

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



MANITOBA

# Premiers of Manitoba

CELEBRATING  
150 YEARS  
as a PROVINCE

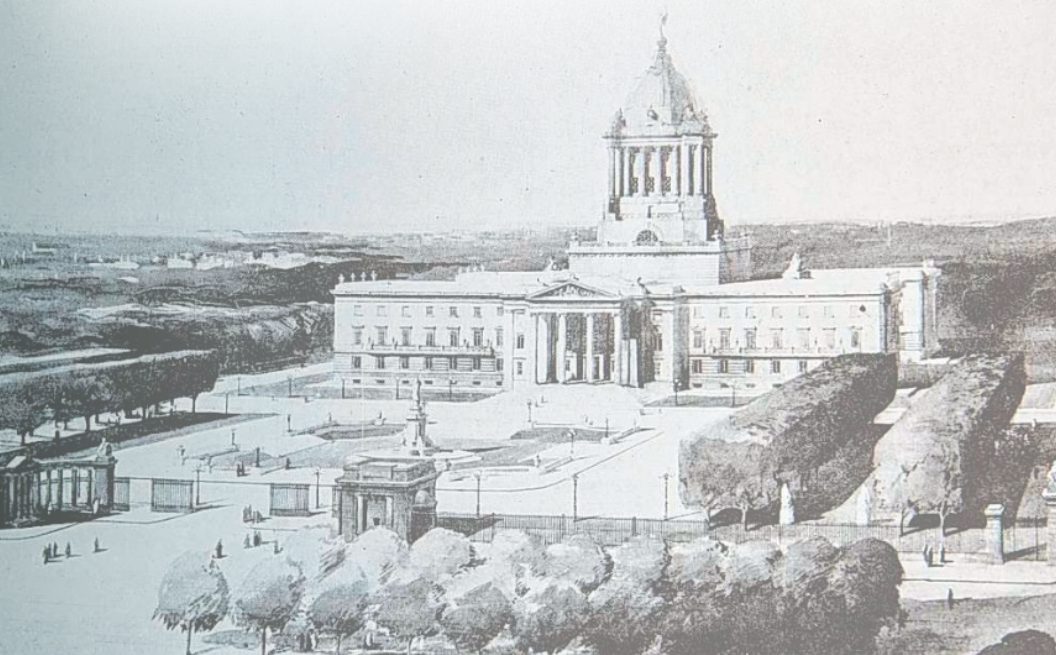
1870-  
2020

# Introduction

**T**he Premier of Manitoba is the head of the Provincial Government and the President of the Executive Council in Manitoba. The political party that wins the most seats in the Legislative Assembly after a provincial election forms Government, and the leader of that political party becomes the Premier of Manitoba.

The Lieutenant Governor on the advice of the Premier appoints Cabinet Ministers. These Ministers of the Crown are the head of a government department.

The role of the Premier is to lead the Provincial Government in setting priorities, forming policies, and is responsible for the overall operations and administration of government. The Premier also represents the province of Manitoba on a national and international level. The Premier is the person who will advise the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve a Legislative Assembly, triggering a provincial election.

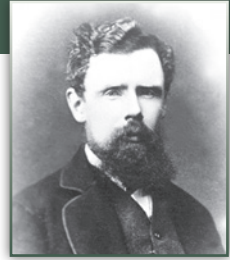


## Alfred Boyd (c 1836-1908)

**Term:** September 16, 1870 - December 14, 1871

**Party:** Government

Born in England, Boyd came to Manitoba as early as 1858, opening a store in the Red River Colony. He was one of the founders of the Winnipeg Board of Trade. He was elected as an English delegate to the 1870 Convention of 40, but refused to vote in the election that chose Riel as president. He was subsequently elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1870, and was appointed provincial secretary. Historians note that Boyd seemed to maintain a low profile politically, and he was criticised for choosing to do little to improve the infrastructure of the province for incoming settlers.



## Marc-Amable Girard (1822-1892)

**Terms:** December 14, 1871 - March 14, 1872;

July 8, 1874 - December 3, 1874

**Party:** Conservative

Born in Varennes, Lower Canada (now Quebec), Girard was the first French Canadian premier of Manitoba. Girard trained as a lawyer, coming to Manitoba in 1870. Respected for his personal charm and integrity, Girard's moderation and conciliatory approach attempted to realize the cultural duality of Manitoba in its early years. Girard was instrumental in the push to alter the proposed route of the CPR through the Lake Manitoba narrows to the south of the lake. He was the first president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Manitoba.

