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Department of Political Science

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct 10/60
ABSTRACT

The peaceful handing over of the reins of government is an important symbol of democracy and is arguably the distinctive feature of representative government. Often taken for granted in democratic jurisdictions, peaceful transition is one of the most important elements in the ongoing evolution of modern politics. Throughout history there have been varying types and various levels of success of transitions of power, depending on the circumstance and political environment applicable to each case.

In Canada, one type of transition has remained largely unstudied - that in which a new leader takes over government by succeeding someone from his/her own political party - generally referred to as an intra-party transition. This is because intra-party transitions have traditionally been seen as less dramatic and therefore less noteworthy than transitions that include a change from one party to another. Furthermore, intra-party transitions typically occur near the end of a political cycle and are therefore closely followed by a general election. If the new intra-party leader loses the subsequent election, that leader’s transition is seen as less noteworthy. In fact, in recent Canadian history, at both the provincial and federal level, there have been only two significant occasions in which intra-party leaders have come from behind to successfully defend their party’s right to govern in the next general election: Ralph Klein in Alberta in 1993 and Glen Clark in British Columbia in 1996.

This study analyzes all provincial intra-party transitions from 1960 to the present. From this analysis, a continuum has been formed from which these transitions will be assessed as to their relative degree of success or failure. It is argued here that the Clark and Klein intra-party transitions represent a specific “pod” or “cluster” within this continuum and as a result, deserve specific analysis. Of both, the principal question asked is: why, in the face of significant obstacles and contrary to historical precedent, did these transitions succeed? Further questions include; how can this success be defined and measured, what factors led to this success, were these cases equally successful and if not, why?

Ultimately these two successful transitions are compared to one of the most unsuccessful intra-party transitions in modern Canadian history, that being the succession of Frank Miller from Bill Davis in Ontario in 1984.

The final section of this study involves a test of key exogenous and endogenous variables that may or may not impact the success or failure of these three intra-party transition case studies. Particular attention will be paid to the ability of these new leaders to effectively distance themselves from their predecessors and how quickly and effectively they were able to put their own ‘stamp’ or ‘footprint’ on their respective new governments. In the end, it is hoped that these three case studies will provide important lessons and prescriptive insights not only for students of parliamentary politics and public administration but for practitioners and future leaders as well.
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Chapter One

Introduction
1.1 Introduction

The transition of a new leader to power is an imperative, yet largely unstudied part of democratic systems. In its purest form, a modern transition is defined as the peaceful transfer of power from one leader to another. How a new leader takes over power however, can have a significant affect on the nature and success of that leader’s entire tenure in government. Chapter One briefly examines the history of democratic transitions, and surveys the existing literature on the subject. From this relatively small body of work, key transition characteristics including, definition, size, scope and duration are described. Chapter One then discusses one segment of transition study that has been largely ignored, that of the intra-party transition. The chapter’s final segment will outline the principal questions to be asked in this study, the methodology used and the organization of the remaining chapters.

1.2 The History of Democratic Transitions

An important, yet relatively new institution

In the democratic world, the peaceful handing over of the reins of government from one party to another is an important symbol of the legitimacy of our institutions. As Hess suggests, “...the essence of democracy is the ability to change leadership peacefully at the will of the electorate. But beyond the lack of violence, there must be cooperation to assure continuity.”\textsuperscript{1} Gaertner goes even farther when they state, “transition in the presidency, especially when a change in parties is involved, is arguably the distinctive feature of representative government.”\textsuperscript{2}

Savoie adds to this notion by suggesting, “...transitions of power represent a critical moment in our democratic systems. Intense activity occurs within a very limited time frame as efforts are made to mesh the new political apparatus with the administrative machinery.”\textsuperscript{3} Similarly, Stephen Hess suggests, “...transition is a ritual of democracy that affirms public faith in our electoral process.”\textsuperscript{4} There are many who would point out that transition is important to the manner in which the government subsequently runs. Brown-John suggests that something as basic as, “...a well selected or indelicate comment in the first few moment’s encounter with the media and, thus the public, can set a symbolic tone for a new government.”\textsuperscript{5}

When contemplating the nature and importance of democratic transition it is imperative that one takes a step back to realize that peaceful transitions should be considered more of a phenomenon than a given. The very ability to transfer control of the executive branch

\textsuperscript{4} Hess, pp. 77.
\textsuperscript{5} Brown-John in Savoie, pp.53.
of government peacefully as the result of an election is a relatively new, yet important mark of a democracy. As Clinton and Lang point out, “...the transfer of power, figuring out a mechanism for ensuring that the regime goes on beyond the lifetime of one individual, is one of the basic problems of any political system. The principle that transfers should reflect the will of the people is not very well established around the world. As late as the 19th century, Tocqueville stated that after visiting the United States it would never work in any European country, at least in any country on the Continent. He said that the distraction of a country involved in electing its chief executive would lay it open to attack by any of its neighbors.”

Moreover, while the concept of peaceful transition is relatively new, planning for and executing successful transitions is even newer. Laurin Henry suggests that it was not until the 1950’s when, with Harry Truman as President of the United States, there was true concern about the importance of a successful transfer of office. One year before the election, Truman announced that he would not be seeking re-election. This meant that there was the potential for the first change of political party in the White House since Hoover - Roosevelt in 1933. In the previous 20 years, the civilian federal bureaucracy in the United States had increased fourfold to over 2.5 million people. The annual budget had increased from $5 billion to approximately $75 billion and Presidential Staff had increased from 40 to over 1300. Furthermore, administration functions were exponentially more complex than in 1933, and the Korean War was going on.

As Henry writes, all of these factors, combined with President Truman’s own experience continued to affect the president’s attitude about transition. “Vivid in Truman’s memory was his own experience in 1945 when he had been thrust suddenly into the Presidency, required to make vital decisions promptly and found it extremely difficult to acquire the necessary background information. An avid reader of history, Truman was familiar with the growth of the Presidency as a governmental institution. The longer he remained in office, the more concerned he became for maintaining its constitutional integrity and operational effectiveness, and the greater became his feeling of kinship with all Presidents, past and future. Despite his intense partisanship, he was determined to give a fair start to his successor, whoever he might be, and to rectify what he later called the “... omission in our political traditions that a retiring President did not make it his business to facilitate the transfer of the government to his successor.”

In Canada, the first major realization that transitions were an important undertaking was during the 1957 national election of John Diefenbaker. After twenty-two years of uninterrupted Liberal majority governments, there was significant public concern that the public service was too “large L” Liberal to interact productively with the new

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Conservative government. At the time, there were no rules or conventions governing
how the two groups were to interact, much less cooperate. In reaction to Diefenbaker’s
victory, some elementary systems were put in place by the federal civil service to ensure a
smooth handover of power.

However, it was not until 1968 that transition planning and execution was given any real
priority in Canada. The first transition books for an incoming administration were
prepared in 1968 at the behest of outgoing Prime Minister, Lester Pearson. “The material,
sent by the clerk of the privy councils Office, provided the new prime minister with
descriptive material on such issues as the decision making process, the allocation of
responsibilities, and the environment of governing.”

Successful Governance
There can be no doubt that transitions are important symbolically to the maintenance and
continuity of our public political institutions. However, they are also important for
practical reasons. How well a new government manages its transition into the formal
hallways of power will help determine how effective it will be in setting its own agenda,
implementing policy change and properly communicating its messages to the electorate.
As Wallace Earl Walker states, “transitions are crucial in the success of new
administrations.” This is particularly true in the American context where “presidential
transitions can be notoriously perilous moments in American democracy. During the
months between his election and his inauguration, Lincoln lost a third of his country to
secession, and Franklin Roosevelt had the banking system collapse around him.”

Transitions are important for different groups of people for different reasons. For the
outgoing administration there is a need not to be seen as a lame duck in the interregnum,
to maintain the historical legacy of the office itself, to ensure that key accomplishments
are acknowledged, to maintain dignity upon leaving and often most important - secure
future employment. For the incoming administration, the general goals are to start well,
avoid major mistakes, extend the media “honeymoon” as long as possible, set the tone for
office and successfully grab the levers of government machinery. As Cameron and White
state, “a new government’s success, particularly its ability to deliver on its policy agenda,
requires it to take over the reins of power quickly and effectively.” Lindquist concurs
with regard to the importance of transitions when he states “…that during the transitional
stage never is the claim to authority and legitimacy of a government greater, yet never is
the capacity of a government to govern at a lower ebb.”

9 Manion and Williams in Savoie, pp. 100.
10 ibid
11 Wallace Earl Walker “Presidential Transitions and the Entrepreneurial Presidency: Of Lions, Foxes, and
Puppy Dogs.” in Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. XXIII, No.1, Centre for the Study of the Presidency,
13 Clinton and Lang, pp._
14 Graham White and David Cameron, Cycling into Saigon: The Tories Take Power in Ontario,
15 Evert Lindquist in Savoie, pp. 29.
For the remaining permanent civil service, transition can be a time of both uncertainty and opportunity. As Savoie suggests that “...public servants who have seen their own proposals shelved for years will likely welcome a new government as a new beginning, a new opportunity to see their proposals become government policy.”\textsuperscript{16} For many others in public service, transitions can be an extremely stressful time. Recent literature on organizational theory and change increasingly emphasizes “...the fragility of organizations and the delicacy and care with which serious change should be approached. Change stimulus can lead to increase in the rigidity of structure, task orientation, coordination and control,”\textsuperscript{17} Long-time Ontario cabinet secretary, Ed Stewart often said of governments and the importance of transitions, “...they are like aircraft, take off and landings are the most important part.”\textsuperscript{18} Hess states that clearly, the “toughest job for a new administrator is to take control of government.”\textsuperscript{19} From these accounts it is not difficult to understand the important role of transition both in terms of democratic process and governance success.

1.3 Weaknesses in current transition analysis

Despite the obvious importance of transition, there has been relatively little academic or scholarly interest in the subject. For example, while there are at least ten transitions every four years in Canada, there have been only a handful of significant books on the subject. Similarly, most of the literature at the state level in the United States is staff work on manuals designed to help outgoing governors. There have been major studies of American Presidential transitions, but their number and quality ebb and flow depending on how much attention is paid to them by incoming presidents. Furthermore, despite the increased focus and resources involved in modern transitions, there has actually been less academic study done on the subject than was the case 10 to 15 years ago.

Another challenge is the fact that the few seminal works on transition theory examine only American case studies and are therefore of limited use to Canadian analysis, given the structural differences of the two systems. Lindquist also points out that the more traditional American accounts of transitions are mostly historical and are therefore: “inadequate guides for those who manage transitions and design transition teams. Every new premier or prime minister has different priorities and managerial style, each has a different pool of talent from which to select advisers and cabinet colleagues and each has a unique set of policy challenges. Indeed there has been a failure to rise above idiosyncratic experiences and conceptualize the critical organizational imperatives that confront all new governments.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Savoie, pp.8.
\textsuperscript{17} Gaertner pp. 422.
\textsuperscript{18} As quoted by a Former Ontario Cabinet Minister in an interview conducted on December 10, 1998
\textsuperscript{19} Hess p. VII
\textsuperscript{20} Lindquist in Savoie pp.30.
Not only are historical accounts of transitions of limited value for new leaders and transition planners, there are other major weaknesses in the literature as well. Greg Gaertner outlines three problems with existing literature when he states, “...first, attention to transition has been cyclic and transient - articles on transition tend to appear closely following a transition and disappear until the next one. Second, attention to transition is likely to address current topical concerns and not focus on long-term effects on government agencies and programs. Finally, and perhaps a result of the foregoing, concerns about transitional disruption are more likely to focus on the resilience of the bureaucracy than on the capacity of agencies to cope with and absorb these shocks.”

In addition to Gaertner's assertions, it can also be argued that even though there are several perspectives from which transition analyses can be written, the bulk of scholarship on the subject thus far has been written from a public administration bias. Generally, authors have looked at the impact of the transition on the public service, not at the success of the transition from the politicians’ perspective or from the perspective of the public good, or how much of an effect the transition has had on the entire term of office of the new government.

1.4 Defining Transitions

While transitions clearly play an important role in political processes, there are those who would suggest that some “types” of transition are more worthy of study than others. To create a typology by which to compare transitions, it is important to first determine the actual elements and characteristics that distinguish transitions. This is not a straightforward matter. Some feel that a transition to power is as strictly regimented period of time from when a new leader wins an election to the moment they are sworn into office. Others see transition as a more general term to describe the period of time it takes a new leader to become comfortable with the levers of power. There is also a wide variance of opinion on what events and issues are actually part of the transition process.

In developing a framework, it is important to set boundaries as to the jurisdictional qualities, size and types of transitions that are to be studied and compared. Obviously, the transition plans and challenges for the leader of a party who has been out of power for over 10 years are going to be significantly distinct from those of a leader who is succeeding himself in office. Similarly, the preparation and execution of a transition for the American President is going to be fundamentally different from that of a party leader newly installed as Premier of Prince Edward Island.

Differing Jurisdictions
As has been already noted peaceful transitions are the hallmark of successful democracies. However, how these democratic transitions occur varies widely. At one extreme is the British case, in which the new Prime Minister is traditionally sequestered

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21 Gaertner, pp.422
into his or her new office (and residence) within 24 hours of the confirmation of electoral victory. In the American Presidential system there is approximately a three-month period from election night to the formal transference of presidential power. Typically, Canadian jurisdictions fall somewhere in the middle, with approximately three weeks between election night and formally taking office.

The other most telling difference is in regard to personnel. While in Canada and Britain there may be approximately 100 senior officials that will be changed over the lifespan of a typical transition, in the United States there are well over 4,000 appointments to be made by the new president. Furthermore it is argued that, with some notable exceptions, the parliamentary systems of Britain and Canada routinely train elected officials for government with their work as shadow ministers in opposition. In the United States, particularly at the Cabinet and Cabinet Secretary level, new recruits often have no or little government experience. On the other hand, transition planning and funding are ingrained elements of the American political and governmental experience. Ronald Reagan, for example, accessed almost $2 million in public funds and contributed $1 million in party funds to finance his presidential transition. In Canada, not only is there almost no public money set aside for this task, the degree to which preparation is undertaken at all is uneven and highly dependent on the personalities of key figures involved.

Finally, there is the matter of information dissemination. Largely for reasons of foreign policy, precedent in the United States is for the current President to share confidential information, often with regard to the United States’ relations with other states, with his or her challenger during the election period. This is to assist the challenger in steering his or her campaign around facts and events that may embarrass both candidates or jeopardize the national interest. These briefings are of enormous value in assisting incoming presidents get a jump on key policy issues during his or her transition period. Given the more confrontational nature of politics at the highest level in parliamentary systems, this sharing of information only occurs in the most extraordinary situations.

The importance of jurisdictional size
It is not within the scope of this study to discuss the variety of institutional, cultural and geographic reasons for the differences between American and parliamentary governments. However, it is clear that immense difference in size has a significant impact on the type, content and duration of transitions in both the US and Canada. As a (or perhaps the) world power, the lapse or break in presidential authority that occurs during the formal transition period has more significance in the US than in other places. Similarly, having a lame duck presidency and a lame duck budget once every four years is exponentially more important for the greatest economic nation in the world.

But beyond the fact that, as the biggest country in the world, the United States has some extraordinary considerations during presidential transitions, there is the fact that the

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22 Almost all American transition analyses cited will be with regard to the Presidential system. This is a result of the almost complete lack of literature on congressional, Senatorial or gubernatorial transition in the United States.
overall size of a jurisdiction does have considerable impact on the manner in which its institutions conduct their business. White, for example, argues that the size of the institution is instrumental in shaping that institution. “In short, the size of our governmental institutions matters, and it matters more than we usually imagine. Both the ratio of the cabinet to the legislature and the number of elected members relative to the population have significant implications.”

Common sense dictates that a new cabinet and premier have less to worry about from their backbench in a small legislature because there are far fewer backbenchers, “…the option of legislative renegade, discouraged in any event by the conventions of party discipline, is even less likely when those conventions are reinforced by personal intimacy afforded by the smaller scale.” On the other hand, “the smaller the house the more likely that substantial numbers of ministers will either be inexperienced and unproved or else experienced but inept.”

Ever larger legislatures may affect procedure. White points out that in the United States that “senate practices are a good deal less formal and constraining of members’ activities than in the much larger House of Representatives. A similar dynamic is evident in Canadian legislatures, in that the smaller chambers can afford the luxury of more straightforward, less restrictive procedures.” White also points out that larger houses engage in far more extensive committee activity than do the smaller legislatures. When comparing provincial legislatures to their larger federal counterpart, White quotes the late Walter Young, who wrote, “provincial government is the premier’s government.” White goes on to suggest that “unquestionably, provincial premiers tend to be more dominant forces within their own governments than is the Prime Minister of Canada solely because of the smaller scale of the organizations they lead.”

The significance of White’s observations for the purposes of transition analysis is twofold. First, clearly the more complex the institution, the greater the need for transition planning and implementation. Moreover, in a larger parliamentary setting there are more pressures on an incoming leader to anticipate and massage his or her caucus. This holds for the President and his caucus as well. Finally, while there is a greater tendency for rookie ministers at the provincial level to be more inexperienced, provincial premiers have a much greater control than in larger jurisdictions and therefore have different concerns about the formation of cabinet and the machinery of government.

Transition Typologies

As Mosher, Clinton and Lang suggest, one of the difficulties with studying transitions, “…is that there are several different types of transition, and no single generalized

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23 White pp. 256
24 Cameron and Smith in White pp. 529.
25 ibid pp. 530.
26 ibid pp. 532.
27 White p.540
28 ibid
description encompasses them all.⁵²⁹ In his recent study of presidential transitions, for example, Charles O. Jones identified three transition types, originated – those associated with presidents elected for the first time, regenerated – those of reelected presidents and of takeover presidents who win election on their own, and received - those of vice presidents assuming the office.⁵³⁰ However, while there are many possible categories of transitions the fact remains that the most studied is one in which the leader is replaced by the leader of another party. The rationale for focusing on this form of transition is that it apparently represents the largest change in terms of ideology, personnel and leadership styles. Savoie suggests that many practitioners refer to the transition of a newly elected government with a capital “T” while the swearing of a re-elected government rates only a small “t.”⁵³¹

Capital “T” Transitions

In the United States presidential arena, for example, there are typically two sub-categories of capital “T” transitions. The first is when an incumbent president runs and loses. Carter over Ford in 1977, Reagan over Carter in 1981 and Clinton over Bush in 1993 are the three most recent examples of this type of transition. Each of these transitions represented major shifts in policy and style and involved significant preparation work by the potential successor, particularly Reagan, who is said to have had the most extensive transition in American presidential history.

The second sub-category involves a situation in which the incumbent president finished out his term but did not seek re-election. Interestingly, in the three instances in which this has occurred in recent history, the successor has gone on to electoral defeat (Adlai Stevenson to succeed Truman in 1952, Richard Nixon to succeed Eisenhower in 1960, and Hubert Humphrey to succeed Lyndon Johnson in 1968). Some suggest that this type of transition tends to be smoother and less confrontational because the leaders are from the same party and should therefore be less inclined towards friction and vitriol.⁵³²

In Canada, authors have also divided capital “T” transitions into categories, but for significantly different reasons. As a result of our differing political systems, principally that a U.S. President cannot succeed themselves more than once, there exists in Canada a much greater opportunity for one party, and especially one leader, to remain in power for an extended period. Therefore there may be circumstances in which a new party and leader take power for the first time in as long as a generation. This occurred in the case of the Liberals in Ontario in 1985 when they took power after 42 years of Conservative rule, and in the case of the Federal Conservatives elected in 1984 after almost 20 years of being out of office.⁵³³ In these instances, not only did the new leaders need extensive

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⁵³¹ Savoie, pp.3.
⁵³² Mosher, Clinton and Lang, pp.24.
⁵³³ This streak was broken only by the very short lived Clark Administration of 1979-80
briefings on policy and on the machinery of government, but as well, their pool of experienced officials, both elected and unelected, was almost debilitatingly small.

Another nuance in the Canadian political universe that has brought about a slightly different type of capital “T” transition is the proliferation of parties in the Canadian system. This has meant, in part, that in the case of the 1990 NDP in Ontario and the 1986 Parti Quebecois in Quebec, new leaders have taken office with their party having never once held power. Obviously, the degree of change during transition for these parties is immense and can only be somewhat offset by advice from officials of similar parties from other jurisdictions. In both these types of transitions one other important factor stands out. Members of new governments such as the Ontario Liberals in 1985 and the Ontario NDP in 1990, had very little or no idea that they would form government until almost at the moment the votes are counted and therefore put little time or effort into formal transition planning.

Finally, there are the cases of capital “T” transitions in which a new party comes into office after having been out of power for only a few months. The best Canadian example of this occurrence is the Trudeau government of 1980. This must be considered a capital “T” transition because it involved a change of governing parties. However, after only 8 months, Trudeau and his cabinet had little need or reason for extensive transition planning or implementation. Furthermore, because Joe Clark’s government had so much difficulty in taking power, Trudeau shone in comparison and enjoyed a longer “honeymoon” period as a result.

Of the small amount of literature on the overall subject of transitions, the bulk of the work has been on capital “T” transitions. This is because it is generally assumed that these transitions are more dramatic and embody the largest change elements. Savoie suggests that a “capital “T” transition signals the arrival of a new government which in many ways “...has maximum energy but minimum knowledge.” The other attractive factor of capital “T” transitions is the newness and untested qualities of the incoming leader. The pure political theatre of watching a new leader brimming with ideas for change, running headlong into the awesome realities of governing effectively is what has made these transitions the most highly regarded. Brauer for example, in his groundbreaking work on transitions, admitted to only analyzing capital “T” transitions because, as he stated, “...transitions are filled with peril and with opportunity. The ability of newly elected presidents to avoid the former and make the most of the latter goes a long way toward determining their success in office and affects a great deal besides that.”

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34 For example, Blakeney and his assistance to the Rae Government in 1990.
35 Savoie, pp.4.
Small “t” transitions

To Brauer’s credit, he did recognize that some of the problems facing small “t” or second term transitions were of equal stature to those of first term transitions and, in fact, warranted special treatment. Nevertheless, neither he nor any other transition authors have paid much attention to small “t” transitions. Mosher, Clinton, and Lang group small “t” transitions into two categories. The first, which is considered the least drastic of all, is when leaders succeed themselves following a successful election. In the United States this list would include Richard Nixon in 1972-73, Ronald Reagan in 1984-85 and Bill Clinton in 1996-97.37 In Canada, this list would include Brian Mulroney in 1988, Frank McKenna in New Brunswick in 1996 and several instances in the Ontario and Canadian governments during much of the 1960’s and 1970’s. The importance or relevance of these transitions is dismissed because as Savoie points out, “...one seldom sees dramatic shifts in policy or in personnel. Once re-elected the government quietly goes about preparing the policy shifts it wants to introduce during the life of its new mandate.”38

The second category of small “t” transition identified by Mosher, Clinton and Lang is when an incumbent dies or resigns, and is succeeded by a vice-president. Franklin Roosevelt succeeded by Harry Truman in 1945, Kennedy by Lyndon Johnson in 1963 and Nixon by Ford in 1974 are the three examples of this type of transition in the United States since WWII.39 In the United States, succession by a vice president as a consequence of assassination, natural death, or resignation are, “…quite unlike other transitions in their relation to time. They are unscheduled, usually unpredicted, and sudden; there is almost no time for preparation. Yet since 1841, an elected president has left office by some unexpected consequence on average of one every twenty years.”40

The advantages of having a vice president succeed in these cases is that they are in an excellent position to learn about the presidency, the demands and the personnel involved. Unfortunately, the vice-presidential role is largely ceremonial and the person is chosen with little scrutiny and for largely political reasons. Therefore, how well prepared a vice president is largely depends on his or her own initiative and circumstance. Lyndon Johnson had been preparing all his life for the Presidency, while one can only wonder where the United States would be now if Spiro Agnew in 1968 or Dan Quayle in 1988 had ascended to the highest office.

In Canada, similar recent cases would include Bill Vander Zalm being succeeded by Rita Johnson in 1990 and Kim Campbell succession from Brian Mulroney in 1993. These are all cases in which a government leader was succeeded by someone from within their own party. For purposes of clarity, these transitions will be referred to as “intra-party”

37 Interestingly, these authors include Johnson in 1964-65 in this list, even though Johnson had only taken over the presidency in 1963 upon the death of John Kennedy.
38 Savoie, pp.3.
39 Mosher, Clinton and Lang, pp.24.
40 This eerie statistic comes from Mosher, Clinton and Lang in Presidential Transitions and Foreign Affairs, pp. 38, where they point out that with the single exception of Ronald Reagan, who barely escaped death from assassination, every president elected or reelected in a year ending in zero and divisible by four between 1840 and 1980 was killed or otherwise died in office. Nixon’s resignation must also be included in the list of unexpected departures from the White House.
transitions. The one thing that is strikingly similar about all these small ‘t’ transitions is that there is a paucity of research about both them and their impact on governance or democratic process.41

1.5 Determining Transition Duration - an inexact science

While transition authors may agree on the variety of types of transitions, there is very little agreement on another fundamental element of transition definition - when transitions begin and end. From both an analytical and comparative standpoint it would seem critical to have at least some concurrence on the time parameters of transitions. At one end of the spectrum there are those who suggest that, strictly speaking, transitions do not really occur at all. Pfiffner points to early American interpretations of transitions as an example. “…In point of fact, the American Constitution inherently prescribes an abrupt changing of the guard. This is why Eisenhower insisted that there is no real transition of the presidency. Rather presidential authority is transferred to the new president at noon on January 20 after the new president is elected.”42

While noting the inherent constitutionality of the above definition, other authors take a slightly broader perspective when they suggest that “formal” transitions are the specific period of time from when a party wins the election until the time they are sworn into office as a new government. This period is traditionally referred to as the “interregnum”. As outlined earlier, in the typical Canadian case there are approximately three weeks between the period when an election is won and the new government formally takes office. This compares to the traditional 24-hour period in the British case and the approximately 3-month period in the United States.

Understandably, most transition authors agree that this narrow definition of transition duration is insufficient and that “actual” transitions include more than the formal conveyance of power. What they cannot seem to agree on is what the proper

41 Some authors have included a final transition category referred to as, “transitions that never happened” - in other words, “the preparations for transition of non-incumbent candidates who ultimately lost their elections.” The most famous of these in the United States would have been Dewey’s preparations in early 1948, well before the election had even begun. In Canada, recent examples of non-incumbents working hard on transition preparation and planning but to no avail, would be Ontario Liberal Leader Lyn McLeod in 1995 and BC Liberal Leader Gordon Campbell in 1996. Both leader took large margins of popular support (20-30% leads) and significant transition preparation into those elections, only to be subsequently beaten in upsets. These “non-transitions” have academic and explanatory significance for two reasons. First, the preparation and planning that goes into these exercises is legitimate and worthy of study. Second, it is important to understand whether the choice of transition team or relative weight given to the process had, in a direct or indirect manner, any impact on the outcome of the election itself. Conclusions drawn from these “non-transitions” therefore can be every bit as informative and prescriptive for future leaders as the real thing. See Mosher, Clinton and Lang, pp. 25

characterization of an actual transition should include. Brauer describes transitions “as the passage from successful candidacy to established incumbency.”

Michelmann and Steeves suggest that “…the period between one’s government electoral defeat and the confident management of power by a new government is generally referred to in public sector management as the transition period.” Pfiffner states, “In reality, the shift of power between administrations extends from the election until the new president has established his control over government. Power is not automatically transferred, it must be seized. To successfully seize these powers, the president must control: 1) his own staff, 2) his cabinet, 3) executive bureaucracy, 4) career civil service, 5) the budgetary process, and 6) the legislature.”

After a thorough examination of the existing literature, Lindquist suggests that there are no definitive criteria for determining when transitions begin and end and therefore an expanded definition of interregnum should suffice. Lindquist would see transitions starting the day a new leader wins office and lasting until that leader holds their first cabinet meeting. His rationale is that any planning exercises before or after this period are just that - theoretical exercises - and therefore not part of the actual, hands on transition activity.

**Transition Inception**

The one point all these authors have in common is that they see the transition period beginning when electoral success is achieved. In reality, this definition has manifested itself several times. For a variety of reasons, including superstition and ignorance, many modern leaders and their staffs have occasionally taken the view that no significant planning should go into a transition and therefore a transition should not start until after a leader is elected. H.R. Haldeman, for example, when talking about the Nixon transition, suggested, “…we were working under the normal superstition that you shouldn’t start taking the steps of the victor until you’ve won the victory.”

As odd as it may sound for a soon-to-be leader of a multi-trillion dollar operation not to make substantive, preliminary plans for taking office, Haldeman’s sentiments are not unique. During elections, campaign directors often loathe committing staff and resources to transition efforts on the grounds that it may; adversely affect campaign staff morale; convey an unwanted sense of cockiness; promote infighting for positions in the new government; and in smaller, less well financed campaigns, it may actually take away from the campaign effort.

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43 Brauer pp. xiv.
45 Pfiffner pp. 3-11.
46 For an excellent preliminary summary of transition duration, see Evert Lindquist in Savoie, pp. 33-34
Others, like Bob Rae in Ontario in 1990, made no significant plans for transition during the campaign because the likelihood of winning the election was so remote. Finally, there are situations like those of Vice-president Ford in 1973, who, when he found out that transition plans were secretly underway, immediately stopped them for fear of embarrassing soon to be retired President Nixon. In any event, these examples are the exception rather than the rule, and in retrospect, it could be argued that all the leaders in these cases would have benefited from engaging in transition activities at an earlier date.

Since Roosevelt took office in 1932, most significant transitions have involved a measure of pre-planning, both by the leader and his/her staff and by the senior bureaucracy. Many leaders have designated specific individuals or teams to work on transition planning well before electoral victory is secured. Often these teams work independently of the candidates election team. Mosher and his associates incorporate this activity into their definition when they suggest; “transition is from the time that candidates or incumbents first consciously [emphasis mine] begin to plan for the transfer of authority to the time when a new administration is in full swing.” 48

The strength of this definition is that it incorporates reality - in most cases a transition begins the moment a leader or senior bureaucrat says “it’s time to get this thing organized, whether we/they win the election or not, it is important that we are prepared for this eventuality.” As discussed previously, in a few unfortunate cases, this moment may not be until after an electoral success. Conversely, in some rare instances, such as the Harris transition in Ontario in 1995, significant planning was going on for taking the reins of government a full 3 years before Harris’ electoral victory.49 However, it will be posited here that most leaders consciously start to think about transition in real terms at some point before the election and if they do not, they should. When this happens exactly truly depends on circumstance and personality.

Transition Conclusion
From this analysis, it is not terribly controversial to suggest that transitions begin when involved parties begin to make conscious preparations for changing governments. When discussing the moment a transition ends however, the waters muddy considerably. As Walker suggests, “The end of the transition period is ill-defined. It is difficult to identify when the administration is fully established and equipped to deal with its responsibilities.”50

In his study of transition planning, Lindquist suggests that there are two major categories for determining when transitions end. The first is when the government is 'set in motion.' This could include disbanding the transition team, cabinet’s first real decision-making session, completing key appointments, the first budget, the completion of the first legislative session. The second category is when there has been a major adjustment in the

48 Mosher et al, pp. 35-36
49 For an excellent description of the Harris transition planning exercise see Cameron and White, Cycling to Saigon, unpublished, 1996
50 Walker, pp.58.
decision-making system or a significant rotation of key personnel. These could be indicated by the first cabinet shuffle, delineation of new policy procedures or a creation of new committee processes. Ultimately, Lindquist narrows his definition of transition to the following: “transition planning ceases when authorities have been transferred not only from the previous government, but delegated by the leader to cabinet members as individuals and as a collective, and ministers begin exercising those authorities.”

With this type of definition, Lindquist is attempting to solidify the boundaries of transition for the purposes of analysis. Unfortunately, his parameters are based on formal expressions of authority which may or may not be meaningful. There can be examples, where the Premier has no intention of allowing his or her cabinet any real authority and therefore the first meeting of cabinet is immaterial. Lindquist’s definition is based on the idea that transition is about “taking office,” when in fact many other authors suggest it is about “taking power.” However, while the notion that a transition doesn’t end until a new government has “taken power” is an attractive one, it is also a nebulous and subjective phrase.

For example, an official involved with Savage’s 1993 transition in Nova Scotia suggests that given the immaturity of some of Savage’s policy initiatives, that transition was still ongoing, almost 4 years later. The point to be taken from this understandable, if somewhat misguided, observation is that, if we measure the end of transition by when a leader is properly in control of the machinery of government, it could be argued that many transitions have never ended. In a definition that Lindquist ultimately rejects, he suggests that pressures from the “learning curve” are constantly placed on government and therefore, “governments are always in transition.” In other words, formal authority means very little if ones hands are not firmly on the levers of power and in some instances this may never clearly occur.

This is what authors mean when they suggest that a transition ends when power is “seized” or “incumbency is established” or when the new government is “confidently managing power.” Many for example, consider Roosevelt’s flurry of activities in 1933, often referred to as “the first 100 days,” as the first modern transition. With reference to this period, Intermeyer suggests that “…it will be the dog that does not bark that determines the last note of the transition planning process: that is, an administration which functions without draining attention because the people who are in those jobs are doing them well.”

Another way to look at transition conclusions is to consider the period when the new government reaches its zenith of newness combined with public approval. This period is often referred to as the “window of opportunity” or “honeymoon.” It is the time immediately after an election, that a new government, fresh in the glow of public approval, and without the considerable constraint of built up scandal or bureaucratic

51 Lindquist in Savoie pp.34-35.
52 ibid, pp. 42.
53 Intermeyer in Ken Thompson, pp. 95.
inertia is able to effect real change. Richard Nixon's famous staffer, John Haldeman once opined that for a new American president, their real power started to erode the minute they take office. Thompson subsequently surmised that transition ends when potential for significant change becomes lessened. If we take Haldeman's suggestion that one's ability to properly effect change diminishes quickly after election, the most prudent measure of transition end therefore may be to average out popularity loss amongst Canadian leaders after having taken office. Walker has done this in his study of Carter, Reagan and Bush in the United States and has come to the conclusion that their average transition lasted approximately one year.

A related measure that a leader is "astride his coalition and able to promote his priorities," is what is commonly referred to as the honeymoon period. When a leader's popularity begins to dip below a certain level, some say in the 50-55 per cent range, it is supposed to show that his or her ability to act independently or unilaterally becomes increasingly fettered. While there can be no doubt that approval ratings are used as a key indicator of a leader's success, what of a leader such as Chretien whose popularity ratings never go below the agreed upon level? Are we to suggest that his transition continues today? Thompson expands on this notion by suggesting that "one way to measure transition is when the honeymoon ends, combined with when the number of internal enemies is the lowest. This shows us when the window of opportunity is closed."

To conclude, while it is reasonable to assume that a transition to power takes longer than the period to swearing in or the first meeting of cabinet, an attempt to quantify this length of time using polling data or media popularity would be folly. It is indeed legitimate however, to take all the criteria and arguments into account and suggest that the majority of transitions should be concluded by the time a new government has been six months in office. Regardless of the size of the jurisdiction, the inexperience of the incoming regime or the complexity of the issues facing the new government, six months is a reasonable time period for the key elements of transition to be under way. Brauer confirms this observation when he states, "...within six months of taking office - there is no arbitrary date - they are well under way, and their transitions can be said to be over."

1.6 Typical Transitions - definition by perspective

To close the loop with regard to understanding the basic parameters of transition, one must consider not only the type and duration of transition, but, also, its principal elements found therein. What is important to remember is that, regardless of the size of the transition, there are several key elements. Brauer suggests that all recurrent topics, functions and problems of transitions can be subsumed under one of three categories: personnel, policy and organization. Of these three, Brauer suggests that personnel is the most vital. Brauer felt that not only appointing good people, but also ensuring that they

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54 Walker, pp. 58.
55 Thompson, pp. __
56 Brauer pp.xiv
were properly orientated to their new positions was one of the fundamentals to a good transition. “Most former Presidents and their top aides would probably agree that personnel is the single most time consuming, frustrating and difficult part of transitions.”

Lindquist expanded Brauer’s organizational framework to include office logistics. He suggests that the cluster of tasks that everyone takes for granted, such as telephone and computer installation, office space designation and general systems development usually provides the “greatest headaches during the early days of transition.” Organization, for Lindquist and others, is often referred to as the “machinery of government.” Good appointments will go for naught if the decision making processes are not clearly understood, redesigned (if necessary) and utilized immediately.

Policy, is the area that most authors agree is the most interesting for a new government. Brauer offers a interesting warning /observation when he suggests that “…although all new administrations enter office well stocked with campaign promises of dramatic change in policy, continuities, not discontinuities, between administrations tend to be the more striking.” It is also important to realize that policy is not only about the long term change that a new administration wants to bring about, it is equally, and more often about how a new government handles immediate policy issues in the first few weeks of its mandate.

An interesting hybrid of these transition frameworks was the early planning work of the 1995 Ontario Liberal Leader Lyn McLeod transition team. Although ultimately unsuccessful, this group undertook comprehensive planning work, made even more relevant by the inclusion on its committee of several key national Liberal transition team members, all fresh from their work on the 1993 Chretien transition. This team divided the various key transition functions into the following five groupings.

a) Human Resources - included making recommendations of Ministers and Ministers’ Staff, suggesting which deputies should be kept or let go, highlighting key Order in Council appointments and who should fill them, suggesting changes to the Agencies, Boards and Commissions system, both in terms of appointments and structure, suggesting key “dollar a day” appointment types and contracting with an outside agency for all initial human resources assistance the new government may need.

b) Government Restructuring - included advice on the number and size of all Ministries, suggestions for redoing the government’s fiscal reporting and accounting systems, providing a new review process for all Assistant Deputies and Senior Managers, as well as all key programs and spending plans, and a reworking of the current Cabinet committee system.

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57 Brauer, pp.262.
58 Lindquist in Savoie, pp.38.
59 Brauer, pp.266.
c) 90 Day Logistics - included suggested timing for all immediate personnel and policy announcements, the start of the legislative session and of all restructuring notices

d) Conflict of Interest - included extracting pertinent information from all caucus members, redoing existing conflict rules and planning short, medium and long term strategies for dealing with potential conflict and government appointments and contracts.

e) Security of Documents - included coding all Cabinet and other sensitive documents and administering an oath of secrecy for all senior employees.

What can be surmised from these different approaches is that regardless of the size or nature of a transition there are four essential groupings within the framework. First, in all modern transitions there must be some semblance of planning. Personnel matters, conflict of interest laws, issue management functions, and machinery of government complexities all demand that some planning take place, regardless of a new government’s experience or time out of office.

Second, there can be little question that personnel is a fundamental element of transition, particularly in an American presidential transition where there are now almost 4,000 appointments to be made by an incoming president. But personnel is not only about the sheer number of political appointments to be made. It is also, perhaps even more fundamentally, about putting in place people who will carry out the program of the new leader. Many even go to the point of suggesting that the correct hiring of personnel is what determines policy outcomes within a new regime. Striking the correct tone with the existing permanent bureaucracy is also a critical element of the personnel grouping.

The third grouping, policy, can be divided into two main sections: a) dealing with the issue management crises that arise during the first few weeks of a new administration and b) the policy challenges involved in implementing a new government’s agenda over a four year electoral cycle. While significantly different, both sections need the proper framework and processes in place to be able to function correctly. Information dissemination, comprehensive issue analysis capabilities and quality communications distribution systems must be set-up and operational as soon as possible following an electoral victory.

Finally, there is the issue of politics, both internal and external. Internal politics has to do with having a firm grasp of who the key influencers and stakeholders are in relation to the new administration’s agenda; and external politics has to do with having the continuing capacity to reach out to like minded groups and communities while mitigating outside opposition.
1.7 Intra-party transitions – A new area worthy of analysis

To date, most transition analyses have focused on inter-party transitions – a change of government from one party to another – particularly when the incoming government has not been in power for a significant amount of time. These transitions are deemed the most worthy of analysis because of the political drama, tension and elements of wholesale change typically associated with them.

Understandably therefore, there has been little study to date of intra-party transitions – transitions to power within the same political party. The rationale is that these transitions are typically less dramatic – the cabinet and senior bureaucracy usually stay predominantly the same, the new leader, typically chosen from the government’s cabinet ranks, is inevitably conversant with the government he or she is taking over.

Even less dramatic, presumably, are transitions that occur within the same party but without the benefit of an election. Less common in the United States than in Canada, these transitions occur when a Prime Minister or Premier steps down mid-term and is replaced by someone from within their own party. Upon moving into a leadership position the new leader will then go on to finish out some or all of the term of office before calling an election.

These “mid-term intra-party transitions” are unlikely candidates for concentrated analysis for all the reasons referenced above and two more besides. First, the bulk of the research on transitions and transition theory originates in, and is focused on, the United States, particularly at the presidential level. In recent history, only Gerald Ford’s replacement of Richard Nixon as President of the United States, following Nixon’s 1977 impeachment, qualifies as this type of transition.

The other reason mid-term intra-party transitions are rarely studied is that, as was the case with the Ford transition, not only are they rare, they are also rarely successful. In the majority of instances, the leader that takes over a party already in power inevitably loses the subsequent election. At the provincial level in Canada, Frank Miller’s dramatic 1985 loss of the office of Ontario Premier, after taking over mid-term from Premier Bill Davis is one example. Rita Johnson’s 1991 loss after the Premier of B.C., Bill Vander Zalm, stepped down or Russell MacLennan’s problems after taking over as Premier of Nova Scotia from John Savage are other examples.

At the Canadian federal level, John Turner’s overwhelming loss to Brian Mulroney in 1984 and Kim Campbell’s 1992 electoral annihilation after taking over the Prime Minister’s job from Mulroney are both examples of this phenomenon. Subsequent to these election losses, the new leaders either resigned or took a much lower profile position within the party’s caucus. As a result, analytical interest in these leaders and the fundamental nature of their original transitions wanes.
Lack of interest in presumably understandably in these cases. Were not most of these leaders doomed to electoral defeat? It stands to reason that a sitting Premier or a Prime Minister does not simply resign their position and allow themselves to be replaced, unless there are significant structural problems with either their leadership or their government. As stated recently, in reference to questions about Prime Minister Chretien’s future political plans, a knowledgeable commentator wrote, “...few Prime Ministers in Canadian history have left the top job without compelling political or persona reasons, or without an obvious political “trigger” or event.” \(^60\) This “trigger” may be a personal scandal, blame for poor policy decisions or implementation, low public popularity or a leader’s overall poor standing in the community or core group of supporters. Whatever the reason, inevitably, a new mid-term intra-party leader will typically assume the role of Premier or Prime Minister with his or her party languishing in the polls and with very little time before the next election has to be called.

Given that the new leader is often taking over an unpopular government, while there can be a short spike of positive public interest around their installment as head of government, there is typically very little of what is considered a “honeymoon”. The new leader is often seen as a lame duck, who must attempt to deal with all the baggage left-over from the previous regime. Furthermore, unlike the case of an inter-party transition, the new leader has no capacity to attack the previous government for its shortsightedness or leaden policy initiatives. This obviously crucial instrument is obviously unavailable and therefore puts the new mid-term leader in an often-vulnerable position.

But are these reasons for dismissal as a legitimate case for analysis valid in all instances? What of the rare cases on intra-party transition in which the new leader actually wins the subsequent election? Is not the relative rarity of such cases sufficient, in and of itself, to make these situations worthy of analysis? In Canada, for example, there have been only two significant occasions in recent history where mid-term intra-party leaders have gone on to win their subsequent electoral campaigns; Ralph Klein in Alberta in 1993 and Glen Clark in British Columbia in 1996. The significant obstacles that Clark and Klein must have overcome in order to succeed should not only be worthy of analysis, but may ultimately prove instructive to planners and analysts interested or involved in all types of transitions.

### 1.8 Statement of Thesis

A thorough examination of the literature has found that authors are, almost without exception, only interested in large “T” transitions, rarely compare transitions in different jurisdictions, but when they do almost never account for differences accrued as a result of size, political or institutional disparities. This chapter has made the case for three things. First that the study of transition success is an important endeavour, not only from an academic perspective, but from the perspective of the practitioner as well. Second, this

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\(^60\) The GPC Federal Source, May 1998.
My hypothesis is that the determining factor in the success of these transitions is the ability of these two leaders to indelibly imprint their own personalities and governing styles onto the political and governmental processes of their respective provinces.

It is argued in this study that, for Clark and Klein, “seizing power” was not solely about winning over the civil service or implementing a detailed plan for governing, as much as it was about utilizing a combination of leadership, media savvy and political management techniques to allow them to properly distance themselves from the previous government and establish themselves as independent, distinct leaders.

1.9 Organization and Methodology

Having outlined the parameters and definitions inherent to a thorough discussion of intra-party transitions, Chapter Two goes on to focus exclusively on the difficult proposition of defining and measuring transition success. Many authors have written on the subject, but very few conclusively. This section will examine those writings and distill the variables or variable groupings best suited for discussion and analysis of Canadian intra-party transitions. From this distillation, a variable “blueprint” or map will be constructed through which all Canadian intra-party transitions can be analyzed and compared.

Chapter Three is designed to give a historical context for the three principal case studies. All modern, provincial intra-party transitions in Canada will be discussed here. Where possible, all cases will be examined with reference to the key variables discussed in Chapter Two. This review is followed by an analysis of the success or failure of all provincial intra-party transitions in Canada from 1960 to present day. Research on these case studies has been carried using a combination of literature review, parliamentary record reviews, electoral records searches, periodical and newspaper scans and polling data analysis. As well, some interviewing of provincial election officers and regional political historians was necessary. These interviews took the form of non-quantitative questionnaires and telephone queries.

Chapters Four through Six are dedicated to an examination of the Frank Miller, Glen Clark and Ralph Klein transition case study. Each case is discussed contextually in terms of each leader’s personal history, the status of the party and government at the time, the nature of the public environment, the run-up to the transition, the first months in office and the nature and outcome of the subsequent election campaign. Research on each case study included a literature review, periodical scans, polling data analysis and extensive personal interviewing. Interviews were done with over sixty politicians, senior civil servants, senior political advisors or “exempt staff” who were intimately involved with the details of the transitions in question. As well, interested observers such as political scientists, media and interest group leaders were also been interviewed.
While based on new empirical research, these analyses are largely qualitative, in that they involve “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships.” They are based on a case study format as this method has been used extensively in both social science research and practice-oriented fields such as public policy and public administration analysis. “As a research endeavour, the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of complex organizational, social and political phenomena.” It is an “empirical inquiry into a contemporary situation with the intent of making an analytical, rather than statistical, generalization.”

A comparative analysis and conclusions are set out in Chapter Seven. The analysis uses the constellation of exogenous and endogenous variables set out in Chapter Two to determine the root causes of success or failure in each of the three case studies. The conclusions include two principal findings. First, that intra-party transitions are worthy of study and actually have several characteristics that are important for all new leaders and transition practitioners to heed. In particular, the successful transitions of Klein and Clark highlight several important prescriptive elements for future transition planners.

Secondly, it will be shown that, while there are arguments for the importance of other variables, on balance it is clear that the ability of these two new leaders to distance themselves from their predecessor was overwhelmingly the most important reason for their success. In fact, so many of the other variables in these two cases were different that this factor, common to both must be the most crucial to their success.

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63 ibid, pp. 13
Chapter Two

Transition Success:
A Matter of Perspective
2.1 Introduction

If there is little written about transitions, there is even less written about successful transitions and the reasons for their success. This is, in part, because historically, no specific significance was given to the transition period. Many, including President Jefferson of the United States, felt that constitutionally, transitions did not exist. Power was simply handed over from one party to another and the time it took the new office holder to adjust was simply a natural part of governing. In fact, many political influencers suggested that the best strategy for a new government was to ‘disappear’ from public view for the first six months to a year in office. During this period it was felt that mistakes were inevitable and there was no reason to shorten the “honeymoon” with voters with a lot of unreasoned activity early in a term.

