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***Western Alienation or Mere Critique of Federal
Government Policies? Saskatchewan Social
Democrats' View of Federalism from 1900 to
Present¹***

Abstract

This article examines the views of Saskatchewan social democrats on federalism from the province's first agrarian protest movements, such as the Territorial Grain Growers Association, to the current NDP provincial government. The article illustrates that there has been an historical connection between Western alienation and social democracy in Saskatchewan, which was strongest from 1900 to 1944 and during the Blakeney government in the 1970s, but considerably weaker during the Douglas and Romanow governments. It is argued that the oscillation of Saskatchewan social democrats between Western alienation and mere criticism of federal government policies is due to changes in Saskatchewan's political economy throughout the 20th century. The article concludes by analyzing the current relationship between social democracy and Western alienation within the Saskatchewan NDP, examining the relationship between left-wing and right-wing versions of Western alienation, and questioning the assumption that Canadian social democracy has an irrevocable centralizing bias.

Résumé

Cet article examine la pensée sociale démocratique envers le fédéralisme de la Saskatchewan des premiers mouvements agricoles (comme les Territorial Grain Growers Association) jusqu'au gouvernement NPD contemporain. L'article démontre qu'il y a un lien historique entre le sentiment d'aliénation de l'Ouest canadien et la démocratie sociale en Saskatchewan. Celle-ci était plus forte entre 1900 et 1944 et pendant le gouvernement Blakeney des années soixante-dix, mais était considérablement plus faible pendant les époques des gouvernements de Douglas et de Romanow. L'article argumente que l'oscillation des social-démocrates de la Saskatchewan entre l'aliénation de l'Ouest et la simple critique des politiques du gouvernement fédéral est causée par les changements dans l'économie politique de la Saskatchewan à travers le 20^e siècle. L'article conclut en analysant la relation actuelle entre la démocratie sociale et l'aliénation de l'Ouest à l'intérieur du NPD de la Saskatchewan, en examinant la relation entre les versions de droite et de gauche de l'aliénation de l'Ouest et en questionnant l'affirmation que la démocratie sociale canadienne a une tendance centralisatrice irrévocable.

The relationship between social democracy and federalism has been generally unappreciated in literature concerning social democratic parties in Canada and around the world. Most European literature on social democracy, particularly literature emanating from Great Britain and France, assumes a unitary state and therefore does not deal with the question of federalism. Research does exist on both the German and Australian cases, which argues that the *Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) and the Australian Labour Party are very centralist in their outlook and that the federal system constitutes a limitation on the power of national social democratic parties to enact broad-sweeping reforms when they take power (Busch and Manow 2001; Parkin and Marshall 1994). However, in both of these cases, the effect of federalism on sub-national social democratic governments (the only kind to have existed in Canada) seems not to be a subject of academic interest. In Canada, most analysts follow Walter Young's argument in his seminal work *The Anatomy of a Party* that the CCF-NDP is invariably centralist in its thinking (Young 1969, 213–215; Penner 1992, 106; Whitehorn 1992, 3). In terms of Saskatchewan social democracy, both Seymour Lipset and David Laycock note that sentiments of Western alienation were part of the ideas of the early CCF in Saskatchewan before it took power (Lipset 1968; Laycock 1990). However, only passing reference to the views of Saskatchewan social democrats on federalism has been made in the works relating to the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP in the time period from when it first formed government in 1944 to present (Gruending 1990; MacKinnon 2003; Johnson 2004).

Using an approach that combines intellectual history and political economy, this article seeks greater understanding of the relationship between federalism and social democracy on a sub-national level through the exploration of the attitudes towards Canadian federalism within the ideas and activities of social democratic movements, parties, leaders, and governments in Saskatchewan from 1900 to 2005. It is illustrated that, during the 20th century, the discourse of Saskatchewan social democrats has oscillated between a moderate critique of federal government policies to full-out sentiments of Western alienation due to alterations in the political economy of the province. I begin by arguing that Western alienation, particularly discontent caused by the National Policy, was the primary stimulus to the creation of Saskatchewan agrarian protest movements in 1900 to 1932. These agrarian movements transferred their combination of social democracy and Western alienation to the early Saskatchewan Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) who used the threat of Eastern mortgage companies' foreclosure on farmland as an effective electoral weapon leading to their electoral victory in 1944.

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However, sentiments of Western alienation were not very prominent within the T.C. Douglas CCF government from 1944 to 1964. Instead of Western alienation, the Douglas government displayed a gentle critique of federalism that was confined to disapproving of federal government policies in the field of agriculture while endeavouring to promote enlarged federal jurisdiction in the areas of income taxes and social policy in return for federal financial assistance to build Saskatchewan's welfare state. The Allan Blakeney New Democratic Party (NDP) government from 1971 to 1982 renewed the tradition of Western alienation within Saskatchewan social democratic thought by strongly condemning the Liberal federal government for abandoning rural Saskatchewan, impeding the economic development of Western Canada, and attempting to gain control over the provincial jurisdiction of natural resources. Conversely, the Roy Romanow NDP government from 1991 to 2000 was less strident with the federal government than Blakeney had been. The Romanow government still attacked Ottawa for its lack of funding for agriculture, abandoning the Crow Rate, and not funding highway construction, but decided to follow a conciliatory approach in relations with the federal government and sought to work with Ottawa towards the achievement of common policy objectives, such as the national Child Tax Benefit Program, Social Union Framework Agreement, and the Charlottetown Accord. The article ends by arguing that recent action on the part of the federal government with regards to equalization has reignited Western alienation within the Saskatchewan NDP. I also contend that differences between right-wing and left-wing versions of Western alienation make it difficult to establish alliances between Western Canadian provincial governments in federal-provincial relations and reject Young's assumption that Canadian social democracy has an irrevocable centralizing bias.

Western Alienation Versus Critique of Federal Government Policies

Undoubtedly, the study of Western alienation over the last 25 years has been most associated with the work of Roger Gibbins. In one of his most recent works, Gibbins defines Western alienation as a "political ideology based on discontent with the West's subordinate position in the nation's cultural, economic, and political fabric" (Gibbins and Berdahl 2003, 4). For Gibbins, this ideology of Western alienation has several inter-related characteristics. First, beginning with the National Policy and the creation of a grain-based economy, the West has felt that it has been placed in an economically exploitative and even colonial relationship to central Canada. Second, Western Canadians feel that the Canadian political system operates in favour of Eastern provinces because institutional arrangements,

such as the Senate, diminish the West's voice in Ottawa and because traditional political parties, such as the Conservatives and Liberals, are beholden to Eastern voters who control a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. Since the 1970s, the call to reform the Senate to be elected and to guarantee an equal number of seats to each province has been an important hallmark of Western alienation. Third, Western alienation contains a populist impulse that leans towards giving power directly to average citizens—through the mechanisms of referendums, recall, and plebiscites—in order to counteract the entrenched bias towards Eastern Canada within the political system. Fourth, since the three prairie provinces received jurisdiction over natural resources in 1930, the Canadian West has generally wanted to ensure that provincial jurisdiction is respected and has not aimed at modifying the division of powers to give either the federal or provincial governments more power. Fifth, Western alienation involves the broad belief that federal program spending is consistently skewed in Quebec's favour and the West has given little support for official bilingualism or French-language rights. Finally, Gibbins notes that Westerners are frustrated Canadian nationalists who, with the exception of a small fringe group of Western separatists, want to reposition the West in Canadian political life in order to reflect its demographic and economic weight and allow it to fully contribute to the Canadian nation.

