

= Herbert Greenfield =

Herbert W. Greenfield (November 25 , 1869 ? August 23 , 1949) was a Canadian politician who served as the fourth Premier of Alberta from 1921 until 1925 . Born in Winchester , Hampshire , in England , he immigrated to Canada in his late twenties , settling first in Ontario and then in Alberta , where he farmed . He soon became involved in the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) , a farmers ' lobby organization that was in the process of becoming a political party , and was elected as the organization 's vice president . Greenfield did not run in the 1921 provincial election , the first provincial general election in which the UFA fielded candidates , but when the UFA won a majority in the Legislature in that election he was chosen by the UFA caucus to serve as Premier .

Like most of the UFA caucus , Greenfield had no experience in government and he struggled in the position . He relied extensively on his Attorney General , John E. Brownlee , for counsel on policy and strategy . He was unable to control his caucus , which did not generally believe in party discipline , and his government almost lost several votes in the Legislature despite its majority . He was unable to effectively address the problems facing farmers (including drought and low grain prices) , bitter labour disputes in the coal industry , or the pronounced divisions in public opinion that had sprung up around prohibition (which his government ended) . Despite this , his time as Premier saw the elimination of the provincial deficit , substantial progress in negotiating the transfer of natural resource rights from the federal government , and the creation of the Alberta Wheat Pool . He also named Irene Parlby as the province 's first female cabinet minister .

By 1924 , many UFA Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) wanted to see Greenfield leave office , both because they were frustrated with his failings and because they thought it likely that a Greenfield @-@ led government would be defeated in the next election . Their first attempt to replace him failed when Brownlee , their intended replacement , refused to have anything to do with the plan , but a second attempt , in 1925 , was successful when Brownlee agreed to take office if Greenfield personally requested that he do so . Greenfield had not wanted the job in the first place , and agreed to resign in Brownlee 's favour .

After his retirement from politics , Greenfield represented Alberta in London , England for several years before returning to Canada to work in the oil and gas industry . He died in 1949 at the age of 79 .

= = Early life = =

Herbert W. Greenfield was born November 25 , 1869 , in Winchester , Hampshire , England , the son of John Greenfield (c . 1830 ? 1909) and Mary Leake (c . 1835 ? 1904) . He attended Wesleyan School in Dalston , but dropped out as a result of his father 's bankruptcy . He worked aboard a cattle boat in 1892 before emigrating to Canada in 1896 .

In Canada , he worked in the oil fields near Sarnia , Ontario , and as a farmer in Weston , Ontario . He married Elizabeth Harris on February 28 , 1900 . The couple had two sons , Franklin Harris Greenfield and Arnold Leake Greenfield . In 1904 , the family went west for economic reasons and homesteaded near Edmonton . He found work in a lumber mill and later turned to farming . During his first year in Alberta , a fire destroyed his home , and he and his wife spent the winter in an abandoned sod hut . In 1906 , they resettled to a large home four kilometers south of Westlock .

In 1922 , while Greenfield was Premier , Elizabeth died suddenly as a result of routine surgery . He remarried in 1926 , to Marjorie Greenwood Cormack , who brought two children of her own into the marriage .

= = Early political career = =

Greenfield entered public life on a local level soon after moving to his new farm . He was elected to the local school board , where he spent twelve years , including stints as chair , secretary , and treasurer . He also served as Vice President of the Alberta Educational Association , as President of the Westlock Agricultural Society , and as co @-@ founder and President of the Alberta Association

of Municipal Districts . Greenfield also was an officer of the province @-@ wide Association of Local Improvement Districts , which advocated for reforms such as a change from a ten @-@ hour to an eight @-@ hour work day , on the grounds that many Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) were having trouble competing with railways for labour . John E. Brownlee later said of Greenfield 's involvement in the ALID that it was there " that he was first initiated into the discussion of public subjects , and it became the training ground for his subsequent success . "

