

The North Moves Left

Politics in British Columbia

by DEREK SHEARER

The New Democratic Party advocates a socialist Canada. Its current programs in British Columbia look good, and its prospects bright.



A year ago last August, Canada's New Democratic Party won 38 out of 50 seats in the provincial legislature of British Columbia. NDP provincial governments, the *New Republic* commented after the Chilean coup last fall, are the "only democratic socialist governments in the Western hemisphere." The financial weekly *Barron's* lost no time in labelling BC premier Dave Barrett, a 42-year-old former social worker, "the Allende of the North."

In the first year and a half of its existence, the NDP government in BC created a publicly owned insurance company, which will be the largest insur-

ance company in Canada. It established public enterprises (called "Crown corporations" in Canada) to market oil and natural gas. It greatly increased severance taxes and royalty rates on extraction of the province's rich natural resources. It set up a new development corporation, backed by public money, to acquire, develop, and sell industrial property and buildings. The government's long-term goals include expanding this public sector and developing labor participation in the management of public enterprises, as well as sponsoring a range of social welfare measures.

These developments are worth looking at. So are the politics of the New Democratic Party—part "socialist," part "social democratic"—that seeks to bring them about. British Columbia may be a backwater in the stream of Canadian political evolution. Or it may be a harbinger of Canada's political future, and even of our own.

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Parts of this article appeared in somewhat different form in Derek Shearer, "British Columbia: Socialism in One Province," *Ramparts* Vol. 12, No. 7, February 1974.

Canadian politics, while generally similar to American politics, lean slightly to the left by U.S. standards. One symbol of this fact is that public economic

enterprise—traditionally a hallmark of “socialist” policies—is nothing new to Canadians. The Canadian National Railroad, Air Canada, and the Canadian Broadcasting System are all owned by the state. Recently, Trudeau’s Liberal government established the Canada Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC buys into foreign-owned companies, aiming to increase Canadian ownership of firms doing business in Canada. In July 1973, CDC made a successful take-over bid for Texasgulf, a mining company that owns the huge Kidd Creek mine in Ontario. And currently, Air Canada is planning a partnership with a private Canadian firm to take over two foreign-controlled aircraft manufacturers.

Another symbol of Canada’s “opening to the left” is the NDP itself, which has no precise parallel in American politics. The party grew out of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), an organization formed 40 years ago by Depression-struck farmers and workers in western Canada. The CCF won its first and only provincial victory in Saskatchewan in 1944. (It was defeated in 1964, then reelected in 1969.) Its program, over 20 years of power, emphasized the expansion of government services and public enterprise well beyond conventional Canadian limits. It established the first government-supported hospitalization program in Canada. It created a provincially owned auto insurance company to sell low-cost, no-fault insurance.* It expanded existing Crown corporations, as in telephone and electric power. It took some industries away from the private sector, such as natural gas distribution. And it established several new public enterprises, among them a bus line, tannery, woolen mill, box factory, shoe factory, seed-cleaning plant, brickyard, and marketing boards for fur, fish, and lumber.

Most of these businesses were financially successful. But after 1952, the initial burst of enthusiasm diminished. The party’s last new program before losing office in 1964 was prepaid health insurance. The measure was widely publicized and bitterly controversial; doctors opposed it, and some went on

strike. But the arrangement was beneficial and popular enough to spread to all the other provinces.

The health program and public auto insurance survived the Liberals’ accession to power in 1964, when most of the government-owned companies were sold to private bidders. Then, when the CCF (now the NDP) returned to power in 1969, it promptly established a government oil company—Saskoil—to compete with private firms. The NDP government, explaining the move, contended that the private oil industry was taking \$100 million a year out of Saskatchewan for investment elsewhere.

The CCF-NDP government in Saskatchewan, for all its attempts to expand public ownership, was never revolutionary, nor even wholly socialist, in conception. Nor was it able to push its reforms as far as it would have liked. The civil service, which never became populated with socialists, provided one set of obstacles. Too, the CCF had come to power in a relatively poor agrarian province, and it faced a hostile federal government. Without federal funds for new social programs, CCF leaders worried that taxes would have to rise and that they, in turn, would be voted out of office. The CCF also moved cautiously in changing labor-management relations in their government enterprises, since to do so would have made it difficult to attract needed industry to the province.