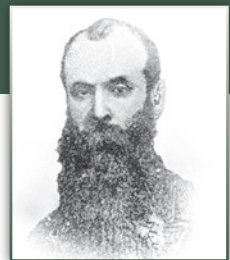


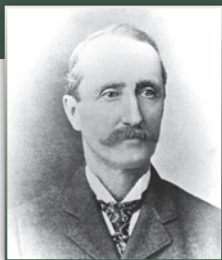
## Henry Joseph Hynes Clarke (1833-1889)

**Term:** March 14, 1872 - July 8, 1874

**Party:** Government Conservative

Born in Ireland, Clarke arrived in Canada with his parents in 1836. He was educated and worked as a lawyer in Montreal, coming to Manitoba in 1870 to assist Lieutenant Governor Adams George Archibald in establishing the provincial government. Clarke is credited for helping to lay the foundations of law and government in Manitoba, and for supporting the Métis at a time when it took some courage for an English-speaking politician to do so. After his resignation from government, he returned to practice law, defending some of Riel's followers after the North West Rebellion of 1885.





## Robert Atkinson Davis (1841-1903)

**Term:** December 3, 1874 - October 16, 1878

**Party:** Government

Arriving in Winnipeg in 1870, Davis purchased a hotel which he renamed "Davis House". It became a popular gathering place for Ontario volunteers of the Wolseley Expedition. He soon became an active spokesperson for newcomers to the fledgling village of Winnipeg and he was active in the push to incorporate the City of Winnipeg. His government was known for its ability to moderate between the various factions based in religious and ethnic lines. He also lobbied successfully to have the CPR pass through Winnipeg rather than Selkirk.

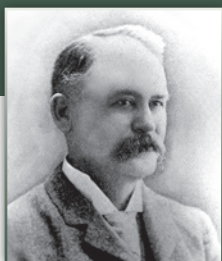


## John Norquay (1841-1889)

**Term:** October 16, 1878 - December 24, 1887

**Party:** Conservative

Norquay was the first premier born in Manitoba; he was also the youngest, being elected at age 37. At the time of his death, he was the only MLA to hold a seat continually since the inception of the Legislative Assembly. He was the acknowledged leader of one of the Anglophone factions in the province. His government was noted for its continuing efforts to obtain better financial terms from Federal Government, and for challenging the CPR's monopoly over railway development. He was a founding member of The Manitoba Historical Society.



## David Howard Harrison M.D. (1843-1905)

**Term:** December 26, 1887 - January 19, 1888

**Party:** Liberal Conservative

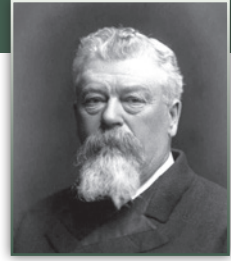
Born in Upper Canada, Harrison was at various times a physician, a rancher, and a businessman. He settled in Newdale, and in 1883 the newly formed rural municipality of Harrison was named after him. He was elected as the government candidate for Minnedosa in the next general provincial election. He developed a warm friendship with then premier Norquay, and quickly rose within the ranks. Quarrelsome politics over the issue of the railroad monopoly marred his premiership, and it only lasted for one month.

## Thomas Greenway (1838-1908)

**Term:** January 19, 1888 - January 6, 1900

**Party:** Liberal

Greenway was a merchant and a farmer and also a successful land speculator. He was the founder of Crystal City, where he owned much land, and actively recruited settlers from Ontario. He also financed the area's first newspaper, the Rock Lake Herald. Notable achievements during his premiership include the settlement of the separate schools question, the end of the railroad monopoly and promotion of railroad building in Manitoba. He was instrumental in the formation of the Liberal Party of Manitoba.

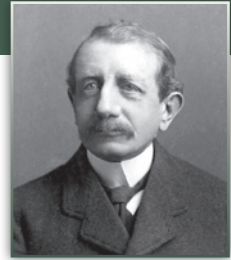


## Hugh John MacDonald (1850-1929)

**Term:** January 10, 1900 - October 29, 1900

**Party:** Conservative

Sir Hugh John MacDonald was probably best known as the only surviving son of Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister. However, Hugh John often sought to avoid being in his famous father's shadow. He enlisted for military service against his father's wishes, finally seeing action the third time at Batoche and Fish Creek. His most important legislation as Premier was the proclamation of prohibition in Manitoba. He was knighted in 1913. His home in downtown Winnipeg is now the Dalnavert Museum.

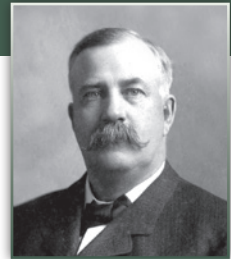


## Rodmond Palen Roblin (1853-1937)

**Term:** October 29, 1900 - May 12, 1915

**Party:** Conservative

Roblin came to Manitoba in 1877 and set himself up in business. He is best known for beginning the construction of the current legislative building, exchanging barbs with suffragist Nellie McClung over his refusal to extend the franchise to women, and for scandals surrounding the cost overruns on the legislature. During his premiership, he also promoted the grain trade and railway construction, and created Manitoba's first crown corporations, introducing the first government-owned telephone system in North America in 1908. During his premiership, Manitoba extended its boundary and doubled its territory. Roblin was knighted in 1912.





