a distinction."⁶⁸

The debate centred on section 16(2) which read as follows:

Subject to the provisions of the said section 93, and in continuance of the principles heretofore [*sic*] sanctioned under the North-West Territories Act, it is enacted that the Legislature of the said Province shall pass all necessary laws in respect of education and that it shall therein always be provided (a) that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the said Province or of any less portion or subdivision thereof by whatever name it is known may establish such schools therein as they think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor, and (b) that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish separate schools therein, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor, and (c) that in such case the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools shall be liable only to assessment of such rates as they impose upon themselves with respect thereto.⁶⁹

This subsection reversed the Territorial ordinances and returned school law in the West to the 1875 provisions.

When Laurier refused to back down from his position, Sifton resigned from cabinet on February 27. Even though Laurier had stated in the House of Commons that the Bills maintained the existing school situation, Sifton argued that the Bills pushed the

⁶⁷ Sissons, 262.

⁶⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. G. Black, Regina, March 10, 1905, 5126. In the original bill, section 16 treated the North West Territories as being part of the union in 1867 which in effect gave protection to separate schools. This section was renumbered to section 17 in the bill that passed.

⁶⁹ Sissons, 264.

school situation in the North -West back to 1875, thus giving more independence and control to the minorities, particularly the Roman Catholics. Sifton wanted a national school system without separate schools at all, and thus, was not prepared to accept Laurier's proposed bills. Scott argued, "We have separate schools but not a separate system, which makes all the difference in the world."⁷⁰ On March 10, Scott wrote to a supporter that the Liberals and, in fact, all Canadians were a mixed family. The only way to keep peace was to leave the school system as it was in 1905, thus avoiding private religious schools.⁷¹

Sifton had experience in controversial separate school debates. He became Attorney General in the Greenway government of Manitoba in 1891, one year after the provincial legislature passed the controversial amendments to the School Act. As Attorney General, Sifton led the government's defence of its school legislation in the courts and became a firm supporter of a national school system.⁷²

The Liberals, rather than having a noncontroversial debate over autonomy, were divided on religious grounds with one cabinet minister out of cabinet and another, W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance, threatening to go as well. Scott did not believe that Laurier was involved in any backroom dealing with the Catholic Church. "Had the Education clause been what we were promised,-- and I think Laurier fully believed that nothing more was meant or guaranteed by Section 16 of the Bills,-- there would have

⁷⁰ *SAB*, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. G. Black, Regina, March 10, 1905, 5127.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. V. Boyd, Sherwood, March 10, 1905, 5156.

⁷² *Sissons*, 181.

been no Sifton resignation and I am sure there would have been not a murmur from the North-West.”⁷³ Scott called the wording of the education clauses “unfortunate” and believed that the whole situation could have been avoided except for “unpardonable stupidity or unpardonable selfishness.”⁷⁴ Scott blamed two Roman Catholic members, Charles Fitzpatrick, and Senator J. W. Scott for the entire political mess. “There has been a very direct and distinct conflict between what Fitzpatrick wanted [*sic*] and what we were willing to grant.”⁷⁵ Scott was disheartened by the whole situation: “the confidence which it took a lifetime for Laurier to win in the English Provinces has been destroyed, or at least dangerously weakened, in a week.”⁷⁶

Sifton agreed to work with several members to draft an amendment that would satisfy him and his supporters. Rather than pushing the rights of separate school supporters back to 1875, the compromise was to set the rights as had been established by territorial ordinance in 1901. This compromise was enshrined in the Autonomy Bills, but Sifton did not return to cabinet. There is dispute amongst historians as to whether Sifton received an invitation to return to cabinet but the fact remains that Sifton served the remainder of his parliamentary career as a private member. Scott believed that Sifton’s resignation had not been absolutely necessary, but perhaps Sifton was tired of cabinet

⁷³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to G. Spring Rice, Pense, NWT, March 6, 1905, 6741.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to H. W. Laird, Mayor of Regina, March 11, 1905, 6018 and to G. W. Brown, Regina, March 2, 1905, 5224.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. G. Black, Regina, March 10, 1905, 5126.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. F. Kerr, manager of the Regina Leader, March 5, 1905, 5964.

and ready to resign. The school clauses were the issues that he could use to resign while bringing about a policy change on a subject for which he had strong feelings.⁷⁷

Even though the parliamentarians compromised on the school question, Scott still had one other unresolved point, the railways. From the time of being first elected Member of the House of Commons, Scott spoke out against any further government land grants to the railways.⁷⁸ “Generosity to the railway companies, generosity to Ontario, to British Columbia, to Manitoba, if you like; our lands were taken to build roads in all of these provinces, our lands were taken to make these railway corporations rich.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, he wrote to W. M. Martin, Member of the House of Commons, “An enormous area of Western prairie lands was alienated for the general benefit of Canada.”⁸⁰ Scott urged the government not to make any additional grants to railways unless the government was prepared to set a maximum rate on the freight rates to prevent “gouging.”⁸¹ In Scott’s eyes, the railways had made excessive profits on the backs of the prairie provinces and resented the impression left by the railways that they ran the country.

As an indication that Scott was in step with the Laurier government, no further tax exempt land was granted after 1896. Scott had used his influence to gain a

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. K. McInnis, March 14, 1905, 46623.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. G. Calder, Medicine Hat, May 15, 1902, 704.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, House of Commons Debates, March 31, 1905, 85809.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. M. Martin, December 24, 1913, 42189.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, June, 1903, 2057-2062.

compensation package for the territorial government in lieu of the tax on railway land. When the Autonomy Bills were before Parliament, Scott proposed, at the committee stage, an amendment to eliminate the tax exemption on railway lands vowing to resign if the amendment did not pass. The committee defeated the amendment and Scott, good to his word, submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister on May 16, 1905.⁸² The Prime Minister persuaded Scott to withhold his resignation, but Scott resigned again after the defeat of his amendment at the third reading stage. Again his resignation was held in abeyance.⁸³

One of the first decisions to be made for the new province was the location for the seat of government. In 1883, the federal government moved the capital of the NWT from Battleford to Regina to be on the main line of the CPR. It seemed logical to many that the capital would remain in Regina with the formation of the province. However, there were other centres in Saskatchewan which dreamed of becoming the capital city. The Saskatchewan Act, as passed by the Parliament of Canada, named Regina as the provisional capital subject to final decision by the province's Legislative Assembly. In his speech on moving the Bill in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Laurier stated that there was some doubt as to where the capital of Alberta would be either Edmonton or Calgary. Edmonton became the provisional capital subject to ratification. In the case of Saskatchewan, Laurier believed that Regina was the obvious choice but left the final

⁸² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, May 16, 1905, 6043 & 6044.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, July 6, 1905, 6058 & 6059.

decision to the province.⁸⁴

Even before the introduction in parliament of the autonomy legislation, Scott wrote to a constituent that he had no doubt about the capital question: "I do not think there is much doubt now about Regina being the permanent capital."⁸⁵ He confirmed this view in a letter to James Balfour, a prominent lawyer in Regina, but urged Reginans not to become too vocal or boastful about gaining the capital city status.⁸⁶ The Canadian parliament had established the electoral boundaries for the first election which weighted the seats in favour of the northern half of the province. The northern seats contained approximately two thirds of the number of voters compared to the constituencies south of the CPR main line. As a result, fewer voters were required in the northern ridings to elect a member to the Legislative Assembly.⁸⁷ Officially, the reason given for this imbalance was that the northern seats were growing faster than those in the south. The inequity would be temporary.⁸⁸ The Liberals knew that new immigrants settling in the northern section were more likely to support the Liberal Party than the more established settlers along the CPR line who tended to vote Conservative. The Liberals wanted the

⁸⁴ J. E. Murray, "The Provincial Capital Controversy in Saskatchewan." Saskatchewan History 5, no. 3 (1952): 81 & 82.

⁸⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Jim Wessels, Regina, January 30, 1905, 6948.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to James Balfour, January 21, 1905, 5080.

⁸⁷ David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-1971, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975). 22. The northern seats averaged approximately 635 voters compared to an average of 1,245 voters in southern ridings.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

boundaries to give them the edge in the first election even though the population did not support such a distribution. In the end, the North received nine seats and the South sixteen.⁸⁹ If the southern Saskatchewan members, once elected, voted on the choice of capital, it seemed obvious that they would vote for a southern rather than a central or northern centre. The Liberals wanted to have enough seats in the North to aid them in winning the election, but enough support in the South to have the capital stay in Regina. It was a delicate balancing act. By July 1905, Scott was anxious that Reginans not arouse jealousies in other competing sites: “The time for the Regina people to act will be when the first Legislature is in session and it seems to me that the worst possible thing the Regina people can do just now is to indulge in talk based on the idea that we have a patent right on the capital.”⁹⁰ If Scott was concerned about a centre other than Regina being chosen, he did not express it. He was confident that the capital city would stay right where it was.⁹¹

On July 6, when Scott met Laurier in his office, Laurier knew that the Saskatchewan provincial Liberals had decided to field candidates in the first election and that he needed a strong person to carry the Liberal flag in that fledgling province. There is no record of what was said at the meeting, but it became known that Scott left his resignation in abeyance after the defeat of the railway tax exemption amendments and he continued sitting as a Member of the House of Commons. It seems clear that

⁸⁹ Murray, *Capital*, 84 & 87.

⁹⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. M. Young, Scott's brother in law, July 14, 1905, 7080.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 7081.

Laurier asked Scott not to resign and embarrass the government. They just had Sifton's resignation and a split in the ranks. Laurier must have asked Scott to let his name stand as Liberal leader in the new province, Saskatchewan.

What was Scott's relationship with Laurier? Scott was not a "pushover" in caucus or in the House of Commons. He was a loyal Liberal but he also defended his principles to the point of standing up to the Prime Minister on the school clauses and the railway tax exemption provisions in the Autonomy Bills. However, it does not seem as if Scott was on the fringe of the party. Laurier consulted Scott from time to time to seek his opinion.⁹² Scott was not a party rebel. In order to remain credible in his constituency, he had to represent western interests. Even though Scott defended territorial concerns, he accepted compromise and won federal compensation for CPR tax exempt land. Scott also won on the establishment of the school system as it existed in 1905. He balanced territorial interests with federal Liberal policy. The compromise permitted him to stay in the party and to remain popular with his electors.

On the other hand, Laurier did not choose Scott as the new Minister of the Interior when Sifton resigned. Perhaps Laurier could not replace Sifton with Scott who had worked closely with the Minister of the Interior. Was Scott considered for the cabinet post? To P. M. Bredt of Regina, Scott hinted that he was supporting Greenway, or Oliver, or Turriff, for the post of Minister of the Interior rather than taking on this responsibility himself.⁹³ He revealed: "I am perhaps myself to some extent responsible

⁹² *Ibid.*, Wilfrid Laurier to W. S., January 14, 1905, 6028.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to P. M. Bredt, Regina, March 17, 1905, 5173.

for the selection [of Oliver].”⁹⁴ Yet Scott confided to G. W. Brown: “I have no intimation as to Laurier’s intention but of course will not be greatly surprised to be sent for myself.”⁹⁵ Even though he did not want to admit it, Scott was secretly hoping that he would get the call to enter the Laurier cabinet but this call did not come. To his half brother John, Walter admitted, “I am not looking for it [the cabinet post]. I see very clearly that there is more work and worry than compensation or satisfaction in such a position, but of course some victim will have to be found and I would not say absolutely that I would refuse it under certain conditions.”⁹⁶ Had Scott gone into cabinet, the necessary by-election, in Scott’s estimation, would have been an easy victory for him but such was not to be.⁹⁷ Scott claimed that he had no regrets in not being chosen for cabinet. Laurier’s biographer and friend, O. D. Skelton, described Walter Scott as having “much promise” and that Laurier held him in warm affection.⁹⁸ From all outward appearances, Scott and Laurier had a close working relationship even though they disagreed on several key policies. In the end, they were able to find compromise they both could live with. This friendship would last their lifetimes.

When was Scott first approached about becoming Liberal leader? On November 13, 1904, Scott wrote to the Liberal secretary in Moose Jaw, W. E. Seaborn,

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Clarence E. P. Brooks, Birch Hills, NWT, April 10, 1905, 5204.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. W. Brown, Regina, March 2, 1905, 5225.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to John A. McDonald, March 15, 1905, 6168.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. Spring Rice, Pense, May 3, 1905, 6743.

⁹⁸ O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Vol. II, (New York: The Century Company, 1922), 243.

acknowledging that he (Scott) had been approached to run for leader. Scott felt that G. H. V. Bulyea would be the strongest candidate for the job.⁹⁹ Scott admitted that Bulyea was not “spectacular” but was “straight and sound.” By February 1905, Scott was still considering the Liberal leadership. He wrote that he doubted his own capacity to do the job. With all the work and worries involved, why would a person seek to become premier?¹⁰⁰ By August 18, 1905, after the Saskatchewan Liberal convention that chose Scott as leader, he wrote to a colleague that he would find it hard to leave Ottawa but “the finger of duty seemed to point very clearly in the local direction.”¹⁰¹

Why did Laurier choose Scott? On June 30, Scott wrote that the “Chief” [Laurier] still favoured Haultain but that Laurier was meeting opposition from some of his own supporters.¹⁰² The concern was that Haultain appeared, to many Liberals, as a Conservative. Haultain had to decide in which province to seek election. His territorial constituency of Macleod, where he had his own electoral base, was in the new province of Alberta, yet his residence and law practice were in Regina. Haultain finally chose to maintain his roots in Regina and sought election in Saskatchewan. This meant that the Liberals had to choose someone who could compete against him. Some Liberal insiders considered Calder for leader, but George Brown for one, doubted that Calder could beat

⁹⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. E. Seaborn, Moose Jaw, November 13, 1904, 4587.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wm. H. Alexander, Woolchester, NWT, February 2, 1905, 5052.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to H. C. Stobel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 18, 1905, 6772.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. H. V. Bulyea, June 30, 1905, 5327.

Haultain.¹⁰³ Calder was a great detail person but lacked the public flourish to capture the imaginations of the people. By June 1905, Scott seemed assured of taking on the leadership of the provincial Liberal party. Yet he had to reassure his local colleagues that he had not campaigned for the position: “The truth is that I had absolutely no idea in the world of going into local politics.”¹⁰⁴ Scott had experience and leadership qualities that Brown admired. And so Brown urged Scott to give Ottawa up because there were not many opportunities for him there. If Scott were to become leader, he could always return to federal politics at a later time.¹⁰⁵ Scott replied that even if he was asked to be leader, he was not sure he would accept the invitation.¹⁰⁶

Liberals considered Bulyea for the leader’s post. Scott believed that Bulyea could do a good job, and he had been so faithful to the Liberal Party during the difficult nonpartisan years in the Territorial Legislative Assembly. Scott had doubts though about Bulyea’s ability to rally the people of Saskatchewan to defeat Haultain.¹⁰⁷ Haultain was clearly the competition. A sound, energetic and popular leader had to be found to defeat Haultain.

Scott had to be careful how he managed the convention and his leadership bid. Five days before the convention, he wrote: “It seems to be much better that no statement

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, George Brown to W. S., June 28, 1905, 5238.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to James A. Calder, June 17, 1905, 5367.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5244.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to George Brown, July 4, 1905, 5249.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. W. Dafoe, 5520.

on the subject [of leadership of the party] should emanate from myself.”¹⁰⁸ The background work would have to come from others. Within a week of the convention, Scott began to show some optimism that the leader’s post was his. He wrote: “I am sorry to have to say that it begins to look as if I might be obliged to leave Ottawa for a time at least.”¹⁰⁹ Scott kept denying that he was a possible candidate for the position but did nothing to stop others who were promoting his leadership. Scott knew that he lacked the education that Haultain and others had, but he was honoured to be considered by his party.

Scott had shown leadership and initiative. He could be stubborn on principle, but being located as far away as Regina, what harm could Scott create for the Prime Minister? After all, Laurier and Scott had patched up their differences over the railway tax exemptions.¹¹⁰ There is no absolute record that Laurier invited Scott to be Liberal leader on July 6 but the timing seems correct. Scott had been disappointed when Laurier had not invited him into cabinet after Sifton resigned. Maybe this invitation to be Liberal leader was too good to pass up. He could always return to Ottawa and federal politics at some time in the future when he tired of the local scene. The lure of a fresh new beginning in the land of the big sky was too much to resist. Scott decided to take on the challenge. On August 5, eleven days before the convention, Scott wrote to Laurier: “From what I have been able to learn since arriving here [Regina], I fancy that the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Andrew Stewart, Prince Albert, August 11, 1905, unnumbered page following 6752.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to F. H. Paget, Ottawa, August 9, 1905, 6388.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, July 17, 1905, 6064.

proceedings may result in harmony with the suggestions which were discussed with you a couple of weeks ago.”¹¹¹ The suggestions must have been Laurier’s offer on July 6 to be leader. The wheels were in motion for a successful convention and the beginning of a new chapter in Scott’s political career.

August 1905 was a crucial month for the formation of provincial political parties in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The provincial Liberals held their conventions in Alberta (August 3, 1905) and Saskatchewan (August 6, 1905). The Liberals at both conventions “declared their determination to contest the provincial elections on federal party lines.”¹¹² The Liberals claimed that this step was in response to the provincial Conservatives’ decision in Moose Jaw in 1903 to organize along party lines and accused the Conservatives of being the first to practice partisan politics.

The provincial Conservatives held conventions in Alberta (August 16, 1905) and Saskatchewan (August 25, 1905). The Alberta Conservatives declared their intention to follow the Liberal lead and to run Conservative candidates in the next provincial election.¹¹³ At the Saskatchewan Conservative convention, Haultain declared his support for nonpartisan candidates.

When Scott entered the House of Commons in 1900, he had been shy and reluctant to enter debate, but by the end of nearly five years, he had become more comfortable in parliamentary debate. He had been a representative of the southern and

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, August 5, 1905, 6073 & 6074.

¹¹² Lingard, 241.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 242.

western segment of the new province and was well known, certainly in Liberal circles. Scott had proven that he was sound in judgement, able to raise points of principle but willing to accept compromise and party policies. Judging by the reception he received when he attended the Liberal convention which met in Regina on August 16, 1905, he was a popular leader. It was a crowd of 300 enthusiastic Liberals, ready to choose a leader and, in all probability, the first Premier of Saskatchewan.¹¹⁴ There was only one nomination for leader, Walter Scott. The motion to name him leader was unanimous and greeted by a round of cheers and applause. The Regina Leader, a paper known for its support for the Liberal party, and still owned by Scott, reported enthusiastically: "Round after round of cheers, accompanied by the waving of hats, prevented Mr. Scott from speaking for some little time, and his first attempt at utterance only provoked another round of cheers."¹¹⁵ The farm boy from Strathroy had arrived. The people wanted to be led into a new tomorrow. Scott promised the cheering crowd: "we shall present to them, good government, clean government, honest government, and, so far as I have the energy and ability for it, progressive government shall be given the people of this province."¹¹⁶

Scott later indicated to a colleague that he had been approached by many within the party including the Prime Minister to be the leader and when the convention was unanimous in choosing him, he could not refuse. People would have thought him lazy if

¹¹⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. D. Grieve, Kertch, Ontario, August 21, 1905, 5736.

¹¹⁵ Regina Leader, August 23, 1905, 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

he had refused at that point.¹¹⁷ It was true that many had encouraged Scott to run for the leader's post and he had decided at least a month before the convention that he wanted the job. Scott carefully did not let on that he was campaigning for it. Instead, he was in a better position to lead if it looked as if he had been persuaded by the cheering throng to take on the challenge. He was leading because they had asked him to lead. In his correspondence, he was quick to point out that there were many responsibilities in being provincial leader but with "the assistance of the energetic aid of all the good friends throughout the Province", victory could be achieved.¹¹⁸

The new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan came into being on September 1, 1905. However, Saskatchewan had to wait until September 4 for the official party of Governor General Grey to arrive in Regina for the inaugural ceremonies when A. E. Forget was sworn in as the Lieutenant Governor. Section 58 of the British North America Act, 1867, empowered the Governor General, on advice of the federal cabinet, to name the Lieutenant Governor.¹¹⁹ A. E. Forget, former Clerk of the Territorial Legislative Assembly and Territorial Lieutenant Governor, became Saskatchewan's first representative of the Crown and of the federal government. Under the authority of sections 8 and 10 of the Saskatchewan Act, Forget had the responsibility to choose an interim Premier who would form a government and recommend the date for the first

¹¹⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to F. L. Dunbar, October 16, 1905, 37838.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to R. F. Fraser, Earl Grey, NWT, August 23, 1905, 5663.

¹¹⁹ Statutes of the United Kingdom, 30-31 Victoria, Chapter 3.

provincial election.¹²⁰ The Canadian Parliament had established the provincial electoral boundaries, subject to alteration in subsequent years by the provincial Legislative Assembly.

Preceding the selection of the first premier, there had been much speculation.¹²¹ One school of thought argued that the Lieutenant Governor was a nonpartisan position and was there to represent the sovereign. Since Frederick Haultain had been the government leader in the North-West Territories and a popular figure, he should be chosen premier.

The other school of thought contended that the Liberal leader was the obvious choice because the Lieutenant Governor was the servant of the federal government. Like Haultain, Scott had parliamentary experience. Wanting to maintain his image of not interfering with provincial matters, Prime Minister Laurier stated that it was up to the Lieutenant Governor to choose a desirable candidate to be Premier.¹²² On the day following the inaugural ceremony, Forget called on Thomas Walter Scott to form the first provincial government. Forget later argued that he had chosen the leader of the party that had a majority of members sitting in the former Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories.¹²³ However, it is also clear that Scott was Laurier's choice. Haultain would have to wait for the first election to offer himself to the people and win

¹²⁰ Statutes of Canada, 1905, Chapter 42.

¹²¹ John Tupper Saywell, "Liberal Politics, Federal Politics, and the Lieutenant Governor: Saskatchewan and Alberta 1905." Saskatchewan History, 8, no. 3 (1955): 83.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 86.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 88.

the premier's chair.

The feeling of support for Scott as Liberal leader and premier was obviously not unanimous in the country. In an editorial in the Tribune of Winnipeg, Haultain was portrayed as the "victim of a Quebec conspiracy."¹²⁴ With a French-Canadian Prime Minister and a French-Canadian Lieutenant Governor, the editorial writer proclaimed that Scott was the product of a Quebec conspiracy. Even though Scott was not Roman Catholic, with a conspiracy like this, critics alleged that it was obvious that he would be sympathetic to the Catholic cause in the West.

It was not only the Conservative press that had some doubts about Scott's taking on the leadership. There is no evidence to show that Jessie Scott actively participated in political rallies or in fact, the leadership convention. Scott wrote to a colleague that Mrs Scott believed that in an election one should envy the defeated candidate and his wife.¹²⁵ Jessie Scott had had a tough adjustment to living in Ottawa with all of the travelling back and forth to Regina. Now she was faced with the beginning of an entirely new political career for her husband. She avoided the press and did not want to have articles written about her.¹²⁶ Whether she was content in the shadows seems doubtful but she did not complain. Her preference was likely for her husband to return to the newspaper business and to leave politics, but such was not the case. The people of Saskatchewan had issued the call and Scott had risen to meet the challenge. There was an advantage for

¹²⁴ The Winnipeg Tribune, August 18, 1905, 4.

¹²⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to F. C. Tate, Wascana, December 20, 1905, 38003.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs. Hayes, Montreal, April 1, 1905, 5831.

the Scotts, however, now that their adopted daughter, Dorothy was in school. Living in Regina would mean less travel.¹²⁷

The debate over the Lieutenant Governor's choice of premier continued through the election campaign in December, 1905. Regardless of whether it was the proper role for the Queen's representative to choose a Liberal as premier, the fact is that the federal Liberals would have been foolish to choose a Conservative as the first premier. Even though Laurier initially supported Haultain, he had alienated the Prime Minister over the decisions of one-versus-two provinces, the school question and the allocation of Crown Lands. When Haultain openly campaigned for the Conservatives in two by-elections in Ontario in 1905, it was clear to the Liberals that Haultain, for all his nonpartisan talk, was a Conservative.

The federal Liberals believed that it was vital to have control of patronage for the first election. To have given Haultain the premiership would have been like giving him the keys to the store. Even though by law, an election was to be called within six months, no chances could be taken. Laurier chose the Liberal he felt would defeat Frederick Haultain, Walter Scott.

Scott had matured since he entered Parliament in 1900. He had learned the key elements of survival in politics. Even though he did not have the formal schooling that many of his peers had, he could think and speak while he was on his feet and he had

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs. Hamilton, Moose Jaw, January 23, 1906, 7178. Jessie and Walter Scott adopted Dorothy Louise Read, Jessie's niece, when she was a child. She was born in 1897 but Walter Scott's files do not mention Dorothy's background. Her parentage or the reasons she was up for adoption were a well kept secret. Dorothy travelled extensively with her parents and became an integral part of their family.

accurate political instincts. From his apprenticeship in Ottawa, he had learned the art of delay. He favoured delaying provincehood for Alberta and Saskatchewan until the people in the North West Territories were ready for it. Scott learned to act on principle only if there was sure public support. He would use this lesson in his premiership over liquor legislation and female suffrage. Radical new policies should be initiated only when the people were ready.

The third lesson for Scott in his apprenticeship was the art of compromise. He wanted to abolish or cancel the CPR's land tax exemption, but when he learned that there were serious political and legal obstacles, he accepted the federal offer of financial compensation. Similarly, he believed the province should be given control of crown lands but accepted increased federal financial payments in lieu of provincial control. And on the school question, he accepted the compromise clauses as drafted by Clifford Sifton. In each case, Scott's preferred policy was abandoned or modified. He strongly defended what he thought were the best interests of the province, but was willing to make concessions in return for improved financial compensation to be paid by the federal government to the province. That made it possible for Scott to remain in the Liberal Party and retain the friendship and confidence of the Prime Minister and other federal Liberals while, at the same time, obtaining the best possible financial terms for the province. Continuing confidence and support of federal Liberals helped him establish a solid power base in the province.

Chapter 4 The First Four Months (September - December 1905)

In the four months after Scott became premier, he had much to do to organize the province for a general election. The autonomy acts divided a portion of the old NWT into two new provinces and the division of the two provinces was smooth. The governmental infrastructure stayed in Regina but two deputy commissioners and one commissioner moved to Alberta to establish that province's new government.¹ Scott's first task was to continue the established territorial government and mould it for the new province of Saskatchewan.

The Legislative Assembly, the Cabinet, and the public service met and worked in two territorial buildings on Dewdney Avenue near the NWMP barracks, adequate buildings for the time. All territorial sessional papers and official documents remained in Regina. The government in Alberta, in contrast, faced the task of starting from the beginning.

The first task for the new premier in September 1905 was to pick a strong and representative cabinet that would carry the party through the first election. Jim Calder was one of the first candidates on Scott's list. Even though Calder had been the Deputy Commissioner of Education in Haultain's administration, he and Scott had known each

¹ G. H. V. Bulyea was the commissioner who became the LG of Alberta. The two deputy commissioners who moved to the new Alberta public service were D. S. MacKenzie and John Stocks.

other since the federal election of 1900. In 1905, Calder resigned his post in the education department in order to practice law in Regina. Shortly thereafter, Scott invited Calder to his office with the offer of a cabinet post. After several meetings and some persuasion, Calder finally agreed. He later reminisced that it was “a decision that profoundly affected all my future activities.”² Calder would go on to be one of Scott’s strongest and most loyal cabinet ministers. He served as acting premier during Scott’s many absences. Calder was, during his political career in Saskatchewan, Minister of Education, Highways, Railways, Telephones and Provincial Treasurer.³

The other cornerstone of the Scott cabinet was W. R. Motherwell, one of the founders of the Territorial Grain Growers Association.⁴ Motherwell was a farmer near Abernathy and an influential leader in the farm community. Scott showed skill in attracting farm leaders to serve in his government, which allowed the farmers to be central to government policy in the province and also kept the Liberal Party in power in Saskatchewan. Motherwell became the Minister of Agriculture and was the first of many farm leaders to be invited into cabinet.

John Lamont, as Attorney General, was the fourth member of the Scott cabinet. Lamont originally joined Scott as a fellow member of the House of Commons for the constituency of Saskatchewan, NWT in November 1904. As a graduate from Osgoode

² SAB, Calder Papers, Calder’s hand written autobiography entitled “Reminiscences, 1944,” 9781.

³ “Reminiscences of the Hon. J. A. Calder,” edited by Allan R. Turner. *Saskatchewan History* 25, no. 2 (1972): 63.

⁴ James William Brennan, “A Political History of Saskatchewan, 1905-1929,” an unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, fall 1976, 25.

Hall, Lamont practised law in Prince Albert before entering politics. Obviously the professional and personal relationship between Lamont and Scott was positive because they left federal politics together in September 1905 to form the first Saskatchewan cabinet. With the four ministers in place, the Scott government was ready to set policy that would attract a power base of popular support for the forthcoming election, and hopefully beyond.

Scott took the territorial governmental structure and ran it in a prudent and scandal-free manner. He had a short period of time to prove to the citizens of Saskatchewan that he was an effective administrator. It will be shown that careful administration, rather than a patronage spree, gave Scott credibility in the first general election.

If Scott ran a scandal-free government as a way of proving to Saskatchewan citizens that he deserved to be elected, what role did patronage play in his administration? Columnist Jeffrey Simpson, in Spoils of Power, called patronage the “pornography of politics,” arguing though that even if patronage has become less accepted by the people at the end of the twentieth century, at the beginning of this century patronage was the glue that held new political parties together.⁵ Doug Bocking asserted that patronage was the key factor in the Liberal election victory in 1905.⁶ Historian Lewis H. Thomas agreed with Bocking that Scott held power due to federal as

⁵ Jeffrey Simpson, Spoils of Power: The Politics of Patronage, (Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1988), 6.

⁶ D. H. Bocking, “Saskatchewan’s First Provincial Election,” Saskatchewan History 17, no. 2 (1964): 44.

well as provincial patronage.⁷ Political scientist David Smith called the Scott-Calder administration a “well oiled machine.”⁸

If this is true, when did Scott establish this machine? Did he use his powers as premier during the four months between his appointment and the first election to reshape government, and to put in place a Liberal public service? Bocking, Thomas and Smith argued that the Scott government was elected on December 13, 1905 because they had control of both federal and provincial Liberal administrations and, with this, patronage. The four months before the election represented an opportunity to rid the public service of “Haultain men” and to replace them with Liberal supporters. Patronage, used wisely, strengthened the Liberals for their first encounter with the Saskatchewan electorate.

Documentary evidence shows, however, that Walter Scott and his government did not use this four-month period of time to reshape government. Compared to Haultain’s cabinet of three commissioners Scott’s had four. It appears that toward the end of the territorial administration, Haultain carried an extra heavy load anticipating the reorganization of the cabinet at the formation of the province. Prior to August 31, 1905, he was Premier and President of the Executive Council, Commissioner of Finance, Education and the Attorney General. His two cabinet colleagues were G. H. V. Bulyea and William Elliott. On September 1, 1905, Bulyea was named Alberta Lieutenant Governor while Elliott was elected in December, 1905 as a Provincial Rights Member of

⁷ Lewis H. Thomas, “The Political and Private Life of F. W. G. Haultain,” Saskatchewan History 23, no. 2 (1970): 55.

⁸ David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-71, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 25.

the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. Scott chose none of the Haultain cabinet for his own government.

When the Scott cabinet was sworn in on September 12, 1905, Scott became Premier, President of the Executive Council and Commissioner of Public Works. He spread the remaining workload amongst three other Commissioners. Even though there was one more commissioner in the Scott cabinet than in Haultain's, the portfolios stayed the same. Clearly Scott found the territorial pattern to be acceptable and made no move to change it.

Scott's cabinet, throughout his term as premier, remained approximately the same size and shape. There were several cabinet shuffles to accommodate transfers. For example, W. F. A. Turgeon replaced John Lamont as Attorney General in September 1907 when Lamont was appointed to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. Turgeon, a former law partner with Lamont, was elected to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly in a bye-election in Prince Albert City on October 12, 1907 and was re-elected in the constituency of Duck Lake in 1908. Lamont and Turgeon were active in partisan political activity but in subsequent appointments to the bench were expected to be nonpartisan. During his premiership, Scott added only three portfolios to cabinet: Railways (September, 1906); Municipal Affairs (December, 1909); and Telephones (January, 1913). Scott viewed the form of the territorial cabinet as a stable model to follow.

Premier Scott's apparent reluctance to bring major change applied to the senior public service as well. Of the six deputy commissioners under the Haultain

administration, four continued under Scott. Scott replaced two deputy commissioners because the former deputies moved to Edmonton to work for the new Alberta government. Scott wrote to Spencer Page of Wapella: “We have made no change in the Departmental heads and deputies excepting the two cases where the former deputies went to Edmonton.”⁹ Even deputies in sensitive posts such as finance or the Clerk of the Executive Council remained unchanged. John Reid, the holder of both of these posts under Haultain, had the full confidence of Premier Scott. The deputies remained in their posts for many years after the first election, and it would appear that they eventually left their posts due to retirement. There is no evidence that the Scott administration exercised a clearing of the senior decks upon taking power.

The notices of appointment in the Saskatchewan Gazette, published approximately every two weeks, show that there was no massive turnover in the lower levels of the public service. Until the establishment of a public service commission in 1913, all appointments were made by the cabinet based on nominations from local MLAs.¹⁰ Patronage, at the local levels of the public service, was important to improve the chances for the government and the local members of the Legislature to be reelected. Yet for the period from September 15 to December 15, 1905, there were on average, only thirty-two appointments biweekly to positions such as Justice of the Peace, Issuer of Marriage Licenses, highway inspector, agricultural inspector or issuer of liquor licenses. However, two weeks after the election, on December 30, 1905, there were

⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Spencer Page, Wapella, October 3, 1905, 6387.

¹⁰ Simpson, 259 & 260.

notices for 184 appointments. It does not appear that these appointments during the four month interregnum were motivated by a desire to replace Conservatives with Liberals, but rather most of the appointments were renewals from the territorial days. There were a few vacancies due to resignation or retirement which had to be refilled. During this period, there was on average, one notice biweekly of a retirement or resignation from the public service. There was neither sign of massive resignations or retirements nor was there evidence that the Scott government used this time to get rid of the Conservatives in the public service and replace them with Liberals.¹¹ As will be shown later, Scott made a point of wanting competent individuals appointed and for those public servants to adopt a non-partisan stance when discharging their duties.

What then was Premier Scott's plan with regard to the public service and to patronage in general? Scott was cognizant of the role of patronage. Before becoming Premier, he wrote to a constituent: "it is not in order in places where we have friends in business to throw patronage into the hands of our Political apponents [*sic*]."¹² Notwithstanding his support of the use of patronage, Scott knew that he had to exercise caution as he approached the election, recognizing that some replacements would have to be appointed to fill vacancies caused by transfers to Alberta. He welcomed some partisan help from Alberta such as Mr. Smith, a coal mine inspector who was "an enthusiastic worker in our interests."¹³ On the other hand, Scott, before the 1905

¹¹ Saskatchewan Gazette, August 15- December 30, 1905.

¹² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to James Rae, Medicine Hat, August 9, 1905, 6544.

¹³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. F. Nichol, Coalfields, SK, November 18, 1905, 6277.

election, did not take a partisan stand on appointments. On August 12, 1905, Scott wrote to Clifford Sifton urging the federal government to wait on appointments to the bench until after the provincial election.¹⁴ Scott was content to continue with the status quo:

Regarding the Territorial appointments I may say that these all remain good until action shall have been taken by the new Provincial Government. Until the Government is formed, it is impossible to state exactly what action they will deem it proper to take, but my own view is that the simplest method to follow will be to merely reappoint all the commissioners for taking affidavits for the present at all events.¹⁵

Concerning the renewal of a contract, Scott wrote to Robert Bickerdike, MP: “Until we know definitely whether we are to remain in charge of affairs in Saskatchewan we have decided not to disturb an arrangement which has existed prior to 1st September with one of the other companies.”¹⁶

Appointments were not the only possible areas for patronage. Did the Scott government use its new-found power to build bridges and roads in the province to influence the voter? Even after the first election, Scott wrote that the division of money for bridges should not just be divided up by constituency. He favoured devoting money “for new works in the light of the necessity of the works and the advantages to be brought to the public without particular regard to the location of the works.”¹⁷ As for this allocation of public works funds, Scott relied on the local members, particularly Liberal

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Clifford Sifton, August 12, 1905, 6698.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to James Z. Walters, Winkler, September 11, 1905, 6926.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Robert Bickerdike, Member of the House of Commons, Montreal, November 11, 1905, 5122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. H. Garry, Liberal MLA, Yorkton, February 14, 1906, 52541.

members no doubt, for “guidance and advice,” but was determined “to have our work done on reports made by our own inspectors and engineers and according to a settled line of policy.”¹⁸

From the time of Scott’s appointment as premier until January 1906, administrative affairs were left in abeyance because an election had to be fought. As late as January 6, 1906, Scott wrote that members of the government had not met in Regina and had not been able to “take up the question of the changes or additions in our staff which may be necessary or advisable.”¹⁹

After being premier for over six months, Scott admitted to having been too busy with other things, and thus had not turned his mind to the details of his public works portfolio.²⁰ Not only had Scott been busy, but he was treating his new responsibilities with great caution: “I hardly think it will be wise for the Government to enter upon any radical change of policy in this matter at our first session before we have had time to give it thorough consideration. It will probably be better for us to take a year to form our conclusions as to the directions in which changes ought to be made.”²¹

What had kept Scott so busy that he did not have time initially for administration? He wrote that he had been campaigning nearly continuously for three

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to E. James, Tisdale, December 19, 1906, 52577.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. A. Beddoe, House of Commons, January 6, 1906, 7086.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. T. Bell, Hill Crest, SK, February 20, 1906, 7092.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7093.

years.²² With elections, both federal and provincial, bye-elections, delayed elections, and the autonomy battle, Scott did not have time, according to his correspondence, to turn his mind to the administrative detail of running a government. It was not until June 1906 that he started to feel as if he had time to solve the “practical problems which require to be dealt with in this Province.”²³

One other potential way for Scott and his government to influence the result of an election was to control the preparation of the voters’ lists. However, for the 1905 election, this was not possible. For this first election under territorial legislation, there was no provision for voters’ lists at all.²⁴ Each party ensured that its supporters turned out at the polls and registered votes on a blank ballot. Naturally, both parties accused the other of bringing ineligible voters to the polling stations. The voters, who had been challenged, cast a “reserve ballot” which was investigated and possibly counted later if the result was close. Being in government did not prove to be an advantage in determining who could vote. Even after the election, Scott was in no hurry to reorganize government within the province. In discussing the merits of changing the electoral law, Scott asserted: “At the present time I think there is a general feeling that it will be better for the Province if we can go on for two or three years with the absence of further political turmoil.”²⁵ It was not until the spring of 1908 that the Legislative Assembly

²² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Fred Bowman, Tonopah, Nevada, June 6, 1906, 7098.

²³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. M. Bryce, Yellow Grass, June 1, 1906, 7111.

²⁴ Smith, 42.

²⁵ SAB, Walter Scott papers, W. S. to Chief Justice Howell, Winnipeg, June 1, 1906 or 1907, 7201. Judging by the context of the letter, the date is likely 1907.

passed an Election Act which provided for the appointment of a registrar and deputy registrars who were responsible for the registration of eligible voters. Lists of electors were published and the names could be challenged by the political parties. A court of revision heard challenges to names on the voters' lists. However, the Conservatives complained that Scott called a snap election for August 1908 without leaving enough time under the Election Act to challenge names on the voters' list.

The appointment of Justices of the Peace was an obvious patronage opportunity, but Scott expressed caution about interfering with the perception of neutrality in the court system: "In my opinion nothing is more important than that the public should have confidence that justice shall be meted out with strict impartiality. I have no objection at all against appointing a political opponent as a Justice of the Peace if I am satisfied that he will leave politics aside when sitting on the bench." The same applied to the appointment of a Liberal: "the practice which I think the Government ought to follow in the appointment of Justices of the Peace is to recognize nothing but a man's fitness for the position regardless of his political leanings."²⁶

In considering the reorganization of the courts in Saskatchewan, Scott wrote that the government intended to take at least another year to study the entire question: "This will mean some inconvenience in certain localities, but it seems to me wiser that we shall make sure of our ground so that when we do act the steps will not need to be retraced."²⁷

²⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Malcolm Millar, Tisdale, April 6, 1906, 7292.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to C. R. Trench, Bavelaw, SK, April 17, 1906, 7489.

Rather than rushing to establish a patronage machine during his first four months in office, and before the first provincial election, Walter Scott and his cabinet decided to run a low-key campaign and to continue the system of governmental administration that had been in place under Haultain. No new controversy would be created and they could rely on an experienced public service while the politicians conducted the campaign. From the records, it does not appear that Scott used his first four months in office to build new roads or bridges in an attempt to attract votes. He preferred to rely on the departmental experts to advise the government where these public works should be built. Later, the Scott government did use its powers of patronage and did bring about a reorganization of government. But Scott was determined that, during his first few years in office, he would proceed slowly and cautiously. The detailed organization of campaigns or government was Calder's responsibility. Scott preferred to fight Haultain on the hustings on the broad policy issues. The reputed "well oiled machine" was not built in the first few years of Scott's premiership. This process took many years. With the new province, there were many appointments to be made. Scott insisted that the most capable people should be chosen. Even though service to the Liberal party was not a requirement for an appointment, it often was an asset.

