

SASKATCHEWAN POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE GRANT DEVINE ERA

BY BARRY COOPER
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... 5

Introduction 6

Political Culture..... 7

1944 9

1982 16

Legacy..... 19

Conclusions 21

Endnotes 22

Bibliography..... 27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper looks at the 1982 Saskatchewan provincial election, which brought Grant Devine to power, as a “critical election” in the sense that it had long-term consequences regarding what would subsequently be acceptable as public policy in that province. It argues that Devine’s two terms and the policies he introduced changed the political culture of Saskatchewan. By political culture is meant “a set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process,” and that “provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system.” The Devine government, like all governments, was not consistent. Nevertheless, it reinforced the foundational political myth of the province, the origins of which lay in the nineteenth century. Political cultures are, so to speak, embedded in myth. Myths provide context for historical events as political culture does for elections and for policies. The “foundational myth” of Saskatchewan, like that of Alberta, evoked “a place with boundless potential, where achievement was limited only by the imagination and dedication of those who came to claim their plot of farmland.” All commentators agree that Grant Devine lived within the Saskatchewan myth, even during times of distress. The early years of Saskatchewan sustained the Liberal party, which embodied the myth, on the one hand, but the province developed a political culture usually described as “machine politics,” akin in our day to the final years of the PC party in Alberta. The election of the CCF brought a new political culture aimed at the replacement of capitalism with a co-operative commonwealth. Again the political culture eventually changed from what S.M. Lipset called “agrarian socialism” to bureaucratic rule. Devine restored the original impetus of the foundational myth — “there is so much more we can be” was the PC slogan of 1986—but drastically reduced the role of the bureaucracy in the economy and political life of the province. The success of this new political culture is evident in the policies of his successors.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in government following a general election do not invariably entail major changes in policy. Often different parties, opposed in terms of personnel and sometimes of principles, follow similar policies insofar as policies reflect interests and interests are slow to change. Occasionally elections result in a political realignment that is sufficiently profound for political scientists to speak of a "critical election."¹ Even more rare than a critical election is a change in political culture. The paper begins, therefore, with a brief discussion of political culture and its connection to political myth. This is followed by analysis of the 1944 and 1982 Saskatchewan general elections, which *ex hypothesi* are understood to have been critical elections. The 1982 election in particular, which led to the first government under the leadership of Grant Devine, was not just a critical election but one that initiated a new political culture within the province.

POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture became a significant topic in modern political science about a half-century ago with the publication of Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba's *The Civic Culture*.² In Canada, political culture is often discussed in terms of regionalism.³ For the most part, survey-based discussions of political culture require the imaginative construction of an analyst to turn data into an intelligible narrative. The result is a flourishing academic enterprise based largely on statistics of little interest or concern to non-specialists or political practitioners.⁴ And yet, the reality to which all such data points is important to citizens and leaders as well as to disputatious academics and scholars.

An adequate and summary definition of political culture still connected to common sense can be found in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*: "a set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process" and that "provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system."⁵ In an earlier day one might have spoken of attitudes coalescing as a political myth, a civil religion, or a regime to describe the common set of political assumptions, symbols and logic that are taken for granted by any political order.⁶ Unlike ideologies, political cultures are not usually programmatic and explicit —though in the example of Saskatchewan after 1944 the political culture was both explicit and programmatic. In some respects political cultures are akin to political myths—and by myth one can hardly do better than rely on Northrop Frye's distinction between myth and history: History deals with what happens; myth deals with what happens all the time. Myth provides context for historical events, as political culture does for elections and for policies. But there is continuity as well. As David Smith observed, "All governments, even the most self-aware, are captive to some extent of their inheritance, especially when they set out to repudiate it."⁷

What, then, is the Saskatchewan myth? According to Dale Eisler, who has devoted the most attention to this question,

the "founding myth" of the province is that "a place with boundless potential, where achievement was limited only by the imagination and dedication of those who came to claim their plot of farmland."⁸ The founding myth, thus, was connected to the settlement of the Northwest. It expressed the "promise of Eden," as Douglas Owram argued, and was an integral part of the National Policy first introduced by Sir John A. Macdonald.⁹ Moreover, to the extent that Smith's remark regarding continuity is true, one may expect to find this myth present throughout the history of the province. That, at least, is the premise of Eisler's argument and it is in many respects valid.¹⁰

Eisler also argued, however, that this fundamentally optimistic myth has its "dark side" that leads to an "identity crisis" when the myth is contradicted by events, by actual life on the prairie. The "dark side" appeared with the disconnect between experience and expectations and was expressed in a desire for security and survival.

One can restate Eisler's insight more precisely. Frye remarked that the privileged vehicle for the transmission of social myths is imaginative literature.¹¹ The two iconic Saskatchewan examples are W.O. Mitchell's *Who has Seen the Wind?* and Sinclair Ross's *As for Me and My House*. The oft-quoted opening words of the first book, told through the voice of a boy, express a limitless potential; the second tells of a failed personal life and of a town "cowered close to the earth as if to hide itself," but still hanging on. Ross evoked what Frye called a "garrison mentality," where survival amid hardship was all that mattered. This attitude was found especially well articulated in the literature of the old colony of Canada, of Upper and Lower Canada, of Laurentian Canada, in both French and English.¹² In the twentieth century and into the present one, the garrison mentality has been dominant in Laurentian Canada.¹³ In Saskatchewan the myth of survival and security has always been present owing to the extensive initial settlement of the province by Ontario migrants of British background.¹⁴ But after immigrating, the Ontario myth of survival has always been balanced by, or has been in tension with, the "Saskatchewan myth" in the precise sense used by Eisler,

namely that Saskatchewan is a place of great potential as yet not fully realized. These two myths express the political culture of Saskatchewan, especially after the “great divide” in Saskatchewan history, the Depression of drought of the 1930s.¹⁵ As is indicated below, at times the emphasis is on survival and at times on the expansive pursuit and occasional achievement of great possibilities.

One final note on the concept of political culture in Canada was recently introduced by Jared J. Wesley in his distinction between a culture and a code, by which latter term he meant “a distinctive creed —a set of prevailing political values [and assumptions] that constitute consensus among political leaders.”¹⁶ By this interpretation, “codes” are more or less refined versions of political cultures, which in turn are more widespread among citizens. The significance of this distinction between codes and cultures is that it respects the ability of leaders to act and to innovate. As with all political initiatives, the purpose of which is to introduce novelty, it is inevitably a matter of judgement and so of controversy whether an innovator such as Tommy Douglas or Grant Devine simply gave voice to an inchoate but already present change or genuinely introduced “new modes and orders,” as Machiavelli would say. Machiavelli also said that doing so successfully was one of the most difficult accomplishments of a political leader. It is the argument of this paper that Grand Devine introduced a new “code” to Saskatchewan politics and that the Devine era of government in that province led to consequences made evident in the governments that succeeded his. In short: he changed the political culture of the province.

1944

Political culture in all its rich and varied texture emerges where the state and the market, politics and economics, public and private interests touch and overlap. And this being Canada, there is always a regional or federal aspect to the problem of understanding just what political culture may entail at any specific moment. Let us begin, however, with a brief look at the party history of the province.