## Tobias Crawford Norris (1861-1936)

**Term:** May 12, 1915 - August 8, 1922

**Party:** Liberal

Norris was variously a farmer, livery-stable owner, and an auctioneer. His government had the unenviable position of having to deal with wartime conditions and many post-war challenges including the Winnipeg General Strike (1919), which ultimately led in part to his government's defeat. Despite these issues, he initiated many reforms which had a lasting effect on the province, passing legislation extending the right to vote to women, establishing mother's allowances for those who needed financial support after the war, and legislating compulsory school attendance for ages 7 to 14, as well as many other educational reforms.



## John Bracken (1883-1969)

**Term:** August 8, 1922 - January 14, 1943

**Party:** U.F.M. (1922); Progs. (1927); Lib. Prog. (1932)

Bracken is the longest serving premier of Manitoba, perhaps in large part due to his particular brand of non-partisanship. He trained as an agriculturalist, and he was head of the Manitoba Agricultural College in Winnipeg. When the United Farmers of Manitoba were asked to form a government after the 1922 general election, they asked Bracken to become their leader, and Premier. He accepted, and subsequently won a seat in The Pas. His non-partisanship enabled him to work with opposition parties, often forming governing coalitions. He was premier during difficult economic times as the booming pre-war economy of the province never quite returned after the end of the First World War. The Great Depression put further strain on the province's finances. He was Premier when the federal government transferred control of natural resources to the province in 1930.



## Stuart Sinclair Garson (1898-1977)

**Term:** January 14, 1943 - November 14, 1948

**Party:** Liberal Progressive

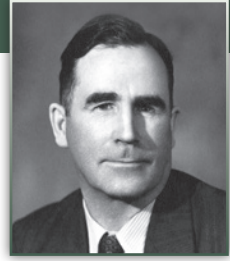
Trained as a lawyer, Garson was recognized as an excellent public speaker, easily coming to the forefront of debate in the legislative chamber. He quickly became an expert in federal-provincial relations and was involved in the establishment of new financial and fiscal arrangements between the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments. He made a substantial contribution to Manitoba's brief to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. His government began a program of rural highway construction and rapid rural electrification, the latter being noted as his greatest achievement. He returned to the practice of law after 30 years in public service.

## Douglas Lloyd Campbell (1895-1995)

**Term:** November 13, 1948 - June 30, 1958

**Party:** Liberal Progressive

Campbell, a farmer and an educator prior to entering politics, was only the second native-born Manitoban to serve as Premier. He is to date the longest serving politician in the province's history, holding a seat for a total of 46 years, 11 months, and 8 days. Known as a wit, Campbell had an ability to think on his feet. This earned him praise as a fine orator, and he was much in demand for speaking engagements. His government continued the rural electrification and highway building of his predecessor. His was a cautious government and he was able to balance the provincial finances. He established the first study in Canada of election boundaries creating the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission.

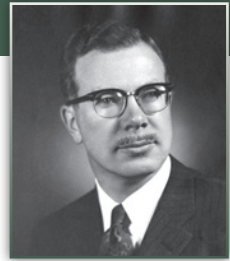


## Dufferin Roblin (1917-2010)

**Term:** June 30, 1958 - November 27, 1967

**Party:** Progressive Conservative

Born in Winnipeg in 1917, Dufferin "Duff" Roblin was the grandson of former premier Sir Rodmond Palen Roblin. His administration was one of the most active in the province's history, introducing a wide range of reforms that changed the government of the Province. He is best known for the creation of the Red River Floodway. Roblin was known to wear a kilt and play bagpipes in the deserted halls of the Legislative Building.



## Walter Weir (1929-1985)

**Term:** November 27, 1967 - July 15, 1969

**Party:** Progressive Conservative

Weir is the second youngest person to hold the office of Premier. He worked as a mortician, first in Saskatchewan, coming to Manitoba to open his own funeral home in 1953. Despite being an outspoken fiscal conservative and keeping government spending to a minimum, he was also a politician of consensus. He reportedly said his greatest achievement was his highways project, which saw 6400 km of municipal roads added to provincial system.