The Scott Government did not initially ignore patronage completely. Sometimes patronage was subtle and sometimes it was not. In June 1905, when a painting contract was tendered, Scott wrote to Fred M. Crapper of Regina giving him dollar figures for his bid with the advice that if he used these figures, "it is probable you may land the

contract.”²⁸ Scott cautioned Crapper though, that this information was confidential and that he should copy the figures into a note book and destroy the letter. Obviously, Scott did not destroy his own copy of the letter.

Patronage did have certain rules, the main practice being to hire locally. If someone came from the East, he would have to work in nongovernmental jobs so as to appear to be local before applying for government jobs.²⁹ Scott expected public servants to stay out of active politics, even if being Liberal was a consideration for the position.³⁰ Several years later he wrote: “It is not in harmony with the proper public policy that members of the civil service should be in positions when they may be advertised as political partizans [sic].”³¹ Scott expected, though, that they would carry out their duties with diligence and loyalty to the principles of Liberalism. Patronage went beyond the provincial government. He wrote Commissioner Perry of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) frequently urging him to give jobs and promotions to certain individuals. Scott even issued a summons to Commissioner Perry to meet in Scott’s office at a particular time and date to discuss certain “personnel issues.”³² Even though Perry and Scott became friends, it was clear that Scott felt it was his mandate to make certain personnel suggestions to the commissioner.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Fred M. Crapper, Regina, June 17, 1905, 5496.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wesley McFarlane, Mount Forest, Ontario, January 14, 1904, 4105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Commissioner Perry, September 29, 1904, 4345.

³¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Harry Willsmer, November 24, 1911, 47490.

³² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Commissioner Perry, December 7, 1904, 4354.

As premier, Scott believed it was his right to exercise the powers of patronage. If he could not, then it was time to resign.³³ He would not be pressured, though, by constituents seeking favours. If people asked for a job with the veiled threat that they would vote for the Conservatives unless they got the job, Scott said this was the “poorest recommendation” they could give themselves.³⁴ It was an offence to offer political support in exchange for a patronage plum.³⁵ There were rules of patronage after all. If an applicant had an “unsuccessful war” with alcohol, even if he was a supporter, Scott would not appoint him. The “enemy” had to be defeated before the appointment.³⁶ To Scott, it was not patronage for patronage’s sake. He made it clear that “to make appointments for purely political ends where there is no public necessity” was not justified.³⁷ With patronage, it was not just political allegiance or service that produced the appointment. The candidate for the position also had to be qualified for the position.³⁸

Throughout the thousands of letters Scott wrote to the people seeking appointments or a railway line or a court house, he was able to maintain his sense of humour. He often saw the negative side of patronage when someone turned against the

³³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. W. Rutan, MP, October 27, 1910, 25680.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. C. Porteous, Carlyle, July 12, 1907, 31082.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to N. A. Rudy, August 17, 1908, 52754.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Rev. R. J. McLean, Landis, June 27, 1910, 26538.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. M. Cryderman, Lang, December 19, 1912, 26908.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to P. M. Bredt, June 13, 1904, 3126.

party because the government had not granted his request. This happened frequently when two towns were competing against each other for a court house to be located in their own town. The fierce battles led Scott to write: "One is almost made to think the better plan would have been to place the Judge at Oxbow where we don't appear to have enough friends to fall out with each other."³⁹

Even though Scott had the image of being a congenial and witty man, from time to time he showed his quick temper and vitriolic tongue. To an opponent, Scott wrote: "You are beneath being even despised. That a thing like you is allowed to breathe the same air as clean people is disgusting."⁴⁰ It is unlikely that this person received any favours from the patronage machine.

For federal appointments, the Members of the House of Commons made recommendations to the Prime Minister, while provincial appointments were made through recommendations from the local MLA.⁴¹ Another consideration for Scott in making appointments was whether there was sufficient money in the budget, money which always seemed to be in short supply: "the coat must be cut according to the cloth."⁴²

During the first four months that Scott was Liberal leader and then premier, he prepared his party and constituents for the upcoming election. On August 21, 1905,

³⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hume Robertson, Carlyle, August 26, 1907, 31141.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Richard Broder, Calgary, December 7, 1904, 3155.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, J. W. McLeod, private secretary to the Premier, to Herbert A. Rayner, File Hills, October 21, 1908, 8486.

⁴² *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. W. Rutan, MP, November 2, 1910, 53352.

Scott sent a “manifesto” to his former constituents in the federal riding of Assiniboia West giving his reasons for leaving federal politics and outlining the Liberal platform for the pending provincial election.⁴³ One month later, Scott sent another manifesto to the citizens in the new provincial riding of Lumsden, the constituency that he intended to contest in the first provincial election. Then in October, Premier Scott embarked on a whirlwind tour of the province, speaking at Lumsden, Saskatoon, Carnduff, Wolseley, Sintaluta, Regina, Wapella, and Oxbow, to name a few. Scott kept a similar pace for November and December, culminating in a joint rally with Haultain in Regina on December 11, two days before polling day.⁴⁴ Scott travelled by train and buggy to visit all of these centres. It is obvious why he had no time for administration: he was in the campaign of his life and he was determined to devote all of his time and energy to the election.

Scott waged a low key campaign and offered a low profile for the Provincial Rights Party. He urged his party workers to make “no noise” and to work quietly amongst the German settlers. The campaigners were not to have too many meetings: “Incessant quiet work will be the best.”⁴⁵ It was to be a low-key campaign. Flashy and high profile patronage appointments would raise the Liberal profile, which was not the attention Scott wanted.

Scott formulated the broad policies and the issuance of the party manifesto while

⁴³ Canadian Annual Review, 1905, 245.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁴⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Frank Moffet, Weyburn, September 26, 1905, 6328.

Calder tended to the finer details of the campaign and the organization of the nominating conventions. Surprisingly, Scott did not even attend his own nominating convention in Lumsden. He sent his regrets and advised his party workers in Lumsden that Calder would attend in his place: "I am more than sorry to be prevented from attending the Convention but trust that Mr. Calder filled the bill. He can deal with the school question better than I can."⁴⁶

Rather than having his cabinet ministers run in safe ridings, Scott insisted that they pick difficult ridings: "Lamont, Motherwell and Calder have everyone of them won districts which in each case nobody else could have held."⁴⁷ And further: "It was a risky looking think [sic] to put the three ministers in such risky places, but it is the bold play that usually wins in politics."⁴⁸ This was the first of many bold plays that kept Scott at least one step ahead of his political opponents.

The Standard, a Regina newspaper, charged that federal forces had invaded the Saskatchewan election.⁴⁹ Because Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, was in the province during the campaign to offer a hand, the editorials claimed that Scott was the "obedient servant" of Laurier.⁵⁰

What then was the Liberal campaign platform in the 1905 election? Walter Scott

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Messrs. Halls and Watkins, Lumsden, September 28, 1905, 37815.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. M. Bryce, December 20, 1905, 37979.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to John Hawkes, January 10, 1906, 38091.

⁴⁹ Standard, September 5, 1905, 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, October 18, 1905, 4.

promised fair treatment to every citizen, including the new immigrants.⁵¹ The Germans/Austro-Hungarians, and in fact all immigrants, made up a large proportion of the province's population and they leaned toward supporting the Liberal Party.⁵² Scott intended to keep them within the fold.

The Liberal platform, as adopted by the August 16 convention, promised to “promote the welfare of the common people and to safeguard their interests.”⁵³ The party pledged provincial rights, common schools supported by provincial tax and supervised by a provincial department of Education. The Liberals promised, if elected to government, to build roads and bridges, to promote agriculture, and lobby the federal government for construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern branch lines as well as a line to Hudson Bay. The Liberal government would push the federal government for the removal of the CPR land tax exemption and public control of public

⁵¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to F. Liebermann, Winnipeg, October 17, 1905, 37847.

⁵² Census of population and agriculture of the Northwest provinces, 1906. Ottawa, 1907. As of March 31, 1901, there were 4,55 settlers of German descent in the Northwest provinces. According to the 1906 census, Saskatchewan had a population of 257,763. The “British born” (including those born in Canada) numbered 164,759 while there were 92,188 “foreign born” persons living in the province. These “foreign” immigrants came from countries such as Austria-Hungary (21,865), Germany (5,827), Russia (16,551), and the United States (35,464).

⁵³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Liberal Party platform, unnumbered page following 38052.

utilities.⁵⁴ In all, the government would be “progressive and economical.”⁵⁵ Scott claimed that he was in league with “no railway monopoly, but free and determined to work for more roads and better service.”⁵⁶ Liberals owed allegiance to no one, just the common people of Saskatchewan.

Scott’s campaign was forward-looking, and the slogan was “Peace, Progress and Prosperity.” According to the Liberals, to vote Conservative would be to look to the past and to court challenges over the Saskatchewan Act. The Liberals predicted “agitation and strife” if the province elected the Conservatives.⁵⁷ Scott pledged to the people of Saskatchewan that he would provide “clean government, honest government, and , ... progressive government.”⁵⁸ Frederick Haultain, the leader of the Provincial Rights Party (the Conservative Party in everything but name), promised that if he gained power, he would continue to “fight for Provincial freedom.”⁵⁹ Even though the Liberals wanted to talk only about the future of the province in the election campaign, they were obliged to respond to the Provincial Rights Party’s concerns over the past negotiations for provincehood. Scott defended the terms of the Saskatchewan Act as passed by the Parliament of Canada.

⁵⁴ While the Liberals were promising government control of public utilities, the Conservatives favoured government ownership of these utilities.

⁵⁵ Regina Leader, August 23, 1905, 3.

⁵⁶ Morning Leader, December 6, 1905, open letter from Walter Scott.

⁵⁷ Regina Leader, August 23, 1905, 1.

⁵⁸ Morning Leader, December 11, 1905, 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, September 27, 1905, 4.

As would be the pattern prior to each provincial election, Scott became involved in a libel charge. On December 6, 1905, one week before the election, J. K. McInnis, an old business partner of Scott's, publicly accused Scott of offering him \$12,000 for property worth \$2,000 if he would support the Liberal cause.⁶⁰ Scott reacted by charging McInnis with libel. The charge and counter charge added fuel to the political debate in the last week of the campaign.

On December 13, 1905, the Scott government was elected with a seven-seat majority, a comfortable majority, but close enough to keep the Liberal team united and on guard. Some time after the election, the court's decision in the libel case went in Scott's favour, but he had been worried. Scott admitted that it might have been better if he had ignored McInnis's charge, however, he could not let it go.⁶¹ To his old friend and editor of the Free Press, J. W. Dafoe, Scott admitted that the court case was another example of his taking chances.⁶²

Scott could look back on the last five eventful years with two federal and one provincial election victories under his belt. Before planning the future of his province, he had time to reflect on his own life, seeming always to face his share of difficulties with some worry. He wrote to his long time friend, Jim Ross, that "the best way to keep

⁶⁰ D. H. Bocking, "Premier Walter Scott, a study of his rise to political power." Unpublished MA thesis, History Department, University of Saskatchewan, 1959, 128.

⁶¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. A. Burton, Medicine Hat, March 13, 1906, 46697.

⁶² *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. W. Dafoe, March 6, 1906, 46672.

from worrying is to keep on working just as if success were certain.”⁶³ In his correspondence to friends or constituents or political leaders, Scott showed a personal interest, “common touch.” He concluded most letters with a word about the other person’s health or the weather or the state of the crops in Saskatchewan. On official business, Scott’s concern about letters getting into the wrong hands made him urge the recipient of some letters to destroy them after having read them. Yet he did not destroy his own copy.

Scott showed a certain turn of phrase in his letter writing. When he did not have time to visit his in-laws in Smiths’ Falls, Ontario, for example he wrote: “I know that excuses are a very poor substitute for a visit but at the same time I think that you will fairly well understand how entirely my time has been taken up.”⁶⁴ For a man with a formal education of grade eight, he truly was a self-made man in the art of writing and speaking.

Scott believed in private business as opposed to a civil service career. He advised talented men to shun the civil service.⁶⁵ Honest in public affairs, he was careful to avoid even the hint of scandal, considering the little details to be as important as the big ones: “A scandal involving \$7.62 is a more dangerous one from the point of view of the ordinary voter than a scandal involving millions.”⁶⁶ Earlier in his career, he even had to

⁶³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Jim Ross, March 6, 1906, 46683.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Fred Read, May 19, 1902, 1067.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs. Jane C. Carey, September 22, 1906, 25807.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to O. B. Fysh, June 27, 1904, 3641.

write a constituent to stop sending him money for services provided by the government. If the constituent would not stop, Walter Scott threatened to curtail the services.⁶⁷ Even though Jessie did not like the political life, Walter knew that politics was in his blood: “I fancy it is harder to get out of this political business than to get into it.”⁶⁸

Scott was dedicated to the West, and he became one of Saskatchewan’s biggest “boosters.” He stated:

Very few people are ever content in the East after once having lived West, no matter how much they disliked the prairies at first nor how much they longed to get back East. In my own case I longed for Ontario the whole nine years from the time I went out in 1885 until I got back home the first time in 1894. Since then I have never felt the faintest inclination to return to live in Ontario.⁶⁹

Scott seemed to be describing himself when he wrote: “a young man of fair intelligence and industrious habits can scarcely fail to reach an independent position before he has passed middle life.”⁷⁰ Not only did he love the West, but Scott was filled with optimism that arose out of the prairie West: “This province has as yet less than half a million souls and there is plenty of room for at least ten millions.”⁷¹ And in another letter, he wrote: “Just as sure as the sun shines there will be within this Province alone some day a population running into the tens of millions.”⁷² It was with this optimistic attitude that

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Jas. Robinson, Crandell, Manitoba, April 14, 1904, 4516.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Rev. J. M. Harrison, January 8, 1904, 3736.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to John A. McDonald, September 21, 1903, 2116.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Arthur B. Telfer, Sarnia, August 3, 1903, 2822.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to C. A. Semans, November 17, 1910, 41087.

⁷² *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Aikins, May 30, 1910, 50349.

Scott and his government set off in January 1906 to create an infrastructure that would serve the people of the province for generations to come.

Chapter 5 The New Government

As 1906 dawned, a new day was starting for Saskatchewan. Even though there had been representative and responsible government in the North West Territories (NWT) for the past fifteen years, it was a new beginning for the province and the Scott government. The size of the province was much smaller than the old territorial jurisdiction. Saskatchewan's governmental and legislative structures in 1905 were modest indeed. There was a cabinet of four, with a Legislative Assembly of twenty-five members. On average, the Legislative Assembly sat, in the first Legislature, six to nine weeks in the months of March, April and sometimes May. The sessions were short but intense. Members representing ridings outside Regina came to the capital by train and expected to stay until the prorogation of the session. With the scarcity of passable roads in the winter, frequent travel between the capital and the constituency was not possible.

Because the sessions were short, members expected to sit most evenings in order to finish their work before spring seeding. Agriculture and the weather determined the timing of legislative business of the province. The members of the first Legislature faced a heavy legislative load. Many bills merely continued provisions of the territorial ordinances while other established new directions for the province.

Early legislation established departments, the public service, and clarified the role of the offices of Lieutenant Governor and Executive Council. Other topics covered were the issuance of motor vehicle licenses, speed limits on highways, the establishment

of officials such as the coroners and marriage license issuers. At the second session, the legislation was passed to establish the University of Saskatchewan. At the end of each session, the members passed the budget for the coming year.¹

The MLAs met in the Territorial Legislative Building on Dewdney Avenue in a room planned for a smaller group of people. With the cabinet, the legislature and the public service being relatively small, there was an intimacy amongst the provincial leaders. Social functions at Government House, several blocks west of the Legislative Building, and at the NWMP depot immediately west of Government House, were popular meeting places for Scott and Haultain and their members. The political rivalries in the Legislature were keen, but the partisan barriers disappeared when they socialized together. It was a small community with an uncommon will to work together for the betterment of the province.

One of the first choices to be made by the new government was the location of the provincial capital. On May 23, 1906, W. C. Sutherland, MLA for Saskatoon, introduced a motion to locate the capital city in his constituency. Speaking in the debate in the Legislative Assembly, Scott clearly favoured Regina, and the members defeated the motion 21-2.² The result of the vote showed that the northern members had voted in favour of Regina, leading historian Jean Murray to speculate that, of the sixteen members in the Liberal caucus, eleven were in favour of Saskatoon.³ Yet Walter Scott

¹ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1906 and 1907.

² J. E. Murray, "The Provincial Capital Controversy in Saskatchewan." Saskatchewan History 5, no. 3 (1952): 99.

³ *Ibid.*, 104.

had been able to win over the northern members and convince them to vote for Regina without causing a major split in the caucus. The Saskatoon “boosters” were disappointed but they were confident that they would win future battles.

How then did Scott win over his members to vote for Regina? There is speculation that he promised the northern members that if they voted for Regina this time, he would commit the government to granting other large institutions, such as the proposed university, to the northern centres as had been done in many American states.⁴ Scott believed that if the Regina people lost something that they already had, their disappointment would be far greater than if they lost something they never had.⁵ Scott knew that his government had to give some rewards to the south or the Liberal Party would be weak in that part of the province. The Liberals were firm in the north and thus had to win the support and confidence of southerners.

Another argument for Scott favouring Regina was that he owned land both in and around Regina, though there is no evidence that Scott preferred Regina in order to boost his financial investments in that city.⁶ This consideration likely did not work against choosing Regina, but political party considerations seem to be the main reason Scott supported Regina’s bid to remain the capital city of the new province.

Once the MLAs had chosen the capital city, the Scott government faced

⁴ David R. Murray and Robert A. Murray, The Prairie Builder: Walter Murray of Saskatchewan, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1984), 43.

⁵ Murray, *Capital*, 103. Reference to a letter from W. S. to Senator T. O. Davis, May 3, 1906.

⁶ See page 157 of this dissertation for a discussion of Walter Scott’s land holdings and financial affairs.

problems that were closer to the people and were more meaningful to the day-to-day lives of their constituents. Not all of these problems fell within the provincial jurisdiction as specified by section 92 of the British North America Act (BNA). Scott had a well-defined list of provincial powers and responsibilities. The construction of main railway lines, homestead and immigration policy and the NWMP were all federal responsibilities. Because policy in these fields directly affected the quality of life in Saskatchewan, Scott was quick to refer these matter to the Prime Minister or appropriate federal ministers. However, the provincial government did not wash its hands totally of these federal fields of jurisdiction. As long as the federal and provincial governments were both Liberal, homestead inspectors (federal appointments) could exert influence on the new settlers to vote for the party which had brought them to this new land. As was shown, Scott was not reluctant to try to influence the Commissioner of the NWMP (another federal official) in making appointments and promotions. Even though the Saskatchewan government did not issue bond guarantees to the railway companies to build branch lines until after the 1908 election, the provincial Liberals tried to convince the federal government to provide assistance to private railway companies to build rail lines in areas of the province that had voted Liberal or might be convinced to vote Liberal in a subsequent election.

Under section 92 of the constitution, the province was given the power to raise revenue through taxation, to borrow money and to establish and maintain provincial

institutions, the municipal level of government and the administration of justice.⁷ In its first legislative mandate, the Scott government concerned itself with the establishment of the system of government. In the first session (March 29 - May 26, 1906), the Legislative Assembly passed sixty-six bills pertaining primarily to government administration.⁸ The Speech from the Throne at the beginning of the Second Session (February 21 - April 3, 1907) referred to the inadequacy of the railway system and urged the federal government to provide financial incentives to private companies to build additional miles of rail line for the more efficient shipment of wheat to market. The Legislative Assembly established a commission to study the establishment of local governments and passed legislation to create a judicial and educational system, including the University of Saskatchewan. Hail insurance, railway taxation and liquor licensing were topics of debate. In all, the Legislature passed forty-eight bills in a little more than five weeks.⁹

At the opening of the Third Session (April 2 - June 12, 1908), the Lieutenant Governor noted the accelerated growth of the province and the large harvests of wheat. During the session, progress was recorded on the establishment of the University of Saskatchewan and the construction of the Legislative Building. The members considered issues such as the organization of municipalities, the provision of textbooks for schools

⁷ Evelyn Eager, Saskatchewan Government: Politics and Pragmatism, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 38.

⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, First Session of the First Legislature.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Second Session of the First Legislature.

and the compilation of voters' lists for provincial general elections. The Legislative Assembly passed sixty-one bills in approximately nine weeks.

With the heavy legislative load and the influx of new immigrants to the province, it was clear that the government had to increase the size of the Legislative Assembly in order to give appropriate representation to the people. As a result, a larger legislative chamber was needed. Similarly, a public service would have to be hired and housed to serve this expanding province for generations to come. When Scott took on the role of Minister of Public Works (Commissioner) in the first cabinet, one of his first tasks was to begin the process of building a new legislative building. The Territorial administrative and legislative buildings, located on Dewdney Avenue, near Government House and the NWMP barracks, were too small. A new site would have to be chosen and a building built to match the grand future of the province.

Under Jim Calder's scrutiny and with the approval of the premier, the government bought the old Sinton property from McCallum Hill and Company for \$96,250. This property was just south of Wascana Creek and well away from the centre of town. Critics argued that the site was too far from town but it did offer 162 acres of land that could accommodate a sizable building with land left for an impressive park.

As minister of Public Works, Scott began the search for an architect who would design this building and oversee its construction. Inclined to use his patronage power to choose a well-connected Liberal as the architect, on June 26, 1906, Scott wrote to Calder that he was tempted to hire F. M. Rattenbury, a friend and well-known architect.¹⁰

¹⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. Calder, June 26, 1906, 52157.

Within a year, Scott resisted this temptation to avoid a competition, writing to Rattenbury: “My own preference was to have no competition but to select an architect. It was decided, however, that keeping the possibility of public criticism in mind it would be wise to have resort to a method of competition.”¹¹ The temptation to use patronage was strong and in a second letter to Rattenbury, Scott wrote: “While my personal view is pretty strongly in favor [*sic*] of putting the work directly in the hands of an architect if [*sic*] acknowledged standing, I found the competitive method, especially with regard to a public building, appealed to some of my colleagues with force. We have decided in favor of holding a competition.”¹² Obviously, there had been division in the cabinet but Scott bowed to the consensus of his colleagues, and a competition was held. Cabinet decided to enlist the “best talent in architect which exists in the English-speaking world.”¹³ The government did not want the importance of such a public building tarnished by charges of patronage or corruption.

Cabinet chose Professor Percy Nobbs of McGill University to lead an independent selection committee with the mandate of conducting a competition for architect. The three adjudicators chosen were Percy Nobbs, Frank Miles of Philadelphia and Bertram Goodhue of New York, all three being recognized experts in the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to F. M. Rattenbury, Victoria, BC, August 15, 1907, 52196.

¹² SAB, Department of Public Works files, # R 195.2, W. S. to F. M. Rattenbury, November 1, 1906.

¹³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Cass Gilbert, a well known architect in New York, August 15, 1907, 52168.

architectural field.¹⁴ Cabinet set the initial estimate for the cost of the construction at between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000. The design was to take into account that Saskatchewan was part of the British Empire.¹⁵ Scott's absence from the province due to illness delayed the commencement of the architectural competition.¹⁶ Nobbs was ready to solicit designs but F. J. Robinson, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, asked him to wait until Scott's return. Scott was away with a bout of pneumonia. The government had hoped to have the architect and design chosen in time for the construction to begin by the spring of 1907. The competition did not commence until Scott's return in June 1907, which consequently postponed the overall construction of the legislative building one year.

Percy Nobbs recommended that seven architects from Britain, the United States and Canada be invited to submit designs for the new legislative building.¹⁷ This would be the beginning of many public projects for the Scott government where they made key choices based on recommendations by "outside experts." Robinson was in charge of assessing the needs of the public service and the legislative assembly for "all time to come."¹⁸

Early in the design phase, the government made several key decisions

¹⁴ SAB, Department of Public Works Files, # R 195.2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, # R 195-205.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, # R 195-242, F. J. Robinson to P. Nobbs, January 31, 1907.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-85, W. S. to Wm. Dodd, Calgary, September 17, 1907.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-75.

concerning the exterior of the building. Since the legislative building was to be located on the flat bald prairie, the building, in Scott's opinion, had to have a dome that would be visible for miles around. The centre of democracy and government would be clearly visible to the people. Second, the government commissioned a landscape architect, Frederick Todd, to design the layout of the land surrounding the building. Cabinet incorporated this layout into the specifications for the design of the building. The building would be visible but would also harmonize with the planned park that would surround it.

Scott still felt political pressure, even though the government made the decision to go for an independent competition. This was the first chance on a local level for the Liberals to take advantage of the patronage levers of power. Reverend D. Oliver, a Presbyterian minister in Moosomin and a strong Liberal supporter, wrote to Scott urging him to include another architectural firm in the competition. "Best friends financially the Liberal party have in Canada" made up this firm. Oliver assured Scott that he would not regret adding this firm to the competition because the partners in the firm were "true friends of the Party."¹⁹ As tempting as this recommendation must have been, Scott stuck to his government's decision for an open competition of seven architectural firms. In response to Oliver's letter, Scott wrote that he would not be increasing the number of architectural firms who would be invited to compete: "I am satisfied that these firms stand at the head of the profession in Canada."²⁰

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, # R 195-118-93, Rev. D Oliver to W. S., September 9, 1907.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, # R 195-85, W. S. to Rev. D. Oliver, September 17, 1907.

The competing architectural firms viewed the competition as fair. Darling and Pearson wrote: “we know of no competition that has been framed during recent years that has met with so much universal approbation among the profession.”²¹ F. J. Robinson received all designs, replaced the names on the designs with codes and forwarded the copies to the three adjudicators. On December 7, 1907, the selection committee chose the design from the Montreal architectural firm of Edward and W. S. Maxwell. Clearly not wanting to be seen as having any part in the final decision, Premier Scott continued to be out of the province when Robinson received the choice of design and announced the decision to the public. He had consciously decided to eliminate any political interference in the choice and wanted everyone to see that he was not involved. Even though the government had not chosen Rattenbury of Victoria, B. C., he wrote to Robinson complimenting him on the fairness of the competition.

Notwithstanding that Scott had not been involved in the choice of design of the building, he, as minister, was clearly involved in the decision-making process for the construction phase. As early as January 10, 1908, Robinson delayed decisions for the hauling of gravel to the construction site because Scott was again away due to illness.²² By March, the architects finalized the design plans and issued the call for tenders for the general contractor. Again the Scott government decided to have an open competition to select a general contractor. There was political pressure to choose a local contractor but Scott knew that he had to choose a company that was large and financially stable enough

²¹ *Ibid.*, # R 195-315, Darling and Pearson to W. S., December 4, 1907.

²² *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-446. Deputy Commissioner Robinson to O. T. Falls, Regina, January 10, 1908.

to carry such a large construction project. The province could not afford to have the project collapse in the midst of construction due to bankruptcy proceedings by the contractor.

By June 1908, the government chose the firm P. Lyall and Sons of Montreal as the general contractors.²³ The Lyall bid was not the lowest tender but the government believed that this firm was large enough to carry the financial load over the length of the construction period. As it would turn out, the building was under construction for four years. The opposition criticized the Scott government for choosing a Montreal firm, the same city as the architects' home base, charging that there had been price fixing between the Maxwells and P. Lyall and Sons. Both the Maxwells and P. Lyall denied this. Robinson's response to this opposition charge was that it was only an election ploy to stir up trouble.²⁴ The opposition presented no proof of this charge and the debate soon died away. Nevertheless, Scott was adamant that where possible, the general contractor should use local firms as subcontractors.²⁵

After the close of the competition and the awarding of the general construction contract, the projected price for the building had risen to \$1,750,000, a considerable increase from the original estimate of approximately \$750,000. The government instructed the architects to avoid waste and extravagance yet have the building "worthy"

²³ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-657 Maxwell brothers to W. S., June 30, 1908.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-949.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-797.

of the province.²⁶ For every decision made on the project, Robinson and Scott's attitude was that this was going to be built only once, so it had to be done correctly the first time. An example of this philosophy of "doing it right the first time" was when Scott noted in the original design drawings that the exterior of the legislative building was to be red brick. Scott wrote to Robinson seeking a price on Tyndal stone. Even though the extra cost was \$50,000, they decided to proceed with the stone. This meant a delay in the construction because the stone quarry in Manitoba had to be opened and a rail line built.²⁷ In all, cabinet, or in most cases Scott and Robinson, approved ninety-one changes to the specifications of the building. In all cases, the overall quality of the finished product improved but the cost did go up.

On October 4, 1909, the Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, laid the cornerstone for the legislative building. In addressing the crowd assembled, Premier Scott said that the building represented the character and ambitions of the people. Since it was a building for the law making and administration of the province, it was all the more important. The building symbolized the people and the province.²⁸ The building had been planned to meet the needs of the people for three to four decades but Scott was already wondering if the building would be big enough when he realized how the province was growing. The building represented the collective "aspirations" of the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-526. Deputy Commissioner Robinson to the Maxwell brothers. March 7, 1908.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-1252, F. J. Robinson to the Maxwell brothers, February 6, 1909 and # R 195.2-1.60-1367, work order # 8, June 21, 1909.

²⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, 52348.

people: "laws originating in and emanating from the tens of thousands of happy fire-sides within the borders of the Province, will be framed, revised and perfected and put into statute form in the committee rooms and legislative chamber of this building."²⁹

Scott wondered how many centuries the building would last and whether people would remember him as the first premier:

How many thousands of feet may climb these stairs in this entrance in the years to come--carrying a burden of responsibility as legislators, one long continuous line of them, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, -- the trusted, invaluable administrative officials and experts and staffs, contemporaneous lines of them, generation succeeding generation,-- studious or merely curious processions of spectators and visitors, week after week, year after year!³⁰

Would the generations to come remember the visionaries who had planned this building?

Scott was not only a visionary but a hands-on manager, involved in the selection of most items in the building, including the plumbing fixtures.³¹ Robinson deferred to Scott when it came time to make the major decisions. The supplies for the building were to be Canadian or British made where possible, with American products as the last resort.³² The construction phase was not all smooth sailing. In August 1909, a brick layers' strike erupted over the question of who could lay bricks used in the interior

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 52351.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ SAB, Department of Public Works Files, # 195.2-1.60-1275, F. J. Robinson to the Maxwells, May 25, 1909.

³² *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-1478, F. J. Robinson to James Ballantyne, Winnipeg, July 27, 1909.

walls. Would it be qualified brick layers or general workmen?³³ And a continuing problem that happened every fall was a definite shortage of labourers. The harvest had first call on the labourers who laid down their hammers and shovels to participate in the western Canadian harvest.³⁴

There is no evidence of blatant patronage in the hiring of construction workers, who were required to supply letters of reference and proof of competence. There was no hint of the graft that had plagued neighbouring provinces with the construction of their legislative buildings, forcing, for example, the government of Manitoba to resign over a scandal regarding the construction of its legislative building.

After more than four years of construction, the Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, officially opened the legislative building on October 12, 1912. Just seven years after the formation of the province, the government and the Legislative Assembly had a new building in which to perform their functions on behalf of the people of the province. It was a building of which the people could be proud. Unfortunately, the key driving force behind the design and construction of this building, Walter Scott, missed the opening of the building due to illness.

The total cost of the legislative building was 1.8 million dollars, double the original estimated price. Even though it was a landmark that became a show-piece for the province, not everything worked as initially expected. The deputy minister of Municipal Affairs wrote to the acting deputy minister of Public Works, just after the

³³ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-1807, W. S. to F. J. Robinson, January 24, 1910.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-1580, report by J. E. Fortin, supervising architect for the Maxwells.

official opening: “We will make no comment on the wonderful clocks which ornament certain portions of the Department but which were evidently never intended to give any reliable information regarding time.”³⁵ When the government made the final payment to P. Lyall and Sons for the construction of the building on March 12, 1914, the Saskatchewan legislative building was finally complete.

Even though the building was a centre-piece for representative and responsible government, there was some criticism about the overall cost of the building. In defence, Scott wrote:

The policy adopted is to put up a Chamber and set up offices adequate for at least twenty-five years without additions and which may for a century yet be creditable enough to form the main building on the Capital grounds. Disraeli said that nothing more completely represents a nation than a public building.³⁶

With the legislative building underway, Scott knew that in order for the British parliamentary institutions to be able to function, an educated and well informed population was essential. Even though Scott had only a grade eight education, he believed that the province needed a university. Parliament and education were the twin pillars of society for Scott. He was well aware of the pioneer spirit of ensuring that the future generation would have access to proper education. The University of Saskatchewan Act provided for the positions of registrar and president. Jim Calder

³⁵ *Ibid.*, # R 195.2-1.60-3034, J. N. Bayne, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs to H. S. Carpenter, Acting Deputy Minister of Public Works, November 19, 1912.

³⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Charles Lunn, June 25, 1909, 9085.

appointed his deputy minister, D. P. McColl as the first university registrar.³⁷ McColl's first task was to establish convocation composed of graduates of any university and who had lived in Saskatchewan for more than three months. It was the duty of convocation to elect a chancellor and a senate. Chief Justice Edward L. Wetmore was chosen as the chancellor.³⁸ By September 1907, elections were underway for members of the senate.

The urban centres which were vying to become the site for the university tried to have as many of their citizens as possible on convocation, the Senate, and the Board of Governors in order to affect the choice of site for the university, a decision that was to be made by the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors comprised nine persons: three appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council; five chosen from the university senate with the president of the university named as the ninth member.³⁹ The Board of Governors was to be responsible for the "management, administration and control of the property, revenues, business and affairs of the university."⁴⁰ As historian Michael Hayden wrote, the university was to be "state supported but not state controlled."⁴¹ The Scott government purposefully created an institution that was a "comprehensive state-

³⁷ Michael Hayden, Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁹ Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1907, chapter 24, section 58.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, section 65.

⁴¹ Hayden, XVI.

financed, self governing university.”⁴² Scott withstood the temptation to use political interference or patronage in the operation of the university.

The first major decision regarding a university was to choose a site for this institution. As in the selection of the capital, aspiring centres sought the site of the university in the belief that this institution would bring more business, economic activity, and prestige to their community. The premier’s absence due to illness delayed this decision, but when he called the second general election for August 14, 1908, choosing the location of the university became one of the issues in the campaign.⁴³ A Liberal candidate in Saskatoon, A. P. McNab, heightened the stakes by promising that he would work to get the university for Saskatoon, making the commitment that if elected, and if Saskatoon did not get the university, he would resign.⁴⁴ Ever the careful diplomat, Scott stated that the decision on the site for the university would be made by the Board of Governors, but subject to ratification by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Scott promised that this would not be a political decision.⁴⁵

On August 20, 1908, the Board of Governors offered Walter Murray of Dalhousie University the position of president of a university that still did not have a professor in a classroom, nor did it have a home. The new president had all of these decisions to make. When Scott met Murray for the first time just before Murray’s

⁴² *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴³ J. E. Murray, “The Contest for the University of Saskatchewan.” *Saskatchewan History*, 12, no. 1 (1959): 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

appointment, Scott told him: "This is a great country. It needs big men with large ideas."⁴⁶ This was not only advice to Murray but represented Scott's philosophy of his own life. Murray was insistent that partisan politics should not interfere with the operation of a university.

The site of the campus was the first true test of this principle. Based on Scott's election promise that the government would spread the institutions throughout the province, Scott favoured Saskatoon for the university. Since Regina received the capital, the Queen City could not very well ask for the university as well. There is some speculation that Scott had decided that if the northern members would vote for Regina to be capital, they would be rewarded with the university.⁴⁷ Yet, Scott promised President Murray that the government would not interfere with the decision over the university's location.⁴⁸ Also insisting that Scott not be involved with this decision, Murray wrote that the public strongly endorsed the "policy of placing the university outside of the pale of party politics."⁴⁹ Murray warned Scott that if party politics became involved in university affairs, the university would fall "prey to the schemes of designing men."⁵⁰ Therefore, to interfere in the operation of a university could lead to the defeat of a

⁴⁶ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, Walter Murray to W. S., December (no date given), 1937.

⁴⁷ Murray, "Contest," 3.

⁴⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mrs. E. F. Grover, Winnipeg, June 11, 1909, 8983.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Walter Murray to W. S., October 8, 1908, 36245.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36247.

government. Murray concluded: "I would rather see a minister rob the charity boxes than see a university pollute the springs of education. To me education is a religion and the university as sacred as the Church."⁵¹ These were strong and fighting words from the new university president, but Scott saw the value in his advice. Publicly at least, Scott made the pledge that the government would not influence the decision.

The new Board of Governors held hearings around the province before meeting in Regina on April 7 to make its decision about the university site. Murray made known his preference for Regina, believing that the university would gain more influence with government if it was close to the seat of government. On the other hand, Scott favoured Saskatoon, so as to spread the public institutions around the province. The Board first decided that there would be a College of Agriculture and that it would be located on the main campus of the university. This was a Canadian first to have the agricultural college associated directly with academic and professional colleges.

The second item on the board's agenda was to decide on a site for the campus. The vote was conducted by secret ballot, with the alleged result being six to three in favour of Saskatoon.⁵² If President Murray voted against Saskatoon, as he had predicted, this meant that two of the southern members and all of the northern members had voted in favour of Saskatoon. Professor Jean Murray argued that Levi Thompson from Wolseley, and John Dixon from Maple Creek, both well-known Liberals, voted in favour of Saskatoon. Thompson went on later to become a Liberal member of the House

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 36253.

⁵² Murray, *Contest*, 22. See also Hayden, 43. Hayden disagrees with Jean Murray's analysis arguing that the vote was actually 5-3 with Dixon voting for Regina.

of Commons. It seems clear that these two board members voted as they did due to influence from the premier. Scott had fulfilled his promise not to influence directly the choice of Saskatoon but indirectly he was able to influence people on the board who had the political inclination to vote for decentralization of public institutions and for the Liberal goal of rewarding the northern part of the province.⁵³

Walter Murray was very disappointed with the decision, writing to his wife that “The interests of the University were simply ignored.”⁵⁴ However, he soon accepted that he and his family would reside in Saskatoon and realized that this decision had some positive advantages. Being farther away from the capital would possibly reduce the chance of partisan political interference in university affairs. Murray had a dilemma. He knew that the university could not defy the will of the people as expressed by the freely elected government; but it should not be subject to the day-to-day whims of that very same government.⁵⁵ Murray realized that the university had to follow a narrow path between complete independence of government, and reliance on government funding. The university needed to be responsive to the needs of the people of the province.

With the university located in Saskatoon, the Scott Government remained true to its election promise of distributing the institutions around the province by building the provincial penitentiary in Prince Albert, and the “insane asylum” in North Battleford. Of the major centres, the government gave nothing to Moose Jaw.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, Walter Murray to Christine Murray, April 11, 1909.

⁵⁵ Hayden, 11.

The official ceremony to lay the cornerstone of the university was on July 29, 1910. The following day, the Morning Leader of Regina reported on Scott's speech, which praised the pioneers of the prairies for always setting a priority on education for their children.⁵⁶ Scott reaffirmed his belief that agriculture was not only a noble profession and vocation but the centre of the world economy:

Saskatchewan is essentially an agricultural province, which is no misfortune. Agriculture is the basis of the business of the world. Farming is the foundation of civilization. It is in keeping with the character of our province that the main part of the highest institution of learning in the province shall be an agricultural college.⁵⁷

Murray was proud that the university would be the meeting ground of agriculture with other academic pursuits: "All are greatly benefitted by the intercourse and better prepared for service in the state, where the farmer, the doctor, the lawyer, the teacher and the engineer must work together for the public good."⁵⁸ Scott had a high regard for universities but relied on President Murray to advise him on what the University of Saskatchewan required to become a top level educational institution. Scott believed in a well rounded liberal arts education and knew that the university would be more than a technical school. Murray and Scott were in agreement that the university had three pillars as an institution of higher learning serving the people of Saskatchewan: it trained the men to farm scientifically, it trained women to be good home-makers and to look after their children, and, through theological colleges, it trained ministers to look after

⁵⁶ The Morning Leader, Saturday July 30, 1910.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Report by Walter Murray circa fall 1916. No specific date was shown.

the souls of the prairie families.

Scott worried from time to time that the school system was taking people away from the farm and creating people adapted to only the urban life. He had support from Reverend George Exton Lloyd, who wrote to him outlining a plan to stop the flow of Saskatchewan youth from the farms to the urban centres. Lloyd saw the “spindley [*sic*] and weedy appearance of the younger girls and boys” on the streets of the towns and cities as a sign that the race of prairie people was being weakened by urban life.⁵⁹ The province needed a shorter school year, particularly for high school, so that the youth could work on the farms for seven months from April through October, and be in school from November to March. The school year would match the climatic conditions of the prairies and would build strong character in the youth. The province would gain from this new program as well because there would be a young, strong labour force available to work on the farms. With their farm labour, by the time the youth were finished school at age nineteen, they would have a taste for the agricultural way of life, being more inclined to stay on the farm and to open new land themselves. The people who wanted a more urban university education could go to other provinces to study. Lloyd insisted: “It is not the duty of an agricultural province to produce professional or arts graduates except as far as it fits the conditions of the Province.”⁶⁰ Scott did not adopt Lloyd’s more radical proposal but was sympathetic to the overall goal of keeping Saskatchewan’s young people on the farm. According to him, the university was to prepare people for

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Rev. George Exton Lloyd to W. S., September 7, 1915, 34405.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 34409.

life's work, that is to learn the "dignity of agriculture."⁶¹

Even though Murray and Scott had disagreed over the location of the university, they established a close and warm working relationship and friendship. Murray remained nonpartisan, but was able to work well with the Liberal government, and Scott was anxious to have a good working relationship with the university. He wrote: "Particularly during the early stages of the university it is important that the university authorities and the Government should take care not to act at cross-purposes."⁶² At the opening ceremonies for the University of Saskatchewan, Premier Scott, who was then also Minister of Education, said that the university was there to solve "the everyday problem" and to meet the needs of the "everyday people."⁶³ The university would be open to all people of the province, with no discrimination against class, gender or culture.