Recently, Gibbins' conceptualization of Western alienation has been challenged by Robert Lawson and by Shawn Henry. Both authors argue that feelings of regional alienation are not unique to Western Canada but are shared by other peripheral regions in Canada and question whether Gibbins mistakes Western alienation for political alienation in general as citizens become more cynical about political institutions (Henry 2002; Lawson 2005). Contrary to these critiques of Gibbins' definition of Western alienation, my analysis illustrates that Western alienation, within the context of Saskatchewan, is a reaction to the unique circumstances of the province's political economy since its inception in 1905. Therefore, Western alienation is a phenomenon that is rooted in Saskatchewan historical experience and goes well beyond the cynicism of recent Canadian political history.

It is my view that Gibbins' conceptualization of Western alienation is useful for my study of social democratic views towards federalism in Saskatchewan with two important qualifications. First, unlike Gibbins, I am not attempting to find congruence between public opinion in Saskatchewan and attitudes of Western alienation. Rather, I am applying Gibbins' definition of Western alienation to the discourse of social democratic political activists and leaders. Second, Gibbins'

conceptualization of Western alienation is generally insensitive to the ideological and spatial diversity within Western alienation. Gibbins presents Western alienation as a cohesive “political ideology of regional discontent” that embodies a certain set of beliefs and attitudes shared by Western Canadian citizens and their political elites (Gibbins 1980, 169). However, it is inappropriate to define Western alienation as an ideology. Rather, I would argue that Western alienation is a disposition that is compatible with more than one ideological position.² Therefore, there can be both left-wing and right-wing versions of Western alienation—a possibility that does not seem to be allowed by Gibbins’ conceptual framework. Further, Gibbins presents Western alienation as an ideology that is fairly uniform in its composition throughout the four Western Canadian provinces. By examining Western alienation in relation to Saskatchewan social democrats only, I illustrate that it is a concept that can be both ideologically and spatially confined to a single province. As such, I see Western alienation as a disposition that can vary both by place and by ideological orientation instead of being the common ideology of Western Canada.

Finally, as we will see, Saskatchewan social democrats’ view of federalism does not always meet the criteria of Western alienation as set out by Gibbins. As such, it was necessary to create the category of “critique of federal government policies” as an alternate description of the discourse of Saskatchewan social democrats concerning federalism. A critique of federal government policies is shallower and tamer than Western alienation in that it does not attempt to recall past injustices and call up feelings of alienation specific to the Canadian West. Rather, it is a criticism of federal government policies that stresses only fairness and is unafraid of the consequences of centralization and greater power exercised by the federal government.

Western Alienation and the Advent of Saskatchewan Social Democracy (1900 to 1933)

Saskatchewan produced a bumper crop of wheat in 1901 but the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) did not have the capacity to ship it and over half the crop spoiled. In response, a group of farmers at Indian Head founded the Territorial Grain Growers’ Association (TGGA) in December of that year for the purpose of lobbying governments and educating farmers. Like other agrarian protest movements that have emerged in North America since the 1880s, the TGGA was strongly against monopoly control of railways and the grain trade. In his presidential address to the 1903 convention, William Richard Motherwell claimed that the “elevator monopoly reigned supreme” and a delegate stated that farmers must work together to “show

the railway companies and the combines that we would have our rights” (TGGA 1903, 3–4). The TGGA’s anti-monopoly sentiment was galvanized by feelings of Western alienation. As one delegate stated “The officials in Montreal do not appreciate our position. They think that the people in the West are asking too much and therefore they do not intend to give what we ask” (Ibid. 11). The TGGA also passed a resolution calling for the immediate granting of province-hood to the Northwest Territories—full provincial powers would mean control over natural resources and Crown lands, as in British Columbia and the Eastern provinces. The TGGA’s main suggestion for reducing the power of Eastern monopolies over Saskatchewan’s wheat economy was the regulation of the railway and elevator companies by the federal government to ensure free competition. However, the TGGA suspected that government regulation would be insufficient to curb the power of Eastern railway and elevator companies over Western farmers’ lives. Therefore, merging sentiments of Western alienation with the social democratic goal of public ownership, the TGGA decided to explore the feasibility of co-operatively-owned elevators and government-owned railways.

The TGGA was renamed the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association (SGGA) upon the creation of Saskatchewan as a province in 1905. By 1910 the SGGA had a growing social democratic tendency within it. E.A. Partridge, an important activist within the SGGA, was the first social democratic thinker of significance in Saskatchewan. Partridge was concerned about the unequal distribution of wealth within society. As early as 1905 he stated that “unless the present opportunities of those who are already wealthy be in some way restricted, a quarter of a century will see ninety-nine percent of the wealth of North America the private property of one percent of the population” (Quoted in Knuttila 1994, 19). Ultimately, Partridge realized that farmers could only prosper under a mixed economy, with co-operative and government-owned enterprises existing alongside private businesses and farms. Resolutions passed at the 1907 and 1909 SGGA conventions, calling for state ownership of telephones and certain natural resource industries, attest that Partridge was not alone in his social democratic beliefs within the early Saskatchewan agrarian protest movement.

Starting in 1910, resolutions were presented at every SGGA convention calling for the SGGA to form a farmers’ political party to run against the “old-line” parties of Eastern Canada. However, the SGGA executive was consistently able to convince a sufficient number of delegates that co-operation with the Liberal party was a better avenue to take. In 1913, after the narrow defeat of a resolution on the entry of the SGGA into politics,

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Partridge invited those delegates interested in forming a new political party to meet at a local church. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of the No-Party League under a manifesto written by Partridge. If Partridge was the first social democratic thinker in Saskatchewan, the unsuccessful and short-lived No-Party League was the first social democratic party in Saskatchewan. Its manifesto links the social democratic goal of economic equality with Western alienation by arguing that the concentration of wealth and capital within a small group of Eastern companies, prospering behind a tariff wall, was responsible for the excessive freight rates and low grain prices that impoverished Western farmers (Partridge 1913, 1). The No-Party League's solution to this situation was a farmer-labour party that advocated populist measures, such as recall and referendum, and promoted public ownership, graduated taxation, and the institution of an advanced welfare state.

The 1920s saw the rise of a rival farmer organization to the SGGA in Saskatchewan. Disappointed with the conservatism of SGGA leadership and their continued support of the Liberal Party, a group of farmers in Ituna came together to form the Farmers' Union of Canada (FUC) in 1921. The FUC argued that it was useless to lobby governments or form farmer political parties in order to reduce the exploitation of farmers by Eastern business interests (Spafford 1978, 255). Rather, the solution was for farmers to assume control of their own affairs through the co-operative marketing of Canadian wheat so that Western farmers, not Eastern grain companies, would set grain prices. The FUC succeeded in organizing a co-operative grain company named the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the SGGA merged with the FUC to create the United Farmers' of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) or UFC (SS) in 1926.