Government in Saskatchewan has been characterized by relatively long periods of one-party dominance punctuated by interruptions. Of the elections that changed the government, those of 1944, which introduced a long period of CCF-NDP rule, and of 1982, which marked the first Devine victory, likely can be qualified as “critical elections” in the sense indicated above. Following the creation of the province in 1905, Saskatchewan enjoyed a long period of rule by the Liberal Party punctuated by a Conservative-Progressive Coalition interlude during 1929-34. Long Liberal rule was followed by an equally long incumbency by the CCF-NDP starting in 1944, punctuated this time by a Liberal interlude during 1964-71. In both instances, following the interlude, the previously victorious party returned for about a decade (the Liberals formed the government between 1934 and 1944; the NDP between 1971 and 1982). There likely were many external “generational” factors involved, along with economic and demographic changes that conditioned these changes. In addition, as David Smith has argued, one must acknowledge the condition of the party organizations and how they mold the political order to make matters easy or difficult for challengers. That is, it is not so much ideology, political culture, or “code” as organization that proves a serious barrier to entry for second and third parties.¹⁷ Escott Reid’s 1936 article, “The Saskatchewan Liberal Machine before 1929,” provided the classic account of the Liberals’ attention to electoral detail: patronage, for example, or the use of “inspectors” on the public payroll travelling the province with railway passes attending to party business, clearly contributed to the long string of Liberal victories. Almost as important was the Saskatchewan

party’s connection to the federal Liberal government in Ottawa.¹⁸ In contrast, the connection between federal and provincial Liberal parties atrophied in Alberta and Manitoba and so did provincial Liberal governments by 1921 and 1922 respectively. It was locally significant, in other words, that the Liberals were in power in Ottawa for seventy of Saskatchewan’s first hundred years.¹⁹

Until 1944 there was nothing approaching “regime change” in Saskatchewan. Following his victory that year, T.C. Douglas introduced what S.M. Lipset later called (not without controversy) “agrarian socialism” to the province.²⁰ Two things are significant about 1944. The first is what attracted Lipset’s initial attention: the CCF was a socialist party rooted in the *Regina Manifesto* of a decade earlier.

The *Regina Manifesto* “gave the party a purpose, a plan, and a project, which together set out a public agenda that is visible decades later in the politics of the province and in its relations with the federal government.”²¹ Ideological or “programmatic” parties such as the CCF-NDP have goals and timetabled strategies to achieve them. They may have to adjust to accommodate the unexpected —such as low oil, wheat or potash prices— but these delays do not mean they have abandoned their goals. They are always beset with a sense of urgency to create the administrative capacity to regulate the economy in order to secure their policy objectives. The basic ideological premise of the CCF-NDP “was its organic or communitarian view of society. In their more desperate moments, the Liberals claimed to see in this view the spectre of totalitarian rule. Extreme rhetoric won few votes; if anything, it helped isolate the Liberals. Yet the focus of their attack was right; their collectivity —one might say— lay at the heart of CCF values. The CCF did not introduce public health measures to Saskatchewan... what the CCF did was make social and health schemes, and any other such measures, universal. The CCF thought in universalistic terms.”²² By this argument, the CCF-NDP “was always more socialist than agrarian in its interests and policies.”²³ Or, as Duff Spafford rather wryly observed, the CCF may not have invented agrarian socialism so

much as try to establish a socialist regime in an agrarian setting.²⁴ One way or another the CCF-NDP was, or aspired to be, collectivist, universal, and systematic. Or, as Jocelyn Praud and Sarah McQuarrie put it, "democracy envisioned by social democrats is not simply political, it is also social and economic," which to non-social democrats looks like an enormous category error.²⁵ That is, to non-social democrats, politics is conceptually distinct from social and economic affairs, though of course they can be related by way of a political myth.

The second significant element in the 1944 victory of the CCF was not ideological but, as with the earlier Liberal regime, organizational. The organizational basis of the CCF was not the party machine but the ability of thousands of co-ops, credit unions, and grain-growers' associations, farmers' unions, churches and other informal associations, to mobilize community support for the party.²⁶ "Contrary to the socialist and anti-socialist rhetoric that dominated Saskatchewan elections for decades after 1944," Smith argued, "the source of CCF success lay in its organizational superiority. In light of the fact that the CCF had no federal government allies to bolster its cause, the victory was all the more astounding."²⁷ For non-social democrats, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, for example, was a social or economic organization, not a political one. By mobilizing the Grain Growers, the CCF turned it into one element of an electoral coalition. In contrast to the earlier Liberal organization, which used patronage to buy votes wherever the opportunity permitted, the CCF "'politicized' civil society."²⁸ The first result was that after 1944 Saskatchewan enjoyed a *de facto* two-party, zero-sum political system that had significant social and economic implications.

The second result was that Saskatchewan developed an image or a reputation as an outlier, a deviant political order in Canada. In this context Lipset, who strongly supported the notion of American exceptionalism might have spoken of "Saskatchewan exceptionalism."²⁹ As Leeson summarized a great deal of commentary: for the outside world, the image of Saskatchewan was that it was "the home of social

democracy and Medicare, of the enduring contest between capitalism and socialism."³⁰ In addition however, for those who supported the CCF-NDP, Saskatchewan "could not afford capitalism," a belief which in turn led to a more subtle justification for Saskatchewan socialism that rearticulated relevant elements of the garrison myth.³¹

At its most elevated, the argument is geopolitical: Saskatchewan is a land-locked island of price-takers. Far from precarious markets, it produces commodities the price of which can fluctuate greatly so that the return to producers of wheat, potash, oil and gas, uranium, and so on also fluctuates a great deal. Such producers, this narrative continues, are necessarily insecure. Moreover, in such a politicized civil society, "for voters the prevailing concern is security."³²

Wesley has provided the most elaborate account of how this apparent insecurity is assuaged by socialism. Collectivism, he argued, preserves security so that co-operation is a central element in Saskatchewan political life. Co-operation, of course, was present in Saskatchewan civil society long before 1944 but it took the moralizing intellectual or ideological vision of Douglas to argue that the state has a collective responsibility for society and must use its power to implement policies designed to reduce the effects of market contingency and help ensure security. This approach to politics is often called "dirigisme" (from the French, *diriger*, to direct). Necessarily such an approach entails taking defensive measures against the malign influence of outsiders as well as against internal opponents. As a consequence, Saskatchewan politics became highly polarized.³³

In other words, "programmatic" or ideological parties are invariably garrison parties as well. That is, they are bound to express elements of the garrison mentality discussed by Frye. Garrisons are beleaguered places where society is held intact by unquestioned morals and authority. Motives count for nothing. One is either a fighter or a deserter, loyal or treasonous. In the CCF, "there could be no backsliding, no temporizing, at least not without controversy as much within the party as outside. That is the nature of a programmatic

party.”³⁴ That is why such parties attempt to marginalize their opponents; in garrisons traitors are intolerable.

As noted above, despite the dominance of the CCF-NDP after 1944, there was a Liberal interlude, the government led by Ross Thatcher (1964-1971). Thatcher was a controversial figure in Saskatchewan politics and thus controversial as well in light of his place in, or contribution to, Saskatchewan political culture. He was, to begin with, a former CCF party member for which he was widely, intensely, and personally disliked by members of that party. He was, so to speak, a convert to free enterprise, markets, and capitalism; he brought with his conversion an enthusiasm and commitment that, for example, long-time Liberals may have lacked or expressed with great moderation. He had a forceful personality and an abrasive style that often made him difficult to work with within a party and province that, as premier, he thought—and acted as if—he controlled. His relationship with the federal Liberal government was never cordial. In part this was because he and Otto Lang, whom then prime minister Lester B. Pearson chose as his Saskatchewan lieutenant, did not get along. More important was Thatcher’s effort at consolidating the non-socialist vote in the province, which led him to make informal alliances with the Progressive Conservatives at a time when the PCs were led by Pearson’s great antagonist and Saskatchewan native, John Diefenbaker. And, finally, Thatcher strongly opposed the Laurentian economic nationalism of Walter Gordon, Pearson’s finance minister. Where Gordon wanted to limit foreign (read: American) investment, Thatcher wanted to increase it because increased investment promised increased economic growth; where the federal Liberals saw the NDP as potential allies, Thatcher saw their provincial counterparts as enemies to be annihilated. In Thatcher’s first administration, federal-provincial affairs were a head-on clash between the Western and Saskatchewan myth of open horizons and open possibilities with the Laurentian and Upper Canadian myth of defending the garrison. By 1970 or so, the federal Liberals were once more the antagonist, not to say the opponent, of Saskatchewan interests. This enabled the new leader of the NDP to say with persuasive effect: “a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal.”³⁵

Perhaps because of the controversy surrounding Ross Thatcher the politician, there is controversy as well regarding his place in the political culture of the province. For Eisler, Thatcher’s break with the CCF’s concern with security began with the “Showdown at Mossbank” in May, 1957, when Thatcher debated Douglas over the benefits brought, or damage wrought, by socialism.³⁶ This debate was broadcast live on radio across the province and apparently ended in a draw. But that amounted to a defeat for the silver-tongued Douglas. According to Eisler, “the clash was the turning point in the political culture of Saskatchewan.”³⁷ Thatcher’s argument was the rearticulation of the Saskatchewan myth with no hint of concern with garrison security. Very simply, the interventionist policies of the socialist government had prevented Saskatchewan from achieving its full economic potential. He was able, Eisler said, “to distill the public’s sense of economic frustration into a political motivation by rekindling belief on the myth of Saskatchewan as a promised land.”³⁸

In contrast to this pivotal role Eisler accorded Thatcher, David Smith concluded that he made much more modest contributions to Saskatchewan political culture. To begin with, he did little, Smith said, during his first mandate, however strong his verbal commitment to free enterprise.³⁹ It is certainly true that Thatcher was unable to recover anything like the Liberal machine dominance of an earlier day, partly because of the different alliances and enemies Liberals had to deal with federally and provincially, as noted above. In addition, the federal Liberal leadership of Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau never cared much about Western commodities or about forging a close alliance with provincial Liberals.⁴⁰ More to the point: so far as political culture is concerned, according to Smith the provincial Liberals “were never able to discard the assumptions and values the CCF put in place in 1944.”⁴¹ In short, by this reading, the regime change of 1944 stuck: the political culture of Saskatchewan seemed set in stone.