The Scott government, in its early days, regarded the construction of a legislative building and a university as most important achievements. Not only were structures built for a functional purpose but also represented a philosophy and a way of life of equality and opportunity. This new province was built by ordinary people, and the institutions were there to serve them. The buildings, erected in less than a decade, reflected the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, report of a speech delivered by Walter Scott at either Swift Current or Saskatoon, fall of 1916, 36453.

⁶² U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, Series 1, B. 105, W. S. to F. R. Munro, President of the Correspondence School of Scientific Farming, Winnipeg, October 26, 1910.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping file, Prairie Farm and Home, May 7, 1913. The Prairie Farm and Home was a weekly supplement published by the Morning Leader.

attitudes of the people and helped shape attitudes and beliefs of the generations to come.

For all of his initial concerns about political interference from the Scott government,

Murray was able to write later in life that he was an admirer of Scott:

I always felt when in your [Scott's] presence that I [was] with a great man, whose large and generous conceptions of your country and of your obligations to it lifted your listener to higher planes and nobler conceptions. What you did [in setting up institutions] was well done and posterity will always hold the first Premier in Saskatchewan in great honour.⁶⁴

During Scott's first legislative term, he had to face other problems in addition to building the province's infrastructure. An essential commodity for all Saskatchewan citizens was an abundant supply of coal for heating during the cold winters. Serious coal shortages in the exceptionally harsh winter of 1906-07 posed the first economic dilemma for the Scott government: should the government become directly involved with the coal mining sector of the province? Unusually cold weather and a strike in the Alberta coal fields led to a shortage of coal on the prairies. William Lyon Mackenzie King, federal Deputy Minister of Labour, tried to mediate a settlement.⁶⁵ On February 20, 1907, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) passed a resolution calling on the Scott government to obtain a portion of the Saskatchewan coal fields from the federal government so that Saskatchewan would not be so dependent on the Alberta supply.⁶⁶ Even though he worked hard to protect the people of Saskatchewan, Scott said that it

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, J. E. Murray Papers, Walter Murray to W. S., December (no date shown), 1937.

⁶⁵ John H. Archer, Saskatchewan: A History, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 146.

⁶⁶ Canadian Annual Review, 1907, 588.

was not the role of government to get involved with the mining of coal. Another factor in the coal shortage was the inability of the railways to transport sufficient coal from the mines to the Saskatchewan people. To avoid future coal shortages, W. R. Motherwell encouraged the CPR to devote more rolling stock in the summer of 1907 for the transporting of coal to Saskatchewan.⁶⁷ The shortage of coal is one example of where the Scott government felt pressure to solve a problem that was affecting the people of Saskatchewan, but was reluctant to have government involved directly in the mining of coal or in the ownership of a railway.

Furthermore, Scott was not inclined to interfere in labour disputes. They were to be resolved between the employer and the employees. In the first Legislature (1905-1908), the Scott government did not introduce any legislation directly pertaining to labour standards or working conditions. It was during the Second Session of the Second Legislature (1909) that the members passed the "Factories Act" prohibiting the employment of children under the age of fourteen in any factory.⁶⁸ Hours of work for women and youth were restricted to no more than eight hours per day or forty-five hours per week. There was no mention of any restriction on the number of working hours for men. The act also prescribed how young women were to wear their hair to avoid industrial accidents.

In the Third Session (1910-1911), the Legislature passed the "Workmen's

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1909, Chapter 10. "An Act for the Protection of Persons employed in Factories."

Compensation Act” and established the Bureau of Labour.⁶⁹ The Act prescribed the conditions for people working on railways, mines, and factories. The employer was required to pay compensation for injury sustained on the job. The new Bureau of Labour, located within the Department of Agriculture, was to “collect, assort, systematise and publish information and statistics” related to strikes, hours of work and working conditions generally.⁷⁰

During the 1912 Session, the Legislature passed an Act to protect workers on construction sites and to prevent the employment of female labour in certain capacities.⁷¹ Chapter 17 prohibited any “white woman or girl” from working in a business such as a restaurant or laundry which was owned and operated by “any Japanese, Chinaman or other oriental person.” In all, the Scott government did not introduce labour legislation until the Second Session of the Second Legislature (1909). Generally the labour legislation attempted to protect workers, particularly female workers, either in dangerous working environments or in business establishments that were a threat to the moral well being of “white women.” With the establishment of the Bureau of Labour, the government began to monitor working conditions and labour standards.

With major projects underway in the new province, and with such projects as the

⁶⁹ Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1910-11, Chapter 9, “An Act respecting Compensation to Workmen for Injuries Suffered in the Course of their Employment.” and Chapter 8, “An Act respecting The Bureau of Labour.”

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, section 1.

⁷¹ Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1912, Chapter 18, “An Act for the Protection of Persons Employed in the Construction of Buildings” and Chapter 17, “An Act to prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities.”

legislative building having the government as the employer, Scott found that the government was in a position of facing labour disputes. In 1908, the labour movement was pushing for a fair wages officer and standards in wages. Scott approached the Trades and Labour Council to recommend candidates to be appointed as the fair wages officer. The government appointed one from the list supplied.⁷² Scott initially consulted with experts and with people directly involved and then acted on their recommendations. In this way, the Trades and Labour Council could not complain about the person chosen for the post. Yet Scott felt inclined not to interfere: "We are not authorized to discriminate between Union and non-Union labor."⁷³

Scott saw the hardship that unemployment brought to the people, yet he hoped that the government would not have to become involved and that the situation would correct itself without government assistance.⁷⁴ It was for charities and municipalities to offer relief to the unemployed. What then were the solutions for curing unemployment? Scott ruled out deportation, soup kitchens, and providing work on borrowed money, proposing instead that the unemployed be settled on vacant farm land. This would attract more settlers, vacant land would be settled and there would be an additional source of food stuffs. The difficulty was that the provincial government did not own the public lands, which were within federal jurisdiction. "Candidly I cannot see how the Province can handle any practicable scheme. If we held the natural resources the problem would

⁷² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, 45885.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to F. J. Robinson, his Deputy Minister, January 24, 1910, 45932.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wm. McAllister, Moose Jaw, September 16, 1914, 46002.

be ours to work out, but as things stand I do not think it is our problem, leaving aside the question of the financial ability of the Province.”⁷⁵ Publicly Scott, to maintain political credibility, argued for provincial control of the crown lands. However, privately he pressured the federal government to do more to settle the unemployed on the land.

An internal paper created by the provincial Labour Bureau of the Department of Agriculture recommended that means be found to keep people on the land. The new settlers often homesteaded but, missing the luxuries of the urban centres, they moved off the farm. The Department of Agriculture concluded that if the people could be convinced to stay on the land, food production would go up and unemployment would go down.⁷⁶ The value of agriculture to the economy and to the well-being of the residents of Saskatchewan became a predominant theme for the Scott government. Economics and politics blended together into one.

Scott was clearly at the height of his power and influence during the first seven years of his premiership. Even though he was plagued with asthma and pneumonia and forced to miss key events such as the opening of the legislative building, Scott was able to lead his government and party as he built the institutions of the province. Trusted and liked by the people, his popularity increased as the years went by because he had the “common touch.”⁷⁷ After the 1908 election, Joseph Harrison, managing editor of the

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. H. Haslam, Regina, May 14, 1915, 46046.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Internal memo prepared by the Bureau of Labour, Department of Agriculture, Thomas Molloy to W. S., May 13, 1915, 46050.

⁷⁷ Even though the province’s newspapers favoured one or other of the political parties, they had to maintain a level of credibility with their readership who were not all partisans. The positive stories in the newspapers are thus one indication of Scott’s

Prince Albert Advocate wrote to Scott: "I know you and I believe in you and know you are right."⁷⁸ The 1908 Canadian Annual Review described him as a "shrewd and aggressive politician" who was in touch with the western ways and politics of the province. He was a "man of the people, personally popular, and in close touch with the powers at Ottawa."⁷⁹ Scott had it both ways. He could relate to the common person on the street and yet had the inside track to Ottawa. However, the picture of Scott is not one of a gentle easy-going man for all people. He had a campaign style that was "keen, clever and aggressive."⁸⁰ Scott knew that on the prairies, the people took their politics seriously and played for keeps.

Scott's personal philosophy was that "a man must act honestly with himself and preserve his self respect before he can face his fellow-men with confidence."⁸¹ Even though he was politically popular, Scott was the first to admit that he did not offer compliments freely. To his cousin, G. A. Scott, who became the Liberal MLA for Arm River in the 1908 election, he wrote after having extended a compliment: "Take this to heart because I do not make bouquets easily, and it may be a long time before you get

popularity. Letters to Scott, comments from outside sources such as the Canadian Annual Review and the election results were all measures of Scott's support from the general population.

⁷⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Joseph Harrison to W. S., September 8, 1908, 8227.

⁷⁹ Canadian Annual Review, edited by J. Castell Hopkins, (Toronto: George N. Morang and Company Ltd., 1908), 490.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 495.

⁸¹ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, MG 61S1, W. S. to D. S. Williams, Indian Head, January 23, 1906.

another.”⁸²

On a personal level, Scott was doing well financially. Just after he became premier, he sold his interest in the Regina Leader, believing that the paper could not ethically gain printing contracts with the government if he was the owner of the newspaper and the premier. Interestingly enough, this same philosophy did not seem to apply to the Moose Jaw Times, which he owned until he died. This was the first newspaper that he had owned individually and thus perhaps held a soft spot in his heart. For a newspaper that he had bought for \$600 in 1894, by October 1906, Scott’s interest in the Moose Jaw Times had increased to \$1,200. He held 1200 out of the 1320 shares in the company.⁸³ Scott was a businessman who believed in rugged free enterprise where profits came to those who worked hard and invested well. In advising potential newcomers to the province as to how they could settle in this new province, Scott recommended that they go into business as opposed to the public service.

Scott viewed his own business career as part of building Saskatchewan, practising what he preached in building the provincial economy. It was a new land with limitless opportunity for entrepreneurs to build the province and enhance their own private holdings. There is no evidence to show that Scott used his public office for personal gain. Instead, he applied his own philosophy on business development to his personal business career and to building the province.

⁸² SAB., Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to George A. Scott, Davidson, August 31, 1908, 38589.

⁸³ SAB, Provincial Secretary Defunct Company File, # R 348-163, The Times Printing Company Ltd., Moose Jaw.

Where did Scott earn this money and what was his financial worth? As a young man and a newcomer to the West, Scott quickly learned the ways of the frontier entrepreneur. He established a partnership with J. M. Young, his brother-in-law, who was in real estate in Regina. Together they bought land in Regina that could be resold for development. In 1903, Scott wrote to his partner that the time to sell their property was when they would make a profit of 50% or more, and not before.⁸⁴ Scott borrowed money to capitalize on the building boom in the West. When the Regina and Hudson Bay Railway was considering coming to Regina, Scott and Young contemplated borrowing additional money to buy more land on speculation for the new railway. Scott wrote to his brother-in-law that he was “so loaded up with interests in land blocks” that he could not afford to borrow any more money.⁸⁵

Scott generally favoured Canadian ownership of the railways but when it came time to sell land to the railway companies, profit became the sole motive. Scott wrote that notwithstanding his preference for Canadian owned railways, he doubted that William Mackenzie of Canadian Northern would pay his price for the land he owned: “From the personal point of view, if that price can be got from Hill, he is the man to sell to.”⁸⁶

Scott formed financial alliances with not only his brother-in-law but others within the Regina financial community. Scott signed an understanding of agreement

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. M. Young, June 15, 1903, 46584.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, May 30, 1903, 46582.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, September 15, 1903, 46588. J. J. Hill was the owner of the St Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba Railway.

with James Balfour, a local lawyer, to buy 250 shares (worth \$2,500) in The Rundschau Company Limited. All profits and value were to go to Scott from this transaction. Scott's shares were under Balfour's name as a "temporary convenience."⁸⁷ Scott bought shares in the Great West Permanent Loan and Saving Company, the Regina Land and Investment Company Limited, the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, the Rocky Mountain Development Company Limited, Sovereign Life Company, and various gold mines.⁸⁸ Not all of these ventures paid Scott huge dividends but they are examples of how he was able to diversify his investments.

Scott furthered his own newspaper career when he bought The Standard, the Times of Moose Jaw and the Leader of Regina. His motto was that any young man did not necessarily have to have means to start building his fortune; he had to have "industry and pluck" in order to succeed.⁸⁹ By means of a secret deal, Scott and Calder held the mortgage on property, ultimately bought by Famous Players, at the corner of Scarth and 12th, in the heart of Regina.⁹⁰ Scott also held commercial property in Moose Jaw to house his newspaper and an apartment building, and he further diversified his land holdings over the years when he bought a five-acre orchard at Naramata, near Peachland, British Columbia.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Memo of understanding between James Balfour and W. S., February 9, 1904, 80456.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Scott's financial statements, 81730, 81823, 81824, & 81904.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to R. F. Wilson, Cleveland, Ohio, September 24, 1906, 50090.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Calder, July 11, 1919, 15736.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Medicine Hat, December 29, 1909, 8846.

By 1910, according to his financial statement, Scott's investments were beginning to pay off. He realized a profit of \$6, 741 on real estate and \$5,000 from the Times in that year alone.⁹² Ten years later, according to Scott's financial statements, he was worth approximately \$507,000 in shares, property, and cash.⁹³ Because Scott was busy with politics and was travelling for business and personal reasons, J. F. Kerr of the Leader and later J. W. McLeod, his private secretary, held power of attorney over Scott's affairs. J. W. Miller of Moose Jaw was the editor and manager of the Times and, with McLeod, paid Scott's bills and handled his financial affairs even after he resigned as premier in 1916. Not only did Scott have financial assistance from his friends but he had various sources of professional advice in his businesses. Turgeon, the provincial Attorney General, gave free legal advice; Motherwell, the minister of Agriculture, gave advice on how to farm the land Scott owned just outside of Regina; and George Bulyea, the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, provided advice on the operation of Scott's orchard in BC.⁹⁴ His brother-in-law handled the real estate transactions.

There was an apparent conflict of interest for McLeod and Scott. McLeod, as Scott's private secretary, controlled the allocation of government printing contracts to the printing shops within the province, including the Moose Jaw Times. At the same time, McLeod and Miller handled Scott's financial affairs. Allocating printing contracts

⁹² *Ibid.*, Thomas Miller to W. S., April 6, 1911, 80647.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hugh Robson, September 16, 1920, 79401.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, G. H. V. Bulyea to W. S., April 4, 1908, 79627.

to the Times, meant a larger profit margin paid to Scott. It is likely that the public and the opposition members knew of these printing contracts but there is no evidence in the files that anyone ever complained about this apparent conflict of interest.⁹⁵

In 1913, as the winds of war were beginning to blow in Europe, Scott wrote to Miller advising him to be sure to pay Scott's bills and to ensure that he was in sound financial shape. Scott predicted that war could break out in the Balkans, and if it did, money would be in great demand in Europe. This would make it nearly impossible to borrow money in Western Canada.⁹⁶ Scott's prediction came true because when the First World War did erupt in the Balkans, money was scarce for investment in Western Canada. Even though Scott led a busy life, but one troubled by his health, he retained his keen sense of business. He cleverly borrowed and invested in Saskatchewan during a time of expansion and growth. Even though he made his money during good times and was lucky, Scott was financially wise in borrowing money and investing in a wide variety of businesses and agricultural, commercial, and residential properties. His financial astuteness proved to be more important to him in his accumulation of wealth than luck, although a little of that did no harm.

Scott had faith in the province of Saskatchewan and its ability to generate prosperity. As has been shown, Scott was able to create his own wealth through wise business investments. Policies that were good for the province were also beneficial for the businessmen and farmers. Saskatchewan was a land of great opportunity.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, J. W. McLeod to Senator J. H. Ross, November 27, 1916, 79564.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Thomas Miller, February 3, 1913, 80806.

Scott, especially with his poor health, was not able to lead his home province by himself. His faithful supporter and often acting premier when Scott was away due to illness was J. A. Calder. With experience in the school system, Calder had worked in the department of education as deputy commissioner under Frederick Haultain. He studied law and opened a private law office before accepting Scott's invitation to go into the first cabinet in 1905. Scott relied on Calder for advice and support as his man who could and did tend to the small but important details of running a government and political party. Calder never had Scott's public appeal, and he concerned himself with electoral boundaries, returning officers, and campaign details that are so necessary for a successful election. They complemented each other in their strengths and weaknesses. Scott admired Calder, writing, for example, to a friend in Ontario: "Keep your eye on Calder. In my opinion, excepting [Clifford] Sifton, there is not in Western Canada his equal."⁹⁷ Yet there was little doubt in anyone's mind as to who was the head of the government. In 1918, Scott reminisced on his relationship with Calder: "With me Calder did the work and the management, but I had been the real head once on a time and always would have been looked on as a head."⁹⁸ Scott wrote that Calder appeared to be a cold calculating administrator, but actually he had a warm heart.⁹⁹ Scott gave much credit to Calder for the success of the government and to the building of Saskatchewan.

Some of the credit also had to be shared with W. R. Motherwell, one of the

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to S. J. Marten, Kemptville, Ontario, January 5, 1906, 7290.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. S. to James S. Telfer, Regina, July 3, 1918, 16278.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16280.

founders of the Territorial Grain Growers Association and a respected farmer in the Abernathy area. Neither Calder nor Motherwell had been directly involved in territorial politics when Scott picked them as the mainstays of his new government. Scott was often very frustrated with Motherwell's lack of political organization, but he admired him as a friend and a contact with the agricultural community. Motherwell was one of the farmers, a segment of Saskatchewan society that the Scott government relied on to stay in power.¹⁰⁰

The third figure in the community that Scott consulted on a regular basis was the commissioner of the NWMP, A. B. Perry. Scott never missed an opportunity to speak to Perry on behalf of a supporter or constituent for a position within the force or a raise for one of the constables. Scott and Perry became friends as well as leaders in the prairie community. Scott recognized the limits of his power with the NWMP as he wrote to a resident of the province: "You understand, of course, that the Provincial authority has no direct say in the management of the Force which is under Dominion control. All I can do is to try to use what personal influence I may possess with Mr. Perry."¹⁰¹

Saskatchewan was a small community with few leaders within the province, and Scott was friends with them all. Walter Murray at the university, Commissioner Perry with the NWMP, Calder and Motherwell in cabinet, and even Frederick Haultain as leader of the opposition were Scott's friends and colleagues. These men worked and socialized together. Even though they had their differences as to the proper direction of

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. L. Lawler, September 1, 1908, 38742.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. H. Thompson, Wood Mountain, October 15, 1910, 77839.

the province, they shared a goal of making the province the best within the Dominion. Their optimism that they could do this was unlimited.

When Scott called the election for August 14, 1908, less than three years since the last election, the opposition cried foul. The Provincial Rights Party claimed that Scott had called a snap election to catch the opposition off guard. Haultain charged that the provincial Liberals were merely pawns of the federal Liberals and had called the election to test the political winds for Laurier, a charge which Scott denied. Scott claimed that he had called the election to seek a new mandate for railway branch line expansion and to seek fuller representation for the people of the province with a larger Legislative Assembly. The Assembly was expanded from twenty-five to forty-one seats. Scott maintained that the province needed a new legislature to review new rural municipal legislation.¹⁰² During the election campaign, Scott promised railway expansion, including the often promised line to Hudson Bay, increased telephone service, free readers for the schools, and the creation of rural municipalities. Scott's government ran on its record of having provided sound administration.¹⁰³ Scott stressed to the people of the province that he had ties with the federal Liberal government which enabled him to "get things done." As the Canadian Annual Review described him, "Walter Scott was 'the man who does things,' his Government was a creative and constructive one, his friendly relations with the Federal powers would help in continued

¹⁰² David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-1971, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 37. The electoral boundaries were determined by cabinet and ratified in law by the Legislative Assembly.

¹⁰³ Canadian Annual Review, 1908, 492.

development.”¹⁰⁴

The apparent ties between the federal and provincial Liberals became an election issue. Scott realized that it was detrimental to be too closely linked with the federal Liberal party, seeing a risk in devoting too much time and attention to the federal issues at the expense of local concerns.¹⁰⁵ As a sign of Scott’s concern for being too closely tied to the federal Liberals, he asked Calder to resign from a federal election planning committee.¹⁰⁶

In the 1908 provincial election campaign, opposition leader Frederick Haultain complained that the election had been called too early because the voters’ lists were not ready. A new Election Act had created a mechanism for preparing voters’ lists but the time period for appeals to the Court of Revision had not expired before the election call. Haultain argued that this was one more sign that Scott was in the pocket of the federal Liberals. Calling for direct government involvement in the Saskatchewan economy, Haultain supported government ownership of telephones and interior elevators. Manitoba had begun an experiment in government-owned grain elevators and telephones, while the Alberta government already owned and operated the telephone system. These two examples became models for Haultain and the Provincial Rights Party.

On the other hand, Scott’s Liberals favoured limited government involvement in

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 38.

¹⁰⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. A. Lamont, August 31, 1908, 37458.

the economy and preferred a co-operative solution. Scott believed that less government involvement meant lower financial risk to the government and less political interference. Scott's belief in the role of government was based on practical and philosophical considerations.

The Liberals were re-elected on August 14 with a two per cent decrease in popular vote but a two per cent increase in the number of seats.¹⁰⁷ Scott wrote that this majority was large enough to be "sufficient to support a progressive policy while not so large as to be a menace to good government."¹⁰⁸

However, close ties with the federal political system did have advantages. When Calder and Motherwell were defeated in the 1908 provincial election, shortly thereafter they ran in bye-elections which had been caused by two Saskatchewan Members resigning their provincial seats to run federally.¹⁰⁹

As in the 1905 election, there was another infamous libel suit just before the 1908 election, with charges and counter charges flying back and forth. In August 1908, Scott publicly charged that H. W. Laird, a Regina town councillor, had received a "kickback" in a local water works project.¹¹⁰ Laird promptly sued Scott for libel, and then ran for the Provincial Rights Party in the 1908 election. The libel suit did not go to

¹⁰⁷ Smith, 37.

¹⁰⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to T. W. Anderson, Disley, August 19, 1908, 38562.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, 39.

¹¹⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to F. J. Deane, Nelson, December 4, 1908, 46347.

court until well after the election, when the jury was not unanimous but voted in favour of Scott. Even though Scott was cleared, each side had to pay its own legal costs, and a portion of Scott's legal costs was paid by the Liberal Party. Nonetheless, Scott had to pay some of the costs which as he jokingly wrote would save him from, "becoming a bloated capitalist too hastily."¹¹¹

This case is illustrative of the contentious political climate of Saskatchewan elections, where it was common for someone to launch a libel suit against an opposing candidate. The press and the public would then talk about the issue, but there could be no court resolution to the charges until after the election. By that time, the results of the court cases seemed inconsequential. There was, though, an emotional drain on Scott: "These sessions and election campaigns and libel suits are entertaining but, like too much champagne, there may be after-effects."¹¹² Notwithstanding the charges of libel and conflict of interest, Scott's government was renewed for another Legislature with a larger majority than the last election. The people of the province had supported Scott's building program and his goals for the future.

The theme for the Second Legislature was that the foundations for the new province were in place and that it was time for the Legislative Assembly to establish a municipal level of government and to offer loan guarantees to railway companies for the construction of branch lines. In nearly every Speech from the Throne, the Lieutenant Governor mentioned the abundant crops which placed Saskatchewan in the "unrivalled

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Alex Ross, Regina, July 17, 1909, 46476.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Dr. W. R. Sparling, North Battleford, January 22, 1909, 47252.

and unchallenged position as foremost grain producing province in Canada.”¹¹³

During the second term of the Scott government (1908-1912), the Legislative Assembly passed 207 bills. With the influx of new settlers and the abundant wheat crops, the government was active legislatively. However, in comparison with today, the sphere of influence for the provincial government was limited. As will be shown, the Scott government led the province with the philosophy that government should not assume ownership of ventures that could be handled by co-operatives or private enterprise.

¹¹³ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, Second Session of the Second Legislature.

Chapter 6 Agriculture: “The Foundation of Civilization”

The first ten years of the century for Saskatchewan were at a time of remarkable growth and expansion, particularly in agriculture.¹ The population of the province increased five fold and there was rapid expansion in the agricultural industry. Wheat was the primary crop for the prairie land. In 1900, Saskatchewan grew 7.8% of the total production of wheat grown in the nation, but by 1910, Saskatchewan produced 50.7%. In the same period of time, Ontario went from 84.7% to 15% of the total national wheat production. For the province’s economy, with the rapid increase in tilled acreage, wheat production grew from \$4.5 million to nearly \$80 million per year. Agriculture, as the economic backbone of the province, vaulted Saskatchewan into wheat production leadership.²

Even though the agricultural industry was expanding quickly, according to the annual reports of the Department of Agriculture, little new agricultural policy was initiated during the first term of the Scott government. The department concentrated on maintenance of a broad and general service for the farmers of the province. In the 1905 report, Deputy Commissioner J. R. C. Honeyman wrote that there was no report for the

¹ The population of Saskatchewan: 1901 91,279
1906 257,763
1911 492,432.
Census of Canada, 1901, 1906 and 1911.

² *Ibid.*, Acres of field crops in production in Saskatchewan: 1900 655,537
1911 9,136,868.

first eight months of the year because there were “no officials in office to report nor are there any to whom the report could be made.”³ The subsequent reports gave detailed accounts of crop and animal production, weather conditions, vital statistics and public health. For the first few years, the department devoted its energies to establishing reporting procedures and acted as a “general information bureau.”⁴

By 1908, the Department of Agriculture began to reveal new initiatives such as scholarships for men and women studying agriculture and home economics. The big news of the year was the establishment of the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. The school year was from November to March to fit the growing season.

Some of the problems facing the Saskatchewan farmer were the storage and transportation of the rapidly increasing volume of grain being produced. The grain elevator companies and the CPR appeared to the farmers as monopolies with an economic strangle hold on the agricultural industry. Scott expected the federal government to encourage the construction of more rail lines in the West to provide competition to the CPR. Since the railways were carriers of interprovincial and international trade and commerce, they were a federal responsibility. This did not prevent Scott from pressuring the federal government into action. Scott’s experience as a member of the House of Commons and his friendship with Prime Minister Laurier helped him represent Saskatchewan’s interests to the federal government.

Farmers relied on the large grain elevator companies for the storage and sale of

³ Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1905. (Regina: John A. Reid, Government Printer, 1907), 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

their grain. Scott avoided direct government involvement in this industry but used government influence to establish farmer-owned cooperative grain elevator companies.

The tariff, a federally set duty on imports, particularly farm implements and supplies such as binder twine, was another problem area for the agricultural industry. Since tariffs on agricultural goods increased the farmers' cost of production, Scott promoted free trade, particularly with the United States. Even though foreign trade and the tariff policy were within federal jurisdiction, Scott used his influence and election campaigning skills to have the tariff reduced or eliminated. Tariffs were regarded as a necessary evil and were needed for revenue. Scott wanted a reduction and ultimately an elimination of the tariffs once the federal treasury could afford to forgo the revenue.

With transportation and trade under federal jurisdiction, the provincial government had little room to move except to represent western farmers in petitioning the federal government for change. In areas where the provincial government had jurisdiction such as government ownership and control of the grain elevators, Scott was reluctant to have his government involved directly since his government had no one with practical experience in the grain handling and grain marketing business. It was too risky to entrust such an important undertaking to inexperienced administrators.

Even if he did not have much power or jurisdiction in agriculture, Scott was the master at sensing public sentiment and the needs of the province. He knew the importance of agriculture because he had rural roots. Even though his occupation was not directly related to agriculture when he entered politics, Scott soon learned that to be a successful Saskatchewan politician, one had to have rural roots and close ties with the

land. His first inclination in government policy was not to have government directly involved in economic ventures. Yet, as he faced pressures from the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) and demands that the government deal with the many problems that were confronting his constituents, he became more inclined to experiment with having government involved, to a limited extent, in the economy.

As V. C. Fowke, an economist at the University of Saskatchewan, described it: "Much of what the farmer wants from government concerns his livelihood and hence is economic; how he goes about persuading government, and how effective his persuasion, are the substance of politics."⁵ Fowke concluded, however, that the Canadian wheat grower historically had not successfully influenced federal government policy. "It is clear that the grain grower has been anything but successful in having policy made by him rather than for him."⁶ The agricultural industry had some success in gaining assistance from the government, but only if such assistance was deemed to be in the national interest. Agricultural policy did not necessarily improve farming practices but instead tried to keep people on the land.⁷ Agriculture played a secondary role in the Canadian economy, second to the other staple commodities.⁸

For the Scott government, it was somewhat different. At the laying of the

⁵ V. C. Fowke, "Political Economy and the Canadian Wheat Grower." Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (editors), (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), 207.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁷ Vernon C. Fowke, Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 271 & 272.

⁸ *Ibid.*

cornerstone of the first building at the University of Saskatchewan, Scott said that farming was the “foundation of civilization.”⁹ He was adamant that “without farmers this country would be useless.” And further: “agriculture forms the real basis of all business and commerce.”¹⁰ Scott kept the importance of agriculture to the provincial economy in mind in formulating policy: “The Saskatchewan government strives always to remember that agriculture is the foundation industry and as such calls for first attention and the chief attention at the hands of all charged with the conduct of public affairs.”¹¹ This statement highlighted the overall theme of the Liberal government under Premier Scott. Wheat was king and, if the government hoped to stay in power, the interests of the farmers had to be considered first and foremost.

Agriculture was important to more than just the politicians. Reverend George E. Lloyd of the Anglican Church wrote to Scott that “Saskatchewan is primarily and chiefly an agricultural province and probably will always remain so. The development therefore of the whole province should be in the interests of the ‘country life’ rather than the towns and cities.”¹² This was Scott’s sentiment. Let no one believe that the cities could survive without the agricultural economy: “many of us have been forgetting that

⁹ Morning Leader, July 30, 1910.

¹⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. H. Spencer, Medicine Hat, December 17, 1912, 23703.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Victor Ross of The Globe, Toronto, December 2, 1913, 51500.

¹² *Ibid.*, Reverend George Exton Lloyd, Principal of Emmanuel College, Saskatoon, to W. S., September 7, 1915, 34405.

the urban centres have to subsist wholly upon the agricultural population.”¹³

How then could people be encouraged to stay on the land? What could be done to make the rural way of life look more attractive than the city lights? In a speech to members of the Legislative Assembly, Scott said that people would be less inclined to move away from the farms if they had proper services such as roads and telephones.¹⁴ Transportation and communication would shorten the miles between farm families and make life more convenient for everyone. It was the role of government to provide these amenities to support not only an agricultural economy, but an entire way of life. Lloyd and Scott shared the view that agriculture was the best way of life. To live on a farm and produce food meant that you were close to nature. It was wholesome and healthy lifestyle.

One of the key factors in Scott’s leadership was his ability to consult with experts in assessing needs and formulating new policies, an important link with the farming community being the SGGA. The 1913 Canadian Annual Review summed it up: “No single organization in the West had so great an influence in directing legislation as the Grain Growers’ Association of Saskatchewan.”¹⁵ Historian Evelyn Eager noted the close connection between the SGGA and the provincial government, arguing that these close ties were not a coincidence but were “carefully guarded and cultivated” by

¹³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to N. G. Neill, Board of Trade, North Battleford, July 11, 1914, 41312.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott’s notes for a speech in the Legislative Assembly, 1911, 10457.

¹⁵ Canadian Annual Review, 1913, 608.

the Scott government.¹⁶ The SGGGA was a pipeline of information and opinion from the farmers to the government. Scott was also able to reverse the flow from time to time, and used the SGGGA as a means of persuading the farmers to follow the government's lead. In any case, the farm vote was essential to any government wishing to stay in power. The values and needs of the farmers and the way of life of an agricultural society were paramount for Scott and his government.

One of Scott's ways of staying in touch with Saskatchewan farmers was to bring farm leadership into his government.¹⁷ Motherwell and Langley are but two examples of Scott's policy of co-opting the leading farmers into his government. He used their expertise and links with the agricultural community. Historian W. L. Morton noted that the agricultural reform movement in Saskatchewan was incorporated in the government.¹⁸ The Scott cabinet had its fingers on the pulse of the farmer, and in fact the province.

The economy, the climate, the distance between the producer and the markets, and the shortage of cash for the many necessary public projects such as bridges, roads, and buildings, all made living in Saskatchewan a challenge. The only way that people could meet these challenges was to work together cooperatively and to share resources and energies. Together they could overcome the difficulties facing them.

¹⁶ Evelyn Eager, Saskatchewan Government: Politics and Pragmatism, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 47.

¹⁷ David E. Smith, Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-1971, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 55.

¹⁸ W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 35.

With the invention of the telephone, the distances between farm families could be reduced. In an effort to keep people on the farm and to limit the feeling of isolation, the Scott government sought to meet the challenge of providing the telephone to every farm family. Scott was committed to the principle of public ownership of telephones for the long distance lines and the links to other provinces.¹⁹ On the other hand, he felt that it would be “suicidal” for the government to try to provide a telephone to every rural resident: “We have, however, been trying to work out a plan of encouragement to be of practical effect while still leaving enough responsibility on the country people themselves to keep the Government free from the danger of being swamped.”²⁰ This was a delicate balance for the government between offering a service and having the people directly involved in providing their own service.

By mid-summer of 1909, the provincial government took over the existing telephone system from Bell Telephones and encouraged the rural areas to form their own telephone companies composed of local shareholders. They charged rental for the services and looked after their own line construction and repair. The provincial government provided the telephone poles and a coordinating service to the rural telephone companies. Farm families had to show an interest by signing up, and they had to be prepared to invest a small amount of money in the telephone service.²¹ By forming a company, the rural residents took on the responsibility of owning and operating their

¹⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Clifford Sifton, April 15, 1908, 59177.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 59178.

²¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hon A. C. Rutherford, Premier of Alberta, June 1, 1908, 59180.

own service. It was this spirit of cooperation that made it possible for the people of Saskatchewan to blanket the province with a telephone service without having the provincial government assume all of the responsibility.

Encouraging the spirit of cooperation was not the only way of involving people in solving their own problems. Before trying to solve a problem, Scott was a master at pulling together a team of “experts” to study the situation and to make recommendations for a solution. In most cases, after full consultation with the people of the province, the government followed the recommendations of these experts. Scott, however, was not about to leave the solution-finding process just to random chance; he took great care in choosing the membership of each commission. He knew the background and beliefs of each commissioner and in many cases met with the commissioners before they began their work. The final recommendations were thus no surprise to him; they were the product of a carefully executed plan. Yet in all cases, Scott left the impression with the public that the commission was independent and beyond the reach of the government.

Transportation was a key for the Scott government to keep the people on the land. Farm families needed roads for transportation of their grain to the nearby centre and the province needed highways to connect the urban centres. Roads became a cornerstone in the patronage system of the Scott government. In the first two years of the Scott government, roads tended to follow the trails used in pre-settlement times. As the countryside filled with homesteaders, the traffic was forced to move to road allowances. In 1906, the provincial government spent \$91,000 on highways and local roads but the

expenditure increased to \$402,000 a year later.²² Since the municipal level of government was not introduced until 1909, the province assumed responsibility for local roads and highways. Although Scott was not directly involved in the details of planning the routes, his government certainly realized the political power that came with the building of roads. Any community that was bypassed did not have a bright future.

Another mode of transportation with even wider implications was the railway. In order for the farmers to transport their grain to Eastern Canada and on to overseas markets, rail links were essential. The CPR provided an early link, but, without competition to the CPR, the western farmer felt like an economic hostage. The province needed branch lines to serve the newly settled communities, providing grain transportation as well as passenger service. The railway became the economic lifeline of all growing communities. If the railway bypassed a community, there was no hope that the centre would grow. A town without a railway could not attract grain elevators and without the farm trade, the centres withered and died.

With regard to transportation and the need for competition to the CPR, farmers knew that if competing companies built more lines, freight rates, which to the farmers seemed exorbitant, would be reduced.²³ The ever expanding population base required more branch lines.

As early as 1901, the Roblin Government initiated a new railway policy to meet

²² John Archer, Saskatchewan: A History. (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 147.

²³ J. Lorne McDougall, Canadian Pacific: a Brief History, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), 87.

these needs in rural Manitoba.²⁴ The government leased rail lines from the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway for 999 years but then transferred these lines to Canadian Northern on the same lease basis, at the same time providing loan guarantees so that the railway could extend its main line to the Lakehead. In return, the government demanded a ceiling on the freight rates. The key to the Manitoba program was that the government provided financial assistance in order to gain influence in the setting of freight rates.

The problem of getting the grain from the producer to the markets was not unique to Saskatchewan; the Alberta and Manitoba governments faced the same dilemma. After much consultation, the three prairie premiers (R. P. Roblin, A. C. Rutherford and W. Scott) met in Brandon, Manitoba on November 26, 1908. There was a concern that the provinces did not have the jurisdiction over inter-provincial or international trade. Thus, a constitutional amendment to give the provinces power over inter-provincial trade was necessary but not sought.²⁵ Scott hoped that with the improved railway facilities, perhaps the problem of grain transportation would correct itself.²⁶ When the problem of grain transportation did not disappear, Premier Scott came to a realization that he needed to find a “made in Saskatchewan” solution.²⁷

The Saskatchewan government resisted pressure to become involved directly in

²⁴ W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 284.

²⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Nine page agreement signed by the three Premiers, January 29, 1909, 40191.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. M. Bryce, Yellow Grass, February 20, 1909, 40211.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Premier Roblin, December 13, 1909, 40252.

the building of rail lines because Scott believed that railways were the responsibility of the federal government. Yet, the Scott government saw the need to offer incentives to increase rail line construction and competition. The Manitoba government helped Mackenzie and Mann, owners of the Canadian Northern Railway, build branch lines with bond guarantees as early as the turn of the century. It was not until 1908 that the federal government, which provided bond guarantees for the construction of the main lines, persuaded the governments of both Alberta and Saskatchewan to offer similar bond guarantees to promote the construction of railway branch lines. Appropriate legislation was passed in both provinces in 1909.²⁸ The threat that the settlers would leave their land if they did not have adequate rail line transportation for their grain, combined with federal pressure, led the two governments to become involved.

The construction of rail lines was not just a matter of building lines in the areas of greatest need. A promise of a line or the start of construction often helped the sitting government member in his bid for re-election. The politics of railway building was not all glory. A new rail line pleased some citizens but alienated others who had been overlooked.²⁹ Mackenzie and Mann, even though they had their own political preferences, were not involved in partisan politics. They “simply helped and supported those politicians who helped and supported them.”³⁰

Even though the Canadian Northern Railway and the Grand Trunk Pacific

²⁸ T. D. Regehr, The Canadian Northern Railway: Pioneer Road to the Northern Prairies, 1895-1918, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1976), 198.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 199.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

Railway took advantage of the government bond guarantees, the CPR did not. Because the CPR did not have bond guarantees, they were not subject to the same government legal compulsion as the railway companies who had accepted these guarantees. When a citizen was seeking compensation from the CPR, Scott wrote: “unfortunately [,] however [,] my opinion does not count for much with the CPR.”³¹

To illustrate the importance of railways in Saskatchewan politics, Scott delayed the first general election in 1905, waiting for Prime Minister Laurier to announce that the federal government would provide bond guarantees for the construction of a Canadian Northern branch line from the east to Regina to provide competition to a region previously served only by the CPR. Scott even threw out a threat to the Prime Minister that he (Scott) might not take on the leadership of the Liberal party unless the prime minister announced the new rail line: “because upon these items depended to some degree the answer I have been recently thinking of giving, with regard to the important proposition that the convention [August 1905] may very likely present to me.”³² Railways became important means of distributing patronage. Scott, for example, wrote to the federal minister of railways seeking assistance awarding a particular company with a contract to build a Grand Trunk Pacific line near Portage La Prairie, arguing that this company should receive the contract because they were “good friends

³¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to H. F. Tyhurst, Regina, September 27, 1905, 54432.

³² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Prime Minister Laurier, August 12, 1905, 6068.

of ours.”³³

The transportation of grain was not the only problem facing the farmers. Even though railways were built to transport the grain, and branch lines were spreading across the province, the major barrier in the system was in the storage, loading and selling of the grain.³⁴ Most elevators were owned by a few large companies, creating an impression that they had a monopoly and were in business not necessarily for the best interests of the farmer. When the SGGGA pressured the government to find a solution to the eastern companies that were stifling the western grain industry, Scott argued that a commission should be appointed to recommend solutions. As with most other commissions, finding the correct experts to serve was the difficult part. When searching for qualified commissioners, Scott often consulted with Walter Murray, President of the University of Saskatchewan. The political stripe of the potential commissioner was not necessarily an important factor. In writing to Murray, Scott said: “Where you procure him [the potential commissioner] matters not,—from either side of the line, -- granted that he carries the qualifications and what these are you will understand much better than I do.”³⁵

Scott was careful to portray the outward image of an independent commission,

³³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hon. H. R. Emerson, Minister of Railways, August 11, 1905, 77138.