Provincially , Greenfield was originally a Liberal , but along with many other farmers , began to grow dissatisfied with the Liberal government 's treatment of farmers . He became involved with the United Farmers of Alberta , which prior to 1919 was a non @-@ partisan lobby group that eschewed direct involvement in the political process . He was elected to the organization 's executive in 1919 and chaired its mass conventions in 1920 and 1921 . He headed an extremely successful membership drive , Despite this involvement , he did not seek election to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in the 1921 election . When the UFA , which as part of its resistance to old @-@ style politics had contested the election without designating a leader , won 38 of 61 seats , it found itself needing to form a government without having decided who would head it . Greenfield meanwhile had been named interim Vice President of the organization after the death of Percival Baker .

The logical choice was UFA President Henry Wise Wood . However , Wood had little taste for the minutiae of government , preferring to remain at the head of what he saw as a broader political movement (saying he would " sooner be President of the UFA than the USA ") , and saw party lawyer Brownlee as the best choice . Brownlee , who , like Wood , had not contested the election , said he felt that the Premier must be a farmer for the aspirations of the UFA 's base to be fulfilled . George Hoadley , one of the two UFA members with previous legislative experience (Hoadley had been a sitting Conservative MLA prior to the election ; UFA MLA Alex Moore had been elected in a by @-@ election a few months before the general election) , was considered , but since his previous experience had been as a Conservative ? one of the old line parties so disdained by the UFA ? he was deemed unacceptable . There was even some speculation that incumbent Liberal Premier Charles Stewart , who had become a member of the UFA before it entered politics directly , would stay on as Premier , but he immediately announced that he would serve only until the UFA selected a leader . A meeting of the UFA caucus in Calgary selected Greenfield , and he took office as Premier on August 13 , 1921 .

= = Premier = =

Greenfield took office as Premier amid great expectations : the Lethbridge Herald called him " the only new Moses that can bridge the Red Sea " , while the Calgary Herald noted that " No government ever went into office in this country carrying better wishes for its success " . He also took office without a seat in the legislature . This latter circumstance was addressed through the voluntary resignation of Donald MacBeth Kennedy , who had won the riding of Peace River for the UFA . Greenfield won the seat by acclamation December 9 , 1921 .

= = = Legislature and cabinet = = =

Once in the legislature , however , Greenfield faltered in his leadership of his caucus . The UFA MLAs came from a determinedly independent and non @-@ partisan background and proved nearly impossible to whip . When Greenfield selected his cabinet and was about to announce it to his caucus for their vetting , he was interrupted by Lorne Proudfoot who asked whether , in addition to the rumoured inclusion of Labour members , the cabinet would include any of the fourteen Liberal MLAs . Proudfoot argued that to exclude them would be to " start out much after the matter of the old parties " . Greenfield had not intended this , and suggested that no Liberals would likely be amenable to it . Irene Parlby , the caucus 's only woman (who Greenfield would shortly name as Alberta 's first female cabinet minister) agreed , and suggested that the UFA 's ideal of securing representation for all economic groups in society did not apply to the Liberals , who were not an economic group and were not democratically organized in any event . Proudfoot 's proposal was

defeated sixteen votes to fourteen . Greenfield went on to name the seven member cabinet he had intended , including Labour MLA Alex Ross as Minister of Public Works , Parlby as Minister Without Portfolio , and Greenfield himself as Provincial Treasurer .

Once the legislature convened in 1922 , the inexperience of the Premier and his caucus was further laid bare . Greenfield , devastated by the sudden death of his wife , turned in a poor performance . Faced with an aggressive attack by new Liberal leader John R. Boyle , Greenfield relied heavily on Attorney General John Brownlee , who sat next to him in the Legislature , to provide the defense . The session got off to an inauspicious start : Greenfield nominated the government 's preferred candidate for speaker , Oran McPherson , only to have one of his backbenchers , Alex Moore , nominate Independent Conservative John Smith Stewart ; Stewart spared the government embarrassment by declining the nomination .