With the depression and difficulties experienced by the Wheat Pool in the 1930s, the resistance to more radical solutions within Saskatchewan's farmers' movement evaporated and the 1931 UFC (SS) convention passed a resolution stating that the UFC (SS) would enter into provincial and federal politics as a political party. The UFC (SS) joined with the small Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan in 1931 to form the Farmer-Labour Group (FLG) to run in federal, provincial, and municipal elections. A platform was adopted by the FLG in 1932 containing many ideas that had already been put forth by Partridge, the FUC, and the UFC (SS) from 1921 to 1931. The FLG program began by contending that Western Canada was being treated as a colony of the East and that "the present economic crisis is due to the inherent unsoundness of the capitalist system, which is based on private ownership of resources and the capitalistic control of production and distribution" (Saskatchewan FLG 1933, 22). The rest of the program relied

on familiar ideas of the agrarian movement such as nationalization of railways, fixed prices for grain, lower freight rates, promotion of agricultural co-operatives, and state health insurance. Other parts of the program reflected the immediate circumstances of the depression, such a moratorium on foreclosures, seizures, and evictions of farmers from their land, crop insurance, and adjustment of farm debt. The most radical proposal was a "use-lease" system of land tenure whereby, upon the request of the landowner, the government could hold the title to the land and lease it to farmers who could pass their leases on to their children.

By 1932, Saskatchewan social democracy had clearly defined itself both organizationally and intellectually. As we have seen, this social democracy began with Partridge's ideas in 1905 and went through the No Party League, FUC, and the UFC (SS) until it achieved its fullest expression in the formation of FLG in 1932. Within this social democracy, there was a convergence of Western alienation and social democratic goals that was shaped by the structure of Saskatchewan's political economy in the early part of the 20th century. The foundation of early Saskatchewan social democracy was the exploitation of the prairie farmer by Eastern Canadian business interests represented by the CPR, grain company monopolies, and tariff-protected manufacturers. This monopolistic exploitation created not only economic hardship for farmers but an unequal distribution of wealth within society and a division between "those who produce and do not possess and those who possess and do not produce." Thus, the problem was not a lack of competition, as some of the Liberals in the early SGGG had supposed, but the private ownership of *certain parts of the means of production* (railways, banks, grain elevators, public utilities, and natural resources) under a competitive economic system. Moreover, this unjust economic system was propped up by traditional parties and daily newspapers that were financed and controlled by the very Eastern companies that benefited from the exploitation of Western farmers.

The solution to this situation was the creation of a co-operative economic system or a "Co-operative Commonwealth" consisting of a mix of public, co-operative, and private ownership. In terms of social policy, the state was to socialize health services and provide old age, unemployment, and accident insurance to all of its citizens. The new activities of the state would be paid for by a graduated income tax system so that the government would not be plunged into debt. The vehicle for the attainment of this social transformation was a farmer-labour party that was not financed by Eastern companies, was more democratic than traditional parties, and was dedicated to educating and organizing citizens towards achieving a Co-operative Commonwealth. Many early Saskatchewan social democrats

also believed in critiques of “partyism” and supported reforms such as recall, referendums, the abolition of the Senate, and proportional representation.

The FLG/CCF and the Use of Western Alienation to Get Elected (1933–1944)

The FLG joined the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) when it was created in 1932 in Calgary. The CCF met in Regina in 1933 and adopted the historic “Regina Manifesto.” The Regina Manifesto has been analyzed at length in other works (Young 1969, 38–67; Whitehorn 1992, 38–45). For our purposes it will suffice to note that the manifesto’s ideas were similar in many respects to themes that had already appeared within Saskatchewan social democracy. However, the manifesto proposed the amendment of the BNA Act to create a greater centralization of powers in the federal government, which did not fit well with Saskatchewan social democracy’s sentiments of Western alienation.

Just over a year after the adoption of the Regina Manifesto, the Saskatchewan CCF faced their first electoral challenge in the form of a provincial election that they contested under the FLG name and the leadership of M.J. Coldwell. Using the slogan “Humanity First,” FLG party leaders stressed debt adjustment, a planned economy, nationalization of banks, higher corporate taxes, and the socialization of health services (Hoffman 1983, 51). Further, using the example of Sweden, the FLG argued that it would develop Saskatchewan natural resources such as forests, clay, and coal under government ownership in order to finance debt adjustment for farmers and create a more advanced welfare state. The Liberals, the Conservatives, and the press heavily attacked the FLG’s use-lease land policy as the nationalization of land, the Sovietization of the province, and the condemnation of farmers to serfdom. The FLG insisted that, without the use-lease policy, the independent farmer would turn into a tenant farmer for Eastern mortgage companies. The FLG attempted to portray itself as defending farmers’ private property against Eastern mortgage companies and financial interests. It declared “What do you need at this time? First, to retain your home and land for your use, and prevent its confiscation by the financial interests ... The Farmer-Labour Group (CCF) pledges itself to enact immediately when returned to power, all the legislation necessary to secure to you the use and possession of your home and land” (Saskatchewan FLG 1934, 2). The call for the protection of the family farm from foreclosure was wrapped in a cloak of Western alienation as the FLG urged voters to “Strike a blow against the financial and industrial exploiters of Western Canada by voting Farmer-Labour” (Ibid. 3). The FLG’s appeals to

Western alienation were successful and it won five seats in the legislature with twenty-four percent of the total vote.

After the 1934 provincial election, the FLG officially changed its name to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and George Williams became its leader. The 1938 Saskatchewan provincial election was a four-way fight between the Conservatives, Social Credit, the CCF, and the Liberals. As an alternative protest party to the CCF, Social Credit argued that it would end the depression using a monetary reform scheme that would give farmers the money they needed to get out of debt. The CCF ran almost no urban candidates in 1938 and again concentrated on portraying itself as the party that would force Eastern mortgage and land companies to adjust farm debt and not foreclose on farmers' land. It dropped its controversial use-lease policy claiming instead that it would enforce a debt moratorium that would "protect the people against the imposition of usury, until the powers of entrenched finance give a square deal to the Farmers and Home Owners of this province" (quoted in Conway 1983, 141). Through portraying itself as the party that would protect farmers' private property from Eastern finance capital, the CCF was able to withstand the challenge of Social Credit and win ten seats in the election. With the poor results of the Social Credit and Conservative parties, the CCF emerged from the 1938 election as the only possible alternative to the governing Liberals.

When Williams went overseas to fight in World War II, the Saskatchewan CCF party united behind T.C. Douglas' leadership. Though more understated, Western alienation was still part of the Saskatchewan CCF's ideology and electoral appeal in the early 1940s. In 1942, as the official opposition in the Saskatchewan Legislature, the CCF put forth motions for supporting free trade and a state-owned railway to Hudson's Bay as ways to circumvent the power of Eastern manufacturers and railway companies (Saskatchewan CCF 1942). In 1944, Douglas declared that banks should be nationalized because Eastern banks operating in Western Canada "generally loan money when we least need it, and call it in when we most need it" (Douglas 1944, 2). Further, the 1944 provincial CCF platform dropped the Regina Manifesto's insistence on giving more powers to the federal government. Instead, the platform was steadfast in its promise to use the powers of the provincial government to the fullest in order to achieve the Co-operative Commonwealth. The platform further stated that a CCF government would press the federal government for more money to develop the provincial welfare state because "if Confederation is to continue and Canadian unity is to be realized, there will have to be a redistribution of income between the Federal and Provincial Governments

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to enable the Provinces to maintain and expand essential services” (Saskatchewan CCF 1943, 19).