Recently, however, transitions in many jurisdictions have been characterized by a whirlwind of preparation and activity, the new premise being that, if a new government is perceived as extremely prepared and pro-active in the early part of a new term, the “honeymoon” can be extended and long-term political benefits will accrue. This frenzy of new activity has recently led the academic elite to deem the study of political transitions worthy of analysis. The prevailing wisdom suggests that how a new government deals with those first few, difficult, often tumultuous, months in office is not only a precursor of a regime’s governance style, but is, in fact, a major influence on the subsequent success or failure of that regime. Yet despite several excellent efforts to document all elements of the transition process, from planning to personnel deployment to policy implementation, tractable answers to the principal question - why are some transitions more successful than others? - continue to elude both researchers and practitioners.

Chapter Two examines wide variety of perspectives as to the nature and importance of transition success, the variables that impact it and the methodology used thus far to measure it. The theory is then posited that intra-party transitions provide a built-in measurement of success, a measurement which, in and of itself, should make intra-party transitions that much more valuable for academic and prescriptive purposes. Finally, Chapter Two outlines the key variables that most influence intra-party transitions, thereby providing a framework from which to judge the intra-party transition case studies that follow.

Transition Theory: Challenges and Opportunities
The reasons for the lack of academic focus on the notion and measurement of transition success are many and varied. First, inherent in the analysis of success is an assumption that the findings may be prescriptive in nature. That is, by exposing methods used in successful transitions, researchers may be laying out blueprints for future transition planners to follow. This concept of the academic as an active participant in the evolution of the political process, rather than as a detached observer, is anathema to many and has led to a paucity of recommendations or even detailed analyses of the possible factors contributing to “successful” transitions.
This leads to the second primary weakness in the literature, in that nowhere is the notion of transition “success” adequately defined. Because of the natural symmetries and sympathies between many public administration authors and the professional civil service, many authors typically default to measuring a transition’s success by its “smoothness,” “its lack of disruptive qualities” and the speed in which the professional civil service and the new political leaders begin working together harmoniously.

The problem is that these indicators may not only be different from, but also may be completely contrary to, those of other key players directly involved in a transition such as the new political leader, the media, the public or key interest groups. For example, it would not be presumptuous to suggest that a political leader’s most telling indicator of a good transition is its positive impact on his or her new government’s potential for re-election.

Measuring success in electoral terms, however, also has its shortcomings. Many early analyses did not take into account the significantly more pervasive level of scrutiny that all governments are now subject to and the lower levels of efficacy our elected officials enjoy as a result. Crisis can now engulf and cripple a government in a matter of hours and can be so fundamental in nature as to negate any benefit derived from an “orderly” transition. Furthermore, the combination of public cynicism and apathy has meant that any benefits derived from a successful transition may well be forgotten entirely by the voters well before the conclusion of a typical three to five year electoral cycle.

2.2 Transition Success – A Matter of Perspective

Typically, the authors who have written on the subject of transitions are academics schooled in the rigours of public administration, public policy analysis or organizational theory and therefore, consciously or otherwise, take their cues from the impacts of a transition on the existing structures and personnel. This most often manifests itself in authors’ definitions of transition success. Many new leaders come into power with a healthy disrespect for the existing civil service. Others see the bureaucracy as a necessary, but minor part of their new administration. Yet, in the majority of analysis, public administration authors define transition success as “the smoothness” with which the new political leadership meshes with the existing bureaucracy. Savoie suggests, for example, that “transition brings together two groups with markedly different values and perspectives and no assurance that the relationship will work...successful transition can put everyone on a solid footing to work together.”

From the leader’s, or a political perspective, a smooth meshing may actually be contrary to their transition goals in that it may represent a co-opting or overtaking of the new government by entrenched bureaucratic interests. In fact, a new leader may have as their number one goal, to disrupt the entrenched status quo of the civil service as a means of bringing vitality and change to the policy arena. Yet the authors ingrained identification

with the public administration perspective limits their ability to see these political goals clearly. Ultimately, how a transition is judged, what points are emphasized and how resources are allocated, all become a question of perspective. Different people have different takes on what makes a transition successful and to grasp the subject properly is to recognize and examine these different perspectives. Success, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. What a successful transition is, therefore, depends very much on whom you ask and when you ask them.

The importance of perspective is underscored by David Clinton of Tulane University. Clinton has analyzed transition from the perspective of five categories of participants because, in his words, "...we thought that looking at the transition simply from the point of view of the new administration taking power was too narrow. It didn’t give a complete story. There are other actors in transitions, and their actions can have very important consequences for what goes on. Their perspective ought to be taken into account, too." The first group Clinton looks at is the outgoing administration. He suggests that this group wants respect and space from the incoming administration and cooperation when touchy issues come up. Clinton’s analysis of this group is less relevant for Canadian transitions because of the extended length of American presidential transitions.

The second group is the career public servants. The watchword for this group Clinton suggests is “reduced uncertainty.” The permanent civil service is uncertain about the new government’s attitude toward them, unclear as to how the new administration’s policies will be implemented, and what the transition means to their ongoing job security.

The third and fourth groups Clinton looks at are again somewhat unique to the American situation, those being the members of Congress and fourthly, foreign states. He suggests Congress wants speedy appointments and early indications that the president understands the need to communicate broadly, particularly with Congress. This has some parallel in a Prime Minister’s or Premier’s need to maintain good relations with their backbench and the legislative assembly as a whole. However, it differs in that Congress has veto power in certain circumstances and therefore represents a larger challenge for a new leader. As a result of the USA’s status as world power, American presidential transitions have a much greater significance internationally than anything that occurs in Canada. Clinton suggests that most foreign governments would prefer that the United States not have transitions at all. “It seems that everyone-ally, adversary, and neutral state-joins in seeking to reduce uncertainty at the time of the transitions.”

The final group is the incoming administration itself. Clinton sees this group’s watchwords not as “reduced uncertainty” but rather as, “hit the ground running.” This means the new group wants to be seen as being effective and to transmit the notion that the new leader is in control. “Incoming administrations want to take advantage of public

66 ibid., pp.7.
67 ibid, pp.10.
and congressional willingness to listen to them, which is a wasting asset after the honeymoon period. They want to identify policy areas to be emphasized early; these may reflect their own volition or outside pressures.”68

Another author who divides the groups within transitions for the purposes of analysis is Evert Lindquist. He suggests that from an organizational perspective, the key groups (in a more Canadian context) are as follows. The winning party, while intermittent and ephemeral in nature, has an impact on a new government in that, for a short period of time, it has a solid network of volunteers and key influencers across the province or nation.69 Party members are interested in seeing policies that were hard fought for in the election implemented by the new government. As well, particularly when the new government has been out of office for some time, the party will also influence the attitude towards appointments and towards the existing civil service. Similar to Clinton, Lindquist suggests that the public service and the emerging new government are key, but unlike Clinton he also hypothesizes that, from an organization standpoint, it is very important to reference the “transition team.”

Clinton suggests that each of these five categories of participants want different things out of a transition. Each has a different standard of success. Clinton outlines another way of understanding this when he states, “the transition is simply a microcosm of a complex system, a microcosm of American politics as a whole. A presidential transition shows on a smaller scale, in a more compressed, intense fashion than ordinary operations of government, the same ongoing traits of a polity that divides up power and gives many different groups a say. It is not run by any one participant.”70

While all these categories serve a purpose in delineating clearer parameters, they are limited in their scope. They do give clarification about transition success and how that is defined by a wide variety of actors but as Lindquist states, the single consistent factor in all these organizations is the new leader and perhaps one or two key advisers.71

If the principal goal of a new leader is to effect the best possible transition, some of these perspectives are less useful than others. For example, there is little an incoming leader can or should do about the attitudes of the outgoing government, particularly in an inter-party transition. Obviously, unless there are excellent reasons, the outgoing government should not be provoked out of spite or political aggression left over from the campaign. The key is to examine the perspective of each one of these groups and determine which must be paid heed by the incoming leader. The best transition, therefore, may well be the one in which the new leader understands these different perspectives, prioritizes them and acts in accordance to this prioritization.

68 Clinton in Thompson, pp.11.
69 Lindquist in Savoie, pp.32.
70 Clinton, pp.13.
71 Lindquist, pp.33.
Key perspectives for transition success
So, what are the key perspectives for a new leader to heed? As a leader is first and foremost a politician, presumably the perspective they should hold most dear is that of their political strategist. This person may be the leader’s chief aide, their transition team leader or their campaign manager. Political staff are typically characterized by having a political agenda, a desire to win and a significant amount of loyalty to the leader. Their principal goal for the transition is that it takes advantage of the leader’s electoral popularity, it smoothly moves the leader into a position of real power, it extends, as long as possible, the leader’s “honeymoon” with the media and the public, and that it sets a strong foundation for winning the subsequent election. Indeed, many political strategists, when asked the question, do you think the transition was successful, answer: “won’t know until the next election results are in, will we?”

The Political Strategist
For the political strategist, one of the greatest paradoxes in transition planning and execution is how the leader is portrayed immediately after an election is won. Being seen as ‘in control,’ with a preliminary but measured grasp of the office and what it denotes, is often the primary goal. In the literature, much is made of a new leader’s ability to take advantage of their media or public “honeymoon”, look organized and perhaps score some early issue management or policy “wins” to show competence and ability. However, this notion of “hitting the ground running” has also be contested by those who suggest that keeping out of harm’s way and proceeding with implementation slowly is a more effective transition strategy. Richard Neustadt, for example, suggests “…governments can do dreadful things in their first heady months of office. I wish there could be a law against a new government doing anything during its first three or so months of existence.” Neustadt argues that the ‘window of opportunity’ concept is overblown. He preaches caution and suggests that the momentum generated by an election victory and the drive of youth and inexperience may lead new leaders to rash actions. He points to the Bay of Pigs disaster in the early months of the Kennedy administration as his case in point.

Another paradox facing a new leader and their staff is the question of partisanship. Many suggest that a less partisan environment, where information is shared freely between outgoing and incoming administrations, would ultimately benefit the system at large. Furthermore, many of these same authors suggest that the quicker a new leader throws off the political shrouds of electioneering and gets down to the art of governing, the more successful the transition. This once again shows a public administration bias and a desire to see politics diminish in importance. As noble an idea as non-partisanship is, what these authors do not want to fully comprehend is that transition is, in essence, a political process.

As Richard Brookhiser points out, “defining an agenda for the new personnel is a political task. So, is laying out a program. Politics does not stop when the voting does. Governing, like war, is a continuation of politics by other means.” The second key
perspective is that of the career civil servant. Regardless of whether the new leader comes in with a mandate to significantly downsize or change the civil service, or if the new leader and the staff are diametrically opposed philosophically, at some point, the leader and permanent staff must work together. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that the more aggressive and wholesale the change, the more detrimental the effect on large organizations such as provincial or national bureaucracies. Greg Gaertner points out that recent literature on organizational theory and change “increasingly emphasizes the fragility of organizations and the delicacy and care with which serious change should be approached. There needs to be consensus and participation at a variety of levels if organizations are to operate effectively. Increases in rigidity of structure, task orientation coordination, and control are observed in organizations undergoing stressful change.”

The Professional Civil Servant

Amongst authors currently writing about transitions, most write from the perspective of the career civil servant. It is not clear whether this is because of a sense of kinship with this group or because of the fact that many of these authors have backgrounds in public administration theory and analysis. Graham White and David Cameron, for example, represent the public administrators when they link the “smoothness” of the transition and the ability of the new leader to take over without upsetting the existing structures with success.

Mosher tacitly agrees when he concludes, “the crucial element in the success of any transition is most often the experience, and the wisdom of the newcomers. They must dispel their illusions that everything they find is bad and must be corrected; that their predecessors (and the career staff) are incompetent; that change in government can be easy and quick; and that government agencies should be run as nearly as possible like closed corporations, protected from congressional and public scrutiny. They must learn, and learn rapidly, that the federal government is different and difficult, that they too will be leaving in a few years, and that in the meantime they are operating as trustees in the people’s interest.”

With regards to major changes such as transitions, Gaertner suggests that, “…rather than being a transient period of adjustment, presidential transitions represent a contrast and contradiction between democratic and organization theory. The requirements of organizations for relative internal stability and consensus are ill-suited to the jarring discontinuity of change in political leadership, and this mismatch is not trivial, brief, or transient in its effects.”

Gaertner examined the impact of the Reagan transition on the US federal Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA. He states that the “model of a resilient, neutral bureaucracy waiting in secure confidence for the new leadership does

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75 Graham White and David Cameron, Cycling into Saigon: The Tories Take Power in Ontario, unpublished, University of Toronto, 1996, pp.1.
77 ibid, pp. 441.
not capture all or even much of the reality of the early transition period in EPA.”⁷⁸ He proposes that the reason for this is that there was significant publicity about potential EPA changes under the new administration and that the EPA was a young and heavily ideological agency unaccustomed to the rigors of a presidential transition. Gaertner’s point is that whether Reagan was going to significantly modify the EPA was not the point. The point is that the combination of early publicity and delayed action had the effect of making EPA bureaucrats tense, guarded and suspicious.

Rumour replaced communication thus impacting efficiency and productivity significantly more than if the new president had quietly gone in and made the changes he felt necessary. This suggests, “that in the absence of an internal climate of support and freedom from threat, external threats undermine good communication, reduce flexibility, and encourage self-protection rather than concern for the organization as a whole.”⁷⁹

Gaertner concludes by suggesting that democratic theory “supposes that the ability of a new president to enact the policy preferences expressed by the electorate is not severely limited by the inflexibility of executive branch agencies.”⁸⁰ To expand this point transition specialists anticipate opposition from new bureaucracies but usually for ideological reasons, or on the grounds that the civil servants have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Gaertner surmises that it is not ideology that makes these institutions inflexible, it is rather poor communication and the prospect of continual, uninformed change, which so hamstrings these groups.

What occurs therefore is a constant state of paranoia and paralysis. Gaertner’s assertion is that, regardless of a new administrations plans, simply paralysing an agency with as diverse a set of constituencies as the EPA’s can only be self-defeating in the long run. Gaertner’s points out the basic contradiction between a new administration’s need for change and an institution’s need for stability. This need for stability should not be interpreted as opposition, but rather as predictable reactions to the process of change. Increased efforts at control are more likely to increase than to reduce resistance.

Transition planners that understand this need for stability will be much further ahead, even if this means planning for and executing significant change expeditiously at the beginning of a term so as to restore stability, albeit to a different group, as quickly as possible. As Gaertner concludes, “political leadership which approaches career leadership as a resource rather than an enemy is more likely to effect a workable top management coalition through which change may take place and without change may be effectively resisted.”⁸¹

The Policy Advisor
The third perspective fundamental to the transition equation is that of the leader’s policy advisor. This person may be a long time associate of the leader, a party activist, come

⁷⁸ ibid, pp.424.
⁷⁹ Mosher et al., pp.425
⁸⁰ ibid, pp. 428
⁸¹ Gaertner, pp. 428
from an interest group or association, an academic, or a high ranking civil servant such as a deputy to the Premier or Cabinet. This person will have significant loyalty to the leader but will have an equal or greater loyalty to the leader’s platform and vision. This person is often motivated by the political rewards of supporting a leader who will get credit for doing what they say they would during the campaign and for the more ideological or idealistic reasons of seeing an policy agenda they support move forward. This person may have even got involved in government to affect change and to be involved in the implementation elements of the policy cycle.

The policy advisor’s concern with transition is principally to see the leader’s agenda progress. If there is no significant agenda coming from the election, then the advisor’s role is to fill the vacuum. Throughout the 1990’s, showing policy direction has become increasingly important within the political arena. The policy advisor’s interests lie not so much in the perception that the new leader is in control, but in the reality of firmly taking hold of the levers of government’s machinery. If, however, making significant policy change entails first building up policy and issue credibility, the policy advisor must find through the course of the transition, small but highly visible policy “wins” for the new leader.

An excellent example of this type of small, but significant policy win was during the Mike Harris transition in Ontario in 1995. One of Harris’ first acts as Premier was to dismantle the province’s photoradar system. From a policy perspective this was a small act that required little in the way of legislative or regulatory change and no major process within the bureaucracy. The effect, however, was to portray the government as decisive and fast moving and built the government’s credibility to the point where they were able to deal effectively with other more difficult and contentious policy issues. The converse to this situation was former Prime Minister Joe Clark’s handling of the Canadian Embassy in Jerusalem in 1979. This was an incredibly complex issue that Clark tried to handle before he had the public credibility or the sufficient control of government machinery to do so. This relatively small issue, spun out of control and severely restricted Prime Minister Clark’s ability to move freely in the policy arena thereafter.

The National Interest

The last perspective that warrants attention by the new leader is what is broadly known as the public interest. In their article entitled, “What makes a successful Presidential Transition?” Clinton and Lang suggest that the most important perspective is the national interest. The authors recognize that, with the exception of when there is a very real international threat to the United States, there are serious difficulties with attempting to define what exactly the national interest is. They conclude that, “rather than making any one actor’s definition of success, the true measure, the national interest should be used as the ultimate standard and it is approximated in most - though not all - cases by the degree of mutual accommodation among the actors.” In other words, how well the new president gets along with the various governmental and political forces in Washington should determine the success of the transition.

The problem with this definition is twofold. First, who is to say the national interest can be assuaged only by mutual accommodation amongst political and governmental elites? There are other elements inherent in the national interest. And secondly, what if the best thing that could happen is that traditional mutual accommodations be shaken up? What if the status quo is no longer working and the new outsiders of the incoming president’s regime are correct in their hostility towards the existing system? Clinton and Lang presuppose a higher value for the status quo than is proper, possibly in part because of they study only the United States, which as the world’s only remaining superpower has a unique role in world affairs.

At the same time, the sanctity and longevity of our institutions is an important goal. Elections are a time of political unease and recently have been more of an opportunity to vote against a political party than for its opponent. From a public perspective, transitions have come to represent the worst element of the political process, as this is the time when, too often, the electorate realizes that the new government is no better, and perhaps worse, than the previous one. There can be no question that the efficacy of our governmental institutions has been in a downward spiral since the late 1950’s. Transitions, which are supposed to be a shining icon of our political maturity, have instead become vehicles reinforcing the public’s negative political stereotypes and frustrations.

If we assume, therefore, that it is in the public or national/provincial or state interest to restore, maintain, and improve people’s perception of government institutions, and that transitions play a significant role in how people see government, then we can properly conclude that it is a new leader’s responsibility to the “national interest” to have an effective transition that maintains people’s faith in the certainty and credibility of our national institutions.

What these four unique perspectives show us is that transitions are not just about positioning the new government to be successful and win the next election, ensuring the civil service is not too disrupted, taking hold of the machinery of government in order to affect policy change, or improving the efficacy of our public institutions; in point of fact they are about all four. It is a leader’s responsibility to understand these diverse, often conflicting pressures, to prioritize them and then to find the most effective balance among them.

2.3 Transition Success – Frameworks

Understanding the different perspectives on the question of transition success is an important precursor to examining the various frameworks put forth by the few authors who have tackled this subject.

The first example of a framework designed to help understand transition success is that used by Ken Thompson. Writing primarily about American presidential transitions,
Thompson attempts to quantify the success of George Bush’s transition by using a series of administrative evaluation variables. The questions Thompson asked and his preliminary answers to these questions were as follows:

- Is he involving his colleagues (in this case Congress) in the policy making process? Bush was.
- Does the President set priorities and let his colleagues know? Does he articulate an agenda and work on priorities within the agenda? Bush was poor at this.
- Has the president started fast and made some early victories? Bush did poorly.
- How does the President use partisanship? Does he perform as a non-partisan when needed (i.e. foreign policy, aid, the budget, S&L)? Bush did well.
- Does the President coordinate his own administration? Do his people speak with one voice? Are messages coordinated? Bush did well.
- Has he established a professional liaison office in the White House? Is he talking regularly with those who hold the strings inside the beltway? Bush did this well.\(^3\)

Thompson eventually concluded that, while Bush had vast experience with internal political and administrative processes, a knowledge that served him well in transition, overall the transition was poor because of a lack of direction and dynamism. Bush himself stated, "I don't have an agenda where I have to get six items done, I am not thinking in terms of 100 days." One can conclude from Thompson’s work that part of the reasons that Bush failed where Reagan succeeded was that Bush failed to take advantage of his early window of opportunity. One of the reasons Bush did this because there didn’t seem to be a great need - Bush’s popularity numbers stayed high for a long time - even higher and longer than Reagan’s.

While Thompson’s indicators of success have their place, often times the evaluation process is subjective and definitive answers difficult to derive. More specific indicators of success would examine how new governments handle immediate exigencies such as, as Sykes suggests, a new government’s ability to choose a good cabinet. Crothers and Sykes both talk about a new government’s ability to set “tone,” that is how well new leaders use public rhetoric to develop support for their plans and programs.

In perhaps the most definitive work on the evaluation of transition success, Wallace Walker addresses this point when he states, “assessing presidential success in any realm is a difficult endeavour. In the area of presidential transition, it is perhaps even more complex. The variety of actors involved complicates assessment. The length of the transition period is not well established. Finally, the criteria for judging success are not well defined.” Walker attempts to summarize the usual list of success criteria as the following:

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\(^3\) Thompson, “Presidential Transitions,” Summary


efficiency of the machinery used to promote decisions
prompt appointment of capable executives
national or provincial interest being served
close adherence to a party platform
winning congressional/legislative approval of proposals
effectiveness of policy implementation

However, he suggests that none of these criteria recognize the realities of politics and the peculiarities involved with the unique process of democratic transition. Walker suggests all are noble goals but may have little to do with the politics of the moment. With regard to efficiency and effectiveness for example, he states, “these are to be wished for in any administration. But transition machinery is impermanent, and efficiency more a capitalist virtue than a democratic value. Capable executives are hard to find, and their performance even after years in office hard to judge.”

Similarly, he suggests, the growing complexity of national capitals such as Washington, means that attempting to reconcile the needs of the extended government community is an unachievable task. Trying to measure new leaders’ performance by their ability to stick to campaign platforms is to suggest that these leaders are “omniscient” and denies the importance or reality that often the best leaders learn most of what they need in office. Walker also criticizes these criteria for their inability to embrace change. “International events are impossible to forecast, domestic circumstances changes and new issues surface. Thus if we ask of presidents only what they have promised, they are doomed to fail.”

Walker suggests that transition success should be judged on the new government’s ability to be nimble (choosing priorities quickly, avoiding blunders, successfully manoeuvring in the face of overwhelming opposition, wooing supporters and mollifying opponents). They should also be shrewd in their implementation in that new policies and programs are announced early, lobbied energetically, enacted swiftly and executed boldly. Walker applies these criteria to Carter, Reagan, and Bush administrations and suggests that these are successful in assessing transitions. They emphasize the necessity of an entrepreneurial focus for incoming administrations and for assessing transitions in democratic and political terms. As Lyndon Johnson noted, “you’ve got to give it all you can that first year. It doesn’t matter what kind of majority you came in with. You’ve got just one year when they treat you right, and before they start worrying about themselves.”

By shrewd implementation, Walker suggests that, “governance and implementation require cold-blooded politics that eschews inordinate concern for specific individuals, issues, and policies which might become an impediment to the incoming government. That is, presidents must protect their reputation for effectiveness and freedom to manoeuvre. They must not squander these assets in the protection of old friends.

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86 Walker, pp.59.
87 ibid.
88 ibid.
89 ibid, pp. 60
Walker instead, suggests that transition should be “measured in democratic and political terms. That is, incoming presidents should be held accountable for nimble governance and shrewd implementation of their priorities. Their approach should be entrepreneurial in character. Nimble governance means choosing among alternative priorities, avoiding plunders, successful manoeuvring in the face of overwhelming opposition and wooing supporters and mollifying opponents in Congress, the Washington community at large, and the nation. Shrewd implementation means that new policies and programs are announced early, lobbied energetically, enacted swiftly, and executed boldly.”

By nimble governance, Walker means that new leaders have to make explicit choices about what they are going to do first and to avoid early blunders. “In the end a president can choose perhaps three to four new initiatives or dominant issues.” Walker contends, like many authors, that transitions are leader driven. “Successful transition require an entrepreneurial outlook on the part of the president. Entrepreneurial presidents in democratic political systems are effective national leaders, a blend of the nimble lion and the shrewd fox, both carefully coated with a benign, puppy dog like exterior.”

Walker uses these animal analogies as criteria to analyze three presidential transitions. On the basis of these criteria he found Reagan’s was the most successful transition. Bush was slightly above average and Carter’s was found wanting. “These criteria are useful in assessing successful transitions. They emphasize the necessity of an entrepreneurial focus for incoming administration and for measuring success in democratic and political terms. Nimble governance and shrewd implementations require a sense of vision, a recognition of the political realities or objective conditions facing any new administration, and tenacity in forcing selected priorities through a highly disaggregated political system. Such an entrepreneurial approach is essential if an incoming president is to combine the realms of politics, policy and administration. Only in this initial period can a new president be assured of both elite and mass support, and so the first year is crucial. Thus an entrepreneurial approach to transition is the essence of democratic leadership at the presidential level.”

There is a lot to recommending Walker’s approach. The leader who drives a successful transition must be something of a mongrel in that there are several disparate objectives to fulfill. His has not only inspired the work of other important transition authors such as Charles Jones, he is also the only author that specifically tackles the tricky subject of actually attempting to measure transition success.

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90 ibid, pp. 67
91 Walker, pp. 59
92 ibid., pp. 60
93 ibid
94 ibid, pp. 67
Carl Brauer also has some key suggestions about how to analyze transitions. As Terry Morley summarizes, “Brauer suggests that all transitions are the shadow of the man—that is, the process reflects the personality of the incoming leader. He also argues that newly elected presidents regularly fail to learn from their predecessors, that the transition team members on the winning side are full of hubris in their first months, that transitions are a growth industry and that each succeeding effort is more elaborate, that the appointment process the most time-consuming of the transition task, that presidents all want to make appointments that reflect the different bases of their electoral constituency, that presidents come to regret losing control of the sub-cabinet appointment process, that conflict-of-interest issues are increasingly important the new administrations tend to ignore career officials in the first months, and the administrations that wait beyond the first year to make significant policy moves find they have waited too long.”

Eksterowicz and Hastedt pick up Brauer’s theme of defining transition success by outlining common characteristics of governing to be avoided by new leaders. These authors look at the presidential transitions of Carter, Reagan and Clinton and from these attempt to hypothesize about problem areas to be avoided. They infer that the new president best able to avoid these problem areas will have had the most successful transition.

The first problem areas Eksterowicz and Hastedt discuss is that of newness and naivete. Most presidents come into office, particularly in the modern era, in part as a result of their ability to cast themselves as outsiders wary of the established powers in Washington. Carter, Reagan and Clinton all benefited from this outsider tag. However, newness has its downside. ‘Ignorance concerning key elements of the political or policy process can cripple key items in a new president’ domestic or foreign policy agenda. It can damage political relationship so necessary for presidential success.’ Carter, for example, was paid a dear price for his inability to understand the political processes in Washington, particularly in regard to the inner workings of the complex relationship between a new president and his Congress.

Like Brauer, Eksterowicz and Hastedt also see hubris as a key problem for new leaders. Coming off hard fought election campaigns, new presidents are bound to be infected with the euphoria and over-confidence that accompanies such victories. This leads to a tendency to over-inflate the leader’s estimation regarding the size of his or her mandate and the tendency to assume that their answers to policy problems are the correct ones. The authors point to the disdain with which most of Reagan’s advisors and Reagan himself had for outgoing president Jimmy Carter and the advice Carter’s group tried to foist upon them. While partially justified, Reagan’s incoming transition team were much more experienced than Carter’s had been, hubris was a problem for the Reagan transition. The authors also suggest that if there was any hubris in the Clinton camp it was unjustified because of the closeness of Clinton’s election victory and his low standing in public opinion polls coming into the White House.

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95 Morley in Savoie, pp. 189
The last problem identified was that of haste. New leaders are under considerable pressure to push their policy agendas through during their first year in office to show leadership and action and to take advantage of precious political capital. The problem, however, that in their haste to act many new presidents make crucial mistakes, mistakes that continue to haunt them throughout their term of office. With regard to the Clinton transition, the authors state, “The transition hazards of newness, haste, hubris, and naïveté can be found at various points in the Clinton presidency. There was haste in the formulation of the economic stimulus package, which was later defeated by Congress. Newness and hubris (and arguably haste and naïveté) were on display in the foreign policy arena during the gays-in-the-military fiasco.”

Eksterowicz and Hastedt conclude that while all three presidents entered Washington as outsiders who had won hard fought election victories. Each succumbed to the four transition hazards and suffered setbacks as a result, but because of his superior planning and organization, Reagan’s transition was far more successful than either Clinton’s or Carter’s. While these authors offer a unique and valuable framework it is for anticipating transition success, their approach does have two significant weaknesses. First, they do not effectively explain their definition of success. They point out hazards to be avoided and therein imply that, if so avoided, a presidential transition may be more successful. But successful by who’s standards, from what perspective? From an institutional perspective, Clinton’s transition may not have been textbook, but he did retain the political players and approach he eventually used to win re-election four years later. The second point is that like Brauer, these authors’ approach is largely leadership based. They look primarily at variables that can be affected by the president and their staff. There was very little discussion on other external variables that may have played a role in the transitions. If the economic climate was better for Clinton than Carter, if the foreign affairs situation was more in Reagan’s favour than Clinton, these factors would understandably skew one’s perception of the success of these transitions. These other factors are not accounted for and therefore diminish the applicability or usefulness of this study for other jurisdictions or cases.

Understanding the keys to success by “learning from others mistakes” certainly has value. Certainly there have been some monstrously bad transitions, perhaps none worse than those of Canadian Prime Minister’s Joe Clark, John Turner and arguably the worst transition in Canadian federal history, Kim Campbell.

**Joe Clark**

When the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada won a minority government in 1979, their leader, Prime Minister Joe Clark, should have been ready to assume the mantle of power. From early adolescence, Clark had been involved with party politics and throughout his career had had a consuming passion for government and governance issues. Yet his takeover of power is seen historically as one of the worst transitions in Canadian history and in little more than nine months, he was out of office. Certainly,

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97 A. Eksterowicz and G. Hastedt, pp. 311
Clark and the Conservatives controlled a tenuous minority government, but even still, there is little debate that he did not make the most of his opportunity.

Warner Troyer in his book on the subject, *Two Hundred Days: Joe Clark in Power* suggests that there were two main problems with the Clark Transition. The first involved hubris and naivete, two of the qualities outlined by Eksterowicz and Hastedt. Troyer felt Clark had an over-inflated sense of his own mandate and had made an incorrect read of the mood of the electorate. “The biggest mistake made by the Tories in transition believing that they had won not that the Liberals had lost.”

Troyer points out that Clark had an odd and inappropriately defiant attitude even as his swearing-in as Prime Minister. Similarly, Clark would not hear of having his election platform discussed or revised. He felt that even though he had won a small minority government, the people had elected him and his platform. One of the reasons for Clark’s hubris was he felt that as long as Trudeau remained opposition leader the minority government was safe. The other reason Clark felt secure, even overconfident, had to do with a caucus retreat Clark held in Jasper, Alberta shortly after getting elected. In Jasper, Clark had a number of people artificially reinforcing his belief that his was a valid and comprehensive mandate from the people of Canada. The Jasper conference also set the course for a number of ill-conceived policy ideas.

Hubris or naivete, the fact remains that the other outcome of this behaviour that eventually came back to haunt Clark was his decision not call parliament back sooner. “By failing to call parliament sooner then it did, the government insulated itself in a political vacuum of its own making. Since it heard no opposition, it saw none. The miscalculation was not so much one of arrogance as of innocence.”

Clark’s policy initiatives were the root of the second problem his transition faced. Rather than secure two or three small victories to prove that he was indeed in charge and comfortable with the levers of national power, Clark tackled several controversial issues right off the bat, the most problematic being his decisions to sell Petro-Canada and to move the Canadian Embassy in Jerusalem. Both issues raised a storm of protest, not just about the facts of each case, but rather about the legitimacy of Clark’s right to govern.

Every time the Jerusalem controversy looked like it would go away, Clark found another way to kick the story. He didn’t understand symbolism versus policy. He didn’t get the real meaning of Petro-Canada (especially to Canadians outside of Alberta) at the time. This was something unique to the Clark case - serious minority that no one took seriously. The Tory transition was “a tragedy of miscalculation.”

John Turner

In 1983 and 1984, it was clear that one of Canada’s most popular, most controversial and longest standing Prime Ministers, Pierre Elliot Trudeau would resign. Waiting in the wings to take over was former Liberal Finance Minister, John Turner. In many ways,

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99 ibid., pp. 11
100 ibid., pp. 17
Turner had been groomed for the PM’s job from the beginning of his professional career and even before. He seemed a natural choice and was, as well, in line to benefit from that the Liberal tradition of alternating English- and French-speaking leaders. The constraints on his leadership and transition and his inability to come to grips with these challenges first became evident in early 1984.

“John Turner had been in an upbeat mood the day in early spring of 1984 when he and other Liberal leadership contenders were summoned to meet with Trudeau in Ottawa. As was customary with Trudeau on such occasions, there was no discussion at all. He simply told them no one would be allowed to use ministerial jets, staff, or departmental resources for campaigning. But Trudeau had another, more private, announcement. Trudeau said that before leaving office June 30, he intended to make hundreds of appointments of party faithful, including so many Liberal MPs that the new leader might be left without a majority in the Commons. Trudeau was true to his word. More than 2,000 appointees were put on the public payroll between his meeting with the leadership candidates and the time he turned over his office to John Turner less than three months latter. It was a staggering payoff mainly to party faithful at the taxpayer’s expense.”

When asked later by his staff about this historic meeting with Trudeau, Turner recounted all the directives with the exception of the PM’s patronage plans. One of Turner’s aides would later describe the lapse as one of most of important mistakes in the history of the Liberal Party of Canada. Later, as Prime Minister, Trudeau’s request would become a massive burden for Turner and a major hindrance to his transition. If he let Trudeau make all his appointments including the truly contentious partisan ones, Turner would have to lead a minority government and give up the power of being the sole individual responsible for calling the next election. If he denied Trudeau the appointments, he would face the wrath of a still powerful political figure. In the end Turner, did not allow Trudeau to make the announcements but in return, promised Trudeau in writing that he would make them himself once the election was called.

By this time Turner was under increasing pressure from cabinet ministers and other Liberal MP’s to call a snap election. He was also being buried under the burden of taking over the Government of Canada. There were endless meetings with bureaucrats and his own advisors, and hefty briefing books were piled everywhere in the Chateau Laurier suite where he would hold court until Trudeau vacated the Langevin block at week’s end. “In the midst of all the chaos, he changed his mind repeatedly on whether to assume the burden of the patronage appointments or be left with a minority government and the possibility of an election call earlier than he wanted.”

One of his closest advisors, Bill Lee remembered putting the argument against making the appointments to Turner. “John, this is absolutely nuts,” Lee exploded. “This is suicide. It’s madness, Here you are, Mr. Clean, the guy who was supposed to distance himself from the Trudeau trough boys, as you’re always calling them, and the first thing

102 ibid., pp. 6
you’re going to do is make a pile of patronage appointments, including Bryce Mackasey. You’ll get crucified.”

Two days later, Turner called the federal election and announced the appointment of nineteen individuals – seventeen of them Liberal MPs – to various federal agencies, boards and commissions. “The media were quick and vicious. As the new prime minister sat under the glare of the television lights in the National Press Theatre trying to say he had decided to seek a new mandate for a new government, reporters demanded to know why he was using his existing mandate to reward the same old faces at the same old trough. The next day’s headlines were devastating, proclaiming the new Liberal leader was already up to his neck in the old Liberal pork barrel tradition.”

Many in the press gallery knew of the signed letters between Turner and Trudeau. What they didn’t know was that Turner would not release the letter, not out of some sense of loyalty, but because the letter only contained 13 names. Turner had added not one, but seven, names to the patronage list and he couldn’t afford to have this get out. The patronage issue would haunt Turner throughout his transition and into the election itself.

From the moment Turner decided to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party, there were significant mistakes and lapses in judgement that brought controversy to his campaign and more importantly breed doubts about his ability to lead. One of the first of these controversies was Turner’s unwillingness to give up his corporate directorships. Despite the fact that Turner was viewed as an elitist by many segments of Canadian society, Turner refused to budge on his directorships until he became Prime Minister. In fact, “between April 26, and May 31, 1984, in the midst of the leadership campaign, Turner stood for and was re-elected to the boards of MacMillan Bloedel, CP, Massey-Ferguson and Seagram’s.” Even after won the leadership he hesitated signing his resignation paper for several weeks. The media and editorial boards were particularly pointed in their criticism of Turner’s sense of propriety and public service.

The next controversy arose over a private fund set up for Turner’s children’s educational needs. Turner consistently denied reports that wealthy Liberals put together such a fund, but when pressed by his campaign manager, Turner replied, “Bill, that’s nothing to do with you. It’s a personal matter.” Lee exploded: “Jesus Christ, John, we’re in a god damn campaign here. You’re going to be prime minister. Everything you do personally or whatever else is going to be scrutinized. I mean you can’t do that. What would the other candidates do to you if they caught wind of this thing?”

The educational fund crisis was never fully exposed and therefore never reached its full damage potential for Turner. An issue that did damage him significantly was his comments on language legislation. In his first press conference as a leadership candidate, Turner suggested that language was a provincial issue. Turner got beaten up in the media

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103 ibid.
104 Weston, pp. 7-8
105 ibid., pp. 36
106 ibid., pp. 40
and had to offer clarifications. He then repeated the error by saying in Quebec that his position on Quebec’s controversial language charter, Bill 101 was that it was a question of provincial rights. Turner was further criticized. The Montreal Gazette wrote, “It is right and proper to acknowledge and respect provincial jurisdiction, but it is also right for an aspiring national leader to set forth a vision of what this country should be…”

Turner had a lot of style problems as well. He didn’t always seem genuine and his wife Geills was a disruptive force on the campaign, largely because she felt Turner should not be running. He also got in problems with the media when he was too forthcoming. The best example of this is when he revealed the true reasons for his leaving the Liberal Cabinet in 1975. What Turner thought had been off the record comments became embarrassing front-page news stories. In many ways Turner seemed genuinely uncomfortable with his return to public life.

Not only that, but the party was in terrible shape as well. Trudeau had neglected the party and now, on the eve of a national election, the party was out of shape and ill prepared. Costs were not being controlled and new systems to compete against the well-organized Tories were not being installed. “Behind the scenes, the campaign became a powerbroker’s slugfest, rife with back-biting and manoeuvring for positions of influence. ‘Part of the problem was that there was no focus at the top, no passionate following for Turner as a leader,’ says a Quebec Grit who was prominent in organizing the campaign.”

Turner also never caught a break. Even when he won the leadership, the Party President, Iona Campagnolo, felt the need to conclude the convention by saying that Chretien had “come second on the ballot, but first in our hearts.” “The roar that engulfed the muggy, littered hockey arena at that instant belied Campagnolo’s attempted fence-mending. More than anything, it was the moment of truth for the Liberal party, a spontaneous mass-confession that power had triumphed over passion, that John Turner’s victory was no more than a heartless contract between party and leader – a contract as tenuous as his ability to win the next election.”

Turner had no idea about when to call the election. His campaign director, Bill Lee, explained that there was no organization, no planning, no policy, the party was still split from the leadership, and the staff was exhausted. Furthermore, there was the anticipated blow-up from the patronage appointments. As well, Turner had difficulty healing the rifts with Chretien’s team. It was perceived that Turner let Chretien push him around, particularly on important questions like who was going to be the political leader in Quebec.

Turner also made a mess of his new cabinet. No matter how much he said he was against the powerbrokers of the Trudeau era like Davey, McEachern and Lalonde, in truth he was still in awe of these people. In the end, Turner ignored the reason he was elected leader –

107 Weston, pp. 49
108 ibid., pp. 59
109 ibid., pp. 62
because he represented change – and ended up kowtowing to the very establishment he had ran against. “What in god’s name is it” Lee asked, reading through the list of twenty-eight new Turner Ministers, twenty four of who had bee sitting around the Trudeau cabinet table. “Jesus Christ, John, this is the same old bloody gang – Lloyd Axworthy, Marc Lalonde, Herb Gray, John Roberts. This is new? This is your idea of change?”

Mulroney immediately responded by saying that the old bunch went out one door and came right back in the other. Angus Reid stated that the cabinet choices led to a significant softening of the eleven-point lead the Grits were holding over the Tories.

The transition process from Trudeau to Turner was very poor. The PMO was left virtually empty; many of the staff had either been fired or quit. “Looking back, I really under resourced the thing and I should have lined up more people in advance, I kind of assumed the leadership process would generate staff and it didn’t.”

Turner’s time during this period was not well spent. Rather than leading a pre-election strategy, Turner was on the phone trying to recruit new candidates. The head office was out of control. When the campaign started, there was still chaos. For the Prime Minister’s first campaign speech in Edmonton, the press gallery was informed that they had to pay their own way. It was a very bad beginning. Furthermore, Turner said he wouldn’t campaign in July, the first month of the campaign. He was tired and felt that he had more important issues at hand as Prime Minister.

Turner continued to do poorly in the election. “Angus Reid sent a long note explaining some of the campaigns problems. “…the message of change is critical to our electoral success – the Turner government cannot have the same texture as Trudeau’s. Yet much of what we have done over the past two weeks suggest the opposite…”

Turner was supposed to be about change, but in fact he couldn’t talk about change while he was defending his appointment of Trudeau loyalists. He also got sidetracked when CTV news captured Turner on tape patting Campagnolo’s bum.

Nor did it help that he continually was drawn back to the advice of Trudeau’s cronies. In what was characterized as the single move that would cause the most dramatic single drop in Liberal popularity since the beginning of the campaign, Turner appointed Keith Davey as national co-chairman for the Liberal campaign. The media had a field day with headlines that proclaimed, “The Rainmaker’s Back”. “What remained of Turner’s fresh-face-government mask had crumbled, revealing a startling likeness of all things Pierre Trudeau.”

The other problem with the Davey appointment is that it revealed the fundamental lack of team or teamwork in the Liberal campaign. Much of this problem stemmed from the fact

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110 Weston, pp. 67
111 ibid., pp. 72
112 ibid., pp. 94
113 ibid., pp. 95
that Turner wanted to actually manage the campaign himself. He had never run anything and now he had the opportunity to be CEO of the campaign. Unfortunately, he had no experience and because he also had huge demands on his time as candidate, the result was unmitigated chaos. The final straw for Turner was the televised national debate. In what must be rated as one of the most devastating exchanges in Canadian debate history, Mulroney accused Turner of patronage. Not only were the attacks effective, they also cemented the perception that Turner was somehow indelibly connected with the less favourable elements of the Trudeau legacy. Turner never recovered and Mulroney went on to a significant majority victory.

**Kim Campbell**

Another example of a new leader’s inability to separate from their predecessor was the case of the 1992 Kim Campbell intra-party transition. The 1988 election was as vicious and as hard fought as any in Canadian history. The Conservatives won in large part because they had convinced Canadians that the Free Trade Agreement would ensure their economic security. The plant closures, massive layoffs and serious recession like conditions that followed and the introduction of the hated new GST tax, left Canadians feeling betrayed. When Brian Mulroney resigned, the mood of the country and the low morale of the party meant that possible replacements were not plentiful.

Dalton Camp suggests that part of the reason Kim Campbell rose to the position of Prime Minister was not so much a result of who she was, but rather, what she represented. “I wanted a prime minister who didn’t come from Quebec or from Central Canada, someone who came from somewhere else and ideally British Columbia. In the second place, I wanted a woman as prime minister if we possibly could find one. And I thought she met both of those criteria admirably.”

Campbell benefited from nostalgia for the ‘Trudeaumania’ era. Unfortunately for Campbell, ‘Trudeaumania’ started after the Canadian public saw Trudeau perform in national debates. “In Campbell’s case the so-called mania came before the convention when few people had had a chance to see her in action. Campbellmania had no visible public manifestation.”

Campbell won the PC leadership because, above all else, she represented change. Her age, her gender, her experience and her geography all screamed change. And yet she worked against that change factor in the election and was ultimately defeated as a result. One of the things that hurt was her easy sidling up to the Mulroney power elite. Well before the leadership race she was being criticized for being Mulroney’s choice. This organization combined with the perception of momentum built unrealistic expectations. It seemed that Campbell and her advisers had become the victims of their own success by creating expectations which no human being could fulfill.” The general consensus

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115 Bueckert, pp. 142
116 ibid., pp. 150
among knowledgeable observers was that Campbell was badly outworked by Charest in the leadership race.

After her victory, Campbell’s transitions goals were not clear. Her cabinet, for example, seemed to be more of an attempt to reconcile the past than anticipate the future. Her new cabinet “was cobbled together from Mulroney-era remnants and Campbell’s leadership rivals.” Jeffrey Simpson of the Globe and Mail called it the weakest Canadian cabinet in a generation.” Campbell’s concerns with her cabinet making seemed to be more in the areas of policy than politics. In her memoirs she talks about working hard on reformulating the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Canadian Heritage and Human Resources, all departments which typically have little political impact on the population at large. Also indicative of this lack of political acumen was Campbell’s reaction to the actions of her leadership rival. She was taken aback by Charest’s assertion that he should be political minister for Quebec and, as a result, Campbell allowed Charest to be a problem throughout the transition.

In office much of Campbell’s governance looked identical to Mulroney’s including her approach to federal-provincial affairs. As well she seemed to focus more on governing than on campaigning. Her massive shake-up of the federal bureaucracy for example, did much to demoralize the professional civil service but did little to spark the imaginations of the Canadian public. Campbell didn’t come quickly or easily to the understanding of the need to distance herself from Mulroney. “Because his cabinet colleagues admired the Mulroney they had often seen at his best, a strong and farsighted leader, they genuinely regretted that he evoked such hostility that he had become a political liability. The negative feelings towards him seemed so disproportionate to his actual shortcomings that on occasions such as this, his colleagues tended to try to compensate with outpourings of appreciation.”

Indicative of her inabilities in the area of issue management, Campbell was taken aback about the public furor over the expense and disposition of Mulroney’s furniture. Much like Ford’s opportunity with the Nixon pardon, this was Campbell’s chance to distance herself from Brian Mulroney. Not only did Campbell not do this, from an examination of her memoirs, it wasn’t even discussed.

Generally, Campbell didn’t seem to approach this period as pre-election. Rather she talked about it as post leadership. Her memoirs devote most of focus on the leadership rather than the election and on a number of occasions she talks about how draining the leadership process was. In one telling paragraph she confides, “The first phase of the post-leadership whirlwind was not complete. Restructuring, cabinet making, first ministers meetings, and the G-7 were now all successfully behind me. So far, I was enjoying being prime minister.”

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117 Bueckert, pp. 150
118 ibid, pp. 163
120 Campbell, pp. 334
The fact that she had a weak mandate held the office without the benefit of a general election seems not to been of major concern. Campbell referred to the leadership race almost as if it was a general election in which she was democratically chosen to be Prime Minister. She did eventually focus on a pre-election strategy, criss-crossing the country doing favourable photo-ops. The result was that “by the end of the pre-election period she had become the most popular leader in the history of Canadian polling – or close to it.”

There is some evidence of Campbell’s understanding of her need to distance herself from Mulroney. In talking about the filming of her dancing the twist she said, “if the goal was to communicate that I was different from my predecessor, I had certainly done that!” She speaks of this successful photo opportunity as if this was the only thing she needed to do to distance herself from Mulroney. For example, she states, “Although my goal was to demonstrate that I represented change, one area where I deferred without demur to the knowledge of my predecessor was with respect to running a national campaign.” Here Campbell speaks as if she has little idea about the depth of hatred the Canadian public had for Mulroney or the disastrous implications of having him anywhere near her campaign. As well she speaks of a national campaign as if it was above and separate from any of her leadership or pre-election work.