It can hardly be the place of an Albertan to settle differences in interpretation between two persons as well informed, indeed steeped, in Saskatchewan politics, history, and

culture as David Smith and Dale Eisler. Nor is it necessary. One can conclude that Thatcher showed that an alternative to the CCF-NDP was possible and that action introduced a new element of continuity in the development of Saskatchewan political culture after 1944. If one interprets the CCF as operating in continuity with the Edenic myth of the National Policy, one must also allow that the CCF version also required suffering such as was brought by the Depression, understood as a capitalist failure, to build the Kingdom of God. Certainly Douglas drew on the apocalyptic symbolism of the Social Gospel to inspire and enthuse the CCF faithful, but it was Thatcher's achievement in this context to restore a sense of economic commonsense to the transcendent visions of the CCF. In short, Thatcher ended the persuasiveness of the *Regina Manifesto*. It was no longer enough to "eradicate capitalism." Henceforth, socialists would have to deliver the goods.

Like Moses on Mount Pisgah, Thatcher may have been able to see the promised land of prosperity, but he did not enter it. But now that the promised land was in sight, the NDP also realized they would be measured by their performance and not just by their promises of a transfigured future. This is why, when in 1971 the NDP was returned to power under the leadership of Allan Blakeney, there may have been changes in policy compared to his predecessors, but no one experienced a need to alter the provincial culture or "code" by which it was articulated. And yet, those policies provided the context for the changes Grant Devine brought about in 1982. Let us consider what happened.

The NDP's 1971 election platform, called New Deal For People (NDFP), was an ambitious roadmap towards economic prosperity. It was "the perfect antithesis" to Thatcher's "Liberal experiment" that may not have failed, but certainly did not deliver the results that Thatcher had promised.⁴² The NDP promised to do the job, the same job that Thatcher had attempted without success to do.

The NDFP was inspired by the radical, left-wing, Toronto-centered "Waffle" wing of the federal NDP who had the ear of Woodrow Lloyd.⁴³ Lloyd had succeeded Douglas before

being defeated by Thatcher. The platform proposed a debt moratorium for farmers, apparently without considering the inevitable consequence that the availability of capital to these same farmers would be drastically reduced. It guaranteed "price supports" for farm products and called on Ottawa to "establish meaningful farm production guides with guaranteed prices for agreed levels of production," something that to critics looked like a Soviet Five-Year Plan. It also proposed to restrict corporate ownership of farms and exclude foreign buyers, a novelty in a province settled by immigrants, and to introduce a Land Bank Commission, where the government would buy land from retiring farmers and lease it back to younger ones, another novelty that to critics looked like turning younger farmers into tenants and share-croppers.

After the 1975 election, Blakeney, assisted by Roy Romanow, formed the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS). For opponents it was simply an ideological gesture; for supporters it was a creative provincial response to federal intrusions on provincial jurisdiction (expanded a few years later with the National Energy Program) and a way of meeting the intransigence of the potash companies that had refused to pay taxes and royalties. Blakeney also believed that the government could provide greater economic growth for the province than did the private sector. In addition, the creation of PCS turned Saskatoon into a head-office town overnight.⁴⁴ There was a widespread expectation that potash would do for Saskatchewan what oil had done for Alberta.⁴⁵

The geopolitics of Saskatchewan and its economic position as a commodity producer was noted above. The goal of a balanced, growing economy shielded from the unpleasantness of bad weather and volatile markets has long been a goal of provincial governments. During most of the 1960s, under the Thatcher administration, the stars aligned and Saskatchewan enjoyed a buoyant economy. Toward the end of the decade wheat sales fell and prices for potash, uranium and oil declined as well. The Thatcher government cut expenditures, balanced the budget, and left the treasury on a sound footing.⁴⁶ The Blakeney decade of the 1970s also brought good times, at least at the beginning

of his administration. High commodity prices, increased investments, and farm mechanization led to higher land prices and resulted in a general prosperity. Toward the end of the decade, declining oil and grain prices brought about a return to uncertainty and a decline in support for the NDP. For supporters of Blakeney, this was just bad luck.

For his critics, much more was involved. Granted: the implications of the demographic and economic changes in rural Saskatchewan might not have been anticipated. In the event, over the years a large number of relatively small family farms had been consolidated into fewer multi-section, capital-intensive operations. The older generation of CCF-supporters moved to town and into retirement. Younger farmers, with no direct experience of the Depression or of small land bases, were less supportive of all the rural co-operation that had so impressed Lipset a generation earlier. Granted as well: the implications of such relatively anonymous and large-scale changes may be seen as the hand of fortune and so of "bad luck."

Even so, one must also consider the significance of those policies initiated by the NDFP that the Blakeney government considered to be the fulfillment of the 1944 political culture. Specifically, the Blakeney administration used the prosperity of the 1970s to increase the size of the bureaucracy and state-owned enterprises, the Crown corporations.⁴⁷ For Blakeney, establishing the "Family of Crowns" to exploit potash, oil and gas, coal, uranium and precious metals was a heightened expression of Saskatchewan political culture; along with the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund, it was "the foundation of his social democratic dream."⁴⁸ This was not so much bad luck as nemesis; and nemesis, as is well known from antiquity, is the source of righteous retribution.

There are two elements to the nemesis the Blakeney NDP brought upon the party. The first was economic. As Gary Tomkins observed: "it could be argued (with hindsight) that the NDP established a spending program on infrastructure that was unsustainable. In spite of high prices for its export commodities, the government had been running on an

approximate budget balance."⁴⁹ The implication was that the Blakeney policy could continue only if commodity prices remained high and nothing else changed—but interest rates had already changed and Blakeney's "dream" proved unsustainable.

The element of political nemesis was even more significant. One of the books that Lipset had said was particularly influential for his approach to politics and society was *Political Parties* by Roberto Michels, first published in 1911. Michels, rather like the young Lipset, was a left-wing sociologist and was concerned that his political party, the German SDP, was not internally democratic even while it championed democratic socialism. Michels concluded that all parties were destined to be ruled by oligarchies even as they competed democratically in the larger political arena. Lipset considered Michels' argument to be too deterministic, but he did allow that it explained why the nominally socialist Soviet Union became an oligarchic dictatorship so soon after the Bolsheviks took power.⁵⁰ In Saskatchewan the consequences were less dire.

The social changes introduced by democratic radical movements, as distinct from anti-democratic ones such as Bolshevism, resulted, Lipset said, from the realities of economic life. In Saskatchewan this meant the pre-1944 co-operatives and the pools were understood as a response to economic uncertainty and the Depression rather than the ideological vision of "a small doctrinaire minority converting the majority of the population." As a consequence, "the stronger a radical social movement becomes in a democracy, the less radical it appears in terms of the general cultural values. As it captures society, society captures it."⁵¹ Compared to the original apocalyptic promises of destroying capitalism and of building a co-operative commonwealth, the CCF actually initially provided relatively moderate government during a period of economic recovery.⁵² Saskatchewan remained a parliamentary democracy, not a socialist dictatorship or worse. This was why the CCF was compatible with the "general cultural values" of Canadian social and political

order. In terms of the language used above, this was why the CCF was able to form and shape the political culture of Saskatchewan after 1944.

