



**HONS. GEORGE HOADLEY, IRENE PARLBY, W.W. CROSS AND  
THE UFA GOVERNMENT HEALTHCARE PROGRAM  
1921-1935**

## HONS. GEORGE HOADLEY, IRENE PARLBY, W.W. CROSS AND THE UFA GOVERNMENT HEALTHCARE PROGRAM 1921-1935

*"If there is one thing we admire  
in our erstwhile friend, Hon. Mr. Hoadley ...  
it is the work he has already done ...  
in regard to health and hospitals in Alberta.  
Upon him we urge immediate attention  
toward solving the conditions which exist today  
in the medical profession" (Wight, 1931)<sup>(1)</sup>*

### Introduction

The Honorable George Hoadley was a man of many parts. He came to Canada in 1890 and Alberta in 1891. His first job was digging irrigation ditches by hand forty miles west of Okotoks. From those lowly beginnings, he became a successful rancher, horse breeder, community contributor, politician, and healthcare leader.

After his 1901 candidacy for the NWT Legislative Assembly, which he lost badly, Hoadley ran provincially for the Conservatives. He was elected to the Alberta Legislature for Okotoks/High River in 1909. That election started a continuous twenty-six year sitting as an MLA, but not all with the same party. In 1918 he left the Conservatives to sit as an Independent. Then he joined the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) in the election of 1921.

The UFA won the election and Hoadley was appointed a UFA Cabinet Minister from 1921-1935. For all

but the first two years, he was Alberta's Minister of Health. Hoadley was succeeded by Dr. W.W. Cross as the Social Credit Minister of Health (1935-1957). Alberta had only two Ministers of Health in thirty-four years. That stability was exceeded at the deputy ministerial level. There were only two Deputy Ministers from 1912-1952: Dr. W.C. Laidlaw (1912-1926) and Dr. M.R. Bow (1927-1952). These political and bureaucratic constants formed the foundation for a host of progressive, public health focussed healthcare decisions.

### George Hoadley, from Youth to Politics 1866-1909

George Hoadley was born at Wetheral Abbey, near Carlisle, Cumberland, England on May 16, 1866. He was a descendant of a Dr. Hoadley, who was a physician in the Court of King George II. Two of his brothers entered the Anglican Ministry. One became the Archbishop of Salisbury and another, the Archbishop of Armagh. His father died in 1875 when George was nine.

Young George attended the Carlisle Grammar and St. Bee's College schools in Cumberland, Northwest England. At age sixteen he decided that his future was in the mercantile business. He moved to Liverpool in 1882 to work for McFee & Sons. Two and a half years later he was in London working for the Peek Brothers, tea importers.<sup>(2)</sup>

By 1890 his work he said was affecting his health, so he decided to seek his fortune in Canada. Arriving at Christmas time in 1890, he spent his first five weeks at Oak Lake, Manitoba with relatives. The temperature was minus fifty-five to sixty, so he moved to Calgary and then south to Okotoks. Hoadley walked forty miles to get his first job, digging irrigation ditches by hand. His work ethic came to the attention of



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Hon. George Hoadley

1. Wight, David O.  
2. Blue, John

Editorial, Cardston News, October 15, 1931.  
*Alberta Past and Present*, Volume 3, pages 506-507, Pioneer Publishing, 1924.

rancher John Quirk, who hired him at the princely sum of thirty dollars a month. One day a buyer arrived with all his worldly wealth (one thousand dollars) to buy some hogs. Quirk would not do business with him until the haying was done. So the buyer, Pat Burns, offered to “tear in and help as not to lose any more time...and a hard day’s work it was”.<sup>(3)</sup>

Hoadley worked for the Q-Ranch (1892) and the High River horse ranch (1893), before he bought the ranch at Hoadley Point (1897). Later he bought the van Strauss Ranch (1902). His forte was buying and bringing wild horses from Montana to Alberta, which he broke and then sold in Saskatchewan and Northern Alberta. Hoadley became the President of the Alberta Horse Breeders Association and Vice-President of the Western Canadian Livestock Union.<sup>(4)</sup>

On November 1, 1900 he married Lillian Rowles, whose father had come to Okotoks in 1883. In 1904 the Hoadleys moved to Okotoks, where George was already a school trustee (1903). He became chairman of the Local Improvement District (1905), after Alberta became a province that year.<sup>(5)</sup>

### The Pre-Cabinet Years 1909-1921

George Hoadley first ran as an Independent in the 1901 NWT election. One hundred voters signed a petition for him to run. Only ninety voted for him. The experience kept him out of politics, until he ran for the provincial Conservatives in 1909. That year Hoadley was elected the Okotoks/High River riding. For the next five elections he never lost the riding. In those days, there were not many Conservatives in the Alberta Legislature. At one time there were only two, R.B. Bennett, “the leader” and George Hoadley, “the party”. The number grew to eighteen under Edward Michener in 1917 before Michener was appointed to the Senate.

Hoadley succeeded Michener as the Leader of the Opposition. After the war he began to distance himself from the Conservative’s agricultural policies. This led to Hoadley leaving the party in 1918 to become an Independent.<sup>(6)</sup> He completed the switch to the UFA party before the election of 1921. No one ran against him, so he was elected by acclamation.

### UFA Agriculture Minister, 1921-1934

The UFA won thirty-eight of sixty-one seats in the 1921 election. Hoadley was one of only two UFA MLAs that had previous legislative experience. The other was Alex Moore of Cochrane, who was first elected in 1919. Hoadley was mentioned as a possible Premier. Instead, he was given the important agricultural portfolio. Irene Parlbay was appointed the Minister without Portfolio, to allow her to focus on women’s issues. Women had received the right to vote in Alberta four years before in 1915.

Hoadley was the Minister of Agriculture from 1921-1934. After the mini-recession in 1921/22, Hoadley filled the empty Agricultural school vacancies with prospective young British farmers. They became known as the Hoadley boys. The program, by his own measure, was 97% successful.

### UFA Health Minister 1923-1926

In November 1923, Hoadley inherited the health portfolio from the Hon. R.G. Reid, who later became Alberta’s 1934/35 Premier. New health programs just or already in place included the Public Health Program (1918), the District Nurse Program (1919), the traveling Dental Clinic (1921), and the traveling Medical and Dental Clinic (1923/24). The latter was organized for the government by Dr. W.T. Washburn, the Superintendent of the University of Alberta Hospital (UAH).