Campbell contends that one of the reasons for her major mistakes during the campaign was that she got no rest in the pre-election period. Another potential “pig” issue was the purchase of the EH-101 helicopters. Campbell’s campaign team argued that the purchase should be cancelled as a move away from the Mulroney legacy. Campbell argued that from a policy perspective cancellation was dead wrong and she would not support it. While Campbell was correct from a governance perspective, she ended up winning two seats nation wide. What are good policy decisions if you obliterate your opportunity to make them?

In hindsight, Campbell seems to now understand the folly of her ways. She states, “the challenge we faced was to convince Canadians that Kim Campbell represented change. But for the campaign team, change meant doing the twist and knowing the price of milk. For the public, change meant not being an old-style politician. It meant integrity and not being subservient to public opinion polls. It meant leading a party that was not still controlled by the old boys.”

Campbell made several gaffes during the election. On the day of the announcement of the election, Campbell said that there would not be significant improvements in the unemployment rates for the next two to three years. Her challenger, Liberal leader Jean Chretien turned this statement so that Campbell was being criticized for saying no new jobs would be created in Canada until the year 2000. Ads using Chretien’s face were the last straw.

121 Bueckert, pp. 170
122 Campbell, pp. 335
123 ibid, pp. 336
124 ibid, pp. 348
Ultimately, she knew that she had made some critical mistakes. “Ray Castelli later told me that he had stifled his bouts about our strategy over the summer, thinking, ‘Well, these guys have done this before and I’ve never run a national campaign.’ But we were both mesmerized by the mythical stature of Allan Gregg and by Mulroney’s assurance that this team was ‘the best there was.’ I had suspected we might well be heading for disaster but had felt helpless to change things. No I realize I should have been much more intrusive in the campaign planning. I have a hard time forgiving myself for not trusting my own judgment when it really counted.”

2.4 Analyzing and Measuring Transition Success – An argument for intra-party transitions

These three cases all speak to the “lessons for success” framework’s put forth by authors such as Walker, Wallace, Eksterowicz and Hastedt. In each there are elements of newness, haste, hubris and naivété. There is a lack of entrepreneurial spirit and an inability to properly distance a new leader from bad issues and baggage-laden predecessors. In each there are lessons about behaviour and situations that must be avoided. The reason we can be sure the actions of these leaders were misguided and ill-advised, however, is interesting. Many other leaders have made similar mistakes but these have often gone unnoticed or are forgotten. The difference is that Clark, Turner and Campbell all went on to suffer major losses in the general elections following their transition to power. Clearly, if Clark, Turner or Campbell had somehow been able to pull out significant electoral victories, the focus would not be on their earlier mistakes but on an entire new spectrum of interesting and positive characteristics and traits.

Thus rather than discussing only those things to be avoided and focusing only on the mistakes made by unsuccessful new leaders, an alternative would be to ask, why some transitions are more successful than others, can we measure this success and if so, what are the criteria for doing so? The effort to determine the reasons behind a successful transition would provide a valuable service to students and practitioners. Such a focused study would help to guide new leaders, many of whom rely only on the instinct to avoid the blunders of their predecessors. There is no definitive study, or guidebook on where and how transition has been successfully executed in the past. Determining success demands the identification of measurable indicators of practical applications for future transition planners.

It is fair to state that people generally do not expect wholesale change when the transition is within (“intra”) the same party. Therefore, not only has there been little written on this type of transition, there has, as a rule, been much less preparation for these transitions, both by the incoming leaders and by the bureaucracies. Furthermore, statistics show that new leaders taking over in an “intra-party” situation are generally not successful over the

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125 Campbell, pp. 391

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longer term and therefore typically do not warrant detailed study. The final reason this type of transition is regularly ignored is that it hardly ever occurs. While many leaders do take over in mid-term, rarely if ever are they successful in the subsequent election. Gerald Ford succeeding Richard Nixon in 1974 and then losing to Jimmy Carter in the US, Rita Johnson succeeding Bill Vander Zalm in 1990 and then losing to NDP leader, Mike Harcourt in BC and Kim Campbell succeeding Brian Mulroney in 1992 and then losing to Chretien are all examples of this phenomenon. History treats this particular group of leaders largely as placeholders, lame duck leaders who were saddled with the baggage of their predecessors and therefore were not able to put a significant mark on the government of the day. As a result of: a) their lack of an electoral mandate, b) the incomplete nature of their term, and c) a lack of definitive action during their stay in office, the transitions of these leaders is largely left ignored and unstudied.

If, by chance, a leader has survived and actually won the subsequent election, (Lyndon Johnson 1964; Frank Miller in Ontario, 1985; Ralph Klein in Alberta, 1992; and Glen Clark in BC, in 1996) their transitions have also been largely ignored. The reason for this is that the two transitions these leaders experience are considered in isolation of each other. Either the transition is considered a small “t” transition between leaders of the same party, or more often, this is perceived as a situation in which the leader simply succeeds himself. Mosher, Clinton and Lang for example, in their comprehensive transition typology, relegate Johnson’s presidential transition in 1964-65 to this final “least dramatic” category. In fact, they suggest that “…in one sense these are not transitions at all, since the same president and the majority of his appointees continue as before.”

But, if the larger purpose is to gain insight from meaningful transitions for prescriptive purposes, is it wise to underestimate the significance of intra-party transitions simply because of the lack of dramatic change elements? For example, could the managerial style, belief systems, social, cultural, and political styles, even upbringing and education of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson be any different? Putting aside the travesty of Kennedy’s assassination for a moment, can one really imagine the trepidation that senior staff felt as they moved from the Kennedy style of administration to the Johnson regime? On top of the genuine dislike these men had for each other, could their leadership qualities have been more unlike? Does the mere fact that they came from the same political party suggest that when Johnson took over the White House with his own mandate from the American public, the changes would not be traumatic? Probably not. Undoubtedly this was a transition that meets and/or exceeds the complexity and pure quantity of change found in a typical inter-party transition. Similarly, despite spending eight years as his vice-president, it could be argued that George Bush was completely unlike his predecessor, Ronald Reagan. While closer on policy than Kennedy and

127 Miller did win the 1985 Ontario provincial election but subsequently lost control of the legislature when the opposition Liberals and NDP formed a coalition and having a majority of seats, propelled the Liberals into the government seats.
128 Mosher, et al., pp. 24-25.
Johnson, from a personality and organizational standpoint, these two Presidents were also polar opposites.

A Canadian example of the same situation is Frank Miller’s succession over Bill Davis in Ontario in 1985. Davis maintained his Premiership over a long period through his abilities of compromise and ability to read and react to the public’s mood. Davis was a non-charismatic “Red Tory” whose ideological beliefs were not well developed or displayed. Miller, on the other hand, was a populist car dealer from cottage country who had extreme views and few of Davis’ political or administrative skills. Miller was completely different from Davis, with a different personality and an ideology that was further from Davis than either the NDP leader or the Liberal leader at the time. Interestingly enough, during that time, many Ontario bureaucrats suggested that it was much more difficult to make the transition from Davis to Miller, than it was (later the same year) to make the transition from Miller to Peterson, the Liberal leader. The bureaucrats said they expected major turmoil with a transition that involved a party change, and didn’t expect it when the parties stayed the same. The reality was just the opposite.129

The second set of arguments against the worthiness of studying “intra-party” transitions is that, having typically been in government for several years, the new leader has sufficient warning, time, and resources to mount a successful albeit, uneventful, transition. Again when looking at the Johnson and Miller transitions this premise can be challenged. Both Miller and Johnson were completely taken by surprise by the loss of their predecessors. Miller had the further burden of having to plan and win a leadership contest before taking office. Neither man had time to make their mark during the time between their taking office and the next election. The notion that they were firmly entrenched as leaders going into their elections is simply not the case. Without mandates and with great public sympathy for their predecessors, neither leader could successfully capture the levers of government during this interim period.

Following on this point is the argument that if a leader succeeds a fellow party member or cabinet colleague, the transitions is little more than a formality and the leaders will simply continue in the style and content of their predecessor. Again the Johnson and Miller examples show a marked contrast to this statement. Once elected leader, both embarked on a course of action very much different not only from that of their predecessors but also from their own interim positions. Johnson’s “Great Society” program and Miller’s Americanized right wing “Enterprise Ontario” platform represented significant paradigm shift for both the US Democrats and the Ontario Progressive Conservatives. Implementation of these plans would involve a comprehensive and elaborate transition strategy.

Finally, at some point the notion that “intra-party” transitions are not worthy of study because of their comparative rarity, may have had some validity. However, given the fact that, in the space of less than 15 years, four intra-party transitions have occurred in British Columbia alone, the notion deserves to be rethought, particularly in Canada. The

129 White and Cameron, pp. 52
American presidential system is obviously somewhat more rigid in that, it is harder to dislodge a President who doesn’t want to go. In the Canadian political system most parities have yearly leadership reviews and as public institutional efficacy continues to drop, parties are hesitating less and less about using a leadership review or related device.

However, given the higher likelihood of assassination in the American presidential system, the likelihood of change in either system is roughly the same. The other politically compelling element of the recent “intra-party” transitions is that in both Klein and Clark’s situations, their parties were 20 to 30 per cent behind in popularity up to the point when their leaders were switched. Whether this is a measurable phenomenon or whether the trend towards this type of transition continues, there are clearly important lessons to be learned from intra-party transitions.

In addition, individual cases studies, what the Klein and Clark cases and in a different respect, the Miller case, show is that intra-party transitions can involve as much or more fundamental change as inter-party transitions. In Klein's case, he is now credited not only with changing his own government, but being responsible for a major change in thinking across the country. This type of massive change deserves serious scholarship and begs the question, how ready were the people involved and how could they have been better prepared?

2.5 Factors that Impact Intra-party Transition Success

Once a firm definition of transition success, within an intra-party context, is arrived at, the next logical step is to examine the variables that impact the success or failure of an intra-party transition. Factors impacting a transition can be bundled into two categories.

For any new leader coming into office there are those issues or events over which he/she has no immediate control and those over which some control can be exerted. For example, if a new provincial leader were to take office in the midst of an international depression, there is little that the new leader can do in the first few months of an administration to counter such an issue. For the purpose of clarity, this bundle of factors is referred to here as exogenous variables.

The second bundle of factors considered here are those that are within the new leader’s realm or sphere of influence - endogenous variables. Obviously, some overlap exists. For example, the state of the provincial economy at the time of the transition may have had a major impact on the new leader’s success or failure. However, the new leader’s ability to analyze economic conditions and to act accordingly is an endogenous factor that must be accounted for.

Exogenous Variables

For the purposes of this examination this grouping of variables can be furthered divided into two principal categories – structural and political. The structural exogenous variables are those that have a long-term affect on a jurisdiction. As such, this list
includes analysis of jurisdiction’s political culture, its electoral and political history and its economic status. Political variables over which a new leader has little or no control include; the disposition and exit strategy of the outgoing premier, the strength and viability of the opposition parties, the impacts of the leadership race, the morale and strength of the professional civil service and the amount of goodwill, if any, exists between the government and the media.

Structural exogenous variables dealing with electoral and political history are examined in Chapter Three as part of a larger examination of all Canadian provincial intra-party transitions in Canada since 1960. Analysis of economic factors and the various political exogenous variables listed above can be found in the actual case study chapters. As stated earlier, in and of themselves these variables cannot significantly affect the success or failure of a given intra-party transition. More interestingly is how well new intra-party leaders heed the signs and signals these factors emit.

The best recent example of economic variables positively impacting a leader’s tenure in office is, of course, the case of President Bill Clinton in the United States. Clinton’s first two years in office, in fact most of his tenure has been marred by policy missteps, process breakdowns and personal peccadilloes and scandals. Yet, largely on the strength of the American economy, Clinton has survived, has been re-elected and, incredibly, his legacy remains somewhat intact. To suggest that his tenure has been prolonged solely because of sound strategy and superior issue management skills would be naïve and foolhardy.

Of the political exogenous variables, one of the most important is the legacy of the outgoing leader and the manner in which they makes their departure. Obviously the death of President Kennedy had a profound effect on the manner in which his successor, Lyndon Johnson, affected his own transition. Even though Johnson and Kennedy were polar opposites both in terms of style and substance, Johnson had to be very careful to carve out his own niche as President while, at the same time, ensure that Kennedy’s memory was being properly served. Particularly when popular leaders resign for personal reasons, it makes it difficult for the new leader in terms of expectations and deliverables. George Bush, for example, never really found a way to embrace Ronald Regan’s legacy while at the same time defining his own identity as President.

From a Canadian perspective, the case is much the same. Pierre Trudeau’s machinations around appointments and ensuring that his loyalists were taken care of after his departure and John Turner’s inability to deal effectively with these issues decimated the Turner government and severely constrained his Turner transition.

The most vivid case of an awkward exit by a retiring Premier was the resignation of BC Premier Glen Clark in the fall of 1999. At the time, Clark seemed to understand that he was resigning under a cloud and that the best thing for the NDP government is that he take their political baggage with him into retirement. In fact, he publicly urged NDP leadership candidates to run against his record. Yet, for reasons known only to himself, Glen Clark continued to take a high profile within the NDP after his resignation. He was a vocal chair of key government committees, he made headlines as a participant in the
high profile World Trade Organization demonstration in Seattle and he played an active role in the subsequent leadership race, publicly supporting the candidate he felt most loyal to him during his tenure as Premier. It has yet to be seen if this unprecedented role for a past leader will pay dividends for the NDP in BC over the long run. History would suggest not. In fact, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the quicker and more thoroughly a past leader departs the scene, the better. The fact remains that the nature of a past leader’s departure, the quality of their legacy and the tension, if any between the two leaders may have considerable impact on the success or failure of a transition.

A second important political variable involves the impact or ‘holdover effect’ of the leadership race on an intra-party transition. In the Canadian situation, almost all modern intra-party leaders have won the right to govern through a leadership race. A particularly divisive leadership contest may contribute added pressure to an intra-party transition, while a smooth or uncontested race may bring different challenges. In the case of Kim Campbell’s leadership victory over Jean Charest, for example, two factors emerged that were of crucial importance to her subsequent transition to power. First, as a result of the divisive and often confrontational nature of that particular leadership race, there existed in the party deep divisions and bad feelings right through Campbell’s transition and into the subsequent general election. Campbell and Charest never did effectively reconcile and the result was a lack of focus and reduced resources available for the election. The other factor had to do with Kim Campbell herself. In her own autobiography, she makes it quite clear that the huge demands on her time and energy exacted by the leadership race left her tired and ineffective for the remainder of her tenure as Prime Minister. So much had been put into the leadership race, that she and her team had little left for the election or for making a proper transition to power.

Carty and Stewart present an opposing viewpoint in their study on party leadership. After examining 136 changes in leadership at the provincial party level they found that a divisive leadership campaigns had no real negative affect on a governing parties poll results and in fact, first-ballot leadership wins or coronations “do not help a party retain power.”¹³⁰ They would presumably point to the extremely divisive 1985 BC Social Credit leadership race in which Bill Vander Zalm emerged the winner after several ballots. Despite massive splits in his own party as a result of that leadership, Vander Zalm went on to a decisive electoral victory. However, on the strength of the research and interviews done for this survey, there can be little question that the potential exists for a particularly nasty or divisive leadership race to have negative impacts on the transition of a new intra-party leader.

Another important exogenous political variable is the strength of the opposition parties at the time of the transition. If opposition parties are ignored or underestimated it can have a profound effect on a transition and the ongoing planning a new leader does in preparation for an election. The best example of this is Frank Miller’s massive miscalculation as to the relative strength of his Liberal opponent, David Peterson, in the 1985 Ontario General Election. This situation will be more fully discussed in Chapter Five.

¹³⁰ Carty and Stewart, pp. 18
Finally, there is the question of the impact of the civil service on a new transition. The most prescient example of this is again in British Columbia, where the civil service took part not only in Premier Clark’s massive pre-election announcement binge, but also assisted in promoting overly optimistic economic forecasts as a method of inoculating his government against the charge of fiscal mismanagement. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

**Endogenous Variables – the real keys to success**

The reasons for focusing more closely on the factors over which the new leader can exercise some control are two-fold. First, there are several examples of leaders overcoming significant external obstacles and overseeing effective transitions. Clark and Klein are both examples of this, as are Lyndon Johnson in the United States and John Major in Britain. Similarly there are examples of transitions in which the external circumstances are very favourable and yet the new leader is not able to capitalize and subsequently goes down to defeat. Losses by Camille Theriault in New Brunswick and Frank Miller in Ontario are both examples of this.

The second reason for focus on endogenous variables is that these factors are simply of more interest to future leaders and political organizers. There is little that can be done about a poor economy and international crisis or a bitter outgoing leader. However, with the right strategy and execution there is hard evidence that a new leader’s prospects can be greatly improved.

**Transition Planning**

Effective transitioning by a new intra-party leader involves a complex series of tasks and strategies. First and foremost, there is the matter of strategic planning. By contrast, in an inter-party transition situation, the leader often does not consider transition planning until well into the election campaign, and then only as an entity to be kept separate and distinct from the election planning itself. With an intra-party campaign, the planning is somewhat reversed. From the moment a successful intra-party leader considers running for his or her party’s leadership, consideration is given to how the Premier’s office will be run and the direction the government might take. Furthermore, because an election usually quickly follows such a leadership race, election planning typically begins immediately upon the new leader taking office. Thus, keeping, with Charles O. Jones’ premise that modern transitions are more about politics than governance, the intra-party leader has, within a short period of time, to focus almost completely on the political tasks of positioning and reputation building. Issues such as personnel, policy processes and administrative changes must take a back seat during this period unless they are directly related to the key political tasks at hand.

What history has shown and what a number of the authors writing about transition success have counselled is, that during the planning stage, lessons from previous transitions should be contemplated. The new intra-party leader that can learn from his or her predecessor, learn from the political history and culture of their particular jurisdiction will, ultimately, be much better prepared to face the challenges that will be brought to
bear during their transition. Similarly a leader who lets hubris or the arrogance of office blind his/her decision making risks jeopardizing the transition process.

Another key factor to take into account when attempting intra-party transition planning is the leader and his or her distinct style and personality. As Brauer states, transition is a reflection of a leader’s personality and to ignore or try to go against a leader’s natural style is often detrimental. Other factors that provide clues to assist the planning process include understanding the political culture of a given jurisdiction, the electoral and party history and the type of election to be expected, be it issue driven or character driven.

Finally, during an intra-party election there are several set events for which planning can be undertaken. These include the choosing of cabinet, the delivery of a budget and, ultimately, deciding on an election date. Understanding and preparing for all these factors is a key element of a properly planned and executed intra-party transition. One of the most important challenges for a new intra-party leader is the decision about when to call an election. Canada’s provincial governments have a number of characteristics that make the transitions of their premiers unique, particularly in comparison to the American system.

With regard to choosing an election date, Canadian provinces are again different, because, to date, Canada’s provincial legislatures have no fixed term of office. While a provincial premier’s term in office may not exceed five years in duration, it may be a much shorter time period than that. Typically in Canadian history, the earliest a premier would call an election is after three years of governing, but political expedience, crisis, or the pressures of coalition government have all played a role in those rare occurrences when an election has been called after less than three years. For most premiers, choosing the date of the election sometime within the two-year window at the end of their mandate is the most strategically important decision of their careers. Many would suggest that the only important decision over which a provincial premier has sole discretion is the decision to call a general election.

The other element of proper planning is putting together the proper team. Overall, proper planning allows a new leader to avoid the pitfalls that accompany newness, haste, hubris and naivety, the encumbrances to success outlined by Eksterowicz and Hastedt.

Political Entreprenurialism
The one thing that can be said universally about transitions is that there will almost always be unexpected events and issues that will test a new intra-party leader early in their new mandate. Intra-party transitions are not an accepted or regular part of the democratic process and therefore are times of great uncertainty. Key actors, including activists, civil servants, even opposition parties are often taken aback by the changes inherent to an intra-party transition and thereby can willingly or unwillingly precipitate issues and events which may prove challenging for a new leader.

131 The leader of the opposition in British Columbia, Gordon Campbell, has made fixed election dates part of his platform for an upcoming election campaign, probably to be held in the spring of 2001.
Being prepared to deal with arising issues quickly and effectively to show both that the new leader is in fact in charge and that the new leader’s approach to issue management is dynamic and therein better than his or her predecessor is very important. Voters are expected to make a choice about an intra-party leader in a period of time that is typically much shorter than is the norm. New leaders therefore have to quickly convince people that they have the leadership and the management skills needed to govern. Furthermore, new intra-party leaders inevitably have a former public role with their party and government. The new leader may often have to dispel concerns about his or her performance in these former positions. Used correctly, properly implemented crisis and issue management skills can help overcome these concerns quickly.

A new leader’s ability to deal with traumatic or “trigger” events and issues is also an excellent method of assessing transition success. Undoubtedly, at the time of his leadership race or during his election, Joe Clark’s advisors did not spend much time considering that the location of Canadian embassies in the Middle East would have a profound affect on their new Prime Minister. Clark’s mishandling of this issue early in his mandate, like Clinton’s mishandling of the gays in the military issues, would have a profound affect on his overall transition to power.

The other element involved in political entrepenurialism is effective implementation. In a very short period of time, the new intra-party leader must exhibit an ability to successfully grasp the levers of power. One proof of this ability is to quickly and effectively implement change. The effective transition is one in which several small victories are won immediately upon taking office as a means of showing momentum and ability.

**Footprinting – a synthesis of successful transition strategies**

Throughout this chapter, a variety of different perspectives on transition success have been discussed. Some frameworks can be effectively applied to intra-party transition success, while others cannot. At the root of most is the understanding that the fundamental goal for any new leader is to takeover the reins of power as quickly and as effectively as possible. To do this a new leader must prove, not only to their new cabinet, caucus and party but as well to the public, the media and the professional civil service that he/she represents a new approach, a break from the unsuccessful policies and directions of the former leader and government. Obviously, for a leader who has just taken office by defeating an opposing party (inter-party transition), this process is relatively straightforward. Different parties naturally represent different ideas and philosophies and, particularly in today’s world of media driven personality politics, the ability to distance oneself from one’s opponent in another party is a relatively straightforward task.

However, for a new intra-party leader, this task is immensely more complex. Successfully distancing oneself from a leader from within the same party is the consummate test of political skill and acumen. Many intra-party transitions occur when a popular leader retires or is forced from office, as has been pointed out with regard to John Kennedy, and as was the case in Canadian politics with popular leaders like Ernest
Manning in Alberta, Frank McKenna in New Brunswick and a host of Ontario Premiers including Leslie Frost, John Robarts and William Davis. In these cases, the new intra-party leader had to make the difficult choice of simply running their new government on the principle of “more of the same” or attempt to distance themselves, but in such a way as not to cast dispersion or shadow on the legacies of their popular predecessors.

Different, but equally difficult, is the task of distancing for the new intra-party leader who follows an unpopular leader as in the case for Donald Cameron and Russell McClellan in Nova Scotia and Rita Johnson in British Columbia. While there may be more fodder and less risk in criticizing one’s former boss in these cases, distancing is not always a straightforward matter, particularly when the new leader was part of the old government’s cabinet, was involved in the decision-making processes and is generally connected to the failures of a past regime. Moreover, coming out of directly criticizing one’s own political party for the purposes of distancing during a transition, can easily backfire and undermine even more of a new leader’s core support.\footnote{132}

Regardless of these challenges, new intra-party leaders, perhaps even more so than in other types of transitions, must work diligently and quickly to be seen as a new and legitimate head of government. Part of the method for overcoming these challenges is that intra-party leaders must not only define themselves in relation to their predecessor, they must also create for themselves a unique and distinct public persona. This means that a successful intra-party leader must do more than distance from their past, they must, in a very short time, set an indelible “footprint” or stamp on the office that makes it unequivocally clear that they are ensconced and setting a new course.\footnote{133}

To effectively “footprint” their new administrations, new intra-party leaders must use every avenue and asset available to quickly define themselves. Utilizing a mixture of policy initiatives, key issues, personnel changes, photo opportunities and savvy decision-making, new intra-party leaders must leave a unique imprint and do it within a very constrained timeframe. Successful intra-party leaders find methods of balancing the need to run against their predecessors with the need to promote their party and their former leader’s legacy, a task that demands the utmost in focus, determination and often times, courage. As discussed, one method of ‘footprinting’ is to actively pursue and implement two or three quality policy initiatives immediately upon taking office. Similar to the notion of ‘hitting the ground running,’ this technique can be very effective in quickly framing the new leader’s required image.

\footnote{132}{Merely showing a difference between the new and former leader is often not sufficient. Often, when the former leader resigns in disgrace or from an environment of low public support, the foremost and presumably easiest solution would be to simply run a campaign against the former leader and work towards an agenda that is simply a polar opposite of one’s predecessor. This strategy, in and of itself, may not take into account a host of other factors including party dynamics, past legacies, political environments and political cultures. In the case of John Turner, for example, while hindsight suggests that he should have done everything he could to distance himself from his predecessor, Pierre Trudeau, the fact remains that, even in retirement, Trudeau had an impressive array of supporters both inside and outside government, leaving Turner with a particularly complex challenge to overcome.}

\footnote{133}{The subtle differences between simple distancing and the more complex ‘footprinting’ become more evident in the case study chapters.}
This all-encompassing strategy can be divided into two parts; first, understanding the need for footprinting and second, acting on that knowledge. Most new leaders understand the need to explain to voters who they are, but not all new intra-party leaders have understood the further need to augment this explanation by consciously distancing from the previous leader. For example, in British Columbia, Rita Johnson had the unenviable task of trying to establish her own presence in a very short time after the tumultuous reign of the charismatic Bill Vander Zalm. Not only was she unprepared to do the work necessary to define her own public persona and campaign direction, Johnson never fully comprehended the need to distance from her former boss, someone she for whom she had been a strident supporter. Kim Campbell on the other hand, understood the need to distance herself from her predecessor, Mulroney but did not have the political acumen to successful put her own footprint on her own transition into the office. Fully understanding the need to footprint, regardless of a predecessor’s legacy, and having the political skill and instruments needed to implement such a strategy permeates all of the success criteria discussed in this chapter.

2.6 Transition Success - Conclusion

Transition success is a subject that has been largely ignored particularly when discussing intra-party transitions. To study success properly, it is first important to understand that success is measured differently depending on the perspective used. Of the studies that have been made of transition success, most focus on lessons to be learned from ineffective transitions and are incomplete when trying to measure or compare transition success. Intra-party transitions are the perfect vehicle for such study because: a) they are often much more dramatic and involved than what has previously been thought and b) because they are often closely followed by a general election, they are eminently measurable. With electoral success being used as a means of measurement, groups of variables that may impact that success can be identified, examined and compared. For the purposes of this study three intra-party transitions will be examined using the framework outlined above, with particular focus on the endogenous variable referred to as ‘footprinting.’
Chapter Three

Measuring Success:
A Historical Analysis of
Provincial Intra-party Transitions
in Canada
3.1 Introduction

In the broadest sense, transitions are defined as change that leads to the taking of power. As discussed in Chapter One, some authors have established detailed typologies to distinguish the various kinds of transitions. Even within the smaller subset of intra-party transitions there are several variations to be considered. For example, it has been suggested that when a leader of a government wins re-election, in other words, succeeds him or herself, it is a form of intra-party transition. While there is no question that, in some instances, politicians and leaders have had to radically redefine themselves to win re-election, the changes inherent in winning re-election, particularly in the Canadian provincial electoral system, are not sufficient to warrant further analysis here.

Another form of intra-party transition that will not be studied here are the cases in which a retiring Premier is replaced for a period of time by an interim Premier. This typically occurs when a leader resigns unexpectedly and/or when circumstances do not allow the governing party to quickly hold a leadership contest. In 1990, Roger Bacon acted as interim Premier of Nova Scotia for almost a year before Donald Cameron formally replaced John Buchanan. Similarly, Ray Frennette acted as interim Premier of New Brunswick for several months before Camille Theriault finally replaced long-standing Premier Frank McKenna in 1998. While these interim Premiers are potentially important in a province’s history, particularly if significant political or legislative events occur during their tenure, typically these leaders are viewed in a care-taker capacity and do not warrant further study.

The last unique example involves the transition of the NDP Premier of Manitoba, Howard Pawley to Gary Doer. In 1988, Pawley’s government was defeated on a key legislative vote and an election was called. Thinking that he might be able to boost his party’s sagging popularity, Pawley resigned as Premier and leader of his party during the election. A leadership campaign was held immediately afterward and the victor, Gary Doer, took up his party’s banner as leader for the duration of the campaign. As a symbol of his connection with the common Manitoban voter, Doer consciously decided not to be sworn in as Premier, even though it was his right as the winner of the governing party’s leadership race. When the general election vote came in, the NDP went down to a crushing defeat and Doer lost his opportunity to govern. Without Doer as Premier, even for a few days, this case was not technically an intra-party transition and will therefore not be studied here.

\[134\] Charles O. Jones in *Passage to the Presidency*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998 pp. 14-16, discusses “regenerated transitions” those in which existing leaders succeed themselves. He suggests that while some leaders have radically changed their operating procedures after winning a second term (President Nixon in 1972 is the most significant example) for the most part these transitions are relatively tranquil requiring few adjustments in response to the election.

\[135\] Stewart and Carty, “Does Changing the Party Leader Provide an Electoral Boost?” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XXVI:2, June 1993, pp. 316
As there are many types of transitions, so too are there a variety of tests of transition success. The ease with which a new government deals with the permanent civil service, the speed with which a new government reaches a working capacity to implement policy and the new leader’s ability to extend his or her “honeymoon” with the media and the public, are all recognized indicators of transition success. Standings in the subsequent election campaign have not, to date, been used as an indicator of transition success, presumably because in typical inter-party transitions, the subsequent elections occur three to five years after the transition and are therefore seen to have been only minimally impacted.

In intra-party transitions, however, the subsequent election typically occurs very quickly, sometimes literally weeks after the transition. Given that the standard for a new government to properly make the transition to power is at least six months, it stands to reason, therefore, that intra-party transitions may have a decisive impact on the government party’s success or failure in the next election. Thus, analyzing the results of the subsequent election can be considered, at least, as a preliminary means of assessing intra-party transition success.

The principal objective of this chapter is to identify all intra-party transitions in Canada’s provinces that have occurred since 1960 and to determine their relative success or failure. Success will be measured by comparing and contrasting the election results immediately surrounding these transitions. By forming a “continuum of success”, a more detailed and nuanced perspective can be given to the three case studies of Premiers Miller, Clark and Klein.

The backdrop for this analysis will be the parties, governments, leaders, electoral systems and legislatures of Canada’s ten provinces. It was felt that, despite some obvious size differences, the similarities of the political and legislative systems within the provinces are sufficient to provide a base for comparison. Similarly, as a result of the wide variances in traditions and protocols, neither the Canadian nor American federal systems are included in this analysis. Again, for purposes of comparison, only modern transitions (those occurring after 1960) are considered here. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first will discuss methodology and terms. The second gives a contextual overview of transitions generally and intra-party transitions specifically in Canada since 1960. The third takes a more detailed look at the intra-party transitions by province and some of the preliminary factors that may or may not impact the success of these transitions. For example, some authors suggest that time period between the swearing in of a new leader and the subsequent election is an important factor. Arguably, the longer this time period, the less influence a new leader’s transition would have on their subsequent electoral success.

136 Canada consists of ten provinces and three territories. On May 25th 1993, an agreement on Inuit Land Claims was reached and as a result, a new territory, Nunavut Territory, was created on April 1, 1999. Canada’s existing three territories have small populations and have only recently developed political party structures. For these reasons and for ease of comparison, this analysis will focus solely on intra-party transitions within the 10 Canadian provinces.
This section also examines the basic question of whether a new intra-party leader won or lost his/her subsequent election effort and the more detailed questions about margin of victory and seat count versus vote count. As well, this section will compare electoral results of new leaders with his or her party’s result in the previous election. In the final section, rationale is given for the choice of the Miller, Clark and Klein cases.

In a broad sense, the purpose of this analysis is threefold: to give a better understanding of the success or failure of Canadian provincial intra-party transitions, to provide a base of information from which these transitions can be compared to each other and finally, to provide a contextual framework from which the thee principal cases can be studied and compared. It is important to remember, however, that this type of analysis is limited in its scope. When comparing election results, for example, this study does not take into account significant events and political standing between elections. Nor does it allow for the variety of other non-electoral factors, which may impact how successful a new leader’s transition will be.

3.2 Transitions in Canada: An Overview

As discussed earlier, this study looks at the 10 Canadian Provinces and their electoral and transition legacies. There exists significantly different electoral histories and experiences across the country, in part due to the fact that the provinces entered Confederation at differing times. Although each province has its own traditions regarding election frequency, since 1960, as is evidenced in Table 3-1, all provinces have had roughly the same number of elections.

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137 Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were the original four provinces created by the formation of the Canadian Confederation on July 1, 1867. Manitoba and the Northwest Territories joined Confederation on July 15, 1870 and were joined by British Columbia one year later. PEI became part of Canada on July 1, 1873, the Yukon Territory on June 13, 1898. Alberta and Saskatchewan entered confederation on September 1, 1905. The last province to join was Newfoundland and Labrador on March 31, 1949.
Table 3-1: Canadian Provincial Administrations and Elections Totals
(As of July 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total Admin.</th>
<th>Admin Since 1960</th>
<th>Total Elections</th>
<th>Elections Since 1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a concession to both brevity and relevancy, an analysis of all intra-party transitions in Canada since Confederation will not be attempted here. Rather, only those transitions occurring since 1960 will be examined. Table 3-2 outlines the transitions that have occurred in each province since 1960, the Premiers involved, the transition type and the exact date in which the new Premier formally took office. As discussed in Chapter One, intra-party transitions occur when there is a change of government leadership within one party.

Table 3-2: All Transitions in Canadian Provinces since 1960
As of July 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Columbia</th>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WAC Bennett to Dave Barrett</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>15-09-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Barrett to Bill Bennett</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>22-12-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bennett to Bill Vander Zalm</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>06-08-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Johnson to Michael Harcourt</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>05-11-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Harcourt to Glen Clark</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>22-02-1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alberta</th>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Ernest Manning to Harry Strom</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>12-12-1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Strom to Peter Lougheed</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>10-09-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lougheed to Donald Getty</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>01-11-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Getty to Ralph Klein</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>14-12-1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138 Relevancy in that pre-1960 little time or resources were committed to formal or informal transition processes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>07-11-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>07-11-1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>30-06-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>08-05-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>01-11-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>25-11-1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>15-07-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>24-11-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>30-11-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>09-05-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>08-11-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>01-03-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>08-02-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>26-06-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>01-10-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>26-06-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>08-01-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>22-06-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>05-06-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>02-10-1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>29-04-1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>25-11-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>03-10-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>02-12-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>11-01-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>12-09-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>29-01-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>12-07-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>12-11-1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
<td>27-10-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
<td>13-09-1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nova Scotia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Stanfield to George Smith</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith to Gerald Regan</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regan to John Buchanan</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchanan to Donald Cameron</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron to John Savage</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savage to Russell MacLellan</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prince Edward Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walter Shaw to Alexander Campbell</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell to William Campbell</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell to Angus MacLean</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLean to James Lee</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee to Joseph Ghiz</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghiz to Catherine Callbeck</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callbeck to Patrick Binns</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newfoundland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Smallwood to Frank Moores</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moores to Brian Peckford</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peckford to Thomas Rideout</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rideout to Clyde Wells</td>
<td>Inter-party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells to Brian Tobin</td>
<td>Intra-party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of all Canadian provincial transitions since 1960 is found in Table 3-3. What Table 3-3 reveals is that of the 59 transitions in Canada since 1960 almost half (46 per cent) have been of the intra-party variety. This fact, in and of itself, raises the question of why so little scholarship has been focused on intra-party transitions.

Table 3-3: Total Canadian Provincial Transitions – since 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total Transitions</th>
<th>Intra-Party</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3-4: Canadian Provincial Intra-party Transitions – since 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-party Transition</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Sub.Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bill Bennett to Bill Vander Zalm</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>1986 (2 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Michael Harcourt to Glen Clark</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>1996 (3 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ernest Manning to Harry Strom</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>1971 (32 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Peter Lougheed to Don Getty</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1986 (5 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tommy Douglas to W.S. Lloyd</td>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>1964 (28 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Leslie Frost to John Robarts</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1963 (22 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. John Robarts to William Davis</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1971 (8 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. William Davis to Frank Miller</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1985 (4 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Rene Levesque to P.M. Johnson</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>1985 (1 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. F. McKenna to Camille Theriault</td>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1999 (21 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. J. Buchanan to Donald Cameron</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1993 (27 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. J. Savage to Russell MacLellan</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1998 (8 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Alex Campbell to Bill Campbell</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1979 (8 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Angus MacLean to James Lee</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1982 (10 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Joseph Ghiz to C. Callbeck</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1993 (2 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Frank Moores to Brian Peckford</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1979 (3 mo.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Brian Peckford to Tony Rideout</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>1989 (1 mo.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *The “Sub. Election” column denotes the year in which the subsequent election took place. The “-- mo.” column indicates the number of months elapsed between the new leader’s swearing in and the subsequent election.

Table 3-4, organized on a west to east axis, examines these 26 intra-party transitions in more detail, with emphasis on the party involved and the crucial period of time elapsed between the swearing in of the new Premier and the subsequent election. It is evident from Table 3-4 that, although intra-party transitions represent almost half of all transitions in Canada, and despite the fact that there have been roughly an equal number of elections in each province since 1960, there remains a wide variance in the occurrence of intra-party transitions across the provinces. Quebec has had the most with five, while Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick each have had only one. Of the 26, it is also interesting to note that the average time elapsed between the swearing-in of the new leader and his or her subsequent calling of a general election, was approximately 11 months. If the three transitions with the longest elapsed time are withdrawn from the calculation, the average elapsed time for the remaining transitions drops to just under
eight months. This suggests that new intra-party leaders typically have very little time to properly prepare to fight their first election campaigns as Premier.

The other inference to be made from Table 3-4 is that intra-party transitions tend to occur predominantly within right wing or conservative parties. In fact, of the total 26 intra-party transitions, 16 or 62 per cent transpired between Progressive Conservative, Social Credit or Union Nationale leaders.

3.3 Canadian Provincial Intra-party Transitions in Detail: 1960-1998

Having provided a general overview of provincial transitions in Canada, the next section of this study examines each of the 26 intra-party transitions in detail. After a general overview of politics in each province, an analysis will be made of the Premiers involved in these transitions and their success or failure in the subsequent general elections. For purposes of comparison and based on the notion that electoral results in the subsequent election provide a valid measurement of transition success, the results from the election immediately preceding and immediately following each transition are documented below.\(^\text{139}\)

One other element that has been added to this review is in regard to the level of expectations immediately before the new leader is tested in an election campaign. For example, Brian Tobin was seen as having an excellent opportunity at electoral victory in Newfoundland in 1996, Bill Vander Zalm was seen as having a relatively good chance of election in BC in 1986 and Pierre-Marc Johnson was forecast to lose the 1985 election in Quebec. While these forecasts and predictions are by their nature, subjective, they are important when judging new leaders’ accomplishments against public expectations.


Introduction

Many authors and historians would suggest that nowhere else in Canada is there such clear-cut example of a dual party system as in British Columbia.\(^\text{140}\) Most certainly, the continued polarization of B.C politics is unique amongst Canadian provinces. In B.C., a leader’s ability to coalesce either the right or left wing vote has historically been one of the most important elements of electoral success.

The other unique quality of British Columbian electoral history is that a minor party\(^\text{141}\) has held power without interruption since 1953. The Bennett father and son dynasty of

---

\(^{139}\) For ease of reference, the title of each transition references the Premier taking over, for example, Bill Vander Zalm taking over from Bill Bennett is referred to from here forward as the “Vander Zalm transition”.

\(^{140}\) For an extended analysis of this see, Donald E. Blake, *Two Political Worlds: Parties and Voting in British Columbia*, UBC Press, 1985

\(^{141}\) Feigert defines minor party as a non-national or non-mainstream party.
leadership of the Social Credit governments, interrupted in 1972 and then followed in 1991 by another minor party, the New Democrats, is quite unusual in Western politics in general and in Canadian politics in particular. Feigert asks, “Why has a minor party, one which has all but disappeared in federal elections come to be so dominant?” Feigert points to the inability of major national parties to give significant assistance or funds to provincial organizations. As well, he points to malapportionment as being an important device of parties that have been in power for a significant amount of time.

To date, Feigert’s assertions about the prominence of minor parties continue to hold true in B.C. Since 1991, the NDP has held power despite consistently low standings in the polls and the resignation for political reasons of Premier Mike Harcourt in 1995. Furthermore, the opposition party with the most opportunity to form government in the future, the B.C. Liberals have done everything possible to distance themselves from their federal Liberal counterparts and position themselves as a “B.C.” party first.

Of the six transitions that have occurred in British Columbia since 1960, three have been intra-party transitions. Using the strict test of victory in the subsequent general election two of these intra-party transitions have been successful while one was not. However, on closer examination more detailed conclusions can be reached.

The Vander Zalm Transition - 1986
On August 6, 1986, Bill Vander Zalm was sworn in as the 29th Premier of British Columbia. As Premier and Leader of the British Columbia Social Credit Party, Vander Zalm was perpetuating a strong and proud political legacy. Indicative of the popularity of the party, the Social Credit leadership convention that catapulted Vander Zalm into office was arguably the most competitive and most lavish in British Columbia’s history. Vander Zalm took over from a retiring William Bennett, who had been Premier of B.C. for over 10 years. On October 22, 1986, just over two months after becoming Premier, Vander Zalm called a provincial general election.

Despite tough economic conditions and an electorate that was somewhat fatigued with the state of government under the Social Credit in B.C., Vander Zalm was almost universally given an even chance of victory before the 1986 general election. Public opinion polling just prior to the call of the election gave the Social Credit approximately 30 per cent support amongst decided voters. At the time most observers felt that Bennett may have won the next election if he had stayed on and that Vander Zalm gave the Social Credit an even better chance. Vander Zalm won that election and went on to lead the province until the spring of 1991, when he was forced to resign over allegations of impropriety.

---

142 When the British Columbia Social Credit League won the 1952 election its political arm became known simply as Social Credit. The League continued to exist as the administrative arm until 1974 when its name was changed to the British Columbia Social Credit Party.

143 While speaking about the Social Credit, Feigert’s question is equally relevant to the NDP party in B.C.


144 Senior BC Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 19, 1998
### B.C. General Election – May 5, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Government Majority (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>820,807</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>741,354</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>44,442</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>19,131</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,649,533</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) This number is calculated by subtracting the minimum number of seats needed for a majority from the total number of seats won by the party forming government. (2) This section includes all fringe parties’ vote totals and therefore may not reconcile exactly with tabled figures.

### B.C General Election – October 22, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>954,516</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>852,544</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>130,505</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>14,074</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,935,453</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * The overall number of ballots cast decreases after the 1986 general election as a result of the province moving to a single member ridings system in 1991.

The day before the election, headlines read “Socred triumph expected in B.C.,” noting that “polls taken toward the end of the campaign show that Vander Zalm’s popularity had slipped a little – but not by much.” In addition to winning the general election, the preceding charts indicate that Vander Zalm captured 12 more seats in 1986 than was the case in 1983 and was able to increase his party’s majority in the legislature by six seats.

Interestingly, while Vander Zalm was able to capture over 130,000 more votes than in 1983, the percentage of votes cast for the Social Credit in 1986 actually decreased. This can be explained by a number of factors including an increase in the voting population in British Columbia between 1983 and 1986, and by a diffusion of votes to a larger number of parties and candidates.

### The Johnson Transition – 1991

On the heels of Bill Vander Zalm’s sudden resignation, Rita Johnson was sworn in as Premier on April 2, 1991. As the first female Premier in Canadian history, Johnson had little time to prepare for the imminent general election. Just over seven months later Johnson called a provincial general election. Not only did Johnson and the Social Credit fare poorly in the October 17, 1991 election, the loss initiated an almost total collapse of the Social Credit party shortly thereafter.

---

### B.C General Election – October 22, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>954,516</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>852,544</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>130,505</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>14,074</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,935,453</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B.C General Election – October 17, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>351,660</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>595,391</td>
<td>40.71</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>486,208</td>
<td>33.25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,462,467</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.0*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * rounding to one decimal may result in slight deviations in column totals.

Johnson’s loss was massive, with over 40 seats being lost in a 75-seat legislature and a decrease in the popular vote of more than 25 percentage points. The Johnson loss meant that Social Credit was relegated from a position of majority government to that of third party in the provincial legislature.

In comparison, the victorious NDP party actually increased the size of its majority, despite a last minute surge by the newest significant entity on the British Columbian political horizon, the B.C. Liberal party.

### The Clark Transition – 1996

Despite the massive victory in 1991, new NDP Premier Michael Harcourt was forced to resign near the end of his mandate over allegations of political mismanagement. After a lightly contested leadership race, Glen Clark was sworn in on February 22nd, 1996, as British Columbia’s 32nd Premier. Three months later he called a general election, and on May 2nd, 1996 he returned an NDP majority (albeit greatly reduced) to power in B.C.

### B.C General Election – October 17, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>351,660</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>595,391</td>
<td>40.71</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>486,208</td>
<td>33.25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,462,467</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.C. General Election – May 28, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>624,395</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>661,929</td>
<td>41.82</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>146,734</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA (1)</td>
<td>90,797</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>31,511</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,592,655</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Progressive Democratic Alliance

The 1996 electoral results in B.C. represent one of the closest general election races in Canadian history. Premier Clark won the 1996 election with a narrow one seat majority, this despite the fact that the opposition Liberals actually increased their popular vote by two percentage points. The NDP won 12 fewer seats in 1996 compared to 1991, which represents a 16 per cent decrease.


Introduction
The nature of Alberta’s electoral history at both the provincial and federal level has been described as being consistently dominated by conservative or right wing political entities such as the Social Credit, Reform (federal only) and Progressive Conservative parties. C.B. Macpherson has called the Alberta situation a “quasi-party system.” Carty and Stewart suggest that Alberta is unique within Canada, in that, more than any other, it has been “...characterized by long periods of a single party’s electoral and legislative dominance.”

At the provincial level, the Social Credit Party controlled the Legislative Assembly from 1935 to 1971. The Progressive Conservatives have held power ever since, with only one real setback, that being in 1986 when Premier Lougheed stepped down. The Tories dropped from 75 to 61 seats in the subsequent election and remained relatively low in the polls until 1992. Carty and Stewart also point out that Alberta is the only western province in which the New Democrats have never been taken seriously as a viable alternative government.

Any opposition support has centered around Edmonton, with pockets of Liberal support in Calgary. Historically, the opposition parties have not been able to gain a foothold in rural Alberta. Frank Feigert suggests that as is the case in several provinces, the

governing party, “has (historically) profited by an unusually large maldistribution of seats as compared to actual votes received.”

As could be expected in an almost one-party jurisdiction such as Alberta, the tenures of individual Premiers have been comparatively long and the transitions have largely been of the intra-party variety. In fact, there has been a higher percentage of intra-party transitions in Alberta than anywhere else in Canada.

The Strom Transition - 1968

Ernest Manning was one of the longest serving Premiers in Canadian history. When he formally stepped down, Harry E. Strom was the accepted choice as Manning’s replacement. Strom was sworn into office on December 12, 1968 and was Premier for over two and half years before he called a general election. Strom’s loss of the 1971 general election foreshadowed the demise of the Social Credit party in Alberta and provided the impetus for one of the longest standing incumbencies in Canadian provincial politics – that of the Alberta Progressive Conservative party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>6,916</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>53,847</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>79,610</td>
<td>15.98</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>129,544</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>222,270</td>
<td>44.60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>498,351</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *By the end of the 1967 term, standings had changed to Socred 55, Prog. Conservatives 10.