³⁴ For a full account of the formation and development of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, see: Robert Scott Irvine, “Farmers’ Expectations and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company,” (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988).

³⁵ U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, Series 1, B. 105, W. S. to Walter Murray, December 31, 1909.

but, since every commission needed some “guidance,” the government appointed people who were in tune with its philosophy. Scott wrote to Murray that “it will be a mistake to assume that no care is needed towards properly guiding the enquiry which is underway.”³⁶ However, the government allowed the commissions latitude to search for all possible solutions. Scott saw the need for some freedom for the commissions: “Unless a condition is radically unsound and wrong a complete ventilation can do no ultimate harm and any condition which is unsound and wrong ought to be ventilated and reformed.”³⁷ Political considerations were to be only one factor. Jim Calder, Scott’s key cabinet colleague, reflected Scott’s attitudes about the composition of the commissions: “You [A. S. Smith] will doubtless appreciate the importance of our securing the services of the best available men for the work in question. While political consideration [*sic*] have to be borne in mind there are other factors in a matter of this kind that cannot be overlooked.”³⁸

The SGGGA put considerable pressure on the Scott government by passing resolutions calling for it to purchase existing elevators and become involved in the grain-handling system.³⁹ Notwithstanding this pressure and a general trend toward

³⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Walter Murray, December 4, 1915, 34444.

³⁷ U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, Series 1, B. 105, W. S. to Walter Murray, December 4, 1915.

³⁸ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, J. A. Calder to A. S. Smith, Moosomin, September 10, 1906.

³⁹ SAB, Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association Convention Reports, 1902-1926, B.2, I-3, 7th annual report, February 12 & 13, 1908, and 8th annual report, February 17-19, 1909.

public ownership, Scott announced that a commission would be established to examine all avenues for a solution to the grain elevator problem. In most cases where Scott established a commission, he had a preferred general course of action and chose commissioners with similar preferences. It was then up to the commission to examine the matter carefully, to explore other options and to recommend a practical and detailed course of action. In the case of the grain elevators, Scott believed that having the government directly involved in the ownership and operation of the elevators would “be attended by grave economic and political dangers.”⁴⁰ Instead, he favoured a system somewhat similar to the telephone system that his government had just established whereby there would be “the granting of a measure of Government aid sufficient to make a locally owned system financially possible and leaving the responsibility of the maintenance and operation upon the local communities.”⁴¹ Scott hoped a way could be found to avoid a situation of having to own the elevators, writing to his old friend and political ally, Jim Ross: “Probably some scheme will be worked out for a system of elevators free from public control but without the Government directly having to do with the operation.”⁴² Even though no easy solution seemed apparent, Scott hoped that “the application of good common sense to such a question will remove the seeming

⁴⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to A. W. Frye, Kinley, December 29, 1909, 39932.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Premier Roblin, December 13, 1909, 40252 and W. S. to J. H. Ross, December 13, 1909, 9333.

difficulties.”⁴³ From the beginning of the commission, Scott believed a cooperative program could be a possible solution.

It may seem contradictory that, even though Scott had the image of being a good listener, he drew conclusions before receiving commission reports. It is not. Scott had his beliefs, principles and plans for the province. As a skilful politician, he did not ask a question without knowing the answer. He did not establish a commission and choose its membership without having a general picture of what the commission would be inclined to recommend. Scott listened to the people but he was not surprised by what he heard, a sign that he was in touch with public sentiment.

Thus on February 26, 1910, the government established the Magill commission, chaired by Professor Robert Magill, of Dalhousie University, one of the candidates proposed by President Murray. Of the other two members of the commission, F. W. Green was the Secretary Treasurer of the SGGGA while George Langley was a director of the SGGGA and a Liberal Member of the Legislature. The commission was thus a combination of an economics expert along with two representatives from the key agricultural organization in the province. Since the SGGGA had favoured a government-owned elevator company as one way of breaking the perceived eastern monopoly, one would assume that the commission would have recommended such a government-owned system. However, historically the SGGGA had supported cooperative ventures. In the end, the commissioners favoured a system somewhat similar to the one Scott had outlined privately in his correspondence with Green and Langley, a system of cooperative

⁴³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Medicine Hat, February 25, 1910, 9609.

ownership and operation with government financial backing.⁴⁴ Scott had been prepared to take a risk of opposing the firm recommendation of the SGGA of government ownership for a cooperative system. Political scientist Duff Spafford asserted that Scott moved on intuition to propose through a commission something that was at first thought to be opposite to what the grain growers' association had wanted. Scott had read the situation like an "inventive genius."⁴⁵

On October 28, 1910, Scott wrote to Magill saying that he was happy with the report and noting that the report was unanimous.⁴⁶ Representatives of the SGGA received advance copies of the commission report so that, Scott hoped, the association would react before he publicized his response. He intimated to the SGGA that he favoured the report but was cagey in not wanting to commit himself publicly before knowing the reaction of the association.⁴⁷ Scott also had to balance the business interests of the province. He urged Dr Magill to handle the matter carefully so that the business interests of the province would not resent having the elevator company receive support from the province while business would not.⁴⁸

It was Premier Scott and not W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, who

⁴⁴ D. S. Spafford, "The Elevator Issue, the Organized Farmers And the Government, 1908-11." *Saskatchewan History*, 15, no. 3 (1962): 84. See also *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. H. V. Bulyea, December 29, 1909, 39938.

⁴⁵ Spafford, 91 & 92.

⁴⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Dr. Magill, October 28, 1910, 40491.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to F. W. Green, Moose Jaw, January 12, 1911, 40521.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Dr. Magill, March 18, 1911, 40584.

introduced the Bill in the Legislature to establish the Cooperative Elevator Company. Bill number 25, entitled “An Act to Incorporate the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company,” received third reading and Royal Assent on March 14, 1911. As time would show, the elevator company provided a successful service to the farming industry and was profitable as well. The company was not a burden on the government. The board of directors of the company came from the executive of the SGGa. Charlie Dunning, a member of the executive of SGGa, became the first General Manager of the elevator company.

In contrast to the Saskatchewan solution, the Manitoba government in 1910 bought or built grain elevators rather than supporting cooperatives. Public ownership of community services was a prevalent idea in Manitoba at that time.⁴⁹ The company bought less profitable elevators that the private grain elevator companies were more than willing to sell. The government responded to farmer pressure and built new elevators in locations that often did not have the grain volume to support a profitable elevator. Unfortunately for the Manitoba government, there were no incentives built into the system to encourage the farmers to use the government system. Individual farmers had no financial stake in the government elevators. For these reasons the Manitoba grain elevators suffered great financial losses.

Through an independent but carefully chosen and guided commission, Scott came up with a solution that won the farmers over to his point of view. Once he had convinced the SGGa to share his point of view, this organization became the means of

⁴⁹ Morton, Manitoba, 290.

bringing the farming population on side.

Harold S. Patton called this a solution “without precedent in the history of governmental relations with agricultural producers.”⁵⁰ Political scientist David E. Smith concluded that Scott had avoided the government ownership of the elevator system not out of ideological considerations but for practical reasons.⁵¹ As previously shown, Scott wanted to avoid government ownership with the possible drain on the public purse and any political fallout that could come from having the government involved in the day-to-day administration of the company. On the other hand, it also has been shown that Scott, from the beginning, supported the concept of using independent commissions to find solutions to the province’s problems. In his correspondence, Scott indicated privately that he favoured, ideologically, a cooperative elevator system as he had done with the telephone system as a means of ensuring that the customer was fully behind the project. The farmer who had money invested in the telephone system or the grain elevator company would be more conscientious in using that service, thus ensuring that it was a profitable venture. The government, for Scott, would be involved in the background but would not take the responsibility away from the user groups. To be successful, Scott believed that the user had to assume much of the responsibility for the service, whether it was telephones or grain elevators. Consequently, this was an ideological decision as much as a practical one. The SGGA, a farmers’ cooperative from its inception, had parted from its original principles in demanding government-owned grain elevators.

⁵⁰ Harold S. Patton, Grain Growers’ Cooperation in Western Canada, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 98.

⁵¹ Smith, Prairie, 56.

Scott, through a commission, had persuaded the largest agricultural lobby group to return to its founding principles and to his own point of view.

Scott had been willing to compromise with the SGGA on several details but was able to convince it of the merits of his arguments. The Liberals supported cooperative action, protected by government regulation. In this case, it was the federal government that regulated the grain industry. In swinging the SGGA to the Liberal point of view, Scott was also able to steal the political thunder from the Conservative opposition, boasting to a political supporter that he had outsmarted Haultain who was left out in the cold.⁵² Frederick Haultain, as leader of the opposition, had initially been on the side of the farmers, the SGGA and government ownership of the elevators believing this to be a stable position. With the Commission's report and Scott's ability to convince the SGGA to support cooperative action, Haultain was left in the position of either changing his point of view, or voting against the cooperative grain elevator system and thus against the interests of the farmers of Saskatchewan. He ultimately supported the philosophical point of view taken by Premier Roblin that the government should own the elevators and provide the service to the farmers. As it turned out, the Manitoba experiment proved to be a failure. Haultain, outmanoeuvred by Scott, was left supporting a failed point of view and was on the opposite side of the fence from the farmers.

Scott was quite pleased with himself over the elevator issue, as evident in a letter to Jim Ross:

⁵² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to A. Hitchcock, February 24, 1911, 10677 and W. S. to W. M. Martin, February 11, 1911, 10847.

We simply hammered Haultain all over the lot and he holds the short end now on every question, having been foolish enough to make a straight issue of the question of Elevators doubtless expecting that his Tory friends were going to succeed in stampeding the Grain Growers' Convention against our legislation.⁵³

The Regina Leader was enthusiastic in its report on the proceedings in the Legislature over the elevator question, proclaiming in a headline: "Premier Scott Delivers Great Speech on The New Grain Growers' Elevator Bill." The newspaper called Scott's speech "masterly and comprehensive."⁵⁴ In revealing his philosophy on how to find a solution to a problem, Scott said in the Legislature that he and his colleagues did not know the answers to every important matter and thus they had "availed themselves of the services of experts."⁵⁵ Scott concluded by saying: "My main reason for wishing the non-partisan support of all parties in the house for the measure is ... there will be vastly more reason to hope for the unanimous adoption of the solution by the farmers of the province, without which the fullest degree of success for the scheme cannot be expected." The speech ended with "loud and prolonged cheering."⁵⁶

Scott was also consistent in not wanting the government to make large financial commitments to solve the elevator problem. He favoured, for practical and ideological

⁵³ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, W. S. to Jim Ross, March 30, 1911.

⁵⁴ Morning Leader, February 8, 1911.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* It may be argued that the Morning Leader was a Liberal paper and thus offered a bias view of the events. Nearly all newspapers of this era professed partisan political views but they had to be accurate in their reporting to maintain their credibility. If they lost the trust of their readership, subscriptions and profits would drop significantly.

reasons, a cooperative system whereby the farmers would have to sign up to become members of the elevator company. In so doing, the farmers made a commitment to use the elevators, thus making the company financially viable. The government took some risk in providing financial backing but, this risk was significantly reduced if the farmers owned and operated the company.⁵⁷

The second major issue for the farming population of Saskatchewan was reciprocity, and by March, 1911, Walter Scott came out fully in favour of it.⁵⁸ This became the key issue between the Liberals and Conservatives in the federal election of 1911, with the Laurier Liberals favouring reciprocity, a program of lowering the tariffs with the Americans. In the West, the farmers saw the lowering of Canadian tariffs on goods imported from the United States as a way to reduce agricultural input costs. Farm machinery and binder twine could be imported into Western Canada cheaper than from Ontario or Quebec if there was no Canadian tariff. This tariff was seen for what it was, a protection of Eastern Canadian manufacturing interests at the expense of western agricultural profits. The Conservatives, led by Robert Borden, defeated Laurier on this particular issue. The Saskatchewan voters had supported the Liberals but the national

⁵⁷ Even though Scott was guarded in providing government backing for cooperative elevators, his government's policy on loan guarantees for railway construction was less cautious. The government offered railway loan guarantees without having the farmers buy shares in the railway or commit to using the railway for transportation of their goods. In contrast to the elevators situation, the farmers usually had access to one railway company and thus were forced to use their services. Since this was an era when railways were extending their tracks by popular demand, the government was more confident in taking risks with the railways than with the grain elevators.

⁵⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Col. Denison, Toronto, March 18, 1911, 10550.

trend was against them.

Notwithstanding the Laurier government's defeat, Scott was delighted with how he had been able to outmanoeuvre Haultain once again. In supporting the Conservative national stance, Haultain supported the tariffs, but in so doing, he once again alienated the farm sector of the Saskatchewan population. In writing to Martin, Scott took full credit for outsmarting Haultain but was disappointed that the federal Liberals gave him no credit for this political victory.⁵⁹ Scott favoured a trade-preference policy with England because it would be a "token of Imperial relationship" and would create a tax decrease for the Canadian consumer.⁶⁰ In 1915, Scott chided a colleague in British Columbia for his rejection of reciprocity in the 1911 election, arguing that the BC fruit growers would suffer with the tariffs because their domestic market was small in comparison to the domestic market available to the American growers. Scott revealed that at one point, he had considered moving to BC due to his asthma, but because of the reciprocity vote he had decided against this move: "I want to live amongst a people whom [where] there may be at least a saving remnant of lovers of freedom in which great and actual development and progress is possible."⁶¹

Scott was able to capitalize on the pro-reciprocity stance of the Saskatchewan voters in 1911 when he called the provincial election in 1912. In his later assessment, one of the reasons that the Liberals won the provincial 1912 election was due to the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. M. Martin, March 18, 1911, 10876.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to H. N. Robson, London, England, February 15, 1906, 58342.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. Kidston, Vernon, B.C., December 4, 1915, 58352.

public support of free trade. These positive results for Scott were another sign that the next federal election would be more positive for the Liberals.⁶²

According to Scott, the sweeping verdict given by the electors of Saskatchewan on July 11th

proves conclusively that the cause of wider markets and freer trade is still a remarkably live question in the West and will continue to be until the people in this part of the Dominion obtain what they feel they are justly entitled to. The outcome of our recent contest is greatly encouraging those who profess allegiance to the cause of Liberalism and the principles for which our party stands.⁶³

To Scott, Liberalism meant freer trade.

Even though Manitoba farmers had much to gain from reciprocity, the 1911 election results in Manitoba were somewhat different from those in Saskatchewan. Eight out of ten Manitoba federal ridings voted Conservative, with voters in Winnipeg and the railway towns seeing a vested interest in the east-west rail trade. Tariffs protected this trade. Winnipeg, as a railway centre and gateway to Western Canada, feared that reciprocity could increase the north-south trade with the United States along the Sault railway line. If reciprocity was achieved, it was possible that Moose Jaw or Regina could become a larger trade distribution centre than Winnipeg. W. L. Morton attributed this Conservative support in Manitoba to “old Ontario loyalties and British Canadian nationalism.”⁶⁴ Saskatchewan and Alberta did not follow Manitoba’s lead and elected mostly Liberal members.

⁶² *Ibid.*, W. S. to M. G. Cameron, Goderich, Ontario, August 13, 1912, 39542.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. H. Burrows, Raymore, August 2, 1912, 39597.

⁶⁴ Morton, Manitoba, 324.

Toward the end of Scott's second term in government, the issue of ownership of Crown lands came to the fore again.⁶⁵ During the autonomy bill debates in 1905, Scott had reluctantly agreed to leave the crown lands with the Dominion government as long as there was proper compensation paid to the provinces. Scott went so far as to say that even after the West was filled with settlers, there likely would be no need for the provinces to assume responsibility for the remaining crown lands. Haultain and the Provincial Rights Party had argued that the federal government should have granted the land to the provinces. By February 6, 1911, Scott wrote to W. M. Martin complaining that the federal government was undercutting his policy on crown lands, emphasizing that the Saskatchewan Liberal party's stance was to ask for all lands that were not suitable for homesteading. The federal government was to keep the agricultural land so as to be able to continue the immigration policy and to continue to pay the financial subsidies to the provinces.⁶⁶ Scott held out for the greatest financial gain for the province. Publicly he supported provincial ownership of crown lands but was willing to use this stance to gain greater federal subsidies from the federal government in lieu of this ownership. Since the federal grants were more generous for homestead land, Scott was content to leave them with the government in Ottawa. However, for the marginal lands, the federal grants were inadequate, in Scott's opinion, and should be transferred to the province. Scott based his stance on gaining the maximum grant from the federal government with provincial ownership of the less lucrative marginal lands. On March

⁶⁵ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1912.

⁶⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. M. Martin, February 6, 1911, 10843.

29, 1911, Scott wrote to Prime Minister Laurier claiming Saskatchewan was \$800,000 richer because of the federal financial subsidies in lieu of the crown lands.⁶⁷

In a debate in the legislature on March 17, 1911, Scott argued that the province would be better off if it had control of the mineral rights and the lands in the North. The federal government could continue to control the arable land but the remainder should be transferred to the province.⁶⁸ After the 1911 federal election, with Laurier's defeat, Saskatchewan pushed even harder to gain the crown lands. On January 8, 1913, Scott moved a resolution in the Legislative Assembly calling on the federal government to transfer crown lands to the province, though he had to explain why his position on crown lands was different from that of 1905. He insisted that his new stance was not due to Borden's election in Ottawa, stating: "I have every reason to believe that Saskatchewan is being systematically neglected by the Dominion agencies."⁶⁹ The federal government had no administrative policy concerning coal and other natural resources. Since these resources were under federal jurisdiction in the three prairie provinces and nowhere else in Canada, there was no policy to guide the public service in how to handle these resources. Scott viewed this bureaucratic inaction as neglect and thus Saskatchewan had to demand greater control of public lands, particularly on non homestead land. The timing of Scott's increased pressure for control of the crown lands though is coincidental with the defeat of the Laurier government. However, it may have

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, W.S. to Wilfrid Laurier, March 29, 1911, 50510.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, File M1, Scott IV, 109. Collection of speeches. 46248-46269.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 46266. See also Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 3rd Legislature, 1st Session, 1912-13, January 8, 1913, 143.

been that he was playing politics with the crown lands of the province in order to embarrass the Borden government.

The lack of adequate credit was another serious problem plaguing the Saskatchewan agricultural community. Farmers had short-term loans from merchants or banks, but also mortgages to cover the purchase of machinery or land. Even though the mortgages were intended to be short-term, farmers were usually able to pay the interest but unable to clear the principal, resulting in the renewal of the mortgage. With the commodity prices, freight rates, and operating costs all beyond their control, the farmers felt vulnerable to outside interests. As farmers accused the CPR of robbing them of their hard-earned cash, so too were the banks, with their interest rates, guilty of the same charge.

The need for farming to be improved to create a better way of life for the whole province was reflected in the Saskatchewan slogan: "Better farming, better business, better living."⁷⁰ In September 1912, Premier Scott travelled to Germany to study its agricultural conditions and its system of agricultural credit.⁷¹ He was particularly interested in the German Raiffeisenschaften, which were cooperative institutions offering vital services to the public. "Cheap money" had been a plank in the 1912 election campaign. Determined to find a solution for the farmers' need for available loans, Scott initiated the process to find appropriate commissioners to look at finding solutions for this trying problem in January 1913. The Saskatchewan Royal Commission

⁷⁰ Report of the Agricultural Credit Commission. (Regina: Government Printer, 1913), 2.

⁷¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, 41198.

was appointed to review recommendations from an international commission, made up of representatives of agricultural states and provinces, which reviewed agricultural credit conditions in Europe. As was his usual practice, Scott consulted with Walter Murray, who agreed that Dr. E. H. Oliver, the founder and Principal of St. Andrew's College, a theological college on the University of Saskatchewan campus, would be a suitable candidate.⁷² J. H. Haslam, Scott's political friend and former business partner, together with Charles Dunning, General Manager of the Coop Elevator Company, were the other two members of the commission. After travelling throughout Canada and to Europe looking for solutions, the commission found that the lack of cheap money was a problem for farmers around the world. When the European farmers organized themselves in cooperatives, better and cheaper agricultural credit became available which led to a healthier agricultural industry. As a result, rural life became "more comfortable, mentally more satisfying and socially more enjoyable."⁷³

The commission presented its report to the Legislature on October 15, 1913, recommending a system whereby the farmers would be able to obtain credit on a cooperative basis. Again the provincial government would offer financial backing but the system itself would be controlled by the farmers. The Farm Mortgage Association was to charge only enough interest to cover its costs and to establish amortization periods so that the farmers could pay off their debts. The Royal Commission believed

⁷² U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, Series 1, B. 105, W. S. to Walter Murray, January 24, 1913.

⁷³ Report of the Agricultural Credit Commission, (Regina: Government Printer, 1913), 2.

that benefits from the new agricultural credit system would “extend to every department of our moral, social and political life.”⁷⁴ The report stressed cooperation, arguing that farmers working together, with government help at arms length, would improve the standard of living for all of the citizens of the province.

Bill 66, entitled The Saskatchewan Cooperative Farm Mortgage Association, was given Royal Assent in the Legislative Assembly on December 19, 1913. However, the outbreak of the war in Europe in August 1914, meant that credit was no longer available and the government could not implement the Agricultural Credit program.⁷⁵ Military financial requirements took precedence over agricultural credit needs.

Since outstanding farm debt remained a problem for the farming industry, Scott saw the need for the government to step in to protect the farmers, though he was wary of doing so because he did not want to destroy the province’s credit rating with a moratorium.⁷⁶ By the fall of 1914, the Scott government was under great pressure to place a moratorium on farm loans to protect the farmers’ interests. The government applied pressure to the loan companies in an attempt to stop them from foreclosing on farmers. By September 26, 1914, Premier Scott announced the government had decided not to introduce moratorium legislation but to work to protect individual cases where necessary, and where the war caused the debt problem: “After careful study the Government has come to conclusion that there is too much danger of the credit of the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Charles A. Magrath, April 16, 1915, 22636.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to P. P. Kroeker, Herbert, September 10, 1914, 22817.

Province being irretrievably damaged by the enforcement of a moratorium to make it a safe or admissible procedure.”⁷⁷ Although the Legislative Assembly passed an Act in September 1914, to permit the Lieutenant Governor in Council to postpone certain debts of farmers who could not repay their loans because they were away at the war, he did not use these powers.⁷⁸ Scott tried to use his personal influence with loan companies to protect certain farmers, succeeding only in certain cases. By October 1915, with the farm debt picture looking more stable, Scott was less inclined to interfere with the thorny farm debt situation. He was reluctant to have government interfere with “private business affairs.”⁷⁹ He wrote:

I quite agree that nothing but the most extreme cause [*sic*] could justify interference by a Government between debtor and creditor but I submit that such extreme cause did exist in the autumn of 1914. Fortunately this Province has been favored in 1915 and I think the necessity for the practice which was followed last winter is past and gone.⁸⁰

Throughout his premiership, Scott was reluctant to intervene in agricultural commerce for fear that this action would frighten the “Old Country Capitalist” and do more harm to the provincial economy: “I wish you to believe therefore that the Saskatchewan Government has gone no further in the legislation respecting this matter than we believe to be absolutely imperative.”⁸¹ Scott was true to his principles even

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Henry Vogt, October 1, 1914, 22867.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. R. Lamb, Bank of Toronto, Winnipeg, October 28, 1914 and to Robert Finlayson, Broadview, December 4, 1915, 22875 & 22971.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to E. H. Trew, Alticane, October 14, 1915, 22950.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Robert Finlayson, Broadview, December 4, 1915, 22971.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to R. S. Hudson, Toronto, May 6, 1908, 23021.

during the harsh economic climate of the war.

Scott met the situation of farm loans with a typical reaction: reluctant to have the government interfere, he nonetheless saw the need to have the farmers protected. He implemented some short-term solutions and used personal influence. He replied to countless letters from farmers seeking financial assistance with sympathy and empathy, but in most cases Scott had to report that nothing more could be done: "It is a very unfortunate case which you [a farmer seeking help] have suffered through and I can assure you that you have my very best sympathy. If the Government could possibly help you any further it would be done but I am convinced that there is nothing more which we can do."⁸² On the other hand, Scott was impatient with any farmer who was in financial trouble due to his own foolishness. The government was not going to help any of these farmers:

In reality no law can absolutely prevent men being foolish. Take away men's responsibility, that is to say, protect them completely against the possibility of their own foolishness and very soon we would have a set of weaklings in the country. It is only by withstanding temptation that character is made strong.⁸³

On these occasions, Scott demonstrated his Presbyterian work ethic. Government was there to protect the weak, only if circumstances beyond their control caused their plight.

The pattern of establishing commissions to examine problems related especially to the farm economy was followed again in December 1912, when the Scott government appointed a commission on hail insurance. The commission recommended a municipal

⁸² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Joseph Schafer, Lafleche, October 21, 1910, 23994.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Alex Foulson, Tugaske, November 28, 1913, 30739.

hail insurance commission which would use cooperative principles to provide hail insurance to farmers and would operate at arms length from the government.⁸⁴ The solution for hail insurance followed the pattern set by the telephone and grain elevator companies. The Co-operative Commission ensured that the public was willing to invest its own time and money in the venture and kept the government out of the day-to-day operation of the company. This system placed the responsibility for the programs squarely on the shoulders of the public involved.

The right of women to hold property in Saskatchewan was another challenge for the Scott government in its third legislative mandate. Since most of the property in Saskatchewan was agricultural land, the issue of joint property rights to the homestead quarter was of concern to the government. Scott was at first reluctant to intervene between a husband and wife relating to property rights, convinced that this was another area where the government should not interfere. Premier Scott wrote to Mrs. Jennie White that: "There are some spheres in which law is powerless and the matrimonial estate when one of the parties turns out to be heartless and bad, whether it be the man or the woman, is such a sphere."⁸⁵ Mrs. White did not give up and wrote the premier again on May 14, 1915, urging the government to pass legislation giving married women the right to ownership of property, particularly farm land that they had jointly accumulated with their husbands.⁸⁶ Scott replied that he could not believe any man could act so badly

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Ralph Bamford, Jansen, October 22, 1913, 42101.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs. Jennie White, Moosomin, December 23, 1909, 59432.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Mrs. Jennie White to W. S., May 14, 1915, 59443.

toward her: "I quite understand, however, that a mere expression of sympathy is of very little use to you."⁸⁷ By the following July, Mrs. White's perseverance paid off when the Scott government introduced legislation to protect a woman's right to property.

It is not hard to tell why Scott was able to win ever larger majorities each election. With his sympathetic ear to listen to the people's complaints and the legislative reaction when necessary, he convinced the voters that he cared about their plight. Scott had to overcome his reluctance to have government become involved in the daily lives of people, but he was prepared to act with the force of law when the need was there. A greater right for women, the right to vote which will be discussed later, was to be granted by the Scott government in the year to follow.

Not only was Walter Scott proud of his government's many successes, he had outmanoeuvred his opponent, Frederick Haultain. However, the political battles did not seem to create a barrier between these two men. Scott's healthy respect for his political opponent was tainted by pity for the plight of the Leader of the Opposition: "He [Haultain] is in reality not a bad person at bottom. His main difficulty, I think, is that he has not sufficient back-bone and permits unwise associates to sway him in wrong directions."⁸⁸ Scott had shown an ability to listen to the wishes of the people and had been able to adjust his sails to the direction of the public wind in time to remain popular. He had been able to manoeuvre Haultain to his opponent's detriment.

Scott's record in listening to the farmers' concerns and appointing experts to find

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs. Jennie White, May 19, 1915, 59451.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to D. S. Williams, Vancouver, February 4, 1911, 11183.

solutions had paid off for the Liberals. On reciprocity, grain elevators, hail insurance, agricultural credit, and rural telephone companies, Scott had the interests of the farmer and rural residents at heart. His government's policies made agriculture the cornerstone of the province's economy. Services were offered to the people of Saskatchewan to encourage them to continue living on the farm. Agriculture was not only good politics, but it was a healthy way of life. Scott believed that if farmers could be as comfortable on the farm as in town, they would stay on the farm and continue to grow the wheat crops that already earned Saskatchewan the reputation as being the bread basket of the world.

Chapter 7 Pending Calamity

One night he went to bed late, and found it difficult to sleep; thoughts raced through his brain, scenes and images forming and reforming with inconceivable rapidity; at last he fell asleep, to awake an hour or two later in an intolerable agony of mind. His heart beat thick and fast, and a shapeless horror seemed to envelop him. He struck a light and tried to read, but a ghastly and poisonous fear of he knew not what seemed to clutch at his mind. At last he fell into a broken sleep; but when he rose in the morning, he knew that some mysterious evil had befallen him.... For that day and for many days he wrestled with a fierce blackness of depression.¹

Even though the above quotation is not about Walter Scott, it describes the depths of depression that he experienced often. From early childhood, Scott had suffered from chronic illnesses. Asthma was a continual complaint as he attended school and was one of the reasons given as to why he moved west at age seventeen. Pneumonia struck him in 1906-1907, followed by a “breakdown.” When did his mental illness begin and how did it affect his political career? It will be shown that 1911 was a watershed year in Scott’s deteriorating health. For five years following this “breakdown,” Scott was able to cover his symptoms and, with winter holidays, continue his political career. However, during 1912, Scott missed the annual Session of the Legislature and the official opening of the Legislative Building. He returned to Saskatchewan only for the election campaign

¹ Janet Oppenheim, “Shattered Nerves”: Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3. Direct quotation from Arthur Christopher Benson, Beside Still Waters, (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s, 1907), 48.

but quickly left again shortly after polling day. From this point onward, Scott was not able to regain his health which ultimately led to his retirement four years later.

At the turn of the century, psychologists and physicians, not having developed an understanding of manic depression, attempted various cures by trial and error with little success. In the Victorian and Edwardian eras in Britain, and to a great extent in Canada, physicians thought that more women than men suffered from depression. A paternalistic society controlled women who were “insane” and institutionalized them for their ailments.² Silas Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia, a well-known therapist in the treatment of depression, prescribed rest, excessive feeding, massage, seclusion, and electricity.³ He intended this therapy to build up the patient’s fat and blood as a way of restoring his or her mental health. Critics of this therapy claimed that Mitchell merely exercised control over women in his clinic until they rediscovered their docile ways and were again subservient to their husbands. Notwithstanding this criticism, Mitchell had a following of people who believed that he had a cure for this dreaded and debilitating disease, depression.

One of the most common symptoms of depression was insomnia and its accompanying feeling of helplessness and an inability to make decisions.⁴ People with depression in the Victorian era took to the “invalid’s sofa” or undertook long voyages,

² Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 138.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Oppenheim, 3.

usually by sea, in search of a cure and “renewed vitality.”⁵ Medical science had yet to discover the connection between ailments of the mind and the body. Physicians knew little about a cure for this ailment, often called a breakdown, nervous collapse, exhaustion, or prostration. Diagnosis depended upon gender and class, women were more often diagnosed with nervous collapse than were men. If a person of a lower class exhibited these symptoms, it was diagnosed as “lunacy.” For a person of the upper classes, the same ailment was called “nervous collapse.”⁶ Private costly clinics located in quiet rural settings provided treatment for the upper classes through peace and tranquillity, as well as seclusion from the daily events of life. Anonymity, if the patient so desired, was another benefit offered by the exclusive private clinics.

Unlike today, at the turn of the century there was little disgrace in suffering from depression. Nervous breakdown was a “torture to be endured, not a sin to be concealed.”⁷ Yet this posed a problem for the people who subscribed to the Victorian work ethic in an age of productivity and ambition. It was fashionable for the well-to-do to take a rest at a clinic or to travel extensively by sea. However, there was an inner conflict between this life of relaxation and the work ethic that was promoted after the industrial revolution.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4 & 5. For a discussion of the “vitalist” theory or the view that women had a limited amount of energy in comparison to men see: Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 29 and Helen Lenskyj, Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, and Sexuality, (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1986), 39.

⁶ Oppenheim, 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

A prevailing attitude at this time as well was that each person had only a limited amount of energy. Once this energy was depleted, a person needed prolonged periods of rest to restore vitality. Women had much less vitality than men.

Although there existed no single prescription for the cure of the shattered nerves, virtually all of the therapeutic methods employed during the Victorian and Edwardian decades sought to address both somatic and psychological distress, restoring the depleted supplies of nerve force that precipitated the collapse and calming whatever form of mental strain exacerbated it.⁸

Many doctors considered blood-letting and purging as a way of treating mental illness. Patients gave up blood or took laxatives to rid the body of wastes in the belief that the mind would then be able to function more clearly. Massage and electroshock therapy were beneficial in producing a cure.⁹

Dr. Weir Mitchell, neurologist and author of Blood and Fat, tried many of these therapies at his clinic in Philadelphia.¹⁰ Outdoor exercise with fresh air was part of the cure. In Britain, depression seemed to be common amongst the intellectual leadership. Charles Darwin took up horseback riding as a means to a cure. Thomas Henry Huxley, Francis Galton and Michael Faraday were other well-known names in British society who tried various cures for their “nervous exhaustion.”¹¹ As for outdoor exercise,

⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁰ S. Weir Mitchell, Fat and Blood: An Essay on the Treatment of Certain Forms of Neurasthenia and Hysteria. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1885).

¹¹ Oppenheim, 122 & 130. Michael Faraday was born in 1791 and became a physicist and chemist. He discovered the existence of magnetic fields. Thomas Henry Huxley (born 1825) was a biologist while Francis Galton (born 1822) was an eugenicist. Both Huxley and Galton supported Darwin's theories on the evolution of humankind.

physicians recommended horseback riding, golf or gardening: “They [the doctors] wanted to induce healthy fatigue, the kind that promised a good night’s sleep, without need of sedatives or soporifics; they equally wanted to avoid exhaustion, which would jeopardize the invalid’s supplies of nerve force, carefully accumulated during sound sleep and periods of inactivity.”¹²

Therapists also prescribed getting away from the source of the stress by taking a long sea voyage, believing that sea level offered a cure, that the ozone by the sea could provide the climate for restoring the body’s vital energy.¹³ To travel to another climate for a cure was called “climatotherapy.” During this travel, the patient was usually accompanied by a friend or a medical attendant.¹⁴ The ocean voyage held a further advantage. Not only was the patient at sea level, but the travel was slow and leisurely with few connections to worry about and no concerns about luggage. Once on board, life became serene until arrival at the destination. If the voyage included sunshine and a warmer climate, as found in the Mediterranean or the Caribbean, this was the source of a magical cure. Understandably, all of these therapies required money, with only the wealthy able to afford to be away from work for extended periods of time and to travel on ships to exotic places. There was no consensus as to the cause of depression but people tried many cures. With the prescription for a cure at a clinic, where doctors were usually the owners, the cure was a profitable venture for the doctor. Yet for any wealthy

¹² *Ibid.*, 122.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

patient trying to find a way out of depression and/or insomnia, life became a continual search for a cure.

Scott was one of these patients and no stranger to ill health. In his autobiography, he described his bouts of asthma that followed him to the North West Territories where he had hoped that the fresh air would provide a cure. Later in life, Scott admitted that he had had several “breakdowns.” It is difficult to know when this condition first manifested itself. As early as 1902, while a Member of the House of Commons in Ottawa, Scott spent a month in a hospital in Montreal.¹⁵ In the fall of that year, he travelled to Banff to consult Dr. Brent, and in January and February 1903, to San Francisco for an appointment with a specialist. He did not specify the ailment.¹⁶

In December 1906, Scott was bedridden with pneumonia for more than one month. On his doctor’s orders, he along with a friend, George Brown, and his physician, Dr. Lowe, travelled to the Caribbean, intending to be away approximately two weeks, but the voyage extended into more than four months.¹⁷ Jessie, Scott’s wife, joined him part way through the southern trip. The first indication that this trip might have been for something more than pneumonia was in a letter from George Brown to Scott, May 24, 1907. By this point, Brown and Lowe had returned to Regina and Scott was travelling in the southern United States with his wife. Upon urging Scott to write letters, Brown mentioned that Scott’s daughter, Dorothy, revealed that her father was not writing letters

¹⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to C. J. Atkinson, April 1, 1902, 589.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to P. M. Bredt, Canadian Government Agent, Reading, Penn, USA, February 11, 1907, 7569.

“at all lately.”¹⁸ Scott was a prolific letter writer, but as seen later in his life, he found that he could not write letters when he was depressed. This inability to write letters in May 1907 may be the first sign that his trip south was in search for a cure from depression, although he did not identify his ailment as such at the time.

Because of Scott’s illnesses, he did not travel in rural parts of Saskatchewan during the winter months: “since the pneumonia attack which I [Scott] had just three years ago [1906], my colleagues aided and abetted by the medical tyrant [his doctor] who presumes to dictate about my habits and health, have been averse to my risking winter trips except to the South Seas.”¹⁹ The trip to the Caribbean, during the early winter of 1907, was so successful that he repeated it again the following winter even though he had not had another bout of pneumonia. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” was obviously the motto of the day.

Feeling that he had to justify to the voters why he did not travel in the province in winter, Scott gave asthma and the “work of session” as his reasons. He found that “In the West after the storm windows are put on the small hotels and school houses and buildings are practically sealed tight and very soon after a crowd congregates there is no oxygen left in the air.”²⁰ Scott had an asthma attack just before the last campaign rally during the December 1905 provincial election, thus missing the meeting because of a lack of oxygen in the room. It is possible that this was an early symptom of his

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, George Brown to W. S., May 24, 1907, 7579.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. Havard, Bangor, December 31, 1909, 47304.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. M. Atkinson, MLA, December 16, 1910, 47419.

psychological state, worsened by anxiety about speaking in front of a large crowd of people. Feelings of stress evoked a word of caution from Scott. In writing to Annie B. (Nan) Telfer, his cousin, in Calgary, he urged her to take it easy. Hard work would not kill anyone but the stress could: "Don't go too fast; late hours are not conducive to good health, and we never appreciate the advantage of good health until we lose it."²¹ This bit of advice was a harbinger of times to come for Walter Scott.

Notwithstanding that Scott was away from his office so much, he was proud of the talent in his cabinet and felt reassured that he had a "splendid team" supporting him.²² While J. H. Lamont was acting premier on Scott's first medical absence, Jim Calder filled this post thereafter for any absences during the remainder of Scott's term as premier. Scott rationalized his absences to his caucus by writing that it might be good for the people of the province to see that, when he was away, the government continued to function well without him. The people could see that it was not a "one man government."²³ Scott knew that he had to be away for part of the year, especially during the short winter days, when he sought the warm sunshine of the Caribbean, the southern United States or the Mediterranean. Walter and Jessie went on a Mediterranean cruise of approximately three to four months during the winter of 1907-1908.²⁴ Even though Scott had a good team "stoking the home fires" while he was away, he felt guilty because he

²¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Annie B. Telfer, Calgary, September 24, 1903, 2818.

²² *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. M. Bryce, Yellow Grass, July 26, 1907, 7586.

²³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. B. Neeley, Liberal Whip, February 13, 1907, 7703.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Medicine Hat, March 31, 1908, 8067.

was not able to put in a full year's work. His need to rest and to have a break from the stress was in conflict with his Victorian work ethic.

Scott's illnesses created delays in the government's programs. The government delayed the commencement of the architectural competition for the Legislative Building several months because of Scott's voyage to the south. Cabinet postponed the 1908 Session and the decision as to the site of the new university in the province for the same reason. The allocation of the judicial districts in 1907, and the introduction of Direct Legislation in 1912, were all decisions that the government put on hold, pending Scott's return.²⁵

Rather than being critical of Scott for his absences, the public viewed his illnesses with sympathy and understanding. Scott's many friends sent letters of support and friendship wishing him a restful recovery. J. W. Dafoe and Clifford Sifton, of the Manitoba Free Press, sent a letter of support during Scott's bout of pneumonia in 1907. Dafoe resorted to an old newspaper custom of writing a eulogistic obituary notice for his friend Scott. Newspaper custom had it that if an obituary notice was prepared, the men "for whom this is done, invariably recover."²⁶ Scott indeed did regain his health, much to the relief of his friends at the Manitoba Free Press and Liberals across Saskatchewan.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder, Acting President of the Executive Council to Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State, Ottawa, March 12, 1908, 8148. See also SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, J. A. Calder to A. Whyte, April 5, 1907, 2321 and J. A. Calder to Charles A. Brothers, Secretary of Direct Legislation League, Moose Jaw, June 12, 1912, 626.

²⁶ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, John Ridington, Manitoba Free Press, to J. A. Calder, January 23, 1907, 2307.

Whether it was the fear of contracting pneumonia again or depression due to the lack of sunshine in the winter, Scott made it a practice to head south every winter. By late December 1909, he reported to a friend that his health was so good that there was no excuse to go south. He noted that the work of a politician was never done and found that he could not get away until the doctor ordered it. By mid-winter, Scott was hoping that the doctor would order another respite.²⁷ Even though Scott was frequently away, he worked long hours in the months that he was in Saskatchewan, as if making up for lost time. Scott squeezed Session, the legislative program, and the election campaigns into a six-month time period.

When Scott returned from his first major episodic illness in 1907, 700 Liberals from Saskatchewan and neighbouring provinces attended a gala dinner to honour him as “the youngest and one of the most able provincial premiers in confederated Canada.”²⁸ In fine form, Scott delivered a rousing speech proclaiming proudly the accomplishments of his government. Because he had been away four months, he came back full of energy to tackle the problems of the province. The Morning Leader reported that Scott announced: “I am prouder than ever of my position in the province--prouder than ever of the Liberal party in Saskatchewan--prouder than ever of my citizenship in the Dominion of Canada.”²⁹ The Attorney General, W. F. A. Turgeon, a loyal Scott supporter, declared that Scott was a student in the Wilfrid Laurier school of politics. Turgeon compared

²⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to John Ross Robertson of the Evening Telegram, Toronto, December 23, 1909, 93 12.