The post WWI period was one of rapid change for medicine in Alberta. UofA President H.M. Tory secured a conditional Rockefeller Grant for \$500,000 (1920), by guaranteeing there would be a new medical school building (1921/22), a full five year accredited medical degree granting program (1921-25), a Dean of Medicine (Rankin, 1920), and the re-acquisition of the Strathcona (renamed UAH) Hospital from the Soldiers’ Civil Re-establishment Commission (1922). By December 1923 the program had been accredited by the American Medical Association and all the Rockefeller conditions met. The grant was released to the UofA. Only two months before, President Tory had been elected President of the National Research Council (NRC).<sup>(7)</sup> The NRC was responsible to Alberta’s former Liberal

3. Watt, F.B. “Hoadley of Alberta.” MacLean’s Magazine, pages 13, 60, 61, July 15, 1929.

4. MacRae, Archibald O. “George Hoadley” in the *History of the Province of Alberta*, pages 1033-1034. Pioneer Publishing, 1912. Also see F.B. Watt’s “Hoadley of Alberta,” page 13.

5. Normandin, A.L. *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, Province of Alberta*, page 534, 1914; page 347, 1930; page 370, 1935.

6. Watt, F.B. “Hoadley of Alberta,” page 61.

7. Vant, J. Ross, Cashman, Tony *More Than a Hospital*, the University of Alberta Hospitals 1916-1986, pages 57-63, 71-75. UAH, 1986. Also see E.A. Corbet’s *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 47-48, UofA Press, 1990, and R. Lampard’s profile of Dr. A.C. Rankin. Hoadley spoke to the Saskatchewan United Farmers on the Traveling Clinic February 26,

Premier Charles Stewart, who by then was in the Federal Cabinet.

### **UFA Agriculture and Health Minister 1923-1926**

Despite his agricultural, non-health related background, Hoadley approached his Ministerial responsibilities with zest and forethought. His plan was to continue to improve the availability of healthcare services in rural Alberta, using the municipal hospital system as the base. That way he could encourage increased municipal funding of hospitals without raising provincial taxes. Municipal hospitals were a central component to the UFA's healthcare agenda, and would continue to be so through the Social Credit era. Hoadley's leadership, timing, and deft diction were respected, so much so that he remained the Minister of Health under three consecutive UFA Premiers: Greenfield, Brownlee, and Reid. Hoadley's negotiating skills were such, he rarely confronted or had to override the opposition in the Legislature.

On April 24, 1924, Hoadley left for England to attend the World Exposition. He talked of the Alberta Pool Cooperative funding a BC grain terminal, to ship grain via Panama to England. Then he visited Danish cooperatives before meeting with his ranching neighbour, the Prince of Wales – at the invitation of the Prince. When the Prince asked Hoadley if he would return to England, Hoadley answered, "even if I was offered all of the revenue of Fleet Street and the Strand I wouldn't return". The Prince exclaimed "Is it that bad?"<sup>(8)</sup>

In the 1926 election, the UFA won forty-three of the sixty-one seats, an increase of five.<sup>(9)</sup> Brownlee interpreted it as a vote of confidence. The government became more aggressive with the healthcare agenda. Hoadley had already observed that Alberta had the highest post-operative death rate in Canada. He had already amended the Alberta Hospitals Act to require that all tissue collected during surgery be examined

by a Pathologist (1924).<sup>(10)</sup> The rate did not improve. In 1926 Hoadley contemplated the hiring of full-time surgeons for rural Alberta because the local practitioners lacked surgical skills. To raise the standard of care, he unilaterally amended the Alberta Medical Profession Act to create the first Specialist recognition system in Canada (1926). The UofA Senate was charged with certifying the specialists. The credential review committee consisted of four medical faculty members, plus the Deputy Minister and the Dean of Medicine. It was the first attempt by any government in Canada to define who medical specialists were.<sup>(11)</sup> By 1934 eighty-six diplomas had been issued. The responsibility for certifying specialists was eventually transferred to the 1929 formed Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada,<sup>(12)</sup> but not until The Alberta regulations were repealed in September 1944.<sup>(13)</sup>

In 1926 Deputy Minister of Health Dr. W.C. Laidlaw (1912-1926) died. To fill the position Hoadley convinced the Regina Medical Officer of Health, Dr. M.R. Bow D.P.H., to come to Alberta in February 1927. Bow had a choice, because Saskatchewan's Deputy Minister Dr. M.M. Seymour was retiring that year. After Bow's arrival, the UFA healthcare focus became increasingly public health orientated.<sup>(14)</sup>

### **UFA Health Minister 1927-1931**

The UFA or UFWA passed several motions requesting an investigation into state medicine (1919, 1924, 1927). After the third one the Edmonton Academy of Medicine sounded the alarm. They recommended the appointment of Registrar Dr. G.R. Johnson on of a full-time basis to help the AMA/CPSA defend itself against ill-advised legislation, which had a tendency toward state medicine. The Academy sent Dr. W.A. Wilson to meet with the Calgary Medical Society (CMS). He raised the possibility of new healthcare legislation in the spring (February) setting, at a CMS meeting on January 3, 1928. The members present

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1930, as reported in the Edmonton Journal. Sharon Richardson wrote comprehensively on the District Nurse Program (Alberta History 46(1): 2-9, Winter 1998) and Alberta's Traveling Clinics (CBMH 19: 245-263, 2002). Barbara Cormack confirmed Dr. Washburn's role in *Perennials and Politics, the Story of Irene Parlby*, page 89, written circa 1969 and privately printed.

8. Watt, F.B.

"Hoadley of Alberta," page 13. The Alberta Pool Terminal idea was recorded in a newspaper article in the Alberta Legislation newspaper clipping file for April 23, July 9 and 15, 1924.

9. Oake, George

*Alberta in the 20th Century*, Volume 5: 87, United Western Communications, 1996.

10. Alberta Government

Amended regulations to the Alberta Hospital Act (1924). A second surgical opinion was also required pre-operatively, for rural operations. Also see the profile of Dr. A.E. Archer, Part 1.

11. Jamieson, Heber C.

*Early Medicine in Alberta*, pages 56-57, AMA, 1947. Also see R. Lampard's profiles of Drs. J.S. McEachern, A.E. Archer and M.R. Bow in Part 1.

12. Bow, Malcolm R.

"The History of the Department of Public Health of Alberta." CPHJ 26: 384-386, 1935.

13. (Hoadley, G.)

Minutes of the CPSA, Volume 2: 332, September 19, 1944.