Moore , along with fellow UFA backbencher John Russell Love , caused the government further trouble with a resolution aiming to limit the circumstances under which the government would have to resign . By convention of the Westminster system , a government was required to resign on the defeat of any piece of its legislation that was critical to its program . Moore and Love objected to the manner in which this provision could be expected to pressure UFA MLAs to back government legislation that they might otherwise be inclined to oppose , and introduced a resolution in the Legislature that called for a policy by which the government would resign only upon passage of an explicit motion of no confidence . The resolution caught the attention of politicians across Canada , including future Prime Minister R. B. Bennett , who warned that it was unconstitutional . Brownlee moved an amendment that reduced the resolution to a vague statement of principle , which passed and was not heard of again .

UFA members also objected to the concept of a caucus , in which MLAs from one party debate policy behind closed doors . They believed that the role of an MLA was to represent the views of his or her constituents directly on the floor of the Legislature . This belief too proved problematic to the government . The Dairyman 's Act had been adopted by the Liberal government to provide low @-@ interest loans to dairy farmers . It was unpopular among farmers , and Greenfield 's government aimed to amend it . Many UFA backbenchers , however , wanted to see it repealed all together , but because of their objection to caucus discussions Greenfield was not aware of this by the time his amendments came to the floor of the legislature . They passed through the house with little debate , until just after third reading , when one of the backbenchers rose to ask if the time had come to speak against the bill . Brownlee suggested that , in view of the legislators ' inexperience with parliamentary procedure , the legislature consider the motion to adopt the bill on third reading as not yet having passed , that debate might ensue . This suggestion adopted , several UFA members attacked the Act . They were joined in this by the Liberals , despite the fact that it was a Liberal act that had been co @-@ authored by Boyle . In the end , the bill passed only by virtue of the support of the four Labour members .

More trouble with the legislature struck Greenfield in August 1922 , during a special session called for the purpose of passing enabling legislation for a provincial wheat board . The session lasted only a week , and on August 31 the only item of business that remained was the members ' pay for the session . The government was proposing \$ 100 per member , but some MLAs complained that this was insufficient in light of the long travel times between Edmonton and their constituencies . Greenfield , lacking the counsel of the vacationing Brownlee and wanting to avoid trouble , proposed upping the amount to \$ 200 . Independent MLA Robert Pearson proposed increasing it once again , to \$ 250 , to match what their counterparts in Saskatchewan had received . This suggestion was carried . While Greenfield had hardly been the driving force behind the increases , he had facilitated them and had been blind to the appearance of paying MLAs more for six afternoons of work than some farmers were able to earn in a year . The grassroots of his own party condemned the move , all the more so when the wheat board that had been the purpose of the special session failed to come to fruition .

= = = Agriculture = = =

Greenfield became Premier at a time of agricultural depression , especially in the province 's south . The region , which was responsible for approximately 75 % of Alberta 's wheat production , was in the midst of its fifth consecutive year of drought , and the farmers who had been responsible for putting the UFA into office were now demanding action . Initially , the government offered direct financial assistance , with \$ 5 million provided in seed and grain relief by the end of 1922 . However , this effort was driving the province close to bankruptcy , and in 1923 Greenfield announced an end to the handouts (the bill authorizing the last of these was a source of chagrin for MLAs from all parties , both because it marked the end of direct assistance for farmers and because the last of the assistance was itself so expensive) . Farmers and political representatives from the affected areas criticized the government bitterly , referencing Greenfield 's earlier pledge that " if the south country should fall , then we are prepared to fall with it " .

The government did not give up on addressing the problem when it ended subsidies . It had previously commissioned a number of studies on the agricultural situation and related factors , and converted some of the results of these studies into legislation . The Debt Adjustment Act of 1923 was designed to adjust farmers ' debts to a level that they could actually pay , thus allowing them to carry on while still ensuring that creditors received as much as was feasible . In the words of University of Calgary professor David C. Jones , the bill offered " solace , but no real satisfaction " . According to Jones , Greenfield 's attempts to rescue southern Alberta from agricultural calamity were probably doomed to failure . Even so , Greenfield had called the situation his top priority , and his failure to bring it to a successful resolution cost him politically .