Success, however, brought new problems that were unanticipated in 1944 and that a dominant CCF was ill-prepared to deal with. Again Lipset, on the last page of his book, and relying on Michels, provided by anticipation an account of a future CCF-NDP dilemma:

Organizations are always started as means of attaining certain value ends. However, organizations become ends in themselves, which often are obstacles in the achievement of the original goals. This does not mean that organized social effort does not secure many of the value ends that it was set up to achieve. The farm organizations of Saskatchewan have helped to better the economic lot of the agrarians of the province. The trade-unions have increased the living standards of their members. Gradually, however, every large-scale social organization falls victim to the virus of bureaucratic conservatism, and to the fear that a further challenge to the status quo will injure its power and status; or the organization may become ... —one of the forces resisting further change.⁵³

In Michels' striking formula: "who says organization, says oligarchy."⁵⁴ As noted, Lipset considered this "iron law" to be overly deterministic. And yet, in the Saskatchewan context it did find at least a partial expression by way of the "Family of Crowns." It should be pointed out that even strong supporters of the role of Crowns were aware of the problem. Ken Rasmussen, for instance, introduced the novel term "constitutional bureaucracy" and explained that it meant leaving the bureaucrats enough space that they could do their job. "Only in such an environment will public servants have the confidence to change their behaviour." He went on, however, to note that "because bureaucracies are inherently resistant to change, the correct environment is clearly a paramount concern."⁵⁵ In other words, "constitutional bureaucracy" or the autonomy of the

"Saskatchewan state" means letting the bureaucrats enact the interests of a bureaucratic oligarchy and do so as they see fit. As John Richards and Larry Pratt observed, after 1944 and again after the Blakeney restoration, "professional civil servants" from across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom flocked to Saskatchewan, "most were in effect Fabians. To the extent they shared a philosophy of social change it was the Fabian faith in the philosopher-bureaucrat who designs and implements change from the centre."⁵⁶ It is true that these constitutional bureaucrats of Fabian philosopher-bureaucrats improved administrative competence of the public service compared to previous populist administrations: the point is, such improvements had their own costs. And, in any event, this was clearly *not* the strategy pursued following the PC victory of Grant Devine in 1982.

Other aspects of the origin and expansion of the Crown corporations in Saskatchewan will be discussed by other contributors to this project. Here one might mention only one feature of how organizations change their purpose as they mature. When Crown corporations, with or without government direction, chose to spend a large sum on, say, the acquisition of a potash company or of a pulp mill, it meant that there was less money available for other expenditures. That is, the development of the Crowns was bound to produce winners and losers in terms of benefits to the different parts of the province and different kinds of citizens. Even if one were an NDP supporter, it would be hard for a resident of Estevan to see the point of buying a pulp mill in Prince Albert. The most obvious and immediate political consequence was that, at a time when most citizens were concerned with high interest rates and high fuel prices, the NDP emphasis on the differentially delivered benefits of the "family of Crowns" provided Grant Devine with a large and vulnerable target.

In addition, to the extent that the bureaucracy and the Crowns understood their own existence as an end in itself, they were bound to adopt a garrison mentality. That is, both the implications of an ideologically socialist party filled with

programmatic ambitions, and the operationalization of those ambitions by way of the Crowns and the "Saskatchewan state," reinforced garrison thinking. This was a major reason why the Devine government provoked such an intense response from the defenders of the CCF-NDP garrison. Even so, much of the increased bureaucratization had already been predicted by those two old socialists, Michels and Lipset.

1982

For years prior to the mid-1970s the non-socialist vote in Saskatchewan was centred on the Liberals; the Conservatives were decidedly junior partners. The defeat of the Thatcher government in 1971 and its replacement by the Blakeney-led NDP left the Liberals deflated and leaderless. The former deputy leader, Dave Steuart, was elevated to the leadership and tried to heal the rift that Thatcher had opened with the federal Liberals led at that time by Pierre Trudeau. It was a thankless task and Steuart's efforts were unrewarded. By the time of the 1975 election, the PCs had chosen a new leader, Dick Collver, whom the Liberals systematically underestimated.⁵⁷ Collver shared Thatcher's ambition of uniting the political centre and in the 1975 election won a surprising 28 per cent of the vote and seven seats. The Liberals remained Official Opposition with 15 seats but Steuart was on his way out as leader. The leadership race continued to divide and distract the Liberals and Collver's PCs won a couple of by-elections from them. After the 1978 election they had displaced the Liberals as Official Opposition, not least of all because the NDP concentrated their criticism on the PCs, which raised their profile. In the late 1970s Collver faced a number of lawsuits over his business practices and eventually sat as an independent. Grant Devine replaced Collver as leader, even though Devine had been defeated in the 1978 election and subsequently lost a by-election in 1980. As Lynda Haverstock put it, "the Tories were on their way to resurgence and no one knew it but them."⁵⁸

To the evident surprise of many commentators, Devine won the 1982 election, taking 55 of 64 seats. This was known locally as the "Monday Night Massacre." By way of explanation, Wesley said Blakeney lost because his "message of security" no longer had the urgency of 1971.⁵⁹ Others were vaguer: Blakeney had "lost touch" with voters who sensed a "need for change;" Devine was riding a mysterious historical "trend" inspired by the deeds of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.⁶⁰ A small number of more commonsensical critics of the NDP noted that the

focus of the Blakeney government was on the administration of received policies and programs, especially those involved with regulation, economic planning, and the redistribution of good and services —none of which was especially exciting.⁶¹ In other words, what may have begun in 1971 as a creative response to challenging circumstances had a decade later become a routine, with no obvious benefits to citizens.

In addition to this variation on the Michels-Lipset narrative regarding political change and the changes that come often unawares to political cultures, more ideological critics pointed to the poor management the Blakeney government had brought to various resource sectors. The highest oil royalties on the continent ensured that relatively few holes would be spudded in. The natural gas industry barely existed, even though the Western Sedimentary Basin did not end at 110 degrees west. Membership on Crown boards was a reward not for competence and acumen but too often for being politically connected to the NDP. Worse, several Crowns were major money-losers. Prince Albert Pulp Company (PAPCO) was said to be costing the provincial taxpayers \$91,000 a day. During the 1982 election campaign Devine alleged that the NDP had sequestered part of the public debt in the Crowns to make the province appear to be debt-free.⁶²

It has often been observed that incumbent parties lose elections far more often than replacement parties win them. That is what was meant by the cliché explanations noted above that the NDP was out of touch or that it was time for a change. However, the NDP did not simply lose in 1982; Devine also brought something positive to the campaign. To begin with, Devine had his own opinions on how the more or less permanent geopolitics of Saskatchewan should be managed. The PC caucus may have been "salad green," as Dick Spencer said, and without a veteran long-term organization to serve as a repository of administrative experience.⁶³ But they did have ideas, and ideas appealed to Devine who, after all, held a PhD in economics. And so, for example, where the NDP saw Saskatchewan as "trapped"

in the middle of a continent, Devine emphasized that they were at the centre of North America: California markets were closer than those of Toronto. He favoured markets over boards and Crowns because the economy was too complex to be controlled —a classic understanding of markets that could have been borrowed from F. A. Hayek or even Adam Smith.⁶⁴

More mundane factors also worked in Devine's favour, chief among them the aforementioned changes in rural Saskatchewan. This enabled Devine to claim the mantle of the CCF as his own: now the PCs spoke for rural Saskatchewan.⁶⁵ As Smith observed, "agrarian socialism has become urban social democracy."⁶⁶ As a consequence, rural Saskatchewan by 1981 often opposed the policies the CCF had put in place a generation earlier to protect farmers. Devine and the PCs sensed the change and promised citizens he would ensure the benefits of Saskatchewan resources were more widely shared than had been the practice of the NDP.⁶⁷ Devine expressed that goal in his own cliché, which he borrowed from Ross Thatcher: Saskatchewan was "open for business."⁶⁸

During the election campaign some of Devine's critics also considered his enthusiastic language not merely to be comprised of clichés but as vulgar, unsophisticated, and foolish —at least by comparison to the rhetoric of sophisticated, lawyerly, and careful Allan Blakeney.⁶⁹ On the other hand, Devine's homey language — "don't say whoa in a mud hole" — also expressed a new energy and optimism that proved to be highly successful during the election campaign. "Give 'er snooze, Bruce" might not even be intelligible to Canadians outside Saskatchewan,⁷⁰ but it was of a piece with the winning campaign slogan of 1982: "There's so much more we can be." In terms of political culture, Devine was attempting to articulate a code that was at variance with the 1944 code of security.⁷¹ In Eisler's opinion, "no one before, or since, has articulated the Saskatchewan myth better, in a more rudimentary or effective fashion, than did Grant Devine in the spring of 1982."⁷² Indeed, in terms of political culture, the election of

1982 marked the triumph of the Saskatchewan myth over the now discredited myth of the bureaucratically guarded garrison. It comes as no surprise, then, that after his electoral victory, the first major task the Devine government undertook was to purge the bureaucracy.