²⁸ Morning Leader, June 26, 1907, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

Scott to Laurier, saying: “He [Scott] is endowed with the same energy, the same honesty of purpose, the same uprightness of character, the attributes of statesmanship, and tonight we have no fear for the future of the party or the province with Walter Scott at the head of affairs.”³⁰

According to the Morning Leader, whose account filled three pages, everyone had a good time at the dinner, eating and drinking, and listening to speeches. The dinner finally concluded at 3:15 A.M. as people filed out to view the sun rising in the east. The Morning Leader and the Liberals were happy to have their leader home again. Even though Scott generally did not like formal dinners, he did appreciate the tribute paid to him at this dinner: “the sight of the gathering that night obliterated for the time being all my natural dislike of being made the particular object of attention.”³¹ Even the Canadian Annual Review mentioned the dinner in honour of Scott: “It was a pronounced tribute to a politician still young in public life; with a dominant note of personal feeling and regard throughout.”³²

Scott received an engraved guest book which contained the signatures of all of the dinner guests. The inscription stated that the Liberals present believed that they needed Scott’s “sound judgement, wise guidance and patriotic statesmanship” in “this

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to William Trant, Arcola, June 28, 1907, 7857.

³² Canadian Annual Review, 1907, 586.

young Western country in the early years of its Provincial development.”³³ It was fitting and symbolic that the first signature on the list was J. H. Ross, his oldest friend, and the last was J. A. Calder, Scott’s close friend and deputy premier.³⁴

Even though Scott had a strong and loyal cabinet and caucus, he noticed that he was “out of touch” when he returned from his extended trips. During Scott’s absences, Calder attempted to brief him on the issues in the province by means of letter or telegram but, nonetheless, Scott still felt unprepared for the first few weeks upon his return.³⁵

Scott received an endorsement in the 1908 provincial election. His government gained a larger majority than in 1905 but his two strong and faithful allies, W. R. Motherwell and J. H. Calder, lost their seats. The constituency of Regina South had chosen Calder in 1905 but, due to redistribution, he ran in the Milestone constituency in 1908. Motherwell ran in North Qu’Appelle in both 1905 and 1908. At this time, MLAs could contest the election in more than one constituency but Calder and Motherwell ran in only one riding each and lost. Fortunately for them, due to the following federal general election, two Liberal MLAs resigned their provincial seats to run federally, thus

³³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, autograph book, 22379. The autograph book has a leather cover with the inscription: “May you long continue our leader.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Medicine Hat, June 13, 1910, 9615.

creating two vacancies. Calder and Motherwell won in the resulting by-elections. Scott went to great effort to ensure the re-election of his two strongest cabinet members.³⁶

By 1909, either because of the initial Motherwell and Calder defeat, or because of his illness, Scott began to have doubts about his political leadership. During his times of doubt, he wondered why he had ever entered politics to begin with: "Whenever I get time to think at all I wonder at the perversity of a fate which precipitated a peace-loving person like me into such a life of contention."³⁷ To a political friend and Alberta cabinet minister who had just given his notice to resign, Scott wrote that he would like to make the same escape from politics:

When I made the beginning with you nine years ago I had no thought of making politics a life work but it looks now as if the only way I shall ever become free will be by defeat at the polls, which consideration inclines me to envy you the release which you are obtaining of your own motion and so much more agreeably.³⁸

It is apparent that Scott was finding that the change in climate was not bringing about a cure for his illnesses. He wrote to his personal physician, Dr. Lowe, at a time when he was sleeping two hours less per night than was his normal: "In reality I do not think I need any change of climate but simply a change of occupation."³⁹ He filled his letters with his concern about how he could not sleep a full night like before.

³⁶ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, Motherwell to Peter Ferguson, Bleakmore, SK, September 24, 1908, 12707.

³⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Judge Morrison, Vancouver, October 7, 1909, 9258.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. T. Finlay, October 21, 1909, 8902.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Dr. Lowe, February 4, 1913, 12141.

By March 1911, with session in a turmoil because of an opposition filibuster over the issue of voters' lists and the possibility of another snap election, Scott was making longer and more agitated speeches in the House. He wrote to J. A. Aikin, editor of the Saskatoon Phoenix, that he was feeling fine but sleeping less. He noted: "my friends here seem to think that I have become too highly nervous."⁴⁰ J. A. Calder, Lieutenant Governor Brown, and other Liberals began to show concern that Scott was having a nervous breakdown and they urged him to leave Regina before the end of the session. Scott agreed to go only after he had delivered his speech on provincial rights.

On March 16, 1911, following a lengthy six-and-one-half hour speech by Frederick Haultain, Scott spoke for seven hours in debate on the issue of crown lands and provincial rights.⁴¹ After his speech, he waited in the caucus room to meet with all of his Liberal members to explain why he was leaving in the midst of session, and he wrote to many of his friends explaining his actions: "At the same time my friends in the House have got it into their heads that I am approaching a nervous break-down and I satisfy them I have consented to skip out West for a little while."⁴² Scott reported that his Liberal friends had been urging him to give shorter speeches and not to participate in every debate in the House. The Morning Leader reported: "It was stated that his [Scott's] own health was to some extent the health of the party and that on the score of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Aikin, Saskatoon, March 18, 1911, 10237.

⁴¹ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.6, The Daily Province, March 16, 1911, 2nd Legislature, 3rd Session, 1135.

⁴² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Dr. W. W. Amos, Lloydminster, March 18, 1911, 10247.

health he should take less part in the debates of the House.”⁴³ During debate in the House, Scott said: “If my friends, (turning to his supporters) see fit to send me to the stable for repairs after the race, why, I am entirely in their hands.”⁴⁴

Not all of the farewells given to Scott were sympathetic. The Standard, a newspaper with Conservative leanings, wrote that Scott was setting a record over the past twelve months. He “has stayed in Regina three months continuously, something he has not done before in that period.”⁴⁵

Initially, Scott did not want to admit that he was experiencing a breakdown. To Calder, he wrote: “in perfect sincerity I say that I have felt so well physically for at least six years past as I am right now, and am positive that I have never in my life been so well mentally.”⁴⁶ Scott noted that he had agreed to depart while in a moment of “weakness,” but felt guilty leaving during session. Although he had missed an entire session in 1907, this was the first time that he had departed during session. He justified his absence by writing to Calder: “no Canadian Province loses anything by its public men taking an occasional spell away from work and benefitting by the education of travel to other countries.”⁴⁷

⁴³ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.6, Morning Leader, March 17, 1911, 2nd Legislature, 3rd Session, 525.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, The Standard, March 17, 1911, 794.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. A. Calder, March 20, 1911, 10330.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10332.

Not only was Scott delivering long and frequent speeches in the House and interrupting the debate with interjections, he was also writing lengthy letters to friends to justify his actions. That he tried to mend fences and restore friendships was a sign of his condition. Clifford Sifton noticed that Scott had been “unfriendly and disloyal.”⁴⁸ Scott’s friends saw a change in his manner. The national press reported Scott’s illness and absence from the Chamber. Feeling compelled to write to all of his friends explaining himself, he said he was feeling fine and felt that Calder had become “excited unnecessarily.” Scott wrote that Calder felt that he was having a “nervous breakdown.”⁴⁹ To the “Chief”, Wilfrid Laurier, Scott reported that he had been sleeping well until New Years, 1911. Then, rather than his usual nine to twelve hours of sleep, he found that even though he was free of worry, he was only sleeping four hours per night. Scott wrote that his friends noted his “state of tension.”⁵⁰

Scott reported to Jim Ross that Calder even resorted to having the Lieutenant Governor talk to Scott to try to persuade him to take a rest.⁵¹ Just before adjournment of the Legislative Assembly when Scott was about to leave the Chamber, Haultain rose to

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Clifford Sifton to W. S., March 24, 1911, 11080. Sifton did not give an explanation of this comment or an example of any specific incidents.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, March 18, 1911, 10433.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, March 29, 1911, 50511.

⁵¹ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, W. S. to Jim Ross, March 30, 1911.

express his farewell to the Premier, wishing him a speedy recovery. According to the Morning Leader, “loud applause” greeted this friendly note of compassion.⁵²

Liberals persuaded Scott to leave Regina for his own health and for the sake of the party. Calder must have breathed a sigh of relief as Scott boarded the train for Victoria. With Scott in such a high state of tension, would he explode in the Chamber and embarrass his party? Once Scott was at the coast and at sea level, he found that he had a more restful sleep.⁵³ When he was away from the Legislature, Scott gained insight into his state of health. Upon taking up golf, he wrote to Ross: “In truth, I am of the opinion, that it will be not at all a bad game for me to spend some time at. The fresh air is the thing.”⁵⁴

Jim Calder was quick to control any potential political damage after Scott left Regina. Calder advised Scott that he had reassured Jim Ross that Scott needed a little rest but was otherwise just fine, yet Calder was insistent that Scott should take a lengthy holiday.⁵⁵ Calder’s advice was: “Don’t show your nose in Regina till about May 8th.”⁵⁶ At first, Scott apparently could not rest and wrote letters to colleagues back in Saskatchewan. Calder sent him a stinging letter telling him to stick to “his fishing” and to give his “thinking apparatus a rest,” but then offered some gentler advice: “Have a

⁵² SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.6, The Regina Morning Leader, March 21, 1911, 2nd Legislature, 3rd Session, 1043.

⁵³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Doctor G. A. Charlton, Regina, 50640.

⁵⁴ U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, W. S. to Jim Ross, March 30, 1911.

⁵⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Jim Calder to W. S., April 4, 1911, 10346.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10353.

little sense Walter--Even if it does go against the grain take heed of the advice of your friends. I know it is hard to give in and especially for a man of your temperament--but--oh well you know and I need say no more."⁵⁷

Scott's supporters, however, were quick to come to his defence. When there were rumours about the possibility of Scott's retirement in May 1911, T. M. Bryce, a party worker and an expert on electoral boundaries, sent a letter to Calder telling him that only the Conservatives would be happy to know that Scott might retire. Bryce gave Calder a warning: "I trust to you and your colleagues to do all in your power to maintain the present status, for Scott's personality remains one of the principal assets of the party throughout the country. It matters little who bears the brunt of the work--some understand--still the faith of the people is pinned to Scott and deservedly so for he has ever kept faith with us."⁵⁸ If Calder had been planning an early retirement for Scott, he could see that this would not be acceptable to many of the party faithful.

Calder replied that there was no truth to the rumours of Scott's retirement. All Scott needed was a little rest throughout the summer and, when he returned, he would be "ready for any kind of work."⁵⁹ Scott had full confidence and high praise for his acting premier, Jim Calder. "But for his executive and constructive ability we should not to-day

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Jim Calder to W. S., April 18, 1911, 10361, 10362, and 10367.

⁵⁸ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, T. M. Bryce to J. A. Calder, May 18, 1911, 5850.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to T. M. Bryce, May 25, 1911, 5853.

occupy the splendid position before the Province that I flatter myself we do occupy.”⁶⁰ Scott felt that Calder was the most capable man he had ever met.

Once Scott got away from the “hurly burly” of Regina, he saw that he needed a rest but he reassured his friend, J. W. Dafoe, that he was not an “invalid.” His inability to sleep caused his ill health and thus he was “all keyed up.”⁶¹ To the Liberal Whip, Gerhard Ens, Scott wrote that he was close to a breakdown but he had to keep up public appearances. Once he was removed from the tension of session, Scott realized “how close to the edge of the precipice I have been and still am.”⁶² Scott conceded that his political friends had been correct in urging him to take a holiday. He realized that he was risking his own health and that of the Liberal Party.

After a rest of several months in Victoria, Scott returned to Regina just in time to leave for London, England, to attend the coronation of King George V. In making the arrangement for staying in London, Scott noted that he and Mrs. Scott were representing the province in an official capacity and that he wanted an apartment to suit the occasion: “Inasmuch as my expenses will be defrayed by the Province I shall not be under the usual necessity of practicing [*sic*] severe economy.”⁶³ The coronation was a chance to be presented to the King and to make the rounds at dinners and receptions, but the

⁶⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to O. B. Fysh, Moose Jaw, March 20, 1911, 10606.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. W. Dafoe, March 18, 1911, 10519.

⁶² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Gerhard Ens, March 20, 1911, 10568.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Ernest Villier, Chairman of the Cecil Hotel, London, February 4, 1911, 32102.

excitement of such a busy social life brought on a recurrence of Scott's insomnia. As a result, after the coronation, Walter left Jessie in London for four weeks as he and his private secretary, J. W. McLeod, took a cruise ship to Norway.⁶⁴

Upon their return to London, the Scotts rushed back to Saskatchewan to participate in the federal election that had just been called. Scott campaigned hard for Laurier, and particularly for reciprocity. He was clear in defending the farmers against the high cost of the tariff. Eastern resistance to eliminating the tariff nonetheless defeated the Laurier government. Through the efforts of Scott and others, Saskatchewan had stayed loyal to the Liberals and reciprocity. Scott noted that, even though the Laurier government had been defeated, at least they had been defeated on a principle and not on a scandal.⁶⁵

Having experienced a "breakdown," Scott received many letters of support. Problem with nerves seemed to be a common affliction amongst political leaders, among whom Wilfrid Laurier and former Governor General Grey both admitted that they had suffered a similar breakdown.⁶⁶ Grey, in fact, was a patient of Dr. Weir Mitchell in Philadelphia. Several years later, Walter Murray, President of the University of Saskatchewan, also had to leave his post for rest and recuperation from a breakdown.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Lord Meath, June 16, 1911, 32554

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Frank Callendar, Peachland, BC, September 23, 1911, 10422.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Wilfrid Laurier to W. S., May 19, 1913, 12094 and W. S. to Rt. Hon. Earl Grey, January 12, 1914, 33016.

⁶⁷ Michael Hayden, Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 97.

Like Scott, Murray suffered from insomnia and nervous tension. They both found that the sea air and rest were the cures they needed.

Throughout Scott's troubled times, his old friend, Jim Ross was watching over his political future. With Scott away again during the cold winter months of 1911-1912, Ross wrote to Calder: "You ought to write [to Walter Scott] telling him that things are in good shape and how delighted people are to know that he is away during this very cold winter--and how much he will be required next summer. He mustn't get the idea that he is entirely out of it. I feel satisfied that another year will put him on his feet again."⁶⁸ The next provincial election was looming and the Liberal planners wanted to have Scott back to lead them in the campaign.

By early April 1912, Scott consulted with Dr. Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia, one of the foremost neurologists of the time and underwent the clinical treatment of rest, diet, and massage for four months at the Mitchell clinic. Scott was desperate to try any solution in order to bring an end to his depression.⁶⁹ He tried the sea air, horseback riding, and even bought a horse which he housed in a shed behind his house in Regina. He also played golf, a new sporting phenomenon sweeping the continent. Scott showed some signs of improvement during the summer months: "I am very well, and for the fact golf and the horse I am sure are largely responsible. These are the medicines I now recommend."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, J. H. Ross to J. A. Calder, January 15, 1912, 6122.

⁶⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. To J. H. Haslam, Halbrite, August 15, 1912, 11475.

⁷⁰ U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, W. S. to Walter Murray, July 31, 1915.

Scott wrote that Dr. Mitchell had told him that if he wanted to recover his “share of nervous energy,” he would have to rest and avoid nervous strain for several years. His doctors advised Scott that he should have only light political duty for two or three years in order to achieve a complete recovery.⁷¹ Scott wrote to Laurier that “nervous breakdown is a condition much easier to get into than to get away from.”⁷² He described Mitchell as the “most noted nerve specialist in America.”⁷³ And further: “To him [Mitchell] and an assistant Mr. A. S. Pennington I owe my recovery.”⁷⁴ Though Mitchell opposed Scott’s leaving the clinic and his return to the stressful occupation of politics, Scott returned to the province just in time to launch his third provincial election campaign as premier.⁷⁵ However, Scott believed that he was regaining his self confidence in public speaking and that he could hold himself together during the campaign.

Ill health and election campaigns were not the only things on Scott’s mind during the summer of 1912. A major cyclone hit Regina during that summer, which created a sense of sadness for the whole family. Although their house was in the path of the cyclone and was badly damaged, Walter, Jessie and Dorothy were not injured.

⁷¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. E. Knowles, Member of the House of Commons for Moose Jaw, July 1, 1913, 12078.

⁷² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, May 14, 1913, 12092.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Miss Browne, Lymstone Rectory, May 31, 1913, 20831.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Dr. Beverley R. Tucker, operator of a psychiatric sanitarium, Richmond, Virginia, February 16, 1916, 22336.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. S. Telfer, Portage La Prairie, August 13, 1912, 20766 and W. S. to Dr. John K. Mitchell, Philadelphia, June 13, 1912, 20714.

Unfortunately, Walter Scott's sister-in-law, Laura McDonald, was killed in the storm.⁷⁶ Living in Saskatchewan meant more than having to cope with political storms; nature could also distribute its share of trouble and heartache.

During the spring and summer of 1912, the Liberals knew that time for another provincial general election was approaching. Jim Ross reported to Scott that as another election was on the horizon: "Mr. Calder apparently has the full confidence of the Party and also the House."⁷⁷ By June, Scott was still at the Mitchell clinic for rest, massage and relaxation while Calder was at home leading the government. Yet, Scott was finding that he could no longer fulfill his usual commitments. One of the rites of political life for any politician is to meet with his constituents and seek renomination. In the spring of 1912, Scott was unable to meet with his constituents in Swift Current to seek the very important renomination. Notwithstanding his absence, the Liberal party nominated him by acclamation to stand as their candidate in the Swift Current riding for the next election, but he missed more than his nomination convention.⁷⁸ He also missed the 1912 session of the Legislature, which was particularly significant because this marked the first time that the Legislative Assembly had met in its new chamber, one that Scott had planned with care and attention. His forced absence must have been troubling to him.

As acting premier, Calder kept Scott posted as to happenings in the province. Both men knew they were in the lead-up to another election. In his letters to Scott,

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to his mother, Mrs. John McDonald, Ilderton, July 4, 1912, 55477.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, J. H. Ross to W. S., February 17, 1912, 11704.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to I. W. Argue, President of the Swift Current Liberal Association, May 14, 1912, 11202.

Calder was, on the one hand, reassuring but he also showed some signs of anxiety about Scott's absence. He wrote: "We simply can't do without you--so get fixed up."⁷⁹ By late April, Calder wrote to Scott wanting to know if he was coming back to the province.⁸⁰ Calder was confident that the Liberals could win another election but wanted the assurance that his leader would be back in time for the campaign. Archie McNab, MLA, wrote to Scott that an election was planned for late June 1912: "so hope you will take good care of yourself as we can worry through the session without you but hope your health will be so that you will be able to give us plenty of help during the election."⁸¹

By early June, one month before the election, Scott returned to Regina to fight in the campaign, writing: "I am by no means as well as I should like to be but feel that I am quite well enough to give my friend Haultain just one more defeat."⁸² Scott admitted in various letters to friends that he had been away a lot and was not up to speed on all of the details. He hoped that, by the end of 1912, he would be fully recovered.⁸³

Scott returned for the election campaign but made fewer appearances on the campaign trail than had been his practice in the past four elections. He was home to wave the flag for his party and his record, but his health did not allow him to give his usual energetic campaign style tour of the province. In his manifesto to the

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to W. S., January 24, 1912, 11284.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, April 22, 1912, 11301.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, A. P. McNab to W. S., January 27, 1912, 11593.

⁸² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Charles Murphy, Ottawa, June 14, 1912, 11633.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. M. Cryderman, Lang, November 23, 1912, 11381.

Saskatchewan voters before the election, Scott declared that his health had been poor due to “overwork” and that he had been “temporarily absent.” But he promised that, if the people renewed their faith in him and if his government was re-elected, he would continue to devote his “best energies to the cause of good government for Saskatchewan.”⁸⁴ The Scott Liberals scored the largest electoral victory on record, winning forty-four out of the fifty-two constituencies. Scott worried that maybe they had won too many seats, that, if the opposition was too weak, the government could become careless.⁸⁵

The Morning Leader was overjoyed at Scott’s return, reporting that he was in “great form” and showed “a familiarity with the details of last spring’s session.”⁸⁶ The paper denied rumours, spread by the Conservative press, that Scott had been in an “insane asylum” in the United States. Whether the newspaper was denying the insane part or the fact that Mitchell’s clinic was not technically an asylum is hard to know since it is very unlikely that the paper did not know that Scott was in Mitchell’s clinic.

Scott had found the campaign very difficult, later reporting to Dr. Pennington, one of Dr. Mitchell’s colleagues, that he had spoken at only seven or eight meetings, that the task of electioneering was a “great deal harder than anybody except I myself

⁸⁴ Canadian Annual Review, 1912, 566.

⁸⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Reverend W. B. Cumming, Aberdeen, Scotland, July 30, 1912, 11383.

⁸⁶ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.8, The Regina Morning Leader, November 19, 1912, 3rd Legislature, 1st Session, 1832.

realized.”⁸⁷ No one knew his inner turmoil to have to stand in front of a group of people in crowded quarters and give the expected spirited speech. However, he had returned to the province to give his best effort for his party and his province.

The people of the province rewarded the government with a landslide electoral victory. Even though the federal Liberals had been defeated in 1911, Saskatchewan had voted Liberal. Scott capitalized on this support for reciprocity by making it a theme of the 1912 provincial election campaign and the first reason cited by Scott for their electoral victory. Scott also believed that the provincial Liberal government had provided the people “reasonably efficient and clean administration,” giving full credit to the members on his team for tending to their political fences and working hard as MLAs.⁸⁸

There was a difference, however, between the 1905 and 1912 elections. When Scott had been elected in 1905, he spent weeks sending out hundreds of personalized letters to supporters and workers thanking them for their support and efforts in the campaign. In 1912, Scott was ill and left the province shortly after the election campaign, leaving J. W. McLeod, Scott’s private secretary, to write the letters of thanks. While each of Scott’s letters in 1905 had a personal greeting, McLeod’s letters were routine and administrative. The personal hand of Walter Scott was missed by the party faithful.

⁸⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Dr. Ash S. Pennington, Philadelphia, July 16, 1912, 20722.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Alberta Lieutenant Governor Bulyea, July 16, 1912, 39427.

The 1912 election campaign showed the importance Scott placed on having a record of clean government but within four years, this goal would be shattered by charges of scandal within the Scott government. Nonetheless in 1912, the Scott government was returned with a larger majority than ever before, the size of which caused Scott to worry. "It is not a bad thing for a party to have a fairly vigorous and watchful opposition. When there is to be a fight fought from the outside there is less danger of members of the household indulging in little spats amongst themselves."⁸⁹ As it would turn out, by 1916 the small opposition of eight members caused enough trouble for Scott that the government was nearly toppled.

Within a week after the election, Scott left the province for Europe, realizing that he had returned to duty too soon and that he needed more time to recover. The newspapers reported that he went to Germany to review German agricultural credit systems. This was to be an official absence. Unofficially, Scott travelled with his brother-in-law, J. M. Young, to various countries in Europe including Germany and Russia seeking a cure for his mental anguish and a rest from the strain of office. No doubt, he reviewed the German credit system while he was there, but he had another motive for his trip: he was travelling the world looking for improved health.

Scott's illness continued into 1913. When he was in the midst of his depression, he described it as a "sense of impending calamity all the time," a feeling of exceeding nervousness with the constant sense of pending doom, and a black cloud over his

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. S. Desautels, Willow Bunch, November 22, 1912, 39674.

shoulder.⁹⁰ While he continued to travel, particularly ocean voyages, in search of a reprieve from his affliction, the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan was fighting off the image that its leader had psychiatric problems. The 1914 Canadian Annual Review, for example, wanted to show the amount of time that Jim Calder had served as acting premier during the year. Calder wrote to the publisher, J. Castell Hopkins, advising him that the government had no objections to having him shown as the acting premier but that he was reluctant to give any dates. The Liberals did not want special attention drawn to the amount of time that Scott had been away.⁹¹

Scott admitted to supporters that he found being premier difficult and that he could not find any peace as long as he was in the province. The many problems needing attention and the people seeking appointments were always there; he always felt on duty. He claimed that he did not have enough money to travel and thus had to remain in Saskatchewan to do his duty, yet in that year, Scott travelled to Nassau, Panama, Cuba, New York, San Francisco, Toronto and Ottawa, spending only one week in his constituency in August 1915.⁹² The urge to travel was more powerful and necessary than his obligation to stay at home to manage the province. Scott had to minimize, to his supporters, the amount of time that he was away. Some would understand his predicament but most would not.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Charles Tabor, Hollywood, May 5, 1913, 21204.

⁹¹ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, J. A. Calder to J. Castell Hopkins, March 13, 1914, 839.

⁹² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Ernest Laycock, Wilkie, July 15, 1915, 13369.

Scott and Calder's telegrams and letters to each other show there was open and honest communication. While Calder was acting premier, he tried to keep Scott informed on all of the important developments. Even toward the end of Scott's premiership, when he was away more than half of each year, Calder did not show impatience with Scott's travels nor did he indicate that he would like to assume the premier's chair permanently. For example, Calder asked the Saskatchewan Cooperative Abattoir and Cold Storage Association to wait with its problems until Scott was back in Regina.⁹³ When the main telephone exchange for the province burned down, Calder, the minister responsible for telephones, conferred with Scott for possible solutions.⁹⁴ When opposition members charged the government with corruption in 1915 and early 1916, Calder conferred regularly with Scott as to what the government's reaction would be.⁹⁵ Calder accepted Scott's need to travel and seemed to be content to stay at home and look after the day-to-day administration. He was not ambitious but knew that the Liberal government depended on Scott's flair with the public and his close relationship with the people of the province. Liberals offered Calder the premiership when Scott finally did resign, but he refused.

Motherwell, Scott's faithful Minister of Agriculture, continued to be supportive of Scott, admiring his ability in the House to cut down the arguments of his political

⁹³ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to M. Cameron, June 16, 1914, 24177.

⁹⁴ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, hand written reminiscences by J. A. Calder from memory from time to time after October 14, 1944, 9823.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9829. See page 264 of the dissertation for a full description of the Bradshaw charges.

opponents. Motherwell wrote that when Scott followed Haultain in debate, Scott “simply did not leave the proverbial ‘spot’ on the floor even, where Haultain had formerly stood.”⁹⁶

Even though Scott had a strong and loyal cabinet, his own internal turmoil plagued him. He consulted with Dr. Charles D. Aaron of Detroit who prescribed “Regulin,” which, according to Squire’s Companion to the latest edition of the British Pharmacopoeia for 1916, was made of agar agar, a common laxative. Dr. Aaron believed that the laxative, which would clean his body of wastes and would help clear the mind, taken with a nerve tonic, would cure depression.⁹⁷ Along with Regulin, Dr. Aaron prescribed Peristaltine, another laxative.⁹⁸

What then was the cause of his depression that affected his life so completely? In discussing a person’s behaviour, it becomes a debate of “nature verses nurture.” It is true that there was a genetic component to Scott’s depression. The medical records at the London Hospital reveal that Walter Scott’s maternal aunt, Bessie Telfer, and a maternal uncle, suffered from mental illness. Bessie Telfer was hospitalized in London for some

⁹⁶ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. R. Motherwell to T. G. Morrison, File Hills, December 16, 1908, 12736.

⁹⁷ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Dr. Charles Aaron, Detroit, December 27, 1912, 11194 and Dr. Aaron to W. S., January 20, 1912, 20631. See also Peter Wyatt Squire, Squire’s Companion to the Latest Edition of the British Pharmacopoeia, (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1916), 137.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Dr. Charles D. Aaron to W. S., April 10, 1913, 20786.

time with depression.⁹⁹ It is, therefore, possible that Scott inherited a genetic disposition toward depression, thus nature being a factor.

The reason given by Scott for his mental state was overwork, a common Edwardian explanation for a state of exhaustion or “breakdown.” Scott also argued that he had to prepare more and work harder to compete with educated men such as Haultain, who could present a speech with apparently little preparation. It was as if Scott had to compensate for his lack of education.

One explanation as to why Scott was driven to succeed is the Phaeton Syndrome, the complex of the abandoned child.¹⁰⁰ According to Greek mythology, Phaeton was the abandoned son of Phoebus, the driver of the sun chariot and Clymene, a sea nymph. When Phaeton finally found his father, Phoebus, he tried to impress his father by driving the sun chariot. The horses, knowing that they had an inexperienced driver, bolted, and the sun chariot crashed to earth, killing Phaeton. Psychologists have argued that the point of this story was that a bastard child did not go through the Oedipus complex and therefore did not have “normal” development. In order to compensate for the insecurity created by growing up without a father, the child had to do daring stunts to impress others and to win recognition. According to psychologists, individuals suffering from the Phaeton complex experience depression, particularly if the loss of a parent is of the

⁹⁹ AO, Walter Scott’s medical file in Ontario Hospital, London, Ontario, RG 10-20-C-2, #8268.

¹⁰⁰ Lucille Iremonger, The Fiery Chariot: A Study of British Prime Ministers and the Search for Love, (London: Secher and Warburg, 1970), 13.

same sex as the child.¹⁰¹ Remarriage of the remaining parent with the resulting presence of a stepfather and half brothers and sisters tends to cause increased stress: “There is evidence... that childhood bereavement by loss of a father is a factor in adult depressive illness.”¹⁰²

When Lucille Ironmonger applied this Phaeton complex to a study of the Prime Ministers of Britain between 1700 and 1900, she found that 67% of the Prime Ministers had lost one parent in childhood or were bastard children. She argued that, because of this childhood bereavement, the child pushed harder than average to achieve and to impress others, thus ending up as the Prime Minister. Luck played a part in their achieving this station in life, but they rose to the top out of choice. They often feigned resistance to becoming Prime Minister but she argues that this was bluff: “the great game of politics has many elements in common with the other great game, poker, and its players are not seldom consummate masters of bluff.”¹⁰³ And further: “the Phaeton Syndrome impels men of ability and character to supreme achievement in many diverse fields, from politics to the arts.”¹⁰⁴ Like Phaeton, these men strove harder than their peers to excel and thus took high risks to get ahead, and in so taking risks, they set themselves up for a fiery crash.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

It is remarkable how Scott's career fits the pattern of the British study. He was born a bastard child and at an early age went West to make his mark in the world. Even though he feigned resistance to becoming Premier in 1905, it was part of his plan to lead Saskatchewan. Scott's depression was a combination of genetics as well as psychological and social factors. He may have inherited some tendency toward depression but his early childhood was a factor. As in the Greek myth, Scott followed high risk behaviour and ultimately ended his political career with a crash.

There is a third possible explanation for Scott's depression. For the first six years of his premiership, Saskatchewan's economy had been buoyant. By 1911-12, the province experienced an economic crisis. This was at approximately the same time as Scott suffered more serious mental health problems. Could this have been coincidence or was his depression caused by economic worries for his province?

There are many causes of mental illness. It is possible that there was a connection between the economy and Scott's mental health but based on a detailed examination of his correspondence, this theory does not seem plausible. Scott's health had been deteriorating since 1906-07. He experienced depression in good and bad economic times. In his letters, he did not express specific worries about the economy or draw a link between the economy and his health. The genetic theory and/or the Phaeton complex are more likely explanations of the state of his health.

By mid-summer of 1915, Scott felt cured. He tried to fit in some relaxation each day, taking time from his schedule to go for a horse back ride or a short round of golf: "I find by doing this I am able actually to do more work (and at the same time to enjoy the

work) than I did in the years when I spent every available hour at work in the office.”¹⁰⁵

Scott had one other passion that endured throughout his life: major league baseball.

When travelling in the United States, he would arrange to attend baseball games. The World Series was a time of great delight, but unfortunately these pleasant times were few and far between. Throughout his time of deep despair with depression and insomnia, particularly in 1911, Walter Scott tried every thing in searching for a cause and a cure, even sending his cigars away to be analysed to see if they might be the cause of his insomnia.¹⁰⁶

As proof of Scott's world travel, his personal address book contained a list of some of the finest hotels in the world. He carried with him Jessie and Dorothy's measurements for dresses and hose, thoughtfully bringing gifts home for his wife and daughter.¹⁰⁷ Scott's periods of depression, at first lasting several months, usually occurred during the winter, when a two-to-three month vacation in a southern warm climate brought relief. When he was in a manic phase, he was able to work long hours and accomplish a year's work in six months. Scott had the ability to pull together a strong team to offer him support. With people like Calder, Motherwell and Turgeon in cabinet, the machinery of government continued effectively while he was away.

¹⁰⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mrs. Maggie Buttery, his half sister, July 1, 1915, 13141.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to G. W. Charlton, Bacteriological Laboratory, Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, April 6, 1911, 50638.

¹⁰⁷ SAB, John A. McDonald Papers, address book. John A. McDonald was Walter Scott's half brother.

On the other hand, Scott's mental illness disrupted his interpersonal relationships. He frequently had long-term disagreements with old friends, which usually led to the end of those friendships, for example, Davin, Haultain, McInnis, Clifford Sifton and ultimately Jim Calder. The three close friends who stuck with Scott throughout his life were his wife, Jessie, Jim Ross, and W. R. Motherwell. Being married to Walter Scott, with the pressures of his political life and with his state of health, must not have been easy. Even though Walter and Jessie Scott were married forty-two years, they experienced many trying times. For three Christmases from 1918 to 1920, the Scotts were not together. Even for families that experience long periods of being apart due to work or illness, it seems common for couples of the Christian faith to be together for Christmas.¹⁰⁸ When Scott was away for long periods of time, Jessie would write him, addressing the letters as "My Darling Daddy" and signing off with "Mother."¹⁰⁹ When Walter was depressed, he was not communicative with his wife, though Jessie would plead with him for attention and for his love. Wanting to please him very much, she would frequently, in her letters, apologize for something she had done and plead for forgiveness. While Walter was away in July 1911, she wrote, "do like me when you get back."¹¹⁰ She would sign off her letters with, "Keep well and come home to the old girl that love [*sic*] you so much."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, Dorothy Scott to W. S., December 1, 1919, 16775 and W. S. to Jessie Scott, December 24, 1920, 17821.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 14549.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Jessie Scott to W. S., July 20, 1911, 20577.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, August (no date), 1919, 16834.

Their adopted daughter, Dorothy, tried to keep her parents close to each other. When Walter and Jessie were apart, she would remind her father to write to her mother: "I think you might write to mother because you know how sensitive she is and when you don't write she thinks you don't care."¹¹² Jessie wrote on one occasion when she was wondering if their marriage was over: "Daddy dear do you think we will get acquainted again when I get home. Really Daddy I am not so bad if you really know me, inside the outside is rather bad at times but that is not me."¹¹³ Jessie did want the marriage to continue: "I would like to mean a lot to you for I do like you so much."¹¹⁴

There were other pressures in the marriage, as revealed in the caring letters Scott wrote to two other women, now contained in archives of his personal correspondence. Ida Goodall and Walter Scott met while on a cruise to Norway in 1911, and Goodall later reminisced about the "pleasant times and events we enjoyed."¹¹⁵ There are few copies of letters that Scott wrote to Goodall but judging from her letters to him, they corresponded frequently. They saw each other from time to time in New York, where she lived, and Los Angeles, where she also maintained a residence. In one letter she wrote to Walter that she was "in eager anticipation of seeing you."¹¹⁶

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Dorothy Scott to W. S., January 2, 1919, 16701.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Jessie Scott to W. S., February 16, 1921, 18523. Jessie often called Walter "Daddy" in her letters to him.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 28, 1921, 18577.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Ida Goodall to W. S., July 12, 1912, 20661.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1919, 15922.

The other woman who wrote frequently to Scott was Doris Fellows, a New York actress. The few copies of letters to Fellows that Scott kept open with “My Dear Doris,”¹¹⁷ and conclude with: “I often think of you, and that [*sic*] I appreciate your letters.” Fellows travelled to various cities with her work and on one occasion, wrote to Scott hoping that they would be able to meet in Winnipeg.¹¹⁸ She concluded her letters with “I would like so much to see you.”¹¹⁹

The level of intimacy and emotion in the letters to Goodall and Fellows showed a different type of relationship from that with other people with whom Scott corresponded on a regular basis. Fellows, for example, wrote to him at the Assiniboia Club rather than to his home or office. In one letter, she said that she had sent a Christmas card to his home but received no reply, suggesting that Scott was discouraging her from sending letters to his home.¹²⁰ On one occasion, Fellows did not want to phone Mrs. Scott for Walter’s address while he was travelling and thus asked a male friend to make the call.¹²¹

In the correspondence with both Goodall and Fellows, there is no mention of Jessie or Dorothy, suggesting that Goodall and Fellows were not family friends but rather Walter’s close intimates. There is no evidence to indicate how intimate these two

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Doris Fellows, December 10, 1919, 15893.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Doris Fellows to W. S., October 22, 1918, 14779.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1920, 17209.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Doris Fellows to W. S., July 2, 1921, 18110.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, October 22, 1918, 14779.

relationships were but, judging from the correspondence, when Scott travelled to Los Angeles and New York, he made a point of visiting with each of them. Whether Walter's family knew of these liaisons is not apparent. Dorothy wrote to her father on one occasion urging him to watch out for "that Bartlett woman" in New York but, with no letters in the files between the "Bartlett woman" and Scott, there is no indication of who she was. Dorothy, who seemed to be concerned though about her father seeing other women, concluded her warning to her father with the note: "you know my feelings in that direction."¹²²

Notwithstanding the stresses and strains on the marriage, Jessie and Walter Scott stayed together as a married couple until Jessie's death in 1932. She suffered from her own bouts of depression and found it difficult to sleep when she was alone, missing Walter greatly when he was away. When Jessie died, Walter missed her and wrote to friends that his closest friend throughout his life was Jessie. Throughout it all, they had maintained their relationship. They had had no children of their own but adopted one girl, Dorothy, who became the centre of their lives.

Throughout his illness, Walter Scott was able to maintain his sense of humour, often including in his letters, a cheerful word of encouragement for a colleague or to share a joke with them. His turn of phrase, for a man with a grade eight education, was remarkable. In a letter to a friend, for example, he described a poker game which lasted beyond 2 A.M. as a "nine handed prayer meeting." Continuing the religious analogy, he wrote that it must have been a "Union service, with some RC's [Roman Catholics]

¹²² *Ibid.*, Dorothy Scott to W. S., August 18, 1919, 16746.

taking part, because I observed a woman's face amongst the pictures; and as you know, we Presbyterians have no Queen to match the King in our creed."¹²³ No matter how hard life became, Scott usually maintained a sense of optimism, in times of trouble reminding himself that "the blacker the night the brighter the dawn."¹²⁴ In working with people who resisted change, Scott wrote, "The kettle never boils without the contents undergoing change."¹²⁵ True to his Presbyterian heritage, Scott had a strong work ethic. In writing to his nephew in San Francisco, Scott praised him for his hard work. "The only real contentment we can obtain in this world is the contentment that comes from the realization of work resolutely confronted and honestly done. Amusements do not bring contentment."¹²⁶

The extensive trips that Scott took in search of good health meant, however, that during his premiership he was out of the office and the province for more than half the time. An analysis of his extensive correspondence with friends while he travelled, provides an estimate of the accumulated time away from home. By his own admission, from December 1905 to August 1908, during the first Legislature, he was away eighteen months.¹²⁷ In 1906, he took a six-month Caribbean cruise and a tour of southern United

¹²³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Norman MacKenzie, Regina, January 13, 1919, 16225.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Sir William Mackenzie, President, Canadian Northern Railway, Toronto, May 17, 1915, 54421.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping scrapbook, M1 XII, Moose Jaw Times, November 23, 1918.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Emery M. Young, San Francisco, June 2, 1913, 21244.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. J. Bell, September 15, 1908, 7937.

States.¹²⁸ In December 1907, he left for a three-month Mediterranean cruise; went to Jamaica in February 1909; made another visit to Europe and took a Mediterranean cruise of ten weeks in March 1910. Away for six months in 1911 in Victoria, London and Norway, Scott visited Florida, Nassau, and the Bahamas in January 1912.¹²⁹ He travelled to Philadelphia for four months in the spring of 1912 until the provincial election campaign, but left for Europe immediately after the election. In 1913, he made an around-the-world tour of approximately nine months.¹³⁰ He wrote that from February to November 1913, he had travelled 50,000 miles.¹³¹ January 1914 found him in Australia and Hawaii and home by June 27, a voyage of approximately five months.¹³² In all, from September 1905 until his retirement in October 1916, Walter Scott spent more than half of his time away from the province. To stave off depression, he travelled from country to country and from city to city at a frenetic pace. It is true that at many of his stopovers, he met with government officials, but for the most part, his travels were for sightseeing, and a cure and avoidance of depression.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Sir Robert Bond, St. John's, Newfoundland, August 5, 1907, 7567.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, J. W. McLeod to L. B. Cochran, December 2, 1907, 7615 and December 5, 1911, 10453.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to P. M. Bredt, Edenwold, October 22, 1913, 11832 and SAB, John A. McDonald Papers, W. S. to John A. McDonald, September 4, 1913.

¹³¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Ash S. Pennington, Philadelphia, November 5, 1913, 21080.

¹³² *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, January 9, 1914, 11929.