In 1961, the CCF joined with the Canadian Labour Congress (of AFL-CIO union affiliates) to form the New Democratic Party. The party was voted into office in Manitoba in 1969, and reelected last June under the leadership of Ed Schreyer, a debonair practitioner of the new media-intensive politics. Schreyer calls himself a social democrat, not a socialist. In deference to party tradition, his government did successfully introduce government auto insurance in 1970—in spite of a sizable public protest organized by the insurance industry. (The government program saves Manitobans as much as 15 percent a year on the total cost of most auto policies.)

But Schreyer balked at any intrusions into other private sectors, above all mining, which is one of the province’s most important industries. Three major companies produce almost all of Manitoba’s mineral products: Sherritt Gordon Mines, Ltd., controlled by Newmont Mining of New York; International Nickel Company, about 30 percent American owned; and Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting. A government-financed study by liberal economist Eric Kierans

* Saskatchewan drivers are required to pay for their compulsory insurance when they register their cars each year. It is estimated that 93 percent of premium income in the province is paid out in benefits, compared to an average of 75 percent in the United States. The major feature of the Saskatchewan plan—payments to injured parties regardless of their negligence in an accident—has been copied by some states in the U.S. such as Massachusetts and Michigan.

(who has been likened to John Kenneth Galbraith) recommended that Manitoba take over the entire mining industry during the next ten years. Schreyer rejected the report, saying, "The instrumentality of the Crown is not to be imposed when private enterprise is successful." Though his government has done much to improve welfare measures in the province, Schreyer evidently believes that most private enterprise in Manitoba is successful enough not to be tampered with.



At the federal level, the NDP has never seriously threatened the hegemony of the two major parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. It has acted as "Canada's conscience"; its very existence prods the Liberals to develop social welfare programs and thereby undercut the NDP's potential appeal. Since Liberals and Conservatives won the same number of parliamentary seats in the last federal election, the NDP currently holds the balance of power in Parliament, which has given the party more publicity and visibility. It recently pressured Trudeau, for example, into establishing a government oil company at the federal level.

Winning the West

The most publicity of all, however, has come from the NDP's solid victory in British Columbia in August 1972. Premier Dave Barrett is a flamboyant, immensely popular political personality. The NDP in BC is well to the left of the other western provincial governments and does not hesitate to advocate a "socialist Canada." British Columbia itself is rich and therefore politically significant. With a population of only 2.5 million, its gross provincial product in 1972 was estimated at \$12 billion, up approximately 11 percent from 1971. The wealth comes mostly from resource extraction industries: forestries, mining, commercial fishing, and agriculture. Another prime source is foreign trade: the export of raw materials from BC and the prairies, and the import of finished goods from the United States, Japan, and Europe.

The provincial government is correspondingly well off: budget surpluses are the rule. In 1970, the

government made \$61 million from its monopoly on the sale of beer, wine, and liquor. The new NDP government raised the royalty rate on coal from 10 cents to a dollar; doubled the royalty rate on oil (to an average of 30 percent of wellhead value); increased timber stumpage rates by 30 percent; and bought out some American firms that are now making profits for the province. "We are a resource-rich province," says Robert Williams, minister of natural resources. "I think we can share in those revenues to a degree that is unprecedented in North America. It will allow us to develop almost any social program we want, almost, I suspect, to the point where the only limit might be our own imaginations."

For the moment, of course, practical politics are more of a limitation than failure of imagination. Still, it is surprising what has been accomplished in a short time.

