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A WORD ABOUT PRINTING THIS ARTICLE: These pages are intended to print on legal (8.5 x 14 inch) paper, two pages per sheet, in a horizontal landscape. Pages can also printed onto letter sized paper, vertically, at a reduced size.

Introducing Inroads 12

BACK IN JUNE 2001, HENRY MILNER AND JOHN RICHARDS INVITED ME to join the Inroads editorial board. Along with Arthur Milner, Henry and John had been the core of Inroads since its founding

nine years earlier. The invitation led to a broader discussion about the future of Inroads, and ultimately to a series of changes that take effect with this issue.

The most significant change is an increase in frequency of publication from once to twice a year. This is the first “Winter/Spring” issue of Inroads; it will be followed by a “Summer/Fall” issue appearing – as the

annual Inroads has in the past – in May. The purpose of this change is both to make Inroads a more effective forum for discussion of Canadian policy issues and to enhance its financial stability. By appearing twice yearly, Inroads can comment on events in a more timely fashion. Thus, we are publishing an issue with a theme section on health

care at a time when health care issues are prominent in Canadians’ minds and both the Kirby Senate Committee and the Romanow Royal Commission are releasing their recommendations.

We also expect a twice-yearly Inroads to be more attractive to potential subscribers. Successful magazines have an elusive quality called “presence,” and the increase in frequency should enhance our presence both within the Inroads community of readers and writers and in the community of Canadian magazines. An annual publication

occupies something of a grey area in the publishing world, not quite a book but not really a magazine either. The Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts have established a twice-yearly minimum frequency for their financial assistance programs. The Canadian Magazine Publishers Association also, in principle, sees twice-yearly frequency as a minimum criterion for membership, although it has made exceptions for a number of annuals, including Inroads.

At the same time, Inroads has revamped its editorial structure. Henry Milner and John Richards have assumed the role of publishers. The editorial board has been expanded to include noted political scientists Linda Cardinal, Philip Resnick and Reg Whitaker and policy analyst Finn Poschmann (whose article on health care funding, written in collaboration with Grant Reuber, appears in this issue), in addition to the three original editors and myself. Reg has agreed to coordinate the journal’s book review section, while I have taken on the position of managing editor, with responsibility for coordinating the transition to twice-yearly publication.

This expansion would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance of our Board of Sponsors, whose names are listed on the inside front cover.

As already noted, this issue focuses first and foremost on health care and features three major articles: Raisa Deber on health care delivery options; John Richards on Aboriginal health, and Poschmann and Reuber’s examination of funding. In an introduction, John situates the articles in the context of the current health care debate.

There is much else of interest in this issue. Vancouver lawyer and political observer

Gareth Morley writes an in-depth critique of Noam Chomsky, one of North America’s most prominent political commentators, yet one whose work has thus far been subject to little serious scrutiny. Rae Murphy replies, pointing out elements of historical context that he believes Gareth has ignored.

As a faithful “lurker” on – and occasional contributor to – the Inroads listserv, I have long appreciated moderator Harvey Schachter’s knowledgeable and incisive comments on media treatment of stories. In this issue, he brings his years of accumulated wisdom to a survey of the often overlooked factors that influence news judgement and media play.

Harvey also contributes his usual selection from the listserv. In April, when French voters put far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen on the final presidential ballot, Henry Milner was in Grenoble on a teaching assignment and posted an on-the-scene analysis and reflection, kicking off a discussion that cast considerable light on this unexpected result. Harvey has chosen the most notable contributions. In addition to the listserv selection, our “front matter” includes an editorial by Henry on why the federal New Democratic Party has no chance of breaking out of its marginal status unless Canada’s electoral system is reformed, and a letter by retired Indian Affairs official Bob Connelly in response to the extensive excerpt from Jean Allard’s *Big Bear’s Treaty* that appeared in Inroads 11.

Also on the subject of elections, political scientist Paul Howe takes note of the statistics suggesting a serious decline in voting among younger generations of Canadians, explores the reasons for the decline, and suggests some measures that might help mitigate this disturbing tendency.

The NDP under new leadership

Still a bit player unless institutions change

Inroads editorial

by Henry Milner

THERE ARE THREE PARTY LEADERSHIP CONTESTS GOING ON IN Canada. The most immediate, if not the best publicized, is that of the NDP. The New Democrats have three experienced, competent and articulate candidates, working hard to be chosen for a job that the prevailing wisdom regards as thankless as well as hopeless. Yet there are many, and not only within the NDP, who would like the prevailing wisdom to be wrong, and hope that new leadership will change the fortunes of the NDP. Indeed, given the state of federal politics today, who could not wish to see a more forceful NDP presence?

When it comes to basic values, the NDP is not really off in left field. Generally speaking, Canadian values are closer to those of Sweden, poster child of the Left, than to those of the United States. For example, in response to a question posed by the Inter-

national Social Survey Programme as to whether “the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income,” 43.3 per cent of Swedes said yes, quite a bit higher than the 34.2 per cent of Americans in agreement, but lower than Canada’s 48.3 per cent. Bill Blaikie was not far off the mark when he launched his leadership campaign on the theme, “We are a country with a social democratic majority. Why shouldn’t we be governed by those values?”

Why not indeed? Except that the question was just as meaningful when the NDP chose Alexa McDonough as leader not too

This issue of Inroads contains two dispatches from far-off corners of the world: Helen Irving takes stock of the state of Australia’s republican movement three years after the 1999 referendum in which the republican proposal was soundly defeated despite widespread support for a republic among Australians, and changes brought by electric power to rural Bangladesh are captured in Rose Murphy’s photographs.

Finally, Inroads looks at two recent books of special interest. Former Quebec education minister Claude Ryan reviews Marie McAndrew’s study of immigration and di-

versity in Quebec schools, which won the Donner Foundation prize for the best Canadian policy book of 2001, while Brian Tanguay reviews the latest publication from the Canadian Election Study, an analysis of the 2000 federal election.

This issue represents a milestone for Inroads, and an enjoyable learning experience for me. We hope that you will be pleased both with our new directions and with our fidelity to the high quality of writing and analysis that has been the hallmark of Inroads in the past.

— Bob Chodos

Our new website

The Inroads website is undergoing a transformation along with the magazine itself. At the time of writing the new site remains under development. It does have a new location with its own domain name: www.inroadsjournal.ca (the old site now automatically forwards your browser to the new location).

When it is up and running, the new website will have copies of articles from recent back issues available in pdf format. Eventually, we hope to have a complete archive of articles written over the years for Inroads. In addition, the website will have links to Canadian policy websites and other features of interest to the Inroads community.

— Paul Barber



many years ago. Has anything fundamental changed since then to render possible the NDP's emerging as a key political player on the federal scene? I don't think so. The real obstacle lies neither in the quality of the NDP leaders nor in its program, but in Canada's political institutions. Given the nature of Canada, the present institutional structure leaves little room for a party like the NDP. If I am right, then those who wish to see the NDP occupy a significant place on Canada's national stage have first to change the country's political institutions.

Let's begin with ideology. NDP members vary from Blairist – as found in the policies of the NDP governments of Saskatchewan and Manitoba – to the anti-globalism of the New Politics Initiative. Not wishing to antagonize potential supporters, leadership candidates steer clear of identifying with either. In search of international inspiration, they look neither to London nor to the streets of Seattle or Genoa, but to Stockholm and Berlin.

As a longtime sympathetic observer of Scandinavian and European social democracy, I can only approve. But acting on that inspiration is problematic: continental European social democratic parties operate in a different institutional context. Unlike us, they are not prisoners of the British (Westminster) institutional model and its first-past-the-post (FPTP) system of winner-take-all elections. With local variations, FPTP imposes a two-party system – in Britain, Australia, the United States and Canadian provinces.

The two-party system works extremely well – for the two parties. If you are one of the two big parties in such a system, the strategy for winning power is simple: stay the course. Sooner or later, the electorate

will want to “throw the bums out,” and you'll get your turn. Depending on the circumstances, you can speed up the process by altering your program – as the British Labour Party did toward the end of Thatcher's reign. Or you can ignore reality and be punished for it – like Lionel Jospin's French Socialists. Either way, you are the government-in-waiting.

But if you are a “third party,” like the British Liberal Democrats, you await a turn that never comes. A third party can defy the relentless logic of our electoral system only if and when it can seize a rare political opportunity to replace one of the two big parties. Such an event marks a historical watershed, the last one of which was Labour's entry into the electorate in the first half of the 20th century, which made it possible for social democratic parties in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in Saskatchewan and British Columbia, to break through.

In continental Europe, Labour's entry into Parliament brought with it the consolidation of a different set of institutional arrangements built on the principle of proportional representation (PR). In PR electoral systems, party representation in the parliament – and government – reflects support in the population. The votes parties receive reflects the overall support for their program, and the seats they get reflect those votes. Every vote counts equally irrespective of the party's local strength or weakness. Social democratic parties and social democratic principles have thrived in this institutional environment. For one thing, it brings more people with lower levels of education and income to the polls – people more likely to vote for social democrats and benefit from their policies. Moreover, by guaranteeing

them fair representation even if they fall into third place or worse, a PR institutional environment allows parties united by principle to express, discuss and develop their programs in a time frame well beyond the next election. And by making room for Green and doctrinaire left-wing parties, PR takes the pressure off social democratic parties: they do not have to appeal to single-minded pacifists, Greens, feminists, etc.

Over the long haul, the combination of practicality and ideological consistency allowed by the continental institutional environment has been the European social democratic parties' key to success. It has meant that whether they do well – as did the Swedish Social Democrats this September, winning 40 per cent of the vote – or badly – as did their Norwegian cousins a year earlier, winning barely a quarter of the vote – they are assured of remaining key players.

Unfortunately, inspired as the NDP may be by the ideas of continental social democrats, their strategy is not available in Canada. In our winner-take-all institutional environment, the NDP has to be concerned first and foremost with winning enough seats to survive – and that means allocating limited resources to those local contests that it has a chance of winning, and the local issues surrounding them.

Penetrating the two-party system is simply not an option. From the 1920s to the 1960s, as the welfare state was being consolidated and the Westminster countries produced a two-party system with liberal/conservatives on one side and social democrats on the other, Canada was left out. The federal CCF-NDP missed its chance during those decades, not because its leaders were inferior to their counterparts in Britain and

its former colonies or because Canada is inherently more conservative, but because a party based on class was even then ill-suited for the Canadian-style regional brokerage politics played so well by the Liberals and, occasionally, the Tories. And if it was ill-suited then, it is completely off the radar screen today: with the level of redistribution more or less fixed, and large portions of the working class doing quite well, class is not a strong enough basis for the alternation needed for a two-party system, especially in a country with deep regional cleavages.

The logic of the system favours the hegemony of a single national party, the one

The real obstacle lies neither in the quality of the NDP leaders nor in its program, but in Canada's political institutions.

that best captures whatever exists of a national consensus. In Canada, this is undeniably and (alas) unalterably the Liberal Party, given its resources and experience. Over the years, the Liberal Party has so well wrapped itself in the layers of Canada's national consciousness that no party can hope to dislodge it. Indeed, the other parties, associated as they are with differing regional aspirations, and further frustrated by the first-past-the-post system which exaggerates parties' regional strengths and weaknesses, have no hope of replacing the Liberals as the “Canada party.” Given the electorate's occasional desire to “kick the bums out,” the Liberals can still lose an election – though as Paul Martin's anticipated anti-government demonstrates, the Liberals have learned that they can stay in power even when the bums are kicked out. But even if

one of the opposition parties could effectively seize on Liberal scandals to win a plurality of seats, this would only usher in a brief interregnum, certain to be shattered by its regional contradictions as was the last such interregnum, Brian Mulroney's alliance of the West and Quebec.

In any case, this is a game that Bill Blaikie, Jack Layton and Lorne Nystrom are no better equipped to play than Stephen Harper. Like the Alliance, the NDP lacks the ideological elasticity of the old parties: power in and of itself counts far less for rank-and-file NDPers than it does for their Liberal and Tory counterparts. The NDP is condemned to being a party of ideas in an institutional environment where ideas count for little.

What is the new leader to do? He must embrace institutional change. The three main candidates are on record as favouring proportional representation; indeed, Lorne Nystrom has been its biggest backer in Parliament. But it's not enough to put PR on the shopping list, or even high on that list. Once the stirring speeches and solemn engagements of the leadership contest are over, the hard reality is that without electoral reform, there will be no possibility for the federal NDP to turn fine words into action.

As the next federal election draws near, the new leader will have no choice but to return to the old game: try to win a few more seats and thus gain a bit more public credibility for the party. But, in the meantime, there is something else that must done, and that is to mobilize creative energies toward attaining institutional reform. Concretely, the party must seek a formal agreement of

all the opposition parties both to move toward electoral reform *and* to refuse to support a (Liberal) minority government that does not act to change the electoral system. And it must be prepared to campaign on this program as a means of making Canada more democratic.

Proportional representation, as noted above, helps social democratic parties by bringing people low in resources to the polls. But democracy must also be an end in itself. Under PR, the door to elected office would be opened wider for the NDP but also for the Conservatives, the Alliance and perhaps even the Greens. The true beneficiary would be democracy. Unhappily, the Canadian Left has been all too ready to sacrifice democracy for “progressive” causes, for example in its use of the Charter and the courts to circumvent the legislatures in pursuit of the rights of various groups. Thus democracy, already weakened by our virtual one-party system, has suffered further.

There is clearly a public perception that something is wrong with Canada's democratic institutions. Myriad nonpartisan organizations have been formed recently to champion PR, and even the Liberals talk about institutional reform — Paul Martin claims it as a central reform concern, though on the crucial electoral reform dimension he is as silent as the Chrétienites.

What of the NDP? Will the new leader have an impact on the federal scene? The true test of his leadership will be his willingness and ability to place and keep electoral reform at the top of the national agenda. ■

Letter to the editors

Allard's Big Bear's treaty

“The best diagnosis ever done of Indian Affairs”

I have read Jean Allard's paper and was impressed with its scope, depth and, might I add, timeliness. It provides a succinct diagnosis of what's wrong with the system both in Ottawa and on Indian reserves. As Dennis Owens concludes in his National Post column, it “should be required reading for all who seek a way out of native poverty.”

Excision of the tumour through a shift in empowerment in the budgetary process is Allard's remedy. At the moment, there is little accountability for public funds spent and, contrary to the expectations of most people, the band council has merely replaced the white bureaucracy of Indian Affairs with a brown bureaucracy. Favouritism and nepotism take root and in the process the individual becomes powerless. Add to the scenario the fact that the Indian Act is silent on corrective measures such as appeal systems to override unfair and discriminatory decisions of the “elected elite” and

you've got a reserve system that is practically lawless. An organization can function effectively and efficiently only if the various levels of management respect one another's prerogatives and avoid encroaching upon, or interfering with, someone else's responsibilities. When the professionals “play politics” or when the politicians usurp the program delivery role, or when managers compromise their professional integrity and management effectiveness in order to ingratiate themselves with the politicians, then the structure begins to crumble. This is because trust is undermined; loyalty and staff morale are shaken. The “line of command” is broken and personal survival becomes the watchword instead of commitment to the organization's objectives. There are no winners, only losers, in this type of scenario. This remains a big problem on reserves and is exacerbated by the relatively short two-year tenure for elected officials.

Most government programs are almost exclusively remedial. The “experts” who deliver these programs (social workers, counsellors, the police) deal with individual personal problems after they occur. As Jack Beaver mentioned in his 1979 report, *To Have What is One’s Own*, “Because of their training, they only see the symptoms of problems and then they try to fit these into conventional and available solutions. They do not recognize the conditions that cause the problems in the first place.” In his fictional conversation with the Minister of Indian Affairs, Beaver tells the minister the reason the department is locked in a remedial approach to problems is,

Because symptoms of problems cannot be ignored for political reasons. Because the growth of services is seen to be a progressive thing for governments to do. Because more consumption of goods and services is generally regarded to be indicative of a developed society. And, because you rely on experts who deal with professionally defined problems and solutions.

Beaver goes on to recommend a redefinition of the old problems “in a way that recognizes the difference between cause and effect.” He asserts this cannot be done by the department. It can only be done by the Indians themselves who live the problems. The people obviously need help in the process. He concludes that “the role of the Department should be to give them the resources to define and meet their own needs.”

I have always felt many good programs are ineffective because of the racist attitudes of most administrators. We need to do away with entanglements among bureaucrats. Of what use is departmental or interdepartmental management if it marginalizes the Indians more and more? As Allard’s treatise

suggests, what is absolutely needed is to help Indians pass from the periphery to the very nub of problem-solving. After all, it is their problem – they live it daily! It must be their solution. To date, government has not manifested a willingness to introduce innovation in a comprehensive manner. While it acknowledges it has the responsibility, the real test is: will it have the response ability? I hope so.

Throwing money by the billions to Indians without a built-in system of checks and balances is not the answer. Allard covered that topic quite adequately. Aboriginal “banana republics” have sprung up across the country and resulted in deficit financing, fraud, corruption etc., which, in turn has left “ordinary Indians ... powerless and despondent, living with the resultant social breakdown.”

I would like to devote a few paragraphs to the question of cultural identity. Until fairly recently, low-income joblessness, poor health, substandard housing and low educational attainment have been the reasons most often cited for the disintegration of Indian family life. It is not that clear-cut, however. Not all impoverished societies, whether Indian or non-Indian, suffer from catastrophically high rates of family breakdown. We know now that cultural disorientation, people’s sense of powerlessness and their loss of self-esteem are the most potent forces at work. They arise, in large measure, from national attitudes reflected in long-established policy and from arbitrary acts of government. Until very recently, the main thrust of federal policy was to break up the extended family, the clan structure, to tribalize and assimilate Indian populations. As Commissioner Collier of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington



Like Jean Allard, Big Bear wanted payment of significant treaty benefits to individual Indians. NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA PHOTO

wrote in 1943, “Remove the tribe, rehabilitate the individual and our problem is solved ... so runs our instinctive thinking.”

People living in constant fear of losing their children may have had their self-confidence so undermined and eroded that their ability for parenting was impaired with the result that they lost their children. When the child-care agency removes the children, it also removes much of the parents’ incentive to struggle against the conditions under which they live. Admittedly, many students enrolled in residential schools not because of parental neglect but rather because there was no school on the home reserve. The erosion of cultural identity was a feature, however, and it is a tribute to these bands’ resiliency that their native languages and culture still persist. One need only note

the permanent structures for sun dances and other native religious ceremonies that can be seen on most reserves. Development doesn’t take place in a cultural vacuum; Indians need to preserve those practices, customs and concepts which give their lives meaning and themselves worth and dignity. Aboriginal groups are experiencing a resurgence of cultural expression and pride throughout the country. Indeed, in the last few years, we’ve seen international competitions involving representatives from many parts of the U.S.A. and Mexico as well as from Central and South America.

The allusion to the annual pilgrimages at Lac Ste. Anne in northern Alberta is an example of the religious/cultural revival under way. It augurs well for the future and I’m glad Allard referred to it. A bit of prayer never hurt anyone. The Indian people’s refusal to be assimilated is a triumph of the human spirit; it is to be celebrated, not deplored.

I congratulate Jean Allard on a job exceptionally well done. In my opinion, his work rates as the best diagnosis ever done of Indian Affairs. I feel it has supplanted Jack Beaver’s report in that regard. ■

— Bob Connelly, Orleans, Ontario

Bob Connelly occupied many positions in the Department of Indian Affairs during his career. In 1969, he was appointed Honorary Chief of the 55 Indian bands of Manitoba. His name is Wabi-bi-nais, Chief White Thunderbird. His final assignment before retirement was in Ottawa, where he was Director of Specific Claims.

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