Alberta General Election – August 30, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>6,475</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>73,038</td>
<td>11.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>296,934</td>
<td>46.40</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>262,953</td>
<td>41.10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>639,862</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

149 Of the four transitions in Alberta since 1960, three (75 per cent) have been intra-party transitions.
The 1971 election results were decisive. Despite predictions that the “...Social Credit’s traditional rural strength seems likely to give the party a 10th term in power.” Strom had lost 30 seats and his party’s share of the total vote had dropped by almost four per cent. The Progressive Conservative party gained a majority government with 11 seats to spare and have not relinquished power to this day.

The Getty Transition - 1985

From 1971 to 1985 Peter Lougheed led the Alberta government and is still considered an important and popular Premier. He consolidated the Progressive Conservatives dominance of the legislature and was seen as a protector of Alberta’s interests in a number of important national issues. Upon Lougheed’s retirement, Don Getty was sworn in as Premier of Alberta on November 1, 1985. Five months later, Premier Getty called a general election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>% of Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>36,590</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>17,074</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>177,166</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>588,485</td>
<td>62.28</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>7,843</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>944,936</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alberta General Election – May 8, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>% of Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>6,134</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>87,239</td>
<td>12.22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>208,561</td>
<td>29.22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>366,783</td>
<td>51.40</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative Party</td>
<td>36,656</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>713,654</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Getty won the 1986 general election, it was not in the decisive manner of Lougheed. Getty and the Progressive Conservatives lost 14 seats in comparison to the previous election, had over 200,000 fewer votes and dropped in terms of popular vote by a massive 10.9 percentage points. This result is arguably one of the weakest electoral showings by a Progressive Conservative government in Alberta since 1971.

---

The Klein Transition - 1992

Under Getty, the Alberta Progressive Conservatives fared somewhat better in the 1989 general elections, but particularly at the end of his regime, Premier Getty was under significant political pressure to step down. Finally in 1992, Premier Getty retired and after a difficult and acrimonious leadership convention, Ralph Klein was sworn in as Premier of Alberta. Six months later, on June 15, 1993, the general election was held.

### Alberta General Election – March 20, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>% of Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>237,787</td>
<td>28.68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>217,972</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>367,244</td>
<td>44.29</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>3,939</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>829,189</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Klein won that election, but took a substantially reduced majority into the legislature. He dropped eight seats and was able to increase his party’s share of the popular vote by only 0.2 percentage points.

### Alberta General Election – June 15, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>% of Vote</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seats %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>9,214</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>392,899</td>
<td>39.73</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>108,883</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>439,981</td>
<td>44.49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>23,885</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>989,025</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Klein’s chief political opponent in that leadership convention, Nancy Betkowski, would subsequently refuse to sit in his cabinet. She left government before the 1993 general election. In 1998, she sought and won the leadership of the Official Opposition, the Alberta Liberal Party.

Saskatchewan Intra-party Transitions 1960-1998

**Introduction**

Prior to 1964, it would have been fair to characterize Saskatchewan as a two party system. This statement is based on the dominance of the Liberals and the CCF/NDP throughout that period. Since then, however, particularly with the rebound of the Progressive Conservative party in 1975, Saskatchewan has been described as a shifting three-party system with a varying second party. The CCF/NDP have been the...
dominant party in Saskatchewan, winning an outright majority in five of the last seven elections. With the exception of the Social Credit in B.C. and the Progressive Conservatives in Ontario and Alberta, this record is unparalleled.

An interesting point however is that despite the fact that one party has dominated the provincial electoral scene, there have been very few intra-party transitions in Saskatchewan’s history. In fact, since 1960 there has only been one, that being the transition from a retiring Tommy Douglas to new CCF/NDP Premier, W.S. Lloyd.

The Lloyd Transition - 1961

Not unlike Ernest Manning in Alberta, Tommy Douglas was one of the longest serving Premiers in Canadian history. Woodrow Stanley Lloyd was an experienced cabinet minister in Douglas’ CCF/NDP governments, having served as Minister of Education from 1944 to 1960 and as Provincial Treasurer in 1960-61. On November 7, 1961, Lloyd was sworn in as Premier of Saskatchewan and retained this position until the defeat of his government on April 22, 1964.

The unusually long period between becoming Premier and calling the subsequent election was marked by a particularly important policy event, that being the introduction of Canada’s first government health-care program in 1962.

Saskatchewan General Election – June 8, 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>94,737</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>221,932</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>276,846</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>83,895</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 679,207 100.0 54* 100.0

Note: * one seat declared void.

Saskatchewan General Election – April 22, 1964

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>126,028</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>269,402</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>268,742</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>2,621</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 666,861 100.0 58* 100.0

Note: *one seat declared void.

Unlike his predecessor, Lloyd was unable to maintain the CCF/NDP’s domination of the provincial legislature. “Most observers were predicting a thin CCF majority in Saskatchewan’s 15th legislature.”\(^{154}\) As a result of the 1964 election, his party had 12 less

seats representing a drop of almost 30 per cent. Interestingly, this massive seat loss is not reflected in the vote totals. In 1964, the CCF/NDP received only 8,104 votes less than in the previous election, a drop in the popular vote of only 0.5 percentage points.

**Manitoba Intra-party transitions 1960 - 1998**

**Introduction**
Unlike many provinces, Manitoba’s provincial electoral history has been similar to its federal electoral history. It is also one of the true three party systems in Canada. Feigert makes two important points about Manitoba’s voting patterns. First, despite the general fragmentation of Manitoba’s electorate, majority government has been the rule rather than the exception.

He suggests, secondly, that even though there have been several majority governments, in most of the elections, the victorious party did not receive a majority of the popular vote. Feigert states, “...this is again clear evidence of a maldistribution problem in which the ruling party profits from the distortions of a single-member district/multiple-party system.”

Finally, he suggests this advantage leads to longer terms for the ruling party. He points to the Liberals from 1941-1958, the Tories from 1959-1969 and again from 1988 to the present and the NDP from 1973 (with the exception of the period 1977-1981) until 1988.

Somewhat in defiance of Feigert’s assertions, while there have been six transitions in Manitoba since 1960, only one of those was of the intra-party variety.

**The Weir Transition - 1967**
Dufferin Roblin had been Premier of Manitoba for almost ten years when he handed over the reins of power to Walter Weir on November 25, 1967. Weir governed for two years before losing the next general election, held on June 25, 1969. Weir resigned as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party three weeks later.

**Manitoba General Election – June 23, 1966**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>130,102</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>107,841</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>75,333</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>11,538</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>325,549</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

156 op.cit., Feigert, pp. 250
Manitoba General Election – June 25, 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>119,021</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>80,288</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>128,080</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>4,535</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>334,688</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>57*</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *An independent MLA was also elected to the Manitoba legislature in 1969 bringing the total number to 57. Since 1969 no one other than a member of the three principal parties has been elected in Manitoba.

In losing the 1969 general election, Weir’s party dropped nine seats, a percentage loss of almost 16 per cent. He lost to the CCF/NDP by less than 10,000 votes but that margin was sufficient to move his party from a majority government to that of official opposition in a very tight majority situation. Despite the closeness of the seat situation in 1969, it is instructive to note that Weir’s share of the popular vote dropped dramatically, by almost five percentage points, between 1966 and 1969.

Ontario Intra-party Transitions 1960-1998

Introduction

Ontario is the largest province in Canada in terms of population. Despite its three-party nature, in Ontario elections the Tories were dominant for almost four decades, forming a majority government in all but 7 of the 17 elections since 1937. Williams characterizes this dynastic performance as “an entrenched, pragmatic (but not overwhelmingly popular) ‘government party’ which persists through the inability of its opponents to combine effectively against it.”

As befits a province in which one ‘government party’ is largely dominant, there have been a number of intra-party transitions in Ontario since 1960, all of which have involved Progressive Conservative Premiers. Of the six total transitions, half were of the intra-party variety. This is the second highest percentage of intra-party transitions in any province, after Alberta.

The Robarts Transition - 1961

Leslie Frost, Ontario Premier from 1949-1961, has been described as one of Ontario’s most successful politicians and as one of “the great consolidators of the Ontario Tory dynasty.” Frost led the Ontario Tories to sweeping victories on three occasions and presided over a period of unprecedented growth and wealth creation in Ontario.

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157 ibid, Feigert, pp. 205
159 Roger Graham, Old Man Ontario: Leslie M. Frost, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, pp. 1
Unlike the Premiers that followed other political icons, like Ernest Manning and Tommy Douglas, John Robarts had no difficulty taking the reins of power from Premier Frost. On November 8, 1961, Robarts was sworn in as Premier of Ontario in what would be the beginning of another 25 years of Progressive Conservative dominance in the Ontario legislature.

Ontario General Election – June 9, 1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>853,625</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>577,774</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>291,410</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,882,573</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the universal popularity of Frost, it understandable that Robarts’ results in the 1963 general election would slip somewhat. He won the election but returned seven fewer seats to the Conservatives and attained a majority that was 12 seats smaller.\(^{160}\)

The Davis Transition - 1971

In the Robarts tradition, the transition to Bill Davis in 1971 was executed with a high degree of political sophistication and aplomb. Davis was sworn in on March 1, 1971, and held the election almost eight months later on October 21.

Ontario General Election – September 25, 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>1,052,740</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>+25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>757,950</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>336,290</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,165,773</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discrepancy between seat numbers and the size of the majority can be explained by the fact that the Ontario legislature expanded by 10 seats between 1959 and 1963.

Ontario General Election – October 17, 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>1,022,967</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>760,096</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>626,429</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,419,710</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{160}\) The discrepancy between seat numbers and the size of the majority can be explained by the fact that the Ontario legislature expanded by 10 seats between 1959 and 1963.
Ontario General Election – October 21, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>1,465,313</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>913,742</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>893,879</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,292,717</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike almost all new Premiers who succeed a popular leader, Davis actually improved his electoral showing in comparison to the preceding election. Davis won nine more seats and polled almost 450,000 votes more than Robarts had in 1967. Undoubtedly, this huge increase was in part due to a massive rise in the number of eligible voters in Ontario between 1967 and 1971, because, on a percentage basis, Davis only increased the Progressive Conservatives’ popular vote by 2.2 per cent.

The Miller Transition – 1985

Although the popularity that Davis and the Progressive Conservatives had enjoyed in the 1970’s had eroded somewhat by the 1980’s, it was still a momentous surprise to most Ontario voters when Bill Davis announced his retirement on October 8, 1984. As Rosemary Spiers pointed out at the time, “...after a comfortable election win in 1971, [Bill Davis’ Tories] were reduced to minority government in 1975 and again in 1977. But his Tories proved adaptable, imposing restraint where once they’d been expansive, while selling the voters the idea there was still no better place to be than Ontar-i-o. When he handed the succession to Frank Miller in January 1985, all the polls said the government party was more popular than ever.”

After a particularly bitter and divisive leadership contest Frank Miller was sworn in as Ontario’s 19th Premier on February 8, 1985. Less than four months later, the Ontario electorate went to the polls for what was to become one of the most interesting election outcomes in Canadian history.

Ontario General Election – March 19, 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>1,412,418</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,072,680</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>672,824</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,182,484</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—

Ontario General Election – May 2, 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>1,343,044</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,377,965</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF/NDP</td>
<td>865,507</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,635,699</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Frank Miller and the Progressive Conservative Party captured 4 more seats than the second place Liberals, on June 18, 1985, a coalition of Liberals and NDP members joined to defeat the Conservatives in the legislature. Frank Miller resigned as Premier and on June 26, David Peterson, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, was sworn in as Premier of Ontario. Miller brought about this unique circumstance with a showing at the polls. That was disastrous by Ontario Tory standards. The Miller Conservatives lost 18 (or almost 15 per cent) of their seats from 1981, and lost 7.5 percentage points of the popular vote.

Quebec Intra-party transitions 1960-1998

Introduction
It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Quebec politics are the most complicated and paradoxical in Canada. While the Liberal party has a history of success in Quebec, both levels have had strong two party systems and at the provincial level particularly, consistent third party participation. Provincially, Quebec Conservatives ran under the banner of Union Nationale.

This party gained four majority governments in the Quebec National Assembly between 1936 and 1956. The strength of the U.N. qualified Quebec as a legitimate two party system. With the U.N. collapse and the rise of the Parti Quebecois, Quebec retains its two party status. This confirms Lemieux’s and Dyck’s analysis that the two party system is “the most constant characteristic of Quebec’s provincial politics.”

In what can only be described as a political phenomenon, until the Bouchard transition all intra-party transitions in Quebec ended in electoral loss for the new leader. Furthermore, these losses were not sustained by one political party, but rather by three: the Union Nationale, the Quebec Liberal Party and the Parti Quebecois. A partial explanation may be that two of the five leaders left office suddenly in tragic circumstances. Jean-Paul Sauve died in 1960, the year in which Antonio Barrette took over, and Jean Bertrand was thrust into office after the sudden death of Daniel Johnson in 1968.

\(^{162}\) ibid., Rand Dyck, pp. 241
The Barrette Transition – 1960

On January 8, 1960, Antonio Barrette was sworn in as the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Premier of Quebec. Five months later a general election was held in which Barrette’s party, the Union Nationale, went down to defeat for the first time in 15 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quebec General Election – June 20 1956</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although observers predicted that the Union Nationale were “bound to lose seats” in the 1960 election, none forecast such a heavy loss.\textsuperscript{163} In the 1960 election, Barrette lost 30 seats for the Union Nationale, almost a third of all those available. Of note, he made a small gain in the actual number of votes cast but dropped over five percentage points in the popular vote.

The Bertrand Transition – 1968

As stated above, Jean-Jacques Bertrand was sworn into office on October 2, 1968, after Premier Daniel Johnson Sr. died suddenly while on government business at a hydroelectric project in Manicougan, Quebec. Bertrand had been Minister of Education in the Johnson cabinet and upon becoming Premier took on the portfolios of intergovernmental affairs and justice until his party’s defeat in the election of 1970.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quebec General Election – June 5, 1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quebec General Election – April 29, 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
<td>564,544</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,304,341</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>662,404</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>337,307</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2,872,970</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bertrand’s defeat was even more serious than Barrette’s before him. On the day of the election, however, there was optimism for Bertrand as it was reported that although “most opinion polls indicate that the Liberals will get the largest share of the popular vote... this may not be enough to topple the Union Nationale Government.”

Bertrand’s Union Nationale party won 39 fewer seats than in 1966, with almost 400,000 fewer votes being cast for his party. The Union Nationale lost a massive 21 percentage points of the popular vote, a blow from which the party never recovered.

The Pierre-Marc Johnson Transition – 1985

While Pierre-Marc Johnson did not suffer the fate of those succeeding intra-party leaders before him, the resignation of Rene Levesque was just as sudden. As Michel Vastel points out, Johnson “had no time to assess his inheritance and make his mark.”

Johnson was sworn in as the 28th Premier of Quebec on October 3, 1985 and just over a month later, lost the subsequent general election.

Quebec General Election – April 13, 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,773,237</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,658,743</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>144,070</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,600,097</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quebec General Election – Dec. 2, 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,320,008</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,910,307</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>+37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>82,588</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,464,232</td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

164 Ronald Lebel, “Polls favour Liberals but popular vote may not be enough to oust UN,” Globe and Mail, Apr. 29, 1970, pp. 1.
165 Michel Vastel, Bourassa, Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1991, pp. 1
Pierre-Marc Johnson and the Parti Quebecois’ loss in the 1985 general election is one of the most massive defeats in Canadian electoral history. Johnson’s defeat was forecast in a Globe and Mail article which stated that “all the polls... suggest that Liberal Leader Robert Bourassa will win a solid victory...” They lost a total of 57 seats and almost half a million votes between 1981 and 1985.

The Daniel Johnson Jr. Transition – 1994
As Vastel points out, Robert Bourassa was a “walking paradox” in Quebec politics. “Whereas other Premiers of Quebec have aroused extremes of emotion – Duplessis aroused indignation; Lesage, irritation; Daniel Johnson, enthusiasm; and Levesque, vast outpourings of emotion – Bourassa never inspired rebellion, hostility, admiration, or any other passion.” Yet, despite his lack of charisma, the Quebec electorate returned him to the position of Premier more than once.

On January 11, 1994, Daniel Johnson Jr. was sworn in as Bourassa’s successor and as Quebec’s 30th Premier. Just over six months later, he and the Quebec Liberals would lose the general election.

Quebec General Election – September 25, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,369,067</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,702,808</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>+29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>125,726</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,408,809</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quebec General Election – September 12, 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,751,042</td>
<td>44.75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,737,698</td>
<td>44.14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>252,721</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33,269</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,913,789</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The end of Daniel Johnson’s Liberal government was foreseen by observers who indicated that “...no matter which poll or pollster is making the prediction, the Parti Quebecois is expected to form the provincial government... with a comfortable majority.” Johnson lost a 29-seat majority, 45 total seats and almost six percentage points of the popular vote in 1994 versus 1989, despite the fact that his Liberal Party received only 13,000 fewer votes than the victorious Parti Quebecois. The vote

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167 ibid., Vastel, pp. 1
percentage for the two parties in 1994 was almost identical and yet the Parti Quebecois won 30 more seats. Presumably, this discrepancy can be explained in part by the Liberal’s traditionally high popularity in the heavily populated Montreal area ridings.

The Bouchard Transition - 1996
After Jacques Parizeau’s difficult and controversial resignation, Lucien Bouchard resigned as Leader of the Official Opposition in the Federal House of Commons to become Premier of Quebec. He became President of the Parti Quebecois on January 27, 1996, and was sworn in as Premier of Quebec on January 29. He subsequently won a by-election on February 19, 1996, which enabled him to take his seat in Quebec’s National Assembly as Premier.

Quebec General Election – September 12, 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,751,042</td>
<td>44.75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,737,698</td>
<td>44.14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>252,721</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33,269</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,913,789</strong></td>
<td><strong>96.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quebec General Election – November 30, 1998*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>1,771,858</td>
<td>43.55</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1,744,240</td>
<td>42.87</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADQ</td>
<td>480,636</td>
<td>11.81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>71,738</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,068,472</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The totals given include the results from the by-election held in the Masson riding on December 14, 1998. The Masson seat was left vacant following the sudden death of incumbent Yves Blais (PQ) during the election campaign.

Bouchard’s win was reflected in poll results published prior to the November election, indicating that “the Parti Quebecois is poised to win a decisive victory…” 169


Introduction
Before 1986, New Brunswick was considered home to Canada’s clearest example of a two-party electoral system, both at the provincial and federal level. “...since Confederation there have been two major parties in the province and they have alternated in power at regular intervals, most commonly after serving two terms each.”170

170 ibid., Rand Dyck, pp. 163-164
At the provincial level, the consistent success enjoyed by the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives has excluded almost all opportunities for third parties and has minimized the possibilities of any type of coalition government. Feigert suggests that the two-party system lends itself to the tendency of one of the two parties winning several elections in a row, thereby creating a certain stability in office. This may assist in explaining Premier Hatfield’s longevity in office despite the many and varied reports of personal difficulties and his apparent deficiencies in the “frontier virtues.”\textsuperscript{171}

The New Brunswick legislature has seen only four Premiers since 1960 and the only intra-party transition has been the most recent being in 1997 between retiring Premier Frank McKenna and his short-term replacement Premier, Camille Theriault.

### The Theriault Transition - 1997

Possibly in response to the Hatfield legacy, Frank McKenna stated early in his mandate that he could only conceive of being Premier for a period of 10 years. He kept that commitment almost to the day. Seven months later, Camille Theriault won the Liberal Party convention and was subsequently sworn in as the 29\textsuperscript{th} Premier of New Brunswick on May 14, 1998.

#### New Brunswick General Election – September 11, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>120,247</td>
<td>30.86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>201,150</td>
<td>51.63</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>1,267</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE (1)</td>
<td>27,684</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>389,562</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Confederation of Regions

#### New Brunswick General Election – June 7, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>209,008</td>
<td>53.02</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>146,934</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>34,526</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>2,807</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLP (1)</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>394,237</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Natural Law Party

In a massive turnaround of events, Theriault was roundly beaten in the 1999 general election by political newcomer, Progressive Conservative Leader, Bernard Lord. Much

\textsuperscript{171} ibid., Feigert, pp. 149
of the analysis of Theriault’s defeat focussed on the exceedingly long length of time between McKenna’s departure and the subsequent election and on Theriault’s inability to display a new vision for the province. Lord had only been recently named leader of the opposition PC party and on election night he became one of the youngest Premiers in Canadian history.


Introduction
Given Nova Scotia’s current political situation, in which any one of three political parties could make a legitimate claim to power, Rand Dyck’s 1987 description of the province’s possible electoral future seems particularly prescient.

“Nova Scotia has been a Liberal one party dominant system from 1867 to 1956, for during this period there were only two short conservative deviations from Liberal rule, and third parties had only brief success... Depending on future Liberal prospects and leadership, the system could move in the direction of a two and one half or a three party system, since the level of third party support appears to be rising consistently.”

Tracking of election results shows that provincially, Nova Scotia elections have been much more competitive than is the case federally. Nearly half the provincial elections have been decided by margins of less than 10 per cent. This is obviously consistent with the 1998 election results in Nova Scotia where the difference between the first and third place parties was less than 25,000 votes, out of almost 450,000 cast.

Half of Nova Scotia’s transitions since 1960 have been of the intra-party variety. The most interesting intra-party transition has been the last, in which, Liberal Premier Russell MacLellan hung precariously on to power with one of the smallest mandates in Canadian electoral history.

The Smith Transition – 1967
Robert Stanfield was a formidable figure in Nova Scotia history. His electoral victory in 1956 was called the most important in the province’s history, because it was the first since Confederation that the Conservatives had won under non-crisis conditions. Stanfield was a popular Premier and remained in that position until 1967, when he declared his candidacy for the position of Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. On September 13, 1967, George “Ike” Smith was sworn in as Premier of Nova Scotia. In November of that same year, the party’s annual meeting confirmed him as leader without the benefit of a convention.

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172 ibid, Rand Dyck, pp. 125
173 ibid., Feigert, pp. 132
175 ibid., Beck, pp.299
Smith governed for three years without a mandate and dealt with difficult issues such as downsizing in the steel industry and the introduction of medicare. The election was called for October 13, 1970. Although it was later touted as one of the closest elections in Nova Scotia history, Smith lost and so ended 24 years of Conservative rule in the province.

![Table representing Nova Scotia General Election data for 1967 and 1970.](image)

Despite the fact that Smith’s Conservatives polled a higher percentage of the popular vote than the Liberals, they won only 21 seats to the Liberals 23. However, this result must still be seen as a massive rejection of Smith as, compared with 1967, he lost 19 seats (41.3 per cent) and the Conservatives’ share of the popular vote dropped by almost six percentage points. In predicting the outcome of the election, observers asserted that “…the Conservatives are expected to be elected for their fifth consecutive term but the Liberals are expected to make considerable gains.”

**The Cameron Transition - 1991**

From 1956 to 1990, a period of 34 years, Nova Scotia had only four Premiers. John Buchanan was the last in this extraordinary display of conservative voting patterns. By contrast, between 1990, when Buchanan left politics and 1997, Nova Scotians had four new premiers in their legislature. Donald Cameron was sworn in as Buchanan’s successor on February 9, 1991. Cameron waited over two years before calling the election on May 25, 1993.

---

Nova Scotia General Election – September 6, 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>202,705</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>182,062</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>73,677</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>467,082</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nova Scotia General Election – May 25, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>150,862</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>237,493</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>85,946</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>7,405</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>481,706</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Progressive Conservative Party’s defeat in 1993 was massive. Cameron lost 19 seats (almost 40 per cent) compared to 1998, and his party’s share of the popular vote dropped a devastating 12 percentage points. One week prior to the election, Cameron’s defeat was being predicted, as media observers stated that “it looks as though the government of Nova Scotia will change hands this time next week.”

The MacLellan Transition – 1997

Any political “honeymoon” Nova Scotia Liberal Leader John Savage may have expected to enjoy as a result of his party’s victory in 1993, proved to be short-lived indeed. Savage’s administration was dogged by allegations of scandal and ineptitude. Savage eventually stepped down and on July 18, 1997, Russell MacLellan was sworn in as Nova Scotia’s 24th Premier. MacLellan had formerly been a member of the Canadian House of Commons, being re-elected there four times before moving into provincial politics. He was first elected to the Nova Scotia legislative assembly in a by-election in November 1997 and then was re-elected on March 24, 1998. The 1998 election result was one of the closest in Canadian history and has led to a unique situation, both in terms of politics and governance.

Nova Scotia General Election – May 25, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>150,862</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>237,493</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>85,946</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>7,405</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>481,706</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nova Scotia General Election – March 24, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>133,902</td>
<td>29.77</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>158,820</td>
<td>35.31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>155,678</td>
<td>34.62</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>449,724</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very difficult to consider Russell MacLellan as actually having “won” the 1998 general election in Nova Scotia. His party lost 21 seats (over a 40 per cent drop) and his share of the popular vote plummeted 14 percentage points. By capturing the same number of seats as the NDP, the Liberals came up short of a majority government by eight seats and the determination as to whether they will remain in government is completely in the hands of the two opposition parties.

As a seasoned political veteran, Premier MacLellan arguably had the skills to negotiate some form of coalition to keep his government alive. However, as was sagely reported after his win, “…alliances can be costly, especially for the NDP in Nova Scotia. Each time the New Democrats have used their king-making power in Ontario and federally, they’ve been punished in the next election.”  

Prince Edward Island Intra-party transitions 1960-1998

Introduction
In terms of both land mass and population, Prince Edward Island is the smallest province in Canada. Not only is the province small, its growth is also comparatively slow. In 1881, its population was approximately 110,000, while today, over 100 years later, it has just over 135,000 inhabitants. Provincially, it has a two party system in which the Liberals have dominated in over three-quarters of the general elections since Confederation. McKinnon describes the island’s political interest and participation as “high and combative”. He goes on to suggest that like many Maritime provinces, politics in PEI is like a national sport. “There is no question of the amount of fun Islanders have with their politics.” 179 The other telling characteristic of PEI politics is its intrinsic connection with organized religion. Feigert suggests, for example, that Trudeau’s religion, as much as his ethnicity, is what kept him from doing well in PEI. 180

Unlike British Columbia’s two party system, in which there is a high degree of political polarization, in PEI there are very few policy differences between the two parties. Feigert concludes, therefore, that PEI politics are highly pragmatic and that, “traditional

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178 Canadian Press Wire Story, March 26, 1998
180 ibid., Feigert, pp. 120-121. Feigert points out that only 4 per cent of PEI is of the same faith, Roman Catholic, as then Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau.
party identifications plus the careful use of patronage appear to be the major determinants of who will rule in this clearly two party province.”\textsuperscript{181}

Of the seven transitions that have occurred in Prince Edward Island since 1960, three have been of the intra-party variety. The first was between Liberal leaders Alex and William Campbell in 1978.

\textbf{The Campbell Transition - 1978}
William Bennett Campbell was first elected to the Prince Edward Island legislature in 1970. He served in a number of capacities including Minister of Education, Minister of Finance and as Chair of the Treasury Board. Following his predecessor’s twelve years as Premier, Campbell was sworn in on September 18, 1978. Eight months later, he and the Liberal party lost the election and Campbell became the leader of the Official Opposition.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Party} & \textbf{Votes} & \textbf{Vote \%} & \textbf{Seats} & \textbf{Seat \%} & \textbf{Gov. Majority} \\
\hline
Prog. Conservative & 60,878 & 48.1 & 15 & 46.9 & \\
Liberal & 64,133 & 50.7 & 17 & 53.1 & 0 \\
\hline
Total & 126,441 & 100.0 & 32 & 100.0 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textbf{PEI General Election - June 1, 1978}

Not only did Campbell lose six seats (almost 20 per cent), his party’s share of the popular vote dropped by 5.4 percentage points. Campbell’s decisive loss came about despite the fact that only slightly more than 10,000 votes separated the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives in the 1979 general election.

\textbf{The Lee Transition - 1979}
Born and raised in Prince Edward Island, James M. Lee was first elected to the P.E.I. legislature in 1975. He held several cabinet portfolios, including the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Following the retirement of Premier McLean, Lee was sworn in as the 28th Premier of Prince Edward Island on November 17, 1981. The general election was held ten months later.

\textsuperscript{181} ibid., Feigert, pp. 121
Lee’s election victory was almost a mirror image of the Progressive Conservative’s victory in 1979. Three years later, the seat total remained the same, the share of popular vote changed by less than one half of a percentage point and the number of votes cast for Lee, “the odds-on favourite,” was less than 3,000 more than in 1979.\footnote{182}

The Callbeck Transition - 1993
Catherine Callbeck was the first woman in Canadian history to lead a provincial party to electoral victory\footnote{183}. After the popular Premier Joseph Ghiz retired, Callbeck won the leadership of the Prince Edward Island Liberal Party and was sworn in as the 30\textsuperscript{th} Premier of that province on January 25, 1993. Two months later, she retained the Premiership by winning the general election.

Notes, *Last election with dual ridings (assemblyman and councillor)


\footnote{183}{ibid., Stewart and Carty, pp. 87}
While Callbeck won one more seat than in 1989, increased the size of her majority and generally continued the Liberal Party’s domination of the provincial legislature, her party’s share of the popular vote decreased quite dramatically, by more than five per cent. Predicting an easy Liberal win from the beginning, the election campaign was dubbed to be “more cakewalk than contest,” for Callbeck.\(^\text{184}\)

Newfoundland Intra-party Transitions 1960-1998

Introduction

As the newest province in Confederation, having joined Canada in 1949, Newfoundland’s party system could be characterized as evolving. At the provincial level, the Liberals dominated Newfoundland’s House of Assembly from 1949-1971. During that time they never received less than 58 per cent of the popular vote, and consistently took three-quarters of the legislature seats during that time. Since 1971, however, the Liberals have not shown the same kind of dominance and have been part of a move into a more traditional two party system.

The reasons for this transformation are many and varied. Pre-1949, the group championing joining Canada was called the Confederate Association. Once Newfoundland became part of Canada, this group became the province’s Liberal Party and anyone who was anti-confederation was thereafter deemed a Conservative.

On the coattails of this union and under the leadership of charismatic Premier Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland Liberals enjoyed considerable success. However, with the recent change in the make-up of the province’s workforce and the social mobilization that brought the Catholics (normally aligned with the Progressive Conservatives in the province) to a more dominant position, the foundation was laid for Newfoundland’s evolution to a two party system.\(^\text{185}\) In fact, Carty and Stewart suggest that Newfoundland, along with PEI and Nova Scotia, represent the only traditional two-party systems left in Canada.\(^\text{186}\) Of the five transitions in Newfoundland’s history, three have been of the intra-party variety.

The Peckford Transition - 1979

Brian Peckford was first elected in 1972 as part of the first Progressive Conservative government in Newfoundland’s history. He served as Minister in a number of portfolios, including Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mines and Energy, Rural Development, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Energy. When then Premier Frank Moores announced his retirement, Peckford won a hotly contested leadership contest. Peckford was sworn in as the 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) Premier in Newfoundland’s history on March 26, 1979. Three months later, on


\(^{186}\) ibid., Stewart and Carty, pp. 80
June 18, 1979, a general election was held. Peckford’s Progressive Conservative Party won that election and maintained its majority status in the provincial legislature.

Newfoundland General Election — September 16, 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>101,016</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>+ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>82,270</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221,818</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newfoundland General Election — June 18, 1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>119,151</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>95,943</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>236,387</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 1979 general election, Peckford increased the Progressive Conservatives seat totals by three, but as a result of the increase in the overall number of seats in the Newfoundland legislature, the size of his government’s majority remained the same. Peckford also increased his party’s share of the popular vote by almost five percentage points. In a newspaper article published the day of the election, Peckford’s Conservatives were seen to “have the edge,” in what was anticipated to be a tight race. 187

The Rideout Transition — 1989

Thomas Gerard Rideout entered politics in 1975 and was originally elected as a Liberal. In 1984, he crossed the legislature floor to the Progressive Conservatives and was made parliamentary assistant to Premier Peckford. Rideout would later become Minister of Fisheries. When Peckford announced his retirement in 1989, Rideout became a front runner for the Conservative Leadership. After winning a close race for leader, Rideout was sworn in as Premier on March 22, 1989. As a result of losing the subsequent election, Rideout served as Premier of Newfoundland for only 44 days.

Newfoundland General Election — April 2, 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>134,893</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>102,016</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>39,954</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>277,641</td>
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<td>52</td>
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Newfoundland General Election – April 20, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>138,609</td>
<td>47.62</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>137,271</td>
<td>47.18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>59.6</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
<td>12,929</td>
<td>4.44</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>2,138</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290,947</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rideout lost 15 seats in the 1989 election, giving new Premier Clyde Wells and his Liberal party a four-seat majority. Although, according to polling conducted in the week before the election, “50 per cent of decided voters were supporting the Tories and Premier Tom Rideout.” While the 1989 results show that Rideout decreased the Progressive Conservatives overall percentage of popular vote, his defeat can be characterized as extremely narrow. Only 1338 votes, less than one half of a percentage point, separated Rideout’s party from the victorious Liberals.

The Tobin Transition – 1996

More so than other regions, Atlantic Canada has a long history of senior politicians moving comfortably between the federal and provincial levels of government. Brian Tobin, for example, was first elected to the Federal House of Commons in 1980. He won federal re-election three times and was named Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in 1993. Upon the resignation of Clyde Wells, Tobin sought and won the leadership of the provincial Newfoundland Liberal Party. On January 26, 1996, Tobin was sworn in as the sixth Premier of Newfoundland. Less than one month later, the voters of Newfoundland returned the Liberals to power and gave Premier Tobin an increased majority.

Newfoundland General Election – May 3, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>127,150</td>
<td>42.13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>148,274</td>
<td>49.13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>22,399</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.</td>
<td>3,967</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>301,790</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

189 ibid., Stewart and Carty, pp. 79
Tobin did not actually win more seats in 1996, but because of an overall reduction in the size of the Newfoundland legislature, he actually increased the size of his majority. More impressive was Tobin’s ability to increase the Liberals’ share of the popular vote, by six percentage points compared to 1993. It was predicted before the 1996 election that the people of Newfoundland were “expected to give Tobin the mandate he was determined to win for himself.”

### 3.4 Provincial Intra-party Transition in Canada: An analysis

Between 1960 and 1998, there have been 26 intra-party transitions at the provincial level in Canada. If performance in the subsequent general election is used as the sole criterion for determining the success or failure of these transitions, 11 could be considered successful, while 14 could be considered unsuccessful. Of the 14 unsuccessful transitions, 12 are clear-cut electoral losses and two require explanation.

Frank Miller’s 1985 transition in Ontario and Russ MacLellan’s 1997 transition in Nova Scotia, were followed by elections that technically could be construed as victories, but in reality could not be described as anything like clear-cut successes. Miller, for example, lost his Premiership and the right to govern less than two months after he “won” the election. MacLellan actually won the same number of seats as his competitor and only remained in office at the pleasure of the opposition parties and lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia. Some may argue that MacLellan ability to manufacture a mandate sufficient for a period of time after the election was the equivalent of a successful transition. The fact remains however, that based on electoral results, it remains improper to suggest MacLellan’s activities between being sworn in and election day could be construed in any way as successful. For these reasons Miller and MacLellan have been placed in the unsuccessful categories.

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**Newfoundland General Election – February 22, 1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
<th>Gov. Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>110,312</td>
<td>38.65</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>157,229</td>
<td>55.09</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>12,706</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,111</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285,358</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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191 One of the reasons often given for the paucity of research into intra-party transitions is that there is a belief that most of the incoming leaders eventually lose the subsequent election and are soon out of politics, seen as little more than footnote premiers. While a majority of intra-party transitions do end in defeat for the new leader, many other do not, with some of the most important premiers in Canadian history establishing themselves on a base created during an intra-party transition.
On the singular criterion of winning or losing the subsequent election, the intra-party transitions can be positioned as follows in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5: Electoral Wins and Losses for new Intra-party transition leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premier</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There can be little doubt that, in isolation, securing a victory in the election subsequent to taking over as Premier must be seen as a mark of a successful transition. At least some of the efforts of the new Premier during the leadership campaign, through the interim period and into the election campaign must have positive to ensure a positive election result. Yet while electoral victory is a telling indicator, there are other electoral indices that may provide more precise indicators of success.

For example, in 1986, Don Getty won the election subsequent to his transition but his majority and his party’s share of the popular vote dropped substantially. Even more dramatic, in the election following Glen Clark’s 1996 transition in B.C., Clark won a majority of seats, but actually polled over two per cent less of the popular vote than his nearest rival, the B.C. Liberals. Moreover, he polled significantly less and won fewer seats than did his predecessor, Mike Harcourt. Similarly, in the 1989 Newfoundland general election, Premier Rideout polled over 1,200 more votes than his rivals, but ended the election 10 seats behind.

The next series of tables will, therefore, rank all of the examined intra-party transitions not only in terms of top-line success or failure in the subsequent election, but as well by the size of their majority, their percentage of popular vote and their percentage of total seats. Table 3-6 for example, ranks all the transitions by the size of the majority won in the subsequent election. If, in the 108 seat Ontario legislature, John Robarts needed 55 seats to win a majority government, winning 77 seats as he did in 1963 ensured him a majority “+22.” Similarly, in 1985, Pierre-Marc Johnson would have needed 62 seats to
form a majority in the Quebec National Assembly. In winning just 23 seats, Johnson was 39 seats short or “-39”.

Table 3-6 Intra-party Transitions: Ranking by Majority Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Size of Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Robarts</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>+ 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>+ 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>+ 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Callbeck</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>+ 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>+ 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Vander Zalm</td>
<td>S.C</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>+ 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>+ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>+ 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Peckford</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>+ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>+ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>- 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>- 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>- 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>- 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>- 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>- 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>- 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>- 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>- 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Theriault</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>- 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>- 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>R. Johnson</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>- 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Bertrand</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>- 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>PM Johnson</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>- 39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While size of majority as an indicator of success is more telling than simple electoral victory results, one potential problem with the indicator is that it would presumably be easier to secure a large majority in a larger legislature.

For example, the two largest majorities recorded during this period came in one of Canada’s largest provincial legislatures, Ontario. However, some of the largest majorities were realized in some of Canada’s smaller legislatures (Getty +19, Callbeck +14). This suggests, at least preliminarily, that comparison of the relative size of majorities is not an altogether poor method of success assessment. Having said this, it still stands to reason that two better methods of measuring performance in an election is to compare the popular vote received and the percentage of seats captured as a result. Tables 3-7 and 3-8 reflect these results and rank the corresponding transitions accordingly.
Table 3-7 Intra-party Transitions: Ranking by Popular Vote Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Vote %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tobin*</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Callbeck*</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lee*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Getty*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Peckford*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Vander Zalm*</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Robarts*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Davis*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Klein*</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>44.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>D. Johnson</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>44.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Bouchard*</td>
<td>PQ</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>42.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Clark*</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>39.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>PM Johnson</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Therault</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>37.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>R. Johnson</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Bertrand</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *won their elections
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Seat %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Callbeck</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Robarts</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vander Zalm</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Peckford</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>D. Johnson</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>PM Johnson</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Theriault</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Bertrand</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative Results
Another dimension of electoral performances by which transition success can be measured involves a comparison of the electoral results of the transitioning Premier directly with the results of the election immediately preceding his or her transition. For example, not only did Ontario Premier Bill Davis win the election subsequent to his transition in 1971, but when compared to the Ontario Progressive Conservatives' electoral results in the election previous (1967), he increased his party’s majority by nine seats (7.7 percentage points) and increased their share of the vote by 2.2 percentage points. John Robarts on the other hand also won the first election after his transition in 1963, but actually decreased his party’s majority by 12 in comparison with the 1959 results.

The final set of tables will attempt to represent graphically these comparisons and thereby provide one further measurement of intra-party success and failure. In at least a preliminary sense, these rankings should provide a more nuanced understanding to the degree of success or failure of certain transitions. For example, in Alberta in 1986, the new Premier, Don Getty won a majority government with 19 seats to spare. Compared to majorities won in other provinces by other intra-party leaders, this is a seemingly impressive showing. However, when Getty’s result is compared to the number of seats his party won in the previous election, his total is actually 14 seats fewer. In this context, any perceptions of Getty’s transition as successful are significantly tempered.
Table 3-9: Intra-party Transitions: Comparative Electoral Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-party Transition</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Election Result</th>
<th>Seat Change</th>
<th>Seat % Point Change</th>
<th>Majority Change</th>
<th>Vote Change</th>
<th>Vote % Point Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vander Zalm</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 12</td>
<td>+ 6.7</td>
<td>+ 6</td>
<td>+133,709</td>
<td>- 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 12</td>
<td>- 16.0</td>
<td>- 12</td>
<td>+29,004</td>
<td>- 1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 30</td>
<td>- 51.3</td>
<td>- 33</td>
<td>+40,663</td>
<td>- 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 14</td>
<td>- 21.5</td>
<td>- 16</td>
<td>-221,702</td>
<td>- 10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 8</td>
<td>- 9.5</td>
<td>- 8</td>
<td>+72,757</td>
<td>+ 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Sask</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 12</td>
<td>- 25.4</td>
<td>- 6</td>
<td>-8,104</td>
<td>- 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 9</td>
<td>- 15.8</td>
<td>- 3</td>
<td>-11,081</td>
<td>- 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robarts</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 7</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
<td>- 13</td>
<td>+199,115</td>
<td>+ 0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 9</td>
<td>+ 7.7</td>
<td>+ 9</td>
<td>+442,346</td>
<td>+ 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 18</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
<td>- 19</td>
<td>-69,374</td>
<td>- 7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 30</td>
<td>- 33.2</td>
<td>- 29</td>
<td>+21,236</td>
<td>- 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM Johnson</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 57</td>
<td>- 46.7</td>
<td>- 55</td>
<td>-453,229</td>
<td>- 10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Johnson</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 45</td>
<td>- 36.0</td>
<td>- 43</td>
<td>+34,890</td>
<td>- 5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>- 0.8</td>
<td>- 1</td>
<td>-6,802</td>
<td>- 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theriault</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 38</td>
<td>- 69.0</td>
<td>- 38</td>
<td>-54,216</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 19</td>
<td>- 41.3</td>
<td>- 17</td>
<td>-2,512</td>
<td>- 5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 19</td>
<td>- 36.5</td>
<td>- 14</td>
<td>-51,843</td>
<td>- 12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 21</td>
<td>- 40.4</td>
<td>- 21</td>
<td>-78,673</td>
<td>- 14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 6</td>
<td>- 18.7</td>
<td>- 4</td>
<td>-5,953</td>
<td>- 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2,864</td>
<td>+ 0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callbeck</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
<td>+ 3.2</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
<td>-5,549</td>
<td>- 5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peckford</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 3</td>
<td>- 1.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+18,135</td>
<td>+ 4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 15</td>
<td>- 28.8</td>
<td>- 13</td>
<td>+3,716</td>
<td>- 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
<td>+ 9.8</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
<td>+8,955</td>
<td>+ 6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Election Result</td>
<td>Seat Change %</td>
<td>Vote Change %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 9.8</td>
<td>+ 6.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 7.7</td>
<td>+ 4.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Vander Zalm</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 6.7</td>
<td>+ 2.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Callbeck</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>+ 3.2</td>
<td>+ 0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>+ 0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 0.8</td>
<td>+ 0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Peckford</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 1.7</td>
<td>- 0.5*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 9.5</td>
<td>- 0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Robarts</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
<td>- 1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
<td>- 1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 15.8</td>
<td>- 4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 16.0</td>
<td>- 5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 18.7</td>
<td>- 3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>- 21.5</td>
<td>- 5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 25.4</td>
<td>- 5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 28.8</td>
<td>- 7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 32.2</td>
<td>- 5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>D. Johnson</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 36.0</td>
<td>- 10.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 36.5</td>
<td>- 12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 40.4</td>
<td>- 14.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 41.3</td>
<td>- 14.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>PM. Johnson</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 46.7</td>
<td>- 21.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 51.3</td>
<td>- 25.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>R. Johnson</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 58.8</td>
<td>- 12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Theriault</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>- 69.0</td>
<td>- 25.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the interesting points from these remaining tables is just how few intra-party leaders actually increased their number of seats (five), increased the size of their party’s majority (four), or increased the percentage of their party’s popular vote (six).

Having thus used five different measurements to rank all Canadian Provincial intra-party transitions since 1960, it only stands to reason that a summary of those measurements would give a more refined snapshot, as found in Table 3-11, of the relative successful and unsuccessful transitions and how they should be ranked comparatively.
Table 3-11  Intra-party Transition Ranking: All factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Prov.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Majority Ranking</th>
<th>Vote % Ranking</th>
<th>Seat % Ranking</th>
<th>Seat Change % Ranking</th>
<th>Vote Change % Ranking</th>
<th>Overall Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robarts</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vander Zalm</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callbeck</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peckford</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getty</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouchard</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rideout</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Sask</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>Ont</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Johnson</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strom</td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Al.</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLellan</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM Johnson</td>
<td>P.Q.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>P.C.</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theriault</td>
<td>Lib.</td>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertrand</td>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-11 shows that by averaging all previous success rankings, a useful overall ranking system can be developed. Furthermore, Table 3-11 shows that there have been four distinct groups or clusters of intra-party transitions in Canada since 1960. On the basis of their electoral measurement, these clusters can be characterized as very successful, somewhat successful, unsuccessful and very unsuccessful.

In the first most successful ranked group, Brian Tobin consistently ranked much higher, to the point of warranting his own category.

The second group represents transitions that were successful, but whose election results were less reflective of that fact. Clark and Klein, for example, measured lower than all the other successful campaigns, most notably in the percentage of popular vote received.
The third group characterises transitions in which the leader lost the subsequent election but typically with a close result. Rideout and Smith, for example, actually had a higher percentage of the popular vote than their opponents and than many of the results of successful campaigns.

Finally, the last group depicts those transitions in which the Premier and his or her party suffered massive electoral damage. In fact, in three of the four cases in this group, the impact of the election result was such that the party either collapsed or was irrevocably politically hamstrung as a result.

**Results versus Expectations – The Final Measure**

While the previous measurements provide a quantitative guide to successful versus unsuccessful transitions, they do not provide the whole picture. For example, while Brian Tobin had the most successful electoral results and made the most significant gains, these results and gains were somewhat anticipated by public polling research. Previous to taking over as leader of the Newfoundland Liberal Party, Tobin was an exceedingly popular federal Liberal cabinet minister, with a high profile in Eastern Canada, derived largely from his position of prominence in the so called “fish wars.” He took over a party that was in excellent shape and in a majority position in the legislature. While his intra-party transition was obviously successful, it could be argued that he did not greatly exceed the normal expectation of success given the circumstances.

At the low end of the expectation spectrum is the transition of former Social Credit Leader Rita Johnson. Her loss can be characterized as one of the most profound in modern Canadian political history. In fact, the utter rejection of the Social Credit by British Columbian voters in 1991 foreshadowed the end of that party as a significant entity in BC politics. There can be little doubt as to the magnitude of Johnson’s transition failure, however, it must also be understood that a loss of power was also expected in this case. Former Premier Vander Zalm, had been implicated in a major scandal, several ministers had resigned as a result and Johnson, rather than being seen as a departure from Vander Zalm, was perceived to be one of his closest loyalists and therefore inextricably tied to him. Given these and other factors, Johnson’s loss came as little surprise to most interested observers.

For the purpose of meaningful analysis therefore, it is argued here that the most interesting transitions cases occur not only when a new leader is successful, but as well, when that success significantly defies expectations. Glen Clark, for example did not increase his majority of seats held in any way near the fashion that Brian Tobin did in Newfoundland. In fact, using voting percentage as an indicator, Clark actually had a percentage that was lower than that in many losing campaigns. However, in winning the 1996 election, Clark managed to significantly outperform all expectations.