PC distrust of the bureaucracy, even not entirely friendly observers such as Ken Rasmussen said, was "not altogether unfounded."⁷³ Indeed, "the two parties involved in the 1982 transition differed about as much as one can expect in the Canadian setting."⁷⁴ For the previous generation there had been little disruption in what had become both an administrative and a policy or ideological routine. Especially at the highest levels, Saskatchewan bureaucrats had been well trained to provide the kind of policy advice the CCF-NDP wanted to hear.⁷⁵ The Blakeney government in particular had pursued an "activist interventionist" policy "with more scope for civil service initiative." Such an approach "suited most civil servants" but clearly did not suit the new government.⁷⁶ With the size of the bureaucracy (not including the Crowns) having doubled during the Blakeney decade, there was plenty of opportunity for reduction. Given that several officials, including Deputy Ministers, had been involved in the NDP campaign or had run for office under the NDP, and given that even those who were not openly partisan were very comfortable with centrally planning the Saskatchewan economy, it was hardly surprising that "the transition team's operating procedure prescribed that erring on the side of dismissal was preferable to being overcautious."⁷⁷ By the end of 1982 about 200 persons had been dismissed, which included lower and middle managers as well as senior staff. As might be anticipated, the actual membership of the bureaucracy did not welcome the PC initiative.⁷⁸

Next in line were the Crowns. The PCs certainly knew they had become part of Saskatchewan life, but that did not mean they could never be sold. In October, 1982 the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Corporation was abolished. In March, 1983 SaskMedia, which made educational films, was gone and the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO) was reduced in size. The province then sold off

Prairie Malt, Agra Industries, an oilseed extraction company, and Nabu Manufacturing, a high-tech firm, along with the mortgage on the Cornwall Shopping Centre in Regina and shares in Intercontinental Packers of Saskatoon.⁷⁹ The arguments in favour of privatization —efficiency, debt reduction and individual liberty— were obvious enough, as was Devine’s preference for what are now called “public-private partnerships,” as for example, the nitrogen fertilizer plant in Regina, a partnership with Cargill. With respect to the initial round there was little opposition. Why it was a good idea for the government to hold a mortgage on a shopping mall or make movies was not self-evident.

Unfortunately for the Devine government, tax cuts and royalty holidays were followed by low commodity prices leading to large deficits. Starting at \$227 million in 1982, the Saskatchewan deficit rose to \$1.2 billion by 1986. Farmers were slightly relieved by a timely billion-dollar federal program enacted by the Conservative government in Ottawa and for which, quite properly, Devine claimed some credit.⁸⁰

Devine won the 1986 election with a significantly diminished majority. The economy was not doing well and the deficit and debt were growing. The Conservatives responded by reducing expenditures and increasing taxes. During the fall of 1986 and into the summer of 1987 the government continued to discuss additional privatization of the Crowns as a way of dealing with the economic crisis. In November 1987 the government announced a program of additional privatization. The sale of SaskOil continued; PAPCO was sold to Weyerhaeuser; government-owned mining and printing companies were sold along with Saskatchewan Forest Products, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, parts of SaskTel and Saskatchewan Government Insurance; parks management and road construction operations were contracted out. Initially the utilities were exempt from privatization, but in May, 1988 SaskPower was split into an electric utility and a new SaskEnergy, the profitable former natural gas division of SaskPower. To the new NDP leader, Roy Romanow, who succeeded Allan Blakeney in November,

1987, this was a bridge too far. When the legislative bells rang to signal a vote on the SaskEnergy bill, Romanow led the NDP out of the chamber, a procedural tactic that postponed the decision indefinitely.

Seventeen days later and after SaskEnergy privatization was put on hold, the NDP returned. Opponents said Devine had come to his senses; supporters said he had lost his nerve. Then in the late 1980s and early 1990s came a series of scandals involving several PC ministers who were convicted of fraud, mostly by making false claims on communications allowances, some of which were pooled and used as an all-purpose slush fund similar to the sponsorship scandal of the federal Liberals a generation later.⁸¹ Devine resigned as leader in 1992, though he sat as a member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) until the 1995 election, won by Romanow. In 1997, with ten appointed trustees, the party took “a strange cryogenic snooze” for two elections. Then “it would either be warmed, revived and awakened to new tasks or just left in cold storage... —no Prince Charming with an awakening kiss was expected.”⁸² None came.

LEGACY

Looking back to the series of events begun by the “Monday Night Massacre” nearly a decade earlier, James M. Pitsula and Rasmussen declared that “the Saskatchewan Tories ... —are true revolutionaries.”⁸³ This was not because they merely passed legislation that critics disliked. Mark Stobbe summarized the critics’ position: “After winning the 1982 election, Grant Devine and his government inherited a province with a long history of political solutions to economic problems and a degree of public ownership unmatched in North America. Public enterprise had been used as a tool for regional development to provide utility service and to capture resource revenue for use within the province. Two waves of the development of publicly-owned corporations had created a high degree of state enterprise that was unmatched in the continent.” The “defining feature” of the Devine government was to deconstruct that unmatched structure of state enterprise. “The goal was nothing less than a fundamental transformation of the political culture of the province. Devine was seeking to purge the Saskatchewan electorate of all traces of its collectivist and social democratic heritage and to replace it with the idolatry of the marketplace.” Worst of all for traditional NDP supporters, to the extent that Devine and the PCs succeeded, “ownership would be so widely diffused within the province that renationalization would be either politically impossible or prohibitively expensive. Further, the structure of decision-making in the province would have been changed, with a reduction of political scope and a corresponding increase on domination by the marketplace.”⁸⁴ To Devine’s supporters, and notwithstanding the political compromises of the 1986 election that led to a growing provincial deficit, on balance that looked like success.

Either way, the implications of the Devine tenure were clear enough. As Spencer observed, “what seems certain is that after a decade of Tory government and politics, the political culture of Saskatchewan has taken a sustained right-turn.”⁸⁵ By changing the “economic landscape” of Saskatchewan

by way of large-scale privatization, Devine introduced a new code regarding the limits of acceptable policy.⁸⁶ As a result, “it is fair to say that the election of 1982 could be compared to the election of 1944 in importance.”⁸⁷ Whether positive, neutral or negative (and unquestionably most of the scholarly judgment of the Devine government has been negative), all commentators agree that Grant Devine seriously lived within the Saskatchewan myth, even in times of distress. As a result, he aimed to alter the political culture of Saskatchewan that had been introduced in 1944.

The evidence for his success in so doing is found in the policies of his successors. To begin with, Roy Romanow, said Wesley, was widely considered a “moderate” for whom market-based solutions to economic difficulties constituted his default position.⁸⁸ His treasurer, Janice MacKinnon, had sharp words of criticism for the left-wing critics of Romanow (and of her). In contrast to the federal NDP, which “stuck to traditional positions and lost the electorate, the Romanow government in the 1990s tried to modernize the NDP and was in danger of losing the party.”⁸⁹ To state the obvious: modernizing the NDP was necessary because of what Devine had achieved in altering the received Saskatchewan political culture.