14. Lampard, Robert

Profile of Dr. M.R. Bow in Part 1.

quoted the noted American College of Surgeons accreditation leader Dr. Malcolm T. MacEachern, who had recently held discussions with physicians in Edmonton on the government favored New Zealand program, as saying “There [New Zealand] the best medical and surgical talent is shut out from hospitals”. Interestingly, Dr. A.E. Archer did not entirely agree with MacEachern’s interpretation.<sup>(16)</sup>

In February 1928 the anticipated legislation did not materialize. Instead two Labor MPs, Messrs. Fred White and Chris Pattinson moved that an Inquiry into a State Medicine Plan for Alberta be made.<sup>(17)</sup> The UFA government agreed and appointed an all-party supported Inquiry under White and Pattison, to study state medicine worldwide.

The arrival of Dr. Bow was followed by the first major polio outbreak in Canada in 1927/28. There were 354 known cases with 53 deaths. Hoadley and Bow responded during the winter by building a sixty-bed polio hospital on the UAH site.

The next challenge came in February 1928, when Hoadley piloted the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act through the Legislation, the same month as the White/Pattinson Inquiry was approved. Then on September 10, 1928 veterinarian Dr. A. Hobbs, a Ponoka Mental Hospital inpatient suffering from depression, was assaulted by a staff member for not eating. He developed pneumonia from his injuries and died. The attendant Scott was charged, and convicted of manslaughter. The employee who watched Scott and released the story, was beaten by seven other staff members. The seven received two-month jail sentences. To learn first hand of the circumstances in his own constituency (Ponoka), Premier Brownlee personally visited the PMH (AHP). He found it overcrowded and appointed Judge Emily Murphy to preside over the judicial Inquiry that followed.<sup>(18)</sup>

On October 26, 1928, the Cabinet asked psychiatrists Drs. Hincks and Farrar from Toronto, to study

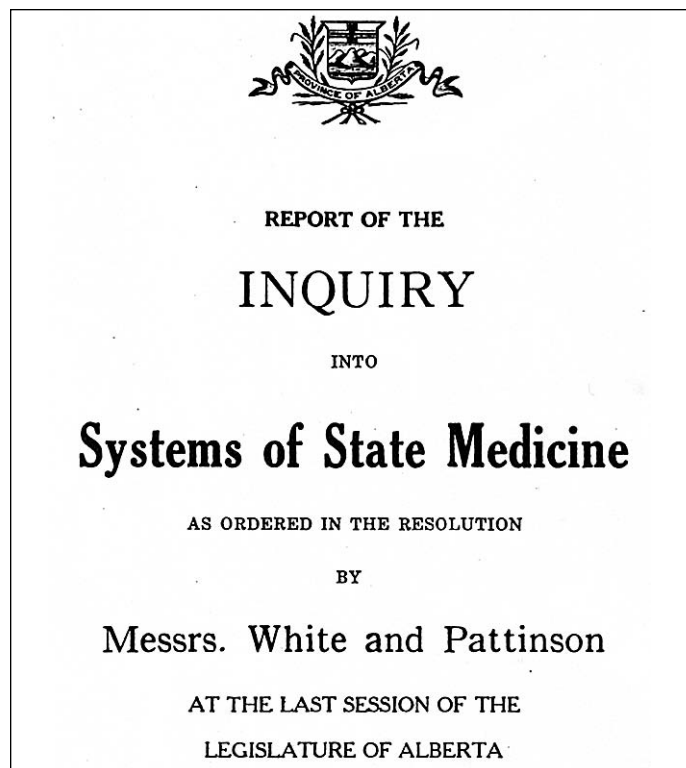
the quality of care at all three Alberta mental health institutions. They completed their report on February 6, 1929. Many recommendations were made. Three days later on February 9, another patient was injured in an altercation, which resulted in a spinal fracture and paralysis of the lower limbs. Hoadley’s resignation was called for in the Legislature. The government responded by transferring one hundred patients to the Oliver Mental Hospital near Edmonton spending \$600,000 to expand the psychiatric facilities at Ponoka and the six-year-old facility at Oliver. It also implemented most of the Hincks/Farrar recommendations.<sup>(19)</sup>

In February 1929, the White/Pattinson Inquiry into State Medicine was tabled in the Legislature.<sup>(20)</sup> It concluded that a state medicine program was feasible. The Inquiry reported there were 28-30 doctors on part or full time medical contracts providing care for about 4,000 Albertans and their dependents in mining and lumber communities. More physicians had signed contracts to care for the 350 Drumheller miners and the 3,300 CPR employees and dependents. The provincial government had signed part time contracts with ten physicians in the Palliser Triangle or dry belt south of Hanna to keep them from leaving, as well as several in northern settlements. Four municipalities had signed part time contracts with doctors similar to the Saskatchewan municipal doctor contracts.

The report noted there were seventeen municipal hospitals throughout rural Alberta (1928). To address the TB problem in the Drumheller mines, the Department of Public Health had started the first TB outreach clinic in Drumheller. To provide better hospital services the Drumheller municipality doubled the size of the hospital to eighty beds in 1926.<sup>(21)</sup>

At the legislative sitting in February 1929, Hoadley proposed a novel solution for the Peace River Country, which was feeling alienated. It was to

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| 15. Hoadley, George                  | Edmonton Journal, October 24, 1930.  |
| 16. Park, A.W.                       | Minutes of the Calgary Medical Society, January 3, 1928.   |
| 17. Pattinson, Chris<br>White, Fred  | “Report of an Inquiry into State Medicine”, 72 pages, Alberta Government, 1929.  |
| 18. (Brownlee, John E.)              | <i>Brownlee and the Triumph of Populism 1929-1935</i> , in <i>Alberta in the 20th Century</i> , Volume 5, pages 77-78, 1996.   |
| 19. (Hoadley, George)                | “Resignation of Minister of Health is Demanded by Conservative Leader.” Legislative newspaper clipping file, March 3, 1929. General Agreement with the Farrar/Hincks recommendations was expressed by Premier Brownlee, as reported in the Legislation newspaper clipping file for March 1929. Also see the Hincks/Farrar Report to the Government of Alberta, February 6, 1929. |
| 20. White, Fred,<br>Pattinson, Chris | “Cost is Stumbling Block in State Medicine,” as reported in the Edmonton Journal, February 28, 1929.   |
| 21. (Hoadley, George)                | For the Drumheller opening and other comments by Mr. Hoadley on rural clinics, health and municipal hospitals see the Edmonton Journal of October 24, 1929, in the Legislative clipping file.  |



*The Inquiry by MLAs, White and Pattinson, 1928/29*

recruit physicians from Britain. They could be contracted, he said, for two thousand dollars a year, or half the cost of an average physician. The government advertised in Britain and eastern Canada. Four physicians responded to the ads and agreed to come to Alberta. One was Dr. Mary Percy (later Jackson).