In 1995, when Clark became leader, his party was at less than 20 per cent in the polls. His predecessor, Mike Harcourt had been hounded out of office on the heels of the Nanaimo “Bingogate” scandal, the economy and the province’s finances were in terrible shape and the NDP seemed destined to lose the upcoming election. Given these types of
expectations therefore, it can be argued that Clark’s transition was actually more successful than those of Tobin or similarly situated Premiers. Similarly, when Ralph Klein first considered running for the premier’s chair in 1992, his party was at an all-time low in the polls, the opposition was organized and well-funded, and for the first time in modern Alberta history, people were openly discussing the chances of a Liberal government. Less than a year later, Klein delivered a majority government.

In Chart One, all 26 intra-party transitions have been charted in terms of expectations versus result. This chart is qualitative in that “Expectations Continuum” measurements were derived using available polling data and anecdotal newspaper coverage. The “Results Continuum” utilized a culmination of all the success indicators outlined in this chapter, including the number of seats gained, the popular vote gained and the seats and popular vote percentage increased.

For example, in Quadrant One of the chart, Brian Tobin, Bill Davis and John Robarts are characterized as having had high expectations regarding the potential success of their transitions and subsequently achieving positive actual results. Similarly, Quadrant Four captures those transitions like those of Pierre Marc Johnson, Don Cameron and Rita Johnson in which expectations for positive results were low and the results themselves were similar. The Premier’s in these two quadrants more or less performed as expected and are therefore less noteworthy.

Quadrant Two however is much more interesting. To a varying degree all the premiers in this group were expected to have successful transitions and win their subsequent election campaigns. For a variety of reasons and again, to varying degrees, these expectations did not pan out and the premiers lost. Leaders such as Thomas Rideout and Harry Strom had big shoes to fill by following prominent Premiers like Peckford and Manning respectively. The expectations on these new untested leaders were therefore lowered. However, they were still expected to win given the prominent positions of their parties leading into the transition. In the case of Strom particularly, he performed much below all expectations. However, the Premier who could be arguably charged with the greatest under-performance, was Ontario Premier, Frank Miller. Leading up to the 1985 election, Miller’s Progressive Conservatives were expected to continue the legacy of Tory government that had started over 42 years before. Less than a month before the 1985 election vote in Ontario, veteran analyst, John Cruickshank stated, “It should be just another conservative cakewalk. Pollsters say that at the Ontario provincial election kick-off two weeks ago Frank Miller’s Tories had enough popular support to win more seats than the party had had in 50 years. Even before the candidates took to the hustings, the strategists concluded that barring the emergence of an election issue so searing it cannot be doused by the scores of skilled Tory firemen, the Progressive Conservatives should extend their 42-year reign in Ontario and become the longest surviving regime in Canadian political history.”

While the final results of the election saw Miller holding on with a tiny minority, the Ontario Liberals had captured a greater share of the popular vote and by June 26, Miller lost the government on a non-confidence vote. Arguably, amongst all the Premiers whose transitions failed, the gap between expectations and results is greatest in the case of the Frank Miller transition. Common sense suggests that this gap warrants special attention and analysis.

Similarly, out of the 26 transitions analyzed, only two, those of Glen Clark and Ralph Klein are present in Quadrant Three. Both these Premiers overcame low expectations and triumphed in their respective elections. Given the uniqueness of these cases, strategies employed during the Clark and Klein are presumably of greater interest and relevance.

3.5 Preliminary Analysis of the impact of certain structural variables.

Party Affiliation

Before delving into greater detail as to the reasons for Frank Miller's massive failure versus Glen Clark and Ralph Klein's unexpected success, other preliminary conclusions may be reached by examining all 26 cases as a group. For example, one's first instinct is to suggest that party affiliation may assist in explaining transition success versus failure. At first glance it appears that Progressive Conservative Premiers such as Robarts, Davis and Getty have had more electoral success during their intra-party transitions than others. What Table 3-12 shows, however, is that while there may be more successful Conservative transitions than other parties, part of the reason is that there are simply more Conservative transitions overall. Generally, Table 3-12 shows that, with the exception of the Union Nationale, partisanship appears to make no difference to the success or failure of intra-party transitions.

Table 3-12: Intra-party Transition Success by Party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Success Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Nationale</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parti Quebecois</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legacy Premiers

Another element of intra-party transitions that must be considered is the fact that many of these transitions occur as a result of a leader retiring or leaving office for non-political reasons. Some would suggest that if a Premier retires and leaves his or her party well positioned in the polls, the chances for success for the new leader are greatly increased. However, knowing when a Premier is actually retiring for personal reasons or for reasons of political expediency is not always clear. Furthermore, the corollary may also be true. By not measuring up to a popular former Premier, a new leader may struggle to find success.

Several of the 26 intra-party transitions occurred clearly as a result of retirement for personal rather than political reasons. Lougheed in Alberta, Frost in Ontario and Buchanan in Nova Scotia are all examples of popular Premiers with long tenures whose parties enjoyed prolonged success after their retirements. However, there is a similar number of popular Premiers who have retired, left their parties in relatively good shape, and then watched as their successors went on to lose power. Examples include Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan, Duff Roblin in Manitoba, Bill Davis in Ontario, Rene Levesque in Quebec and Robert Stanfield in Nova Scotia. Overall, it must be concluded that the retirement by a popular premier for personal reasons has no quantifiable effect on the success of the incoming new leader.

Political Desperation

Two studies have examined the notion that changing leadership may provide a boost in popular support to struggling political parties. Stewart and Carty point to the case of the Social Credit in British Columbia in the spring of 1991. It was clear that the governing Social Credit Party’s only hope for political salvation was to replace Bill Vander Zalm as leader. “In that case the electorate was not fooled and the party went down to a massive defeat a few months later. Did the party really believe that changing the leader could save it? Probably, for the belief that changing leaders enhances electoral hopes seems deeply ingrained. The party’s previous leader (and premier), William Bennett, appeared to be expressing this view himself when announcing his retirement in 1986, and Social Credit won the following election.”

Stewart and Carty examined 136 changes of leadership in provincial parties over the years 1960-1992. In their study, Stewart and Carty did not look at changes in government parties exclusively. However, their findings for both government and opposition parties was the same – that changing a leader and leadership conventions do not “provide a guarantee of future electoral success nor are they a panacea for an unpopular governing party.”

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193 Stewart and Carty, pp. 313
194 ibid., pp. 329
Richard Nadeau and Mathew Mendelson did a similar study of 12 leadership changes in Great Britain over a 35-year period. These authors did not examine the impact of a change of leadership on a subsequent election or its affect on government after more than three months. Rather they focused on factors such as economic conditions, the opposition parties and whether or not the party in question suffers a ‘popularity deficit.’ What these authors concluded was that, “Changing the leader is not the magic solution to low standings. Other historical, economic, and political circumstances affect party popularity. Only under certain circumstances will a change in leadership have the desired effect. When the opposing party leader appears old and tired and when party support is low despite favourable economic circumstances, this is when a change in leadership could help remedy the problem of low standing in public opinion.”

Ultimately, it can be concluded that intra-party transitions in and of themselves are not sufficient to ensure or even boost the possibilities of electoral success.

Timing
In a similar vein, it could be argued that timing might have some impact on the success or failure of certain transitions. For example, it could be hypothesized that intra-party premiers that are either bound by time limits or political forces to call their elections immediately after their swearing in would have less opportunity to develop and maintain a strong election presence. Conversely, those leaders who wait, sometimes up to three years before they call the election, should be more successful because of their extended opportunity to put their own stamp on government.

Table 3-13 examines the groups of intra-party transitions with the shortest longest amount of time elapsed between the swearing in of a new leader and the subsequent election. Although obviously clearly anecdotal, with a couple of exceptions, Table 3-13 does seem to suggest that Premiers who went to the polls quite early (between 1-10 months) after being sworn in had good success (9 of 15), while those who went immediately or waited in excess of one year (7 of 9), struggled electorally.

The findings from Table 3-13 are in keeping with the only other study done to date on this subject, that of professor Louis Massicotte at the University of Montreal. In his study, Massicotte examined “...prime ministers who reached office by succeeding another prime minister from the same party rather than by winning an election in their own right.”

For the purposes of his study, Massicotte surveyed the polities of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As well he examined provincial leaders in ten Canadian provinces and five Australian states. One of the key elements of his study was his comparison of the time between winning the leadership of the party and calling an election. Massicotte’s principal findings are twofold. First, he concluded that

\[\text{Equation}\]

in the 53-year period he examined, internal succession to power is becoming an increasingly more common, but that the possibilities for sustained political success are limited. “The record for recent decades strongly suggests that for a ruling party, changing horse before reaching the other bank of the river is an old device which is less and less likely to work, though it sometimes does.” Massicotte’s second conclusion was that new leaders who wait less than a month or more than a year to go to the polls are decidedly less successful than those who wait between three months and a year. These findings are generally congruent with findings generated by the 26 provincial case studies examined here.

**Volatility**

The other element of timing that deserves examination is the suggestion that because of urbanization and modernization, traditional voting patterns in Canada have been skewed, thus creating a much more volatile electoral environment. The conclusion one would draw from this is that a party attempting to win consecutive elections would have less chance now than would have been the case in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Cursory analysis suggests that this premise does not apply to intra-party transitions, as some of the most successful intra-party transitions have occurred in the last 15 years (Tobin-1996, Vander Zalm-1986, Callbeck-1993)

An explanation that does bear consideration is in regard to the impact of patterns of provincial party competition and of provincial political cultures on intra-partry transitions. It stands to reason for example that in one-party dominant provinces such as Alberta or pre-1985 Ontario, there would be a preponderance of successful intra-party transitions. Upon examination of the 10 most successful intra-party transitions, this interpretation seems to have merit. Of these 10 transitions, nine have occurred in provinces with either strong one-party tendencies or two-party provinces like Newfoundland and PEI in which the leaders of the transition belong to the dominant party. Only Lee in PEI, Peckford in Newfoundland and Clark in B.C. seem to be partial outliers, but all belong to parties that, while not dominant, have experienced some recent electoral success in their respective provinces.

### 3.6 Conclusions

In the inexact world of politics, there is obviously no “best” method of measuring success or failure. To date studies of transitions have looked primarily at qualitative indicators of success such as smoothness, nimbleness, entrepenurialism and other interesting, yet

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197 ibid., pp. 107
198 While this premise has been put forward by many authors, please see Murray Beck, *Politics in Nova Scotia*, Volume Two, pp. 253
difficult to measure, factors. Intra-party transitions lend themselves to a different type of analysis in that, with a few exceptions, these transitions are followed very closely, typically within one year (see Table 3-13), by general elections. The new leader’s electoral results, particularly when compared with results from the previous election, do offer a tangible measurement of success.

In focusing primarily on election data, we obviously overlook several factors that may have a significant impact on transitions. For example, a new leader may have had a particularly difficult leadership convention. Similarly, the governing party may have done well in the previous election, it may have fared very poorly in the run-up to the transition. Moreover, election information does not reveal a Premier’s and a government’s reactions to key events and external issues which may significantly affect electoral success. These factors cannot be captured in an analysis of electoral data alone.

Despite these limitations, this chapter has attempted to construct a basic model for analyzing and comparing intra-party transitions. While incomplete, it has provided a continuum on which to judge, in this case, Canadian provincial intra-party transitions from 1960 forward. It has offered some preliminary causal arguments, the most valid of which seems to be the impact of party history and provincial political culture on electoral success or failure. Finally, it has also provided a contextual basis from which to begin a much more comprehensive analysis of three specific case studies – the successful intra-party transitions of Glen Clark and Ralph Klein and the unsuccessful transition of Frank Miller.

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Chapter Four

Frank Miller: The End of a Dynasty
MILLER TIMELINE

Mar. 1
Bill Davis becomes Premier

Oct. 8
Davis announces his retirement

Ref. 1
mid Oct
Miller re-announces leadership bid

Feb. 8
Miller is sworn-in as Premier

1983
Nov.
Miller retires from the non-leadership race

1984
Jan. 26
Miller wins leadership of PC's

May
Davis announces full funding for separate school system

May 2nd
Miller calls an election

1991
June 18th
PCs are defeated in a vote of non-confidence

June 26th
David Peterson is sworn into office as Premier

Figure 2
4.1 Introduction

The Treasurer of Ontario traditionally occupies the largest office on the 7th floor of the Frost Building. From there one is permitted a terrific vista of Queen’s Park, the former mental asylum and current home of the Ontario Legislature. Certainly a heady view for the young intern who had decided, spontaneously, that his first day on the job should include a visit to his local representative, the Honourable Frank Miller, Treasurer and Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Muskoka. Naively oblivious to the turmoil caused by his unannounced visit, the student was graciously ushered into the famous politician’s cavernous office for a talk that ranged from legislative affairs to the status of Gravenhurst’s Junior C hockey team. After 30 minutes of making his constituent’s acquaintance, the Treasurer was asked to take an emergency call from his cabinet colleague, Larry Grossman. That one phone call was to spark the most serious crisis to date in Frank Miller’s storied political career.

Grossman had picked up from his sources in the press gallery that *The Globe and Mail* newspaper had acquired significant parts of the Ontario budget, due to be released later that month. Subsequently, it was learned that the Globe reporter had sifted through the garbage of the print shop responsible for reproducing the budget document and had retrieved whole sections of the confidential document. British Parliamentary tradition demands that in such cases, the Treasurer immediately resign and, when circumstances dictate, the budget be withdrawn. The repercussions and fallout from this serious breach of security would be felt immediately across the entire government. It was well into his fourth or fifth crisis management call before the Treasurer remembered the forgotten student was still perched mouse-like in the corner of the office, taking in the commotion and the secret discussions in wide-eyed amazement.

Rather than brusquely dismissing the youth, the Treasurer maintained his courteous, affable persona, as he was to do throughout the duration of the crisis. In fact, it was undoubtedly the Treasurer’s easy manner and genuinely honourable nature that ultimately saw him through this tension filled period. Despite the weight of 400 years of precedent, the daily pummeling at the hands of the opposition, and the stress associated with an official investigation, Miller stayed on as the Chief Financial Officer for the largest province in Canada, largely due to the fact that the people of Ontario liked him and were impressed with his grace under fire. It was certainly an auspicious first day for the young intern, as it was an important benchmark in the remarkable career of the soon to be Premier.

It was with amazement therefore, that less than three years later, the then politically seasoned student/staffer watched as the man he considered genuine, honest, and affable was, as Premier, portrayed publicly as a mean-spirited, bumbling, unsophisticated extremist. This characterization would follow the new Premier through the 1985 general election and would eventually contribute to his ignominious loss of power and subsequent retirement from politics. This chapter will examine the circumstances

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200 Meeting occurred May 4, 1983
surrounding Frank Miller’s 1985 transition to Premier of Ontario, including the factors that contributed to his loss of the Premiership and to the first loss of government suffered by the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party in over 43 years.

4.2 Background: The Tory Dynasty – 1943-1985

No party in Canada has dominated the political landscape like the Ontario Conservatives. To understand the key decisions made during the Miller transition it is vital to understand some of the history of the party, particularly during Premier Bill Davis’ tenure from 1971 to 1984. The Ontario Conservatives’ dynasty began in August 1943, with the election of Colonel George Drew. The charismatic, yet mercurial Liberal, Mitch Hepburn, had governed the province very badly for the previous eight years, so badly in fact that many believe he was the reason for the Tories’ subsequent success, even to the present day. “Hepburn’s bequests to Ontario were mostly negative. He completely destroyed the provincial wing of the Liberal party... He rocked Confederation... but Hepburn’s most lasting endowment was that for three decades he continued to represent to Ontarians all that was unacceptable in a political man. His outrageous and crisis-ridden period in power is still remembered: the people of the province seem to believe that any repeat of that period should be avoided at all costs.”

In contrast, Premier George Drew took to running the province in a calm, formal manner, with a sense of military precision that emanated from his earlier training in the Canadian Army. He understood that in response to the tumultuous Hepburn era, his mandate was to govern without excessive conflict, to move steadily and to present some kind of economic vision for post-war Ontario. Drew brought two characteristics to the Conservative Party that helped prepare them for the next 40 years of government. First, with extraordinary foresight, he anticipated the tremendous economic growth and social change Ontario would undergo following World War II and he laid out a series of plans to ensure that the party was prepared to deal with these forces. Second, he presented himself in a style that was defined by a press gallery correspondent at the time as ‘untouchable.’ He seemed to transcend the common scandals all governments routinely face and he made up for unpopular decisions with energy and vision. Indeed, Drew’s personal style would act as a basic template for all successful Tory premiers over the next 40 years.

After Drew, Tom Kennedy, Leslie Frost, John Robarts, and William Davis all followed remarkably similar strategies to success as Conservative Premiers in Ontario. Superbly executed pragmatism mixed with good management skills and an understanding of the importance of small town values was part of their recipe for success. Some commentators, like author and journalist Rosemary Speirs, felt that one of the principal reasons their political organizations were so successful was not because of any personal attributes but more a result of favourable economics. “The Tories rode a golden tide of economic prosperity from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1970’s. These

were easy times for a government to win a reputation with the voters as good managers.”

Jonathan Manthorpe, on the other hand, felt that the Tories prolonged their dynasty largely because of the opposition’s constant inability to organize itself properly and field electable leaders. Furthermore, he suggests that the Tories consistently had excellent organizers and “backroom” support. From the “brilliant” A.D. Mackenzie, who worked for Drew and Frost, to Ernie Jackson with Robarts, to William Kelly, Norm Atkins and the rest of the Big Blue Machine\(^2\) created during Davis’ tenure, the Ontario Conservatives consistently had the most modern, best-funded, political machine in the province.

Manthorpe also suggests that, while the Tories have displayed symptoms of weaknesses similar to other political dynasties, such as elitism and a lack of imagination, they consistently avoided the arrogance that typically accompanies long stretches in office. “As each election comes round, the Tories whip themselves into a kind of Dervish dance of despair; the aim of the mad whirling is to convince themselves that they are going to be beaten. The result is the salutary one that they seldom take an election result for granted until the votes are counted. In the fall of 1976, for example, about 18 months before an election could be expected, senior party organizers were already putting the fear of the NDP into party workers and whipping them onto greater efforts. This gift for self-hypnosis may well be the single most important reason for the Tories’ success.”

Whatever the key element, the fact remains that the Ontario Conservatives had an uncanny ability to consistently re-invent themselves through their leader. Yet, while all the Tory leaders exhibited similar abilities to reconcile various interests and to be pragmatic rather than ideological, they were all very different people. Hugh Segal, political activist and observer, noted that after the war, Ontario needed a builder of infrastructure and Leslie Frost played that role. When Ontario’s prosperity needed to be managed, Robarts the management man took over. And when, “…the maturing of the baby boom, the OPEC impact on prosperity and the regionalization of both Canada and Ontario all combined to produce the need for a great conciliator, that’s what Bill Davis was.”

**Bland Master Davis**

As someone who was intimately involved with the Ontario Conservatives his entire adult life, Bill Davis fully understood and had been immersed in the Tory formula for success. As he was later described by biographer, Claire Hoy, “…Premier William G. Davis of Ontario, the province where more than one out of every three Canadians lives, has the

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203 The Big Blue Machine (BBM) was the commonly used moniker for the close knit group of professional staff and the advisors that Progressive Conservative Parties in Ontario and Ottawa used so successfully in the election campaigns of the 1970’s and early 1980’s.

204 *op. cit.*, Manthorpe, pp. 8

205 Hugh Segal, “Don’t look for PC’s to seek Davis Clone,” *Toronto Star*, October 17, 1984, pp. A22
image of a squarish, competent, avuncular, prudent, and pleasant leader who likes to extol the virtues of family morality and of the monarchy. In the view of those who follow politics closely here, the image does not hide anything. The silver-haired, carefully dressed, fifty-one-year-old premier is exactly what he seems, and what he seems is exactly what the voters of Ontario want.\(^\text{206}\)

Bill Davis was a god-fearing, small town lawyer. “Church remained the centre of his family’s lives, both theologically and socially, and church values and traditions were passed on to the three Davis children, profoundly influencing Bill Davis’s approach to political issues.”\(^\text{207}\) The small town element of his persona was an important part of his political success and he continued to refer to the small town of Brampton, even after it had become part of the sprawling metropolis known as Metropolitan Toronto.

Davis epitomized the non-political conservative character. His church going, his moderation in all things, including alcohol and tobacco, and his measured response to difficult questions and crises, all set the tone for the Premier’s office and indeed, the government of Ontario. “Davis was, after all, not only the product of his own close-knit Brampton family but a child of the Tory dynasty as well, the inheritor of its traditions. From George Drew he learned the value and political popularity of social programs of the progressive school; from Tom Kennedy he acquired his Peel power base and the skills of grass-roots politics at the riding level; from Leslie Frost he grasped the mechanics of shaping an industrial giant and running a successful political machine: and from John Robarts he gained an appreciation of Ontario’s brokerage role in Confederation.”\(^\text{208}\)

**Minister Davis – The Art of Ribbon Cutting**

Davis entered politics as a rookie MPP from Brampton and soon caught the eye of then Premier John Robarts. At an early age Davis was made Minister of Education in the Robarts cabinet. From October 1962, until Davis became Premier in 1971, education spending rose 454 per cent.\(^\text{209}\) As education minister, Davis was able to take full political advantage of this massive spending increase. By the late 1960’s he controlled almost seventy cents of every provincial tax dollar spent. As Minister of Education, Davis averaged 100,000 miles a year in the province by plane, train, or phone-equipped car, rarely getting home more than one evening a week.

Everywhere he went he was opening new schools or doling out major grant increases to school boards. “In a 1965 blitz, 480 elementary schools and sixty-nine high schools were built. Not only did Davis sign the cheques, he also showed up to cut the ribbon for all but a few of them.”\(^\text{210}\) He also opened 22 community colleges of applied arts and technology, launched Ontario’s first educational television network now called TV Ontario and started the highly successful Ontario Science Center. As a result of these popular initiatives, Davis was well liked not only on a grassroots level, but as Hoy points


\(^{207}\) ibid, pp. 13

\(^{208}\) ibid, pp. 36

\(^{209}\) ibid, pp. 54

\(^{210}\) ibid, pp. 56
out, “the free-spending minister remained popular with his colleagues, the opposition, and, more importantly, the taxpayers.”

All this ministerial activity did not dull Davis’ political instincts, to the contrary, it sharpened them. As he traveled the province, Davis slowly built a cadre of trusted friends, all of whom would eventually be part of his team as Premier. Key people like Tom Campbell, Helen Anderson and Clare Westcott befriended Davis early and stayed with him throughout his entire political career. Loyalty and teamwork were hallmarks of the Davis style.

Properly organized succession is an essential element of Tory success in Ontario, the best example of this being the succession of Bill Davis from John Robarts. By 1970, Robarts had let the party slide. As popular as Robarts had been throughout his long tenure as Premier, when he retired there were serious organizational and financial weaknesses within the party. The NDP had a tremendously dynamic new leader in Stephen Lewis, who, some have argued, was the best orator in the history of the Ontario Legislature. Moreover, the NDP were organized. On several key issues, such as unemployment, housing and the environment, they held voter friendly positions. The Ontario Conservatives were not in the best of shape for a leadership race or a general election and thus their dynasty depended on a successful handing over of the levers of power.

The 1971 Ontario Progressive Conservative Leadership Race - “from the jaws of victory...”

While Davis was well received during his tenure as Minister of Education, he really had no momentum going into the leadership race. He was popular in Cabinet, Robarts obviously thought highly of him and he worked very hard as education minister to visit the ridings of his fellow caucus members. He felt he deserved to be named leader, but he was not particularly well known by the public, nor was he particularly charismatic. Well known or not, when John Robarts finally did retire early in 1971, Davis was seen as the frontrunner in the leadership campaign. As such, and given the PC’s long legacy of success, Davis felt obliged to carry the party standard in manner that did little to disrupt the status quo. Nor was his campaign team particularly dynamic... “...the organization that gathered around Davis for the provincial leadership contest in 1971 was the remnants of Bob Macaulay’s supporters in 1961 – and they had not learned much in the interim.”

Davis’ leadership opponents, particularly Allen Lawrence, were freer to run more dynamic campaigns with more discussions of policy and new directions for the PC party and the province. Lawrence also benefited from the fact that his campaign was being run by some of the best campaigners in the business, people like Norm Atkins. This group used very modern techniques for delegate tracking and campaigning. When Lawrence delegates arrived at the Royal York Hotel in anticipation of the leadership weekend, they were fully briefed, motivated and accounted for by Lawrence’s team. In the end his modern campaign almost overcame Davis’ lacklustre effort, with Davis winning by a mere 44 votes on the final ballot. To Robarts credit, he stayed largely in the background

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211 Hoy, pp. 55
212 op. cit., Manthorpe, pp. 95
during the leadership race. On the night of the final balloting he said of all the candidates, “I am proud of them. They are my boys. They present a picture of strength and vitality to the people of this province and what the Progressive Conservative party is and what it can offer to the people.” It was the last successful intra-party transition the PC party would experience in the 20th century.

Davis, who had given his heart and soul to the Conservative Party for most of his adult life, was stunned by the outcome. He had worked extremely hard to get to this point and not only had he almost lost, he was now left with a highly divided party and generally bleak prospects for the upcoming election. “…what was meant to be Davis’s natural triumph had gone wrong and had almost become a total disaster. He was not leader of a new wave of progressive conservatism, but of an aging faction of the party that was self-satisfied, flabby, and out of touch with contemporary political realities and techniques. The faction had achieved power and authority in the 1960’s and had used that power to make Davis leader.”

The Davis Intra-party Transition

Davis’ first, and arguably most important, realization was that a truce was immediately needed with the Lawrence supporters. While many new leaders talk about such efforts to heal leadership campaign wounds, Davis made some excellent decisions to bring about such a truce. Wisely, he chose popular cabinet minister, Roy McMurtry, to orchestrate a meeting between the two sides. McMurtry was a perfect choice. Not only was he was widely respected, but he had been unable to take sides during the convention owing to a back injury.

McMurtry organized a dinner at the conservative National Club in Toronto. Without making major concessions, Davis won over Lawrence’s key supporters, largely on the strength of his personality. Atkins, for example, had never really met Davis, but was intrigued by some of the similarities in their political positions and character traits. By bringing together the two disparate sides, Davis had inadvertently created one of the most powerful political apparatus in Canadian history, the ‘Big Blue Machine’ or BBM.

Norman Atkins was eventually made campaign chair in anticipation of the upcoming general election. Atkins was to leave nothing to chance. American pollster, Robert Teetor told the group that Davis was seen as ministerial gray. “He found that 80 per cent of Ontarians knew Davis but didn’t know much about him.” Atkins immediately activated a heavy speaking schedule for Davis around the province. Davis also did free time political broadcasts and “meet the people” videos that Atkins had distributed to all TV stations. Davis worked hard on his image to the point where he was criticized for creating a ‘leadership cult.’ However, it was this work combined with two specific policy issues that, as much as anything else, prepared Davis for a successful election campaign. The two issues were, his refusal to extend aid to separate schools and his commitment to stopping any extensions of Toronto’s Spadina Expressway.

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213 ibid., Manthorpe, pp. 113
214 ibid., Manthorpe, pp. 126
215 Hoy, pp. 86
Since the early 1960’s, Metropolitan Toronto had been attempting to extend an expressway from the city’s limits in the Northwest to the downtown core. When the expressway got within sight of the downtown, the urban “10 speed” environmentalists rallied to fight it. Despite the fact that the city and the Ontario Municipal Board voted to build it, Davis went his own way and banned the extension. In an attempt to “change his image to that of a modern sophisticate, a man leading the parade of concerned citizens on the environment and saving the cities for the folks, Davis first banned logging in Quetico Park. That issue didn’t catch on, but Spadina did.”

“The strategists knew what the political impact of Spadina would be…they needed a move to transform Davis into a decisive, modern, ecology-minded leader. Not many issues had the potential to do this, but Spadina had it and they knew it.” So on June 3, 1971, Davis gave his now famous “people versus cars” speech. Davis’ popularity skyrocketed as a result of this move. Regardless of what side they were on, Torontonians saw Davis as progressive and the rest of Ontario respected him for telling Toronto they couldn’t have the expressway.

During this renaissance period he also launched a $25 million lawsuit against Dow Chemical for mercury pollution. The suit was settled years later, but the initial effect of the announcement was in Davis’ favour. On July 18, 1971, Davis introduced legislation giving eighteen-year-olds the right to vote, hold elected office, serve on juries, sign contracts and drink legally. This move was fortuitous as many baby boomers were coming of age during this period. In fact the move added 412,000 new, and often appreciative voters to the list for the next election. Altogether, in his first session as premier, Davis’ government introduced 137 bills. When added to his public stance against separate school funding, Davis entered the October 21, 1971 general election looking like a decisive, poised activist. He had eclipsed his former party and was now significantly more popular. As one senior Liberal MLA said of this period, “When he won the leadership Davis did not look like he was ready to govern. By the time the election was called, he looked urbane, progressive and independent of any special interests including the senior conservative elite.”

Activist Premier Bill Davis – the 1971 Ontario general election
Atkins estimated that the campaign would cost the Tories about $4.5 million, two and half times what Robarts had spent in 1967. One of Davis’ key organizers, Bill Kelly, went out and raised over $5 million, an extremely large sum even by today’s standards. Atkins, Macaulay and the Big Blue Machine orchestrated one of the most expensive, pervasive campaigns in Ontario history. Everything was focused on the Davis leadership cult with little reference to the party in flyers, brochures, ads, signs or speeches. Through a massive advertising campaign and the unprecedented use of highly accurate, scientific

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215 Hoy, pp. 88
217 ibid., pp. 89
218 ibid
219 ibid., pp. 92
220 ibid
221 Senior Liberal MLA and Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 10, 1998
polling, the Big Blue Machine developed, marketed and honed its product. More than anything else they had devised a method for Davis appear to be in favour of traditional Tory values, while at the same time making his look very much his own man, someone who could be clearly distinguished from his predecessor.

Davis went on to win a massive majority. He did it by effectively erasing any animosity there may have been from the leadership race, by putting together a first rate campaign team and by waiting until he had properly established himself as Premier before calling the election. He was assisted by the fact that his predecessor, Robarts, stayed largely in the background and that his main opponent in the leadership, Allen Lawrence, all but disappeared after the McMurtry dinner. However, possibly the most important reason for Davis’ massive general election victory was the fact that he ran hard from the moment he won the leadership. As a result of his narrow leadership win, Davis was deathly afraid of being the Tory Premier who finally let power slip from his grasp. He got a serious wake-up call at the leadership race and he ran hard from that day forward. Once sworn as Premier, he did not waste precious time or political capital worrying about governance. Rather, every act announced from that day forward was designed to enhance the PC party’s election readiness.

The Davis Legacy – 1971 to 1984
Given the sorry state of the party and Davis’ electoral chances prior to the election, the size of the win took everyone by surprise. The victory, particularly when compared with those of his predecessors, went, understandably, to Davis’ head. After the election win, he was not a particularly good premier. “At the beginning, Bill Davis exhibited a kind of truculent arrogance, acting as if he had inherited by right, the leadership Ontario.”222 “He was now the undisputed master, and he quickly set about demonstrating an uncompromising and sometimes ruthless determination to have his house decorated to his liking.”223 Said one member of Davis’ cabinet, “Bill Davis’ first three years as Premier were catastrophic. It takes a long time to become a good Premier.”224

As a result of this arrogance and through his carelessness on issues such as the foisting of regional government on municipalities and his unwavering support for a controversial plan to build an international airport in Pickering, Davis and his party almost lost the election of 1975. Thinking this was an aberration, Davis contrived to have his own government defeated in the legislature in 1977. Ontario voters were not taken in by this bald faced ruse to gain power and again, Davis was returned to government with a minority.

From 1977 to 1981, having almost destroyed the Tory legacy twice, Davis finally began to learn the nuances of minority government, how to mediate between the disparate forces in Ontario’s political and social arenas and, eventually, emerged the better for it. It was through this period that Davis learned that ‘bland works’ and that when faced with badly fractured public interests, procrastination becomes an important political

223 op. cit., Manthorpe, pp. 212
224 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
instrument. Using these new skills to perfection, Davis finally restored the Tory legacy and returned a majority on March 19, 1981.

It was at this moment that many feel the groundwork was laid for Miller's ultimate loss of power in 1985. Having regained the much-coveted majority, Davis began to return to his arrogant and domineering ways. As Davis became more comfortable in his role as Premier, and the influence of the Big Blue Machine became more predominant, he became more insulated and dictatorial. Not only did he tend towards unilateral decision-making, if he had a difficult decision it took him a long time to make up his mind. Davis was notorious for delaying and obfuscating when an important decision had to be made. On several issues during this period it seemed that he was actually waiting for the climate around a tough decision to change so he could avoid making the decision at all. An example of this indecision was in regard to his run for leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Davis was pushed to run by several close supporters and by a large number of favourable articles in the Ontario media. By the time Davis finally decided not to run for the federal office, his party and the government were adrift from neglect. This particular delay had negative ramifications throughout government. Said one senior civil servant, "...after the federal leadership decision, Davis' heart wasn't in it. He basically stopped governing. For all intents and purposes, Principal Secretary Ed Stewart was the Premier of Ontario for most of 1984." \(^{225}\)

**Catholic School Funding – The Ontario Tories’ Achilles Heel**

One of the other traits of the Conservative Party in Ontario at this time was its lack of success with multicultural voters. Ontario was quickly becoming a mosaic of different peoples and communities and Davis and his Tories had difficulty coming to grips with this changing reality, particularly in ridings that were traditionally Tory – such as those around the outskirts of Toronto. Eddie Goodman describes the Tory success among Italian voters for example as “terrible...basically we don’t do that well with any Catholic group.”\(^{226}\) Some would argue this phenomenon was caused by the Tories being seen as a British party, while others would argue that new immigrants traditionally vote Liberal because the bulk of immigration occurred during Prime Minister Trudeau’s tenure. Regardless, despite a variety of efforts and targeted programs, the Conservatives continued to do poorly with these groups.

This may have been in part why Bill Davis eventually reversed his stance on the Catholic School funding issue. In 1971, Davis had promised that there would be no increase of public funds for senior grades in Catholic high schools. Obviously this move did not ingratiate the PC’s with Roman Catholic voters. However, throughout his tenure, Davis had an increasingly close relationship with the elite members of the Catholic Church hierarchy. He seemed to waver on his original decision several times and finally he reversed his decision and announced there would be full funding for all Catholic schools in Ontario. Some feel this decision was in part motivated by the fact that large numbers of Catholic families were moving into Toronto suburbs and threatening traditional Tory strongholds.

\(^{225}\) Senior Cabinet Office Official, December 11, 1998

\(^{226}\) op. cit., Hoy, pp. 254
Davis made the move in May 1984. The Davis inner circle was meeting at the time to discuss the merits of calling a snap election. Their motivation was to first, pre-empt the bounce federal Liberals would get when they nominated a replacement for Pierre Trudeau and second, to get Davis to run once more before he retired. It was at this session that Davis dropped his bombshell. Completely on his own he had negotiated to extend full funding to grades 11, 12, 13 in the Catholic school system. “Everybody was completely stunned, he had done it completely on his own hook.” Davis apparently tried this and Cardinal Carter stated unequivocally, “if you want to run an election without keeping your word, count on having opposition from every Catholic pulpit in Ontario.”

**Davis’ last announcement – an election or …**

This was the last serious policy decision Davis made as premier. On October 8, 1984, Premier Davis called his last official press conference. Everyone in the legislature expected him to call an election. The PC’s had governed for almost four years, the fuss around the Catholic School funding issue seemed to have died down, the polls were good and the opposition was almost non-existent with two inexperienced leaders in David Peterson for the Liberals and Bob Rae for the NDP. It was only when reporters spotted Davis’s wife and son walking with him to the press conference that people realized Davis was going to announce his retirement. He would not bring family to announce an election date.

Rosemary Speirs, in her excellent analysis of that period, points out that while the tributes flowed for Davis that day, it was only months later that “…Conservatives said publicly that Davis’ resignation had set them up for defeat. Bitter party members blamed him for waiting so long; for saddling his successor with a divided, indebted, yet complacent party; and worst of all, for leaving behind the volatile emotions unleashed by his recent decision to extend full funding to Roman Catholic separate schools.” Frank Miller recalled that Davis had said privately on several occasions that he had learned from his 1971 transition experience and that he never would have left the new Premier to win a leadership in winter, nor leave them insufficient time to govern. One of Miller’s deepest regrets was that Bill Davis didn’t live up to those promises.

The advice Davis’ received on the difficult issue of retirement was evenly split. Some of his innermost circle, people like Hugh MacCauley, Eddie Goodman and fundraiser, Bill Kelly said that if he wanted to retire he should. Davis, they argued, had earned the right to do what he wanted and furthermore, he had left the party in great shape, with, by the fall of 1984, the highest public-approval rating of any provincial government in Canada.

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227 Hoy, pp. 264-265
228 ibid., pp. 265
229 op. cit., Speirs, pp. 2
230 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
Others, such as his former principal secretary, Hugh Segal, and possible leadership candidates, Tory cabinet ministers Dennis Timbrell and Larry Grossman, pleaded with Davis to stay. Segal felt that given Ontario's rapidly changing social fabric, the fragile state of the economy and the potential problems that could arise from the Catholic school funding issue, the Tories could be courting disaster if Davis left. "Segal said history would judge Davis a success only if his successor won the next election, and, as Segal saw it, all of the likely successors were potential losers."\(^{231}\) What Segal was too polite to mention was that Davis was probably the only one who could right those wrongs he himself had committed. "Bill Davis rolled 3 grenades into the Miller bunker. Catholic School Funding, Suncor and a general drift in the party, a drift that had come about because Davis had spent a lot of his time before the resignation pondering the possibility of entering the race for the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party."\(^{232}\)

Leadership hopefuls, Grossman and Timbrell wanted Davis to stay for more selfish reasons. They needed more time to get their own leadership bids in order and felt that if Davis stayed on for one more election and then retired they would be ready to replace him. None of these reasons touch on the principal fact that the party could simply not afford to let Davis retire. As a former executive director of the party stated, "...It is important to remember that the conservatives were already split on ideological lines before the January leadership. Davis was the glue that held the whole business together and with his departure, the entity was bound to split apart."\(^{233}\)

There is little or no question that Davis would have won the subsequent election if he had stayed on. His party was at over 53 per cent in the polls, 31 per cent higher than the Liberals. Indeed, even the eventual premier, Liberal leader David Peterson, admitted after the fact that he would not have beaten Davis. Although the absolute truth may never be revealed, it appears that Davis left for a combination of reasons. He felt he was leaving his party in good shape. As well, having decided at the last moment not to pursue the leadership of the federal PC party, his heart was no longer in politics. Finally, he knew if he stayed through the next election, the first question from the media would be whether or not he was going to stay the full term. He knew that in good conscience he would not be able to answer that question in the affirmative.\(^{234}\)

**Frank Miller – Background of a reluctant leader**

No one was more unprepared for Davis' announcement than the Treasurer of the Province of Ontario, Frank Miller. Throughout 1984, Davis and Miller had several discussions about the future and Miller insiders contend that none of these conversations led him to believe Davis was quitting. Davis, on the other hand, suggests that he dropped several hints to Miller and, as such, Miller was the most informed of all senior Ontario Conservatives about the resignation announcement.\(^{235}\) When Miller first heard that Davis

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\(^{231}\) ibid., Speirs, pp. 3

\(^{232}\) Former Liberal MPP and political commentator, Interview, December 10, 1998

\(^{233}\) Former executive director of the Ontario PC party and Miller campaign strategist, Interview, December 10, 1998

\(^{234}\) op. cit., Hoy, pp 385

\(^{235}\) The mixed signals Miller received from Davis helped undermine the entire Miller Premiership. The strangest of these exchanges was in 1984 when Miller told Davis and his Muskoka riding president that he
was making an announcement, his immediate reaction to friends was, “Great, he’s going
to announce the election. I’ve got 38 days left and then I’ll retire.”

Even if these were his first thoughts, the surprise resignation still left Miller in a serious
quandary. As a successful cabinet minister, Miller had been thinking about taking a run
at the leadership for a long time. In 1983, he had mounted a serious effort to determine
whether or not he had sufficient support for a successful leadership bid. He had opened a
separate office, spent one day a week on leadership issues and had employed a number of
eager young organizers. The organizers, led by the 22-year old Michael Perik, used
sophisticated technology and campaign methods to size up Miller’s support. They did
solid work and were rewarded with the knowledge that Miller had pockets of support all
over Ontario, with particular strength in Northern Ontario. However, in the fall of
1983, Miller suddenly called off the effort.

One of his reasons for this surprise decision was that he had been privately chastised by
the party for running too blatant a campaign while Davis was still premier. All of the
leadership hopefuls had been testing the waters for some time and Davis was not
impressed. Dennis Timbrell, for example, asked Davis for a cabinet demotion from
Education to Agriculture specifically so he could work Ontario’s rural residents for
leadership purposes. Miller also raised Davis’ ire by hiring away one of the PC party’s
field staff in Eastern Ontario. While he wanted the leadership, Miller also had great
respect for Davis and would not have wanted to do anything to displease him, particularly
at the party level.

Moreover, Miller was unsure he could raise the money needed to compete. He knew,
even as early as 1983, that Dennis Timbrell, Roy McMurtry and probably Larry
Grossman and Darcy McKeough would all have sufficient funds to fight for the
leadership. On principle, Miller would not borrow money to fight the leadership and he
certainly did not want to be out of pocket. Miller was also concerned about the political
capital he was using up in his fundraising efforts. He was very aware that there were no
tax receipts for people who donated to the leadership. As he stated to close colleagues at
the time, “We were going through the motions, but we got to a point where, if we were
going to do anything more it was going to cost an additional $200,000.”

Miller’s final reason for quitting was his frustration with Davis’s inability to make a
decision about retirement and his own reluctance to conduct a phantom campaign until
the decision was reached. When he dropped out of the race, Miller asked reporters
rhetorically, “Quitting, I’m not quitting, how can I quit a campaign that doesn’t exist?”

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236 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
237 Miller workers referred to this as the ‘Donald Duck’ campaign. The code was needed to avoid upsetting
Premier Davis who was against any formal campaigning by his cabinet ministers.
238 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
239 Frank Miller, in the Toronto Star, 1984
This episode explains a couple of Miller’s key characteristics. The first was that he
didn’t really know where he stood with his predecessor, Davis. There was a strong
mutual admiration between the men, particularly at the personal level. Miller admired
Davis’s success and understood that pragmatism and compromise were the foundations
of that success. Davis liked Miller’s, affable, down-to-earth persona and populist political
skills. But there were also significant problems with the relationship. The first was
philosophical.

Miller considered himself a moderate right-wing conservative. His father died when he
was young and he was raised, if not in poverty, then in a lower income, single parent
environment. Miller often worked two or three jobs to get himself through engineering
school at McGill University in Montreal. That experience, coupled with Miller’s later
entrepreneurial efforts, instilled a sense of self-reliance and a notion that the
marketplace must remain unfettered so that people like himself could succeed.

This natural conservatism was reflected in Miller’s time as Treasurer. In this position,
Miller looked to a previous Conservative Treasurer, Darcy McKeough, for guidance.
McKeough was a strong minister who didn’t believe in subtleties or half measures. As
Treasurer, he implemented a plan to cut two per cent in the civil service and ensuring that
overall growth did not exceed inflation. This was considered a major restraint program at
the time. McKeough had started talking about a restraint program before the 1975
election. As Minister of Health, Miller took McKeough at his word and was ready to
implement downsizing in the Ministry. Miller oversaw nine volumes of budget review
documentation, including plans to close down several hospitals. Miller was only acting
on his Treasurer’s direction yet he took the brunt of abuse from interest groups that
characterized him as the mean spirited minister who wanted to kill health care.

This business-like conservatism was often at odds with Davis’s pragmatic, brokerage
style of politics. Miller kept his feelings largely reigned in, but there were moments of
real stress. Foremost amongst these was in 1981 when Davis unilaterally decided that the
provincial government should buy a controlling interest in an oil company, Suncor.
Miller was furious with the decision on the grounds that government had no place in the
oil business and he almost quit over the decision. Miller consistently found himself at
odds with Davis and the PC cabinet on issues like these.

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240 Miller earned his chemical engineering degree at McGill University, married Ann Norma and became
bilingual while working for Alcan Ltd. in Quebec. Later he taught high school in Aurora, sold paint in
Brantford, sold cars in Bracebridge, and ended up owning and operating family tourist resorts and the
Santa’s Village attraction there. In Hoy, pp. 393

241 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998. This episode was also the beginning of
Miller’s well-known hatred of leadership rival, Larry Grossman. Larry Grossman, then a backbench MPP,
publicly took on Miller over the closing of the Women’s General Hospital in Grossman’s riding.
Grossman’s public condemnation of Miller worked, the Ministry of Health backed off the closings, but
Miller never forgave Grossman for his disrespect of caucus solidarity.
Miller was also uncomfortable with the club-like, elitist nature of Ontario provincial politics. He felt at odds with MPP’s like Bob Nixon, Stephen Lewis and Larry Grossman, whose fathers had been famous politicians. He felt strongly that he had arrived at the pinnacle of political power on the strength of his own hard work and that the office was not a birthright. Similarly, he was particularly uncomfortable with the notion that unelected officials could hold positions of influence near the Premier that they had not rightly earned. He shared this sentiment with many grassroots Conservatives who felt disenfranchised by the disproportionate amount of power wielded by the Big Blue Machine members like Norm Atkins, Hugh Segal, Tom Campbell, John Tory and others. How aware Davis was of the depth of Miller’s feelings is unclear. What is known is that Davis continually wavered on his support of Miller as leader and therefore did not properly lay the groundwork for his succession, certainly not in the manner and tradition that Robarts had laid it out for Davis himself. Davis presumably felt that Miller’s affable nature and long standing in government would be sufficient to ensure that Miller would accept the advice and traditions of the Big Blue Machine and, as a result, develop into a successful premier.

The other important characteristic brought to the forefront by this situation was Miller’s lack of vision regarding the premiership itself. Again, largely based on his background, Miller had a clear understanding of wanting to be premier. For him, the notion that a paperboy from the back streets of small town Ontario could work hard and eventually become premier was an extremely compelling image. Unfortunately, that is where the image and the vision stopped. What Miller wanted to accomplish once he achieved the leadership was unclear to himself, to his team, and, as became increasingly evident during the campaign, to the public.

Hand in hand with the question of whether Miller really wanted to be Premier was the related question of whether he was simply too nice a person for the job. Certainly, in an anecdote told by one of his Liberal opponents, one senses that Miller may not have had the killer instinct necessary to extend the Ontario Tory dynasty. The incident occurred during the 1981 election. Miller was in Rainy River, in Northwestern Ontario, speaking on behalf of the local Tory candidate. The Liberal MPP Pat Reid held the riding at the time. The local Conservative candidate had campaigned on the importance of electing a government MPP so that more government largesse would flow into the Rainy River area. At the rally the candidate encouraged Miller to discuss the weaknesses of the sitting MPP. Miller refused. Instead he stated bluntly, “Pat Reid is a great guy who gets a lot done for the Rainy River area. I’ve watched him in the house and I know.” As embarrassing as this may have been for the local PC candidate, it exemplifies Frank’s qualities as an honest and genuine person. Others might suggest it also speaks to his lack of partisan fire and his overall inability to go for the political jugular when needed.

