



The Story of Mouseland

(As told by Tommy Douglas in 1944)

It's the story of a place called Mouseland. Mouseland was a place where all the little mice lived and played, were born and died. And they lived much the same as you and I do.

They even had a Parliament. And every four years they had an election. Used to walk to the polls and cast their ballots. Some of them even got a ride to the polls. And got a ride for the next four years afterwards too. Just like you and me. And every time on election day all the little mice used to go to the ballot box and they used to elect a government. A government made up of big, fat, black cats.

Now if you think it strange that mice should elect a government made up of cats, you just look at the history of Canada for last 90 years and maybe you'll see that they weren't any stupider than we are.

Now I'm not saying anything against the cats. They were nice fellows. They conducted their government with dignity. They passed good laws--that is, laws that were good for cats. But the laws that were good for cats weren't very good for mice. One of the laws said that mouseholes had to be big enough so a cat could get his paw in. Another law said that mice could only travel at certain speeds--so that a cat could get his breakfast without too much effort.

All the laws were good laws. For cats. But, oh, they were hard on the mice. And life was getting harder and harder. And when the mice couldn't put up with it any more, they decided something had to be done about it. So they went en masse to the polls. They voted the black cats out. They put in the white cats.

Now the white cats had put up a terrific campaign. They said: "All that Mouseland needs is more vision." They said: "The trouble with Mouseland is those round mouseholes we got. If you put us in we'll establish square mouseholes." And they did. And the square mouseholes were twice as big as the round mouseholes, and now the cat could get both his paws in. And life

was tougher than ever. And when they couldn't take that anymore, they voted the white cats out and put the black ones in again. Then they went back to the white cats. Then to the black cats. They even tried half black cats and half white cats. And they called that coalition. They even got one government made up of cats with spots on them: they were cats that tried to make a noise like a mouse but ate like a cat.

You see, my friends, the trouble wasn't with the colour of the cat. The trouble was that they were cats. And because they were cats, they naturally looked after cats instead of mice.

Presently there came along one little mouse who had an idea. My friends, watch out for the little fellow with an idea. And he said to the other mice, "Look fellows, why do we keep on electing a government made up of cats? Why don't we elect a government made up of mice?" "Oh," they said, "he's a Bolshevik. Lock him up!"

So they put him in jail.

But I Want To Remind You:

That You Can Lock Up A Mouse Or A Man
But You Can't Lock Up An **IDEA!**

Tommy Douglas (1904 – 1986)

Tommy Douglas was one of Canada's best known New Democrats. He was a man of many talents and, being involved in politics since 1936, he is renowned for various reasons. The "Mouseland" story is a small sample of the wit and humor many people knew him for.

Some people saw Tommy Douglas as a true democratic socialist, someone who placed human rights and needs above the mere pursuit of profits and power. Such principles should be implemented at the wish of the majority of the people. A social minded government would plan the economy of the country to allow all people to share in the country's wealth and have equal access to such basic needs as health and education.

Others saw Tommy as a great politician whose natural speaking, storytelling and debating abilities helped bring social change to the country. Tommy was first elected to the House of Commons in Ottawa in 1936. He later switched to provincial politics and it was during his years as Premier of Saskatchewan that Medicare was first introduced to North America. Prior to Medicare, health care services were only available to those who could pay the price.

When the C.C.F. (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) was renamed the New Democratic Party in 1961, Tommy Douglas was chosen as the Leader of the New Party until he resigned in 1971. Tommy Douglas relates his message of social democracy in such a fashion that any audience can understand even the most complicated issue and be well entertained at the same time. To social minded people everywhere, Tommy Douglas remains a constant source of inspiration.