The left-wing critics, however, were relentless. In 2001 Leeson said that Romanow was a “Red Tory” and not a socialist at all.⁹⁰ By 2008 Raymond Blake concluded that “Romanow’s government was clearly right-of-centre in its philosophy.”⁹¹ Charles W. Smith agreed.⁹² Likewise, Pitsula noted that “the Romanow government made it clear that it had no intention of reversing Devine’s privatization of non-utility corporations. Economic growth would have to come mainly from private-sector investors and entrepreneurs.”⁹³ And more in sadness than in anger, Rasmussen declared “the Romanow government signaled the end of Saskatchewan’s tradition of activist entrepreneurial government.”⁹⁴ By 2015 it was a matter of course that, for left-wing critics, especially academic ones, Romanow was a despicable neoliberal.⁹⁵

In terms of policy, the Romanow government sold its remaining shares in SaskOil, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Cameco, and the Lloydminster upgrader. By 1995 they had increased taxes and cut expenditures, producing a budget surplus, followed by a balanced budget law akin to that of Alberta. The Romanow government, Praud and McQuarrie said, "appeared to perceive the state as an instrument to foster an attractive investment climate for business, not as a full-fledged economic actor and initiator, intervening in the economy and owning parts of it." On the contrary, Romanow "assiduously courted the business community." This was not what the authors understood to be social democracy.⁹⁶ For genuine social democrats, the best that could be said of Romanow was that he pursued a "Third Way," which he called the "Saskatchewan Way," similar to those of Tony Blair in the UK and Bill Clinton in the US.⁹⁷

Romanow's successor, Lorne Calvert, "represented a slightly more left-wing version of Third Way social democracy compared to the Romanow government."⁹⁸ That said, there was no return to the Blakeney era by renationalizing natural resource Crowns that Devine had sold. Indeed, like Romanow, Calvert also sold government shares in the resource Crowns "at a considerable profit."⁹⁹ The Calvert government did insist on retaining the major Crown utilities (electricity, car insurance, telephone, and natural gas distribution) not least of all because they were profitable and run like private-sector businesses.

Finally, there is Brad Wall who inherited not only the Devine transformation of Saskatchewan's 1944 political culture but Romanow's confirmation, indeed reinforcement, of those changes.¹⁰⁰ Wall's Saskatchewan Party, formed in 1997 as a coalition of sitting Liberal and PC MLAs, was initially led by Elwin Hermanson, a former Reform Party MP. In 1999 the Saskatchewan Party displaced the NDP from rural ridings but was shut out of Regina and Saskatoon even while it was the voters' second choice in 24 urban ridings. In the process the NDP was reduced to a minority government. In 2003 the Saskatchewan Party promised to reduce

taxes and government involvement in the private sector. Hermanson said his party had no plans to sell the remaining utility Crowns but that he might consider doing so if it would benefit the province. This ambiguity enabled the NDP to recoup lost ground and provided them with a small majority. Hermanson resigned and Wall was acclaimed leader in March 2004.¹⁰¹

Wall's first task after becoming leader was to review existing party policies and change them in such a way that he moved the party "out of the traditional space to the right of the NDP and situated his party in the centre with some social policies to the left of the NDP."¹⁰² In 2004 Wall supported the NDP's Crown Corporation Public Ownership Act, which required: (1) a thorough study of any proposal to privatize existing Crowns; and (2) ensured that any sale would be final only after a general election, thus requiring a kind of popular referendum on the proposal since such a proposal would likely be an important issue in any election.¹⁰³ This move ensured there was no possibility of the NDP using the "hidden agenda" charge that had worked so well against Hermanson.¹⁰⁴ In 2007 Wall led the Saskatchewan Party to its first electoral victory, which was repeated in 2011 with an increased popular vote from 51% to an unprecedented 64%. In 2016 Wall again won, gaining two more seats and 63% of the vote.

CONCLUSIONS

Political cultures seldom evolve in straightforward ways. What Grant Devine began in 1982 may be intelligibly connected to events a quarter-century later, but no one could have predicted any such outcome. Indeed, from Grant Devine to Brad Wall, events followed a kind of dialectical development where Devine's successors accepted part of what he had accomplished but rejected, or tried to reject, other aspects of his achievement. Devine definitively extinguished the political culture of 1944 agrarian socialism, not least of all because the economic and social conditions for its existence were no longer present in the province. This does not mean that Devine did nothing creative. No more than was Tommy Douglas a passive consequence of the wheat economy of 1944 was Devine simply a product of what Saskatchewan had become by 1982.

One can see in the active intervention of the Blakeney government in the Saskatchewan economy, especially in their strong support for, and expansion of, the "Family of Crowns," the end-point of the political culture of 1944. Ross Thatcher had shown it was possible to install a private enterprise alternative to the CCF-NDP and to do so by emphasizing the positive elements of the Saskatchewan myth. When things didn't work out as Thatcher promised, the electorate switched to Blakeney in the hope that he would realize the myth.¹⁰⁵ Blakeney and the NDP, however, had the large ideological mortgage of socialism to discharge and it translated into Michels' iron law along with the garrison mentality that a growing bureaucracy invariably brings with it. This dead end provided the Devine government the opportunity to introduce additional market-friendly policies and a new political culture. Critics dismissed Devine as they did Romanow later with a sneer at "neoliberalism" but supporters called it common sense, or moderation or workable policies. So did the Saskatchewan electorate. With the Romanow government there was a clear awareness that no return to the policies of the Blakeney administration or, indeed, anything redolent of the political culture of 1944, was possible.

From Romanow, Wall adopted the politics of moderation and of possibility and avoided the "third rail" of Saskatchewan politics, an ideological commitment to privatizing the utility Crowns.¹⁰⁶ This did not mean that the "province-building" policies that had earlier relied on the Crowns and on other state activity was gone from Saskatchewan political life. For example, in 2010, when Wall opposed the takeover of PotashCorp, which had been privatized by the Devine government in 1989, by the Anglo-Australian multinational enterprise, BHP Billiton, it was hardly a market-friendly move. It was, however, a political master-stroke. This was not, however, a return to the code of safety based on insecurity, fear and garrison-thinking. The difference between the old code and the new was nicely illustrated during the 2007 election. The NDP rented billboards in Calgary encouraging the many expats in the city to come home because housing prices were lower in Saskatchewan.¹⁰⁷ Wall said lower housing prices were evidence of economic failure. His message to former residents of Saskatchewan emphasized the opportunities in their home province, not the begging of people to return. The difference in messages, wrote Blake, "was immense."¹⁰⁸ He did not say that the difference solidified Devine's 1982 exhortation: there is so much more we can be. But it did.¹⁰⁹

ENDNOTES

¹The term was introduced by V.O. Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17 (1955), 3-18. It was significantly refined by Walter Dean Burnham a few years later with his introduction, broadly speaking, of a generational cycle. See Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1970). Burnham has been criticized for developing a "Rip van Winkle" view of democracy that voters come awake only once a generation." See David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignment: A Critique of an American Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). For Canadian data, see Ray Argyle, *Turning Points: The Campaigns that Changed Canada* (Toronto: White Knight, 2004).

² Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

³ See Don Blake, "The Measurement of Regionalism in Canadian Voting Patterns," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 5 (1972), 55-81; R. Simeon and D. Elkins, "Regional Political Cultures in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7 (1974), 397-437; J. Wilson, "The Canadian Political Cultures: Towards a Redefinition of the Nature of the Canadian Political System," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7 (1974), 438-83; David Elkins and Richard Simeon, eds., *Small Worlds: Provinces and Parties in Canadian Political Life* (Toronto: Methuen, 1980); Ailsa Henderson, "Regional Political Cultures in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37 (2004), 595-615. See also Nelson Wiseman, *In Search of Canadian Political Culture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), Ch. 5, 9.

⁴ Henderson is a partial exception to this observation. Her use of "cluster analysis" described geographic locations that corresponded to historical or to semi-historical configurations of meaning such as "New France" or "British North America" that evoked symbolic expressions of who "we" are. That is, narrative, not numbers, makes her account persuasive.

⁵ David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), vol. 12, 218.

⁶ See Barry Cooper, *It's the Regime, Stupid!* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2009), Ch. 2 for details. In this context institutions, legal procedures, constitutions and so on are secondary phenomena.

⁷ Smith, "Path Dependency and Saskatchewan Politics," in Gregory P. Marchildon, ed., *The Heavy Hand of History: Interpreting Saskatchewan's Past* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2005), 34.