The structure of Saskatchewan’s political economy again played an important role in the CCF’s use of Western alienation. While Saskatchewan’s farm economy had returned to prosperity due to wartime demand for wheat, the experience of the depression had convinced farmers of the need for government action to ensure that their land could not be foreclosed upon by Eastern mortgage companies if depression were to return. Douglas made masterful use of this latent fear of foreclosure among farmers by promising that he would resign as premier if a single farmer was forced off their land due to foreclosure. Further, the CCF’s promise of an expanded welfare state, to be partially paid for by the federal government, would provide security to both urban and rural voters if there was an economic downturn after the war ended. On the strength of an improved total vote in both urban and rural areas, the CCF won a massive victory in the 1944 provincial election taking 47 out of 52 seats.

The high prevalence of prosperous farmers within early Saskatchewan agrarian movements and the early Saskatchewan CCF has led some researchers to claim that the party was an expression of the *petite bourgeoisie* class fighting against the threat of industrial modernization for their own economic benefit (Naylor and Teeple 1972; Sinclair 1975; Conway 1978; Richards and Pratt 1979). These researchers argue that the farmers’ *petite bourgeoisie* class position determined their political behaviour. Under this analysis, the early Saskatchewan agrarian movement was made up of small capitalists defending their private property, contained in the family farm, against the exploitation of large capitalists concentrated in central Canada. Thus, the conclusion of these authors is that the political party that came out of the Saskatchewan agrarian movement—the CCF—was a populist party that was not dissimilar to Social Credit in Alberta.

In contrast to these arguments, I agree with David Laycock’s characterization of the agrarian protest movement and early CCF in Saskatchewan as “social democratic populists” and concur with his statement that “Class attachments do not necessarily produce all-embracing class logics ... the class basis of an organization should not be granted inordinate explanatory power” (Laycock 1990, 267). Early Saskatchewan social democracy was more of a populist movement than a class movement. While early Saskatchewan social democracy was interested in obtaining a better economic situation for farmers, it was also attempting to create a better society for all. In its advocacy of the reform of

capitalism, Saskatchewan social democracy displayed characteristics that were distinctly populist, such as stressing the worth of the people and their political supremacy, rejection of an intermediary between leaders and the masses, and directing an attack of the whole people against an enemy external to society (Richards 1981, 5–8). The difference between the social democratic populism of the Saskatchewan CCF and the other populisms that grew up on the prairies during the same time period was that it advocated the use of the state to protect farmers from monopoly capitalism through public ownership. The other populisms on the prairies in the first half of the 20th century focused on government regulation of the grain trade (crypto-liberalism), monetary reform (social credit) or direct legislation (radical democratic) as means to protect farmers from monopolistic exploitation (Laycock 1990). In their focus on using the state to reduce economic inequality through public ownership and the construction of a welfare state, Saskatchewan social democrats transcended their immediate class interests to move toward a vision of growing equality within society as a whole. It was this vision as much as the ideas of a mixed economy and a welfare state that the Saskatchewan agrarian protest movement had passed onto the CCF and that the CCF aimed to achieved upon being elected to government.

The Douglas Government's Support of Centralization (1944–1964)

Before 1944, the Saskatchewan CCF had an undeveloped and even contradictory vision of federalism. It had signed on to the Regina Manifesto with its centralist vision of federalism but had maintained in its 1944 election platform that it would use the powers of the provincial government to their fullest in order to achieve a Co-operative Commonwealth and had frequently expressed sentiments of Western alienation that it had inherited from early Saskatchewan agrarian movements. However, once in power, the federal–provincial relations inherent in governing a Canadian province forced the CCF to quickly develop a more comprehensive approach to federalism. The Saskatchewan CCF government articulated its complete and coherent vision of Canadian federalism at the Dominion–Provincial Conferences on Reconstruction in 1945 and 1946 where it argued for a quite centralist system of federalism. For the most part, the Saskatchewan position at the reconstruction conferences supported the federal government's vision of social security contained in the *Green Book on Reconstruction*, which sketched a centralized welfare state where the federal government would provide unemployment assistance and health insurance to all Canadians. In fact, Douglas was the only premier to support

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the *Green Book* that other provinces, particularly Quebec and Ontario, saw as an unjustified intrusion on their provincial jurisdiction.

The Douglas government orientated its federal-provincial relations from the premise that provinces did not have the financial resources to effectively discharge their constitutional responsibilities. The solution to this asymmetry was for provinces to surrender their jurisdiction over personal and corporate income taxes to the federal government. The federal government could then redistribute personal and corporate income tax revenue in such a way as to help poorer provinces, like Saskatchewan, in addition to distributing federal grants to assist all provinces in providing improved health and social services that would meet “a minimum standard across Canada” (Government of Saskatchewan 1945, 504). The CCF was even willing to accept minimum standards in the field of education in exchange for federal grants and proposed a national labour code to “eliminate inter-provincial legislation competition for industry at the expense of labour” (Government of Saskatchewan 1946, 77). With the federal government leading the construction of the welfare state, the Saskatchewan CCF government argued every Canadian would come to enjoy comprehensive services regardless of whether they lived in a rich or poor province.

The Douglas government’s proposals to the reconstruction conferences illustrated that the Saskatchewan CCF government definitely did not hold a provincial rights position concerned with maintaining and expanding provincial jurisdiction. Further, populist proposals such as recall and referendum, which had been waning in influence over Saskatchewan social democracy since 1930, were now finally put to rest as the CCF embraced cabinet-dominated government. The last vestige of populism in the Saskatchewan CCF constitution was eliminated when the clause authorizing the recall of CCF MLAs by their constituency association was abolished in 1945.

Yet, the Saskatchewan CCF’s view of federalism was not devoid of concerns emanating from the tradition of agrarian protest within Saskatchewan social democracy. The Saskatchewan CCF remained in favour of abolishing the Senate. It also harshly criticized the federal government’s inactivity on agricultural issues, such as the provision of seed grain and price supports for wheat. Further, while willing to accept centralization in terms of social and agricultural policy, the CCF government defended provincial jurisdiction over natural resources when the federal government, prompted by the CPR, threatened to disallow the CCF’s Mineral Taxation Act, which imposed levies on formerly tax-free

subsurface mineral rights. The CCF argued that natural resources were a provincial jurisdiction, urged Saskatchewan citizens to write letters to the federal government, and held massive rallies around the province to denounce the federal government's action, which forced the federal government to back away from its threat of disallowance. Thus, the Saskatchewan CCF's approach to federalism under Douglas could be best described as support for centralization in exchange for financial resources to build a Canada-wide welfare state coupled with a critique of federal agricultural policy and the defence of provincial jurisdiction over natural resources.

The Saskatchewan CCF's vision of federalism in the 1950s remained very similar to the model that it argued for at the 1945 and 1946 reconstruction conferences. The CCF government consistently expressed their satisfaction with federal government collection of corporate and personal income tax while urging the federal government to set up a national welfare state comprising health insurance, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and federal grants for education (Douglas 1955). Douglas viciously attacked the granting of corporate and personal income taxing powers to Quebec in 1955 because he thought that it undermined the ability of the federal government to direct the economy through fiscal policy and to build a country-wide welfare state (Shackleton 1975, 222–223).