To do so, the government passed an amendment to the Municipal District Act in 1929, to allow district funds to be used to pay municipal doctors. It fuelled the municipal doctor and state medicine debate. So did the appointment by the government of one half of the members of the University of Alberta Hospital Board in 1929.

Two other government initiatives were well received. The government passed legislation to start two pilot public health projects in Okotoks/High River (Hoadley's riding) and in Red Deer, and it funded an acute psychiatric unit in the UAH hospital. Both programs received Rockefeller Foundation support. The

government also initiated two mental health clinics and TB clinics in Calgary and Edmonton (1929).<sup>(22)</sup> Hoadley was regaining his public standing and reputation.

On December 14, 1929, Hoadley was one of the three Alberta government signators to the federal/provincial natural resource transfer agreement. It transferred mineral rights including future oil and gas royalties to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Hon. Peter Lougheed often commented that this was the date Alberta was really born.<sup>(23)</sup> In 1930 R.B. Bennett acknowledged that Alberta had a very business-like government.

But the effects of the Depression on healthcare were continuing, unabated. The White/Pattinson annual motion in the Legislature to implement a state medicine program was routinely turned aside by Mr. Hoadley.<sup>(24)</sup> In September 1930, D.O. Wight, the owner of the Cardston News, editorialized his support for a state medicine plan or program, and requested it be pursued by Mr. Hoadley. Wight would be heard. Access to medical care was diminishing dramatically particularly in rural Alberta. Non-remunerative or unpaid medical services were affecting everyone in the healthcare field.

In the election of 1930, Dr. W.A. Atkinson was elected as a Conservative in Edmonton. He spoke eloquently of the work Mr. Hoadley had done and what he had accomplished in the health field. He also stressed that the state not intervene further into the practice of medicine. When Mr. Hoadley was invited to speak at the September 1931 annual AMA convention, he requested "closer cooperation" with the profession.<sup>(25)</sup>

### **The AMA and CMA/CPSA Stir**

In an unobtrusive way, the AMA/CPSA physicians had already started to focus their attention on the state medicine issue. When Dr. J.S. McEachern of Calgary returned from the third Canadian Conference of Medical Services in November 1929, he had one paramount observation. In his review the most important topic discussed was state medicine, and the public health leaders in Canada controlled the agenda.<sup>(26)</sup>

22. Bow, Malcolm R. Legislative clipping file for February 15, 1929 and "The History of the Department of Public Health of Alberta," CJPH 26: 384-396, 1935.
23. Horan, J.W. *West, NorWest, a History of Alberta*, page 91, Northgate 1945.
24. Wight, David O. Editorial, Cardston News, September 18, 1930. In 1930 and again in 1931 Minister of Health Hoadley refused the motions of Labor MLA's White and Pattinson to design a plan, as noted in the Legislation newspaper clipping file for February 25, 1930.
25. Hoadley, George "Many Problems Face Medical Men of Today." Calgary Herald, September (n.d.), 1931. The speech by newly-elected Dr. W.A. Atkinson and the reply of Hon. G. Hoadley were reported in the Legislative newspaper clipping file for February 28, 1931.
26. McEachern, John S. "Proceedings, the report of the [1929] Annual Meetings of the AMA and College," pages 5, 42-45, AMA, September 1930.

At the annual 1929 meeting, the CMA agreed to research the concept of health insurance. In 1930 it concluded that guiding principles were needed. The CMA appointed a seven-man Study Committee (1931), which included Dr. McEachern, to begin to identify them. After a progress report was tabled in 1932, the CMA transferred the responsibility for further action to the Committee on Economics. At the meeting on November 29, 1932 the CMA charged it with drafting A Plan for Health Insurance for Canada. Dr. McEachern was appointed to that twenty-six-man committee. By then, McEachern had agreed to become the President of the CMA in 1934/35.

After another Wight editorial on October 16, 1931 encouraged Mr. Hoadley to venture forward with his state medicine agenda, an Oxford-style debate was held on state medicine in Cardston on January 4, 1932. The affirmative (D.O. Wight) won the debate. The Cardston News owner/editor, Wight spearheaded the discussions that followed.<sup>(27)</sup>

The Cardston community was receptive to a plan. For twenty-five dollars, a family could prepay its medical services for a year. The Cardston Medical Contracts were initiated on March 1, 1932. The Mutual Improvement Association of the Mormon Church agreed to be the Trustee. On the three-man Board with Wight were two future Social Credit cabinet ministers, N.E. Tanner and E.W. Hinman.<sup>(28)</sup>

### The Hoadley Commission 1932-1934

As early as 1927, Dr. Horace Wrinch had begun to promote a health insurance program in the BC Legislature. Though unsuccessful, his motion to appoint a BC Royal Commission was implemented in March 1929, shortly after the tabling of Alberta's White/Pattinson Inquiry in February 1929. All parties in the BC legislature agreed to the Commission. In February 1932, the BC Commission tabled its report,

and recommended a two-ninths government contribution, up from a one-ninth recommendation in the 1921 BC Royal Commission report. It was to be an employer/employee based contributory health insurance program. One-half of the government contribution was to come from the federal government.

In Alberta, pressure was building on Hoadley to do something about state medicine.<sup>(29)</sup> In February 1932 the UFA local in Edmonton made another motion endorsing state medicine. So did the AARN's Weir Report on Nursing.<sup>(30)</sup> On February 29, 1932, all parties in the Alberta Legislature agreed to the White/Pattinson motion for a Commission to design a state medicine plan for Alberta. Supporters included the UFA Cabinet Ministers Hoadley and Parlby. On March 3, the Hoadley Commission was appointed, with both Ministers Hoadley and Parlby on it.<sup>(31)</sup>