⁸ Eisler, *False Expectations: Politics and the Pursuit of the Saskatchewan Myth* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2006), xi.

⁹ Owrham, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

¹⁰ Because the Saskatchewan myth begins with settlement, it has until very recently excluded the Aboriginal population of the province. In principle, there is no reason why First Nations could not be included as participants in the myth, though critics can always find reasons to ensure the difficulties of so doing will be increased. See Eisler, "The Saskatchewan Myth," in Marchildon, ed., *The Heavy Hand of History*, 79-84.

¹¹ See Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971).

¹² For an elaboration of this argument about the centrality of survival or of *la survivance*, see Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972) and Cooper, *It's the Regime, Stupid!* Ch.2.

¹³ A contemporary restatement of the parochial reality of Laurentian Canada, which is coupled to its self-identification with the entire country is Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, *The Big Shift* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2012).

¹⁴ One of the cultural differences between Saskatchewan and Alberta in this respect is the relatively greater impact of American settlers on the latter province. For them, the garrison mentality was a distinctly minor theme, even when families originally moved from Ontario to, say, Nebraska or South Dakota and then to Alberta.

¹⁵ Gregory P. Marchildon, "The Great Divide," in Marchildon, ed., *The Heavy Hand of History*, 51-66.

¹⁶ Wesley, *Code Politics: Campaigns and Cultures on the Canadian Prairies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 9.

¹⁷ Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," in Jene M. Porter, ed., *Perspectives of Saskatchewan* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 37.

¹⁸ Reid, "The Saskatchewan Liberal Machine before 1929," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 2 (1936), 27-40.

¹⁹ See Smith, *Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) and Norman Ward and David Smith, *Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) for details.

²⁰ The term was first used by Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the great social scientists of the twentieth century, in his dissertation. It was published as *Agrarian Socialism: The Coöperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950). There have been several subsequent editions and a critical analysis, David E. Smith, ed., *Lipset's Agrarian Socialism: A Re-examination* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2007). Also useful in contextualizing Lipset's still useful early work is his "Steady Work: An Academic Memoir," *The American Sociologist* 34 (2003), 112-30, and George Hoffman, "Rural Radicalism: Seymour Martin Lipset and Saskatchewan 'Exceptionalism,'" *Prairie Forum* 34:2 (2009), 313-31.

²¹ David Smith, "Saskatchewan and Canadian Federalism," in Howard Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics: Crowding the Centre* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2008), 308. Referred to hereinafter as *Saskatchewan Politics* (2008). The opening paragraph of the *Regina Manifesto* stated: "We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated." It concluded with a commitment: "No CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth." It is reprinted in Walter Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-61* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), Appendix A.

²² Smith, "Saskatchewan and Canadian Federalism," 314. On Medicare before the 1950s see Robin Badgley and Samuel Wolfe, *Doctor's Strike: Medical Care and Conflict in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 13-16.

²³ Smith, "Path Dependency," 47.

²⁴ Quoted in Hoffman, "Rural Radicalism," 320. See also Duff Spafford, "Notes on Re-reading Lipset's *Agrarian Socialism*," in Smith, ed., *Lipset's Agrarian Socialism*, 27.

²⁵ Jocelyne Praud and Sarah McQuarrie, "The Saskatchewan CCF-NDP from the *Regina Manifesto* to the Romanow Years," in Howard A. Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics: Into the Twenty-First Century* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2001), 144. Referred to hereinafter as *Saskatchewan Politics* (2001).

²⁶ See Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, 166ff. and Ch. 10.

²⁷ Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," 42.

²⁸ Smith, "Saskatchewan and Canadian Federalism," 313.

²⁹ In the event Hoffman spoke on his behalf in "Rural Radicalism." Lipset preferred to use a term of Paul Lazarsfeld, one of his teachers at Columbia, and speak of a "deviant case" analysis. See Lipset, "Steady Work," 118.

³⁰ Leeson, "The Rich Soil of Saskatchewan Politics," in *Saskatchewan Politics* (2001), 4.

³¹ Leeson, "The Rich Soil," 6.

³² Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political culture," 51. The weight to be given this issue of "insecurity" lay at the heart of the dispute between Lipset and C.B. Macpherson, whose *Democracy in Alberta: The Theory and Practice of a Quasi-Party System*, came out the same year, 1950. See the exchange in *Canadian Forum*, November and December, 1954 and January, 1955. See also Cooper, *It's the Regime, Stupid!* 114ff and Alan C. Cairns, "Agrarian Socialism (Lipset), or Agrarian Capitalism (Macpherson)," in Smith, ed., *Lipset's Agrarian Socialism*, 75-88. Full disclosure: I first read *Agrarian Socialism* as an undergraduate at UBC in Cairns' class on Canadian federalism. See also John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 49ff.

³³ Wesley, *Code Politics*, Ch. 4.

³⁴ Smith, "Path Dependency," 40.

³⁵ For details see Dale Eisler, *Rumours of Glory: Saskatchewan and the Thatcher Years* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987).

³⁶ See Eisler, *Rumours of Glory*, Ch. 3.

³⁷ Eisler, *False Expectations*, 167.

³⁸ Eisler, *False Expectations*, 175.

³⁹ Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, 303.

⁴⁰ In July, 1969, Trudeau famously asked an audience of Saskatchewan farmers, rhetorically, "why should I sell your wheat?" Whatever he may have intended, it did not express a seamless connection with the provincial party.

⁴¹ Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," 52. Smith argues that Devine was also unable to jettison the 1944 political culture. A slightly different argument is provided in the following section.

⁴² Eisler, *False Expectations*, 183.

⁴³ See Richards and Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism*, 253-7.

⁴⁴ For details of Blakeney's administration see Dennis Gruending, *Promises to Keep: A Political Biography of Allan Blakeney* (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1990) and Gruending, "Allen E. Blakeney," in Gordon L. Barnhart, ed., *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004).

⁴⁵ Richards and Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism*, 199. The problem with the expectation was that cycles for potash demand were tied to cereals production because potash fertilized cereal crops.

⁴⁶ James M. Pitsula, "Saskatchewan's Path to Economic Development," in Porter, ed., *Perspectives of Saskatchewan*, 111.

⁴⁷ According to Eisler, the government and Crown share of the Saskatchewan GDP grew from 15.5% to 23.3% during the Blakeney years. See *False Expectations*, 195.

⁴⁸ Dennis Gruending, "Allen E. Blakeney," 300. One might extend the "bad luck" argument to include high interest rates toward the end of the decade. But even here, the argument that Blakeney's emphasis on the Crowns led him to neglect matters more pressing to both rural and urban middle-class citizens remains unimpaired.

⁴⁹ Tompkins, "Managing Prosperity: Saskatchewan's Fiscal and Economic Challenges," in Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics* (2008), 324.

⁵⁰ Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, 192-3; "Steady Work," 114-16. At the time Lipset's sympathies lay with Trotsky.

⁵¹ Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, 157.

⁵² John Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 267.

⁵³ Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, 286.

⁵⁴ Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, tr. Eden and Cedar Paul (Glencoe: The Free Press [1915] 1958), 418.

⁵⁵ Rasmussen, "Saskatchewan's Public Service: Converging to the Norm?" in Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics*, 2001, 108. In a later analysis Rasmussen called "constitutional bureaucracy" the "Saskatchewan state" and noted it "needs to be strong and reasonably autonomous from mass pressures if it is to respond effectively to ... external challenges." See Rasmussen, "From Entrepreneurial State to Embedded State," in Keith Brownsey and Michael Howlett, eds., *The Provincial State in Canada: Politics in the Provinces and Territories* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2001), 243. Likewise, Janice MacKinnon, who was treasurer in the Romanow NDP government, had great misgivings about the bureaucratic dullness of the Crowns. SaskTel, for example, insisted that telephones be purchased only from the Crown-owned monopoly; Saskatchewan Government Insurance refused to allow people to purchase customized licence plates. Glitzy movie theatre ads extolling the "Family of Crowns" were "greeted with a chorus of boos while cabinet ministers in the audience cringed." See her *Minding the Public Purse: The Fiscal Crisis, Political Trade-Offs and Canada's Future* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 17-8.

⁵⁶ Richards and Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism*, 139.