Insurance. Like the NDP in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Barrett's government has entered the auto insurance business. No-fault government auto insurance is now mandatory in the province and will be issued in conjunction with drivers' licenses. Private insurance agents (over 1,000 in BC) will be allowed to sell government auto policies at a fixed commission: 9 percent of the premium payable in 1974-75 and 7 percent the following year. This rate is not as lucrative as the 12.5-15 percent range that agents have been paid for selling auto insurance policies for private companies. But the government's original bill didn't allow independent agents to sell policies at all. An amendment giving them the right to do so provided the government with a trained sales force to handle distribution of the insurance. It also eliminated the independent agents as a source of opposition to the plan. In Manitoba, independent agents had been organized by Canada's large insurance companies to protest the NDP plan.

While the government insurance company has a monopoly on auto insurance, it will sell other kinds of insurance in competition with private firms. The government's only *prima facie* advantage here is that it can compel any municipality or public agency receiving government funds to purchase government insurance. The insurance program is a double-edged tool in the NDP's eyes. It offers lower rates to BC consumers. It also provides a flow of capital for investment in other government corporations and securities, and in new private-public investment ventures. This capital leverage gives the government new potential influence in the economic affairs of the province. Minister of Transport and Communications

Robert Strachan serves as president and chairman of the board of the government's insurance corporation.

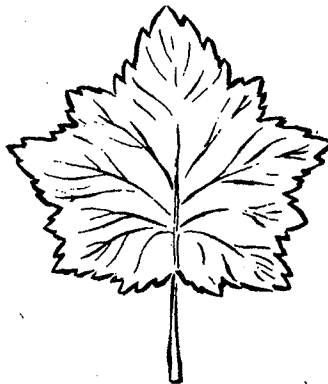
Protest against the creation of the government insurance company was half-hearted, since the battle had been lost previously in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The insurance companies have filed a suit contesting the legality of the government's action, but it is unlikely that the courts will decide in their favor. It does appear that private insurance companies have attempted some minor sabotage. They pulled out of the Traffic Indemnity Fund, which covers hit-and-run victims, and they have cancelled a number of policies of "risk" drivers. Such tactics cause short-term problems for the new government corporation as it is setting itself up, but they should not affect its long-term operations. There is also a problem of finding executive talent for the government's insurance company, according to an assistant to the minister of transport. But it is too early to tell how significant this will be.

John Mika, special assistant to the minister, estimated that the government corporation will do about \$25 million worth of general insurance business in competition with private firms, thereby capturing about a third of the market. Government rates for general classes of insurance will not be excessively low. Nor will the government engage in much advertising, since it expects consumers to purchase government insurance out of loyalty to the province and nationalist sentiments (many private Canadian insurance companies are divisions of American firms).

Energy. The NDP has replaced the province's public utilities commission with a seven-person energy commission headed by a former businessman, James Rhodes, whom newspapers have labeled "the red capitalist." The commission has the power to license gas stations and other energy businesses, and to fix wholesale and retail prices for gasoline, heating fuels, and related products. It may also examine the books of any licensed company, as well as require the company to furnish additional financial information.

The NDP's basic argument, which may find many takers in the United States in response to the energy crisis, is that energy industries should be looked upon as public utilities. The government has already established a Crown corporation to purchase and market natural gas in competition with Westcoast Transmission, the main natural gas wholesale distributor in BC. It has also set up a provincially owned oil company. In officially proclaiming the new energy act, Attorney General Alex MacDonald said, "We

regard it as first priority to protect the public of British Columbia and not allow ourselves to be merely the victim of outside forces and international oil companies."



Ironically, the government's actions in the energy field are not as radical as its parliamentary opponents contend. Major sections of the energy act were lifted wholesale from an old law called the Coal and Petroleum Products Control Board Act. Peter McNelly, political columnist for the *BC Province* wrote, "This act was BC law from 1937 until it was repealed in 1953 during Social Credit's first legislative session. All the NDP is doing is [restoring] a law brought in by a Liberal government during the Depression."

Public Enterprise. In BC, nearly 95 percent of the land and resources is publicly owned. Until the NDP came to power, private companies were making immense profits from the extraction of mineral and forest wealth at low royalty rates. The government has set about raising resource taxes until it feels it's getting its "fair share." This means, according to Natural Resources Minister Williams, that inefficient companies will be forced out of business and most likely taken over as government corporations. For private corporations that are efficient, it will still be the government, through its taxing policies, that decides the permissible rate of profit.