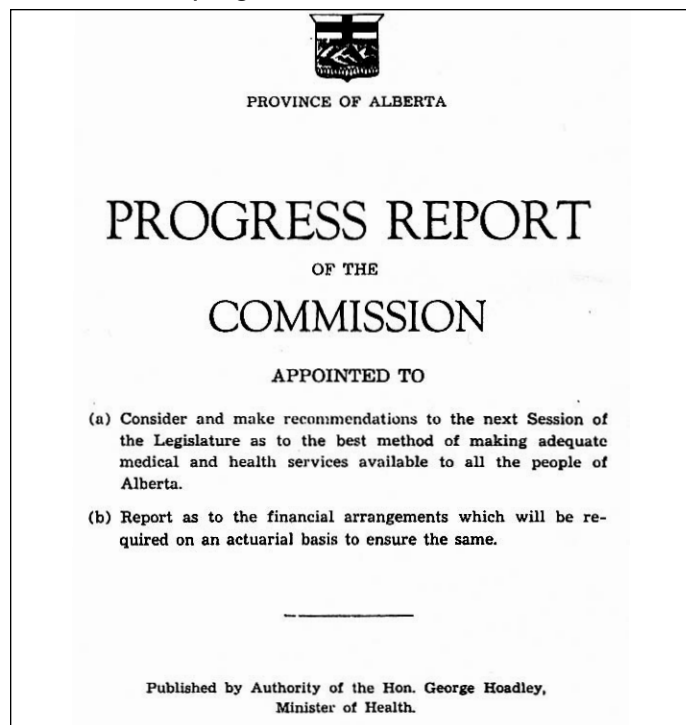
On November 8, 1932, and again on December 11 and 12, Drs. A.E. Archer and W.A. Wilson of the College of Physicians and Surgeons presented their brief to the Commission. The Commission continued to meet on December 13, 14 and re-drafted their report. The Commissioners supported the concept of a contributory health insurance program. The brief incorporated the principles that the presenters felt needed to be respected.<sup>(32)</sup>

On March 1, 1933, the Progress Report of the Hoadley Commission was released for study and comment.<sup>(33)</sup> It was also the worst year of the Depression. Alberta almost defaulted on its bonds. Although its public health expenditures were being protected, it was not a propitious time to be undertaking a major initiative.<sup>(34)</sup> Nationally, there was a crisis looming over the provision of medical care for those who could not afford it. In Winnipeg there was a three-month doctor's strike over free care for the indigent. In Vancouver there was a work to rule cam-

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27. Lampard, Robert "The Cardston Medical Contracts," Alberta History 54(3): 5-10, Fall 2006.
28. Wight, David O. Cardston News, March 3, 1932.
29. Lampard, Robert "The Roots of Medicare are in Alberta," in Part 2.
30. Collins, Paul V. "The Public Health Policies of the United Farmers of Alberta Government 1921-1935," pages 122-131. MA Thesis, UWO, 1969.
31. (Hoadley, George) State Health Under Review. Legislative newspaper clipping file Friday, March 4, 1932.
32. Archer, Albert E., Wilson, William A. Final Memorandum, submitted by the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta to the Rowell Royal Commission, pages 3-4, dated March 3, 1938. Also confirmed in the CPSA minutes of October 4, 1934.
33. Hoadley, George "Progress Report of the Commission." Seventy-six pages. Kings Printer, 1933. The proposal was outlined in an article by Dr. McGugan, the Secretary of the State Health Insurance Commission, in "Alberta's State Health Insurance Plan," CJPH 25(4): 155-160, April 1934.
34. Foster, Franklin *John Brownlee, a Biography*, page 197, Foster Learning, 1996. Also see Paul Collins' "The Public Health Policies of the UFA Government 1921-1935," page 108. Alberta's income dropped 58% from 1929 to 1933. Alberta's total debt increased from one third of its income (1929) to more than its income (1933). Public Health expenditures remained constant at 1.6-1.9 million dollars per year, while education, public works and justice costs were severely curtailed.

paign to all but emergency services, for those who could not afford to pay for them. Two years later the Ontario government agreed to provide one million dollars a year for medical care for citizens on relief. That equaled the Alberta government's total annual net healthcare expenditures. No other provincial government followed Ontario's lead.

Pressured, the federal government refused to contribute to the access to care crisis, giving the BNA Act as its pretext. A CMA delegation met with Prime Minister Bennett on October 6, 1933. Bennett was intransigent and refused to commit or earmark money for medical care for those on relief, even though the federal government was already transferring funds to the provinces for that program. The federal government refused to contribute to the Ontario medical relief program, too.



*The Hoadley Commission Progress Report, 1933*

In the spring of 1934 two reports were tabled: 1) A Plan for Health Insurance in Canada by the CMA, prepared by the CMA Committee on Economics,<sup>(35)</sup> and 2) the Hoadley Commission report on March

19.<sup>(36)</sup> The CMA report was sent to the provincial medical associations for study in June. No immediate action was taken on the Hoadley Commission report.

In 1934 the UFA government was distracted by the Brownlee affair. Premier Brownlee resigned under controversy. The cabinet was shuffled. Hon. D.G. Reid became Premier. Hoadley maintained the Health Ministry, but dropped the Agriculture portfolio and assumed the Telephones and Railways portfolio. He would start the Mutual Telephone System during his short tenure.<sup>(37)</sup> The UFA government was beginning to worry seriously about the popular Social Credit movement, led by teacher William Aberhart. Hoadley suggested Aberhart be retained as an economic advisor for \$6000/year for five years. The UFA government was too conservative to do so.<sup>(38)</sup>

### Alberta Health Insurance Act 1935

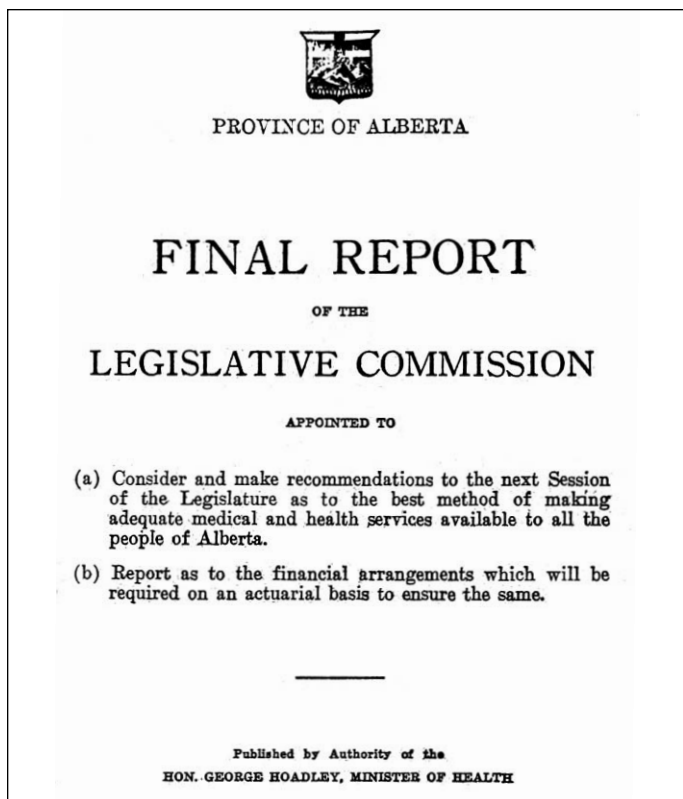
In March 1935 Hoadley celebrated twenty-five years in the Alberta Legislature. He was the senior sitting member by eleven years. The month before the Alberta Health Insurance Act was passed in the Legislature. It was assented to April 23, 1935.