Another preoccupation of the UFA and the Greenfield government was the marketing of wheat . From 1919 to 1920 there had been a federally established wheat pool to stabilize wheat prices . When it was disbanded , wheat prices tumbled by two @-@ thirds , prompting many farmers to call for its re @-@ introduction . At the call of the UFA and farmers ' organizations in other provinces , the federal government (whose razor @-@ thin majority in the House of Commons was often widened by the support of farmer @-@ friendly Progressive members) created a new , mandatory agency , pending the appointment by the provincial governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan of a board of directors for the agency . This they proved unable to do . Greenfield 's government ultimately admitted defeat and gave up on re @-@ establishing the pool , opting instead to guarantee loans to farmer @-@ run cooperative pools . With government assistance , the Alberta Wheat Pool came into existence in time for the 1923 harvest .

= = = Labour unrest = = =

During Greenfield 's premiership , Alberta 's major non @-@ agricultural industry was coal mining , and the industry was not prospering . Production was more than 50 % greater than demand , and fewer than half of the province 's mines were profitable . The industry as a whole was earning a profit of less than one cent per ton of coal . Miners ' wages had more than doubled (in nominal terms) between 1909 and 1920 but had barely held their own against the wartime inflation . In the 1920s mine owners began to roll them back . Besides the low wages , miners were unsatisfied with working conditions in an industry that saw more than 3 @,@ 300 workplace accidents per year . The results had been labour militancy and violence . A general strike in the industry in 1920 had seen strikers assault strikebreakers , throw them off their bicycles , and throw rocks through the windows of buses . Police were used to aid the strikebreakers and had been sometimes attacked as well . One constable was partially paralyzed from the beating he received . Provincial police commissioner W.C. Bryan was warned against inspecting one strike site in a note reading " You spoilt the strike , and if you go ... you will be killed . " He went anyway , and was greeted by an ambush in which three bullets were fired into his car , missing him .

The situation was still unsettled after Greenfield became premier in autumn 1921 . Greenfield was at a loss as to how to respond to this crisis , complaining that both employees and employers were the most difficult people in the province to deal with and that they showed " very little spirit of compromise " . He tried to be balanced in his approach to this labour @-@ employer friction but was not aided by his own Minister of Public Works , Labour MLA Alex Ross , who took the side of the

miners and objected to the government 's provision of police escorts for strikebreakers . Though the problems originated before Greenfield took office , many Albertans felt that a stronger leader might have been more successful than Greenfield in achieving industrial peace .

= = = Prohibition = = =

Prohibition had been introduced in Alberta following a 1916 referendum , during which the UFA had advocated for the prohibitionist side . The Liberal version of prohibition was weak , and Greenfield came into office intending to strengthen the legislation . Even by 1920 , however , it was becoming apparent that the policy was not working (or , as the Medicine Hat News noted , " Prohibition is now working smoothly . The only thing left is to stop the sale of liquor ! ") . Greenfield 's own MLAs began to grumble about the policy ? Archibald Matheson expressed in 1923 the view that " This government has acted as philosopher , guide , and God to the people long enough . " Public opinion , too , began to shift against the policy , more rapidly after 1922 when three police officers were killed in the line of duty by bootleggers . The last and most dramatic of these was the murder of Steve Lawson in front of the barracks where he and his family lived , by Emil " Pic " Picariello and Florence Lassandra . Public opinion ran high both for and against the pair , and their 1923 hangings only served to unite both factions against prohibition .

An autumn 1923 referendum saw Albertans vote decisively for the repeal of prohibition , despite the UFA 's continuing support for the policy . In response , the government resolved to repeal the Prohibition Act and replaced it with government @-@ controlled liquor sales . Greenfield attempted to make the move more palatable to prohibitionists by proposing that liquor profits be shared with impoverished municipalities . However , the scheme proved unworkable , and the re @-@ legalization went ahead without any such profit @-@ sharing . In 1924 , the government introduced legislation to replace prohibition with the regulation of liquor sales by the government , and subjected it to a free vote . While the legislation passed , the new measures were divisive , pitting community leaders who wanted their towns to remain " dry " against those who wanted to apply for liquor licences , and different would @-@ be saloon @-@ keepers against one another in competing for the government @-@ issued licences .

= = = Provincial finances = = =

At the outset of his premiership , Greenfield served as Provincial Treasurer as well as Premier . In both of these capacities , he was faced with a provincial deficit , which reached an accumulated total of \$ 4 million between his taking office and the end of the 1922 fiscal year . One reason for this was the government 's involvement in railways : it had found itself the owner of four uncompleted money @-@ losing railway lines after the private syndicates set up to run them collapsed due to construction cost overruns . By 1922 , the government had lost a total of \$ 6 @.@ 7 million on the endeavor , with an additional \$ 5 million expected to follow that year ? 37 % of the estimated 1922 provincial budget . Greenfield wanted to sell the lines to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) , a course of action that was endorsed by Brownlee , but many farmers despised the CPR and most UFA MLAs preferred to keep the lines government @-@ operated . Moreover , Greenfield 's own Minister of Railways , Vernor Smith , was among this faction . This problem plagued Greenfield for his entire term as Premier , and it was not until Brownlee succeeded him that a resolution came in the form of a \$ 25 million sale to the major lines .

Absent a solution to the railway problem , the government continued its deficits . Brownlee advocated deep cuts in spending to bring them under control , and , when Greenfield demurred , began to cut staff in his own department . He found an ally in Richard Gavin Reid in 1923 when Greenfield , exhausted by his responsibilities , appointed the latter to replace him as Provincial Treasurer . Reid impressed on the cabinet the need for drastic economy in all departments and , by 1925 (the last year of Greenfield 's Premiership) , the government at last showed a surplus , a state that would persist until the beginning of the Great Depression , with the exception of a small deficit in 1927 .

= = = Natural resources = = =

At the time that Alberta was made a province in 1905 , the federal government retained control of its natural resources (though it provided financial compensation to the new provincial government for this) , a fact that set it apart from the older provinces . By 1925 , negotiations to alter this state of affairs had been ongoing for more than a decade , and the two levels of government had an agreement in principle . Despite this , Alberta Liberal leader John R. Boyle sent a letter to his fellow Liberal , Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King , pleading with him to delay any agreement until after the expected 1925 election so that the UFA could not claim success . Greenfield and Brownlee attended a series of meetings with federal representatives beginning May 19 in Ottawa ; these continued until June 7 , whereupon Brownlee returned home . Greenfield offered to stay , but on June 11 King told him that the cabinet would need the summer to consider the question and that no agreement would be immediately forthcoming . This decision did not help the Alberta Liberals , who went on to lose the next election soundly , and did not prevent the transfer of resource rights , which took place in 1929 , but was enough to rob Greenfield of his glory ; he left office the next year .

= = = Provincial banking = = =

It was the longstanding view of a segment of the UFA that the Alberta government should enter the banking business directly by obtaining a bank charter from the federal government (which has responsibility for banking under the Canadian constitution) . In fact , UFA President William John Tregillus had included the idea in a speech he gave on his goals for the organization in 1913 . At the UFA convention in 1923 , a proponent of a provincial banking , George Bevington , made a passionate speech in favour of this idea , bringing most of the membership around to his side . The convention passed a resolution in favour of the idea (along with one calling on the provincial treasury to establish a loan department , an idea that came to fruition fifteen years later with the creation of Alberta Treasury Branches) , against the stiff opposition of Attorney @-@ General Brownlee . Brownlee 's opposition stemmed in part from investigations that Greenfield 's government had already undertaken into the subject : information was gathered from similar experiments in New Zealand and New South Wales , leading to the conclusion that , while there would be some benefit to a provincially owned bank , Alberta " had neither the economic nor constitutional base to consider such a scheme " . This conclusion was affirmed by University of Alberta professor D. A. MacGibbon in a government @-@ commissioned study .

At the 1924 UFA convention , Bevington and his followers moved a resolution calling for immediate action on the previous year 's banking resolution . Against them stood Greenfield 's government , UFA president Henry Wise Wood (whom Bevington was challenging for re @-@ election) , and radical Labour Member of Parliament William Irvine . Thanks to Irvine 's surprising intervention on the side of the conservatives , the resolution was soundly defeated .

= = = Departure from politics = = =

Greenfield 's political stock fell during the course of his time as Premier . His arrival was heralded with great expectations of economic and political reform . After the 1921 federal election , Progressive Party of Canada leader Thomas Crerar was considering a merger of his party with the Liberal Party of Canada and asked Greenfield to join him as Alberta 's representative in the federal cabinet upon completion of this merger . This initially lofty stature was reduced by incident after incident : his reliance on Brownlee in the legislature and elsewhere , his failure to deliver on the promised economic relief , and his alienation of the radical wing of his own party . By 1924 , many of Greenfield 's own backbenchers had had enough and hatched a plan to force Greenfield 's resignation and replace him with Brownlee , who was perceived as more likely to lead the UFA to victory in the impending election . This group ? which included George Johnston , George

MacLachlan , William Shield , Donald Cameron , Oran McPherson , and Austin Claypool ? contacted Brownlee to alert him to their intentions and were taken aback when the Attorney @-@ General told them that if Greenfield resigned , so would he .

The following year , the group approached Greenfield directly to ask for his resignation . He initially agreed , but then vacillated long enough for Brownlee to once again pledge his loyalty to the Premier . This time , Henry Wise Wood intervened to ask Brownlee to reconsider , which he agreed to do only if Greenfield himself made the request . The Premier immediately did so , saying that he had never wanted the job in the first place . On November 23 , Greenfield resigned as Premier of Alberta , tearfully telling the media that he was " through with politics " .

The media judged the rebellion harshly . The Calgary Herald mocked the rebels as a " group of farmer politicians who have always claimed to be purer than those of other parties " and yet " [threw] their leader to the wolves in the hope that they may save their own skins " . It concluded : " Greenfield was not a good political captain , but he had a poor set of officers and a mutinous crew . "

= = Later life = =

In 1927 , Greenfield was appointed Alberta 's Agent General in London , England . The appointment was controversial and was perceived as a patronage reward even by some UFA backbenchers . Liberals also accused the government of benefiting the Hudson 's Bay Company , which owned the London office that the government leased , more than Alberta . Even so , Greenfield 's performance in the position was well regarded : his personality was better @-@ suited for his duties there , which included the promotion of Alberta 's burgeoning oil and gas industry , attracting English immigration to Alberta , and acting as a guide for Albertans visiting London . It was in this last capacity that he welcomed Brownlee to London , where the two met together with British immigration and financial officials .

In 1931 , the Agent General 's office closed , and Greenfield returned to Alberta , settling in Calgary . There he entered the oil and gas business , serving as a director (and later vice president) of Calmont Oils , president of the Oil and Gas Association , president of the Alberta Petroleum Association , and director of Home Oil . He also served as managing director of the British Dominion Land Settlement Corporation and as president of the Calgary Board of Trade . He spent the rest of his life in the city , maintaining an office in the General Trusts Building .

Greenfield died at 8 : 25 in the morning of August 23 , 1949 . His funeral took place at Grace Presbyterian Church and he is buried in Union Cemetery , both of which are in Calgary . In 1968 , Greenfield School , an elementary school in Edmonton , was named in his honour .