242 “His first function as Premier was to address the Bracebridge Rotary. It was only a couple of days after the leadership win. His first lines were, “Even if I’m defeated tomorrow at least today we can say that a paperboy from Dovercourt and St Clair was Premier of Ontario.” I’m convinced that Frank never truly believed he should be Premier”. Interview with a long-time political supporter of Frank Miller’s, December 10, 1998

243 As told by a Former Liberal MPP, Interview, December 08, 1998
Moreover, at 57 years of age, Miller was even older than the retiring Davis, he had suffered a major heart attack, he was frustrated by structural problems within the PC party, and in many respects, all the objectives he had set for himself when he first entered politics, he had now achieved. For more than a year, he had let his team and his fund raising machine disintegrate while others organized. Of the candidates who had anticipated Davis’ eventual departure, Timbrell had the most money raised with almost a quarter of a million dollars in his war chest, while Miller had only $24,861.\(^{244}\)

Therefore, less than a year after having disbanded his campaign team, Miller had a number of compelling reasons to stay out of the race. The bulk of his campaign team had moved over to Dennis Timbrell, but after some discussion it was clear they would be more than happy to return to Miller’s side if he re-entered the race. Small business operators, particularly auto dealers, doctors, and insurance brokers showed enthusiasm for his leadership run and for supporting him financially.\(^{245}\) After a few phone calls, Miller knew he had significant cabinet and caucus support, particularly from the older members who felt left out by the candidacies of younger men like Timbrell and Grossman. Gordon Walker and Claude Bennett were both early leadership hopefuls. They had both put together substantial war chest and had done polling. Unfortunately for them, their polling suggested that Frank Miller was still the most popular choice for Premier. They then helped convince Miller to run and signed their donations over to his camp.

Miller’s wife Ann, who played an important role in all his political decisions, told him that he would always regret not running. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Miller was told by a number of people that he had to run or Larry Grossman would win. This argument may have appealed to Miller more than any other because of his personal animosity towards Grossman. Many felt that this deeply held dislike was based on Grossman’s Jewish heritage. There is no evidence to support this claim. Indeed, Miller’s team included several prominent Jewish members, including David Melnik.

Furthermore, friends of Miller’s from Jewish communities in Montreal donated a significant amount towards his leadership campaign.\(^{246}\) Miller’s dislike was instead based on the lack of support he received from Grossman during the hospital closure crisis and his general disdain for Grossman’s undisguised political ambition. While, in retrospect, vengeance may not have been the most enlightened reason to run for the leadership of the most successful political entity in Canadian party, its importance to Miller’s ultimate decision cannot be denied.

\(^{244}\) Hoy, pp. 392
\(^{245}\) The Miller campaign originally budgeted $500,000 for the leadership race. Miller had to borrow $10,000 from his riding association to get started. They eventually spent more than $1.2 million but did not go into debt. The money was raised amongst small business people with special contributions coming from the auto dealers, pharmacists and chiropractors around Ontario. Miller himself thought the best donation was the use of a plane. During the campaign he would typically have 5 meetings a day often in different towns. From Interview with a Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December, 12, 1998
\(^{246}\) “Miller raised over $50,000 for his leadership bids from friends in his old hometown neighbourhoods of Montreal.” Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
4.3 The 1985 Ontario Progressive Conservative Party Leadership Campaign

Once Miller decided to formally get back into the race, he did so with gusto. Less than two weeks after Davis's resignation, Frank Miller publicly announced that he would be running for the position of leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party and Premier of Ontario. At his announcement, Miller was able to produce over a dozen supportive cabinet ministers. He spoke of the role of small business as the engine of Ontario's economy and for the need for balance. He told the media that his handlers would not let him say he was a "right-winger" so he referred to himself as a 'small-c' conservative. "Miller's opening statement concentrated on his argument that a fiscal conservative 'can also care about people' and on his experience as a chemical engineer, car dealer, teacher, and tourist resort owner. Miller was thirteen in 1941 when his father died and his mother, virtually penniless, moved her family of five from Toronto back home to Gravenhurst. At his press conference Miller, now a millionaire, told of working his way through school, sometimes holding down three jobs at once."247 With great fanfare a special song, 'Miller’s Ontario' was unveiled and the campaign was launched.

Whatever is said about Miller's subsequent performance as Premier, the fact remains that, in and of itself, his leadership campaign was the picture of execution. Early on there were two major factors that contributed to his victory. The first was his team. During his first set of preparations for Miller's leadership, Michael Perik had put together a highly sophisticated campaign organization model based, in large part, on successful Democratic campaigns in the United States. On rejoining Miller, Perik brought with him the detailed analysis of the likely PC leadership convention delegates. Perik and his 'Miller Team' colleagues, David Melynk, Carl Stockman, Lou Parsons and Tom Campbell, sent out massive mail-outs and organized ferociously at the grassroots level to get Miller slates elected in all PC ridings and associations. Perik was still considered very young to be running such a high profile leadership campaign. To his credit, Perik understood this and told Miller so. Showing a loyalty that ultimately would hurt him, Miller kept Perik as campaign manager over several other qualified candidates including BBM heavyweight, Norm Atkins. One person that was exceptionally helpful during this period was Miller's close friend Hugh MacKenzie. MacKenzie lived in Miller's home riding of Muskoka, and had worked on all of Miller's campaigns including his original riding nomination in 1971, which he won by nine votes.

Dennis Timbrell had been working for two years on the leadership but was not prepared for Miller's grassroots organizational ability. Timbrell was particularly bitter about Miller's re-entry into the leadership race. He felt that Miller team was simply too polished coming out of the gates and therefore must have been organizing secretly over the previous year. He never forgave Miller for this perceived slight. Larry Grossman was organized but only in certain urban areas, while Roy McMurtry was neither organized nor financial able to mount much of a campaign at the riding level. By the time all of the 1711 convention delegates were selected, rough estimates suggested that Miller had at least a 150-vote lead.

247 ibid., Hoy, pp. 393
Agenda Orange

The other factor that helped Miller during this period was the decision by party officials that memberships would be cut off from the date of the announcement of Davis’s retirement. This was done to ensure that massive numbers of instant Tories were not bused in to skew the delegate selection. The effect of the decision was to prohibit any new blood into the party, therein conferring a significant advantage to the Miller camp. Leaked documents showed that of the 1,711 delegates, “73.5 per cent were Protestant, 63.9 per cent were of European, and mainly British, extraction, 60 per cent made more than $40,000 a year, and 53.8 per cent were over the age of forty.”248 As the oldest candidate and the only candidate from outside Toronto, these numbers were a huge boost for Miller. The selected delegates represented what is often referred to as ‘Old Orange Ontario’ after the politics of the Orange Lodge. This group had simple, small town values to which Miller could relate.

Focusing on this particular group later in the general election would be a significant mistake however, since it was not representative of the province as a whole. The majority of people in Ontario at the time were between 25-40 years of age and were more likely than not residents in an urban area. As well, Ontario had just gone through a period of intense immigration by new Canadians, none of whom was represented by this Old Orange mentality. The other problem with focussing too closely on this group was that they made it too easy for Miller to embrace the status quo. This group had fond memories of successful past Tory premiers and many wanted, more than anything else, this trend to continue. Change was not part of their makeup and as result, change was not something Miller stressed. In his opening announcement he said, “Miller’s Ontario will not be a radically different place. It will be a place where we accept an old truism that an economy has to be able to pay the bill for the services government provides... but it is not a place where we suddenly cut off services, or forget to help those who really need it.”249 While Larry Grossman’s campaign team was playing Bruce Springsteen at their rallies, Miller’s group was playing, ‘I want a girl just like the girl that married dear old Dad.’250

While Miller got off to a very fast start and, as a result of superior organization, was able to tie up voting delegates early, his campaign still had some major problems. The first was the Big Blue Machine. Unaccustomed to not having complete control, the key actors of this group responded by working hard for other candidates, specifically, Grossman and McMurtry. Norman Atkins in particular, having just come off securing a huge majority for the new Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney, was not about to let “the Ontario Tory standard fall into infidel hands.”251 The BBM’s problem was not only that Miller had gotten off to a fast start, but that most delegates were comfortable with Miller, in part because, they honestly believed it didn’t really matter who won the leadership race, because who ever won would certainly go on to win the general election.

248 op. cit., Speirs, pp. 35
249 ibid., Speirs, pp. 36
250 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
251 ibid., Speirs, pp. 41
The Davis Spectre

Miller’s other principal problem was Davis himself. Some have suggested that, because of his guilty conscience about leaving the party in the lurch, Davis continued to stay involved politically. Shortly after all four candidates had announced their intentions, Davis made them promise not to discuss politically sensitive issues left over from the Davis era. The effect of this repressive edict was twofold. First, it meant that Miller was unable to talk about issues that were of key importance to him and the party. Thus, all of the candidates, especially Miller, did less work than was necessary on answers and solutions to these tough issues that may have helped them during the general election. Second, it inextricably tied the candidates to the politics of the past. Much like Trudeau forcing John Turner to make Trudeau’s patronage appointments, Davis had given the candidates no room to distance themselves from the previous regime. Miller was the first to see the unreasonableness of this edict, but by the time he rebelled against it, the damage had been done.

“Bill Davis wanted the transition to be orderly, so after making sure the delegate selection process and the all-candidates meetings would be tightly structured, he asked the four contenders not to disagree publicly on rent control, the Suncor share purchase, separate schools, or bilingualism. A few days later Miller let the cat out of the bag. Some say he put his foot in his mouth, others say he goofed intentionally, but the deal was soon off, and it wasn’t long before everybody was promising to sell Suncor and keep rent controls.”

In what would be considered completely inappropriate meddling in any other situation, Davis continued to insert himself into the day to day of the Conservative Party. First, he told the leadership candidates not to use “public officials, space, or equipment for campaigning. He also ordered them to appear regularly for question period.” As well, rather than simply acting as a placeholder until the new Premier could get settled, Davis announced, less than a week before the leadership convention, “the construction of a $150 million, 62,000-seat domed stadium, featuring the world’s largest retractable roof, to be built on railway land at the base of the CN Tower in the heart of downtown Toronto.”

During the leadership, Davis wouldn’t say who he supported, but Claire Hoy suggests it was obvious where Davis’s sympathies were, “…it’s clear he voted McMurtry on the first ballot and Grossman on the next two. After all, in their two camps were numbered his entire Big Blue Machine, and while he didn’t openly politick at the convention, he was kept constantly up to date.”

Voting Day – A Dramatic Conclusion

As a result of these divisions and internal stresses, the January 26 leadership convention was particularly dramatic. On the first ballot, Miller led with 591 votes, followed by

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252 Hoy, pp. 400
253 ibid
254 ibid, pp. 401
255 ibid, pp. 403
Timbrell with 421, Grossman with 378 and McMurtry with 300. The real surprise of the first ballot was that McMurtry had done so well. This was attributed to his passionate leadership speech and the sympathy of many first ballot voters who did not want to see the long time Cabinet minister embarrassed after an early exit from the race. The other surprise was that Timbrell had done so poorly. He had been told to expect almost 700 first ballot votes – an indication just how off Timbrell’s campaign team were.

Anticipating Miller’s early lead, Timbrell and Grossman had made a pact prior to the vote stating that who ever came third on the second ballot would take his supporters to the others camp.

Miller’s strategists were aware of the potential for such a pact and as such tried to anticipate it. Miller knew he had more support in the Timbrell camp than in the Grossman camp and therefore preferred to face Grossman on the final ballot. Consequently, Miller’s group attempted the risky ploy of quietly telling a few Miller supporters to vote for Grossman to ensure Grossman a second place finish. If word of this strategy had spread amongst the Miller supporters too many may have voted for Grossman and jeopardize Miller’s chances for victory. As it turned out just enough Miller delegates voted for Grossman. The second ballot results were; Miller – 659, Grossman – 514, Timbrell – 508. Even without a third ballot, Miller knew he would be victorious and starting composing his victory speech.

Before the final ballot, a dejected Timbrell honoured his commitment and sent his supporters to the Grossman camp. This move, while helpful, was ultimately not enough to put Grossman over the top. On the last ballot Miller won by a mere 76 votes, with 869 or 53.3 per cent of the votes cast, compared to Grossman’s 792 or 47.7 per cent.

The relief and sense of pride that Miller and his supporters felt was almost immediately overshadowed by the damage of the final result to the party as a whole. As described by one commentator, “the convention came down to a final ballot that was a showdown between the Establishment and the non-Establishment, the Big Blue Machine and Miller’s Tartan Train, the Palace Guard against the disenchanted and the disaffected from the right. For there behind Grossman, literally or figuratively, were all of Davis’ people: MacCauley, McMurtry, Atkins, Segal, Goodman, and Tory. No doubt Davis was extremely popular within the party, but as with the popular John Robarts at the end of his rule, the party did not want more of the same. Grossman’s loss not only underscored the end of the Davis era; it also meant the power structure had gone with him. When the dust had settled a few weeks later, the only Davis confidant to retain influence in Miller’s Ontario was the old survivor, Eddie Goodman.”

The depth of the Conservative party’s division cannot be overstated. As one party executive remarked, “The bitterness of the 1985 convention reached unprecedented levels. It was still painfully fresh at the second convention in 1986. What other convention in Canadian history has so poisoned a party as the 1985 Progressive Conservative convention in Ontario?”

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256 Hoy, pp. 404
257 Miller Campaign Strategist, Interview December 10, 1998
The convention coverage reiterated this theme and focused more on the divisions created than on the character or personality of the new Premier. As Rosemary Speirs states, “What had Ontarians seen? They had watched an unrepresentative convention, whose delegates were older, richer, more rural, and more homogeneously white and Protestant than the province at large, choose the candidate who did less well than either Grossman or McMurtry in the public polls. They’d seen a series of claustrophobic leadership debates. They’d seen the imperial style of a party so long in office it assumed it governed by divine right; a party already $2.8 million in debt whose leaders poured more than $5 million into their lavish pursuit of the premier’s office. They read in newspaper reports about McMurtry and Grossman accusing Miller of dirty tricks, about candidates buying votes by paying delegate expenses or promising patronage jobs. Worst of all, Ontarians had seen a party split and divide by internal bitterness.”

These were not the kind of endorsements Miller needed if he hoped to build any momentum or excitement around his new premiership.

4.4 The Interim

Having won a tough leadership race, Miller was now at a crossroads. His party still had, what to all knowledgeable observers seemed like, an absolute hammerlock on public support. A Decima research poll taken immediately after the leadership showed that the Progressive Conservatives had 56 per cent of public support, while the Liberals had 18 per cent and the New Democrats – 20 per cent. Not only were these numbers compelling, there was hard evidence that, if anything, the Tories had room to rise even higher.

This evidence came in three forms - all three related to the perceived health of the opposition Liberals. 1984 had not been kind to Ontario Liberal Leader, David Peterson. First, several of his key caucus members, including the only woman Liberal MPP in Ontario, Sheila Copps, decided to quit the Ontario Liberal Caucus. Some like Copps, Eric Cunningham, Don Boudria and Albert Roy left to enter federal politics. Earl McEwen crossed the floor to the Conservatives and two experienced MPP’s, Patrick Reid and James Breithaupt, retired from politics altogether. Then in September 1984, John Turner and the federal Liberals were decimated at the polls by the Mulroney wave. Commentators were quick to predict the permanent death of Liberalism in Canada, a sentiment that reflected poorly on Peterson’s leadership.

Finally, in the fall of 1984, outgoing premier Davis had called five by-elections, four of which were in Liberal-held ridings. The Liberals won only two of these by-elections and in an almost unprecedented development; the governing Conservatives won one of the races. Internally, key Liberals openly discussed removing Peterson as leader. There can be little doubt that rumours of low Liberal morale and the possibility of a leadership change got back to Miller and figured into his overall transition strategy.

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258 ibid., Speirs, pp. 58
259 ibid., Speirs, pp. 96
The leadership aftermath – an inability to heal old wounds

Even with these overwhelmingly positive factors, Miller’s early days as Premier were fraught with difficulty. The first and foremost amongst his key problems was the open wound that existed as a result of the leadership race. With almost 48 per cent of delegate support, Larry Grossman demanded and received special compensation from Miller. Miller promised to reinstate Grossman to the position of Treasurer and to make him political chief for Toronto. Even with these rewards, Grossman was not happy. He wanted cabinet posts for many of his key supporters and he demanded that key party officials like Hugh Segal and Norm Atkins be named to Miller’s campaign team. As the sole remaining BBM representative, Grossman had a considerable power base amongst senior conservative officials and senior bureaucrats. “Grossman was brilliant in cabinet. He leveraged his position to great advantage after the leadership race. The constant, ongoing competition with Grossman combined with the extended negotiations around the construction of cabinet left Miller frustrated and tired.”

Similarly, although less overtly, Bill Davis was putting significant demands on the new premier. In previous Tory successions, key Premier’s office staff typically stayed behind to help the new leader adjust. Davis had three reasons why he was particularly concerned about this maintaining this continuity. First, he remembered how he himself had struggled in 1971 as a new Premier and how important it was to be able to depend on the sound counsel of experienced staff. Second, he had deep loyalties to many of his former staff, in particular to his principal secretary John Tory, his deputy minister Ed Stewart and his appointments secretary, Laird Saunderson. As part of his loyalty to these people, Davis wanted to ensure they were well ensconced in the new regime. Finally, Davis had niggling doubts about Miller’s ability and felt that Miller was underestimating the overwhelming day-to-day demands of running the Ontario government.

The ‘Bunker’

One of the elements of Miller’s transition that certainly gave Davis pause was Miller’s decision, immediately after winning the leadership, to establish a set of police-guarded offices in the Four Seasons Hotel in anticipation of the official hand-over of power on February 8, 1985. “Davis didn’t approve of Miller’s temporary rival court, and his people were quick to take offence at real or imagined slights from what they called ‘the bunker.’ More than once Davis said he felt as if he was in the trenches with the Germans about to invade.”

Miller’s perceived need to set up the ‘bunker’ is indicative of his mood generally around the transition. He and his immediate staff, Melnik and Perik, felt they needed to show that Miller was in control of the process of moving into the Premier’s office. “Melnik and Perik bunkered Miller down in some uptown hotel – this was against every sense of Miller that people had. He had always been warm and accessible – now, not over an extended period – but within 24 hours - Miller had been closeted away just like the BBM.

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260 Senior Cabinet Official, Interview, December 11, 1998
261 ibid., Speirs, pp. 83
The BBM was unhappy because they had no access and the young upstarts were pissed because this looked like more of the same.”

A similar story was told by one of Miller’s oldest friends and political supporters. “As one of the key leadership campaign organizers, I shared a two bedroom suite with Frank in the Toronto Sheraton where the convention was being held. After the victory celebrations, I got back to my room around 2:00 am to find my bags outside the suite in the hallway. I was told that the suite was needed and that I was to find alternative accommodations. That was the last time I saw or spoke to Miller for the next two and half months.”

The rank and file, many of whom had voted for Miller because he represented the outsider’s viewpoint, resented this sudden new and secretive style. Many cabinet ministers, particularly those most in need of appeasement, such as Grossman, resented the lack of access and the preferential treatment Miller was giving some versus others. Finally, the Big Blue Machine, represented by Atkins, saw this as a clear indication that Miller had surrounded himself with inexperienced amateurs who had little or no respect for tradition and past successes. These perception problems were not only within the elite circles of the Conservative party. The media and the public at large were somewhat confused by the new Premier’s early actions. Gone was the fun loving, good-natured Treasurer and in his place was a somewhat secretive, seemingly pensive new Premier. The switch was palpable. “Davis and Robarts both came into the premiership with strong positive public images, both from being aggressive Minister’s of Education. Miller image was in some ways equally positive, but more enigmatic.”

Within a couple of days of winning the leadership, Miller’s transition was experiencing problems and he knew it. He understood the need to move quickly to repair divisions in the party, but he was getting conflicting advice about how to do it. Davis’s supporters suggested he have a meeting like the one McMurtry held for Davis in 1971, but when Senator Bill Kelly came back and said there was no mood for such a dinner, Miller unwisely let the matter drop. Miller took a similar lackadaisical attitude towards his discussions with Norman Atkins. After the leadership he twice approached Atkins about being campaign chair. Both times Atkins brusquely suggested that Miller had won the leadership on a fluke and that he would consider the position only if he had complete control of the organization. Not only did Miller find Atkins’ demands and his tone demeaning, he also was aware that Atkins was not being overly supportive in public and in the media. In one media story, Atkins was quoted as saying Frank Miller’s entire future depended on how he treated Tories who did not support him. When Atkins was asked, in the same article, whether he would agree to run the next provincial campaign for Miller, he replied, “The request would have to be made in the proper spirit and for all the right reasons.”

262 Former PC senior legislative staffer, Interview, December 11, 1998
263 Longtime Miller supporter, Interview, December 10, 1998
264 Queen’s Park Historian and Commentator, Interview, December 11, 1998
265 op. cit., Speirs, pp. 86
266 Norman Atkins quoted in the Toronto Star, January 29, 1985, pp. A8
While this statement may seem the height of arrogance, it must be put into the context of the times. The Big Blue Machine was the most successful set of political operatives in Canadian history. Less than six months before they had engineered the unseating of the governing party of Canada, the federal Liberals, and had delivered a massive majority for the new Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney. They were on the top of the heap and they knew it. The problem was the Miller’s internal code of honour would not allow him to be dictated to by a group of un-elected hacks, certainly not this particular group, many of whom had worked so vigourously against him in the leadership race. In a moment of pique, Miller decided to rescind the offer of campaign chair to Atkins. He would later refer to as one of the biggest mistakes of his career.267

Instead he appointed Patrick Kinsella, a long time Tory operative who had been working in British Columbia as chief of staff to Social Credit Premier, Bill Bennett. Kinsella was seen as a compromise choice. He had worked with Michael Perik but was well known amongst the Big Blue Machine operatives. He had not been in Ontario for the leadership race and was therefore not involved in the post leadership tussles. The perceived problem with Kinsella, however, is that his style was very blunt and straightforward; being the conciliator amongst warring factions therefore was not his strong point. Furthermore, feeling that he had been manipulated several times by the media in B.C., Kinsella had an ongoing distrust of the media, a direct contrast to Miller’s historical style.

Choosing a cabinet – a web of cross-pressures
The problems for Miller were not confined to his inability to bond with his campaign chair. His next major obstacle was the choosing of a cabinet. On February 8, 1985, Miller’s cabinet was sworn in with his new cabinet. At 32 members, it was the largest cabinet in Ontario’s history. When asked why he had chosen to install such a large group, particularly after his comments about shrinking the size of government, Miller’s response was that he detested the office of Parliamentary Assistant. He felt the PA’s were a real problem because they received no respect or benefit from the role. He suggested he would rather see a larger cabinet with no PA’s and with a few super ministries and a series of Secretaries of State, as is the case federally. “It was a systems decision.”268

There were three distinct problems with the cabinet and its structure. First, Miller had run for the leadership on a platform of change. He had spoken of the need to apply the common sense used to run a small business to the problems and structures of government. Presumably this meant that government had to become smaller and more efficient. The first and best way to indicate change of this type would have been to appoint a much smaller, more streamlined cabinet than those of Davis and Robarts. Presenting Ontario with a much smaller cabinet would have been a powerful symbol of Miller’s commitment to smaller and less intrusive government.

267 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
268 Senior Elected Official, PC Party, Interview, December 11, 1998
Second, the cabinet did Miller no good in terms of strategic political positioning. Typically, cabinet formation is the Premier’s opportunity to appease or attack his opponents. Some leaders like Chretien put their leadership opponents in positions close to the throne (Paul Martin to Finance for example). This way a certain amount of control is maintained. Others, like Klein in Alberta, send a very clear message of change by banishing all of their serious leadership opponents to the backbench.

Miller’s cabinet was a mix of both strategies, a mix that neither appeased nor isolated in sufficient measure to fix his internal problems. Miller would later comment to colleagues, “…in retrospect, I should have kept Grossman out of cabinet. But it would have been more political headache that I could afford at the time. I knew he was in some personal financial trouble, but he said it wasn’t a problem and I had no proof so he went into cabinet.” There can be little question that Miller held Grossman responsible for much of what went wrong during this period.

Others were equally critical of Miller’s cabinet-making, although some acknowledge that circumstances made decisions about this cabinet particularly difficult. “Miller’s cabinet building was not stellar. He was going to lose some good people in the next election. Snow, McMurtry and Tom Wells had already said they would not run again. Al McLean, Norm Sterling and Bob Runciman were all put in and were all weak choices.”

The way in which Miller handled the Snow appointment is instructive. Longtime cabinet minister and Miller supporter, Jim Snow had explained that he would not run again. Miller took this to mean that Snow was comfortable not being appointed to cabinet. This was not the case and Snow did not take it well. Another strong Miller supporter, Claude Bennett, had been promised the post of deputy Premier. When the time came, Miller appointed Bette Stephenson, possibly a result of gender considerations. Bennett went away understandably disgruntled.

The third and final problem with the cabinet-making process was the confusion that followed. At the ministerial level there were cases of people being appointed and then being reassigned without being informed. Other ministers, upon being informed they had made it back to cabinet, proceeded to go on holidays, some, like Grossman, only after informing Miller they were still unhappy and were considering retiring. At the bureaucratic level, things were even worse. Miller did not inform any of the senior deputies whether they would be staying on or not. Many of these senior bureaucrats had worked for years under Davis and Robarts and were used to being kept in the loop. Miller, either by design or miscalculation did nothing to placate the nervous bureaucracy. Shortly after being sworn in Miller did appoint three women to deputy minister status. This was a much-needed move, but the arbitrary nature of the announcement only reinforced the bureaucracy’s concern about the new leader.

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269 Senior Elected Official, PC Party, Interview, December 11, 1998
270 Former Deputy Minister in Cabinet Office, Interview, December 11, 1998
271 Years later several senior civil servants would confide that the transition from Miller to Peterson was much smoother than from Davis to Miller. Peterson, even though he was from a different party, worked hard to bring the professional civil service on side and they were much more receptive to his ideas as a result.
The Miller transition – missing the forest for the trees

Miller’s inability to take advantage of the political opportunities afforded him by the cabinet making process was seen by his strategists as problematic but not crucial. The public opinion polls were still so positive, a thick blanket of complacency had enveloped Miller’s entire operation. One cabinet minister recalls Miller’s later feelings in hindsight. “Don’t forget we had great polling numbers. We thought we were secure. As a result I spent my time on the big governance issues. I was examining methods of improving the budgetary process and the manner in which we determined as assessed our overall governmental priorities. I realize now that if I had had more political acumen, I would have realized that the wounds were not healing from the leadership process. The workers were not getting along together.”

It is particularly instructive to look at the issues and events Miller and his staff saw as important when they first took office. Rosemary Speirs points out that the very first concern Melnik and Perik had when arriving in the Premier’s office were not about implementing policies they had promised during the leadership campaign, nor were they interested in broad public issues that would have the effect of distinguishing Miller from his predecessors. Rather, their first order of business was to wrestle government advertising contracts away from Norman Atkins’ firm – Camp and Associates.

Similarly, upon his arrive in the Premier’s office, Miller himself seemed to be most interested in re-ordering the processes of government. He was later to state, “I started changing cabinet committee structures. P and P need to be sorted out. People were there for political reasons not because of their inherent skills. I needed to change that. I am quite proud of my changes to Policy and Priorities.” While an improvement in the decision making process is always a noble undertaking, making this a priority so soon before a general election suggests an alarming lack of focus on behalf of Premier Miller. Changing committees is an internal issue, neither cared about nor understood by the voting public. Miller threw himself into the mechanical elements of governance and took his eye off the political ball.

Interestingly, none of the over 20 people interviewed for this study, including three of Miller’s most senior bureaucrats in government, remember this initiative as being important. In fact, none of the people interviewed even mentioned it. One senior deputy in the Cabinet office at time suggests the only attempts at governmental change came from David Melnik’s office, “...from what I could see, Melnik focused his efforts on what he considered ‘bureaucratic renewal.’ His idea was that a committee would be struck to focus on positive change in the Ontario civil service. To my perspective this could not have been a bigger waste of time. Melnik was dabbling and did not seem to have an active interest in politics, which to the senior civil service is actually quite disconcerting.”

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272 Former Senior Elected Official, PC Party, Interview, December 11, 1998
273 Former Senior Elected Official, PC Party, Interview, December 11, 1998
274 Former Deputy Minister in Cabinet Office, Interview, December 11, 1998
Another area in which there was little change was Miller’s approach to First Ministers’ conferences. Miller spent a significant amount of time and energy during his first two critical weeks as Premier preparing for his first such meeting in Regina. The conference focused on free trade, an issue that was top of mind for most Ontario voters during the first months of 1985. Rather than stake out his own ground on the issue however, Miller’s strategy was to be seen as an able replacement for Bill Davis. “Miller’s Style Mirrors Davis at Conference” was the headline of the day. In fact, Miller’s key advisor on free trade told reporters at the time that their goal was to cast Miller as mediator between the provinces, a position Davis had often taken during his time as Premier. Utilized properly, the Regina conference could have been an excellent national stage from which Miller could have come out from Davis’s shadow. Instead, it was a missed opportunity that did nothing but eat up a large amount of time and energy at a critical period in Miller’s transition.

The final area of weakness for Miller was in regard to the seeming “duality” of Miller’s personal political ideology. In a February 3, 1985 Toronto Star piece entitled, “How far right does Frank Miller lean?” journalist Martin Cohn publicly mused about the possibility of Miller having a hidden agenda for Ontario. Cohn pointed out that, while Miller vigorously claimed his opponents were deliberately exaggerating the right wing nature of his views, he has consistently made public comments that were significantly to the right of his own party.

The depth of this ideological “duality” becomes evident when an examination is made of Miller’s quotes through his years as a cabinet Minister and as Treasurer. In the legislature in 1983, Miller said, “…the (Ontario) system has been diluted through a gradual erosion by socialistic ideals, as has the economy of this province. It is nowhere near as right wing as I believe it should be.” In response to a brief from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce which asked the government to abolish the minimum wage, end Medicare, lift rent controls and cut taxes, Miller told MPP’s: “They are enunciating exactly the things I came here believing in, the way the world was as I thought it should be.”

Similarly, with regard to the possibility of introducing hospital user fees, Miller was on record as early as November 1981 saying he would not rule out such an eventuality. Then in April 1983, he told reporters he personally favoured allowing hospitals to charge daily fees. Miller’s open admiration of Ronald Reagan was also well documented. Early in the leadership campaign, Miller said, “You could say I’m a Canadianized version of Ronald Reagan, with adjustments made here and there to fit this country.” In a speech as treasurer in February 1982, Miller stated, “Mr. Reagan did have an economic theory… supply-side economics… As a theory, I must add, it is one I entirely support. Its thrusts… sum up the very things that first attracted me to politics and which keep me in it today.” Also with regard to financial policy and ideology, Miller made a remarkable admission early in the leadership race with regard to the idea of abolishing a progressive

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275 Alan Christie, Toronto Star, February 16, 1985, pp. A10
276 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
income tax system. “I favour things like, believe it or not, a flat rate tax. I think a lot can be said for that.”

The Miller Transition – A Civil Servant’s Perspective

After 42 years of one party rule, transition was not a word that the Ontario civil service understood. “It was not until mid-May 1985 that cabinet secretary, Ed Stewart, said, “..hey we need a transition plan. The idea that they needed a transition plan from Davis to Miller what just something they did not contemplate. The assistant secretary to cabinet was dispatched to Ottawa to learn about transition planning from senior staff there. Bob Carmen did due an entire agenda review for Miller in February 1985, but there did not seem to be significant follow up with action items as a result of the review briefing. There was very little done in the civil service to reflect the change from Davis. There was no real activity until May 10, 1985. Miller retained the basic structure of government. All the central agencies such as Management Board were left unchanged.”

One of the reasons for the confusion and lack of planning was the incessant meddling by past premier Bill Davis. “Davis was not helpful. He was around during the transition and the election and played the role of cheerleader rather than fully involved participant. Therefore when he said things like “its in the can” people took him at face value rather than understanding he had little real idea of what was going on and was only trying to boost people’s spirits.”

Another Miller mistake was letting Ed Stewart step down as Cabinet Secretary. Stewart was the highly regarded “King of Ontario.” He had personally seen to it that the position of cabinet secretary was elevated to an extremely exalted position under Davis. Stewart was involved in all key decisions be they bureaucratic or political and had great institutional knowledge not only about the civil service but as well about what worked and didn’t work in Premier’s office. Miller should have demanded that he stay but this didn’t happen. As a result, Miller’s office was perceived to be weak with an inability to formulate or execute decisions. One former secretary to cabinet remembers the Miller group to be “oddly dysfunctional.” Another observer suggested that many “bureaucrats were appalled by Miller’s transition to office. Miller came away with the bureaucracy as the enemy. It was a negative environment from which to launch his electoral ambitions.”

Many people inside government, particularly those who had been there since before 1971, felt that there was very little done in the civil service to reflect the change from Davis. “There was no real activity until May 10, 1985. Miller retained the basic structure of government. All the central agencies such as Management Board were left unchanged.

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277 The last quote regarding a flat tax was made during a luncheon address in Kitchener, Ontario, January 1985. The other quotes are from Ontario Hansard and from Martin Cohn, “How Far Right Does Frank Miller Lean?” in the Toronto Star, February 3, 1985, pp. F4
278 Senior Cabinet Office Official, Interview, December 11, 1998
279 Senior Cabinet Office Official, Interview, December 11, 1998
280 Senior Cabinet Office Official, Interview, December, 11, 1998
281 Ontario Politics professor, Interview, December 14, 1998
Overall, while the civil service was undoubtedly at fault for not recognizing earlier the need for a comprehensive transition plan, Miller was also to blame for his lack of preparation with regard to the civil service. Miller had been in government a long time and as a result suffered from the delusion that as Premier, things would work much the same as they had when he was Treasurer. Miller had some ideas about reforming the civil service, but he was being pulled from so many directions his forays into this area were met with skepticism and derision.

Impacts on the Dynasty – The Ontario PC party neglected
One of the groups that suffered from neglect during this critical period was the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party itself. On the first of February 1985, Miller got big headlines for his announcement about renewal inside the party. He felt that the grassroots Tories were not being heard and he set up a political transition committee to find ways to increase their input and role in party affairs. “The committee, expected to report to Miller in about a month, will examine ways of involving members from every region of Ontario in financial, policy and organizational matters. Miller proposed to set up seven regional councils, while giving expanded responsibilities to caucus members and those holding elected office within the party, such as riding association presidents.”

At its roots, the idea had significant merit. It was a direct response to the fact that, during the last years of the Davis government, party members, even cabinet ministers, were not informed about major decisions like the purchase of Suncor shares and the decision to fully fund Roman Catholic high schools. The idea also built on Miller’s grassroots populist appeal. Unfortunately, the committee was not heard from again and in the public’s eye, the idea died on the vine.

Calling the election – a crucial decision
The true impact of these unhealed wounds and of the chaos around Miller’s transition was felt around the key decision of when to call the election. Miller felt that realistically he had three ‘windows of opportunity’ for calling an election. Calling the election for the spring of 1985 would have meant the Conservatives would have been in power four years and two months. A Fall window would mean four and a half years and a spring 1986 window would back them up against the full term of five years. There was a big caucus meeting in March 1985, at which the caucus collectively decided that they would honour all the commitments made by outgoing Premier Davis. This included the separate school funding issue. Miller felt that the election had to be held before the children returned to school in September. If the kids were in school during an election in which the funding debate was the main issue, it would have been a big problem politically.

As well there was the question of the positive polling. In addition to the polling done immediately after the leadership, “…there was a poll done within 2-3 months after the leadership. It had Miller at 51-57 per cent in the polls. This surprised many Conservative

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282 Miller planning bigger role for party members, Toronto Star, February 1, 1985, pp. A8
activists and precipitated support for calling the election. The mood was “let’s capitalize on this and go now.”

There is room to question this reasoning. Certainly, the students going back to school unclear about full funding would have been a problem, but not an insurmountable one. If this had meant the government was that much better organized, then presumably, the thing to do would have been to wait. Hindsight is of course 20/20, but when looking back at the Miller time in office, there is not one positive action that he took that he could be connected with. For that matter, there was nothing of consequence done while he was Treasurer either. Robarts had the education portfolio, Davis had the Spadina expressway and separate school funding, but Miller had nothing to distinguish himself. As Premier he had not even brought in a Throne Speech or a Budget.

Two months after Miller took office, longtime political observer, Orland French, tried to sum up Miller’s transition problems: “In the last two months, Mr. Miller has closeted himself in the Tory bunker with his close advisers, trying to mend a party split by post-convention animosities. He has not put any stamp of himself on the party, nor has he instilled any new sense of direction in his Government. The scent of Government in Ontario today is as stale as it was when William Davis retired. What we have not seen from Frank Miller is a major policy decision that would signal the public that he has control of his party and is heading his Government in a new direction. If he calls an election for May, he will be gambling heavily on creating a positive public image of himself in a five-week campaign. It’s not much time to paint a fresh coat over an old plaid jacket.” This theme of worrying about the wrong things at the wrong time would continue to follow Miller throughout the transition period.

“Miller’s had only two principal decisions during the transition – when to call the election and whether or not to participate in the election debates. On the first point all his advisors say go immediately. Only Hugh Segal said that he should wait and let the people of Ontario get to know Frank better. The election would not have been a problem if we had waited longer. The period after the leadership was fraught with difficulty. An example of the discord was Timbrell’s demands that Larry Grossman be fired as Houseleader or Timbrell would quit cabinet. Miller’s decision when confronted with ultimatum is instructive. He despised Grossman so much, he was ready to fire him mostly because Timbrell asked. That he had to show his own leadership style or that he shouldn’t have even been listening to Timbrell as beaten foe, or that a firing so soon after he had constructed his cabinet would certainly be seen in a bad light publicly, or that he wouldn’t have had this problem is he hadn’t put Grossman in the cabinet in the first place never occurred to Frank. Eventually the staff convinced Miller not to fire Grossman but the event is instructive.”

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283 Former Executive Director of the Ontario PC Party, Interview, December 10, 1998
285 Miller supporter and Conservative activist, Interview, December 10, 1998
Conflict and indecision continued to shadow Miller throughout his preparations for the election. The area in which this indecision was most evident was in Miller's efforts to put together an election team.

The Team – a picture of dissension

Miller's principal problem was that his team lacked confidence in their leader. Unlike the small dynamic, confident team that put together Miller's leadership challenge, his campaign team was racked with internal dissension and doubt. Much of this unrest can be traced back to the leadership race. There were still several people unhappy with the leadership result and the manner in which Miller handled the transition. Much of the venom at that time was directed at Miller's young leadership campaign manager and chief advisor, Michael Perik. “Mike Perik was a ‘big problem.’ He got offside immediately with the BBM. He should have let them run the election instead he let his emotions get the better of him. He was pissed at the way the BBM had treated Frank and let that colour his deportment during the transition. He did not understand the difference between a leadership race and a general election.”

Even the opposition Liberals understood that Perik was beginning to look like Miller's Achilles heel. “Miller did not lead. There were several opportunities from the moment he won the leadership in which he could have grabbed the reins and taken over. One of the big mistakes was that Michael Perik had no interest in bringing the people that Miller needed to help him grab the reins.”

Other Conservative activists felt that Miller had made several poor choices for key campaign staff. “One of their key organizers, Tom Campbell was a policy guy. He knew nothing about running campaigns. It was almost as if Miller was trying to run the election like a government committee. Overall, there were some individually very strong people on the campaign, but collectively they were very weak, there was no cohesiveness.”

Others concurred. “Lou Parsons (Miller’s campaign chair) was weak. Parsons’s public comments that the ‘little yellow bus’ had beaten the Big Blue Machine, did more damage to the Ontario Conservatives than any one other single action during this period.”

The surprisingly unwillingness of key Tories to put these problems behind them in anticipation of a major election battle seems to have stemmed from the fact that most were still very confident that however the election was run, the Conservatives would be victorious. Many, for example, were still fixated on the fact that Miller had not done more to involve Norm Atkins in the election campaign. “Miller could have fixed the rift with the Tories if he had taken Atkins as campaign manager. Miller’s group was insecure. Even though Atkins was the best person at bringing people together.”

286 Former Tory Campaign Manager, Interview, December 18, 1998
287 Former Liberal Chief of Staff, Interview, December 11, 1998
288 Former Davis Appointee and Senior Party Activist, Interview, December 9, 1998
289 Personal friend of Miller’s and Conservative Activist, Interview, December 10, 1998
290 Former Davis Appointee and Senior Party Activist, Interview, December 9, 1998
their credit, Miller’s group made several genuine attempts during the election to be inclusive. Two BBMers, Rich Willis and John Tory, were both made to fell welcome during the campaign. Despite these efforts however, there was still a high level of tension during the campaign.

Campaign Director Pat Kinsella – An awkward fit
A general lack of ease started at the very top of the organization chart. Kinsella and Miller were not long time friends and Kinsella had been out of the province for several years before agreeing to chair Miller’s campaign. Not having a lot of experience with Miller, led Kinsella to propose a standard Conservative campaign for him. He sought to significantly change Miller’s image to one of a button-downed and buttoned-up version of former Ontario premiers, and to keep him away from the media whenever possible. Unlike Rod Love in Alberta, who had already served with Ralph Klein in several elections before running his provincial election campaign as Premier, Kinsella did not have any time to familiarize himself with the inherent style and strengths of Frank Miller. He did not have time to understand Frank’s populist appeal and muse on how to exploit this appeal. Rather, he ran a traditional Tory campaign for a non-traditional candidate. When viewed from this perspective, the final election results become more understandable.

Kinsella’s typical campaign style was to rely heavily on polling to help shape his candidates image and actions. Through his connections with the Big Blue Machine and later with the technocratic Bill Bennett, Premier of British Columbia, Kinsella had become of master of understanding the shifting constellation of voters groups in a given jurisdiction and molding a leader and a campaign to appeal to those groups. This technocratic, scientific method was contrary to every populist bone in Miller’s body. His very essence was to appeal personally to a specific group of voters using his small town charms, and policies based on commonsense and small business acumen. There was a clear disparity between the two styles and in retrospect a clash was inevitable. As one senior Liberal involved in the election observed, “…the Conservatives were trying to adapt a typical “Tory autopilot campaign to a guy who was used to flying solo.”

There is some evidence that, at the time, key campaign staff felt the problem was not that the campaign was serving Miller poorly, but that Miller had an obligation to get on board with the PC election machine. One senior campaign staffer, for example, felt that the biggest problem from a campaign perspective was what to do with Frank. “The buses were painted, the itinerary was done, money was OK, party was in fairly good share, there was some questions about advertising that needed to be worked out, but nothing serious.”

These comments raise several questions. First, they run contrary to several other reports that the party was not in good shape, that under Davis it was run down, that after the federal election many volunteers had run out of energy and that were somewhere in the neighborhood of $2.8 million in debt. The other interesting element of this statement is

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1 Former Liberal MPP, Interview, December 10, 1998
2 Senior PC campaign organizer, Interview, December 18, 1998
that it looks like the Tories put together the campaign before they considered how Miller would be a part of it. They went through the mechanical elements of a typical Ontario Conservative campaign without really thinking through whether this would work for Miller. Little thought seems to be given to the unique and important role of a leader in provincial election campaign. It was simply a Tory cookie cutter campaign that Miller was inserted into.

Evidence of how Kinsella and others impacted Miller’s approach to campaigning was immediate. Gone were the whimsical plaid jackets and sport coats. Miller left the election starting gates in tailored blue suits and an updated haircut. His contact with reporters and the Queen’s Park press gallery was immediately and almost entirely curtailed. This was to have a particularly large impact on the campaign because Miller had such a good reputation with the media before the election. He was friendly with many of them and when the new Miller emerged, the gallery was not impressed. Part of this reticence again came from Kinsella’s experiences. Kinsella has always had a very rocky relationship with political media and his overall strategy is to ignore them and fight the campaign with paid advertising. This was in direct contrast to Miller’s style and led to disastrous media coverage as a result. Miller did nothing except exacerbate the situation when he told reporters on several occasions during the first weeks of the campaign that, “his handlers had told him not to speak to the media.”

Early in the campaign, Perik, who in many instances was guilty of severely over-thinking issues and strategies, decided that Miller was too much of a loose cannon and should be kept away from the media. This desire to control could, in part, have developed as part of the arrogance that develops with one party having been in power for 43 years. The overriding thinking here seemed to be that “we must know the voters better because our record is so much better.” Perik felt that he had to dictate the terms of access to the new Premier if he was to control the election result. This cynical arrogance permeated almost all of Miller’s campaign. Compounding the problem was the fact that Miller himself didn’t really seem to be aware of it. His comments about not being allowed to talk to the media were made in jocular way, as if he considered it a joke rather than a strategy. In fact, it wasn’t until the second week that he realized he was being consciously herded away from the media.

As a result of indecision and a lack of confidence in his personal abilities, Miller allowed himself to be ‘handled’ on these and related issues early in the campaign. He suggested afterwards that his staff’s belief that he was a loose cannon started with a few innocent comments he made in Thunder Bay before the election began. At the time, politicians in Manitoba were contemplating the implementation of a flat tax and in a quiet casual moment one of the reporters assigned to Miller to ask him for his opinion. Miller said that he was willing to consider any taxation option that helped the economy. The reporter wrote a story based on Miller’s support of a flat tax for Ontario and it became something of a media crisis for the Miller team. This crucial misread of Miller’s media strategy would be later pointed to as one of the principal reasons for his poor showing.

293 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December, 12, 1998
“The decisions made regarding the timing of the election and later in regard to Miller’s participation in the debates show the extent to which Miller was poorly handled by his staff. It is not clear if Miller was even conscious of how badly he was being handled. He was certainly not aware of how isolated they had kept him from the people he cared about. One example of this was less than 10 days before the vote, when he called me and asked if something was wrong, because he hadn’t seen me since the leadership. Only when I told him his staff hadn’t let me near him for the last two months did he realize the extent to which he had been isolated.” 294

The Positioning

This conflict between Miller and his advisors continued with regard to his positioning on key issues. Allan Gregg from Decima Research, did polling immediately before the election call which indicated that, while the Tories’ support was still strong, the Ontario public did not really know Miller and were unclear as to his plans for the future. Gregg suggested that Miller run on his strengths as a small-town businessman. “To overcome Miller’s image as the hard-nosed minister who’d tried to close hospitals – the politician with the secret right-wing agenda – Gregg proposed Miller be sold as a Tory populist. Former leaders of the dynasty had been small-town aristocrats, but Miller was from the common folks. Gregg though he could project a grandfatherly appeal to all the little guys, small-businessmen and farmers, who wanted to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, just as Miller had himself.” 295

This image was problematic for Miller’s advisors for two separate reasons. On the one hand, selling Miller as a small town populist would position Miller strongly on the right side of the political spectrum. This positioning would conflict with the progressive elements of the party and the cabinet and with the perception that modern Ontarians wanted a leader who understood modern issues such as the changing high tech economy, the evolving role of women in society and the new multiculturalism of urban Ontario. Within the party itself, ministers like Timbrell, Grossman and Kells were working on progressive issue announcements such as strong commitments to rent controls, housing and day care innovations, initiatives for working women including pay equity, and a pollution crackdown.

While Miller was ready to compromise his personal agenda to win the election, he was simply not comfortable talking about day care or pay equity and it showed. The result was an odd mishmash of new ideas being espoused by someone who had won the leadership campaign by appealing to Orange Ontario. This caused obvious problems. In Ontario, the Conservatives historically ran to the left so they could govern from the right. Davis, even with his dowdy Brampton background, was able to position himself as urbane and sensitive to new trends. Miller was not a traditional Tory. In the leadership and afterwards he was seen by the rump of the party as taking them back to their roots. The BBM tried to run the Frank Miller election with a Larry Grossman campaign.” 296

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294 Personal friend of Miller’s and Conservative Activist, Interview, December 10, 1998
295 op. cit., Speirs, pp. 99
296 Former Director of PC Research, Interview, December 8, 1998
the end, the campaign strategists abandoned both strategies, deciding instead to simply run a quiet campaign largely devoid of significant policy.