The Alberta Health Insurance Act proposed a Plan A and B. Plan A was for the comprehensive health insurance program to be available to each Albertan. In rural Alberta it was to be based on a municipal hospital, and could be extended to cover all rural hospitals in the province. The total cost for Plan A (doctors, hospitals, drugs, dentists, and public health services) was estimated to be \$10.6 million. The provincial and municipal government contribution was to be 2/9 of the total cost. Under an optional and less expensive Plan B, which covered employers and employees only, a similar 2/9 contribution was to be provided by the government.

In March 1934, a voluntary hospital insurance program was started amongst the four Edmonton hospitals by Drs. A.F. Anderson (RAH) and W.T. Washburn (UAH). Known as the Edmonton Group Hospitalization Plan, it was the first Blue Cross hospital insurance plan in Canada.<sup>(39)</sup> It became the template for the province-wide hospital insurance plan implemented in 1948.

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35. Smith, Harvey, Fleming, Grant "A Plan for Health Insurance in Canada," CMAJ Supplement, pages 26-62, September 1934.
36. Hoadley, George "Final Report, Hoadley Commission," thirty-nine pages. It was tabled in the Legislature on March 19, 1934 as part of a new five-year plan.
37. Hoadley, George "Hoadley Regrets Leaving (Agricultural) Branch." Legislative newspaper clipping file, June 5, 1934. Also see the Edmonton Journal, November 20, 1934 and the Legislative clipping file for April 18, 1935.
38. (Hoadley, George) The plan to hire Aberhart was masterminded by Hoadley as reported in *Fury and Fidelity: The Onset of the Great Depression*, in Alberta in the 20th Century, Volume 6: 23, UWC, 1997.
39. Vant, J. Ross Cashman, Tony *More than a Hospital*, page 125.





*The Final Hoadley Commission Report, 1934*

In May 1935, Hoadley met with his Minister of Health counterparts in Ottawa. They asked for more federal healthcare funding. Hoadley called for a Royal Commission to investigate medical care to “the indigent”. His call was not heeded. In July 1935, Hoadley wrote expectantly of his planned health insurance program in the Alberta Medical Bulletin. He predicted a “new dawn in healthcare” in Alberta.<sup>(40)</sup> The first rural pilot project was to be initiated in Camrose by Dr. A.C. McGugan.

Then politics prevailed. In the August 22, 1935 election, all of the UFA members in the province lost their seats, including the Hon. George Hoadley.

### After Politics 1936-1955

By 1935 Hoadley was wedded to the access to healthcare issue. In 1936 he visited his friend,

Ontario psychiatrist Dr. Clarence Hincks looking for a job. Hoadley wanted to study the distribution of medical services in Canada and the variations in public health and infectious disease rates across Canada. He was primarily concerned with the effect of the withdrawal of access to medical care services that had been caused by the Depression, and compounded in Alberta and Saskatchewan by the drought. Hincks suggested Hoadley approach the National Committee on Mental Hygiene of Canada (NCMH(C)) President E.W. Beatty. Sir Edward W. Beatty was the President of the CPR and owed Hoadley a favor, for Hoadley's support for the CPR's purchase of half of the Northern Alberta Railway. It was sold to the CPR/CNR in 1928 for \$25 million dollars. Beatty agreed to fund Hoadley for three years at \$5,000/year.<sup>(41)</sup>

Hoadley with co-author Dr. A. Grant Fleming, the head of public health and epidemiology for the National Committee, tabled their confidential report in March 1939 with the NCMH(C) Board. By then the chairman was Sir Frederick Banting. The report was titled “A Study of the Distribution of Medical Care and Public Health Services in Canada.”<sup>(42)</sup> The study was reviewed by the CMA's Committee on Economics in their comprehensive report that year, and for A.E. Grauer's Public Health report prepared for the 1937-1940 Rowell-Sirois Commission.<sup>(43)</sup> The Commission was investigating Dominion-Provincial relations and the responsibilities for social security programs (pensions, employment insurance, WCB, and healthcare), not contemplated under the BNA Act. The public health statistics were based on 1935 provincial data, and represented an early (pre-1940) form of Statistics Canada health data collection.

Hoadley gave speeches across Canada on his report and its findings. In one he noted that Ontario care indices were improving. So were the prairie rates, he said. His study was the first comprehensive assessment of rates of diseases, deaths and preventive care

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40. Hoadley, George “Public Health,” AMB 1: 3, 5, July 1935. Hoadley commented on the Plan A pilot project planned for Camrose during the first reading of the Alberta State Health Insurance Act. See the Legislative newspaper clipping file for February 16, 1935.
41. Lampard, Robert “The Roots of Medicare are in Alberta,” Part 2.
42. Hoadley, George, Fleming, Grant *Study of the Distribution of Medical Care and Public Health Services in Canada*. 184 pages. National Committee on Mental Hygiene [NCMH(C)], September 1939. See the Board Minutes of the NCMH(C) for March 6, 1939 for the tabling of the confidential report. Action to be taken was left with Sir Edward Beatty. The report was published by Metropolitan Life in September 1939. The CNR/CPR railway bids were discussed in Brownlee and the Triumph of Populism, Volume 5, pages 84-86, in Alberta in the 20th Century, UWC, 1996. The funding of the Hoadley position was confirmed by Dr. J.D. Griffin and Cyril Greenberg, Ph.D. on April 20, at a meeting with the author; and subsequently in writing on August 27, 1997.
43. Rowell, N.W., Sirois, J.O. *Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations (1937-1940)*. Three volumes. Tabled May 3, 1940. Reprinted in one volume in 1954.