While the CCF government was willing to co-operate with the federal government in terms of social policy, agriculture would continue to be an area of major friction between the CCF and federal government during the 1950s. After CCF legislation stipulating that payment on the principal of a farmer's mortgage be suspended for one year in the event of a crop failure had been found *ultra vires* by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1948, the CCF government introduced another piece of legislation intended to protect insolvent farmers. However, the Canadian Bankers' Association, the Dominion Mortgage and Investments Association, and the federal government brought the legislation before the Supreme Court of Canada where it was found to be unconstitutional as well. The largest issue in agriculture in Saskatchewan in the 1950s was the negotiation between the federal and the provincial governments for the building of a dam along the South Saskatchewan River to provide irrigation. Discussions had actually begun as early as 1946 but the new federal Liberal government in 1948, under Louis St-Laurent, refused to move on the issue even though the Saskatchewan government agreed to pay over half of the costs. The Saskatchewan CCF government argued that St-Laurent's position was unfair since the federal government was constructing the St. Lawrence

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Seaway at no cost to Quebec or Ontario. It was not until Diefenbaker became Prime Minister in 1958 that an agreement for a dam was concluded.

The end of the fourth term of the Douglas government bought about two important innovations in the Saskatchewan welfare state that were made possible by increased federal transfer payments, which the CCF government had been pushing for since 1945. First, increased federal financial support led the CCF government to pass the Social Aid Act in 1959, which modernized social assistance in Saskatchewan and increased welfare rates. The second and more significant innovation was the expansion the province's hospitalization insurance program into Medicare. In 1957 the federal government under Diefenbaker committed to sharing the costs of any provincial hospitalization plan that offered universal coverage. The CCF had stated in its 1944 election platform that socialized medicine would take "considerable time" to implement and this increased federal support finally freed up the necessary fiscal resources for the CCF government to proceed with Medicare, which it did after the provincial election in 1960.

Alterations within the political economy of Saskatchewan were responsible for the toning down of the CCF's Western alienation rhetoric under Douglas. First, stable demand for grain in the postwar era combined with the orderly marketing practices of co-operatives and the Canadian Wheat Board to provide high and steady wheat prices. The discovery of oil, uranium, and potash and their development by private capital diversified Saskatchewan's economy and provided employment, increased government revenues, and had positive economic spin-off effects. The expansion of Saskatchewan's public sector, welfare state, and infrastructure also provided employment and positive economic growth. Under such favourable economic circumstances, Saskatchewan farmers had little to fear from Eastern mortgage companies concerning foreclosure on their land. Second, with the diversification of the Saskatchewan economy, the province's urban population had increased from twenty-one percent of the population in 1941 to forty-three percent in 1961 (Archer 1980, 361-362). These new urban voters were less concerned with traditional agrarian grievances concerning freight rates, tariffs, and grain prices.

Finally, with the Canada-wide postwar economic boom and popularity of Keynesianism, the federal government metamorphosed from a force protecting the unfair monopolies of Eastern grain companies and railways to a possible source of cash to fund the expansion of the Saskatchewan welfare state. The construction of "modern federalism," in which the

federal government took the lead on the construction of the Canadian welfare state, led the Saskatchewan CCF to emphasize the positive role that central government could play in the creation of innovative social policy (Simeon and Robinson 1990, 129–153). Thus, the Douglas CCF government moderated its Western alienation rhetoric concerning the use of provincial powers to the fullest in order to enhance access to federal money that it could use to build its social programs. Instead of Western alienation, the Douglas government approach to federalism could well be described as one of critique of federal government policies, particularly in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, which did not recall past injustices or grievances specific to the West and instead focused on basic issues of fairness.

The Blakeney Government and the Fight for the Crow Rate and Control of Natural Resources (1971–1982)

The NDP government from 1971 to 1982, under the leadership of Allan Blakeney, renewed the tradition of Western alienation within Saskatchewan social democracy that had faded away under Douglas. Blakeney adopted the rhetoric of Western alienation in four primary areas: agriculture, resource taxation, economic policy, and the constitution. The platform with which the Saskatchewan NDP was elected in 1971 strongly criticized the federal Liberal government on its agricultural policy. It stated that the federal government's policies will "lead to the take over of Saskatchewan by agribusiness. Instead of family farms, there will be huge corporate enterprises run by a few hired hands" (NDP 1971, 3). The platform went on to promise that an NDP government would urge the federal government to institute guaranteed grain prices, provide capital grants to farmers, pass legislation to allow the creation of producer-controlled national marketing boards, and convert a substantial part of the national defence budget into food aid for Third World countries. The platform also attacked the federal Liberal government for abandoning rural Saskatchewan by closing post offices, allowing the shutdown of railway stations and branch lines, and reducing grain delivery points.

In late 1974, the Saskatchewan NDP government became increasingly concerned about suggestions emanating from Ottawa concerning the elimination of the Crow Rate—a subsidy that had been paid to railway companies by the federal government since 1897 in order to reduce freight rates on eastbound grain. Throughout the rest of its time in office, the Blakeney government fought hard against the federal government's proposed changes to the Crow Rate, which would have eliminated fixed freight rates for grain. The Saskatchewan NDP government declared that the Crow Rate must be maintained because it was part of the bargain of

Confederation whereby Saskatchewan agricultural producers accepted inflated prices caused by tariff walls in exchange for low freight rates for grain and quality railroads. The NDP argued for public investments by the federal and provincial governments to make improvements to the rail system, such as increasing main line capacity, branch line rehabilitation, and equipment replacement. The Blakeney government even put these principles into practice by purchasing 1,000 hopper cars to be used by the railways free of charge to move grain within their Western division. The government argued that such public investments would give governments equity in the railway system and “should ultimately lead to a total public utility rail system, where the only goal would be to increase Canadian exports, not to fatten the pocketbooks of corporate shareholders” (Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture 1982, 4). In language that closely resembled early Saskatchewan social democrats, a pamphlet, widely distributed in February of 1982, stated:

The railways hold a powerful monopoly position over the movement of grain to port from Canada's land-locked prairies. What is needed is a national transportation policy which looks beyond the interests of the railway companies, to the national interest. What we need is a transportation policy which recognizes that the crucial question is not whether the CPR can afford the Crow Rate, but whether Canada can any longer afford the CPR. (Ibid. 5)

The Saskatchewan NDP also was involved in an on-going fight with the federal government concerning resource taxation throughout its time in office in the 1970s. In the autumn of 1973, the federal Liberal government introduced a freeze on the price of domestic oil and a tax on exported oil in reaction to the emerging OPEC crisis—a move that Alberta and Saskatchewan regarded as direct interference in provincial jurisdiction over resources. The federal government's actions prompted Blakeney to become a defender of provincial rights and autonomy using Western alienation rhetoric. Soon after the federal policy was announced, Blakeney did a provincially televised address to emphasize that oil and gas resources clearly belong to provinces and that his government would “capture for the people of Saskatchewan the full benefit of all future windfall profits” (Blakeney 1973, 2). He also wrote an article in the *Globe & Mail* arguing that Canada was facing a “crisis of regional inequality” in which the comfort of residents of the Eastern provinces was being prioritized over the prosperity of Saskatchewan (Blakeney 1974, 6). Aside from rhetoric, the Blakeney government responded to the federal government's proposal with legislation of its own that nationalized, with compensation, oil and gas freehold rights of twenty-five companies to gain more complete public

control of the province's oil reserves and placed a royalty surcharge on oil in order to recoup royalties that were currently going to the federal government. Shortly after its passage, the legislation was challenged in courts by the federal government and a Calgary-based oil company on the basis that it violated the federal-provincial division of powers as set out in the constitution. Appreciating the significance of the case to provincial rights over resources, the Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec governments intervened on the side of Saskatchewan.

During its first term, the Saskatchewan government was also sued by a potash company and the federal government on the grounds that its potash policies were unconstitutional. Just five days before the 1975 provincial election, a Saskatchewan judge ruled in favour of the potash company and the federal government. Blakeney promised that Saskatchewan would appeal the ruling and said that the federal government's intervention in the case was part of a "federal campaign to obtain control over Saskatchewan resources" (Anonymous 1975, 1). As such the NDP's 1975 election platform claimed that the most important issue of the campaign was ensuring that "the people of Saskatchewan" benefit from the extraction of the province's natural resources instead of foreign multinational corporations and the federal government (NDP 1975, 1-2). During the campaign, Blakeney repeatedly stressed that his government needed a new mandate in order to fight Ottawa to retain provincial control of natural resources.

During its second term, the Blakeney NDP government made the boldest move of its time in power. After a variety of legal battles had made it clear that the collection of potash royalties in the future was becoming uncertain, the NDP government introduced a law allowing it acquire by purchase or expropriation any relevant potash assets in Saskatchewan. With both the federal government and potash companies anxious to avoid expropriation, several companies voluntarily sold their holdings to the NDP provincial government. What is interesting in both the oil and potash examples was that Western alienation arguments of unjust intrusion of the federal government into provincial jurisdiction were used to justify the social democratic policy of nationalizing certain parts of the province's resource extraction industry. Similarly, the Saskatchewan NDP argued that increased resources royalties were to be used to pay for the expansion of Saskatchewan's welfare state and therefore federal government intrusion into provincial jurisdiction was standing in the way of creating a more equal society in Saskatchewan. Thus, the assertion of provincial autonomy was necessary for the achievement of the social democratic goals of a more equal society and nationalization.

*Western Alienation or Mere Critique of Federal Government Policies?
Saskatchewan Social Democrats' View of Federalism from 1900 to Present*

Throughout its first mandate, the Blakeney government criticized the federal government for not controlling inflation, which was eating away at citizen's purchasing power and allowing corporate profits to soar while worker wages stagnated. The NDP Finance Minister in his 1973 budget address argued that responsibility for the twin problems of unemployment and inflation "rests with the Federal Government, since it has the fiscal and monetary capacity to alter this situation in a significant way" (Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1973, 10). The Saskatchewan government denounced the federal government for creating "Corporate tax loopholes," particularly for large foreign companies, at the expense of the "average taxpayer" (Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1974, 5-6; Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1975, 5-6). The NDP was also critical of the federal government's lack of initiatives to create secondary manufacturing in Western Canada. In his 1974 budget address the Finance Minister stated that "The assumed 'natural' advantage of the East which attracts industry is by no means natural. Rather, it is the result of the discriminatory national policies which have been pursued over the past 100 years" (Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1974, 8). Reminiscent of early Saskatchewan social democrats in the SGG or UFC (SS), the Finance Minister went on to declare: "We need a national development policy which neutralizes the historic advantages awarded by successive old-line party governments to Central Canada" (Ibid.).

Blakeney's final two terms in office were also characterized by considerable animosity between the federal government and the Saskatchewan government over economic policies. The Blakeney government severely criticized the federal government's "tight" monetary policy of high interest rates by the Bank of Canada in order to keep inflation down (Government of Saskatchewan 1982). The Blakeney government held that high interest rates choked economic growth leading to higher unemployment while not substantially lowering inflation and benefiting banks instead of "average" Canadians. Moreover, the monetary policy of the federal government hurt the West and its dynamic and growing economy based on resource extraction. Instead of monetarist economic policy, the Saskatchewan government proposed Keynesian solutions, such as low interest rates and direct government investment in the economy to boost economic growth.

Finally, in its last term in government, the Blakeney administration took an antagonistic approach to the federal government during the negotiations leading up to the repatriation of the Canadian constitution. The Blakeney government joined the "Gang of Eight" and opposed Trudeau's initial package of constitutional changes and unilateral patriation of the

constitution. The Saskatchewan NDP government pushed for a clear provision in the new constitution to give provinces full control over their resources and ensure a very limited role for the Senate in constitutional amendment since the Blakeney government was officially in favour of abolishing the Senate (Government of Saskatchewan 1981). The Blakeney government was also against an entrenched federal Charter of Rights because it would give the courts too much power over public policy and it did not support a constitutional veto for the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In the end, Saskatchewan succeeded in getting a constitutional amendment securing provincial control over resources, an amending formula that did not contain a veto for any province, and limited the role for the Senate in exchange for its support of an entrenched Charter.

We can see from the above discussion that, along with its social democratic commitment to the expansion of the welfare state and public enterprise, the Blakeney government displayed a consistent sentiment of Western alienation as it argued against the federal government's agricultural, economic, and constitutional policies and fought to establish complete provincial control over natural resources. It is clear that the Blakeney government relied much more on appeals to Western alienation in its political rhetoric and was more protectionist of provincial jurisdiction than the Douglas government had been. As such, the Blakeney government of the 1970s harkened back to the era of early Saskatchewan social democracy, which used Western alienation as a motivating force for the accomplishment of economic and social reforms, such as nationalization of resource industries and the use of resource royalties to expand the provincial welfare state.

Alterations in the political economy of Saskatchewan were important in stimulating the renewal of Western alienation as a part of Saskatchewan social democracy. The Blakeney government had three problems that the Douglas government did not face that accounted for Blakeney's heightened sense of Western alienation: world economic depression, a weak farm economy, and sustained federal intrusion in the jurisdiction of natural resources. The world economic depression in the 1970s created the impetus for the federal government's modest steps towards monetarism and subsequently opened it up to criticism from the Saskatchewan government, which still followed a more Keynesian outlook. The declining world demand for grain led to low prices and overproduction of wheat, which created a weak agricultural economy within Saskatchewan, leading to calls from farmers and the provincial NDP government that the federal government was not doing enough to help rural Saskatchewan. The increasing reliance of the Saskatchewan economy on mineral extraction

combined with the threat of federal intrusion on provincial control of resources at a time of rising world oil and potash prices to make the Blakeney government very protective of the natural resources it believed were the key to the province's future prosperity. The Blakeney government saw resource revenue, not federal cash, as the means to expand the province's welfare state. It is notable that the additions to the Saskatchewan welfare state in Blakeney's time, such as free dental care for children under 12 and a prescription drug plan, were not cost-shared with the federal government nor were they part of any Canada-wide initiative.

In many ways, the Blakeney government was part of the "province-building" agenda embraced by several provincial governments in the 1970s that was contrary to the nation-building agenda of an activist federal government under Trudeau (Black and Cairns 1966). The Blakeney government wanted to collect resource revenue and distribute it fairly within the province through universal and free social programs while the Trudeau government wanted resource revenue to reduce its deficit, pursue its own national social programs, and keep the price of energy low for Eastern residents. Moreover, the emergence of a thriving resource sector made Saskatchewan part of the booming Western Canadian economy of the 1970s that challenged the traditional industrial base of Central Canada, which was dependent upon cheap Western oil. Indeed, after the OPEC crisis, the Canadian West experienced high economic growth and near full employment while the Eastern Canadian economy was mired in a recession and saw a dramatic rise in unemployment. In such conflict between heartland and former hinterland, clashes between the Saskatchewan NDP and the federal government were inevitable.