Notwithstanding Scott's internal turmoil and pain, rumours continued to circulate that he was going to return to federal politics and possibly to Laurier's cabinet. The 1908 Canadian Annual Review reported that, after Scott met with various federal politicians in Regina, word spread that he would enter the Laurier cabinet, but nothing came of this speculation.¹³³ Two years later, the Review again noted that Scott was going to go into the Laurier cabinet to replace Frank Oliver as Minister of the Interior.¹³⁴ The following year, the Review predicted that, if Laurier had won the 1911 election, Scott would have become the Minister of the Interior and Calder would have become the premier.¹³⁵ Scott, no doubt, heard these rumours with some interest but publicly claimed that he had every intention, if the people of the province were willing, to stay on as their premier.¹³⁶ Yet the stories continued. The Leader reprinted an article from the London Times which predicted that the next prime minister would be from the West, possibly Walter Scott.¹³⁷ W. M. Martin, a Saskatchewan Member of the House of Commons, also heard rumours of Scott's return to federal politics.¹³⁸ Even two years after his resignation

¹³³ Canadian Annual Review, 1908, 477.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1910, 502.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1911, 565.

¹³⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. M. Martin, January 22, 1910, 9945.

¹³⁷ Canadian Annual Review, 1913, 582. See also SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to G. E. McCraney, MP, Saskatoon, December 15, 1913, 12148.

¹³⁸ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. M. Martin to W. S., January 18, 1910, 9943.

as premier, J. W. McLeod was still hoping that Scott would become the next Liberal leader after Wilfrid Laurier.¹³⁹

Instead of revelling in this praise, Scott was more interested in securing his own succession in Saskatchewan. He wrote W. M. Martin that he could be his successor: “You have excellent equipment in the way of education, the lack of which will always be a serious handicap to me, and you are showing ability to inspire confidence both in a private and public way which is essential to success in public life.”¹⁴⁰ A year later, Scott renewed this offer to Martin: “I have had an idea in the back of my head that some day it would be mutually advantageous to you and me for you to leave Ottawa and come into our House.”¹⁴¹ Martin replied that he was less interested in coming into provincial politics than in earning some money.¹⁴²

By the time that Laurier was dying, Scott knew that his time for returning to federal politics had passed. Whether he had ever seriously considered running for the post of Canadian Prime Minister is open to speculation. As time passed and Scott’s health continued to deteriorate, he knew deep down that he would not be able to carry the load, and by the time the position of Liberal leader was open, Scott’s era was over. The torch would have to be passed to someone else.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, J. W. McLeod to W. S., June 27, 1918, 15083.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. W. McLeod, January 22, 1910, 9946.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, February 27, 1911, 10855.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, March 29, 1911, 10884.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Calder, February 25, 1919, 15727.

Chapter 8 Times of Change: Troubled Times

During Scott's last months as premier, five topics of major importance confronted him: the First World War, the social reforms that arose from the war, the Bradshaw charges of corruption, the controversy over Reverend MacKinnon, and his own deteriorating health which led to his resignation. These were times of change for the premier and the province but, with his depression, Scott and the Liberal Party realized that his term in office was coming to an end.

Notwithstanding Scott's lengthy absences due to ill health, he and his government introduced a heavy legislative load in the Third Legislature (1912-1916). In the first Session (November 14, 1912 - January 11, 1913), the Legislative Assembly passed seventy-three Bills pertaining to education (School Act, School Assessment Act, and School Grants Act), rural telephones, rural municipalities and local improvement districts, guarantees for railway construction and the ratification of the Co-operative Elevator Company agreement. As minister of education, Scott piloted the school Bills through the Legislature.

The Second Session of the Third Legislature (November 6 - December 19, 1913) passed ninety-seven Bills with Scott introducing twelve, his busiest session as premier. The Legislative Assembly considered agricultural issues including the success with the Co-operative elevators and hail insurance. The members received reports on the lack of progress on the negotiations over crown lands and debated further amendments to the

School Act.

The outbreak of the First World War necessitated a short third session. The Assembly passed twenty-two Bills to help the citizens through the war and to determine Saskatchewan's contribution to the war effort. The Fourth Session of the Third Legislature (May 10 - June 24, 1915), through Scott's introduction of seven Bills concerning the sale of alcohol and the School Act, concentrated on the closure of Saskatchewan's bars and the sale of alcohol through government liquor board stores.

The highlights of the Fifth Session (January 18 - March 14, 1916) and Scott's last as premier, when the Legislative Assembly passed forty-six Bills, were female suffrage and the Bradshaw charges. Scott's three Bills again concentrated on the School Act. In all, the Legislative Assembly passed on average forty-eight Bills each session, with Scott piloting slightly fewer than six Bills per session. As premier and minister of education, he concentrated his efforts on the School Act amendments.

With the declaration of war on the European continent in August 1914, radical change, both economic and social, came to Canada, including the Prairies, thousands of miles from the battlefield. Old boundaries of social thought came crashing down. War tested the beliefs that people had held for generations but, for many, strengthened the ties that bound the British Empire together. On the first day of the war, Scott's first instinct was to call for calm and to quieten any racial divisions that the war was bound to create. In a speech on August 4, 1914, Walter Scott asked the people of Saskatchewan "to be careful in making comments that might be offensive to citizens of the various

countries involved.”¹ Scott’s government drew its electoral strength from the immigrant settlers in the province, the largest groups being of German and Ukrainian background. Germany/Austria-Hungary was the enemy of the British Empire, but Scott was careful not to alienate the German/Austro-Hungarian voters. He was anxious to ensure that they would remain loyal to the Canadian government and by implication, the British Empire. Scott had sympathy for the new settlers who felt a pull to their homeland and yet exhibited a new sense of loyalty to their new homeland, Canada, when he wrote:

I know that they [German Canadians] are loyal to the British cause which is their own cause in this new land, but I know also that the better men and women they are the more must their hearts be torn by the present terrible state of affairs. I wish to say that the fortitude they are displaying in their trying position is deserving of all praise, and will not be forgotten when their awful troubles are ended.²

Throughout the war, Scott urged a calm voice in dealing with the immigrant population. When the Post Office threatened to withhold the delivery of German-language newspapers, Scott argued that, since the German and Austro-Hungarian settlers were peaceable, the action was unnecessary. Scott realized that the settlers clearly wanted to know about events in their homelands and wanted to ensure that they still felt welcomed in their new homeland.³

Scott had always been a proud supporter of British ties and flag, as he showed

¹ Canadian Annual Review, 1914, 631.

² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Theo Schmitz, Regina, October 3, 1914, 59539.

³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to John A. Reid, Agent General for Alberta in London, September 19, 1914, 12939.

when he wrote: “the flying of the Union Jack over the schools should be helpful towards recognition of what the flag represents and towards inculcating a pride in it and in British citizenship.”⁴ For Scott and others, the war would draw into question the true meaning of that flag.

On war itself, Scott soon became a supporter of the war effort. To a mother with a son overseas, he wrote: “It is a sad and terrible time for everybody but on the other hand you have every right to feel a joy and pride in the fact that you have a boy bearing arms and doing his part to uphold the great cause of universal liberty and fighting in behalf of the Flag under which we have always lived and of which we are so justly proud.”⁵ For Scott, “when England is at war, Canada is at war.”⁶ His loyalty to the British cause was unwavering. War was a difficult time, however, for many Presbyterians who had been pacifists. A colleague of Scott’s and a Presbyterian leader in the province, Dr. E. H. Oliver, believed that if a country had to be at war, at least the church could offer leadership in humanizing the battle: “it was the Church that did seek to check its [war’s] ravages by humanizing its methods, by chivalry, by the truce of God, by the Red Cross, and by endeavouring to link it only to righteous causes.”⁷ Scott did not try to justify the war with such lofty goals. Since Canada was part of the British

⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Barlow Cumberland, Port Hope, Ontario, January 20, 1910, 33975.

⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mrs F. L. Blair, Toronto, February 17, 1916, 32087.

⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. S. Lewis, Editor, The Star, Montreal, August 2, 1914, 51536.

⁷ E. H. Oliver, The Social Achievements of the Christian Church, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930), 4.

Empire, under the Union Jack, there was an obligation to fight to defend British values and political institutions.

The Legislative Assembly met in wartime session to debate the situation, and Scott praised the British institutions.⁸ In support of the war effort, the government of Saskatchewan donated 1500 horses as an initial contribution to Canada's allies.⁹ A threat to Saskatchewan's agricultural workforce appeared when men began to leave the farms to join their comrades in the fields of France. But it was to be a short war and soon the world would return to "normal." Scott made his personal contribution to the war effort, offering all employees at the Moose Jaw Times leave with pay to go to fight. Because the threat to Britain was so serious, he felt that everyone should be willing to make a contribution.¹⁰

The First World War brought mixed emotions and economic results to western Canada. With the increased need for manufactured goods for the war effort, westerners expected that the West would be able to diversify its economy and become a manufacturing as well as an agricultural region. Historian John Herd Thompson argues that the reverse happened, that rather than increased manufacturing in the West, this

⁸ SAB, newspaper files, X3.10, The Regina Morning Leader, 3rd Legislature, 3rd Session, September 17, 1914, 2500.

⁹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, J. W. McLeod to E. Maxwell, Portreeve, SK, September 12, 1914, 59698.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Thomas Miller of the Moose Jaw Times, August 29, 1914, 12801.

region became even more dependent on agriculture and particularly on wheat.¹¹

As the war in Europe continued, more men went to war, thus creating a labour shortage for the western farmers. "In rural areas, farmers raised wages and pleaded for harvest leave so that soldiers could help in the fields. By 1916, the labour shortage was so acute that most interned aliens were released."¹² Canada lacked both men and horses at the battlefield and at home, creating a dilemma for governments. How could the nation best serve the war effort? Prices for wheat were up but the farmers could not bring the crops off the fields without the men and horses. Without the high production of wheat, the war machine in Europe would starve. J. H. Thompson noted that the gasoline tractor was coming onto the market but farmers were reluctant to convert from horse power to tractors: "There simply were no suitable light tractors available at prices farmers were willing to pay."¹³ In response to the manpower shortage, the federal government introduced conscription but Scott was out of office before this national debate reached its peak.

In addition to the economic effects, the war brought increased pressure for social change whereby the government had to become more involved in public policy, for example, bringing reform in such areas as prohibition and female franchise.¹⁴ The

¹¹ John Herd Thompson, The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1978), 49 & 60.

¹² Desmond Morton, A Military History of Canada, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985), 137.

¹³ Thompson, 65.

¹⁴ Thompson, 97. See also: Veronica Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader': Nellie McClung, First-Wave Feminism," Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's

reform movement that pushed for tariff reduction, prohibition, direct legislation, and women's suffrage had begun at the turn of the century but had experienced little success before the war. With the soldiers fighting and dying overseas in defence of liberty and democracy, there was a change of attitude regarding the role of the state within society which the reform movement used to promote prohibition and women's suffrage.

The prohibitionists argued that alcohol should be banned to protect the morals of the soldiers and to conserve grain for food in the war effort. Drunkenness, they said, weakened the drive to defeat the Kaiser. It was a general perception that the immigrants drank alcohol more than those born in Canada, so the prohibitionists urged the immigrants to show their loyalty for Canada by voting "dry."

As for the struggle to win the vote for women, the suffragists argued that women wanted the liberties and freedoms that their husbands, sons, and fathers were fighting for in Europe. If the women could achieve the vote, they would be able to prevent the "going back" on the social reform when the war ended.¹⁵

Even though the prohibition movement had been pressuring the government to limit, and finally eliminate, the sale of alcoholic beverages in the province, the war brought a coalescing of the public will and new pressure on the government to bring change. Scott had long been a supporter of prohibition, writing as early as 1905: "I cannot say that I look with favour upon the licensing system at all. I should very much

History, edited by V. Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Limited, 1986).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

like to bring about the adoption of a system which would eradicate the bar.”¹⁶ And further: “while I am not a pledged abstainer I do not use intoxicating liquor in any form.”¹⁷ Scott knew that the government had to be very careful not to get too far ahead of the public will on the sale and consumption of alcohol or it would create a danger of a backlash or a negative reaction against methods of liquor control.¹⁸ Scott planned to have the prohibition or “ban the bar” lobbies push the government to implement legislation. He was clearly aware of the counter-pressure coming from the Licensed Victuallers to keep the bars open. Without a great public surge of popular support to close the bars, Scott was not prepared to go out on a limb.¹⁹ He was not prepared, however, to hire any government employee who had a problem with alcohol. Once the “enemy was subdued,” the person could consider applying for a government job.²⁰

Scott knew the anti-alcohol lobby would not provide stable support for the government, and if the bars were closed, he was sure that the bar owners and liquor interests and many foreign immigrants would vote against the government. Likewise, Scott knew that he could not count on the prohibitionists for their support after the bars were closed: “Putting law on the statute book is only the beginning. Unless the moral

¹⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. H. Sissons, Yellow Grass, September 12, 1905, 48127.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. T. Blythe, Wapella, October 25, 1905, 48129.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to A. H. Foulds, Carnduff, May 4, 1908, 48161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to C. C. Knight, Secretary Treasurer of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Saskatchewan, Regina, June 18, 1908, 48255.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Rev. R. J. McLean, Landis, June 27, 1910, 26538.

reform forces are ready to take their clothes off and do something more practical than frame resolutions and have sermons given to help enforce the law, it would have been better not to pass the law.”²¹ And to a colleague, he wrote: “the political party which depends on the so-called temperance people for support is sitting on a very shaky stool.”²²

Scott was determined to wait with liquor legislation until he was certain that the majority of the people wanted controls on the sale of alcohol. He knew, as well, that to close the bars would wreak havoc on the local hotel and bar owners. Any measure to close the bars would have to be done in the spring or summer and not in the winter, in order to cushion the impact of the layoffs of employees. Scott withstood the criticism for not taking action until he felt the “time was right,” but on March 18, 1915, at a meeting hosted by J. G. Turriff, Member of the House of Commons, in the town of Oxbow, Scott announced that the government would introduce legislation to close the bars as of July 1, 1915.²³ He was able to keep the plan secret until the announcement, thus dropping a bombshell on both sides of the debate: “I rather think the opposing element had its breath so completely taken away at first that the proposal got the advantage of a seemingly almost universal endorsement [*sic*], which is always a most valuable advantage for any political proposal.”²⁴

²¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to C. C. Knight, June 19, 1908, 48256.

²² *Ibid.*, W. S. to D. B. Neely, MLA, Humboldt, September 15, 1908, 48268.

²³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, January 4, 1915, 13464.

²⁴ U of S Archives, Presidential Papers, W. S. to Dr. Walter Murray, March 31, 1915.

In the Speech from the Throne on May 10, 1915, the Lieutenant Governor announced that the major initiative for the session would be to terminate the bar licences as of June 30. The sale of “intoxicating liquors in bars and clubs” was harming the country’s “strength in prosecuting the war.”²⁵ Instead of total prohibition, the government, however, had decided to open a system of publicly-controlled liquor dispensaries, based on local option. Districts could vote on whether they wanted these dispensaries. In the same speech, the government announced that there would be a referendum no earlier than December 1916 on the question of closing or reopening the bars. The government did not opt for prohibition because the province did not have the authority to enforce it.²⁶ The Speech from the Throne outlined one further measure. No earlier than 1919, the people of Saskatchewan could decide whether they wanted the dispensaries to continue.²⁷ Scott made a bold announcement to close the bars but provided several opportunities for the people to decide to close the dispensaries at a future time. Yet by May 1915, the government had not shown a commitment to go for full prohibition.

The 1915 Canadian Annual Review praised Scott and Calder on their political skills in announcing a wise program whereby they were able to hold conflicting interest groups together.²⁸ A two-person commission composed of Dr. E. H. Oliver and J. F.

²⁵ Journal of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1915, 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Canadian Annual Review, 1915, 669.

Bole went to South Carolina to study the only publicly-owned system of liquor dispensaries in North America. The commission recommended a similar system for Saskatchewan as a transitional step toward total prohibition, but the government was not convinced that the people were ready for total prohibition.²⁹

The decision to close the bars was a result of the war, according to Scott, who wrote to Motherwell: "It is becoming quite apparent, however, that one effect of the war is a marked strengthening of public opinion in favour of much greater restrictions against, or even the abolition of, the liquor business."³⁰ Motherwell strongly supported the government's stand on the liquor question. Scott called the measure "drastic" and a "war measure."³¹ Knowing the government would meet some opposition, he did not enter the decision lightly: "We decided on the policy in the full expectation that we were taking our lives in our hands and that we should have to meet determined and probably long-continued opposition."³² Without the war, Scott wrote to a relative in Australia, the government would not have "taken the responsibility for such a measure."³³ Aware that the war meant a dramatic shift in public opinion, Scott was determined to ride the wave of change:

An extraordinary change in the sentiment and temper of the people has taken

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 666. SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, December 8, 1914, unnumbered page following 12880.

³¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to his cousin, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, July 1, 1915, 13236.

³² *Ibid.*, W. S. to S. F. Callender, Vancouver, March 25, 1915, 13150.

³³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. W. Scott, July 1, 1915, 22040.

place in some respects, for one thing the sentiment against the liquor traffic has solidified and become focused in a quite remarkable way. The Saskatchewan Government have been feeling the force of the new opinion and we have decided to completely abolish the retail traffic within the Province.³⁴

In establishing the liquor board system, Scott was conscious that his government was interfering in what had been a private business, yet he believed that the government would lose control of the sale of alcohol if it was in private hands. Controls, administered by a public board, would ensure a system free from political interference, thus instilling public trust.³⁵

Even though it took the Scott government considerable time to come to the decision to abolish the bars, Scott was confident that he was on the right trail: "we made no mistake in the action which was taken in this sphere."³⁶ He had some doubts, however, as to whether public support for prohibition would last:

People are never quite unanimous on the liquor or temperance question but whether it is the result to a different feeling produced by the war or the fact that our solution of the question is somewhat different from the colutions [*sic* solutions] generally proposed or some other reason we appear to be receiving the very enthusiastic approval and support for our solution of an overwhelming majority of the people.³⁷

Scott continued to worry that no matter how well the government administered the policy, public support would erode and that it would be difficult to prevent illicit liquor

³⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to D. H. Ross, Canadian Trade Commissioner to Australia, April 16, 1915, 13620.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to George H. Young, Brampton, July 8, 1915, 13752.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Aileen Escombe, November 10, 1915, 21784.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to his half brother, John A. McDonald, June 15, 1915, 21879.

sales.³⁸ It is true that the war had created a “unique situation,” but what would happen once the war was over?

Scott was convinced that he had reacted to the public will but was wary of any further shift in the majority position.³⁹ To maintain public support meant that Scott had to keep his finger on the pulse of the province and not act too quickly. However, delay could also be costly if the government failed to stay just one step ahead of the majority of the people: “The Government certainly has taken a risk, but on the other hand a situation had developed which compelled us to do something or lose hundreds of good supporters.”⁴⁰ Scott demonstrated intuition by sensing the direction and strength of the political wind, and by anticipating when it would change.

Scott wrote to a church leader, T. Albert Moore, of Toronto, that total prohibition might not be too far off, but he first wanted to be assured that the people were in support of such a bold move.⁴¹ He predicted to Reverend Bennett that the liquor board system would likely last a year or so.⁴² These letters were sent to church men who were in favour of total prohibition. Scott gave them encouragement that the government had gone as far as it could for the moment but that it would go further when the time was right. Yet he expressed doubt to other supporters that the public attitude would stay

³⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Hugh Guthrie, Guelph, June 5, 1915, 27312.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Victoria, July 1, 1915, 48561.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Martin Wagner, Regina, April 15, 1915, 48571.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to T. Albert Moore, November 9, 1915, 48993.

⁴² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Reverend M. M. Bennett, Moose Jaw, January 4, 1916, 49000.

“dry” for a long period of time. Scott was always wary of being caught out of step with the public mood.

The public reaction to Scott’s policy was generally positive. Mrs White, a Saskatchewan resident, praised Scott: “It seems to me you are a leader of men or you would not have succeeded in gaining a unanimous decision on such an important question [liquor evil].”⁴³ Scott received congratulations from all sides except, of course, from the liquor interests. He did not rule out the possibility of having to give credit protection to the hotel owners if necessary to compensate them for lost revenues.⁴⁴ As it turned out, the government never gave this protection. Scott was convinced that his government’s actions would stimulate a prohibition vote in Alberta but not in Saskatchewan where there was a “very heavy foreign population” which would not vote in favour of prohibition.⁴⁵ Scott led his political team on a delicate balancing act on a high wire without a net. The foreign vote was a cornerstone of the Liberal government’s support, yet Scott knew that the prohibition forces, particularly in wartime, had the power to sway the majority of the people into supporting prohibition. Prohibition and patriotism became synonymous.⁴⁶ A successful party leader had to balance the competing forces and to form a compromise position that would be adaptable to change on short notice. Scott had to avoid counting on the shaky stool.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Mrs Jennie White, Moosomin, to W. S., April 30, 1915, 59442.

⁴⁴ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, W. S. to Hon. G. H. V. Bulyea, Edmonton, March 23, 1915, 6523.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Thompson, 102.

According to historian, James Gray, the closing of the bars reduced provincial consumption by ninety percent.⁴⁷ But the prohibitionists did not ease the pressure on the government with the closing of the bars. They wanted to eliminate all consumption of alcohol. On December 13, 1915, seven districts, by means of a plebiscite, opted to close their liquor stores.

In the Speech from the Throne on January 18, 1916, one short paragraph was devoted to the alcohol question. The government claimed that the effect of closing the bars was positive. Several “minor” amendments to the Liquor Act were promised for the coming session.⁴⁸ Premier Scott was occupied with Education Act amendments and left the Liquor Act amendments to Jim Calder. By the 1916 session, Scott took a very low profile on the question of alcohol.

It was not until December 11, 1916, several months after Scott’s resignation, that the province, under W. Martin’s premiership, voted overwhelmingly to close the liquor stores. Even though Scott had not expressed a strong belief that prohibition would work or would last after the end of the war, it is likely that Scott, if still premier in December 1916, would have bowed to public pressure and would have closed all provincial liquor outlets. As experience would show, Scott was correct. Prohibition was hard to enforce and did not last long after the end of the war.

The First World War brought more social change to the prairie landscape: female suffrage. Women in Britain had led the way in pushing for the vote, but it had been a

⁴⁷ James Gray, Booze: The Impact of Whiskey on the Prairie West, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), 81.

⁴⁸ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1916, 10.

long uphill battle. Pressure for granting the franchise to women in Saskatchewan was evident before the war. In February 1912 and 1913, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, at its annual meetings, passed resolutions in favour of giving the vote to women. In December 1912, J. E. Bradshaw, Conservative MLA for Prince Albert, moved a resolution in favour of female suffrage without creating the firestorm he had expected.⁴⁹ Members of the government spoke in favour of the motion and the resolution passed unanimously. Even though the Legislature had adopted the motion, Premier Scott did not take action on this measure waiting for a ground swell of public support.

Scott held traditional views about women of his day. In hearing that a woman in the community had just delivered triplets, for example, he wrote in offering congratulations: "I may, however, speaking for the Government, venture to express the hope that other good ladies in the Province will take note of the event in your district and go and do likewise."⁵⁰ Scott never missed a chance to encourage the growth of the province's population, but in so doing he left the impression that women were primarily there for the reproduction of the human race. On the other hand, Scott did not oppose women in their struggle to gain the vote and property rights. The Scott government proposed legislation to ensure a woman's right to control the sale of homestead property

⁴⁹ June Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan's Women." Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, editors, (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), 80 & 81. A resolution, also called a motion, may be moved by any member of the Legislative Assembly in order to create debate and to measure the mood of the House. Even though resolutions are not binding on the government, they can apply pressure on cabinet to change its policies.

⁵⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Malcom C. Dulmage, Mullinger, May 3, 1913, 11952.

and the Act passed on June 24, 1915.⁵¹

Scott's support of female suffrage was clear in correspondence long before the war, as indicated in a letter of August 1910: "Personally I have always held the view that just as soon as a majority of women desire to exercise the franchise they should be granted the right by law. I have never given the subject serious study and I should at present prefer not to commit myself publicly on the question."⁵² Scott repeated his stance that he favoured granting the vote once women could show the government that they wanted it. As in the closing of the bars, even though Scott personally favoured a measure, he was reluctant to move on the issue until he was convinced that the majority of the people were in favour. He was the type of leader who would lead the people only when he was convinced that he knew where they wanted to go. Scott supported female suffrage in principle but had to wait until he could gain partisan advantage. When the Legislature again passed a resolution in favour of female suffrage in December 1913, Scott said that he favoured the measure but did not think the time was "ripe" yet for women's suffrage.⁵³ However, he openly encouraged women to take action, advising Mrs. Lawton, President of the Equal Suffrage Association, to keep pushing its campaign

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 4th Session, 3rd Legislature, 88.

⁵² SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mrs. Ethel H. Stewart, London, England, August 15, 1910, 59459.

⁵³ SAB, newspaper clipping files, X3.9, The Regina Morning Leader, December 10, 1913, 3rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2178.

for suffrage.⁵⁴ Scott offered tips to the women on how to organize politically and how to collect the petitions needed to convince the government to move on extending the franchise. He did not oppose women who wanted the vote. He was prepared to help them where he could to build a public movement in favour of female franchise, but he refused to introduce the necessary legislation unless they organized a strong public lobby.

On January 18, 1916, in the Speech from the Throne at the Opening of the Legislature, there was a hint that the government was prepared to make a move on the franchise question. On February 14, Valentine's Day, and with the galleries full of women who had come to Regina to present thousands of petitions, Premier Scott rose in his place in the Chamber to announce that his government would introduce legislation to extend the vote to women.⁵⁵ To the President of the Women's Grain Growers' of Saskatchewan, he wrote:

I was very pleased indeed to be in position to give a favorable reply to the delegation who presented the petition. The women of Saskatchewan have helped and are helping to build up this Province of which we are so justly proud and I am very glad indeed that it is my good fortune to occupy the position of Premier in a Legislature which is extending to our women, through the franchise, further and fuller powers of assistance and service in the development of Saskatchewan.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, J. W. McLeod on behalf of Walter Scott, to Mrs. Lawton, Yorkton, July 6, 1915, 59470.

⁵⁵ Christine MacDonald, "How Saskatchewan Women Got the Vote." Saskatchewan History, 1, no. 3 (1948): 7.

⁵⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Mrs. John McNaughton, Saskatoon, February 16, 1916, 59508. Although the letter was addressed to Mrs John McNaughton, she was better known as Violet McNaughton. For a detailed account of how Saskatchewan women formed the Women's Grain Growers of Saskatchewan, see:

The Act to grant the franchise received Royal Assent on March 14, 1916.

For several reasons, the women of Saskatchewan gained the vote after a relatively short battle. To homestead on the prairie land and to make a success of farming, required work by both men and women, and their cooperative efforts built prairie society. Because the men generally recognized the importance of this joint service to the land and the province, they supported the concept that women deserved the vote as well.⁵⁷ Scott was also aware that, by the end of 1915, the neighbouring prairie provinces were preparing to introduce legislation to grant the vote to women, and his pride in Saskatchewan as a socially progressive province prompted him to take action before they did. When Scott finally acted, he knew that “the time was ripe and the demand was broad.”⁵⁸

Elizabeth Kalmakoff argues that the Scott government had introduced this measure not to bring social change to the province but “simply because the optimum moment for doing so had arrived, the moment when the greatest possible credit would reflect upon the Liberal party.”⁵⁹

Aileen Catherine Moffatt, “‘Where the Emphasis on Sex was Less:’ The Women’s Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.” MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, History Department, 1990, 23.

⁵⁷ Catherine L. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 46.

⁵⁸ Menzies, 90.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Kalmakoff, “Naturally Divided: Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916 - 1919.” Saskatchewan History. 46, no.2 (1994): 3. See also Elizabeth Kalmakoff, “Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan.” (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Regina, 1993).

February 1916 was not only a positive time for the announcement on the extension of the vote to women, but also the beginning of a firestorm for the Scott government. Three days before Scott made his Valentine's Day address to the women of the province, J. E. Bradshaw, Conservative Member for Prince Albert, rose in the Chamber to announce that there was corruption in the Scott government, and that he had evidence to show that members of the government had accepted bribes. He refused to name names or give any details, however, until the government agreed to establish a Royal Commission. If the government would not do this, the Opposition threatened to go to Lieutenant Governor Lake, a federal Conservative appointee, to ask him to establish a Royal Commission.⁶⁰

If the government decides to publicly investigate allegations of wrong doing, they have at least two options. They can either refer the matter to an existing or newly created legislative committee or establish a Royal Commission. A legislative committee can be established merely by a motion in the Assembly which would name the members and outline the committee's powers. The Legislature can refer a matter to a "Standing Committee" such as the Public Accounts Committee which has its membership and powers already established. For both committees, during Scott's time, the Chair was a government member of the committee.⁶¹

A Royal Commission is established by an order of the Lieutenant Governor, by

⁶⁰ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.12, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, Morning Leader, February 11, 1916, 2890.

⁶¹ It is only since the mid 1960s that the Chair of PAC has been selected from the Opposition benches.

practice on recommendation of the premier. In the order, the terms of reference or the scope of the study are stated as well as the membership of the commission. It is usual to have commissions with one or more persons (often judges) chosen for their expertise in the area of study. Essentially the government selects the commissioners and the terms of reference, but once the commission has commenced its study, it conducts its proceedings in an independent manner.

A government may choose to send a controversial issue to a committee in the belief that they will have more control over the depth and direction of the inquiry than with a Royal Commission. Opposition parties prefer Royal Commissions as a way of avoiding much of the government control. For both commissions and committees, the power is usually given to call witnesses and to examine them under oath. Reports, in both cases, are presented to the Legislature.

Governments have the option of taking a defensive stance by refusing to initiate an inquiry either in a commission or committee but in so doing would leave the impression that they have something to hide. If a government wants a more limited or controlled review, it usually chooses the committee approach. The depth of the review and the control over the proceedings are the two chief differences between commissions and committees.

For the Bradshaw charges, the government agreed to send the matter to legislative committees for investigation. The Conservatives refused to participate in these committees and gave no further details until there were assurances that there would be an independent inquiry. The Opposition feared that the legislative committees,

with a government majority, would fail to seek out all of the facts in the cases raised by Bradshaw.

On February 23, 1916, Jim Calder charged that Bradshaw was part of a plot hatched by the Honourable Robert Rogers, a federal Conservative Cabinet Minister from Manitoba, who was intent on embarrassing the government.⁶² Since the government was afraid that the Conservative opposition would convince the Lieutenant Governor to establish a Commission on his own accord, Premier Scott met with LG Lake on several occasions and received his assurance that the LG would consult the government before taking any action.⁶³

An editorial in The Evening Province accused the government of playing for time, charging that the delay in setting up a commission was a sign of the government's guilt.⁶⁴ However, Scott argued that a legislative committee was the proper route whereas a Commission would weaken the authority of the Legislative Assembly. It was a political issue within the purview of the Legislative Assembly.

In the midst of the crisis, Scott left for Montreal en route to Nassau, Bahamas. From Montreal, Scott wrote a letter explaining, or perhaps rationalizing, why he left when he did: having expected the session to be over by that time, he had booked a ship

⁶² SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.12, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, Morning Leader, February 23, 1916, 2925.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott Papers, 48078-48102.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping files, X3.12, The Evening Province, February 17, 1916, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, 3027.

to Nassau and he felt that he could not cancel his vacation.⁶⁵ He was sure that matters of state were in good hands in Saskatchewan, reassuring his friend, Jim Ross, that Calder could handle it all in Regina. Even though his actions looked mysterious or even reckless, Scott felt that it was a good tactic, one which would ease the pressure on the government when he was away, and Calder was a capable lieutenant.⁶⁶ Throughout his political career, Scott had acted cautiously but progressively in providing to the province policy that had broad public support. In the latter months of his premiership and with his illness affecting his judgement, Scott took chances politically and alienated people whom he had taken pains to accommodate in the past.

From a distance and by means of a series of telegrams, Scott and Calder planned the strategy to meet the Bradshaw charges. Scott advised Calder that they should establish a Royal Commission to “lay bear [*sic*] the whole unthinkable treacherous game.”⁶⁷ Scott had another motive in sending the telegrams. On March 1, 1916, he sent a copy of his Calder telegram to Stewart Lyon of the Globe, emphasizing that they were establishing a commission to get to the bottom of the affair. That he sent a copy of his telegram to the press indicates that Scott wanted to appear clean and untouched by the scandal and that he was doing everything in his power to clean it up.⁶⁸

Once the government announced that it would create royal commissions,

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Morning Leader, February 29, 1916, 2945.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Jim Ross, February 29, 1916, 55739.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Jim Calder, February 28, 1916, 55731.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Stewart Lyon, managing editor of the Globe, Toronto, March 1, 1916, 55743.

Bradshaw revealed the information he had on the scandals. In the end, the government appointed three commissions, the first of which was chaired by Sir Frederick Haultain, former leader of the opposition, and comprised Judge Newlands and Judge Lamont, the first Attorney General of Saskatchewan. The government charged this commission with investigating allegations of graft in the construction of the Battleford asylum, the Regina jail and the Department of Telephones.⁶⁹

Judge Wetmore chaired a second commission to examine all road construction contracts from 1913 to 1916 and the construction of a bridge in Saskatoon.⁷⁰ And finally, the government established the Brown Elwood commission which examined the charges made by J. E. Bradshaw concerning the acceptance of bribes by certain MLAs over liquor legislation.⁷¹ Since Scott was out of the province, he was not directly involved with the commission hearings. Even though the final result of the three commission reports cleared him and his cabinet of any wrongdoing, several public servants and Members of the Legislature were found guilty of fraud and the acceptance of bribes.⁷²

⁶⁹ SAB, Haultain Royal Commission files.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Wetmore Royal Commission files.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Brown Elwood Commission files.

⁷² Of the twenty-seven accusations raised by Bradshaw, two were dropped by counsel, fifteen were dismissed by the Commissions. Of the remaining ten, four private members were charged in a court of law. E. H. Devline, MLA Kinistino and H. C. Pierce plead guilty to charges of issuing forged documents and were sentenced to three years each in jail. C. H. Cawthorpe, MLA was released due to a hung jury and Gerhard Ens, MLA was cleared of the charges. J P Brown, Chief Clerk of the Board of Highway Commissioners was found guilty of issuing forged documents and sentenced to seven years in the Prince Albert penitentiary. See James William Brennan, "A Political History of Saskatchewan, 1905-1929." (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Fall, 1976).327.

The political effect of having scandal among the Liberal members and the civil service could have been disastrous for Scott's government. Yet Scott and his cabinet survived because they were seen in the public eye as having had the Bradshaw charges investigated fully, even if unwillingly initially. The three independent Royal Commissions erased any hint of coverup and when those who were implicated were charged and tried, the government could validly argue that the charges were in the past and that it was time to move on to other issues. However, this was no time for Scott to breathe easily.

The culmination of another storm that had been brewing for the past three years came in 1916: the question of separate schools had been controversial since the creation of the province. In 1905, Scott had been satisfied with the autonomy bills which created Saskatchewan and Alberta, giving some protection to separate schools, which were administered like the public schools under one governmental system. Religious minorities had the right to have religious education for one half hour at the end of the school day but the curriculum, and the general administration of the school system was handled by the Department of Education. The school boards were very much involved in the day to day administration of the schools in their systems. The separate school supporters paid their taxes to help finance the separate schools as did the public school supporters for the public schools.⁷³ Believing that this system was "essentially a national school system," Scott fought the 1905 provincial general election on the autonomy bill

⁷³ Raymond Huel, "Pastor vs. Politician: The Reverend Murdock MacKinnon and Premier Walter Scott's Amendment to the School Act," *Saskatchewan History*, 32, no. 2 (1979): 62.

issue and the people had elected him.⁷⁴ Even though the schools issue was not prominent for the next eight years, it was always in the background. Neither side was totally happy with the solution.

On September 14, 1911, Judge McLorg issued a court decision concerning the Vonda school district which reopened the school debate. McLorg wrote: “the option of supporting the public or the separate school system rested with each individual ratepayer.”⁷⁵ The taxpayers who were supporting the separate school system could switch their taxes over to the public system or vice versa. Afraid that ratepayers would exercise this choice and jeopardize the financial stability of some school boards, the government claimed that the ruling was against the constitution and the School Act.⁷⁶

On November 18, 1912, Premier Scott, as Minister of Education, introduced amendments to the School Act to restore the tax system as he believed it had been under the 1905 Act. Separate and public ratepayers would dedicate their taxes to their respective school boards. Even though both political parties supported passage of the amendments, a political storm began to brew shortly thereafter. The Orange Order argued that the religious minorities, particularly the Roman Catholics, were given special treatment.⁷⁷ The Daily Standard charged that Scott gave in to the Roman Catholics to repay them for their support in 1905, suggesting that he was paying

⁷⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to D. H. McDonald, Fort Qu’Appelle, September 11, 1905, 35113.

⁷⁵ Huel, 62.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Canadian Annual Review, 1913, 620.

allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church.⁷⁸ Late December 1912, Reverend Murdock MacKinnon, Presbyterian Minister of Knox Church in Regina, protested to Scott that the amendments gave too much power to the Roman Catholics.⁷⁹ He argued that the amendments promoted the separate schools by forcing separate school ratepayers to dedicate their taxes to the separate school board. Given a choice, perhaps the separate school system supporters would direct their taxes toward the public system, thereby weakening the separate system. The Scott amendments brought greater financial security and thus new life to separate schools.

In the case of businesses, the government divided the taxes between the two systems even though there might not be any separate supporters associated with the business. MacKinnon argued in favour of free choice but in one direction only: this freedom should be there to allow Catholics to direct their taxes to the public system but not for Protestants to support the separate schools. MacKinnon and his followers believed that it was their mission to bring assimilation to the prairies so that the people would be English- speaking and supportive of Protestant Anglo-Saxon beliefs.

Scott was liberal in his views, believing that assimilation would come over time as part of an evolutionary process. He felt a duty to protect the rights of the minority. The provincial Conservatives took up MacKinnon's point arguing that Scott was harbouring foreigners and was an agent of the Catholic Church.⁸⁰ While Scott chose the

⁷⁸ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.8, *The Standard*, January 10, 1913, 3rd Legislature, 1st Session, 1948.

⁷⁹ Huel, 63.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

legislative route to try to solve this debate, it is likely that Clifford Sifton would have left the issue with the courts.

In writing to his old friend, J. W. Dafoe, Scott noted that “anything involving the term ‘separate schools’ is very easily used to stir people up because it is a subject which so easily arouses a latent prejudice.”⁸¹ Scott continued to argue that the School Act amendments reaffirmed the law as it had been in 1905.⁸² Again the Liberal government was performing a balancing act. Relying on the support of the new immigrants, many of whom were Roman Catholic, the government had to protect the rights of this minority.

Most French Canadians in Saskatchewan and many Germans were Roman Catholics. As a result, the separate schools often had children who spoke a language other than English. The question of schools involved not only religion but language. W. R. Motherwell, who favoured English in the schools but was critical of any plan to force people to speak English, reflected Scott’s liberal views on this issue:

English, by all means, should be the language of our schools but just whether you can make British subjects quicker out of non-English by the lionizing process of squeezing their mother tongue out of them all at once is, to me, a very open and doubtful question. Make our schools, our laws and institutions generally so attractive to them that they will gladly drop the past, is, to me, a more preferable...method.⁸³

The entire school question heated up for Scott when Reverend Murdock

⁸¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. W. Dafoe, August 1, 1914, 12655.

⁸² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Roy S. Wells, Country Secretary, White Bear Orange Lodge, Hughton, SK, July 11, 1914, 13060.

⁸³ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. R. Motherwell to A. G. Hopkins, August 25, 1916, 5381.

MacKinnon waded into the issue. The debate began with an exchange of letters between Scott and MacKinnon, each letter becoming longer and more vitriolic than the last.⁸⁴ The two men extended their written debate to the public forum through open letters to editors of the local newspapers. On December 26, 1915, with Premier Scott present in the congregation, Reverend MacKinnon delivered a 100-minute sermon criticizing Scott and his government for being soft on Catholics with the amendments to the School Act. MacKinnon charged that Scott was accepting direction from the Catholic Church and making it easier for Roman Catholics to establish separate schools.⁸⁵ At first, Scott gave the impression to one of the key German Liberals in the province that there was nothing to worry about concerning MacKinnon's charges: "my friend and pastor, Reverend Mr. MacKinnon, Sunday evening opened up with vigor against the little amendment which we adopted three years ago with regard to separate schools. The sword which Mr. MacKinnon wields is a double edged one, and I am not losing any sleep over the matter."⁸⁶ Scott's early bravado changed to action when in January 1916, he wrote to a friend in Victoria that MacKinnon "broke loose again."⁸⁷ It troubled him that MacKinnon delivered this critical sermon in his own (Scott's) church: "Anyway controversies with clergymen are very delicate business for politicians."⁸⁸ Scott was

⁸⁴ Canadian Annual Review, 1915, 680.

⁸⁵ Huel, 66.

⁸⁶ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to P. M. Bredt, December 29, 1915, 21671.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to L. B. Cochran, Victoria, January 8, 1916, 13860.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

determined, though, to speak his mind: “Ecclesiastical fur will be flying in this neighbourhood the next few weeks.”⁸⁹ Scott was convinced that he was right and that he had the public on his side.