**1935**

**CHAPTER 49.**

**An Act respecting Health Insurance.**

*(Assented to April 23, 1935.)*

**HIS MAJESTY**, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, enacts as follows:

**1.** This Act may be cited as "*The Alberta Health Insurance Act.*" Short title

**2.** In this Act, unless the context requires a contrary Interpretation meaning—

- (a) "Advisory Board" means a local advisory board of a medical district appointed pursuant to this Act;
- (b) "Board of reference" means a board of reference appointed pursuant to this Act;
- (c) "Commission" means the Health Insurance Commission;
- (d) "Dental services" means professional services such as are ordinarily afforded by persons registered as members of the Dental Association under *The Dental Association Act*;
- (e) "Employment" means any remunerated engagement of any person in any profession, trade, business or occupation;
- (f) "Employee" means any person who is in the service of an employer;
- (g) "Employer" means any person who has in his service any person under any contract of hiring or any contract of apprenticeship;
- (h) "Hospital" means an approved hospital for the purposes of *The Hospitals Act*;
- (i) "Hospital services" includes all facilities ordinarily afforded by a hospital and without derogating from the generality of the foregoing, X-Ray and other laboratory services;
- (j) "Income earner" means any person who is in receipt of any income whether temporary or continuous and whether in cash or in kind;
- (k) "Medical district" means any district constituted pursuant to this Act as a health insurance district;

*Alberta Health Insurance Act, 1935*

in Canada. After completing the report, and a briefing book that went with it,<sup>(44)</sup> Hoadley became the President of the Dominion Health Study Plan. He spoke as late as 1944 supporting the federal health insurance proposal.

Hoadley retired to Victoria, where he passed away on December 14, 1955. The town of Hoadley, north-west of Rimbey, bears his name.<sup>(45)</sup> The Hoadley family had three children, George M (1906), Doris Muriel (1908), and William Cecil (1909). Mrs. Hoadley, from whom he had separated (c1936), died in Edmonton in 1964.

**The Hon. Irene Parlby**

The UFA was formed in 1909, as part of an agrarian reform movement in the five western Canadian provinces. The focus of the movement on healthcare reform has been unrecognized. The UFA's attention on healthcare issues was captured during WWI. The two new prairie provinces had few hospitals to face the high rate of return of disabled soldiers, which stemmed from the high prairie enlistment rate particularly from the rural areas. A crisis loomed.<sup>(46)</sup>

The UFA movement was already receptive to the role, attitudes, points of view, and voice of women. Women were partners on the farm. They received the right to vote in Alberta in 1915. That year their influence on UFA policies and politics was formalized. The Farm Women of Alberta formed a separate auxiliary to the UFA. The next year (1916) they formed their own organization, the UFWA. Irene Parlby of Alix was elected the first Vice-President (1915) and in 1916 she became the second President, holding that position until 1919/20. As UFWA President, she was on the UofA Board from 1916-1919. Two decades later in 1935, after participating in the successful 1929 Five Persons case, the UofA Senate granted her an honorary degree.

In 1916 Ms. Parlby was appointed to a committee to draft a Municipal Hospital Act for the province. A 1912 Bill had been passed by the Liberal govern-

**Study of the Distribution of  
Medical Care**

and

**Public Health Services in Canada**

**THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MENTAL HYGIENE  
(CANADA)**

*Division on Public Health and Medical Services*

**111 ST. GEORGE STREET, TORONTO**

**1939**

*Hoadley/Fleming Study, NCMH(C) 1939*

- 44. Hoadley, George      Canada's Health National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Sixteen pages, 1940. Deposited in the Public Archives of Canada.
- 45. Hoadley, Alberta      The town of Hoadley first appeared on a map two years after the railroad arrived in 1922. It was initially called Harenigg but the name was soon changed to Hoadley. See Fred Schultz' column #2029, "Hoadley, The Boom Town," written for the Rimbey Record, January 31, 1995.
- 46. Cormack, Barbara V.      *Perennials and Politics*, pages 62-63, 67, 88, 102-103, 136-137, circa 1969. For more on Irene Parlby see Catherine Cavanaugh's "In Search of a Useful Life: Irene Marry Parlby, 1868-1965," Ph.D. thesis, UofA, 1994; and Alexis Soltice's "Dried Apples, Victorian Ideals, Organizational Works: The Private and Public Persona of Mary Irene Parlby." Ph.D. thesis, 479 pages, UofC, April 2005.

ment, which permitted a municipality to collect funds for a hospital. The original Municipal Hospital Act was revised in 1917. The first municipal hospital was located on the Saskatchewan side of the fourth meridian that divided Alberta and Saskatchewan and bisected the town of Lloydminster. A special Act to cover the cross-border Lloydminster circumstances was passed in 1919. Revisions to the boundaries outlined in the 1917 Municipal Act, were required before it could be applied across the province. The amendments were passed in 1918. One district, Mannville, foresaw its passage and completed and opened what the town called the first municipal hospital in the British Empire, in 1918. The Act and the municipal hospitals it created became the foundation of the rural healthcare programs of both the UFA and Social Credit governments.

In 1917 the UFWA and AMA endorsed resolutions that were sent to the government to establish a Provincial Public Health Department. Accepted, it became the second in Canada after New Brunswick.<sup>(46b)</sup> In 1918 the UFWA were the first body to advocate for a rural or district nurse program. The



Hon. Irene Parlby 37-2

possibilities were researched by Dr. Heber Jamieson in Manitoba in 1918, before being implemented in Alberta in 1919 as the second program in Canada. Thereafter Irene Parlby strongly supported “a state

system of medical and nursing aid”.<sup>(47)</sup>

When the UFA were elected to power in 1921, Irene Parlby was appointed the Minister without Portfolio (1921-1935). The election landed the government in the middle of the mini 1921/22 recession. Cutbacks were the order of the day in the Public Health Nursing Program. That led the government to look for alternatives. When one general practitioner-surgeon agreed to replace a northern Alberta colleague for part of the summer in 1923, his locum caught the attention of Deputy Minister Dr. W.C. Laidlaw. In 1924 the government organized the first summertime traveling medical, nursing, and dental clinic, organized through the UAH by its Superintendent Dr. W.T. Washburn. It operated every summer until 1943, except for 1934, primarily in northern Alberta.

In 1924 Parlby and Hoadley noted that Alberta had the highest post-operative death rate in Canada. In 1926, Drs. Archer and Young from the Lamont Clinic published their first series of 245 appendectomies with a death rate of 1.22%, about one-half the provincial rate.<sup>(48)</sup> It led to a surgeon-only policy for performing abdominal operations the post-operative death rate was still slow to drop.

By the late 1920s Alberta had 6.0 acute care beds per 1,000 persons, excluding mental health beds. Hoadley concluded the province as saturated and capped it. The ratio would not exceed 7.0 acute beds per 1,000, until diminishing in the 1980s. The high ratio of beds was one of the prices paid in the pre-antibiotic era.