The Platform – Dualism continued
The other key election plank that suffered as a result of this strategy was Miller’s economic platform. Based on Davis’ successful BILD infrastructure programs from 1981, Miller’s Enterprise Ontario was a $1.3 billion program over three years designed to help small businesses and new high tech ventures. Almost a billion dollars of the program was a tax cut for small business, while the rest was venture capital grants for new high tech firms. Miller was strongly against the technology fund element of the announcement and it showed. Miller announced the programs on March 22, 1985, with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm. The media started to criticize the programs immediately and by the end of the campaign, Enterprise Ontario was largely dead in the water.

“Miller never got his feet under himself as Premier. He brought out some type of BILD clone and the Liberals were able to knock it out of the park, exposing it as a series of rehearsed and unworkable ideas. Miller tried to re-announce what amounted to an old infrastructure program. It wasn’t Frank’s style and it showed.”

When Miller did try to talk about the new economy, he looked out of date and out of his depth. This was evident early in the campaign. On one of the first days of the election he visited a leading computer firm. As one strategist recalls, “…the organization for the visit had been very poor. Protestors had already attached themselves to the Premier and he and his staff did not handle them very well. Miller was supposed to be showcasing his awareness of the new technological age but it didn’t come across well. Instead he looked pedantic and unenthusiastic.”

Others concurred, “Eventually the platform was Jobs and the Economy, but it looked weak and Miller looked wishy washy.”

The Enterprise Ontario program and indeed the entire Miller campaign may also have suffered because of Tory complacency around Ontario’s economy. After being hard hit during the recession of 1982-83, all indicators pointed to a strong recovery of Ontario’s key economic sectors in 1985. With a strong economy, a weak opposition and continuing upbeat polling, complacency about policy could be understood. “With the polls looking so good, it was better to run a campaign that made no waves and not take any chances of disturbing the slumbering voters. Almost nobody was worried. Perik told John Balkwill in a telephone conversation the strategy was “Dullsville” – Miller just needed to go through the motions to win.”

It was “the motions” that would eventually lead to Miller’s downfall. The motions for Miller’s campaign team meant running a standard Ontario PC campaign of organized leader’s visits to controlled environments with limited leader’s access to the media. The idea was to keep Miller’s visits to key constituencies light and upbeat and give the leader minimal opportunities to freelance and say something that could get the entire campaign

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297 Senior Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 11, 1998
298 Senior Tory Activist, Interview, December 9, 1998
299 Former Director of PC Research, Interview, December 8, 1998
300 ibid., Speirs, pp. 100 and 102
in trouble. It was a defensive effort designed to protect a lead rather than aggressively going out and securing the victory. Besides complacency, there were other reasons for Miller’s campaign team to choose this type of strategy.

The Non-debate
The other manifestation of this controlled approach had to do with the PC’s decision around televised debates. The Tories were concerned about Miller’s capacity to effectively debate the other leaders, particularly the overly bright and acerbic NDP leader, Bob Rae. Within a week of calling the election, Miller announced that he would not participate in any debates. The idea was to announce their debate strategy early so that if there was any fallout it would be long forgotten by the time the voters went to the polls. At the time, Kinsella was quoted as saying that an April 20 televised debate would prevent the Premier from meeting ordinary voters on the campaign trail. The voting public did not accept this transparently contrived reasoning and the opposition parties were able to exploit Miller’s unwillingness to face them for the remainder of the campaign.

Miller himself points to the debate decision as one of the most important factors in his ultimate loss of power. He now acknowledges that he was over handled, that a lot of people again were over thinking the situation, thinking that they knew better than the electorate. One Tory strategist observed, “…people had just seen Mulroney knock Turner out of the debating ring and they didn’t want Rae or Peterson (but particularly Rae) doing the same thing to their man. Ironically, it was Hughie Segal who had the right approach. He was the only one who suggested that Miller should have said nothing about his decision to debate and then extend the negotiation of the debates in such a way that they simply didn’t happen.”

“On the question of debates, again his handlers were unanimous in their opposition to Frank’s participation in the election debates. Ultimately the decision not to debate Peterson and Rae was a costly one for Miller.” Many Conservatives were frustrated and angry at Miller’s decision not to debate. “That the Conservatives refused to debate was emblematic of a closed and arrogant government.”

The Age of Arrogance
Miller and the PC’s arrogance manifested in many ways other than their refusal to debate. One of Miller’s most interesting planning transgressions was with regard to his party’s approach to riding targeting before and during the 1985 general election campaign. In any serious election campaign, there is some strategy of focusing money and resources on at specific ridings. Amongst the Miller team, there was very little if any discussion of this type and even less execution. Making lists of ridings by their potential win-ability is a common strategy amongst opposition parties. For a dominant government party like

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301 Senior PC campaign organizer, Interview, December, 18, 1998
302 Senior PC campaign organizer, Interview, December 18, 1998
303 Personal friend of Miller’s and Conservative Activist, Interview, December 10, 1998
304 Former Director of PC Research, Interview, December 8, 1998
the Tories in Ontario, perhaps it was presumed that they would take seats in all regions of Ontario and therefore targeting only had to occur in a mostly macro sense. Unfortunately, if they had targeted their resources at 10 key ridings in the last 10 days, there might have been a much different result in the 1985 election. This oversight is particularly confusing given the high level of strategy that members of the group had utilized during the leadership campaign. It was another graphic example of their lack of preparation and inexperience.

One of the main reasons Conservative activists did not make more of the ideology issue at the time was because of the seeming invincibility of the Ontario Tory juggernaut. This arrogance in turn led to complacency, a flaw that many see as Miller’s principal undoing. Jim Snow, a former Conservative Minister of Transportation, made comments at the time that were indicative of the pure and unadulterated Tory arrogance, “…if we didn’t have these elections all the time, I could get on with my job.”\(^{305}\) This statement also reflects the fact that the Tories had become almost completely immersed in the world of governance only occasionally popping their heads up to reluctantly to the political reality of elections only when absolutely necessary. As an aside, an example of the continued arrogance of the conservatives is the letter Miller left in the Premier’s desk for Peterson and Rae. “Dear David and Bob, We’ll be back, don’t get too comfortable.”\(^{306}\) Although it was unclear at the time whether this was false bravado or simply outright denial – it certainly is an interesting testament to the out of touch thinking that was going on at the time.

Similarly, many of the senior conservatives interviewed for this study suggested that the only problem in 1985 was that the party elected the wrong man. This goes directly to the conservative and BBM arrogance after even a decade and a half.\(^ {307}\) 15 years later they still didn’t realize, or want to admit that the problem may have been strategic and not structural. Given the closeness of the vote, with a few simple changes the Tories could have easily captured the few thousand votes necessary to win the three to four seats they would have needed to keep their minority government afloat. If they had only done that it wouldn’t have mattered if who they elected Premier – the economy was about to take off and all the new Premier had to do was ride the crest. As one observer pointed out, “In fact if that was all Miller had done – if he had pursued a slightly right wing agenda with an eye on limiting expenditures, Ontario would not have been in the fiscal disaster it found itself in 10 years later.”\(^ {308}\)

The same observer suggests the principal outcome of this arrogance was a lack of consideration for their opponent. “They never took the opposition seriously and they

\(^{305}\) Former Executive Director of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Interview, December 10, 1998.

\(^{306}\) Senior Cabinet Office Official, Interview, December 11, 1998. The day of the Peterson swearing in, Miller was selling car raffle tickets in the press gallery. An ironic combination of denial and insecurity.

\(^{307}\) Interestingly the BBM may have been the author of its own demise. When the BBM became so big and so identifiable, it became a target for all those who felt dispossessed. Part of the blame therefore should have gone on the BBM for not redefining itself and tending to its grassroots support.

\(^{308}\) Former Liberal Chief of Staff, Interview, December 11, 1998
never truly considered the possibility of being out of office.”\textsuperscript{309} Others agreed. “One of the reasons for this argumentative and conflict riddled atmosphere was that deep down, the conservatives never considered the possibility they could actually lose. “People felt that the winning the leadership was the real contest, the real prize. That we would win the subsequent election was simply assumed.”\textsuperscript{310} This arrogance came from several places. Not only from the extended length of the Tory dynasty but from Miller’s camp itself. “Miller ran a very competent leadership race – In many ways this may have been an eventual problem because it made the Miller people cocky.”\textsuperscript{311}

\textbf{Rats!}

The next major strategic error made by the Miller Team involved a PCB spill near Kenora in Northern Ontario. Environmental issues were high on people’s agenda in 1985, and nowhere more so than in Ontario, especially in the urban centres. Instead of moving decisively on the spill issue to ensure that the public was safe, the clean up done expeditiously and the legislation tightened so companies would be more careful, Miller did nothing.

After significant internal pressure, Miller eventually sent his environment Minister, Morley Kells, who badly mishandled the issue by suggesting the PCBs were not harmful and would do little more than kill a few rats. This statement made the Tories look like behemoths who were completely uninterested in environmental issues. As one senior Tory strategist lamented, “...we missed a key opportunity with the PCB spill. Miller should have capitalized. It didn’t help that the Liberals had a coherent, activist based environmental platform and an excellent spokesperson in Jim Bradley. Their message appealed and they got serious mileage out of the Kells screw-up.”\textsuperscript{312}

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“In retrospect, Miller should have gotten on a plane and handled the issue himself. Instead a minister was sent and the story became big news. Kells summary of the issue as “no big deal” cemented in many people’s minds the fact that Conservatives were not on track with modern issues in Ontario.”\textsuperscript{313}

\textbf{David Peterson and the New Look Ontario Liberals}

The PCB issue was indicative of the success the Ontario Liberals were having at the expense of the Miller campaign. In fact the Liberals had been garnering success after success literally since the moment Miller became Premier. As one Liberal strategist stated, “Miller’s leadership was heaven sent for us. Miller’s image allowed us to move into a part of the political spectrum we were quickly becoming very comfortable with.

\textsuperscript{309} Former Liberal Chief of Staff, Interview, December 11, 1998
\textsuperscript{310} Former Executive Director of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Interview, December 10, 1998
\textsuperscript{311} Former Senior PC legislative staffer, Interview, December 10, 1998. The PC arrogance is interesting, because, in the larger context it wasn’t realistic. The Davis era with its numerous minority governments had not been the high point of the Conservative dynasty. If ever there was a time for the Tories to whip themselves into a frenzied panic about losing the election, comparatively at least it should have been 1985.
\textsuperscript{312} Former Davis Appointee and longtime PC Activist, Interview, December 9, 1998
\textsuperscript{313} Personal friend of Miller’s and Conservative Activist, Interview, December 10, 1998
We knew Peterson wouldn’t win as a businessman. We simply couldn’t out Tory the Tories.”

With Miller as leader, the Liberals knew that ultimately, the election wasn’t going to be about left or right, instead the issues would be generational. The Liberals slogan, “Vote for your Ontario” was about youth and ethnic voting and key generational issues like the environment, equality and new choices.

Before Miller’s leadership win, the move to the centre left had been a big problem for Peterson. He had to contend with a right wing rump, the “clear grits” from Southwestern Ontario like Jack Riddell and Eddie Sergeant. The clear grits had a compelling argument. They had moved left under the Jewish Torontonian, Stuart Smith in 1981 and they had failed miserably. They didn’t want to go there again. What ultimately decided it was that the rump feared Bob Nixon. He was the centrist who forced them to keep their mouths shut. Some argued that “Nixon was the main reason Peterson even held on to the leadership for the first two years.”

While all this ideological pushing and shoving was going on, Peterson was building a party. The Ontario Liberals had never been organized on a provincial scale. In the times they came close to victory such as 1975, an ad-hoc organization had hung together for the election but then disbanded shortly after. There were pockets of organization in Toronto, Ottawa, and London but nothing provincial in scope and very little that could be classified as professional. Peterson professionalized the Party’s approach, organizing serious fundraising and recruiting better candidates. Don Smith of Ellis Don construction was key to Peterson’s fortunes. He was a rich construction company owner from London who literally scared money out of people. He took the organization to a different level.

The other person who took the Liberals to new places was Hershell Ezrin. A career diplomat who was heavily involved in the public relations campaign associated with Trudeau’s repatriation of the constitution, Ezrin was looking for new challenges. Keith Davey the Liberal rainmaker recruited Ezrin for Peterson in 1982. At the time, Peterson was bookish, overweight and terrible in the legislative arena. Yet Ezrin saw the makings of something exciting and joined on.

From that moment forward, Peterson ran a two-year campaign in anticipation of the election call. He did it outside of Metropolitan Toronto because he couldn’t get any media coverage in Toronto. “When the election came, what a lot of people didn’t realize was, that while Peterson was not well known by the provincial or national media, he knew the local press, he had good candidates, and for the first time in history he had the money to run a grown-up campaign.”

This fact was reconfirmed by a senior Liberal MPP who stated, “…Peterson took advantage of the openings that he got - this is an underrated talent. He was a clutch hitter and he made some key contact in the run up to the election. He had a good platform, he

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314 Senior Liberal Staffer, Interview December 16, 1998
315 Senior Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 11, 1998
had worked the province he had some quality candidates like Ian Scott and he was ready
to do battle as early as November 1984."^316

This kind of superior political organization made it easier for Peterson to take some
chances in the legislature. When the Player/Rosenberg Trust company scandal was
brought forward by the Liberals, Peterson asked 20-30 leader’s questions before the
media wrote one story. Finally the story broke and because the Liberals had been so
determined, the press had no option but to begrudgingly give the Liberals the credit for
the story and the research behind it.

Suddenly this made Peterson a player in the Legislature on a level with the golden boy of
the Ontario opposition, NDP leader Bob Rae. Peterson was getting national exposure and
starting to look like a credible leader. He was just starting to get his feet under him when
he was hit with a wave of defections. Having a number of his MPP’s jump ship, some to
retire and others to try their hand at federal politics was a serious blow to Peterson and
his credibility. Losing seats in the subsequent by-elections was even worse. As a rule,
the government party in Ontario almost always loses by-elections, and for Peterson to
lose crucial by-elections in the run-up to an election was a serious threat to his leadership.

For Peterson, these results were more than a little problematic. “At that point we would
have lost if Davis had called an election instead of quitting. We would have gotten
smoked. The only silver lining in the defections was that they gave the Liberals a wake
up call. It was like an angina attack. You figure you may as well go for it, tomorrow
could be my last day.”^317 Another senior Liberal MLA concurred. “The defections
allowed the more progressive in caucus and in caucus staff to make Peterson realize that
he had to lay out a much more detailed platform if he didn’t want to get annihilated in the
next election. The defections and the by-election losses were the impetus for positive
change.”^318

The key issue in the election for the Liberals was discipline. Peterson stuck to his
message, and was not distracted by outside issues. Peterson continually hammered on the
“New Ontario” theme and had small but symbolic policy issues such as a reform to make
beer and wine available in corner stores and changes to ensure equal pay for work of
equal value. These were referred to by the Liberals as “icon or milestone” issues, not
sufficient in and of themselves to change voting preference, but representative of a new
style and an image of a different way. They also gave Peterson a platform from which to
attack Miller as yesterday’s man. One of Peterson’s best lines in this regard was, “He
(Miller) was looking at the 1980’s in a rearview mirror.”^319

The other key factor was Peterson himself. Transformed from the overweight
professorial opposition leader, Peterson hit the campaign trail as a fit, modern, young
professional with fresh ideas and a seemingly boundless enthusiasm for the task at hand.

^316 Senior Liberal MPP, Interview, December 10, 1998
^317 Senior Liberal Party Executive Council Member, Interview, December 17, 1998
^318 Senior Liberal MPP, Interview, December 10, 1999
^319 Senior Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 11, 1998
Accompanied by his attractive actress wife and sporting a bright red tie as his political symbol, Peterson and his messages about the new economy and the new Ontario struck a chord with voters. Peterson’s upbeat messages were also in tune with the improving economics of that time. People were starting to feel more confident after the numbing recession of 1983 and Peterson represented that newfound confidence.

Said one long-time observer (and staunch New Democrat), “…my first reaction was – my god, it’s John Robarts. Viewing the Peterson promotional video was like seeing 15 minutes of Robarts’ twin. A good-looking young lawyer from London, who seemed like he would run the province like a benevolent CEO. Don’t forget that very few people knew Peterson before the election. He was able to take advantage of making first impressions during the intense period of an election. No preset opinions – he turned a lot of people over to him all at once.”

Catholic School Funding - again
That Miller was unable to exorcise Bill Davis’ ghost was most evident with regard to the Catholic School funding issue. Miller resented the fact that Davis had made the decision to fully fund the Catholic schools just days before he retired. Miller was left with trying to explain the issue and put in place some form of an implementation plan. Miller was uncomfortable with the very principle of Davis’ decision but abided by Davis’ bizarre and unreasonable demand that the issue not be discussed during the leadership debates. As Premier, Miller felt burdened by Davis’ decision but was uncomfortable contemplating reversing the decision or putting his own stamp on it.

As a result he ignored it and hoped it would not be a major campaign headache. At the beginning of the campaign, there was little protest over the decision, but as time passed opposition grew. Miller’s analysis of the situation had been a serious misread. In fact one Tory researcher stated, “The caucus staff ran a policy hotline for candidates and their campaign managers. The policy line was hammered during the campaign on questions about Catholic school funding. The Conservatives were trapped on the issue for legal reasons. Things got especially nasty after the Garnsworthy statement.”

The researcher was referring to the statement made on April 25, 1985 by Anglican Archbishop Garnsworthy of Toronto, a long time opponent of full funding. In reference to Davis’ flip flop on full funding and Miller’s blind loyalty to Davis’ position, Garnsworthy suggested, “…that this is the way Hitler changed education in Germany…by decree.” Garnsworthy’s comments made headlines across the province and were deemed by some to be the final nail in Miller’s coffin. If not decisive to the campaign results, the comments certainly had the effect of showing the Miller and his team were not the smooth managers and conciliators that their Tory predecessors had been. Others interviewed for this study confirmed this evaluation. “Only at about the midpoint in the campaign did Miller’s people realize the jam they were in and only then...

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320 Ontario Politics professor, Interview, December 14, 1998
321 PC Caucus Researcher, Interview, December 10, 1998
322 op. cit., Speirs, pp. 126-7
323 ibid
did Miller regain some focus. Miller was actually coming back somewhat but then Garnesworthy hit him right between the eyes.”

In hindsight, the Catholic School funding crisis needn’t have been the nemesis it was for Miller and the Conservatives. The Liberals were basically on the same side as the Tories on the issue and when the Liberals came to power in 1985, they handled the issue without serious problems. This may have been due, in part, with the Liberals higher comfort level with the Catholic Church hierarchy, but the fact remains that the issue was not intractable. A former Liberal cabinet minister gives this perspective. “More than taking one side or the other, Miller was lukewarm and unclear on the Davis pronouncement regarding the funding of Catholic schools. During the election Miller gave no details, he did not bring a bill forward, he didn’t start the ball rolling so the courts could decide. He took no action and, as a result, the issue remained a millstone for Miller and the Conservative party.”

The Last Ten Days

In retrospect, it was felt by a number of advisors that as Campaign Director, Kinsella should have “stepped on some throats.” The campaign started to fray badly going into the last weeks of the campaign. Experienced BBMer, John Tory was largely seen as the reason the campaign kept going at all. He single-handedly kept the campaign together. In desperation, Kinsella went on the bus and tried to explain to Miller that there was a competent campaign system in place that was not there to undermine the candidate but to help him. In the last 10 days the bus ran on time and Miller kept to message better than at any time during the campaign. It also helped that Peterson ran out of gas in the last week. The Liberals would argue that pulling Peterson back from all out campaigning was a conscious ploy designed to avoid scaring old Tories back to Miller. Either way, Miller did make some gains in the last week and even his most senior staffers thought he would win 65 seats at least.

Miller’s senior staff felt that, although there were problems with the Conservative’s campaign strategy, there would have been equally large challenges running Miller as a populist candidate. “There were not myths about Miller, he just wore bad suits. We didn’t suffocate his populist inclinations; he really didn’t have any. He won the leadership on competence not folksiness. The leadership was about Toronto versus the rest of the province, but it was not about the populist versus the status quo.”

The contrary argument would suggest that Miller’s folksy charm, particularly with the media was squelched from the first day of the campaign and the tensions that resulted severely hurt his public image. There seemed to be little effort to portray Miller as a kind, honest, hardworking individual. In fact there seemed to be little thought put into the managing of Miller’s image at all. It seemed to be that if he couldn’t immediately take Davis’ place in the election schema, then the poor outcome was his fault.

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324 PC Caucus Researcher, Interview, December 10, 1998
325 Former Ontario Liberal Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 14, 1998
326 Former Tory Campaign Manager, Interview, December 18, 1998
327 Former PC senior legislative staffer, Interview, December 10, 1998
The Miller “Style”
This argument symbolized one of the most significant problems in the Miller camp. While Miller and his handlers may have been able to agree he was not a traditional Tory, that is where the agreement ended. Many felt the problem was that Miller did not have what it took to properly seize the opportunity given. “Miller stumbled out of the gate, didn’t exude the capacity to lead: He had no sense of Ontarian’s need for a strong manager. He didn’t look confident. Miller liked the concept of being Premier, not the process of becoming Premier. It was like he wanted to be Premier, not because of what he could do with the job, but simply to be able to say that he had reached that particular pinnacle.”

Others concurred. “Frank Miller seemed adrift and completely lost from the night of the leadership vote until after the Accord was signed. Some people make better lieutenants than generals.”

Interestingly, many of the people that worked for Miller during the election and even during his leadership campaign had, in retrospect, similar views. “Maybe he didn’t have the royal jelly. He didn’t seem to possess that intangible element that a Conservative Premier needed to win re-elections. His performance was weak, he tried too hard to be like the common man. This worked in the leadership but not in the campaign.”

This is an interesting point in that as much as Miller didn’t have it, his staff wasn’t clear on what “it” was and how to get some of it to stick to their leader. They were unclear on what it was that continually propelled Davis into office.

Furthermore, in connection with Miller’s lacklustre performance, was the feeling among many that under Miller, the Ontario PC party was at a crossroads. Many felt that the loss was due to the change in basic ideology from centre left to centre right under Miller. Davis, Grossman, McMurtry and Timbrell were centre left and Miller was centre right. Centre left had always been successful in Ontario. Defenders of this theory point out that historically the Tory leadership is always more moderate than the party. (Just like the NDP leader has to be more centrist than many of his activists.) After 40 years, Miller the populist allowed himself to “...get caught in the traffic circle of traditional Ontario PC thinking. He let himself be manipulated and then in the worst possible response he became nasty.”

Throughout, Miller’s entire Queen’s Park career, one fact was strikingly clear. At no time was Frank Miller, the man, ever truly comfortable with Frank Miller, the politician. The
conflict between these two sides of Miller’s personality led to confusion, lack of will, skewed decision making, low confidence and ultimately, poor leadership. Prior to becoming a politician, Miller had a similar type of conflict in his professional life. As a trained chemical engineer, he worked in the United States and in Montreal for Alcan. Both positions were unfulfilling for Miller, and eventually he realized what he really wanted to do was interact with people. Selling cars and running a tourist operation in Muskoka fit this criteria extremely well and Miller realized considerable personal and financial successes as a result.

Similarly, in his riding, Miller was extremely at ease, he was able to talk to people, fix their problems where he could and generally be helpful. In return, the people of Muskoka returned Miller to Queen’s Park every four years with massive majorities. Muskokans loved his easy, affable manner, his capacity for hard work and his genuine populist nature. He was highly respected and rarely opposed.

In Queen’s Park, however, the situation was much different. As a minister of the crown, he still got along well with his peers, the opposition and the media, but philosophically he struggled. He was not comfortable with the compromises that had to be made in politics, particularly as a member in Bill Davis’s pragmatic, brokerage-style government. He lashed out at status quo wherever he could, but also kept his own counsel on many issues, which led to high levels of personal frustration and disenchantment. As a relatively junior Minister of Health he was asked by the very powerful Treasurer, Darcy McKeough to find significant savings in his Ministry. Cutting the size of government was something Miller the person could agree with and he went forward with the best proposals to do so that he could muster. Rather than praise and support from his caucus and cabinet for his initiative, in this case the closing of hospitals, he was vilified as a right wing hick, not only by the media but also by members of his own team.

As Treasurer, Miller wore his garish outfits not only to amuse but also to push back at the establishment and the un-elected, yet powerful, spin doctors in his own government. When his budget was badly compromised as a result of leaks, Miller’s instincts were to quit. Similarly, when Davis made the disastrous decision to buy in to Suncor, Miller’s first reaction was to get out of government altogether. Both would have been honourable decisions given Miller’s sense of integrity and political philosophy. Furthermore, going with his instincts on either of these decisions would have greatly increased Miller’s populist appeal and would have, in the longer term, increased his political opportunities. Yet he kept quiet and remained in government.

Regardless of the variety of conflicts in the Miller camp, the election result was still very much in doubt. “People paid little attention to the election and to our opposition because no one knew who Peterson was. Elections were 37 days long back then, not 28 days as is case currently. There was a huge undecided as late as 10 days before the vote.” Other Miller strategists concurred with this reading. “1985 was the first time in Ontario politics

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332 Miller Campaign Strategist, Interview, December 10, 1998
that the election was decided in the last two weeks of the election. This trend continued in 1990 with David Peterson and 1996 with Mike Harris.  

The 1985 Progressive Conservative Election “Win”

After the Garnesworthy episode, Miller’s prospects for a decisive electoral win all but disappeared. Despite the fact that Miller’s group did some of their best campaigning in the last week, on May 3, 1985, his party plummeted to 52 seats from 74, the Liberals went from 28 to 48 and the NDP gained 3 seats to hold 25 in total. Seats that the PC party had held for over 40 years were lost and a total of 8 cabinet ministers lost their seats. Perhaps most agonizing was the fact that Bill Davis’s own seat in conservative Brampton was lost to a Liberal, the same Liberal who had lost the previous election in the same riding by almost 16,000 votes. Miller, who was rumoured to have suffered a heart attack upon hearing the results, recovered sufficiently to declare victory and his firm intent to make the threadbare minority government situation work. Despite all the internal problems and the surprising strength of his Liberal opponent, Miller continued to believe the main reason for his downfall was the separate school funding issue.

Election night was a nightmare for Miller, not just because of the results but because he had not been prepared to expect the results. Despite the fact that Decima was doing rolling polls and had overnight results, Miller did not know the desperate nature of his situation until after the results were announced.

Miller personally felt let down by his party and let down by handlers. After the results had sunk in and Miller had started to come to grips with what had happened, he didn’t really know who he could trust. In the end he realized that it was not only his lacklustre campaign but, perhaps even more importantly, his lack of focused activity during the pre-election period that cost him the premiership. As he stated afterwards, “in retrospect, I should have surrounded myself with more able people and people I could trust to do their jobs well. I didn’t try hard enough to get Ed Stewart to stay. Ed said that he wouldn’t stay and I didn’t force the issue. I tried to get Tom Campbell over as a successor to Ed, but Hydro offered him twice the salary and he went there. Sally Barnes and Jim Fleck eventually came back to help but by then it was too late. Carman was a professional administrator. He was effective, but I didn’t know him and I couldn’t ask him for the quasi-political advice I needed. The other problem was that the power plays from the leadership carried over to the government transition. Everyone was fighting each other for turf rather than fighting the election.”

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333 Former PC senior legislative staffer, Interview, December 10, 1998. Miller’s supporters contend, in hindsight, that this represents an increased volatility in Ontario voting patterns. They say there is now less partisan loyalty and that elections are susceptible to being won or lost on one or more volatile issues. Some may construe this as a rationalization for Miller’s poor showing. It is important to remember that in 1987 there was no volatility in Ontario’s electorate as David Peterson won one of the largest majorities in Ontario’s history.

334 Miller in *Macleans*, May 13, 1985, pp. 15

335 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998
Miller was not the only one dumbfounded by the events of May 3rd. All four major polling groups predicted that the PC’s would receive between 41 and 43% of the vote, with the Ontario Liberals receiving between 31 and 34%. The actual results had the PC’s netting 37% and the Liberals 38%. It was a remarkable turnaround made only more noteworthy by the fact that for the first time in over 42 years, the Tory dynasty in Ontario was in jeopardy.

4.6 The NDP/Liberal Accord: A unique approach to governing

How much jeopardy was to be determined as Miller returned to Toronto to retake his position as Premier. Miller told reporters that the Progressive Conservatives had learned its lessons well about running minority governments and that he had little doubt that after discussions with the two opposition leaders, compromises could be reached so that the government could continue. Initially, it seemed that Miller was somewhat dazed by the results and unclear about just how precarious his position was. Similarly, David Peterson, jubilant from his surprising showing gave no early indication about his potential to take over as Premier. When asked about a possible alliance with the NDP, Peterson was careful when he said, “I haven’t had any discussions about a possible alliance and I don’t have any plans to do so.”

Despite his poor performance in the election, the spotlight immediately shifted to NDP leader, Bob Rae. Both leaders called Rae the next morning to feel him out on possibilities for running the government, but Rae felt that neither grasped the seriousness nor the full implications of the election result. Miller sounded like he assumed the Tories would continue in office while Peterson seemed to have little grasp of his own potential. Rae had no affinity with Miller, “Rae had a personal distaste for Conservatives, growing out of his experiences in Britain, where he had come to despise the Tories as the party of privilege. All his life, Conservatives had governed Ontario, and Rae didn’t want to go down in history as the man who had extended the life of the dynasty beyond its 42-year hegemony. Rae had also been disturbed by Miller’s peekaboo election performance, by his repeated assertions that he was being gagged, and he wondered what Miller’s real agenda was.

At the time, however, it was everything Miller could do just to hold his dispirited caucus together. After the election, the cabinet chose MPP’s Bob Elgie and Larry Grossman to discuss possible options with the NDP. Said Miller at the time, “I couldn’t have picked two worse people, both these cabinet ministers were extremely disloyal.” Others disagreed with Miller’s assessment, suggesting that particularly Elgie worked very hard to secure a deal with the NDP. “Elgie did everything possible to secure an agreement. He blew his brains out. Elgie traded heavily on his close personal relationship with NDP stalwart Elie Martel. Elgie came back and reported that they had been close with the

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336 David Peterson, in the Toronto Star, May 3, 1985, pp A
337 Speirs, pp. 133
338 Senior PC Cabinet Minister, Interview, January 7, 1999
NDP but in the end the NDP thought they would have more policy leverage with the Liberals."^{339}

Miller sat down on May 25, 1985 to discuss future options with Bob Rae. It was the day a massive tornado hit the Ontario community of Barrie. Rae demanded that any deal should include a firm date before which an election could not be called and a definite list of policies that would be carried out during that period. Miller tried to reason with Rae. Miller was reported to have said to him, “Why in the world would I want to have an election any time in the near future, don’t be daft.”^{340} But Rae demanded a firm date and Miller told him he would get back to him. Miller knew then that the Conservatives and the NDP were not going to get together. As one of the Liberal negotiators recalls, “If Larry or Dennis had of been leader they could have made a deal with the NDP. Some elements of the Tory party always had a strange symbiotic relationship with the New Democrats. Even at their most expedient, the NDP could not rationalize or defend propping up Miller.”^{341}

Other Queen’s Park observers concurred. “During the election, Miller had described the NDP as the party that ‘thrives on misery and hate.’ The NDP had hated the Tories for 40 years, particularly their arrogance. The arrogance was evident even after the Accord was signed. Phil Gilles, a young but influential Tory MPP was quoted publicly as saying he thought there still had to be some way out. Miller was never clear on whether he really wanted to make a deal with the NDP. An example of this was his post election cabinet. The NDP had explicitly said that Bette Stephenson could not be made Treasurer and she was anyway.”^{342}

Rae had more in common with Liberal leader Peterson and was a close personal friend of Peterson’s chief of staff, Hershell Ezrin. Rae knew that if there was any way his party was to share power with the Liberals as the government, his caucus would have to move fast with a plan for coalition. The idea for a signed two year coalition agreement came to Rae from his federal counterparts who explained that minority government was very hard on the opposition’s morale and human relations. They explained that if there was any way Rae could get a signed agreement with the Liberals on specific policies to be implemented within a set time period, he should try and do it. Despite terrific opposition from within his own caucus, Rae agreed to allow a set of NDP and Liberal negotiators attempt to negotiate an accord.

On May 28, 1985, the NDP and the Liberals signed the historic “Accord” document that would guide the governance of the Ontario government for the next two years. The four page document entitled “An Agenda for Reform: Proposals for minority government” outlined reforms covering freedom of information, patronage, the commercialization of health services, energy and environmental issues, separate school funding, ban on extra billing, pay equity, housing and worker’s compensation reform. The two parties agreed

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^{339} Former Secretary to Cabinet, Interview, December 11, 1998
^{340} Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998,
^{341} Senior Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 11, 1998
^{342} Queen’s Park historian and commentator, Interview, December 11, 1998
in the document that Peterson would form the government but not call an election for two years and in return the NDP would not move or vote non-confidence in the government.

As soon as the Accord was announced, PC caucus discipline went ‘right out the window.’ It became every person for themselves. Miller reflected later that if he had had more time in office, things would have been significantly different. He knew that he was not allowed the time needed to earn the credibility or authority that Davis had. Miller had no choice but to bring forward a Throne Speech and hope that it would pass in the house. In the days leading up to the delivery of the Throne Speech, Miller again wavered on whether to throw in the towel or continue to try and reconcile with one of the two opposition parties in an effort to retain power. As late as June 3, Miller was quoted in the provincial newspapers as saying he was prepared to enter opposition. For some time Miller toyed with the idea of asking Lieutenant Governor, John Black Aird, to dissolve the Legislature and call another election.

However, the reality of the situation continued to make itself clear to Miller and he publicly suggested that opposition would be a challenge and an opportunity. Privately, he continued to hold onto hope that the Liberal/NDP marriage would dissolve and his legacy would not be that of the man who led the PC dynasty into oblivion. Going back and forth on the wording of the Throne Speech from one that would espouse Miller’s own deep conservative views to one that reached out to the NDP, Miller ended up delivering one of the most embarrassing speeches in legislative history. The speech, which have been continually revised by Tory hacks desperate to hold onto power, was a major fob to the NDP and instead of being seen as an attempt at reconciliation, was seen as the last pitiful gesture of a sad desperate man. Miller was later to say, “The Throne Speech was my worst day in politics.”

While it may have been his worst day, Miller and the PC’s lost power well before the Throne Speech or the signing of the Accord. Of all those interviewed for this study, only one Conservative strategist suggested that Miller lost power after the election not during or before. “We didn’t lose power because of the election results. We lost power because after the election the party didn’t pull together. The second leadership started the day after the 1985 election.” This viewpoint, however, was in the minority. Everyone else that was asked about Miller’s chances of retaining power after the election said it was impossible. The demand for change was simply too strong by that point.

For the Liberals, the signing of the Accord was an enlightened piece of negotiation work that enabled David Peterson to lead a vote of non-confidence on Miller’s government on June 7, 1985 and then, less than three weeks later take over as the new Premier of Ontario. The Liberals would claim that the reforms in the Accord were already part of their platform and therefore not a significant compromise. The Liberals had no crisis of conscience in taking over the reins of power because as one of their newly minted cabinet

343 ibid.,
344 ibid., Interview, December 11, 1998
345 Former Executive Director of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Interview, December 10, 1998
ministers remarked, “We felt comfortable primarily because we won a greater percentage of the popular vote. It gave us the authority to consider a change of government. If the Conservatives had won the same number of seats with a higher percentage of the vote, our position would have been much more difficult.”

The NDP, while initially excited about their role in bringing down the Tory dynasty, were quietly disconcerted by the incredible outpouring of public support and positive media for the new Liberal Premier. Watching Peterson sign the accord, long time NDP MPP and Accord negotiator, Ross McClellan suddenly realized the gravity of his actions and asked rhetorically, “My God, what have we done?” Many New Democrats grumbled about not having negotiated at least one or two seats at the cabinet table for deserving NDP MPP’s. However, in hindsight the NDP must be generally satisfied with the Accord. It brought about some of the most progressive legislation in the history of the Ontario legislature and it allowed their leader sufficient profile to where he was able to successfully campaign for and win the Premier’s chair five short years later.

4.7 Conclusions

While Miller had serious conflicts with his staff, while he mishandled key issues and underestimated the strength of his opponents, it is important to remember that even half way through the 1985 campaign, the election was still his to lose. The impact of two generations of Conservative rule cannot be overlooked as a major contributing factor to a potential Tory win. “People paid little attention to the election and to our opposition because no one knew who Peterson was.”

However, there was one other variable that needs to be factored in. This was Miller’s unwillingness to distance himself from past Conservative regimes. Nowhere is this better documented than in Miller’s Election Day speech from Queen’s Park on March 25, 1985. He said, “If a government ever wanted to run on its record, this would be the time to do it. My government will build on the foundations that were put in place by William Davis. There is no need for radical change or a sudden shift in direction, only a change in emphasis… I am seeking a mandate to maintain and improve our social services, in keeping with the principles of decency and equity which have characterized the government of William Davis.”

This speech was a direct result of Decima polling. As Rosemary Speirs pointed out, the pollsters had told Miller in no uncertain terms that continuity with the Davis years had to be a key part of his message. This despite the fact that Miller was unlike Davis in nearly every way from their different upbringings, to their publicly opposing political and ideological perspectives to their drastically contrasting personal styles. Miller didn’t respect Davis’ positions on many key issues, he certainly had no time for the Big Blue

346 Senior Ontario Liberal Cabinet Minister, Interview
347 Ross McClellan in Speirs, pp. 1645
348 Miller Campaign Strategist, Interview, December 10, 1998
349 Frank Miller, Election Kick-off speech, Queen’s Park, March 22, 1985
Machine and their arrogance and overall he felt that his leadership victory was a repudiation of the old style of Ontario style politics by the grassroots such as himself. Why then did he allow himself to be manhandled into an election persona and campaign strategy, to trust polls that went against the most fundamental of his political instincts? Lack of confidence seems the most likely answer.

Lack of self-confidence contributed to Miller’s inability to properly lead. He second-guessed himself on all major decisions such as staff positions and policy direction. He resented Davis’s prolonged departure from the scene, yet followed his predecessor’s advice right to the end. He knew he had hit a positive chord with the media and the grassroots of the party and the province with his folksy down-home image, but in the end he did not have the capacity to defy the traditional powers of the Ontario Conservative Party.

Ultimately, this series of paradoxes led to Miller’s defeat and to the end of one of Canada’s most enduring political legacies. Ironically, much of Miller’s indecision came from second guessing his own conservative, Reagan-like fiscal notions. Over a decade later, a new Progressive Conservative leader, Mike Harris was elected to a majority government, on a platform that Frank Miller could have written himself. Fittingly, at Miller’s funeral on July 21, 2000, Premier Mike Harris told reporters, “Frank Miller had anticipated the need for the kinds of change that are now commonplace in administrations across Canada. He was 10 years ahead of his time.”

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350 Ontario Premier Mike Harris in the Muskoka Times, July 21, 2000, pg. 1
Chapter Five

Hardball Politics:
The Transition of
BC Premier Glen Clark
CLARK TIMELINE

Oct. 22
Clark is elected
MLA for
Burnaby-Kingsway

Oct. 17
Harcourt becomes
Premier

Nov. 15
Harcourt resigns

Jan. 19
Clark announces he will
launch public inquiry into
NCHS if elected leader

Feb. 18
Clark wins
leadership

Feb. 21
Scandal at BC Hydro
"Hydrogate" breaks,
Hydro Chair Laxton and
VP Sheehan fired by Clark

Feb. 22
Clark sworn-in
as Premier

Feb. 28
Clark names
new cabinet

Apr. 23
Premier Clark
makes public
TV address

Apr. 30
Budget announced,
Freeze on tuition, Hydro
and ICBC rates;
Hours later Clark
calls election

May 28th
NDP wins
majority
government

May 16th
Television
Leaders debate

Aug. 21
Clark resigns as
Premier amid
casino scandal;
Dan Miller voted
interim Premier
5.1 Introduction

1995 was a good year to be a Liberal in British Columbia. After a major breakthrough in 1991, in which the upstart party confounded the pundits by winning 17 of 75 legislative seats, the BC Liberal caucus had been beset by a series of difficulties and defections. By mid-1995 however, the party and the caucus started to look more focused and had coalesced around its new leader, Gordon Campbell. Moreover, through their improved performance in the legislature, the Liberals contributed, in no small measure, to the severe drop in fortunes of the NDP government and the public pressure for NDP Premier Mike Harcourt to resign. By the fall of 1995, the BC Liberals were up between 25-30 percentage points in the opinion polls and were confidently, albeit quietly, discussing taking over the reins of government.

Despite their role in his demise, Harcourt’s November 15th resignation still took the BC Liberals somewhat by surprise. More surprising was the immediate upwards spike in public opinion of almost 10 per cent the NDP enjoyed as a result of Harcourt’s departure.\footnote{Vancouver Sun, December 10, 1995, pp. B4. The BC Liberal caucus and staff understood there would be an increase in NDP popularity after Harcourt’s resignation, but none foresaw the full magnitude and extent of the rise. After three years of extensive research into NDP mistakes, particularly around the NCHS scandal, it was bitter irony for the Liberal staff that their efforts to force Harcourt’s retirement would ultimately lead to the re-election of the NDP.} Suddenly the NDP was back in the race, albeit as a significant underdog, an election call was imminent and the BC Liberals were forced to refocus their approach and strategies. This apparent need for refocusing manifested itself quickly. The very next weekend the BC Liberals were holding their own annual general meeting and convention in Vancouver. This meeting was to have been a key opportunity for solidifying party support behind Campbell and preparing the troops for the rigours of an election campaign. Harcourt’s resignation changed all this. Reports from the convention floor pointed out that, “...the turmoil in the NDP has overshadowed the event and has appeared to leave the Liberals without a clear target. Campbell’s main address to the delegates, redrafted at the last minute to virtually eliminate references to Harcourt, revealed a number of details of his election platform.”\footnote{Justine Hunter and Jim Beany, “Liberals vow to cut budget,” Vancouver Sun, November 20, 1995, B1-2}

While the last minute redrafting may not have been unusual, (Campbell was notorious for tinkering with his major public addresses) the contents of the speech were. Campbell and his most senior advisors felt a major announcement was needed, both to boost the spirits of the 900 plus delegates and to stem any further positive news coverage the NDP was receiving as a result of the Harcourt resignation. As it turned out, the policy announcement Campbell decided to deliver at that convention would ultimately play a significant role in one of the most remarkable political turnarounds in Canadian history.

This chapter will examine the events surrounding the Harcourt resignation, the subsequent transition and the extraordinary circumstances that led to the electoral victory of British Columbia’s 31st premier, Glen Clark.
5.2 Background

At no time had the idiosyncratic nature of BC’s politics been more evident than during the period in and around the NDP’s 1991 general election victory. Social Credit (Socred) Premier Bill Vander Zalm had had a tumultuous term in office and eventually resigned in April 1991 over conflict of interest charges. Vander Zalm’s conflict issues were not the only problems facing the Social Credit through this period. Writing about the Vander Zalm government, former deputy minister of labour, Graham Leslie, outlined no less than sixteen confirmed cases of conflict of interest, twelve breaches of ethical conduct and numerous cases of abuse of office and fiscal mismanagement. After Vander Zalm’s resignation, Socred minister, Rita Johnson took over the government on an interim basis and was eventually elected leader. Through the late 1980’s the NDP had organized itself into an effective opposition and by the summer of 1990 was ready to fight an election. However as a result of Vander Zalm’s continued difficulties and Johnson’s inability to put together an effective election machine, the formal election announcement was put off several times.

The 1991 General Election

The election finally got under way on September 19, 1991, with the NDP far and away the early favorites to win power. Mike Harcourt, the NDP leader, was a storefront lawyer and a former mayor of Vancouver. He was not seen as a radical socialist, but rather as a compassionate moderate with an understanding of how to run government. He was at odds with BC’s history of personality politics and he embraced this difference. As he himself stated in the 1991 election campaign, “I’m a political leader, not an entertainer. I’m a populist in a sense that I believe in gaining consensus. Look what charisma got us under Bill Vander Zalm.”

But while Harcourt’s background and positioning as a moderate helped him in the short-term to contrast with Vander Zalm and the Socreds, it also proved to be a long-term hindrance once he became Premier. As one columnist correctly pointed out after the fact, there had always been a group within the NDP that doubted Harcourt and his credentials. “Nice Mike Harcourt, product of the middle class, is the son of an insurance salesman. No horny-handed child of the labour movement. No grinding poverty to stoke the ideology. The soon-to-be-ex premier of British California is a small-L liberal. Always has been. Always will be. Always irritated the true believers.”

Regardless of any internal problems the NDP may have had, the Social Credit Party under Rita Johnson was never able to mount a serious campaign challenge. First, Johnson herself was seen as a Vander Zalm loyalist and she did little to dissuade people of that fact, both before and during the campaign. Then, immediately after the election call, a series of very serious allegations were made against several of her candidates.

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354 One senior media personality recalls, “Getting Vander Zalm to quit was like ‘killing a vampire’. Interview, January 15, 1999
355 Canadian Press Newswire, November 15, 1995
356 Allen Fotheringham, Financial Post, November 18, 1995
forcing her to remove them from the candidates list. The similarities in the resignations of Bill Vander Zalm and Mike Harcourt, led many of the individuals interviewed for this study to compare the intra-party transitions of their replacements, premiers Rita Johnson and Glen Clark. As one observer recounted, “Rita didn’t have the energy, the vision, the agenda, the strong communications skills, she had no vision and no confidence – the public and the civil service sensed this and responded in kind. She had heart and a sense of the province and maybe more loyalty than Clark. She didn’t realize she had to run against everything her party had stood for so long. She didn’t re-energize the party, more likely most in the party thought “thank god someone took the job.”

The major turning point in the campaign came during the televised debate. Liberal leader Gordon Wilson, who had to stage public protests just to be included, portrayed himself as a reasonable outsider who, like all British Columbians, was concerned about the deterioration of politics in BC. Wilson’s approach proved wildly popular and his support rose dramatically in the last week of the campaign, with the Liberals taking voter support from both the Social Credit and the NDP. In the end, the NDP won 41 per cent of the popular vote and 51 of the 75 legislative seats, the Liberals picked up 17 seats, while the Social Credit dropped to seven.

Harcourt’s team had commenced formal transition preparations well in advance of the election victory and, as a result, enjoyed an extended “honeymoon” with the public and the media. However three factors marred Harcourt’s tenure, the same three issues that would eventually lead to his premature departure from government. First, while Harcourt was seen as a genuine and even a nice man, he was also perceived to be indecisive on key issues. His management of BC’s position on key constitutional issues led to the derisive nickname, ‘Premier Bonehead.’ Similarly, his attempts to instill a true ‘cabinet’ style of government and his desire to lead by consensus were seen as weak and ill advised.

In regard to Harcourt’s relationship with his own party, particularly towards the end of his tenure, one writer commented, “...The essential problem of Mike Harcourt is that he is too nice. A tougher leader would have had their hides for rugs by now.”

The second problem was Harcourt’s inability to distance himself from the NDP’s Nanaimo Commonwealth Holding Society (NCHS) scandal. This scandal involved a

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357 Bill Reid, a former Socred cabinet minister had a civil suit brought against him for alleged conflict of interest, the Socred candidate in Vander Zalm’s riding was found to be a key member of a white supremacist group and another former cabinet minister, Jack Kempf, had criminal charges laid against him.