So far the government has taken over three forest-product firms at what are generally considered fair prices. Two of the three, money losers under American private ownership, are now making money, thanks primarily to a rise in pulp and newsprint prices around the world. Crown Zellerbach wanted to sell its plant at Ocean Falls to ITT, but the government blocked the sale and purchased the plant itself. The government also opposed the sale of Plateau Mills to

Rayonier Canada, Ltd.; again, it purchased the mill instead. Plateau is an interesting case, in that it had been established in 1944 by 42 Mennonite families from Saskatchewan. The government sought to protect the Mennonites' equity position in the company and to provide them with a continuing management role; to assure Canadian ownership of the operation now and in the future; and to relate future operations to experimental government logging districts. A district forester from the BC Forest Service was appointed to the company's board of directors.

Barrett's government has also created the BC Development Corporation. Its \$25 million capital can be used to acquire, develop, and sell industrial property and to make loans. The goal of the corporation is to develop secondary industry in the province and thereby reduce BC's reliance on resource industries and the import of finished products. In describing the possibilities for the new corporation, Attorney General MacDonald told the press, "Yes, the development corporation would go into partnership by taking equity capital. The thing is very flexible."

The NDP is not in favor of government ownership to the exclusion of all other considerations. The party's electoral platform promised, for instance, that the province's privately owned telephone company would be nationalized, but Barrett has announced that this is no longer a priority. According to an assistant to one of the ministers, "We took a look at nationalization, and the cost was incredible. What's more, the facilities of the phone company are in need of modernization. If we took over the phones tomorrow, then all the complaints about lousy phone service would be leveled at us. Better that people stay angry at the phone company for a while."

In a remarkable end run around the issue, Barrett announced at the NDP convention that the government employees' pension fund just happened to be purchasing shares in the phone company (prices had shot down after the NDP victory), and that the government would soon demand representation on the board and a say in policy as a major stockholder.

The major criticism of the government's public corporations comes from labor. "The NDP runs their Crown corporations worse than a private employer," complains one labor leader. The government has proceeded slowly in finding new management for the Crown corporations. Poor working conditions and intransigent managerial attitudes have already led to

strikes on the government railroad line and at a government pulp and paper plant.

Mike Lebowitz, a radical economist at Simon Fraser University, has proposed that the government create its own socialist business school to train workers and managers for Crown corporations. So far, the NDP seems to be repeating its mistake in Saskatchewan of failing to develop civil servants committed to socialist objectives. Partly out of necessity, the government has retained most of the private management in firms it has taken over.

Barrett's ministers are aware of these problems. Robert Williams, who is Barrett's chief "ideas man" in the cabinet, has stated,

We don't intend just to get into the game of state capitalism. We will have worker and community representatives on the boards of Crown corporations, and will also give workers some equity participation. . . . This could mean that we could find an alternate way in terms of sharing wealth between management and labor instead of the kind of sterile confrontations and shut-downs and games playing.

That will take time and trust and experience. But if it didn't happen, much of the real purpose for public involvement in companies would disappear. Just owning it to make money isn't quite good enough, even for the public.

In an interview, Williams refused to be more specific. I asked both him and Premier Barrett if they had studied workers' control arrangements in Yugoslavia; neither expressed any firm response. Either they know little about Yugoslavia or they were unwilling to admit to a reporter that they did.

My impression from talking with Williams is that he's serious about introducing new labor-management arrangements into the Crown corporations, but wants the government to be careful about how it is done. Many labor leaders are skeptical about experiments in workers' participation and control, often viewing such new arrangements (in some cases rightly) as threats to their bureaucratic power. To date, most of the Canadian labor movement, like its American counterpart, has shown little official interest in democracy in the factory and office.