On February 25, 1916, with Reverend MacKinnon in the galleries of the Legislative Chamber, Scott sought his revenge, announcing in debate that the government intended to repeal the Education Act amendments because they were no longer needed. He informed the Legislative Assembly that in correspondence with Judge McLorg, the justice had admitted that in the Vonda decision, he had not been aware of “earlier and contrary decisions of two higher court judges.”⁹⁰ Because of this retraction by Judge McLorg, Scott believed that the previous amendments to the School Act were redundant. The day after Scott’s speech, McLorg publicly denied that he had reconsidered his decision.

Nonetheless, the Leader reported that Scott was in “excellent form and his presentation of facts was a masterly effort.”⁹¹ He gave a detailed account of the history of the School Act and the McLorg judgement. It was only near the conclusion of his speech that he went beyond his usual cautious path, explaining to the Members and the public why he had written so many public letters about the school question. Calling Reverend MacKinnon a “moral leper,” he felt it was his duty to reveal to the public this threat to society: “The intellectual and spiritual leper is very much more dangerous,

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13861.

⁹⁰ Huel, 67.

⁹¹ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.12, Morning Leader, February 25, 1916, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, 2932.

especially when he is found in the most sacred position in our civilization.”⁹² Scott had crossed the line of human decency in his attack on his rival. His controversial remarks, although brief, were caustic and deadly, and in attacking the Presbyterian minister, he made Presbyterians the enemy. Scott had devoted his political career to cultivating the support of diverse groups, including the Presbyterians. He had taken pains not to alienate any segment of society and he was proud of his ability to unite disparate groups into the Liberal party. In his agitated state over MacKinnon, however, he caused more damage than he realized.

Almost immediately after this speech, Scott left Regina for Montreal and then went on to Nassau. The reaction to Scott’s “MacKinnon speech” was quick and vociferous. W. M. Martin wrote: “You did yourself a whole lot of harm.”⁹³ He urged Scott to get some rest. George Langley, an outspoken member of Scott’s cabinet, blamed Scott for the MacKinnon affair. Langley believed that Scott was right but he had verbally beaten MacKinnon so badly that MacKinnon had gained public sympathy.⁹⁴ He criticized Scott for introducing a personal element into the debate and making MacKinnon a martyr. Langley wrote that Scott had acted out of character and that Scott’s political friends and supporters were beginning to doubt his political judgement.⁹⁵ This was the first sign that the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan was having

⁹² *Ibid.*, 2935.

⁹³ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. M. Martin to W. S., March 31, 1916, 14208.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, George Langley to W. S., March (no date), 1916, 14089.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14093.

doubts about Walter Scott's leadership, and that he was becoming a liability. Langley urged Scott not to fight religion, fearing that Scott would destroy the Liberal Party.⁹⁶

While in Nassau, Scott intended to continue the debate and to send letters critical of MacKinnon to Regina for publication in the newspapers. J. F. Kerr of the Leader and Scott's cabinet colleagues were reluctant to put these letters in the paper. Lottie Craig, Walter Scott's secretary for sixteen years, wrote that she was disappointed in the attitude of the women who supported Murdock MacKinnon. She felt that these women were disrespectful of the government that had given them the vote.⁹⁷ Scott refused to back down on the issue, writing to Calder: "I am ready and willing to quit the political post right away but I shall not withdraw from the fight in the MacKinnon matter as long as breath is left in me or until the issue is settled fairly. I know that I am wholly honest and right in the matter."⁹⁸

It is clear, however, that the major players in the Liberal Party had arranged for Scott to be out of town for some time until the MacKinnon affair had blown over. Calling his trip to Nassau a "practically compulsory absence," Scott wrote to Craig that he would be away until the middle of June: "Anyway this is what Mr. Calder and Mr. Ross proposed."⁹⁹ Even though this was a forced vacation, Scott felt resistance within himself for being forced to be away during the biggest crisis in the history of his

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14095.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Miss Craig to W. S., March 7, 1916, 13880.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. in a side note to Calder in a letter to Miss Craig, March 16, 1916, 13885.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Miss Craig, April 4, 1916, 13907.

government: “there is such a thing as being too much out of affairs.”¹⁰⁰

Even though Calder urged Scott to leave town, he asked Scott not to resign: “Under no circumstances must you think of dropping out.”¹⁰¹ In a telegram to Calder, Scott confirmed that he would not.¹⁰² Calder reassured Scott: “Would suggest that you do not bother your head with the troubles we are in just now. It is far better that you should have an easy mind and no worries as later on you will need every ounce of your strength.”¹⁰³ And further: “After all Walter don’t worry. If the worst comes to the worst we will both have a chance for a rest—something we both need.”¹⁰⁴ Was Calder trying to keep Scott in office so that the government would not look weak during the investigations by the three commissions? Perhaps Calder believed that Scott could recover and return to Saskatchewan politics as he had done for the 1912 election.

Attorney General W. F. A. Turgeon, Scott’s long-time friend, urged Scott to rest and take a low profile: “Any change in the leadership of the Party would immediately put me back in private life, while with you at the head I am willing to stay in the ring just so long as you may deem it expedient.”¹⁰⁵ Turgeon wrote that he would rather face Tories in the next election than Presbyterians. Thomas Miller, Scott’s manager of the

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1916, 13913 and W. S. to J. W. McLeod, March 11, 1916, 14166.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to W. S., April 9, 1916, 13826.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Calder, March 24, 1916, 13829.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to W. S., March 16, 1916, 13819.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 13822.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, W. F. A. Turgeon to W. S., March 27, 1916, 14400.

Times, reported that Scott had gone too far in verbally beating up on a clergyman.¹⁰⁶

Motherwell believed that MacKinnon received what was coming to him but urged Scott to leave MacKinnon alone.¹⁰⁷

To her brother-in-law, Jessie Scott expressed a desire for her husband to get out of politics but not until after this storm had blown over:

I will be glad when the day comes that he [Walter] will be out of politics. We may not have so much money to spend and not go so much but for myself I would not care and I really think both Walter and Dorothy would be better off if they did not go so much. I would not like to see them go out just now until things are cleaned up but in another five years I would not much mind.¹⁰⁸

The Leader, staying loyal to Scott and his government throughout the investigations, reported: "And despite their [the Conservatives] fond hopes and expectations the Scott Administration is still firmly seated in the saddle, the rights of the Legislative Assembly have been upheld, the responsible government of the good old British kind continues to prevail in Saskatchewan."¹⁰⁹

After some rest in Nassau, Scott came back to Regina in good form, but not long after his return to the pressures of the premiership, he was ill again.¹¹⁰ This time he

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Thomas Miller to W. S., April 12, 1916, 14222.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, W. R. Motherwell to W. S., May 3, 1916, 14230.

¹⁰⁸ SAB, John A. McDonald Papers, Jessie Scott to John A. McDonald, May 1, 1916.

¹⁰⁹ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.12, Morning Leader, March 13, 1916, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, 2971.

¹¹⁰ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, J. W. McLeod to Wm. Trant, Victoria, September 26, 1916, 14385.

headed to the Mitchell clinic in Philadelphia where he had received good treatment before and might again.

The criticism of Scott began to mount. The Province ran an article by George H. Barr, identified as a prominent Liberal, arguing that it was time for the Scott government to go, particularly due to Scott's attack on Reverend MacKinnon. Barr wrote that even though he was a Liberal, he refused to be identified with the Scott government. Barr was critical of Premier Scott for going to Nassau when his government was under investigation and just after his attack on Murdock MacKinnon.¹¹¹ If the Barr letter was representative of public opinion, Scott was becoming a liability to the Liberal Party. The party had been able to weather Scott's absences before, but his attack on the church and a fiery orator, such as Murdock MacKinnon, became too much to overlook. The party did not, however, want to consider the premier's resignation while under investigation by the three commissions.

By August 10, 1916, the Scott cabinet was cleared of any wrong- doing by the Brown Elwood Commission, and the time was right for Scott to bow out gracefully. Calder, having felt the strain as acting premier for all of the time that Scott was away, finally decided to consult with J. H. Ross and a few "close friends," and summed up the negotiations:

In the end we [Ross and Calder] decided that in his own best interest he [Scott] should resign. When we broached this matter to him a day or so later he fully agreed without hesitation. That same evening he handed his resignation to Senator Ross on the understanding that it would be handed to

¹¹¹ SAB, newspaper clipping file, X3.12, The Evening Province, March 3, 1916, 3rd Legislature, 5th Session, 3143.

the Lieutenant Governor as soon as his colleagues and supporters agreed on his successor.¹¹²

Calder wrote to W. S. Fielding, a federal Liberal, that Scott's resignation had required very careful handling: "Now that it is accomplished I am convinced that taken all in all we have improved our position in the province."¹¹³

Scott signed his letter of resignation while he was in Philadelphia and it became effective October 20, 1916. From Calder's recollections of the negotiations, he and Ross had consulted before Ross went to Philadelphia to talk with his old friend Walter. It must have been difficult for Ross, but the party had become convinced that Scott was no longer an asset and it was time for him to resign. After several days of reflection and advice from his physicians, Scott agreed to sign the letter bringing to an end a career of more than eleven years in service to his province.¹¹⁴

Once the public heard of Scott's resignation, letters of support poured in from loyal supporters. H. L. Lovering, a farmer and owner of a nursery near Regina, wrote that he had not been involved in politics but he wanted to thank Scott for his leadership, for being a statesman with "vision and courage." Even though he at first thought Scott had been wrong on the school question, in the end he conceded that Scott had been right.¹¹⁵ Even the opposition newspapers in the province rallied to praise Scott. The

¹¹² SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, handwritten reminisces written from memory from time to time after October 14, 1944, 9835 and 9836.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, J. A. Calder to W. S. Fielding, December 11, 1916, 6398.

¹¹⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, J. W. McLeod to J. M. Bryce, December 28, 1916, 13812.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, H. L. Lovering to W. S., February 11, 1917, 14507.

Moose Jaw Daily News reported that, though the paper did not agree with Scott politically, the editors admired his integrity. Throughout the investigations arising out of the Bradshaw charges, “the character of Hon. Walter Scott continues unassailed.”¹¹⁶ The newspaper summed up Scott’s aptitude “for anticipating the probable course of public opinion on questions of policy which came to him through his newspaper training, made him a man of uncommon strength with the public.”¹¹⁷ The 1916 Canadian Annual Review described Scott, at his resignation, as “broken in health.” And further: “He fought to the last with characteristic vigour and though there were clouds and corruption charges in the air during his last days in office, they did not personally touch him nor, in the end, his ministers.”¹¹⁸

Publicly stating that “physicians had ordered a complete rest from all work and responsibility for a year,” Scott left politics with the intention that he would be fully recovered from his depression within two years and that he would make a successful return to politics at that time.¹¹⁹ He resigned at age forty-nine, still a young man with time to make a comeback. J. W. McLeod, Scott’s private secretary, believed that his long time boss would return: “You [Scott] had weathered the gale so often in the past that I felt confident that you would do so again and come back to us with your strength

¹¹⁶ SAB, newspaper clipping file, M1, Scott XII, (8), Moose Jaw Daily News, October 17, 1916.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Canadian Annual Review, 1916, 689.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 720. SAB, Walter Scott Papers, J. A. Calder to W. S., Aldene Hotel, Philadelphia, October 30, 1916, 13830.

renewed for the fight that we are likely to have at the forthcoming session and a little later in the election scrimmage.”¹²⁰

Historian Bill Brennan described Scott: “Though he was not the master of intricate political detail... Scott had proven himself a match for any opponent on a public platform or on the floor of the Legislature.”¹²¹ When President Walter Murray learned of Scott’s resignation, he wrote to Mrs. Scott: “His integrity, his truthfulness, his courage and his loyalty to friends and colleagues have never been seriously questioned, while his large views and deep sympathies with the plain men who work and suffer have given him an influence and a power that perhaps his great modesty prevented him from realizing.”¹²² Jim Calder was proud of the accomplishments of the Scott government: “Walter Scott government had done its best to create the fundamental laws that would reasonably take care of the lives, needs and activities of the people of Saskatchewan.”¹²³ In later years, Calder summed up Walter Scott’s government years: “They were years of intensely interesting work, great activity, hard work, long hours, much travelling and many difficulties accompanied however at all times with a feeling that something real was being accomplished for the future life of the province and its people.”¹²⁴

Two years after his resignation, Scott neither recovered his health nor returned to

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, J. W. McLeod to W. S., December 19, 1916, 14197.

¹²¹ Brennan, 329.

¹²² U of S Archives, J. E. Murray Papers, Walter Murray to Mrs Jessie Scott, October 18, 1916.

¹²³ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, reminiscences, 9789.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9840.

Saskatchewan politics. Instead, he was still thinking about his lost battle with Murdock MacKinnon. Scott wrote that he was somewhat improved in health due to “the fortitude and faith of friends, including my wife, to whom I can never be half grateful enough.”¹²⁵ Scott concluded that he had made a mistake with MacKinnon: “I drove a man wearing sacred cloth so utterly and so defencelessly into a corner that sympathy was created for him.”¹²⁶ Yet, just the thought of MacKinnon years later caused a further outburst of anger from Scott in which he argued that he had been right and that MacKinnon was “a deliberate, persistent, malicious slanderer, falsifier and destroyer of the truth and facts.”¹²⁷ J. A. Allen, a Presbyterian, a Liberal, and a Scott supporter, wrote to Scott that the Knox Church Session had been critical of him, not so much about the issue, but about the way in which he had attacked a church minister.¹²⁸ Scott had passed “beyond the bounds of public controversy.”¹²⁹

Scott wrote to Langley that he believed that he had been proven correct in how he dealt with the school question: the problem had been that his friends had not acted to protect his reputation.¹³⁰ Scott was not able to forgive or forget but he felt he had been wrongly accused by his own church and forsaken by his colleagues. As time passed,

¹²⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. A. Allen, Toronto July 4, 1918, 78370.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 78371.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, J. A. Allen to W. S., July 18, 1918, 78396.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to George Langley, August 3, 1918, 14914.

Scott rationalized his own actions, denying that he was mentally ill or that there was anything wrong with his judgement. He wrote that he intentionally let himself “appear mad clear through to attract to the row the attention of the classes whose votes we needed to offset any votes lost because of our position on the Amendments.”¹³¹ After two years of rest and exile, Walter Scott’s perception of the MacKinnon incident had not yet cleared and he still had not returned to his old state of mental health. Scott went into a deep depression after his retirement and spent two years in Los Angeles, unable to return to his home province until 1918. He continued to be angry about his last few months in office and felt betrayed by his friends.

The correspondence files for 1916-18 are virtually empty. Scott was bitter over the MacKinnon incident and was unable to reflect positively on his many accomplishments in his eleven years as premier. If he did have moments of self congratulation and a sense of satisfaction about the progress and development in Saskatchewan under his leadership, the records do not show it. From having been the centre of attraction in Saskatchewan politics, he soon believed he was a forgotten man.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, September 5, 1918, 78423.

Chapter 9 Life After Politics

Retirement for Walter Scott at age forty-nine, after eleven years as Premier of Saskatchewan, with a full schedule of meetings, responsibilities and travel was very difficult. At the time of his resignation, he was in the Weir Mitchell clinic, Philadelphia, where instead of finding a cure, his spirits plunged further into the depths of despair which lasted nearly two years. He moved to Los Angeles and stayed there in a hotel. According to Scott, his daily mood was as if he was going to his own hanging.¹ Finding that, when he was depressed, he could neither write letters nor meet with people, he became a recluse. After having been a journalist and prolific letter writer all of his professional life, he did not write letters for a period of two years, with the exception of an occasional letter to W. R. Motherwell. Scott described to Motherwell his inability to go out of the house and to meet people. Occasionally he would make the effort to go out, which often led to greater fatigue and more depression. Scott found that the easiest route was just to stay home: “for 18 months I was incapable of consecutive thinking and altogether lost touch with current literature and progress of thought on these and all other questions.”² Scott had at least one faithful political friend who stuck by his side

¹ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, May 30, 1918, 16272.

² *Ibid.*, 16271. SAB, J. H. Haslam Papers, W. S. to J. H. Haslam, July 12, 1918.

through illness and health. Jim Ross had been influential in attracting Scott to politics in 1886, had maintained a close friendship throughout their political careers, and travelled the world in search of a cure for Scott. In 1917 Ross sent a telegram to Calder during the Liberal convention asking him to keep Scott's name before the Liberals: "Tell the convention Walter Scott is with you today in spirit. He keeps in touch with all great public matters and to the joy of all Liberals will be with you in the flesh within two years."³ Scott, in turn, cherished Ross's friendship, writing to him: "I know that there is nobody in the world who has or who has ever had a man friend quite so good as you [Ross] have constantly been to me."⁴ But Ross was not his only friend. Scott wrote, from time to time, that one of his best friends was his wife, Jessie, but admitted that she did not know all of what was going on. Now that Scott felt alone in retirement, he depended on his two old friends, Jim Ross and his wife, Jessie.

For Jessie Scott, who was with her husband in Los Angeles during his mental anguish, it was a very difficult time. She had lost the social contact and the circle of friends in Regina that she had as the Premier's wife, and her husband was not a fit companion. Scott himself admitted as much: "How my wife ever stood the strain of those long months is past understanding. She had an ever-reviving faith and courage that was amazing-- and Jim Ross, well I think no man can ever have had such a friend as he has been to me. The two of them have saved me from going under altogether."⁵ Life on

³ SAB, J. A. Calder Papers, J. H. Ross to J. A. Calder, March 26, 1917, 6416.

⁴ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Jim Ross, February 29, 1916, 55741.

⁵ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, May 30, 1918, 16272.

the political sidelines was not pleasant for a man who had been in the centre of events for nearly two decades. Even though people vowed that Scott would not be forgotten and many of his political colleagues wrote letters to him after his retirement, the letters soon stopped when he did not reply.

Scott blamed his difficulties on his lack of education, convinced that quitting school after grade eight had been “fatal” to his career. His years of work ended early and now he was experiencing “years of idle misery.”⁶ Years later, in one of his last letters before his death, Scott confided to his Presbyterian Minister friend, Reverend Inkster, that he had considered suicide during his bouts of depression: “what prevented me from trying to end it all definitely, God only knows; -- at the time I believed the chief reason was lack of courage to do it; whenever I heard of cases of suicide, I envied the courage of those who went out that way.”⁷ By the spring of 1918, the depression lifted and Scott began to feel somewhat better. He returned to Regina for a brief visit before travelling to Victoria to take up residence in the Empress Hotel.

When Scott was feeling better, he took renewed interest in Canadian politics. He supported Jim Calder when he resigned from the Martin government in Saskatchewan to join the Borden Union government, because this was a wartime effort and a strong government to lead the country was important.⁸ Scott was critical of Wilfrid Laurier in

⁶ SAB, J. H. Haslam Papers, W. S. to J. H. Haslam, July 12, 1918.

⁷ SAB, SHS Collection, file SHS 57, W. S. to Rev. John Gibson Inkster, Toronto, June 22, 1935.

⁸ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, May 30, 1918, 16274. W. M. Martin formed government in Saskatchewan after Scott resigned in October 1916. On the federal scene, Robert Borden formed a coalition or union

refusing to join this Union Government: "In my view Sir Wilfrid made the cardinal mistake of his life in refusing to join Borden."⁹ Scott disagreed with Laurier over the conscription issue, favouring an all-out effort to end the war to protect the British empire and the democratic principles it stood for.¹⁰ Scott was suspicious of the French-Canadian factor in government: "I should not want a government at this time with the head and body of it so much subject to Quebec influence as a Government led by Sir Wilfrid was sure to be."¹¹ Scott saw no contradiction in supporting the rights of German immigrants in Saskatchewan while criticizing the French-Canadian influence in central Canada. Yet throughout these trying war years, Laurier wrote to Scott that even though they had disagreed over conscription, they were still friends. Laurier conceded Scott's right to support conscription but wrote that he (Laurier) still admired him.¹²

With Scott's return from the United States, rumours began in earnest that he was preparing for a political comeback, and an editorial in the Saskatoon Phoenix speculated that Scott would return to politics.¹³ Scott disagreed, saying that he intended eventually to return to Saskatchewan to take up the newspaper business again, but he was not

government to consolidate Canada's war effort.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 16275.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to James S. Telfer, July 3, 1918, 16278.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, May 30, 1918, 16274.

¹² *Ibid.*, Wilfrid Laurier to W. S., June 20, 1918, 16306.

¹³ The Phoenix, October 21, 1918.

inclined to return to politics.¹⁴ Unfortunately, his return home was not without relapses. By December 1918, Scott still had days of feeling like a “has been” with “no possible chance of being anything else to the end of his miserable days.”¹⁵ One of the things that he missed most in being out of public life was the special treatment he had received wherever he went. Since his retirement, people treated Scott like a common citizen, to which it was difficult for him to adjust. While a patient at the Mayo clinic in Rochester, USA, in December 1918, Scott complained about no longer having a secretary and having to wait in line like all of the other patients. He reminisced about the “good old days” when he had been “wined and dined” by important people. A retired premier received none of these privileges of office.¹⁶ In a letter to the Mayo clinic, he complained that he had met with prime ministers and cabinet ministers of many different countries yet he received no special treatment from the clinic.¹⁷ His confrontational behaviour with the administration of the clinic and the letter of complaint became a trend that Scott exhibited throughout his later years. He became more aggressive and unhappy with the world and how he was treated by it.

Scott’s feelings of rejection increased when, on his return to Regina in July 1919, the Liberal caucus was meeting and he was not invited to attend. The members knew,

¹⁴ The Manitoba Free Press, October 17, 1918.

¹⁵ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to Burford Hook, manager of the Morning Leader, December 13, 1918, 14886.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott’s memorandum of complaint against treatment received at the Mayo Clinic, December 29, 1918, 15419.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Dr. Balfour, c/o Mayo Clinic, Rochester, January 24, 1919, 15613.

according to Scott, that he was in the Legislative Building where the caucus was meeting but did not invite him, heightening his feeling of being a “has been.”¹⁸

In November 1918, Walter Scott began to write editorials for the Moose Jaw Times, which many thought was the beginning of a return to normal life for the former premier. In the first article which appeared on November 23, 1918, Scott gave his background and an outline of his political career, and announced that he was returning to journalism.¹⁹ At first, the articles outlined the positive achievements of the “progressive” Scott government. The Co-op grain elevator system, the closing of the bars and the granting of the vote to women were examples cited as to the progressiveness of the government under his leadership. In the articles, Scott announced that he hoped to offer solutions to public policy.²⁰ In subsequent articles, he began to take a more aggressive stance, arguing that, since the war was over, the time had come for the Union Government to disband and for the Liberals to return to their own natural party.²¹

In a private letter, Scott called the Borden government a “maggotty [*sic*] aggregation.”²² News that Scott had returned to the world of journalism spread across

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Sid Porter, July 13, 1919, 16539.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping scrapbook, Moose Jaw Times, November 23, 1918, M1 Scott XII.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping scrapbook, Moose Jaw Times, November 23 & 25, 1918, M1 Scott XII.

²² *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. N. Fish, Regina, December 11, 1918, 14796.

Canada and was reported in the Globe.²³ Scott continued to write approximately two editorials per week but the tone of the articles soon became bitter and vindictive. The newspaper became a vehicle for a disappointed former leader to wash the old “dirty linen” in public. Scott wondered in his articles if he would have had his “breakdown” if he had stayed out of politics. Would life have been easier if he had stayed in journalism?²⁴ After writing on average two articles or editorials per week from November 23, 1918 to March 20, 1919, Scott found that he could not continue to write coherently. The title he adopted for his column was: “Silly Squibs by that ‘Sick Slacker’ Scott.”²⁵ His return to sound mental health had been short-lived.

There were some bright moments for Scott in his retirement. He took great joy in knowing that the courts ruled that he had been correct in his assessment of the education system, that he had been vindicated on his amendments to the School Act of which MacKinnon had been so critical. After the Scott government had repealed the controversial amendments to the School Act in 1916, the government appealed the issue to the Supreme Court of Saskatchewan and ultimately to the judicial committee of the Privy Council in England, the highest court of appeal in the British empire at that time. On July 31, 1918, the Privy Council ruled that once a separate school district was established, the religious minority was obliged to support it. This was in line with

²³ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping file, The Globe, November 27, 1918, M1 Scott XII (10).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping scrapbook, The Moose Jaw Evening Times, November 23, 1918, M1 Scott XII.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping scrapbook, Moose Jaw Times, January 2, 1919, M1 Scott XII.

Scott's argument two years earlier. The Morning Leader proclaimed in a headline: "Walter Scott Vindicated."²⁶ The article went on to say: "The result speaks for itself. Whatever opinion one may have of the constitutional law in controversy, the sincerity of Mr. Scott, his honesty of purpose, and the accuracy of his judgement can no longer be disputed. Nor can anyone say that the attitude of the Government under his leadership and under that of Mr. Martin has not been strictly in accordance with the principles of fair dealing."²⁷

With Scott back in the news, rumours of his political return began to circulate. As Laurier was aging, speculation began as to who would be his successor. Motherwell wrote to Laurier that Martin or perhaps Scott would be his successor.²⁸ Even during the war, Lottie Craig, Scott's secretary, believed that he should take over from Laurier.²⁹ J. H. Haslam, a prominent Liberal in Saskatchewan, wrote that once Scott's health had returned, he could be the Prime Minister of Canada.³⁰ But Scott knew the reality of his future: his era had passed and he was not capable of taking the torch from Laurier.³¹ Yet the rumours persisted. Lottie Craig reported to Scott that people were talking in

²⁶ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping file, Morning Leader, August 6, 1918, M1 Scott XII (10).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ SAB, W. R. Motherwell Papers, W. R. Motherwell to Wilfrid Laurier, December 13, 1918, 5383.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Walter Scott Papers, Lottie Craig to W. S., January 29, 1917, 14496.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, J. H. Haslam to W. S., December 12, 1918, 14861.

³¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to J. A. Calder, February 25, 1919, 15727.

Saskatchewan that he would be appointed Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan.³²

Craig speculated that if Scott did not become the LG, and if the Liberals were re-elected federally, he would be named to the Senate.³³ She had great admiration for her former boss, writing to him: “You with your wonderful,—almost supernatural,— ability to know what the people want before they know it themselves and the courage that you have always shown in following the path that you knew to be right, no matter who opposed.”³⁴ She felt that Scott’s most positive attribute was his ability to know what the people wanted.³⁵ Although Craig was not a neutral observer, she reflected the admiration Scott’s close associates had for him, notwithstanding his illness.

In his retirement, Scott received recognition from his province. In March 1918, the University of Saskatchewan established a scholarship in his name for agricultural students.³⁶ In 1925, Scott received an honorary degree from the university that had been founded under his premiership. Unfortunately, due to ill health, Scott did not attend the convocation ceremonies. President Murray wrote to Scott advising him that the honorary degree had been granted for Scott’s contribution to the province: “Your great services to Saskatchewan in the organization of the new province, and the planning of its public buildings and in the provision of public services, was so manifest to all that everyone

³² *Ibid.*, Lottie Craig to W. S., April 29, 1920, 17132.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 23, 1921, 18096.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, August 13, 1918, 14703.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, August 7, 1922, 18659.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Walter Murray to W. S., March 9, 1918, 15216.

was delighted to do you honour.”³⁷

Even though Scott had the outward appearance of returning to normal life in the summer of 1918, he still exhibited signs of instability, writing to Laurier that Martin and Calder were trying to portray him (Scott) as insane.³⁸ Paranoia was part of Scott’s psychiatric condition. Scott’s entire cabinet had been extremely loyal to him, particularly Calder who had been acting Premier during nearly half of Scott’s term as Premier. Calder refused the leadership when Scott resigned, thus proving that he did not have a personal motive in having Scott retire from politics. Yet, Scott lashed out against those who had suggested that he step down, writing that Jessie had suspected Calder of spreading gossip about Scott’s mental health. Over the years, she had told Walter that she did not like J. K. McInnis (an old business partner), Frederick Haultain and Jim Calder. Scott now believed that Jessie had been correct all along in her assessment of these men.³⁹ By the end of the war, when Calder did not leave the Union Government and return to the Liberal fold, Scott admitted that he had lost faith in him, which compounded his belief that Calder was spreading lies about him. Scott wrote that “Calder has gone wrong in public matters, and he broke faith with me personally in a semi-private matter.”⁴⁰ In his “falling out” with Calder, Scott followed a life-long pattern of disagreeing with long time friends.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Walter Murray to W. S., May 5, 1925, 18676.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Wilfrid Laurier, December 27, 1918, 78165.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Jim Grover, Edmonton, June 16, 1920, 17268.

Walter and Jessie Scott chose Victoria as the place where they wanted to relocate. Still in his early fifties, Scott found that he could not work nor did he wish to reenter politics. They lived in the Empress Hotel for several months before Jessie initiated the purchase of a house in the Oak Bay area of Victoria.⁴¹ In March 1919, they sold their house in Regina, thereby cutting their ties with Saskatchewan. Even though Scott wrote that he intended to return to Regina in several years, he admitted that he did find the Regina winters long and cold.⁴² However, Scott missed the prairies: “there is no place like the prairie. As always, the first good look at the prairie near Calgary, was just like a good draught of water to the thirsty person.”⁴³ He felt that Victoria was very quiet but it offered a more moderate climate by the sea: “Even if the people here are dead if unburied, there are compensations.”⁴⁴

Walter Scott returned to Saskatchewan politics for one brief interlude. In October 1919, when Motherwell ran in a federal by-election, he returned to give a hand to his old friend and former cabinet colleague.⁴⁵ Even though Scott “enjoyed being at the old game again,” the campaign was not successful for Motherwell, and Scott returned to private life.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs Minnie Douglas, his half sister, April 5, 1919, 15818.

⁴² *Ibid.*, W. S. to Mrs Bartlett, March 25, 1919, 15621.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Sid Porter, June 4, 1919, 16531.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Norman Mackenzie, June 23, 1919, 16241.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Ida Goodall, Los Angeles, November 27, 1919, 15930.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, W. S. to M. M. Clark, Columbia, S. C. USA, November 29, 1919, 15748.

In 1918-1920, Scott experienced a series of personal mishaps. A newspaper reported that he was fined \$15 for failing to stop his car as he passed a stationary street car. Scott declared that he would appeal the conviction.⁴⁷ On December 18, 1920, Scott had another incident with his car when he ran over a pedestrian, John Thompson.⁴⁸ Thompson was unhurt but Scott wrote to the Chief of Police complaining about the lack of enforcement of the law regarding pedestrians. Then, on December 22, 1920, Thompson wrote to Scott thanking him for replacing his clothes that had been damaged in the mishap.⁴⁹

In another incident, on July 28, 1919, while Scott was journeying by train to the United States, he was arrested at the Pembina border crossing by an American border officer when he failed to give a permanent address and listed farming as his occupation.⁵⁰ Scott had no doubt become aggressive toward the guard on being questioned and ended up in a holding cell under arrest. He then broke down a wall and escaped from the guard house and continued on his journey without permission of the American government to enter the country. Scott was insulted by this treatment and sent letters and telegrams to the Canadian Prime Minister and the American President

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, newspaper clipping file, M1 Scott XII (12). There is no date or name of the newspaper.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to the Victoria Chief of Police, (no name given), December 18, 1920, 17546.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, John Thompson to W. S., December 22, 1920, 17906.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Sir Robert Borden, July 28, 1919, 78952.

seeking restitution for himself and punishment for the border guard.⁵¹ Scott wrote to E. R. Russell, the American immigration officer, accusing him of being the “rankest kind of coward”⁵² and claiming that he broke out because, in the three hours he had been in the cell, he had not been fed. He believed that the Americans were trying to starve him!⁵³ Scott’s instability surfaced once again, as he lashed out in an irrational manner when confronted by authority.

During August 1919, when he attended the Liberal national convention to choose a new leader to succeed Laurier, Scott showed once again that he was not able to return to politics. He wrote to W. S. Fielding, the former Minister of Finance under Laurier and a leadership contender, that he (Scott) had voted on every ballot for Fielding. Yet, to Fielding, Scott admitted that he thought Mackenzie King was “the best man available for the leadership.”⁵⁴ Since Scott thought that King had no chance of winning, he probably voted for Fielding in the hope of being on the winning side. His political judgement was clouded, though, when he wrote to a leadership candidate that he was not the best person for the job. Scott had lost his ability to pull friends and allies together in a common cause. Scott sent a letter to King, telling him that he would make a fine leader even though he (Scott) had voted for Fielding.⁵⁵ Scott renewed his pressure to ensure that the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, and W. S. to Joseph Tumulty, Secretary to President Wilson, Washington, August 10, 1919, 78983.

⁵² *Ibid.*, W. S. to E. R. Russell, July 29, 1919, 78965.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, W. S. to Acting Prime Minister George Foster, January 19, 1920, 78993.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. S. Fielding, August 10, 1919, 15894.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. L. Mackenzie King, August 10, 1919, 16039.

Liberal Party moved closer to Ontario than Quebec. "Keep yourself [King] a distinctly Ontario man, -- we need strengthening in Ontario. A few less seats in Quebec may be advantageous."⁵⁶ King's response was that he would welcome Scott's advice at any time.⁵⁷

Scott had some inconsistencies in his own philosophy. As has been shown, Scott supported individual and minority rights with the quiet hope that all new immigrants would voluntarily adopt the British and Protestant culture, language and value system. Yet he felt that French Canadians (another minority) were disloyal to Britain and to Canada in their lack of enthusiasm for the war effort. Scott was consistent in his support of British values and the minorities who he believed could become loyal British subjects. Since French Canadians did not fall into this category, according to Scott, they were not to be trusted with control of the levers of federal power.

Throughout Scott's political life, Liberalism was the central focus. He believed that the Liberal Party was Canada's natural governing party: "Canada's welfare is affected by whatever affects the Liberal Party."⁵⁸ Scott believed in unions but did not see them becoming a political force: "I am a thorough believer in labor unionism too,--until I became an employer I held membership in an union, -- yet it is my firm conviction that a purely labor party is too narrow to entrust with the affairs of the country."⁵⁹ Although

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, W. L. Mackenzie King to W. S., November 20, 1919, 16044.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, W. S. to W. R. Motherwell, November 3, 1919, 16381.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to H. S. Ross, Montreal, May 25, 1919, 16627.

Scott was a long-time supporter of a progressive liberal party, he was somewhat disillusioned: “my faith is in a Liberal or Progressive party; — and I am too old and have seen too much of parties from both outside and inside to expect anything approaching perfection from them.”⁶⁰

While Scott was wrestling with his own mental health, personal physical injury occurred frequently. On November 29, 1919, while he was enjoying a round of golf, he hit a golf ball into a large rock and the ball came straight back and hit him in the eye.⁶¹ This injury led to a loss of vision in that eye and a source of discomfort and finally to corrective surgery.

In all, Scott’s retirement life was filled with negative and stressful events which led to other rounds of depression. Notwithstanding his eye injury, he left on December 1, 1919, with Jim Ross on another world tour, once again resorting to world travel with a friend when his depression became too much to bear.⁶² The travel, however, did not bring Scott total peace, because, while on the ocean liner, Scott had a confrontation with the ship’s captain over the storage of a trunk.⁶³ This incident led to further accusations and letter writing. A common thread had developed in Walter Scott’s life. He had become disillusioned about politics and found the adjustment to retirement very

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, W. S. to M. M. Clark, New York Life Company, Columbia, S. C., USA, November 29, 1919, 15748.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15748.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, correspondence between W. S. and Captain Nagano, of the SS Shinyo Maru, December 11-13, 1919, 79116-79123.

difficult. His mental instability contributed to this lack of adjustment. He reacted aggressively towards anyone in authority who did not know him or would not give him preferred treatment. Did they not know that he had been the Premier of Saskatchewan? From having been in a position of telling people what to do, he had to take direction from others. This was a pattern in his life that later would have serious ramifications.

One of the most tragic events for Walter Scott was the death of his wife of forty-two years in 1932. There are no letters in Scott's correspondence files about Jessie's death but judging from his correspondence about her while she was alive, this loss must have been devastating. With Walter's bouts of depression and lengthy absences, he had not been an easy person to live with, yet Jessie was always at his side. We know little about Jessie Read Scott. She disliked the spotlight of politics and was not relaxed with sea travel, yet she went with Walter by sea, moved to Ottawa, back to Regina, and finally to Victoria without obvious complaint. Together, they raised an adopted daughter, Dorothy, who stayed near her adoptive parents throughout their lives. Even though Walter idolized his daughter, child care was Jessie's responsibility. Scott always referred to his wife in his correspondence as "Mrs. Scott" yet appeared to love her and counted her as his best friend. Her death must have been a cruel blow to a man who had had his own share of personal grief.

Walter Scott's last years in Victoria were ones of isolation and depression. It was only by June 1935 that he began to feel somewhat better. On June 22, he wrote to his old friend, Reverend Inkster, a minister at Knox Church in Toronto, one of his last letters

before his death.⁶⁴ Scott had just had a day trip to downtown Victoria and he was feeling euphoric. He felt physically handicapped with a lame left leg, one eye “totally blind,” and he was unable to read with the other, yet his spirits were good enough to leave the house to visit the dentist and to get his hair cut. During his years of depression, both the doctor and barber had visited him at his home. He noted that over the past years he had even lost his ability to speak in public. He reminisced about a farewell party for Reverend Inkster when he was leaving Victoria in 1920. When Scott rose to speak, his mind went blank. He did say a few words, but it was then that he knew his political days were over: “So an old political war horse, get him on his feet and prop him up, will always be able to say something, no matter how little intellect he has left.”⁶⁵

To Reverend Inkster, Scott wrote about how he missed his friend Jim Ross, who had died. “He [Ross] was like a real father to me, who never had the advantage of a father. My own father had passed on before my birth as I must have told you.”⁶⁶ Thus to a church minister and an old friend, Scott, at the age of sixty-eight, was still talking about his father as if he had died before he was born. Privately he knew this story to be untrue, yet publicly, he continued the story until his own death.

On the topic of religion, Scott admitted to Inkster that he (Scott) had had a strict Presbyterian religious youth. On the Sabbath, religious reading was the only recreation

⁶⁴ SAB, SHS Collection, file SHS 57, W. S. to Rev. John Gibson Inkster, June 22, 1935.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

allowed: “Nothing but cold victuals on the Sabbath and long faces.”⁶⁷ Even though he had rebelled against the church, he still felt some condemnation when he saw work being done on a Sunday. Yet he had to admit to his friend that in his latter years, he did enjoy golfing on Sunday rather than going to church. Scott concluded his letter with a solemn plea to his friend to pray for him. He asked Reverend Inkster to thank God for the reprieve he had experienced from his depression and to ask for a continuance of his improved mental health. Scott worried about what would become of him, afraid that a home for the “mentally helpless” was in his future.⁶⁸

This eight-page letter gives insight into Scott’s mental anguish on his continuing depression and his inability to leave the house. The letter was written (the first in fourteen years, according to Scott) on a rare day when he was feeling much better, but lived in fear of the return of the dark days. However, the summer of 1935 was a good time for Scott. He showed signs of returning to his old cheerful self. He convinced Dorothy to drive him across Canada to his two home provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario, the former being the land where he had once been premier, so that he could visit old friends, political and nonpolitical alike.

By mid-September, the Regina Leader Post, with great anticipation, began reporting on the expected arrival of their former premier. Judge Rolison of Winnipeg, who had seen Walter, said: “Mr. Scott is looking fine.”⁶⁹ The Leader Post announced

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Regina Leader Post, September 20, 1935, 3.

that after many years of residing in Victoria, Mr. Scott was returning to Regina for a visit and that he “is in much better health than he had been for some time.”⁷⁰ The local Regina newspaper was proud to have the former premier in the Queen City: “Saskatchewan citizens, whatever their political sympathies, cannot recall him with other than appreciation.”⁷¹

By coincidence or design, it turned out that the federal election was in full swing while the Scotts were visiting in Saskatchewan. The November 4th issue of the Leader Post reported that while in Regina, Scott had appeared on the same stage with the national Liberal leader, William Lyon Mackenzie King.⁷² This was one of the few times that Scott was back to Saskatchewan since leaving the premier’s office in 1916. He received a hero’s welcome. This was an exciting chance to appear on stage with the soon-to-become Prime Minister of Canada.

The reporter covering the political meeting showed a flare for observation and creative writing: “Hands are an interesting study. Mr. Scott has the large and roughened hands of a man who once used them. He was a printer. Mr. King has the small fine hands of the scholar type who uses them to grasp a pen.”⁷³

Unfortunately, later that fall while continuing their journey eastward, Dorothy and her father were in a serious car accident near Strathroy, Ontario. Caught on icy

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, September 23, 1935, 4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, November 4, 1935, 4.

⁷³ Regina Leader Post, no date. Newspaper clipping from Carolyn Feasey, Strathroy Ontario.

roads near Scott's birthplace, their car swerved off the road and struck a power pole.⁷⁴ After spending some time in the London hospital due to his injuries, Scott joined his daughter and other relatives for Christmas in the London area. He established himself in the Hotel London while Dorothy stayed with her aunt and uncle, Margaret and Ralph Buttery at 290 Princess Street, London.⁷⁵

On January 25, 1936, a series of events began to unfold which led to Walter's hospitalization and eventual death. When he had checked into the Hotel London, Dorothy had been quite clear with the management that her father had been ill and that he could be hard to handle at times.⁷⁶ She made the arrangement that, if any problems should arise, the management of the hotel was to phone her. On January 25, Scott and the manager of the hotel became involved in a fierce argument over an unpaid account. Apparently, the hotel account was one day overdue and the manager had refused to serve Scott any further meals until his account was settled. During the argument, according to the manager, Mr. Scott threatened to shoot him. The manager called the police who arrested Scott for uttering threats. The police contacted Dorothy with the

⁷⁴ Newspaper clipping held in a newspaper clipping file of Carolyn Feasey, Strathroy, On. Mrs. Feasey is the granddaughter of John A. McDonald, half brother to Walter Scott. The clipping does not indicate the name of the paper or the date of publication. It is likely that the clipping was from a local newspaper in or near Strathroy for the late fall, 1935.