## Edward Richard Schreyer (1935- )

**Term:** July 19, 1969 - November 24, 1977

**Party:** New Democratic Party

Schreyer, at age 34, is the youngest premier in Manitoba's history. He oversaw a number of important events in Manitoba politics, including the amalgamation of the City of Winnipeg, the introduction of public auto insurance, the implementation of home care and pharmacare, and the reduction of medicare premiums, which he later eliminated. His government also enacted regulations requiring environmental impact assessments for major development projects. In 1979, Schreyer was the first Manitoban to become Governor General.

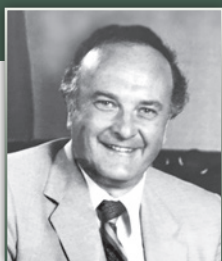


## Sterling Rufus Webster Lyon (1927-2010)

**Term:** November 24, 1977 - November 17, 1981

**Party:** Progressive Conservative

Born in Ontario, Lyon moved to Manitoba with his family at a young age. He was a lawyer and later a judge. During his term as Premier, he played a role in the 1982 patriation of Canada's Constitution, including the notwithstanding clause, and the development of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He continued his predecessor's enthusiasm for hydro-electric development. His politics reflected a passionate belief that the best government was the least government, and he fought against government deficits, becoming known for restraint in public spending. He was a hunter and avid conservationist.



## Howard Russell Pawley (1934-2015)

**Term:** November 30, 1981 - May 9, 1988

**Party:** New Democratic Party

Arriving in Manitoba in 1953, Pawley first became an educator and then a lawyer. Intensely interested in social justice and human rights, his leadership led to changes in Manitoba's Employment Standards Code ensuring fair pay and the inclusion of sexual orientation to Manitoba's Human Rights Code.

He reintroduced French language rights that had been abolished in 1890. His cabinet was distinguished by a record number of women. Pawley was one of the central figures behind the public automobile insurance system and his government launched the Limestone Generating Station.

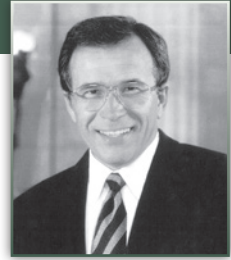


## Gary Albert Filmon (1942- )

**Term:** May 9, 1988 - October 5, 1999

**Party:** Progressive Conservative

Born in Winnipeg, Filmon initially trained to be an engineer. He entered public life in 1975 on the Winnipeg City council and in 1979 he was elected as MLA for River Heights. He served in the cabinet of Sterling Lyon. He formed a minority government in 1988 and 1990 and 1995. His administration made the improvement of the province's finances a priority. His reported most significant memories from 11 years in office center on the Meech Lake Accord (the unsuccessful attempt to amend Canada's constitution), the community spirit of the 1997 Red River Flood and the loss of the Winnipeg Jets in 1996. After his retirement from office, he has worked as a business consultant. His spouse, Janice Clare Filmon is currently the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba.



## Gary Albert Doer (1948- )

**Term:** October 5, 1999 - October 19, 2009

**Party:** New Democratic Party

Doer began his public life as a union leader, becoming president of the Manitoba Government Employee's Association in 1979. First elected in 1986, he served in the cabinet of Howard Pawley. His premiership saw investments in health care, education and infrastructure at a time of increasing government revenues. He oversaw election spending reforms and also introduced a reform in the Legislative Assembly. After declining to seek re-election in 2009, Doer was nominated as Canada's ambassador to the United States, a post he held until 2016. He now works as a business consultant.



## Gregory Francis Selinger (1951- )

**Term:** October 19, 2009 - May 3, 2016

**Party:** New Democratic Party

Selinger worked as an associate professor of social work at the University of Winnipeg before beginning his political career on Winnipeg City Council in 1989. In 1999 he was elected as MLA for the Winnipeg riding of St. Boniface and was subsequently appointed Minister of Finance. After Doer's resignation, Selinger became Premier after winning a leadership convention in October of 2009, and subsequently led his party to a majority in the 2011 general election, running on a platform to protect health-care and Manitoba Hydro. After his party's defeat in the 2016 election, he continued to sit as an MLA for St. Boniface until March 2018.





## Brian William Pallister (1954- )

**Term:** May 3, 2016 - present

**Party:** Progressive Conservative

Pallister is the 22<sup>nd</sup> and current Premier of Manitoba. After graduating from Brandon University, he taught high school and later became a financial consultant. He was first elected as an MLA in 1992 and three years later became Minister of Government Services. In 2000, he became MP for Portage-Lisgar and was re-elected in 2004 and 2006. In 2012 he became leader of the provincial Progressive Conservative party. He formed majority governments in 2016 and 2019 running on campaigns emphasizing economic growth, fiscal restraint and the removal of regulatory burdens.

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### Sources

List of premiers, with dates and party affiliation  
[https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/Resources/Provincial\\_Premiers](https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/Resources/Provincial_Premiers)

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