The Romanow Government's Conciliatory Approach to Federalism (1991–2000)

The Saskatchewan NDP government, under the leadership of Roy Romanow, was definitely less strident with the federal government than the Blakeney government had been. In constitutional matters, its positions often mirrored those of the federal government. The Romanow government came out strongly in favour of the federal government-sponsored Charlottetown Accord, which the Saskatchewan NDP argued struck the right balance between a strong central government and limiting the federal government's spending power, created an effective and elected Senate, protected existing provincial jurisdiction, recognized Aboriginal rights, and strengthen the federal commitment to equalization (Saskatchewan Justice Constitutional Unit 1992). The closeness of the 1995 Quebec referendum result motivated Romanow to help spearhead the process whereby premiers outside of Quebec agreed to the Calgary Declaration that

recognized the “unique character of Quebec society” but followed the “equality of provinces” line of thinking in insisting that if any future constitutional amendment conferred powers onto Quebec that these powers must be available to all provinces (Marchildon 2004, 383). The Saskatchewan NDP government was strongly supportive of the Calgary Declaration and, after holding consultations with the Saskatchewan public, passed a resolution in favour that was supported by all opposition parties. The Calgary Declaration was intended to be supportive of the federal government’s Plan A approach of constructive efforts to keep Quebec in Canada. On the other hand, Saskatchewan was one of only two provinces to intervene in the federal government reference to the Supreme Court over Quebec’s right to secede from Canada. Saskatchewan took a very hard line, or Plan B approach, by agreeing with the federal government that Quebec has no right to secede unilaterally under Canadian constitutional law or international law (Attorney General of Saskatchewan 1997; Whyte 1997). Similarly, the Saskatchewan NDP government was vocally supportive of the federal government’s 1999 Clarity Bill that gave the federal Parliament the power to set the terms under which Quebec could secede from Canada.

The Romanow government maintained this conciliatory tone with the federal government on matters of social policy. Saskatchewan successfully lobbied the federal government to create the national Child Tax Benefit Program in 1997 and played a critical role in creating a consensus among the provinces during the negotiations on the benefit’s implementation (Government of Saskatchewan 2001, 17–18). The Saskatchewan NDP government hailed the federal program as the first addition to the Canadian welfare state in 30 years and sought to take credit for its creation. The Saskatchewan government also strongly supported the federal government’s efforts to establish the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) and acted as the provincial co-chair of the negotiations. In particular, Saskatchewan led the fight against Ontario’s and Alberta’s advocacy of Thomas Courchene’s ACCESS proposal, which made the case that all responsibility for social policy should be handed over to the provinces and that transfer payments should be replaced with greater provincial taxation powers (Marchildon and Cotter 2001, 373). As part of this decentralist proposal, national standards would be eschewed in favour of provinces formulating their own guidelines.

Unlike the ACCESS proposal, the Romanow government wanted the SUFA to maintain “national standards, and the federal spending power that is used to protect them” while at the same time preventing the federal government from creating social programs in isolation from provincial input, as well as making unilateral decisions to remove funding from

cost-shared programs (Romanow 1998). In the end, Saskatchewan was able to broker a deal between the provinces, excluding Quebec, and the federal government that left the federal spending power and ability to set national standards intact in exchange for increased transfer payments for health care. However, SUFA still did limit the federal government's power by allowing provinces to opt out of federal social programs with full compensation to be spent in the "same or related policy area," requiring any new federal government social policy initiative to be approved by a majority of provinces and obliging the federal government to consult with provincial governments at least one year prior to renewal or significant changes to transfer payments (McIntosh 2002). The Saskatchewan NDP believed that SUFA was representative of its co-operative vision of federalism where the federal government had the responsibility to establish frameworks that served the national interest but the decision making process remained respectful of the fact that different provinces had different needs, desires, and aspirations (Romanow 1997, vii–x). It felt that administrative changes such as SUFA would go eighty percent of the way to accommodating Quebec's desire for greater autonomy while the remaining twenty percent of the accommodation would have to come from the constitutional changes starting from the premises of the Calgary Declaration (Marchildon and Cotter 2001, 374–375).

Despite its generally conciliatory tone towards Ottawa, the Romanow government did criticize the federal government in a number of areas during the 1990s. In its first term, the Romanow government claimed that cuts to transfer payments from the federal government necessitated cuts to provincial social programs in order to eliminate its deficit (Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1992, 15). In its second term, the NDP argued that large cuts to transfer payments were impeding its ability to reinvest in vital social programs such as health care (Saskatchewan Department of Finance 1998, 14). The government was also critical of the federal government establishing the Millennium Scholarship Fund instead of increasing block transfers to post-secondary education (Garcea 1998, 212). In its 1995 and 1999 election platforms, the NDP attacked the federal government for lack of funding for agriculture, elimination of the Crow Rate, and not funding highway construction (NDP 1995, 55; NDP 1999, 15–16). Moreover, the Romanow government urged the federal government to fight against the unfair agricultural subsidies of the European Union and the United States in trade negotiations to ensure "fair market-driven prices" and called on Ottawa to come up with a \$1 billion trade equalization payment to offset the negative effect of EU/US subsidies on Canadian farm income (NDP 1999, 15). It also called on the federal government to strengthen the Wheat Board and opposed the removal of the board's monopoly over barley. Finally,

under pressure from the province's gun lobby, the Saskatchewan government supported Alberta's constitutional challenge against the federal government's gun registry initiative. However, besides these reproaches, the Romanow government never fundamentally challenged the federal government's power as the Blakeney government had done. Romanow never deployed the rhetoric of Western alienation and his government was one of the strongest allies of the federal government in federal-provincial negotiations. It is clear that Romanow decided to follow a conciliatory federalism, which merely critiqued federal government policies in the areas of agriculture and transfer payments, and sought to work with the federal government in achieving common policy objectives, such as the Child Tax Benefit Program, SUFA, and the Charlottetown Accord.

The reason for Romanow's temperate tone with the federal government compared to Blakeney was changes in Saskatchewan's political economy. First, the Romanow government was left with a large deficit by the previous Conservative government and faced decreasing transfer payments from the federal government after the 1995 federal budget. Unlike Blakeney, who funded the expansion of the Saskatchewan welfare state through resource revenues, the Romanow administration's large deficit and debt made it dependent upon negotiation with the federal government in order to receive adequate transfer payments to maintain its existing social programs. Similar to the Douglas government, the Romanow government saw federal transfer payments as the only means of attaining funding for its provincial welfare state. Even if it disagreed with provinces like Quebec and Alberta on the degree of decentralization, the Romanow government subscribed to same opinion as all other provinces in SUFA negotiations, that federal government involvement in provincial jurisdiction must take place within a predictable and mutually agreed upon fiscal framework (Prince 2003, 127). Only such a framework could prevent the repetition of the federal government unilaterally making massive cuts to transfer payments, as had happened in 1995.

Second, due to the struggles of the Blakeney government, the Romanow government had constitutional protection for its natural resource revenues, which removed a major stimulus to sentiments of Western alienation. The provincial government's resource revenues were secure and the Romanow government had no need to fight against federal intrusion in this area. Finally, the agricultural sector in Saskatchewan in the 1990s continued to decline and the Saskatchewan economy was less dependent on farming as the services, resource, and manufacturing sectors grew and the pace of urbanization accelerated. The decreasing importance of agriculture to

Saskatchewan's economy and dwindling numbers of rural voters may have made the Saskatchewan NDP government less confrontational with the federal government in the area of agriculture, which had been an area where Saskatchewan social democrats had traditionally used appeals to Western alienation.