Private enterprise in Canada will howl even louder than labor when and if the Barrett government starts to alter labor-management relationships seriously. Capitalism is predicated on workplace hierarchy. Should the government move against it in a bold way,

even in a few public corporations, business interests and the media are certain to mount an attack.

By the same token, introducing new democratic working arrangements in Crown corporations would be a step virtually without precedent in Western nations. Public enterprises exist in other countries—Renault in France, BOAC in Britain, Alfa Romeo in Italy, etc.—but all are run in a manner similar to private enterprise. Even in Sweden, where social democrats have ruled for decades, government enterprises have been slow to introduce industrial democracy. Barrett's government has a real opportunity in this area; one hopes it makes good on its promises.

Left and Right

The political and economic prospects for the NDP in British Columbia are good and should remain so in the near future.

Barrett, of course, does have his critics. The NDP itself is a sometimes-shaky coalition of the left that faces division within its ranks as well as opposition from the outside. For example, the party's Women's Committee has complained about the government's failure to establish a women's ministry, a promise that was part of the official party program in 1972. A feminist NDP member of the legislature, Rosemary Brown, has been holding hearings on the status of women in BC, and can be expected to offer a number of legislative proposals. She has already proposed that the BC Insurance Company offer coverage tailored to the needs of housewives.

Labor leaders in the BC Federation of Labour (the "Fed") are not overjoyed with Barrett either. Although Fed leaders fully supported the NDP in the last election, they have never been close to Barrett; their man Berger had been badly defeated in the previous election and lost the party leadership. Barrett, for his part, wants to avoid the impression that his government is controlled by the union leadership. According to labor reporter George Dobie of the *Vancouver Sun*, Barrett believes "it is preferable for unionists to affiliate with the party as individuals rather than as part of a union group." Dobie writes, "It is also said King [the minister of labor] is dedicated to his position that anti-labor legislation will not be replaced by anti-management legislation."

Such sentiments warm no hearts at the BC Fed. The Fed was particularly upset with the government's new labor act. While the act repeals much anti-labor legislation, it also creates a labor relations board with sweeping powers to intervene in labor-management

relations and to make binding orders on both parties. The labor movement has been unhappy with appointments to the board, contending that the people chosen are mostly professionals with little direct labor experience. "Undoubtedly the government would like to see labour and management resolve their own disputes in a 'peaceful' manner—through joint councils, as in Sweden," suggests the *Western Voice*, the radical alternative paper in Vancouver. "The existence of both a high degree of foreign corporate ownership and competing trade union federations, however, make that difficult at present. In the meantime, it will have to rely on a powerful Labour Relations Board to insure industrial harmony."

The difficulty for the BC Fed is that it has no place to go. The NDP is the only party that is at all pro-labor. In addition, the Fed is faced with the growing appeal of Canadian "breakaway" unions—not affiliated with American internationals—fueled by the desire of Canadian workers for organizational autonomy. Led by the Council of Canadian Unions, the Alcan workers at Kitimat recently defected from the United Steelworkers of America; Cominco workers in Trail have also been struggling to break away from the steelworkers and form their own union.

The BC Fed is sometimes sympathetic. In one strike, involving Local 69 of the Distillery, Rectifying, Wine and Allied Workers International Union of America, the BC Fed supported the workers against the collaborationist tactics of the international union (headquartered in New Jersey). This move got the BC Fed in hot water with the executive board of the Canadian Labour Congress. At the annual convention last fall, the Fed then passed a strongly worded resolution urging the Congress to "fight vigorously" for the complete functional autonomy of all Canadian locals within international unions. Faced with problems of this sort, the BC Fed will probably not seek to organize substantial opposition to Barrett from within the NDP.

Opposition parties in the BC parliament bicker among themselves and are unlikely to unite against the NDP at election time. The right-wing Social Credit party, which ruled the province for 20 years prior to the NDP victory in 1972, is looking for a leader to replace crusty 72-year-old W.A.C. Bennett, a stern patriarch who ran the party and the government like a medieval fiefdom. So far, Social Credit has found no one to match Barrett's popularity. Liberals and Conservatives are, for the most part, politically



insignificant, except insofar as they contribute to division among the NDP's opponents.