360 This despite the fact that the Socreds had done absolutely nothing to facilitate the hand over of the Premier’s office to the NDP. Recalls one Harcourt staffer. “When we got there, the (Premier’s) office was absolutely deserted and the phones were ringing off the hook. There was no staff, no paper, no evidence of any kind that the Socreds had been there.” Senior Harcourt Staffer, Interview, December 11, 1999

361 Financial Post, October 21/23, 1995, pp. 25
complex and systematic bilking of Nanaimo based charities of funds that were then diverted to NDP political activities. Harcourt was never accused of direct involvement in these criminal schemes – most of the actual events had happened more than a decade before. The problem for Harcourt was that through a combination of poor issue management skills and an inability or unwillingness to face the problem head on, he constantly found ways to keep the story current - thereby inadvertently connecting himself and his party to the scandal in perpetuity.\footnote{This point was highlighted by the fact that the RCMP actually raided NDP headquarters not once but twice, looking for evidence in the NCHS case. Both raids were televised. BC Liberal caucus members, watching these unprecedented events unfold, can be forgiven for believing the seemingly irrefutable fact that the NDP would never again be in a position to lead a government in BC.}

The NCHS scandal was unlike many of the other problems Harcourt’s government faced because it went right to the core of the party’s values. Populism is based in part on a certain moral righteousness. For right wing populists this often has to do with small town values and certain social conservative beliefs. For the left wing populists it meant being above the corruption and sleaze of status-quo politicians and above the callous actions of the mean spirited business class. For the NDP in British Columbia, this traditionally meant castigating the Social Credit as a “government of car dealers” and as a generally evil lot. The NCHS scandal changed all this. As a less than objective commentator, Rafe Mair still makes a valid point when he states, “…looking back on the calamitous “bingogate” (NCHS) affair, one thought springs to the fore – the NDP finally lost its virginity and became a full-fledged whore like the rest. The party had always flaunted its innocence – it was the party of J.S. Woodsworth, M.J. Coldwell, Stanley Knowles, clearly men or rectitude, and of course Tommy Douglas, who is now considered a saint.”\footnote{Rafe Mair, “There in no sin-free political alternative in BC any more,” Financial Post Daily, November 24, 1995, pp. 13.}  

Harcourt’s other principal problem was in regard to his ability, or lack thereof, to manage the government’s finances and in particular, government spending. Harcourt had had strong economic growth for the first three years of his mandate. But by 1995, ominous clouds were forming on BC’s economic horizon. Early in 1995, the BC government scaled back its economic growth projections from 3 per cent to 2.7 per cent. In September 1995, Statistics Canada downgraded its capital spending projections for BC by almost five per cent. The rate of net in-migration, typically an important economic indicator in BC, began to slow significantly in 1994-95. Urban housing starts were down 31 per cent in the first seven months of 1995 and job creation by June had slowed to 1,000 new jobs compared to 34,000 in Ontario.\footnote{Statistics from Western Report, “Deathbed restraint; the NDP discovers its spending spree didn’t boost employment in BC,” September 25, 1995, pp. 13. (It should be noted that many in BC feel that the BC report and the Western Report both have a significant right wing bias and are prone to selective use of statistics)} Major media outlets were not yet calling it a recession or even the start of a recession. Moreover, Harcourt’s government was still reporting a balanced budget. However, there were significant indicators that the government was in serious trouble fiscally. Despite the downgrading of growth and revenue projections, most ministries in the government had double digit spending
increases. Ministries like Aboriginal Affairs were up over 38 per cent and, in part due to the NDP’s higher spending on income assistance, social services spending was spinning out of control.

Later in the year, Auditor-General George Morfitt would announce that in the four years the NDP had been in power, the provincial debt had increased by a massive $10 billion. By 1995, the NDP had increased the civil service to over 40,000, an increase of over 65 per cent from 1991 levels. At the same time, the NDP was squandering hundreds of millions of dollars on mega-projects and was losing anticipated windfalls such as $250 million expected from the Bonneville Power Administration. Those more sympathetic to the NDP’s plight would suggest that while Harcourt had his political difficulties in the area of fiscal administration, BC still had the smallest public service in Canada. They would go on to state that most of Harcourt’s problems came not from mismanagement but rather from the unrealistically high public expectations he generated with his oft repeated campaign promise that the NDP would only spend money that was available.

Regardless, the pressure of these three major issues, along with a long list of other problems came to a head for Harcourt on the evening of February 22, 1995. In the previous 18 months Harcourt had continued to fight to shore up his public support. He had revamped his approach to government, saying he was going to be more ‘hands on,’ he initiated a major reshuffling of cabinet and had fired several key staffers. As part of his strategy to tell British Columbians that he had control of the government and in particular, control of the government’s finances, he planned several electronic ‘Town Hall’ meetings to relay his record on these issues directly to the public. The first of these meetings was scheduled on February 22.

As Harcourt himself concedes in his autobiography, “…the Town Hall meeting bombed!” He felt, correctly, that the planning for the event was unfocused, the production work was atrocious and the audience abusive. As it turned out the event was more than just a major technical and political fiasco. As he states, “…looking back, that bleak event precipitated the unraveling of my career in politics. I had taken a lot of abuse and met a lot of challenges over the years, but “Black Wednesday” started the ball rolling for eight months of pure hell for me and my family. It did not stop rolling until the autumn and my decision to retire from political life.”

Premier’s Harcourt’s resignation – ‘taking one for the team…’
If the town hall meeting got the ball rolling, the handing down of a comprehensive report on the NCHS provided Harcourt with the final impetus to resign. To that point, Harcourt had been under significant pressure to quit. The release of forensic auditor, Ron Park’s NCHS report on October 13, 1995, only intensified this pressure. One cabinet minister, Joan Smallwood, had spoken out publicly against Harcourt’s handling of the scandal and was summarily fired for her efforts. Others, including a group of key ministers, dubbed

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365 The Bonneville Power Administration fiasco was an ill-fated mega-deal with an American power company overseen by then Minister of Finance, Glen Clark. Other statistics, ibid., Western Report, pp. 14
366 From Mike Harcourt’s recollections in Mike Harcourt and Wayne Skene, Mike Harcourt: A Measure of Defiance, 1996, pp. 135
the “gang of six,” confronted Harcourt with polls showing the premier’s personal popularity was spiraling out of control because of the scandal. One source suggested, “It wasn’t a threatening meeting. It was more like, “these are the facts, Mike, what are you going to do about them?”

Harcourt was also getting advice on this subject from another source. For some time, Harcourt had convened an informal “Breakfast Club” of influential NDP members who got together regularly to assist him in making critical decisions about steering his government. The Club started two years into Harcourt’s mandate out of a concern that Harcourt’s government was drifting. The group met weekly and consisted of key NDPer’s such as John Laxton, Ken Georgetti, David Levy, and lawyer, Don Rosenbloom. They were all personal friends of Harcourt and they tried to provide him with big picture advice. “Our only rule is that we would not lobby Mike for our pet projects.”

The group was not shy about telling the Premier about his staff. “On several occasions, we attacked various members of his staff as being too controlling of Mike’s time and policy directions.” The group was largely responsible for Harcourt’s mid-course correction in 1993 and is also credited with convincing Harcourt to move Glen Clark back into a key position after he had been demoted from the Minister of Finance spot. “It was certainly our wish as a group for Mike to bring Glen back in from the cold.” But after a period of time, the group advised Harcourt that even this was not enough. While there was much speculation that Harcourt was forced from office by advisors, friends and key cabinet ministers, sources close to Harcourt say the decision was not predetermined or even part of a major plan. “His reason for quitting was simple – He read the Parks report and said ‘I’m toast.’ He couldn’t continue to deal with the attacks on him and his family. He is not naturally thick skinned.”

Even with all the build up, Harcourt’s resignation took everyone by surprise, including the now infamous ‘gang of six.’ One insider recalls, “…the day he quit, I called Joy MacPhail and she was practically in tears – ‘I can’t believe it,’ were her exact words. The atmosphere at the cabinet table was highly emotional – the cabinet was shocked. Harcourt explained it to them simply, “I’m tired of having BCTV parked in front of my house.”

Harcourt was exemplary in defeat. Although he had an intense interest in seeing several projects wrapped up, particularly in the areas of his environmental initiatives, East Vancouver public housing and the native treaty agreements, he understood the need to

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367 The infamous “gang of six” included senior cabinet ministers, Glen Clark, Moe Sihota, Joy MacPhail, Dan Miller, Andrew Petter and Elizabeth Cull. On September 2, 1995, Vancouver Sun Columnist Vaughn Palmer reported that this group was sharing decision-making power with the Premier and is in fact “more popular and influential within the party than Harcourt himself.”

368 Canadian Press Newswire, November 15, 1995

369 Laxton would regularly violate this rule as he constantly lobbied Harcourt for an international soccer pitch to be based in Vancouver, Laxton’s personal passion.

370 All quotes in this paragraph taken from an Interview with a senior NDP consultant, January 14, 1999

371 To be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

372 Senior NDP consultant, Interview, January 14, 1999
clear the decks for the next leader. On the day of his resignation he said, “I consider it essential that the work of the government continue to another term in office. It is my opinion that the task can best be carried on by a new leader who will be free of some of the baggage that I have been harnessed with. I have sought the truth about the past regardless of whether it might be considered by some to be to our political disadvantage I have never shied away from the truth and the consequences that come from the truth being told.”

Columnist Vaughn Palmer pointed out that Harcourt comment about the truth was a parting shot at the “gang of six” who made no secret of their belief that it was suicidal to dig too deeply into the NCHS morass. However in the rush to consider his replacement, these parting comments were largely overlooked. Rather, Harcourt’s seemingly heartfelt comments about the toll of public office on his family won him a modicum of begrudging respect, respect that would help, in part, lay the groundwork for the NDP’s re-election. Harcourt’s departure was so well received the major papers were calling for a possible NDP election win even though the party was 25 points behind at the time. “Premier Mike Harcourt’s decision Wednesday to quit politics has given his party a chance at re-election next year.”

Glen Clark - Premier in waiting
Since the NDP were so near the end of their mandate when Harcourt resigned, the decision was made that an interim premier not be appointed in Harcourt’s place. Instead, Harcourt was expected to stay on until a leadership race could be held. A positive side effect of this decision was the perception that there was little or no gap between Harcourt’s resignation and swearing in of a new leader. This meant that the NDP were able to take the momentum gained from the positive media coverage generated by the resignation and seamlessly parlay it into a sense of action and urgency around the leadership race.

Mr. Clark was immediately perceived to be a frontrunner in the race. He was quoted on the day of Harcourt’s resignation, saying, “Mr. Harcourt’s legacy is outstanding and his conduct today was really incredible. He made this decision on his own and I’m very sad about it.” Sad or not, the resignation offered Clark an opportunity afforded few politicians, the chance to become Premier without the facing the electorate in a general election. Everything in his background suggested he would make the most of the opportunity.

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373 Mike Harcourt in the Vancouver Sun, November 16, 1995, B2 – Harcourt was always very concerned about transition issues. After his resignation he ensured that his key strategists Hans Brown and Chris Chilton got involved in making sure the transition was smooth. Interestingly, their concern was not about a smooth bureaucratic transition, but rather to ensure that the new leader had the information he or she needed to fight the next election.

374 Vaughn Palmer, Vancouver Sun, November 16, 1995

375 op. cit., Vancouver Sun, November 16, 1995, B2. Once resigned, Harcourt continued to do the party a great service by keeping quiet. As one long time political observer noted, “To bring this off the departing premier has to keep his mouth shut. Bennett was a perfect example of this. He let Vander Zalm run against him. Bennett more or less shut up for two years. Harcourt did the same thing for Clark.

376 Glen Clark in the Vancouver Sun, November 16, 1995, B3
Glen Clark was born in Nanaimo, British Columbia on November 22, 1957. The son of a union painter, much has been made of his hardscrabble upbringing in east end Vancouver. As an undersized high school slotback, Clark was known for his grit and cockiness rather than his athletic ability. At university, he studied political science and eventually got his Master’s in Community Planning, under the watchful tutelage of his thesis advisor, friend and future deputy minister, Tom Gunton. While completing his graduate studies, Clark also worked as an organizer for the Ironworker’s Union. For two years he stood outside the gate of the Ebco Industries plant in Richmond talking to workers. Due largely to his efforts and after a decade of successful resistance, the plant eventually succumbed to unionization.

In 1985, the 27-year-old Clark won the NDP nomination in the riding of Vancouver Kingsway. “Glen had a major battle against NDP heavyweight Margaret Burrell. There were over 1,000 people at that nomination. This was a big deal in East Van in the middle eighties.” Clark went on electoral victory in 1986 and was named the party’s finance critic. He became part of the NDP’s young “ratpack,” a group in caucus who relentlessly attacked the Socreds for their indiscretions and political screw-ups. After the NDP won the 1991 election, Clark became the youngest minister of finance in BC’s history. It was here that his career’s upward trajectory finally started to level off. Clark delivered two deficit budgets and increased the debt by over $6 billion, which won him the label, “Tax and Spend Clark.” Nor did Clark shy away from his record as a spender. As Vaughn Palmer outlines, “…in Opposition, Mr. Clark had claimed, “there’s absolutely no magic to balancing the budget in BC” and he’ boasted, “it’s absolutely one of the easiest things I could imagine doing.” In government, a balanced budget was the farthest thing from his mind.” Clark made several other public missteps, the most telling of which was his proposal to implement a series of ‘wealth taxes,’ the first of which was an extra tax on homes worth more than $350,000. This move sparked a public outcry, the proposal was withdrawn and, as part of Harcourt’s restructuring efforts, Clark was removed from the Finance portfolio after just two years.

As mentioned, by 1993 Premier Harcourt knew he had to take his government in a new direction. Publicly he suggested he had been too laissez-faire with his cabinet and would have to take a more hands on role in the future. A major cabinet shuffle was integral to Harcourt’s plan to reposition himself as a forceful leader. One of the keys to the shuffle was to demote his firebrand, free spending Minister of Finance, Glen Clark. Clark accepted the demotion because he understood the need for change. However, as someone who is always acutely aware of the political dynamic, he also understood that he still had significant leverage with the Premier’s office. As a result, while other new ministers were being told about their portfolios, Clark was privately negotiating the size of his new ministry with the premier’s deputy minister, Doug McArthur. When the dust settled, Clark had haggled (some would say – bullied) his way into a quasi-super ministry of job

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377 Former Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
378 Vaughn Palmer, “If a Premier Clark is anything like the Minister was, watch out,” the Vancouver Sun, January 9, 1996, A10
creation and growth. The formal name of his ministry, Employment and Investment, hardly did justice to the power he now wielded.

Clark had open-ended responsibilities for all job creation schemes in the public and private sector including infrastructure development and science and technology. As well he gained direct control of four crown corporations – transit, ferries, hydro and public buildings – and indirect control of all the others. As respected journalist Vaughn Palmer pointed out, it didn’t take long for the new responsibilities to go to Clark’s head. Within days of the appointment Clark was heard boasting, “...now I get to play Santa Claus.”

It was clear from the beginning that Glen Clark had astutely calculated the political importance of his role as economic development minister. In the summer of 1994, when the NDP were announcing their commuter rail project from Mission to Vancouver, Premier Harcourt was on the podium, but everyone knew that it was Minister Clark’s event. “That’s it for you guys in Coquitlam,” maverick cabinet minister Glen Clark joked in a private aside to the area’s New Democratic Party MLA’s, before their train rolled up to the platform and within earshot of waiting microphones. “Gawd, we’re shoveling money off a truck.”

The ‘Art of the Deal’
Clark’s propensity for major deals and “mega-projects” is well documented. As one NDP insider suggested, “Clark may be a political populist, but he is an elitist on business issues. He suffers from a severe case of Wacky Bennett hero worship and he is fascinated by the ins and outs of the deal making and mega projects.” A high profile example is the $1.2 billion Island Highway project, which guaranteed that only union labour could be used during the highway’s construction. This ‘sweetheart deal’ as it was referred to by the opposition and the BC coalition of independent contractors, was largely authored by Clark and was reported as having cost BC taxpayers over $200 million in extraneous labour cost. He also spearheaded the fast ferry initiative, a project designed to revitalize the ship building industry in BC. Clark got a lot of political mileage out of the fast ferry initiative, partly because he promised it would be on time and on budget. He stated on more than one occasion that he would oversee the cost of the project ‘right down to the toilet paper.’ While the series of announcements and photo opportunities afforded Clark were beneficial politically, the project would end up being at least $200 million over budget and would be characterized as one of the worst government investments in British Columbia’s history.

With regard to Clark’s unwavering interest in the ‘big deal,’ many point as well to his open affection for self-made, BC billionaire, Jimmy Pattison. They suggest that what Clark may have lacked in business acumen, he made up with a serious business enthusiasm. This in turn put him a ‘bad box’ – a corporatist mindset – in which organization, concepts and marketing vision came before a real understanding of people.

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379 Vaughn Palmer, “Clark loses no time building new empire,” *The Vancouver Sun*, September 27, 1993, pp. A10
380 Glen Clark quoted in *The Vancouver Sun*, June 11, 1994, pp. A14
381 Senior Political Advisor, Interview, November 8, 1998
An oft-raised example was Clark’s role in reducing stumpage costs. “The recent move to reduce stumpage costs for major forest companies in BC was much more costly in real and political terms for Clark with his core supporters than if he had cut the small business tax or done something equally meaningful for the investment climate in B.C. But this is all part of Clark’s background - what he lives for more than anything else is to be ‘part of the deal.’”

As the possibility of Clark becoming the next Premier began to take hold, there was no shortage of opinions about his abilities and character. With regard to his political skills, one of his toughest critics, BC Liberal MLA Gary Farrell Collins, acknowledged that, “…you can’t take anything away from the guy in terms of smarts and determination. He’s their strongest campaigner but he’s also the one with the worst ideology.”

Similarly, public-policy analyst Gerry Kristianson suggested, “…you can love Clark or you can hate him but you can’t say he doesn’t have a vision. He knows what he wants to do in politics. He doesn’t want to be a footnote premier.” A co-worker of Clark’s reinforces the notion of his steely determination. “One of Clark’s key characteristics is his focus. ‘I would not spend time on things not important’ – he used to say. He never got off subject, he didn’t buy into people’s personal agendas – he was always focused.”

This focus had its drawbacks however. As Clark himself confessed, “I’m super aggressive, you know, like really tough and aggressive and I think I’m little bit intimidating to women.”

David Mitchell concurred with regard to Clark’s passion for raw politics: “Glen Clark genuinely seems to enjoy politics. He seems to love every aspect of the job; he devours every aspect of the job. He likes people, he’s good with people, he’s outgoing, he has a joie de vivre about him, he’s engaged by ideas and he seems to have purpose.”

Mitchell tempers his comments by suggesting that while there is general passion for politics, it remains misguided. “Despite his youth, he is sadly out of date in his political ideas. He actually still believes in the activist, interventionist state and by subscribing to that theory so wholeheartedly he shows himself to be out of step with the times.”

Actually pinning down Clark’s political ideas has proven to be, at best, challenging. Some felt he epitomized the ideal socialist leader, “He (Glen Clark) is a true believer, as Harcourt was not. He is a protégé of Bob Williams, the intellectual guru of the party who ran the Dave Barrett agenda and for a while that of Harcourt before being purged because of the nervousness of B.C. businessmen.” Reform Leader Jack Weisberger reiterates

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382 Senior Political Advisor, Interview, November 8, 1998
384 Canadian Press Newswire, January 13, 1996
385 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999
386 Glen Clark quoted in The Vancouver Sun, June 11, 1994, pp. A15 Clark was generally lambasted for this comment and eventually had to clarify.
387 David Mitchell, in The Vancouver Sun, January 27, 1996
388 David Mitchell, in BC Report, January 22, 1996, pp. 9
389 Allen Fotheringham, Financial Post, November 18, 1995
this view. “He’s a throwback to the NDP socialist philosophies of the 1970’s. He’ll scare the wits out of most BC voters.”

Eventually Clark would try to distance himself from this type of positioning. After he became leader he told CBC-TV that, deep down, he was a conservative. He said he had tapped into the same political vein that had elected Tories in Alberta and Ontario. “The appeal of Ralph Klein, of Mike Harris, that’s the same appeal I’ve been making. Don’t call me a socialist. That’s an “old label. Its pejorative.”

Key Clark influencers
Whatever the spin, the fact remains that Glen Clark’s ideas were steeped in the more traditional socialist beliefs about the interventionist nature of the state. Many of these ideas were nurtured during his time studying under Tom Gunton. Gunton was an associate professor in resource management at Simon Fraser University and has published articles on BC’s economic development and the need for greater government intervention in the economy, including public entrepreneurship, more government stewardship of the province’s forests and heavier taxation of unfinished natural resource products. With regard to the national trend of governments focusing more on controlling expenditure, Gunton has written, “…policies like these are fundamentally misguided. A more intelligent response to a cyclical downturn in resource revenue would have been to increase social spending…” As mentioned, it was at SFU that Gunton befriended Glen Clark and became his mentor. As minister, Clark brought Gunton in as a special advisor and further promoted him to deputy minister of Finance. When Clark was fired from Finance, Gunton was also shuffled to the Ministry of the Environment to work with Mr. Clark’s close friend, Environment Minister Moe Sihota.

As deputy of environment, Mr. Gunton gained a reputation of being tough on corporations and as being plugged in to the most ideological ministers such as Clark, Moe Sihota and Andrew Petter. Later, as a member of Clark’s transition team, Gunton continually traversed the line between political staffer and senior bureaucrat. As an example, Vaughn Palmer points to a particularly sensitive and irregular Freedom of Information request made by Mr. Gunton to the Ministry of Finance asking for the amount of corporate capital tax paid by BC companies. Palmer points out that by amazing coincidence, “These figures then turned up in several Glen Clark press releases and in at least one NDP election ad.” Gunton would go on to play a key role in the preparation of the 1996 budget and in Clark’s subsequent election campaign.

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390 Reform Leader Jack Weisgerber, in BC Report, January 22, 1996, pp. 9
391 Terence Corcoran, “B.C. tries pragmatic hypocrisy” Globe and Mail, June 5, 1996,
393 Vaughn Palmer, “Clark connection in queries about corporations’ taxes raises questions,” The Vancouver Sun, May 21, 1996, A6
394 Noted national columnist, Robert Sheppard would remark, “It’s the first election campaign I’ve ever seen in which a top civil servant – Tom Gunton – is acknowledged to be working on the campaign ‘in his spare time.” In the Globe and Mail, May 28, 1996, pp, A7
The other key advisor to Clark at this time was his executive assistant, soon to be principal secretary, Adrian Dix. The two shared not only a passion for sports and politics, but as well, the ownership of a condominium in Victoria. Dix was a fiercely private person, but had a reputation as an extremely hard worker, a ferocious campaigner and as being unwaveringly loyal to his boss. Dix would eventually leave the Premier’s office in and around the time Clark was under scrutiny for his involvement in what was referred to as the “Bingogate” scandal. Dix played a major role in the construction of Clark’s leadership and election bids. One of Dix’s principal sources of political inspiration was the book, “Hardball: How Politics is Played” by American political strategist, Christopher Matthews. One of the principal tenets of the book is that, “position is everything,” a truism that would play a crucial role in the rapid ascendency of Clark. 395

Clark’s own literary inspiration came from the words of noted American author and public servant, Robert Reich. As one senior civil servant close to Clark at the time remembers, “The leadership was a dry run for the election. Clark had a sneaking suspicion that the NDP’s problem was not just Harcourt, but more importantly that the party generally was losing its way. Deep down he knew that the best way to distinguish himself from Harcourt was to have a distinct agenda. The basis of this agenda was the Robert Reich text, “The Welfare of Nations.” 396

The important part of this book for Clark is the way in which Reich redefines “us” versus “them.” For Reich, the traditional “us” no longer exists in today’s society. In the case of the economy of a country like Canada for example, Reich would argue that is was never “us” (Canada) versus “them” (the rest of the world.) Rather, the “us” now represents the middle and lower class and the “them” are the capitalists who are realizing huge profits from the globalization of the world’s economy.

One of Reich’s principal points is that, “...we and they belong to fundamentally different communities.” 397 For Reich, community is no longer defined by political boundaries. Society and economy are no longer linked – and the new question that needs to be answered by those in power is; “do we want to make the sacrifices necessary to take care of society?” There can be little doubt that the writings of Reich had more than a little influence on Clark’s eventual choice of a campaign slogan – “I’m on your side.”

Clark also depended on sources within the labour movement for guidance and support. After Harcourt resigned, the BC Federation of Labour conducted a poll. The principal question asked was, “Some people say the NDP has moved too far to the centre away

395 Christopher Matthews, Hardball: How Politics is Played – told by one who knows the game, New York: Harper Perennial, 1988, pp. 212. Another one of Mathew’s principles is “to always keep your enemies in front of you.” There can be no doubt that this influenced some of Clark’s stranger appointments such as those of Brian Smith to Hydro, David Mitchell to Conflict Commissioner, Bob Plecas to Deputy to the Premier and Gordon Wilson to Deputy Minister. All were avowed non-NDP’ers and yet, with the exception of Mitchell, were inspired political appointments.

396 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999

from its roots, do you agree or disagree? The BC Fed analysts deemed the findings remarkable. They found 56 per cent of the general population, not just NDP supporters, felt that the NDP had drifted too far to the centre.

The BC Fed staff immediately made this information available to the party and to Glen Clark and the reaction was the same – that the NDP had to move to the left of the political spectrum in order to regain their core support. "The poll confirmed we had lost our base and for the NDP in BC that base represents approximately 40 per cent of the popular vote – it is definitely worth going after." 398 It was with influences and information such as this that Clark would make his decision about whether or not to run for Premier.

5.3 The 1996 BC NDP Leadership Race

The formal jockeying to replace Harcourt began within hours of his resignation announcement. As one party official put it, "...our first priority was to get a name candidate. The reasoning was that only a name candidate could hold onto the NDP’s base in the next election. At this point there was no talk amongst the party about winning the election, all we wanted to do was hold onto our base. There were still strong memories about Dave Barrett losing the federal NDP leadership to a no name, a move that probably cost the NDP 30 seats in the subsequent federal election. The party did not want to make the same mistake in B.C." 399 While in hindsight, this outlook suggests a deeply ingrained sense of pessimism, many in the party remained upbeat. As one participant remembers, "Harcourt’s departure was not necessarily a negative. You have to remember that the NDP love campaigning. The leadership was invigorating and renewing for the party." 400

Of the name candidates, NDP insiders felt that senior cabinet minister, Dan Miller, had the most room for growth, but that Glen Clark was the most dynamic. It was generally believed that at the most, Clark could deliver 25 seats in the next election by holding traditional NDP ridings. In the beginning, Miller was seriously considering a run, as was Finance Minister Elizabeth Cull. Cabinet Minister Andrew Petter was less interested, but was listening closely to his supporters. Miller eventually dropped out because he was concerned about going up against Clark – "it would have been tough and ugly." 401 Miller and Clark had always been close friends and it was assumed a Miller leadership bid would test that friendship. Longtime federal NDP MP, Nelson Riis, also announced he would not run for the leadership. 402

398 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
399 NDP Consultant, Interview, January 16, 1999
400 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999
401 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
402 Riis made it clear that he wouldn't run in part because he had been "frozen out by a powerful cabal of insiders bent on elevating one of their own to the top spot." Vaughn Palmer, The Vancouver Sun, December 13, 1995
While Clark made no early public indications about his intentions, he was not idle. From the moment Harcourt resigned Clark was telling people privately that he was in the race and that he would be aggressively running from the left. His goal was to intimidate others and make them think twice about throwing their names in. This strategy was particularly successful with Ministers Andrew Petter and Elizabeth Cull.\textsuperscript{403} As well, immediately after the resignation he started working to put key people together for his campaign. \textquote{He arranged some kind of deal with Petter not to run and started to talking to other MLA’s.} Clark’s sense was that he would not announce his intentions unless he had at least 10 to 15 MLA’s and a minimum of five cabinet ministers in tow.\textsuperscript{404}

Many would argue that Clark’s natural aggressiveness combined with his political ambition meant there was a predetermined inevitability to his run for the NDP leadership. Others, less charitable by nature, suggest that Clark orchestrated the machinations leading up to Harcourt’s resignation and had secretly conspired to be Premier from the moment he entered government. People in the first camp suggest that although Clark may have had the prerequisite skills needed to be Premier, even by the late fall of 1995, he had not made up his mind to run.

One former deputy minister who was close to Clark recalls, \textquote{...even after Harcourt resigned, Glen was not sure he would run. He took several calculations. Although he is obviously ambitious, it was that same ambition that nearly prevented him from running. The last thing he wanted to do was lead a lame duck party back to the obscurity of opposition. He needed to know that he would have at least a chance at winning. He knew that Miller had a wider reach and more backing. Ultimately however, Clark knew he could win quickly. He knew he had the energy and the communications skills. Glen knew he could take the party over quicker and he could look different than Harcourt quicker than the other potential candidates could.}\textsuperscript{405} Clark himself states that his run for the leadership was not as predetermined as people thought, \textquote{...it wasn’t until I heard news reports of record bank profits that I decided to run.}\textsuperscript{406}

The less charitable (and probably more accurate) observers suggest this was just spin and point to the fact that the leadership race unfolded exactly as if Clark had run it himself. As well, they point out that the moment Harcourt announced his retirement, Clark was seen as the leader of the government. In the run-up to the actual vote for the leadership, the media certainly seemed to have bought into this positioning: \textquote{...they (the media) seek out Employment Minister Clark, rather than Premier Harcourt, for official government reaction on every major issue from the Nisga’a treaty to welfare reform.}\textsuperscript{407}

\textsuperscript{403} Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, December 9, 1999
\textsuperscript{404} Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, November 8, 1998
\textsuperscript{405} Former Deputy Minister, Interview, March 23, 1999
\textsuperscript{406} In \textit{The Vancouver Sun}, January 10, 1995. This comment too has to be viewed with some skepticism. As one senior media personality revealed, \textquote{Clark always tried to portray himself as a reluctant entrant into the leadership race. Consciously tried to avoid the image as a power hungry professional politician.} Interview, January 15, 1999
\textsuperscript{407} Ian Hayson, \textquote{BC’s next premier – wry, clever and provocative,} \textit{Montreal Gazette}, Feb 16, 1996, A10
The group most closely observing Clark, the opposition Liberals, identified the same phenomenon. “As the ‘gang of six’ ringleader, Clark had a major role in Harcourt’s demise. From the moment Harcourt quit, Clark started campaigning and to this day he hasn’t stopped. He’s ruthless and will not hesitate to wield the powers of the premier’s office. No one stood up to him in cabinet. He was able to control things and this gave him much more time to focus on strategy and the opposition. You have to remember, it was a very bad time for the NDP. There was a certain desperation amongst the party and the cabinet to have someone tell them what to do. Clark filled this vacuum.”

The Clark Team – The good “brothers and sisters”

From the moment he considered running for the leadership of his party, Glen Clark was focused on one primary task - winning the next provincial election. All the challenges preceding this goal, i.e., winning the leadership race, making the transition to the Premier’s chair, choosing a cabinet and presenting a budget, were approached not as individual obstacles, but in terms of their impact on the main goal – winning the election. This meant that the strategies Clark put together at the beginning of his leadership race were relevant and interconnected to everything he did right up to the eve of the general election. Clark’s personal ambition would not allow him to stand as a leadership candidate unless he had a legitimate opportunity to win the general election. He understood from the beginning that that outcome could only be brought about through a significant change of direction. To change the direction of the government and the party would mean he and his team needed to raise the bar in terms of focus and execution.

An example of this extraordinary focus was the make-up of the Glen Clark campaign team. With a couple of exceptions, the key players in his organization were with him from the beginning of his leadership run right through to his election victory. As a result, Clark was able to build a cohesive cadre of seasoned political professionals that could not be swayed by peripheral stresses such as party policy struggles, ideological differences, bureaucratic obfuscation or the other related pressures that so often weigh on a new leader’s psychological resources.

The executive director of the BC Teachers Federation, Ken Novakowski, headed the Glen Clark campaign team. The campaign chair was Maureen Headley, a labour lawyer and former official with the BC Government Employee’s Union (BCGEU). During the leadership race, media relations were delegated to Chris Gainor. Bill Tielman would join Clark later as part of his media strategy team. Tielman was on leave from his job at the BC Federation of Labour, while Gainor came to Clark from the Hospital Employee’s Union. Adrian Dix and Ron Wickstrom, both ministerial aides to Clark, were to be instrumental in the campaign, as was MLA David Schreck. Geoff Meggs, Clark’s communication advisor, was a former member of the Communist Party and long-standing union staffer. On the government side, Tom Gunton continued to play a key role. As

408 Senior BC Liberal MLA, Interview, December 18, 1998

409 The BC Liberals charged that Ken Novakowski crossed an ethical line by participating in Clark’s leadership bid while retaining his position as an executive member of the BC Teacher’s Federation. The charge was particularly valid in that the teacher’s union would later spend some $1.6 million in pre-election, pro-government advertising.
well, Doug McArthur retained his role as Deputy Minister to the Premier. A former NDP cabinet minister, McArthur had impeccable NDP roots from BC and Saskatchewan.  

Also playing an important role were NDP political strategists, Chris Chilton, Hans Brown and Ron Johnston. All had played key roles in the 1991 Harcourt victory. Johnston was key in positioning the Clark’s messaging and in the areas of issue management and quick response. Chilton and Brown were not directly involved in the leadership race, but worked diligently in the background, compiling crucial polling data to assist Clark and his group prepare strategically for the election campaign.

If the Clark team had any identifiable beginnings or roots, they were based with longtime NDP politician, Ian Waddell. Clark, Wickstrom and Dix had all worked for Waddell in one capacity or another when he was an MP and leadership candidate in Ottawa. Along with the Waddell group, Clark had two other groups close at hand for advice and support – one was the union group – comprised of Novakowski, Ken Georgetti and a number of IWA members. The other group centred around the former NDP cabinet minister, Bob Williams. Williams was Clark’s original political mentor and still had significant pull in many NDP quarters. In its entirety, Clark’s coalition covered a broad spectrum of backgrounds, interests and ages. The group came together fairly quickly early in the process, thereby relieving Clark of making any stressful or acrimonious personnel decisions through the transition period.  

The Clark Strategy – the “indelible inking” of Gordon Campbell

The fact that Clark had a plan to take over government almost from the moment Harcourt resigned was reinforced by early media reports describing Clark’s candidacy. “The ever-confident Clark, a clear front-runner in the race, was already polishing his transition plan before announcing Tuesday night that he will seek to replace Harcourt at the NDP convention on February 18th. Clark’s team has been working up a two-month recovery plan for the party that could spell a spring election.”

When, on January 10, 1996, Glen Clark did announce his candidacy there was a collective sigh of relief among key party members. They had their heavyweight. The concern then became whether or not another potential heavyweight like Andrew Petter or Elizabeth Cull might enter the fray. “The collective thinking was that while on some occasions a good feisty leadership campaign can help build momentum, the NDP in BC were so far back on their heals that a real leadership battle had the potential to rupture any party support that was left. The executive was particularly concerned that someone like Petter or Cull would have split the party ideologically, particularly now in its fragile

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411 And it wasn’t all doom and gloom for this new group of best friends. One key staffer remembered, “Our spirits were buoyed by a UTV poll that was done about 2 weeks after the Harcourt resignation. Many in the media and the opposition had pegged Clark as being too “hot” to be successful as Premier. The poll, however, compared all candidates and showed that Clark had a lot of favourables with the voting public and was not seen as overly controversial.” NDP consultant, Interview, January 14, 1999  
412 *The Vancouver Sun*, “A man of confidence, no apologies,” January 10, 1995, pp B3
state. Thus the party went from worrying about having enough heavyweights to worrying about having too many.”

No other senior NDP candidates would enter the race, but unlike Lucien Bouchard and Brian Tobin – both of whom became premiers without the need to win party leadership races, Glen Clark would eventually have some leadership challenges. Former housing minister Joan Smallwood based her campaign on an appeal to the party’s social conscience. Backbencher Corky Evans, a former logger from the Nelson/Creston area captured attention with his engaging down to earth style and articulate speaking manner. Grocery clerk Donovan Kuehn and funeral director Jack McDonald rounded out the slate.

**An Early Election Call – Set in Stone**

Since he was to run virtually unopposed, the only other variable that could slow down Clark’s planning process was potential uncertainty about the eventual date of the election call. The NDP were mandated to call the election by November 5, 1996, but very early in the process Clark and his staff knew that they would not wait that long. Traditionally in BC, elections are called every four years at the latest, the idea being that a party that waited until the very last moment of a mandate was seen as desperate and resigned to losing. The NDP did not want to be accused of this kind of political expedience, particularly given their current relationship with the electorate. Clark’s senior staff felt that there was no precedent for leaders holding on to the last moment and then being successful in the subsequent election. One of the key examples they cited in making this decision was the case of John Turner’s electoral defeat in 1984. They decided very early in the process therefore that the election would be held in the spring of 1996, less than three months after the leadership contest.

The other very real problem for the Clark strategists in waiting to make the call was their concern as being perceived as ‘regulation socialists.’ Unique to the NDP, this concern focuses on an awareness of being perceived as a party too fond of governing, of bonding with their natural allies - the public service unions, and of basically luxuriating in the trappings of power. “One of the unwritten rules of our group was that the election was definitely going to be held earlier rather than later. Even when we were being pummeled with the Hydrogate scandal there was no talk of delaying the election. This was set in stone because, to be effective, the NDP must constantly campaign and must constantly be perceived as the underdogs. If we fell into the trap of being seen as the ‘governing party,’ it would have severely limited our ability to define Campbell and it would have negated any chance at electoral success.” Nor was an early call a problem for the NDP from a logistical standpoint. Since they were well into their mandate many of the sitting members had already been re-nominated. Also, being so far behind in the polls, it was

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413 NDP consultant, Interview, January 14, 1999
415 Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
416 Former NDP MLA, Interview, October 10, 1998

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clear that the remaining nominations would not be hotly contested and if needed, could be held quickly and easily.

Policy Positioning – Filling the NDP Box

With concerns about the leadership contest and the date of the election out of the way, Clark and his staff were freed up to focus exclusively on election planning. More than anything else, the most important thing for Clark, the main reason he decided to run, was that he would be in a position to be free and clear to basically act as the premier even before the leadership race was over. Having achieved that goal, one senior campaigner saw the mood of the Clark team this way. “We were surprisingly loose and up during this period. The reasons for this were twofold. First the party was so far behind; there was very little pressure on them to perform. Second, the run-up to the convention was not about who was getting in but rather who was getting out. Potential frontrunners Elizabeth Cull, Andrew Petter and Nelson Riis systematically announced they wouldn’t be running so by the time the leadership contest got into full swing it was obvious that, for all intents and purposes, Clark was running unopposed.”

As a result, “…the essential part for Clark during the leadership was not so much to beat the other candidates but to prove that he could win the next election.” With this in mind, Clark’s team devised a two-prong approach that was a model of clarity and simplicity. As one Clark insider recalls, “Clark really only had two things to accomplish before the leadership, first he had to define Campbell and explain the differences between himself and the Liberal leader and second he had to repudiate the style and substance of Harcourt.”

Clark understood that before he could define Campbell or distance himself from Harcourt, he first had to present a clear picture of himself and his own vision. He had to make it clear to his own colleagues, the convention delegates and to the voting public, who he was and why he should be supported. For the policy element of this vision he went back to the principles of Robert Reich. Reich’s approach is that, any one government can only do so much. To be successful in politics as the leader of a government you must go to your strengths, to your comparative advantages. Clark’s felt his strengths, or his “three pillars,” were his experience with economic development, his commitment to education and training and the NDP’s reputation for protecting health care. While these three elements developed over time – through the leadership race and during the run-up to the campaign, the basic ‘policy boxes’ were put in place very early.

Clark’s economic development platform was straightforward. Under a Clark government new industrial concerns that had high-energy demands, such as aluminum producers, would receive very competitive hydro rates in return for creating new jobs. Clark’s ‘Power for Jobs’ strategy was in sync with Tom Gunton’s beliefs about the interventionist role of government in industrial development. That his new policy might put him at odds with existing industries not eligible for these new incentives was a detail

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417 Senior Political Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
418 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999
419 Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
to be worked out at a later time. ‘Power for Jobs’ allowed Clark to make a series of extremely hopeful (and well covered) public pronouncements about entering into negotiations with major industrial interests. Indeed at one point after the 1996 campaign, the Clark government had promised that as many as three new aluminum smelters were going to be built as a result of this new policy. The ‘letters of intent’ that were signed by the Clark government and participating aluminum producers with such promising flourishes have long since lapsed, with nothing to show as a result.

The second plank in Clark’s economic development platform was a plan to increase government support for BC’s burgeoning high tech sector. This positioning served the dual purpose of making Clark look current and upbeat, while allowing him to take credit for a sector that was booming regardless of government assistance or intervention.

The third element of his platform was his ‘Jobs for Timber Accord.’ Originally conceived by his leadership rival, Corky Evans, the idea was that private companies be required to meet job-creation goals in order to qualify for timber licenses. That the plan was largely unworkable was unimportant. The NDP absolutely needed a clear policy in what remains BC’s most important sector. Clark’s adoption of Evans’ plan helped diffuse any hard feelings out of the leadership convention and the large public kickoff, complete with several forestry CEO’s on stage with Clark to promote the program, was extremely well covered by the provincial media and seen as a major coup for an NDP premier.

In the areas of health and education, Clark said little that was new. With the exception of the freeze on post-secondary tuition, most of what he supported in these areas was the maintenance of the status quo. He did not tackle, in any meaningful way, controversial issues such as school and teacher accountability or the structural weaknesses of the NDP’s “Closer to Home” health care initiative. Rather he focused on his role as protector of Medicare and education, while painting Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals as interested only in cutting back these services.

Many would say that Clark never did do a very good job of outlining the details behind these policy pillars or ‘boxes.’ Indeed, in the last week of the campaign, Clark made an extraordinary confession that he would need to give significant clarification about the details of his platform once the election was over. Others criticized Clark for not running on policy at all and making the general election a personality contest with Gordon Campbell. All of these criticisms have merit and will be examined in more detail later in this chapter. The fact remains, however, that by creating a series of base positions for himself, Clark made it much easier to do three things. First, it was a start to get the NDP on the long road back to reconnecting with their core vote in BC, a vote that had abandoned the NDP under Harcourt. Second, by clearly explaining what he was for, it made it much simpler for his strategy team and his supporters to understand what Gordon Campbell was against.

420 In its first year, there were actually significantly more jobs lost in the forestry sector than were created by this program. Defenders of the NDP would suggest this was as much because of poor international markets than because of negative NDP policies.
Finally, by providing a bare bones understanding of his policy positions he began the process of merging existing provincial government activity with his own political goals. In a move, unprecedented in BC history, Clark would set the stage for a massive mobilization of taxpayer supported government resources, all to be focused exclusively on his personal political objectives. Never before had someone with such a precarious mandate been able to so quickly secure the time, support, and most importantly, the advertising budgets of major public service departments, key bureaucrats, policy makers, communicators and groups dependent on the government, all for the purposes of electoral gain.

As politically perceptive as Clark was, his strategies were not based on instinct alone. Clark’s group was doing a significant amount of polling and they were developing polling truths for themselves that contrasted sharply with public perceptions and most media conclusions. Clark himself was very involved in all the polling analysis. The first ‘truth’ was that the NDP were not as bad in the polls as was commonly believed. Harcourt’s handling of the NCHS was poor and this led to some bad polls, but Clark’s group saw evidence that the fundamental NDP support base was still there, particularly on key issues. As protectors of health care Clark had a 55 to 14 ratio of positives to negatives. On protecting education, his numbers were 45 to 20 and on the environment, a historically strong NDP issue, the numbers were 60-25. These three issues would make up the NDP’s ‘box.’ Equally important were the issue areas in which the NDP were weak, particularly in relation to the BC Liberals. These were debt, taxes and their overall inability to positively impact BC’s economy.\footnote{NDP Assistant Campaign Manager, Interview, November 8, 1998}

The second ‘truth’ was that despite his party’s high standing in the polls, Gordon Campbell had a number of serious political vulnerabilities. In the spring of 1996, the NDP asked respondents to agree or disagree with a number of statements, including; “Gordon Campbell wants to give large corporations a billion dollar tax break. To pay for that tax break I believe there’s a good chance taxes will go up for ordinary people. That’s a good reason for me not to vote for Campbell’s Liberals.”\footnote{NDP polling results obtained during an Interview with an NDP campaign manager, November 5, 1999} An overwhelming number - 83 per cent - agreed with the statement. The NDP saw similar results when respondents were asked about Campbell’s plans to cut services, his commitment to Liberalism and the threat he posed to middle class families.

The final fact brought to light by the polling data was the existence of a group of voters referred to as ‘latecomers.’ These were the people who had parked their vote with other parties, but if properly persuaded would work their way back to the NDP. The ‘latecomers’ were so named as it was assumed they would be the last group back into the NDP tent before election day. It was estimated that this group represented a crucial six to eight per cent of the overall electorate and was made up of mostly federal and provincial Reform party supporters. The NDP designed a platform plank entitled fighting crime and the causes of crime specifically as a means of reaching out to these disaffected NDP latecomers. While certainly an atypical policy for the left leaning NDP, it was an
important part of their strategy particularly in the 10 vitally important swing ridings in Northern BC.

Issue Positioning – Inoculating against weaknesses
With a basic policy skeleton in place, Clark’s team worked to put together a strategy to ‘inoculate’ their leader in the areas of obvious weakness. While never precisely defined, the group had a timetable which would involve an effort to message around Clark’s weak issues first and then follow up with on subjects that were more clearly his own. The first, and arguably most important weakness Clark had to battle was the Harcourt legacy itself. Even as early as the leadership kickoff event, Clark made it clear that a key part of this plan would be to distance himself from the Harcourt record. “It is important that there be change and that the new leader, whoever it is, demonstrate to the public what they stand for, where they want to take the province and why we need a second term. I think the public’s going to have to decide what the differences are between myself and Premier Harcourt. Obviously I’m a different generation, a new generation, and have a different style.”

As one press gallery member stated, “Contrasting Clark from Harcourt was the NDP’s first priority. They did this by emphasizing the differences in age, style, media “friendliness” and energy level.”

With regards to the age difference Clark’s team used a series of image devices to firmly connect him to the youth of British Columbia. For example, once he was sworn in as premier, Clark immediately named himself Minister of Youth. As well he staged a series of photo opportunities designed to emphasize his youthful, energetic demeanour. “He did a lot of youth stuff, the young clothes, the skateboard and the motorcycle, not so much to curry the youth vote but to enhance his image as a youthful leader, particularly in comparison with Harcourt.”

Added one senior civil servant, “When Clark came in the government’s agenda was clear. Clark made himself the Minister of Youth to add to the image of Harcourt as an old guy. The other thing he did was actively pursue the Chinese community and the ethnic vote. He very quickly made himself the ethnic guy. He had a quick makeover and he was ready.”

However, Clark also understood he would need more than superficial or cosmetic changes to properly divest himself of the Harcourt baggage. His next step was to promise that if he won the NDP leadership race he would immediately call a public inquiry into the NCHS scandal, something Harcourt had consistently refused to do. Harcourt’s reasoning was that he could not call a public inquiry on the NCHS as long as there was an ongoing police investigation. As a former lawyer, Harcourt knew that the moment he called such an inquiry it would be shut down, as had been done at the Susan Nelles inquiry into the mysterious deaths of babies at the Children’s Hospital in Toronto. Clark had no such qualms and was uninterested in any charges of political expedience that may

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423 “Rally launches Clark Drive,” in the Vancouver Sun, January 10, 1995, pp. A10
424 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
425 Senior Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 6, 1999. Interestingly Clark also had to combat the contrary impression that, at 38 years of age, he was too young to be Premier. He moderated his language and appeared in more business suits than before but as the leadership wore on this became less and less of an issue.
426 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999
result. "What do I care if they call off the inquiry?" Clark is alleged to have asked. "That's somebody else's problem." As a result of his calls for an inquiry, Clark immediately looked more decisive and in charge than Harcourt. As an added benefit, he muted the opposition's ability to attack the NDP on this still sensitive issue.

Vaughn Palmer pointed out that after four years of silent acquiescence to Mike Harcourt's refusal to call a public inquiry into the NCHS scandal, