

Agnes Macphail

V2.5



1954. **F**IRST woman to be a member of the Canadian Parliament, Agnes Campbell Macphail, 63-year-old veteran of Ontario politics, died in Toronto.

The death of Miss Macphail ended an era in provincial and Dominion politics. For years she was the only woman in the Federal House and later in the Ontario Legislature. She sat as a member for the now-defunct United Farmers of Ontario and later for the CCF.

Except for two years after 1945, when she was ill and the years between 1940 and 1943, the country school teacher was never out of politics after 1921, when she was elected to the House of Commons as the UFO member for Grey East.

Miss Macphail sat for 19 years in the House of Commons, always as a member of the Opposition.

It was as a teacher in south east Grey that Agnes Macphail began to attend UFO meetings. She so impressed the party that she was chosen its candidate for the 1921 elections and conducted her campaign by touring the riding in an old car which regularly broke down.

She was once offered a seat in the Senate but refused it, with the comment that the Senate, as constituted "is to me a huge joke."

Between 1921 and 1948 she won seven elections and lost three. She was elected to the Ontario legislature in 1943 for a term that lasted until 1945. In 1948 she again campaigned and won the York East seat for the CCF in the Ontario provincial election, again as the only woman in the Legislature.