Business interests have not, as yet, begun to move against Barrett. He is genuinely popular with the voters, and an obvious or vicious attack could backfire. Most citizens do not view government intervention in the economy as a threat to private enterprise; rather they see it as assuring that Canadians enjoy control over their own resources. Also, the government has introduced a number of health and welfare measures that are highly popular. These include the highest minimum wage in the world, \$2.50; a guaranteed income of \$209 a month for people over 60; and free prescription drugs for people over 65. It is currently attempting to introduce a guaranteed income and guaranteed employment for all citizens, though it is not yet clear in what form.

Barrett could, of course, face some crisis in the future. Socialists are popular neither with Canada's "eastern establishment" nor with the chieftains of the American multinational corporations that control so much of Canada's economy. If Barrett's political popularity grows and he becomes a national figure, he will no doubt face mammoth opposition from powerful economic interests. On November 19, 1973, Barrett met with René Lévesque, leader of the Parti Québécois. In a public speech at the NDP convention a few weeks earlier, Barrett had called on the PQ to abandon separatism and to "build a socialist Canada

from shore to shore." The meeting between Lévesque and Barrett was reportedly fruitful, and Lévesque is coming to BC to take a firsthand look at "socialism in one province." The main strength of Trudeau's Liberal party is in Quebec. Should the PQ continue to grow, an alliance with it could signal a real opportunity for the NDP to win a national election. In such circumstances, Barrett would most likely be the party's national leader.

The NDP, of course, has not yet built socialism in one province. Nor is it likely to, if "socialism" means the abolition of private enterprise. But if socialism is "all about priorities," as Premier Barrett would have it, then we should judge the NDP's accomplishments by what they imply for the future. The government has made a good start toward controlling the province's economy. Regulation, taxes, and the judicious use of public enterprise have all played a role. Some welfare measures have been taken and others planned, and there is plenty of money in the public treasury to implement them. The NDP's priorities seem to be in the right order, and the prospects for the future look bright.

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RESEARCH NOTES

This article is based on a visit I made to Victoria and Vancouver in November 1973. My trip happened to coincide with the annual NDP convention, so I was able to see the party, as well as the government, in action.

Headquarters of the NDP are at 1881 East Hastings, Vancouver, BC. Copies of the party newspaper *The Democrat* can be obtained from that office on request.

If you are planning to visit the government in Victoria and wish to interview a particular minister or obtain particular information on one of the government's programs, address your request to: John Twigg, Press Secretary to the Premier, Parliament Building, Victoria, BC. Twigg, a former anarchist and sportswriter, is very friendly and will direct you to the proper office or person you're seeking. You can also write or call directly to the ministry in which you're interested.

General Articles on the NDP in British Columbia

"How Socialism is Changing Canada's Sprawling West," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 16, 1973.

"Canadian Premier is Shifting Economic Goals," *New York Times*, business and finance page, July 9, 1973.

"Norman Thomas, North," *Newsweek*, August 27, 1973.

"Socialist Experiment in Canada," by Peter Barnes, *New Republic*, October 13, 1973.

Anthony Astrakan, "A Profane Socialist and his Prospering Province," *Washington Post*, August 12, 1973.

Special issue of *Maclean's* magazine, June 1973.

The Canadian Economy

"Tiny CDC Keeps Profile Low," *New York Times*, business and finance page, September 7, 1973.

Mark Starowicz and Rae Murphy, eds., *Corporate Canada*. Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1972. Material drawn from *The Last Post*, a left muckraking journal.

Gary Teeple, ed., *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. Marxist approach.

Eric W. Kierans, *Challenge of Confidence*. Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1967. Liberal Keynesian approach.

David Lewis, *Louder Voices: The Corporate Welfare Bums*. Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1972. NDP national leader's attack on corporate subsidies.

Robert M. Laxer, *Canada Ltd.: The Political Economy of Dependency*. Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1973.

History of the CCF and the NDP

Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969. Outstanding work on the subject.

Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968. Especially his seminal essay, "Conservatism, Liberalism, and Socialism in Canada."

Martin Robin, *The Company Province*. Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1972, 2 vols. Best and most recent history of British Columbia from 1871 to 1972.

Daisy Webster, *Growth of the NDP in BC, 1900-1970*. Copies available for \$2.50 from NDP headquarters. Contains 81 political biographies of ranking NDP members.

"The New Democratic Party," special issue of *Canadian Dimension*, vol. 7, no. 8, April 1971. Single copies \$1 from Reader's Service, Canadian Dimension, PO Box 1413, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba.

CCF in Saskatchewan

Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 (revised edition). The standard work with additional, updated material.

John F. Lyons, "Insurance Innovation," *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 1967. Report on government auto insurance program in Saskatchewan.

CCF in Manitoba

"Schreyer's New Democrats," *Canadian Dimension*, n.d. (1973).

Walter Stewart, "Manitoba Votes a Resounding 'Maybe,'" *Maclean's*, September 1973.

Donald Swanson, "Manitoba's Election," *Canadian Forum*, September 1973.

Joy Cooper, "The Struggle for Public Automobile Insurance," *Canadian Dimension*, n.d. (1971).

"Manitoba's Auto Insurance Plan is a Success," *Province*, May 19, 1972.

BC Insurance Company

Copies of the two acts, the Automobile Insurance Act and the Insurance Company of British Columbia Act, are available from the Premier's press secretary, John Twigg. Detailed inquiries should be addressed to the minister of transport and communication, Robert Strachan.

Alex Young, "Strachan Blasts Insurance 'Sabotage,'" *Province*, August 21, 1973, and other articles in the clippings on file in the premier's press office, Victoria.

Energy

Peter McNelly, "'New' Energy Bill is a Rewrite," *Province*, May 21, 1973, and other articles from the same newspaper on file in the press office.

Copies of the energy act are available on request from the press office.

Public Enterprise

Press releases from the office of the minister of natural resources, Robert Williams, describe the government take-over of the three forest-product firms. Articles from the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province* on file in the press office describe the debate over the BC Development Corporation and report on conditions in the various Crown corporations. A three-part interview with Minister Robert Williams conducted by Barbara McLintok in the *Daily Colonist* in November 1973 discusses Williams's views on public enterprise in detail. Copies are available from Williams's office or the press office. All quotes from Williams in this article are from the McLintok series or from a personal interview.

Women's Issues

The NDP's Women's Committee publishes a regular journal titled *Priorities*. Subscriptions are available for \$2 a year from *Priorities*, c/o 2803 Wall St., Vancouver, BC.

Rosemary Brown, a member of the legislature and the NDP, has been holding hearings on the status of women in BC and on possible legislative remedies. For copies of her speeches and information on these hearings write Ms. Rosemary Brown, MLA, Parliament Building, Victoria, BC.

Labor

Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. Recent history of labor from a radical perspective.

Christine Krawczyk, "BC's Breakaway Unions," *Canadian Dimension*, n.d. (1973).

Allan Engler, "Fed Crawls Back into NDP Pocket," *Western Voice*, November 7-20, 1973, and numerous articles in this bi-weekly paper, which focuses on labor issues in BC. Subscriptions are \$5 a year from *Western Voice*, 324 Powell St., Vancouver 4, BC. Highly critical of the NDP.

Keeping Up with Developments in BC and the Rest of Canada

If you want to keep up with the doings of the NDP, two generally reliable sources are the independent left monthlies, *The Last Post* and *Canadian Dimension*. Subscriptions to the *Last Post* are \$4 a year from 430 King Street West, Suite 101, Toronto 135, Ontario. The *Dimension* costs \$5 a year from PO Box 1413, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba. It has a readers' service through which you can order back copies of the magazine, numerous pamphlets, and a number of the books mentioned in these notes.

From the Reader of the Conference on Alternative State & Local Public Policies held June 13-15, 1975 in Madison, Wisconsin. The reader was edited and compiled by Derek Shearer and Lee Webb.

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