

= Social Credit Board =

The Social Credit Board was a committee in Alberta , Canada from 1937 until 1948 . Composed of Social Credit backbenchers in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta , it was created in the aftermath of the 1937 Social Credit backbenchers ' revolt . Its mandate was to oversee the implementation of social credit in Alberta . To this end , it secured the services of L. Dennis Byrne and George Powell , two lieutenants of social credit 's British founder , C. H. Douglas .

After requiring all Social Credit Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to sign loyalty oaths to it , the Social Credit Board proceeded to recommend radical legislation regulating banking , taxing banks , and restricting freedom of the press and access to courts . Most of this legislation was either disallowed by the federal government or ruled ultra vires (beyond the powers of) the province by the Supreme Court of Canada ; these defeats and the advent of World War II made the Social Credit Board increasingly irrelevant . In its later years it became highly anti @-@ Semitic , and it was dissolved by the government of Ernest Manning in 1948 .

= = Beginnings = =

William Aberhart 's Social Credit League won the 1935 Alberta general election on a platform of ending the Great Depression by implementing social credit , a new economic theory that posited that poverty could be ended by increasing citizens ' purchasing power . By 1937 , many Social Credit backbenchers in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta were becoming frustrated with the government 's lack of progress . This frustration became the 1937 Social Credit backbenchers ' revolt . As a condition of regaining the rebels ' support , Aberhart agreed to create the Social Credit Board , to be composed of five Social Credit MLAs and responsible for the implementation of social credit in Alberta . The chair of the Social Credit Board was Glenville MacLachlan ; he and three other members had been insurgents during the revolt , while the fifth member , Floyd Baker , had remained loyal to Aberhart .

The Social Credit Board was tasked with the appointment of a Social Credit commission , composed of experts on social credit , to advise on the implementation of social credit in Alberta . Most Social Crediters hoped that C. H. Douglas , the British founder of the social credit movement , would agree to head this commission . Douglas refused MacLachlan 's entreaties to do so , but sent two representatives , George Frederick Powell and L. Dennis Byrne , in his stead . One of Powell 's first acts was to demand that all Social Credit MLAs sign an oath of loyalty to the Social Credit Board , which almost all did .

= = Proposals , disallowance , and judicial defeat (1937 ? 1938) = =

The first round of legislation recommended by the commission and subsequently passed by the legislature included the Credit of Alberta Regulation Act , which required every bank and all their employees to be licensed by the provincial government and to be overseen by a Social Credit Board @-@ appointed directorate , the Bank Employees Civil Rights Act , which prohibited unlicensed banks and their employees from initiating legal proceedings , and amendments to the Judicature Act prohibiting court actions alleging that any of Alberta 's legislation was unconstitutional . Lieutenant @-@ Governor of Alberta John Campbell Bowen , asked to give royal assent to these bills , asked Attorney @-@ General John Hugill if he considered them to be valid under the Canadian constitution . Hugill responded in the negative and , after being asked to do so by Aberhart , resigned . Aberhart appointed himself Attorney @-@ General and told Bowen that it was his opinion that the laws were constitutional . Bowen provided royal assent , but all three acts were subsequently disallowed by the federal government .

In 1937 's Bankers ' Toadies incident , Powell (along with Social Credit whip Joe Unwin) was convicted of criminal libel , sentenced to six months hard labour , and deported to the United Kingdom . The charges stemmed from a pamphlet listing nine men as " bankers ' toadies " and advocating their " extermination " .

The Social Credit Board 's second round of bills included a rewritten version of the Credit of Alberta Regulation Act . The previous version had been disallowed partly on the basis that , under the British North America Act , 1867 , banking was a responsibility of the federal government , and the government of Alberta therefore lacked the authority to regulate it . In an attempt to address this concern , the new version substituted the words " credit institutions " for " banks " . The Social Credit Board 's proposals also included the Bank Taxation Act , which imposed extremely high taxes on banks operating in Alberta , and the Accurate News and Information Act , which severely restricted freedom of the press . All of these bills were passed by the legislature . Bowen , not wishing to have more laws to which he had assented disallowed , reserved assent from all three until the Supreme Court of Canada could comment on their constitutional validity . It did so in 1938 's Reference re Alberta Statutes , which found all three to be unconstitutional . The Social Credit Board 's major initiatives had failed .

= = Decline and dissolution (1939 ? 1948) = =

World War II further reduced the Social Credit Board 's importance , as implementation of social credit took a backseat to the war effort . Instead of proposing new policy , the board devoted itself to propaganda ; its members spoke across the province about social credit , and it distributed vast numbers of pamphlets and leaflets (272 @, @ 900 in 1939) . When Aberhart died in 1943 , he was replaced by Ernest Manning , who was by this time considerably less open to radical social credit proposals than Aberhart had been . He soon transferred many of the Social Credit Board 's responsibilities to the new department of Economic Affairs , of which L. D. Byrne was the deputy minister .

Byrne , the remaining Douglas lieutenant after Powell 's deportation , shared both Douglas 's economic theories and his antisemitism . Under his influence , the Social Credit Board began to propagate anti @-@ Jewish conspiracy theories , including those espoused by the Russian forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion . Its 1943 report alleged " a plot , world @-@ wide in scope , deliberately engineered by a small number of ruthless international financiers " , most of whom were Jewish . Its 1947 report repeated these allegations , and also proposed a new voting system in which voters would state their choices publicly , and be taxed only for those government programs they supported during the election . Political parties were to be abolished in favour of " leagues of electors " , and all farmland was to be appropriated by the government . Manning , benignly neglectful of the Social Credit Board to this point , took this as " a direct challenge to his leadership , a shot across the bow " . He quickly introduced a resolution in the legislature to " condemn , repudiate , and completely dissociate " the legislature from " any statements or publications which are incompatible with the established British ideals of democratic freedom , or which endorse , excuse , or incite anti @-@ Semitism or racial or religious intolerance in any form " . In November 1947 he announced that the Social Credit Board would cease to exist effective March 1948 , and in February 1948 he asked for and received Byrne 's resignation as deputy minister of Economic Affairs .

Despite its beginnings as a vehicle of intended economic revolution , the board achieved nothing of lasting importance . Once its early efforts were foiled by the federal government and the courts , it ceased to have much influence . By 1948 , the dire conditions that had sparked Albertans ' enthusiasm for radical economic reform had vanished , and with it their interest in social credit . While the Social Crediters remained in government until 1971 , the revolutionary spirit of the 1930s was all but forgotten : as Athabasca University historian Alvin Finkel notes , post @-@ war Social Credit " had been transformed from a mass , eclectic movement for social reform led by monetary reformers to a relatively small government party that enjoyed considerable support from various sectors of the Alberta population for its judicious combination of right @-@ wing rhetoric and social service and road @-@ building programs . " The Social Credit Board , with its reform mandate and its direct pipeline to Douglas , was no longer needed .