



this government will govern over the next year and beyond. These principles are:

Fiscal responsibility, which has become the basis of Albertans' confidence in the economy;

Innovation, which means making effective change that benefits the province;

Equity, which includes fairness for all citizens and respect for diversity of culture, age, gender and other characteristics; and

Balance, especially balance between revenues and expenditures, saving and spending, and development and sustainability.

## LECTURE

### THE MYTH OF THE POPULAR WILL

From "From Riel to Reform: Understanding Western Canada," by Professor Tom Flanagan, the Seagram Lecture presented on October 26, 1999, in Montreal. Dr. Flanagan was the Seagram Visiting Chair in Canadian Studies, 1999-2000, at the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and is a professor of political science at the University of Calgary. He worked as an adviser to Preston Manning and the Reform Party from 1991 to 1993, but was fired for giving too much advice. The entire paper is at [www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/misc/flanagan.htm](http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/misc/flanagan.htm).

The most interesting aspect of politics in Western Canada is its tendency to generate new political parties. This has been going on for over a century and shows no signs of stopping.... What can one make of this except to say that, while western voters may swing either left or right, they like to support parties rooted in their own region?

Without claiming to be complete, Table 1 lists some of the most important parties founded in Western Canada. Several, such as the CCF, Social Credit and Reform, have also operated outside the West; but all were founded in

the West and had their main base of support in that region. The parties are designated F, P, or F+P, depending on whether they were purely federal, purely provincial, or operated at both levels. Some of the dates may be debatable because the founding of a political party is not always a clear-cut event. The list would be considerably longer if it included the instances in which a Liberal or Conservative party was reborn after a long period of dormancy in one province or another.

#### New Political Parties Founded in Western Canada

- 1905 Provincial Rights Party P
- 1916 Non-Partisan League P
- 1919 Progressives (incl. United Farmers' parties) F+P
- 1932 Co-operative Commonwealth Federation F+P
- 1935 Social Credit F+P
- 1952 Social Credit Party of British Columbia P
- 1980 Western Canada Concept F+P
- 1980 Western Canada Federation F+P
- 1983 Confederation of Regions F+P
- 1987 Reform Party of Canada F
- 1989 Reform Party of British Columbia P
- 1992 National Party F
- 1997 Saskatchewan Party P

Not surprisingly, Quebec, the other region of Canada in which many voters are fundamentally dissatisfied with the terms of Confederation, has demonstrated a similar proclivity for creating new political parties....

The parallelism between Quebec and the West is nicely illustrated by the fact that in 1993 a new party from Quebec—the Bloc Québécois—was elected the Official Opposition in the House of Commons and was then replaced in that role in 1997 by a new party from the West—the Reform Party of Canada. Meanwhile, the Liberals continue to govern through their overwhelming domination of Ontario. The federal politics of the 1990s are an exaggerated version of a tableau that has often

reappeared in modern Canadian history, in which political forces based in Ontario fight off challenges arising from Quebec and/or the West. Attempts to bring Quebec and the West into coalition with each other met with only infrequent and short-lived success under Robert Borden (1911-17), John Diefenbaker (1958-62), and Brian Mulroney (1984-93).

The repeated emergence of new parties in the West is the most obvious manifestation of the special character of politics in that region of Canada. Historians and political scientists have identified three major features of western politics that seem to perpetuate themselves across the generations in the various new parties as they arise. I would describe these three characteristics as suspicion of external control, rejection of Canada's federal parliamentary system, and a thirst for fundamental solutions. It would take me too far afield to make the case today, but I believe that similar characteristics tend to appear in Quebec's unique political parties, except that in Quebec, nationalism plays the role that populism plays in western Canada....

Populism is much more than a candidate wearing denim shirts to convince gullible voters he's a regular guy. Populism is a distinctive style of politics which holds that political supremacy ought to rest in the common people, whose interests and desires are fairly homogeneous; which craves direct links between people and government and is suspicious of intermediate institutions such as interest groups, political parties and elected assemblies; and which tends to see the cause of misgovernment as rule by elites or special interests that have lost contact with the common people. Underlying all these characteristics is the myth of the popular will, and the belief that politics should consist of discovering that will and putting it into effect.

Populism has run like a red thread through Western Canadian political movements since the early years of this century. It reached its highest development in Henry Wise Wood's theory of group government, which the United Farmers of Alberta acknowledged in principle but never put fully into practice. Ideally, for Wood, parties were supposed to represent functional groups in the society—farmers, labour, merchants, employers—and all parties with members in the legislature would participate in the cabinet. The legislature would be a congress of delegates who could work in harmonious co-operation because there were no fundamental conflicts among the interests they represented. This would truly be a government of the whole people, not just a government of the majority enforced by party discipline and propped up by patronage and corruption.

Wood's theory of group government was never fully accepted, even in Alberta; but more conventional populist ideas were espoused by all the farmers' parties—the enfranchisement of women, so that the whole people

could be politically active; direct democracy in the form of referendum and initiative, so that the people could make governmental decisions for themselves; recall, so the people could quickly replace politicians who did not do their bidding; proportional representation, so that all interests could receive adequate expression in the elected legislature; reduction in party discipline to break the power of "machine" politics; election of Senators, so that all lawmakers would be dependent upon the popular will; and reform of electoral finance to reduce the "money power" of the "special interests."

All of these ideas—some in their original form, some in slightly modernized guise—are recognizable in the Reform Party's platform.

## SPEECH

### TRUDEAU'S STAND FOR UNITY

Pierre Elliot Trudeau (1919-2000) co-founded *Cité Libre* in the 1950s. The magazine was an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas, under the guiding principle that freedom and diversity of opinion are the foundations of an open and democratic society. On October 1, 1992, writers, readers and friends of *Cité Libre* gathered at Maison Egg Roll to hear Trudeau speak about the Charlottetown Accord. The nation was stunned by his arguments. This is an excerpt of his speech, translated by George Tombs and published by Robert Davies Publishing, 1992.

[Whichever way] you vote, the YES or the NO is very important: so important that you cannot simply base the word you choose on emotions, or on anxiety, fear or impatience. We will have to use some reason, some analysis. Because it is no small matter to know whether we are going to live in a society in which personal rights, individual rights, take precedence over collective rights. It is no minor question of secondary importance to know whether we are going to live in a society in which all citizens are equal before the law and before the State itself. And it is no trivial matter to determine if there will be a spirit of brotherhood and of sharing in the society we are going to live in.

The choice we are going to make in the referendum, the choice of which society we want, has an impact on these three questions. And to know what choice to make, we have to look at the texts. I am not trying to say that those people who give preference to a collective society and collective rights over individual rights, do not have the right to state such a preference. I am saying to them that it is not just an emotional decision they are called on to make. We have to look at history—above all we have to look at contemporary history, the history of yesterday and today.

When collective rights take precedence over individual freedoms—as we see in countries where ideology shapes