From 1927-1929 Ms. Parlby was one of the “Five Persons” who won their case for recognition as “persons” in an appeal to the British Privy Council. From 1932-1934 Parlby was the second Cabinet Minister appointed to the Hoadley Commission.

In January 1934, Ms. Parlby gave an enlightened speech on the Hoadley Commission’s “State Medicine” plan for Alberta, at the UFWA Annual Convention.<sup>(49)</sup> She stressed that any plan “not be unduly influenced by the difficulties of the economic situation ... [It] must be an ideal scheme in its consummation”. She closed her UFWA presentation on a note of optimism. “I believe this scheme will be possible. I feel sure that eventually it will come. How soon it can come will depend on the aliveness of the

47. Richardson, Sharon “Frontier Healthcare and Alberta’s District and Municipal Nursing Services 1919-1976.” Alberta History 46(1): 2-9, Winter 1998.

48. Archer, A.E., Young, Morley A.R. “The Mortality from Appendicitis in Alberta.” CMAJ 16: 1491-1494, 1926. Also discussed in Ross Vant and Tony Cashman’s *More Than a Hospital*, page 121 and Barbara Cormack’s *Perennials and Politics*, page 88.

49. Parlby, Irene “State Medicine.” An address to the UFWA 1934 Annual Convention Report, pages 11-14, January 1934.

people to their problem, and the energy with which they attack it". The speech reflected what she believed. To reinforce her presentations she often quoted UofA President H.M. Tory: "Every man owes to the generation in which he lives, the last full measure of devotion to whatsoever things are true".<sup>(50)</sup>

Premier Brownlee referred to her great influence and the admiration everyone felt for her. She was a "tower of strength for the passage of Health Minister Hoadley's health bills".<sup>(51)</sup>

### The Hon. W.W. Cross

Most historians have assumed that the demise of the UFA government in 1935 halted the UFA healthcare initiatives and their plan for state health insurance. That assumption is not correct. Hoadley's successor as Minister of Health and Welfare from 1935-1957 was the Hanna General Practitioner Dr. W.W. Cross. Coming from the dry belt and having worked in a municipal hospital, he was well acquainted with rural medical problems. Dr. Cross' mission throughout his political career was to staunchly support the growth and extension of the municipal hospital system.<sup>(52)</sup>

Only Alberta had formed a Municipal Hospital Association (1920), separate from the 1919 incorpo-

rated Hospital Association of Alberta. The two organizations remained distinct until 1943. Continuation of the UFA position was further provided by Dr. M.R. Bow, who remained Alberta's Deputy Minister of Health from 1927 to 1952.

A product of the 1930s, Dr. Cross was a fiscal conservative who abhorred a deficit. He believed that the government should behave much as he must have personally, on a cash as you go basis. Worried over cost escalations at the University of Alberta Hospital, he appointed himself to their board (1936-1940) joining Dr. Bow, to better control the UAH expenditures.

Dr. Cross remained supportive of the state health insurance concept. In 1938 he suggested that a contributory insurance program could be implemented by extending the Workman's Compensation Act, although he did not do so.<sup>(52b)</sup> He did initiate the passage of the second free Tuberculosis Services Act (1936) in Canada, the first free Polio Rehabilitation Act (1938), the free Cancer Services Act (1940), and the two weeks free Maternity Benefits Act (1944).

Dr. Cross took the first opportunity afforded him, to revisit the contributory health insurance concept. In 1942, the provincial government re-passed the UFA's 1935 Alberta Health Insurance Act intact. It was passed so the government could appoint a Commission to implement the federal government's enabling proposal for a contributory national health insurance plan.<sup>(53)</sup>

Dr. Cross supported the municipal hospital program so resolutely that when the federal government offered to contribute to the provincial Hospital Insurance Program, by paying an average of 45% of the cost of the federal Diagnostic and Hospital Services Program, in 1957, Dr. Cross was so offended by the federal intrusion into a provincial jurisdiction that he retired. His retirement ended a remarkable era of political stability, cooperation with the medical profession, and progress towards a contributory comprehensive, provincial health insurance pro-



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Judge Emily Murphy

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50. Cormack, Barbara V. *Perennials and Politics, the Life Story of Irene Parlby, LLD*, pages 66-67. Whatsoever things are true or Quaecumque vera is the motto of the UofA.
51. (Brownlee, John E.) *Brownlee and the Triumph of Populism 1920-1935*, Volume 5: 139-141, in *Alberta in the 20th Century*, UWC, 1996.
52. Vant, J. Ross, Cashman, Tony *More Than a Hospital*, pages 124-125. Reiterated by Dr. R.K. Thomson in *The Development of Alberta Hospitals Since World War II in Medicine in Alberta: Historical Reflections*, pages 1-21, AMF, 1993. Reprinted in Part 2.
53. Cross, W.W. "Draft Scheme for Free Hospital Care," *AMB* 9: 20, January 1944. The 1942 Act was not implemented, although it was still being discussed in the *AMB* (pages 18, 19) as late as January 1947. The April 1944 *AMB* issue focused on health insurance, the Federal draft bill, the Alberta Maternity Care bill, doctor incomes and state medicine.



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gram. The Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton was named after him and opened in 1968. The provincial Crossbow long term care facility in Calgary was named after both Drs. Cross and Bow.

Dr. Cross would pass his concerns over jurisdictional intrusion to Premier E.C. Manning. Manning would become the last provincial premier to vociferously oppose (1967-1969) the federal government's extension of Saskatchewan's compulsory (universal) health insurance program to all provinces. Cross' successor, Dr. J. Donovan Ross was perhaps the strongest provincial opponent of Fedicare as he called it. He resigned as Alberta's Minister of Health in 1969 over the provincially intrusive federal universal Medicare plan.

The only remaining vestige from the Cross/Ross era is the payment of health insurance premiums in Alberta.

Fortunately, relatively open communication between the Alberta government and the medical profession on issues of common concern has continued, strike free. One very positive and progressive result has been the establishment of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research in 1980.

**Related Profiles:** McEachern, Archer, Jackson, Bow, MacLean

**Related Perspectives:** The Roots of Medicare are in Alberta, the University of Alberta and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act, Cardston Medical Contracts, Di Bozsha, Alberta Hospitals

**Key Words:** Hoadley, Parlby, Cross, UFA Government, Hoadley Commission, Canadian Medicare, 1942 Act



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