Conclusion

As we have seen, there has historically been a connection between Western alienation and social democracy in Saskatchewan, which was strongest from 1900 to 1944 and during the Blakeney government but considerably weaker during the Douglas and Romanow governments, which were merely critical of federal government policies. It is interesting to note that one commonality within Saskatchewan social democracy's view of federalism, whether in a period of Western alienation or mere criticism, was that it defended provincial autonomy in the area of resources and was always open to federal participation in the areas of social policy and agriculture. Therefore, with the federal government removing the main source of Western alienation in the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP through ceding complete control over natural resources to the provinces in the 1982 constitution, Western alienation within the Saskatchewan NDP appeared to be waning at the end of the 20th century.

However, the bilateral agreements signed in 2005 by the Liberal federal government with the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland to exempt their equalization payments from clawbacks due to their offshore oil revenues has brought the question of resources rents once again to the heart of Saskatchewan Ottawa relations. The issue of excluding revenues from oil and other non-renewable resources from the equalization formula has reignited sentiments of Western alienation within the Saskatchewan NDP. The Calvert government is adamant that Saskatchewan should receive the same deal as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and sees "absolutely no reason for different treatment of energy revenue between provinces" (Van Mulligan 2005, 4). The election of a new Conservative federal government in 2006 has only made relations between Saskatchewan and Ottawa worse. Even though the Conservatives promised to fully exclude non-renewable resource revenues from the equalization formula, they appear to be ready a report recommendation to exclude only half of non-renewable resource revenues from the equalization formula. Reports on this impending decision caused the Saskatchewan Finance Minister to claim that the Conservatives were trying "to use Saskatchewan's oil money to buy votes in Quebec" in reference to the increased payments that Quebec would receive if non-renewable resource

revenues were partially included in the equalization formula (quoted in Brownlee 2007). This recent controversy over equalization illustrates that the left-wing version of Western alienation, represented by Blakeney and the early Saskatchewan agrarian protest movement, may be making a comeback within the Saskatchewan NDP.

Once again, it is the political economy of Saskatchewan that is driving this resurgence of left-wing Western alienation. As the price of oil has dramatically risen since 2000, the Saskatchewan NDP has increasingly come to see oil revenues as the key to financing the provincial welfare state and sustaining economic growth for the province and have therefore become very sensitive to any federal attempts to undermine the fiscal returns from rising oil prices. As another provincial election looms, the Saskatchewan NDP may try to paint themselves as defenders of Western interests in the face of an insensitive Conservative federal government, which is explicitly supported by their main opponents—the Saskatchewan Party.

As this article shows Saskatchewan social democrats have veered between Western alienation and mere critique of federal government policy throughout their history. This oscillation points towards an important reality of politics in Western Canada that is missed in Gibbins' conceptualization of Western alienation: Western alienation is a disposition that is fractured between a left-wing version, represented by the NDP, and a right-wing version, represented by the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party. The inconsistent nature of the left-wing version of Western alienation, as evidenced by the oscillations of the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP on federalism, has only increased the division between the left-wing and right-wing versions of Western alienation. As such, the Canadian West remains divided on the issue of federalism and alliances between the four provinces and two major ideological orientations (social democracy and conservatism) on relations with Ottawa remain elusive.

However, such alliances are by no means impossible, especially in times of heightened Western alienation due to certain federal government actions or alterations in Western Canada's political economy. While the Douglas government had very little co-operation with other Western Canadian provincial governments and was an ally of the federal government at the reconstruction conferences, the Blakeney government co-operated with the Alberta Progressive Conservative government and the Manitoba NDP government on the questions of federal intrusion within the jurisdiction of natural resources. Further, the Blakeney government joined with all three of the other Western provincial governments (one of which was Progressive

Conservative while the other two were NDP) to prepare common position papers in the lead-up to the Western Economic Opportunities Conference in July of 1973 (Blakeney, Barrett, Schreyer, and Lougheed 1973). The main thrust of the papers was that the federal government's transportation, industrial assistance, financial, trade, and agricultural policies were skewed in favour of Eastern Canada and were unable to meet the economic development needs of the four Western Canadian provinces. Unlike the Blakeney government and akin to the Douglas government, the Romanow government did not pursue co-operation with Alberta or other Western provincial governments, preferring to be a strong ally of the federal government in federal-provincial negotiations. In perhaps a reversal of the strategy of the Romanow government, the Calvert government has enlisted the aid of the Alberta Progressive Conservative government in its struggle to exclude non-renewable resources from the equalization formula (Brownlee 2007).

As we can see, in times of heightened feelings of Western alienation and perceived federal intrusion in the jurisdiction of natural resources, the Western Canadian political actors espousing both right-wing and left-wing versions of Western alienation can unite in temporary alliances. However, the unstable nature of the left-wing version of Western alienation and its frequent oscillation towards mere critique of federal government policies precludes any long-lasting alliances between right-wing and left-wing versions of Western alienation. Moreover, despite agreement over provincial control of natural resources, right-wing and left-wing versions of Western alienation are consistently divided on the role of the federal government in social and agricultural policy. The right-wing version is adamant that the federal government should allow provincial governments to set their own priorities in the area of social policy and that federal intervention in the agricultural economy should be circumscribed as much as possible. On the other hand, the left-wing version of Western alienation has always seen a role for the federal government in setting national standards in the area of social policy and has lobbied the federal government to maintain its intervention in agriculture through the mechanisms of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Crow Rate.

In conclusion, the existence of Western alienation within the ideas of Saskatchewan social democratic actors brings up the larger question of the relationship between federalism and social democracy. Certainly, social democracy is not an ideology that is irrevocably centralist. Indeed, both Eduard Bernstein and the Fabians saw municipal government as a key arena for the advancement of social democracy and advocated greater powers of self-determination and expropriation for local governments (Bernstein

1899, 180–184; Webb 1889, 70–76). Contrary to Young's argument that social democratic thinking in Canada is inevitably centralist, the intellectual history of Saskatchewan social democracy illustrates that social democrats have argued for greater autonomy for the provincial level of government when their political economy demanded it. Indeed, many times sentiments of Western alienation and provincial autonomy in Saskatchewan have reinforced social democratic goals, such as public ownership and the construction of the welfare state. Therefore, it is important that future research on social democracy in Canada and around the world take seriously the relationship between social democracy and federalism and be aware that social democracy can encompass both centralist and decentralist viewpoints.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference in London, Ontario, on June 2, 2005. The author wishes to thank the journal's two anonymous reviewers for their comments and also wishes to thank Harold Jansen and Anthony Sayers who commented on the paper when it was presented in London.
2. Larry Johnston distinguishes between an ideology and a disposition. He holds that an ideology (such as conservatism, liberalism, or social democracy) to be a consistent set of beliefs on a variety of questions, such as the role of the Church or God in society, collectivism versus individualism, the place of tradition in society, the role of the state in the economy, human nature, and the extension of rights. On the other hand, a disposition (such as populism, nationalism, feminism, or environmentalism) is a set of ideas about society that can be infused into several different ideological outlooks. See Johnston 1996, 20–22 and 173–175.

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