⁷⁵ Scott gave this as his London address. The Henderson directory for 1935, shows this to be the residence of Margaret and Morden Buttery. Margaret Buttery was Walter Scott's half sister. The London Hospital admission form showed that Walter Scott had been staying at the Hotel London.

⁷⁶ Archives of Ontario, (AO), Medical records of the London Hospital, clinical record showing Walter Scott's case history. RG 10-20-C-2, #8268.

news that her father was in the local police station. A magistrate's order committed Scott to St. Joseph's hospital in London.⁷⁷ Walter's reply to the accusation of threatening to shoot manager Struckett was that he intended to "shoot him with a camera." Scott claimed to be as sane as the magistrate and laughed at the assertion that he would have shot the manager. He did not even own a gun. Magistrate Menzies did not accept this story and Scott was admitted to hospital on a Warrant of Remand until March 24.⁷⁸

Scott's political and personal friends were able to hush up the incident and there was no report of the altercation at the Hotel London in the local newspapers.⁷⁹ After an examination, seven doctors diagnosed Scott as suffering from manic depressive psychosis in the manic phase.⁸⁰

Although the local newspapers had not reported Scott's hospitalization, the news had travelled quickly back to Saskatchewan. On January 27, 1936, two days following the incident at the Hotel London, Dr. J. W. MacNeill, Superintendent and Commissioner for Mental Services at the Saskatchewan Provincial Hospital, North Battleford, wrote to Dr. George H. Stevenson, Medical Superintendent of the London Mental Hospital. Dr. MacNeill reported that he had been requested by Scott's friends such as Justice Turgeon,

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ A Warrant of Remand is a court order where a patient is committed to an institution until a date specified or released by a further order of the court.

⁷⁹ There were no stories about Walter Scott's altercation at the Hotel London in either the London Free Press or the London Advertiser for the period January, February or March, 1936.

⁸⁰ AO, medical records of the London Hospital, conference report, February 7, 1936. RG 10-20-C-2, #8268.

Sir Frederick Haultain, and A. P McNab, to write to the London Hospital about Scott. Even though Scott's friends were conscious that he was well known in Saskatchewan, "everybody thought that he should be put some place where he could be protected, and where the Public would be protected against him."⁸¹ Was this recommendation by Scott's friends made out of genuine concern for his health or had Walter Scott's state of mental health become an embarrassment to the Liberal Party? If the party establishment had concerns about what Walter might say or do, the best way to ensure silence was to have him committed to a psychiatric hospital far from home.

Despite Scott's claims of feeling just fine and being as sane as the doctors who attended him, the psychiatrists committed him to long-term care. Very concerned about her father, Dorothy felt guilty for leaving him in the London hospital: "Dearest Dad, I can't tell you how badly I feel to be leaving you in that awful place tonight."⁸² She tried to convince the doctors that they should release him and that she would look after him, but the combination of the psychiatrists' reports and the pressure from Saskatchewan overpowered Dorothy's influence to have him released. Dorothy became convinced that the best treatment for her father would then be Homewood Sanitarium in Guelph, Ontario, where, ten days after the incident at the Hotel London, on February 4, 1936, the psychiatrists transferred Scott. Dr. Stevenson had committed Scott to ensure that Dorothy would not be pressured into releasing her father from Homewood.

How did society commit people to psychiatric hospitals in the 1930s in Ontario?

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Letter on file from Dr. MacNeill to Dr. Stevenson, January 27, 1936.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Letter from "Bill", a nick name used by Dorothy Scott, to her father, January 25, 1936.

The Private Sanatoria Act stated that a committee of a magistrate, a Clerk of the Peace, the Sheriff of the county, and two medical practitioners would examine a patient to have him or her committed for care to a psychiatric sanatorium.⁸³ This committee made the decision as to who should be committed and when that person should be released again. According to J. M. Kearns, a Clerk of the Peace, the decision to release someone after he had been committed did not happen often.⁸⁴ The most common forms of treatment in psychiatric centres were rest, diet, exercise, electric shock therapy, purging, and the “baths.”⁸⁵ Homewood Sanitarium used all of these treatments. According to one advertisement, the sanitarium provided treatment of psychiatric disorders “by means of normal sleep, freedom from worry, cheerful surroundings, quiet and intelligent nursing attention and some occupation that will interest but not irritate.”⁸⁶ To Dorothy, this sounded too good to be true, a place surely where her father would be able to relax and find a cure.

Homewood Sanitarium opened in 1883 as the first private psychiatric care centre in Ontario to treat people with “mental disorders” and addictions. The centre had three levels of care. Level one was similar to a luxurious hotel where one could check oneself in and out voluntarily, a place for peace and quiet, a time to rebuild one’s life before

⁸³ *Ibid.*, working papers of the Barlow Investigation of Homewood Sanitarium, RG 18-116, box 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2008.

⁸⁵ Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, Moments of Unreason: The Practice of Canadian Psychiatry and the Homewood Retreat, 1883-1923, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 43 & 44.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

returning to the outside world.⁸⁷ At the second level of care for those patients who had been committed involuntarily, the furniture was more sparse and the atmosphere closer to a jail than a hotel. At the third level, for patients who were violent and posed a threat to themselves or others, the rooms had bars on the windows and little or no furniture which could be a potential weapon for a disturbed patient. The outward public impression of Homewood was level one where everyone was a special guest in a luxury hotel. Homewood's Prospectus, written in 1915, was glowing in its praise of its comforts and treatment:

It would be impossible to secure a more complete privacy, or a more pleasant seclusion than is enjoyed amongst the grassy slopes, shaded walks and the lovely lawns of the Homewood Sanitarium. Here you feel the perfect charm of refined seclusion: here you feel that while the world is near, you are sheltered from its grosser side. It is perfect peace, perfect rest. It is the Homewood.⁸⁸

Scott's stay in Homewood was not as idyllic as the prospectus described. From the daily medical files, it appears as if he resisted the sanitarium with his whole being. At first he maintained a neat and clean appearance and had a good appetite, but he refused to cooperate with sanitarium staff. Throughout his two years in Homewood, Scott kept expecting that someone was coming to release him. If he was anticipating guests, he would pack all of his belongings with the notion that his guests would take him home. When it came time for the visitors to leave, Walter became angry and aggressive upon realizing that he would not be going with them. The psychiatrists noted his aggressive behaviour as "typical" and one further reason why Scott should remain

⁸⁷ AO, Barlow Commission Papers, 4.

⁸⁸ Warsh, 6.

longer in Homewood.⁸⁹ If Scott was quiet and well-behaved, the diagnosis was that he was accepting his lot in life and that he would just settle down and stay for some time. There was no behaviour that would have gained his release from such an institution.

Scott's stay in Homewood was not an easy time for Dorothy, who had not been totally in favour of his hospitalization but had been convinced by the psychiatrists that this was the best treatment for him. She felt some guilt on having to leave him there, but her father had become a problem to handle, especially when he became angry or aggressive. As Cheryl Warsh points out in her book, most people in psychiatric hospitals were committed by family members as part of a family strategy because they could not control their behaviour any longer: "The decision to commit, therefore, may be seen as a family strategy in a time of crisis."⁹⁰

Two years passed with Walter Scott expecting to be released at any time. He believed that he had been committed falsely and that he had no business being in such an institution. If his behaviour became too loud or aggressive, he was transferred to ward 2A, an area reserved for patients who were violent. This transfer was called "ward therapy," and reward for good behaviour was a transfer back to the former ward where the patients were more docile.⁹¹ The ward files show that Scott had been particularly hard to handle on March 19 and had been transferred to ward 2A. That night, shortly

⁸⁹ AO, Homewood Health Centre Papers, Medical Records, Scott, Hon. Thomas Walter, clinical records, page 7. F 1398-4, reel 122.

⁹⁰ Warsh, 63 and 64.

⁹¹ AO, Coroner's Inquest Files, Wellington County, RG 22 - 5695 - 9, 2. See also Warsh, 130.

after midnight, according to verbatim transcripts of the coroner's inquest, Scott and Norman McKendry, an attendant, had a struggle over a library book. According to McKendry, Scott "slipped" and fell on the corridor floor. Scott did not complain of any soreness but he refused to stand or to walk, so McKendry dragged him on the floor back to his room. Because Scott still refused to stand or to get back into bed, McKendry left him on the floor for the remainder of the night.⁹² McKendry filed no incident report and Scott stayed on the floor in his room until he was discovered by the day staff. Upon being put into bed, he refused to be examined by the physicians. He did not complain of extra pain but refused examination. By Tuesday, March 22, Scott was taken to the Guelph hospital for an X-Ray, which told the doctors that his right hip was broken. After he was casted, Scott was transferred from the hospital back to Homewood.⁹³

Meanwhile on the afternoon after the incident, Homewood moved McKendry from his ward. The explanation given for this transfer was not that he had done anything wrong but that management wanted someone to be with Scott who could get along with him better.⁹⁴ The sanitarium decided not to reprimand or punish McKendry, who had finally filed an incident report on Monday morning, two days after the incident.

Scott remained in Homewood in his ward for the remainder of Tuesday and died at fifteen minutes after midnight on March 23, 1938.⁹⁵ Following Scott's death, Dorothy

⁹² AO, Coroner's Inquest, 12.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

asked that there be no autopsy done but the coroner conducted an investigation, concluding that Scott died of a blood clot and that there was no relationship with the broken hip. The Leader Post reported on Saskatchewan's first premier having died in a Guelph Hospital of a "plugged vessel." The article mentioned a heart condition but did not identify the hospital in Guelph as a psychiatric institution nor was there any comment about the struggle over the library book in Homewood.⁹⁶ The press described Scott as the founder of Liberalism in Saskatchewan, a printer and a man who was not robust, whose health had not been strong throughout his career. The article mentioned the coroner's investigation but informed the Saskatchewan people that their first premier had died a natural death after a lifetime of illness.

At the time of Scott's death, the Ontario government established two Royal Commissions, not because of his death, but the timing was opportune. The first was the Barlow Commission, appointed by the Honourable Harold Kirby K. C., Minister of Health of Ontario, to look into the commitment procedures at Homewood Sanitarium.⁹⁷ The commission started its study on March 21, 1938, two days before Scott's death, and it sat for fourteen days. The commission heard from witnesses, reviewed the financial records of Homewood, and examined the actual facility. The government appointed this commission because of Angus McIntosh, a Montreal businessman, who had experienced some unhappy financial losses through his business. He decided he would voluntarily check himself into Homewood for a week or two of rest. He did not feel "mentally ill"

⁹⁶ The Leader Post, March 23, 1938, 1 and April 5, 1938, 1.

⁹⁷ AO, Barlow Commission Files, 1. RG 18-116 B 100.

but only in need of some peaceful rest as promised by Homewood's advertisements. Once he was in Homewood, McIntosh's wife met with two physicians and a magistrate and had him committed, even though he apparently showed no signs of mental illnesses. As he was soon to find out, there was no way for him to fight this order, nor could he communicate with the "outside" world. After over two years, McIntosh was finally able to get word of his false committal to some influential friends on the "outside", including Premier Mitch Hepburn. McIntosh demanded a second opinion on the state of his mental health. The province retained two physicians to do this examination on McIntosh and found that he was sane and able to leave Homewood, but McIntosh was not about to let the matter rest there. He demanded an examination of the commitment procedures of Homewood, charging that the psychiatrists were admitting people unnecessarily and keeping patients longer than necessary in order to bolster the financial bottom line of Homewood. The Barlow Commission was the result.

The commission examined the level of training of the attendants hired in Homewood. It heard testimony that attendants had no background in the care of the mentally ill and received minimal training on the job. One attendant testified that he had been a rubber factory worker while another had been a cook before starting work at Homewood.⁹⁸ These workers received no special training when they started with Homewood.⁹⁹ The commission, in its final report, criticized Homewood and made many recommendations for change including amendments to the Private Sanitarium Act, more

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189 & 228.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* , 6.

training for staff and more control over private hospitals. The commission noted that some incidents (without mentioning Scott) would not have happened if proper training had been in place. Due to bad working conditions and low pay, the report noted, it was nearly impossible to get proper staff, which meant that employees who had not performed up to standard were still retained because there was no one else willing to take their place. C. L. Snyder, Counsel representing the Province of Ontario before the commission, stated: "None of these attendants were given any special instructions as to their duties, and they were, in my opinion, entirely unfitted to act as a companion to an inmate of an Institution of this kind with the likelihood of being of any assistance to the patient in recovering."¹⁰⁰ Snyder noted that "Once so committed, a patient, so long as he or his relatives are able to pay, may find great difficulty in obtaining his liberty. It is one thing for the state to deprive a person of his liberty; it is another thing for a private institution to be able to detain a man against his will."¹⁰¹ McIntosh testified that Dr. Baugh of Homewood had told him that he (McIntosh) was in Homewood "for keeps."¹⁰² Baugh denied having said this and attributed McIntosh's behaviour to "exhibited delusions of persecution typical of sufferers from paranoia."¹⁰³ It was, incidentally, Baugh who certified Scott's death.

On September 10, 1938, the government named a second commission to examine

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰² *The Leader Post*, April 13, 1938.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

psychiatric hospitals in Ontario after the Barlow Commission found so many problems at Homewood. Perhaps the second commission was an attempt by the Ontario government to ensure that conditions found at Homewood were not present at other provincial psychiatric hospitals. The commission made a decision to ignore any letters that indicated “quite clearly that the writer was suffering from a mental illness, and therefore required further attention.”¹⁰⁴ Even though the commissions did not look specifically at the Scott case, details of his stay in the sanitarium and of his death came out at the commission hearings.

The testimony at the two commissions revealed many details of the type of treatment given at psychiatric institutions in the 1930s. Mr. Wells from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia testified that he did not experience treatment for his alcoholism: “I cannot say there was treatment of any sort, only I was locked up. That was the treatment. They call it ‘lock and key treatment.’”¹⁰⁵

Mr. Hoerday, a Guelph resident who lived next door to Homewood, testified that he witnessed an attendant beating up on a patient outside the gates of the institution.¹⁰⁶ Scott’s name came up often in the testimony, clearly indicating that the institution and the city were still upset by his death. Ernest Gavin of Homewood testified that he had witnessed Scott receiving a “shower.” Not only was there a traditional shower nozzle on the wall for the patients to shower with but, in some cases, the patients were treated to

¹⁰⁴ AO, Royal Commission on the Operation of the Mental Hospitals Act, RG 18 - 116 - B 100, 6.

¹⁰⁵ AO, Barlow Commission, 171.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

an additional experience of having an attendant train a high pressured hose on them. The attendant had a control whereby he could vary the temperature of the water from hot to cold and back again.¹⁰⁷ In his testimony, Gavin said: “ I thought on different occasions that Mr. Walter Scott shouldn’t have been given a shower at a distance, with the hose playing up and down his back, and the water turned from warm to cold, with the heart condition he had. I think he should have had a tub bath.”¹⁰⁸ The shower described took place one month before Scott died. During testimony, it was revealed that a patient, Mr. Culligan, had been grabbed by the shoulders, “pushed” and forced into the showers. This particular patient fell and broke his hip, and subsequently died.¹⁰⁹

Angus McIntosh, the business man who had lobbied for the investigations into psychiatric hospitals in Ontario, maintained until his death that he had been committed falsely to Homewood. He had struggled for more than the two years that he had spent in Homewood to prove his sanity and to gain his freedom. Scott and McIntosh spent many hours together in Homewood, and Scott wanted to stay close to McIntosh for “protection.” McIntosh proved his sanity and gained his freedom, too late to be of assistance to Scott.

It is difficult, with today’s standards, not to condemn the accepted means of treatment in psychiatric centres in the 1930s. The debate raged, though, at the commission hearings as to whether Scott received proper care. Mr. Viens, counsel for

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 384.

McIntosh, argued before the commission that “there is no doubt there was a lack of proper attention given to him [Scott]. A Doctor should have been summoned immediately [after his fall in the corridor] and he should have been attended to that very night.”¹¹⁰ Mr. Pickup, K. C., counsel for Homewood, noted that Scott had a heart condition: “it is far worse in my opinion as far as that patient [Scott] is concerned to forcibly remove him [for an X-Ray] or to go against his will, thereby exciting him to accomplish the end I can accomplish in other ways.”¹¹¹ Homewood, as an institution, argued that it was not a lack of care to leave Scott on the floor overnight or to wait three days before sending him to the hospital for X-Rays and treatment. To move him against his will would have done more harm than good.

Was Scott wrongfully committed to Homewood? Sixty years later, it is impossible to reexamine the psychological state of a man and to second guess the psychiatrists on site, or to judge medical procedures of another time. It would appear that Dorothy was at her wits’ end as to what to do with her father, who had a volatile temper and seemed to be increasingly aggressive as he aged. Yet she had asked the hotel to contact her if he was a problem, which it did not. She wanted him released from the London hospital but the pressure from the medical community and “political friends” in Saskatchewan swayed her. The subsequent commissions and coroner’s inquest seem to indicate that, even by 1930s standards, the treatment in psychiatric centres was less than humane. Angus McIntosh gained a second chance to prove his sanity and to gain his

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, summary arguments presented by the lawyers before the Barlow Commission. RG 10 - 125 - 0 - 1, 33.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

freedom: Walter Scott never received that second opportunity.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

Even though Walter Scott died in a psychiatric institution with no family or loved ones present, he had been a popular premier of Saskatchewan. He and his government enjoyed larger majorities after each general election. The people generally knew that he was ill and away a lot but they still supported him. The opposition press and the Conservatives publicly criticized Scott's absences but the majority of the people continued to support Scott and his vision for the future of the province. They accepted him for who and what he was, believing that it was common for people, especially hard-working talented people, to over work and be away for lengthy periods of time. There was the common belief, that with a bit of rest and relaxation, a person would return refreshed and ready to continue the battle. Even after Scott's resignation, he received letters from friends and supporters urging him to return to the political field.

Even though Scott was absent from the province for up to six months of every year, he was more than just a popular figure-head. As has been shown, cabinet delayed many key decisions until Scott's return to the province. Scott led his government on a broad philosophical plain and was content to rely on Calder and Motherwell for the implementation of the new programs. Calder seemed content to continue as the "second in command." Both he and the Liberal Party knew that they needed Scott to rally public support, particularly during election campaigns. Jim Ross and Jim Calder travelled with Scott when he was ill and Calder particularly kept the government functioning in his

absence. They were quick, however, to spirit him out of town when a “breakdown” was imminent. Scott’s “friends” in Saskatchewan were influential in his committal to Homewood which was out of the Saskatchewan eye. Even on his death, there was a “cover up” as to the circumstances so that the people of Saskatchewan could remember him as the popular leader of old.

What kind of leader was Walter Scott? His style was pragmatic rather than dogmatic. He certainly had his principles that he would defend such as the need to eliminate the CPR tax exemption as raised in 1905. Yet he was able to adjust his principles to follow the Liberal Party line on the retention of the Crown lands with the federal government. During his time in Ottawa, Scott had learned the art of compromise and the merits of delay. He lobbied hard for the interests of his constituency and the West and was able to follow the party line in exchange for larger compensation grants from the federal government. Scott had strong beliefs and far-reaching goals but was cautious not to implement a new program until he was convinced that the majority of the public was ready to support him; he did not throw out his point of view to the people and hope that they would follow him. First he had to carefully educate and guide the public will. Having learned patience and a sense of timing, he did not want to be too far ahead of popular support. Scott had principles for the long term but often had to delay their implementation until there was sufficient public support. Notwithstanding the delays and compromises, Scott’s long term principles and goals remained intact.

If Scott had lived in a time of public opinion polling, he would have used this technique regularly on all major initiatives. Even though he did not have the advantage

of scientifically measuring the public will, he had several means of keeping his finger on the pulse of the province and nation. A voracious reader of newspapers, everyday, he read a wide variety of local and national newspapers as well as several papers from the United States. Even while he was on extended voyages to other parts of the world, Scott left instructions with his staff to send the newspapers to prearranged destinations so that he could follow the news at home.¹

While in the province, Scott followed the events at the annual meetings of the SGGA or the Ban the Bar Movement, and it was common for resolutions passed at a SGGA convention to appear on the Liberal agenda in the following year. Scott kept in close contact with the farm leaders by convincing them to join his cabinet. Since the various pressure groups in the province always had the ear of the premier, he was able to keep in touch with the province's grass roots.

Letter writing was another means that Scott used to keep in close communication with the people of the province. He had a practice of replying to a letter within one day of its receipt, and if he was out of town, J. W. McLeod, his private secretary would respond, promising that Scott would reply personally on his return. Scott encouraged both supporters and critics to write to him to advise him on issues and he used this correspondence as a measure of popular opinion.

Scott continually frustrated the pressure groups by being deliberate in his decision-making. For example, in the case of granting women the vote, he had publicly shown that he was in favour of women having the vote several years before the measure

¹ SAB, Walter Scott Papers, W. S. to J. W. McLeod, April 6, 1912, 39257.

was finally introduced. Instead of moving on the issue earlier, Scott insisted that the women's groups go out throughout the province to collect more signatures on petitions, wanting to be sure that the women were in favour of suffrage and proving to him that they could be politically active. The struggle for the women to canvass the province without good roads or a widely used telephone system must have been daunting. Yet Scott insisted that the government would move only if the women could show him that there was wide support for the measure. This was his caution showing. In the end, Scott knew that he could delay no longer because Manitoba and Alberta were preparing to grant women the vote and he did not want to tarnish his image of leading a progressive government by falling behind other provinces, though this was a factor only in determining the timing. The First World War pressured the Scott government to implement social and legislative change by providing property rights and the vote to women. Scott supported these changes philosophically but it was also good politics. For his time, Scott was a progressive man regarding women and their rights even if he did view them in a paternalistic way.

Scott was progressive in restricting the sale of alcohol. In his early years, he did not drink alcohol at all, but was not a prohibitionist. From a practical political point of view, he knew that the Liberal government depended on the support of the immigrant population, which tended to vote against prohibition. Because of the war, Scott was pressured into closing the bars but he believed that, even if prohibition eventually came, it would be a short-term measure. He did not believe that there was public support for total prohibition on the long term. He carefully balanced the prohibitionist lobby against

the immigrant vote, moving only as far as the wide public support would back his government. Although the liquor dispensaries were closed soon after Scott's resignation as premier, he was correct in believing that the pressure to close the bars and dispensaries would not last long after the end of the war. As events would show, prohibition laws were nearly impossible to enforce.

Scott assumed portfolios within his own cabinet which were the pressure points at the time. He was Minister of Public Works during the crucial construction phase of the Legislative Building and Minister of Education during the establishment of the University of Saskatchewan. At Oxbow, Scott announced the closing of the bars and on Valentine's Day, 1916, he announced that his government would grant the vote to women. He announced agricultural programs such as the cooperative grain elevator system even though he had a capable Minister of Agriculture. Scott was in the centre of the decision making and was clearly visible as the leader of the government. When he was away due to illness, many important decisions awaited his return.

Another way that Walter Scott measured public support for a specific policy was to establish a Royal Commission, and in this way, the Scott government studied a broad variety of issues from liquor boards to co-op elevators. The commissions were usually composed of one to three commissioners, experts in their fields, as for example, with the panel of experts who made the choice of the architectural design for the Legislative Building. The members of the commissions were not necessarily Liberals but the government knew their backgrounds prior to their appointment, thus ensuring that they were philosophically in line with the government. It was not uncommon for the premier

to meet with the members or at least the chairman of the commission before the commencement of their study. When the commissions presented their reports, there were therefore no surprises for the government. The commissions not only sampled public opinion but also educated the public on an issue. The reviews usually lasted several weeks or months. In most cases, the government acted quickly after receiving the report except with the Agricultural Credit Commission. Due to war time, credit was not available and the government did not implement the agricultural credit program.

The government occasionally took risks with its studies. For example, with regard to the grain elevator system, the Conservatives and the SGGA favoured a government- owned elevator system similar to the one in Manitoba. Even though Scott appointed two commissioners from the SGGA, the final report supported his own point of view, a cooperative elevator system. By receiving the commission's report in favour of cooperative elevators, Scott was able to remind the membership of the SGGA of their historic roots in cooperation and brought them to his point of view. Haultain was left "out in the cold."

Scott used patronage to his advantage in shoring up support for his government. From the inception of the province until Laurier's defeat in 1911, he had the advantage of having patronage from both the federal and provincial levels. Scott was involved in most appointments but was not blinded by power. He did not hide the fact that he preferred to appoint good Liberals to choice positions. He knew their background and felt comfortable in knowing they would support the government. And yet he insisted that once a person was appointed to a public service position, he/she should not be visibly

partisan. Scott insisted on hiring or appointing qualified people. He had an ability to collect around him, men and women whom he knew would work in the best interests of the province. He resisted the temptation to appoint political friends as the architects or the main contractors for the Legislative Building. The government chose both companies by competition. Even though P. Lyall and Sons were not the lowest bidders as the contractors, the government selected them because of their financial stability and their track record in getting the job done. The government hired local workers who were friends of the Liberal Party, but in the key areas of expertise, political considerations were immaterial. As a result, Saskatchewan was able to avoid the political scandals that were experienced in Manitoba during the construction of its Legislative Building.

And Scott was not averse to spreading the political plums around the province. Regina remained the capital city, while Saskatoon was awarded the university, and North Battleford, the “mental hospital.” Patronage was a key consideration in making the government function effectively. Scott insisted on hiring qualified and capable people who, even if they were not Liberals, were philosophically supportive of his initiatives. Scott emphasized that with successful patronage, it was not only important for the faithful to get the job but that the job was done well.

Scott’s guiding principles were that government could support society by regulation or by independent boards such as with the university but he preferred not to have government directly involved in public ventures. Instead, he supported the cooperative principle. Government became involved with the sale of alcohol after the government closed the bars but this was done at arm’s length through an independent

board.

Even though Scott had a strong Presbyterian influence at home during his youth, the church was not a determining factor in his adult life. He was married in a church but his funeral was in a private funeral home. Scott defended the rights of Roman Catholics to practise their religion and to have religious instruction after school because he believed in these rights. However, it was also a reality that the Liberals depended on the immigrant vote which was largely Catholic. Scott's public policy was based on his search for a politically acceptable stance rather than his own church dogma.

Like many other western leaders of Scott's time, he was from Ontario, but Scott did not try to fit the West into the Ontario mould. He believed that agriculture was the primary industry of the province and that, if his government wanted to stay in power, it had to provide clean honest government with inventive solutions to farm problems. Many of these solutions, such as the cooperative elevators or telephones had not been tried in Ontario. Yet with the circumstances in the West, these solutions were popular with the farming population. Unlike the majority of the people in Ontario, Scott did not support the tariff policy of the federal government. Even though Scott was from Ontario, he did not try to remake the West in the image of Ontario.

Another important principle in Scott's life was education. He did not have much formal education like Haultain or Davin and he regretted having quit school after grade eight. Yet he saw the importance of education for others and he continued to increase his knowledge and education even if it was not through formal schooling. Scott believed in the common school supported by a Department of Education with the rights of the

minorities protected. He was very proud of the new university in Saskatoon with the combination of academic and professional schools teaching along side the College of Agriculture.

As a member of the House of Commons for five years and then premier of Saskatchewan for eleven years, Walter Scott represented the ideas and defended the interests of his constituents and his province. He was a populist leader with a keen sense of the ever changing public mood. He was a supporter of Liberal policy such as freer trade, the rights of minorities and public education. He believed that the role of the state was to protect the interests of the minorities and to build a public infrastructure which would serve all of the citizens of the province. Scott's government presided over an era of population growth and development in Saskatchewan. The government built roads, bridges, schools, court houses and a university and supported the expansion of the railway system within the province. For Scott and his government, agriculture was more than an industry. It was a way of life. With the able assistance of W. R. Motherwell and close cooperation with the leaders of the SGGGA, Scott fashioned sound agricultural policies to encourage farm families to settle on the land.

The Scott government was in touch with the public mood and foresaw the infra structural needs of the province. With this pragmatic not dogmatic approach to public policy in Saskatchewan, Walter Scott established a provincial political party which stayed in power for thirty-nine years with one interruption.

Behind all of these principles, programs, and policies, who was Walter Scott? He was an effective public speaker but not as flamboyant as Frederick Haultain. Able to use

bombast in debate and interrupt with interjections, Scott was a fiery speaker who could quickly arouse his audience to anger or laughter. He understood the Saskatchewan people and knew how to outmanoeuvre Haultain. The leader of the opposition was often left with the situation of either abandoning his original position and looking indecisive or defending a position which was unacceptable to the people of the province.

Scott had a vision for the province: millions of people would arrive, with a family living on every quarter section of land; villages, towns, and cities would spring up as service centres for this vast rural population; and Saskatchewan would become the largest food producer in the world. For Scott, his role as premier was to provide the public institutions and infrastructure to allow the province to grow and prosper. He was not only a booster of the province but had foresight. He planned the size of the Legislative Building so that it would serve the province for many generations, with the capacity to be expanded without destroying the architectural design. The building was to be of such fine quality that it would last for a century or more. When the Board of Governors chose the site of the university, Scott insisted that the province purchase enough land to ensure that the city, a town at that time, would not encroach on the university grounds. If it was to serve this growing population, the university would need room to grow for many generations to come. As he told Walter Murray, this was a big land which required big people with big ideas to lead it.

Keenly aware of being the first premier to lead this new province, Scott hoped that he would be remembered for his accomplishments. He knew that he was ploughing the first furrow. It had to be straight because the pattern would then be set for the whole

field. Scott meticulously kept all of his papers as a record of his life, piles of newspaper clippings as well as his official and personal correspondence. Judging by his own papers, Scott was a father and a husband who devoted most of his working life to leading his province through times of rapid expansion. He was a warm man with a sense of humour and an ability to know what the people were thinking, and he was a master strategist at political planning.

Scott was liberal philosophically and a Liberal politically. He often used the term "Liberalism" in his correspondence but he never quite defined what he meant by this term. As has been shown, he followed the national Liberal Party line on many occasions, yet followed his own line on issues such as the CPR tax exemption, and much later, conscription. Scott was a Liberal in a practical sense. He differed with Laurier over conscription because he believed it would make possible a strong offensive against the enemies of the British Empire. He supported Calder's entry into the Union Government for similar reasons yet, the moment the war was over, Scott called on Calder and other Liberals to rejoin the Liberal Party. Scott supported policies that would favour the farmers of the province and the war effort. A man who continually kept his ear to the ground and responded to the public will, he supported his party, federally and provincially, as long as its policies did not oppose the best interests of the people of his own province.

This thesis helps fill a gap in western Canadian political history for the first two decades of this century. It is a personal, psychological and political biography of a man who presided over the beginning of a political dynasty. Scott's government provided

strong and capable administration to the province. This was an era of confidence, optimism, and rapid expansion in the West and Saskatchewan. The economy experienced its boom and bust cycles. In like manner, Scott had his own personal and psychological ups and downs.

Much has been written on the formation of the province in 1905 and its development over the following two decades. This biography shows the struggle of one leader and his team to meet the growing needs of Saskatchewan with the influx of new immigrants. On this team, Scott provided broad leadership; Calder looked after the day to day details; and Motherwell initiated agricultural policy and was the government's link to the agricultural community. The challenge was to protect the rights of the minorities but yet help the new settlers join the second generation western Canadians in forming a strong and united province.

Historians have studied and written about the events in the early years in Saskatchewan and have tried to answer the questions of what, where, when and why. This biography makes a contribution to answering the question of "who." It is a biography of a man who was the centre of policy formation and program delivery. But the biography is more than a story about one man. Scott represented the western regional struggle in confederation and along with Jim Calder, built a political party which withstood political challenges and remained in power, with one exception, until the election of the Douglas CCF government in 1944.

This thesis is a return in western Canadian historiography to a biography of an élite political leader in Saskatchewan society and also to a man who was representative

of his times. The thesis answers the question of why Scott was away on average for more than six months every year while premier and how the Liberal Party was able to maintain Scott's image throughout his struggle with mental illness. Scott's story offers some insight into the trials of a public figure who experienced manic depression and offers a glimpse into the state of one private psychiatric Ontario sanitarium in the 1930s. Until now, the people of Saskatchewan have not known about Scott's mental illness or his death in Homewood Sanitarium. This biography is a story of a very public and popular man who set the course of history for a province while suffering a very private, debilitating and lonely disease which ended, prematurely, a successful political career and eventually his life.

Walter Scott's legacy was in line with his first election slogan: "Peace, Progress, and Prosperity." Perhaps he was lucky in being premier during the expansion years, but he also led his province during tight financial times. Scott had a popularity outside of the province and, according to rumour, was to be the successor to Wilfrid Laurier. The people accepted the provisions of the 1905 autonomy bill. Scott presided over a time of progress in his province and he brought peace to it as he promised. Immigrants flooded into the province from all parts of Europe to settle the land and put it into production. Government built roads and bridges as well as health and education facilities and a governmental infrastructure. Under Scott's leadership, Saskatchewan grew to be the third largest province in population in Canada, bringing prosperity and an expanding economy. The people of Saskatchewan supported the Scott government with ever-increasing majorities.

By 1916, however, Scott's health had deteriorated to the point that he had to leave the province during each crisis. The pressure from the Bradshaw charges was only one factor in his resignation. The three commissions which investigated the charges cleared Scott personally of all graft or corruption charges. He was unaware of any of his own members accepting bribes or corruption on the part of several of the province's public servants. Possibly this ignorance of what was happening was due to Scott's frequent absences from the province, but his acting premier, Calder, did not appear to be aware of these problems either. The government avoided serious political damage, however, when it initiated three independent inquiries and prosecuted those who were found guilty.

The impetus to resign actually came from the fight with Reverend Murdock MacKinnon. Religion in the schools was the issue that toppled Scott. With his depression and general feeling of pending doom, Scott overreacted to MacKinnon's charges. He exhibited a reaction that became a pattern for him: when confronted, he would respond with anger and harsh language and lose his perspective of the situation. Scott could not resist calling Murdock MacKinnon, in the Legislative Chamber, a "moral leper," thus crossing the line. He alienated supporters who had been Liberals but who were, in this instance, supporting MacKinnon rather than their premier. Scott lost his ability to build bridges and form coalitions of diverse opinions. Instead, he was burning bridges with the Presbyterians in the province. Once his judgement became clouded, Scott became a liability to the party.

Walter Scott left the premiership at age forty-nine. He attempted a comeback on

several occasions but he was not able to regain his old popular style. He had been the first premier and a leader to implement new programs, a man known for his drive to succeed. The majority of the people were behind him and adored him, yet, like Phaeton, Scott took risks and eventually crashed, never to fly again. Scott left office unhappy and feeling like a man who had been defeated from within. He died alone in an Ontario psychiatric sanitarium. The Saskatchewan Legislature gave little notice of his passing, and the Saskatchewan newspapers reported his death but did not mention his mental illness or that he had died in a psychiatric hospital.

Reverend Inkster, a long-time friend of Walter Scott, performed the funeral service in London on March 26, 1938. Scott's body was taken by train to Victoria for interment in Oak Bay Burial Park beside his wife, Jessie. His final resting place was in neither his province of birth nor his adopted home province, the one that he had helped to create. The tombstone inscription for Walter and Jessie shows the usual information of their birth and death dates with the final line being: "Peace Perfect Peace." This is an ironic reminder of Homewood's motto from their prospectus: "Perfect Peace--Perfect Rest." In the 1905 election campaign, Walter Scott had promised "Peace, Progress and Prosperity." The concept of "peace" was a constant throughout his life.

Nearly sixty years after the interment, the tombstone is covered with moss, grass clippings, and soil. The lettering on the stone is barely discernible to the close observer and not at all to the casual passerby. The stone has now become as nondescript and forgotten as his career. The system of government and civil service, the Legislative Buildings, the University of Saskatchewan, and the many agricultural programs started

by the Scott government still remain in the service of the people of the province. The name and the man, Walter Scott, have been forgotten. The Liberal Party hid from public view his years of inner turmoil and pain both during and after his premiership to the point that the man and his accomplishments have been forgotten by the generations who are benefitting from his vision and leadership. After sixteen years of elected office federally and provincially, his last few years in Homewood must have been the final indignity to a life of power and influence in politics. Under Scott's leadership, Saskatchewan enjoyed progress and prosperity. However, he did not gain his "Peace Perfect Peace" in life. One can only hope that he found that peace in death.

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Abbreviations

AO	Archives of Ontario
SAB	Saskatchewan Archives Board
SHS	Saskatchewan Historical Society
SLAO	Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly Office
UA	University of Saskatchewan Archives

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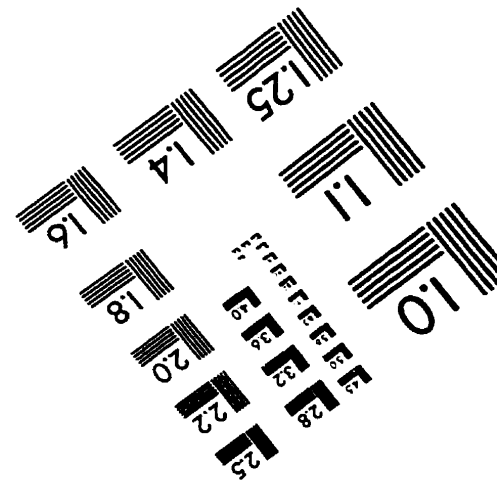
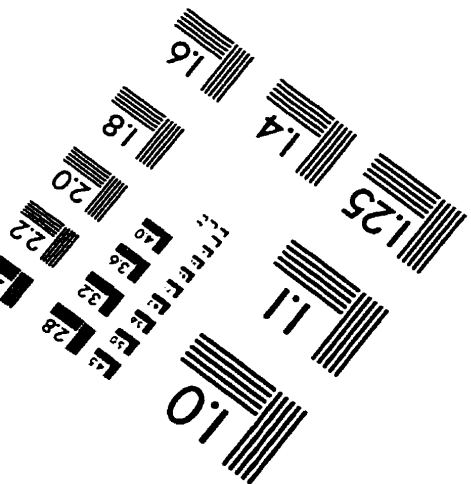
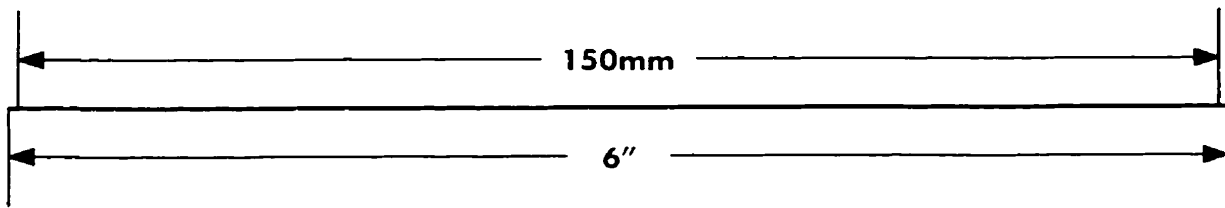
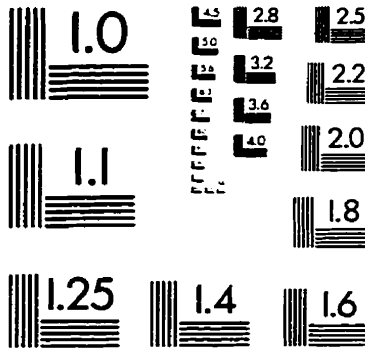
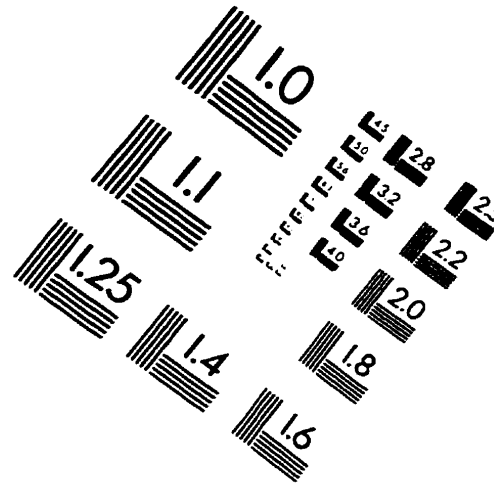
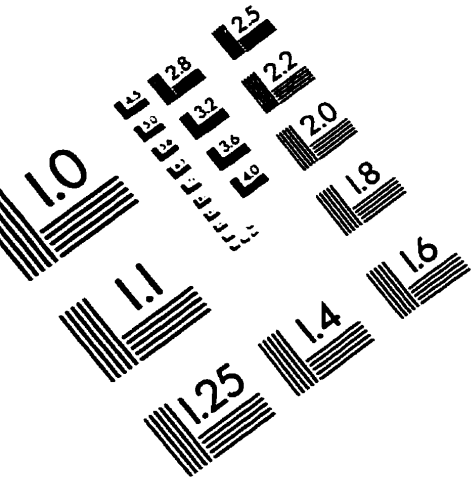
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