⁵⁷ Barry Wilson, *Politics of Defeat: The Decline of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 83.

⁵⁸ Haverstock, "The Saskatchewan Liberal Party," in Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics* (2001), 212. Haverstock later served as leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party and as Lieutenant Governor of the province.

⁵⁹ Wesley, *Code Politics*, 158.

⁶⁰ James M. Pitsula and Ken Rasmussen, *Privatizing a Province: The New Right in Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: New Star, 1990), 24; Praud and McQuarrie, "The Saskatchewan CCF-NDP," 153. I call this "trend" mysterious not because there is no evidence that, for instance, the existing Keynesian orthodoxy was immune from criticism by other schools of economics or that what is usually called "conservatism" was not in some sense resurgent (see Barry Cooper, Allan Kornberg, William Mishler, eds., *The Resurgence of Conservatism in Anglo-American Democracies* [Durham: Duke University Press, 1988]). Rather, the influence of such trends and ideas on the actual conduct of Saskatchewan politicians is not clear.

⁶¹ See Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," 46.

⁶² These and other highly partisan criticism of the NDP regime can be found in Don Baron and Paul Jackson, *Battleground: The Socialist Assault on Grant Devine's Canadian Dream* (Toronto: Bedford House, 1991). An equally partisan criticism focused chiefly on the Calvert government is John Gormley, *Left Out: Saskatchewan's NDP and the Relentless Pursuit of Mediocrity* (Saskatoon: Indie Ink, 2010). These two books, having been written from a right-of-centre perspective, constitute a minority of the partisan discussions of Saskatchewan politics.

⁶³ Spencer, *Singing the Blues: The Conservatives in Saskatchewan* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2007), 177.

⁶⁴ Whether Devine's acceptance of market economics was part of a trend, a notion that was discounted above, or simply a consequence of his professional formation as an economist is secondary to his action: Devine put policies in place that were based upon assumptions largely antithetical to those of the CCF-NDP economic orthodoxy.

⁶⁵ Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," 47-8.

⁶⁶ Smith, "Saskatchewan and Canadian Federalism," 315.

⁶⁷ Tompkins, "Managing Prosperity," 321.

⁶⁸ This was also the title of a conference held in Regina in late October, 1982, co-sponsored with *The Financial Post*.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Pitsula and Rasmussen, *Privatizing a Province*, 51, 112-16, 137.

⁷⁰ Or inside either. See MacKinnon, *Minding the Public Purse*, 14, who translated Devine's words as "Give 'er snooze, Bruce." Snooze is a stimulant rather than a soporific.

⁷¹ If one wanted to be psychological about it, security concerns are among the lowest of Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs." See his *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954). Devine wanted to move his province up the pyramid towards "self-actualization," which was "so much more" than what the NDP code entailed.

⁷² Eisler, *False Expectations*, 196.

⁷³ Rasmussen, "Saskatchewan's Public Service," 98. Nor was it unprecedented. Thatcher distrusted the bureaucracy he inherited but was able to bring them into line without having too many persons fired. Likewise when Romanow replaced Devine, several NDP members expressed their distrust of the bureaucrats for being Tory loyalists. See Eisler, *Rumours of Glory*, 136-50; MacKinnon, *Minding the Public Purse*, 73-8.

⁷⁴ Hans J. Michelmann and Jeffrey S. Steeves, "The 1982 Transition in Power in Saskatchewan: The Progressive Conservatives and the Public Service," *Canadian Public Administration* 28 (1985), 2.

⁷⁵ Rasmussen, "Saskatchewan's Public Service," 99. Apparently such politicization was also part of "constitutional bureaucracy."

⁷⁶ Michelmann and Steeves, "The 1982 Transition in Power in Saskatchewan," 4.

⁷⁷ Michelmann and Steeves, "The 1982 Transition in Power in Saskatchewan," 15-6, 10.

⁷⁸ For details see Pitsula and Rasmussen, *Privatizing a Province*, 120ff. See also MacKinnon, *Minding the Public Purse*, Ch. 3.

⁷⁹ Pitsula and Rasmussen, *Privatizing a Province*, 75.

⁸⁰ Spencer, *Singing the Blues*, 184.

⁸¹ For details, see Spencer, *Singing the Blues*, 196ff.

⁸² Spencer, *Singing the Blues*, 211-12.

⁸³ *Privatizing a Province*, 287.

⁸⁴ Mark Stobbe, "The Selling of Saskatchewan," in Lesley Biggs and Mark Stobbe, eds., *Devine Rule in Saskatchewan: A Decade of Hope and Hardship* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991), 81, 107. See also Merrilee Rasmussen and Howard Leeson, "Parliamentary Democracy in Saskatchewan, 1982-1989" in Biggs and Stobbe, eds., *Devine Rule*, 49-65 for another critical account of how Devine changed the "folkways" and political culture of the province.

⁸⁵ *Singing the Blues*, 192-3.

⁸⁶ Pitsula, "Saskatchewan's Path to Economic Development," 116.

⁸⁷ Lesson, "The 2007 Election: Watershed or Way Station?" in Leeson ed., *Saskatchewan Politics* (2008), 123.

⁸⁸ *Code Politics*, 159.

⁸⁹ MacKinnon, *Minding the Public Purse*, 268. See also her criticism of additional difficulties caused by the left-wingers, *Minding the Public Purse*, 73-8, Ch.6

⁹⁰ Leeson, "The Rich Soil of Saskatchewan Politics," 9.

⁹¹ Blake, "The Saskatchewan Party and the Politics of Branding," 169.

⁹² See Charles W. Smith, "The 'New Normal' in Saskatchewan: Neoliberalism and the Challenge to Workers' Rights," in David McGrane, ed., *New Directions in Saskatchewan Public Policy* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2011), 129.

⁹³ Pitsula, "Saskatchewan's Path to Economic Development," 117.

⁹⁴ Rasmussen, "From Entrepreneurial State to Embedded State," 252.

⁹⁵ See Aidan D. Conway and J.F. Conway, "Saskatchewan: From Cradle of Social Democracy to Neoliberalism's Sandbox," in Bryan M. Evans and Charles W. Smith, eds., *Transforming Provincial Politics: The Political Economy of Canada's Provinces and Territories in the Neoliberal Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 226-54.

⁹⁶ Praud and McQuarrie, "The Saskatchewan CCF-NDP," 158, 163, 165.

⁹⁷ See Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Wesley, *Code Politics*, 162ff.

⁹⁸ David McGrane, "Which Third Way? A Comparison of the Romanow and Calvert NDP Governments from 1991 to 2007," in Leeson, ed., *Saskatchewan Politics* (2008), 143.

⁹⁹ McGrane, "Which Third Way?" 147. See also Wesley, *Code Politics*, 169ff.

¹⁰⁰ Wall had been an executive assistant to Graham Taylor, Minister of Public Transportation, Tourism, Small Business Cooperatives and Health and to John Gerich, Associate Minister of Economic Development, both members of the Devine government.

¹⁰¹ Hermanson did not have a personality that could easily be projected as agreeable. In 2003, when asked who they did not want to be premier, 50% of respondents said Hermanson and 20% said Calvert. See Blake, "The Saskatchewan Party," 173.

¹⁰² Blake, "The Saskatchewan Party," 176.

¹⁰³ McGrane, "Which Third Way?" 156.

¹⁰⁴ See McGrane, "The 2007 Provincial Election in Saskatchewan," *Canadian Political Science Review* 2 (2008), 64, and Jeremy Rayner and Tina Beaudry-Mellor, "Hope and Fear Revisited: A Contextual Explanation of the 2007 Saskatchewan Provincial Election," *Canadian Political Science Review* 3 (2009), 18.

¹⁰⁵ Eisler, *Rumours of Glory*, 276; *False Expectations*, 197.

¹⁰⁶ McGrane, "Which Third Way?" 156; McGrane, "The 2007 Provincial Election," 69.

¹⁰⁷ The number of former Saskatchewan residents in Calgary at the time was high. Whenever the Stampeders played the Roughriders at McMahon Stadium, the seats were almost evenly divided between Stamps supporters and members of the Rider Nation. But all the fans were Calgarians.

¹⁰⁸ Blake, "The Saskatchewan Party and the Politics of Rebranding," 177-8.

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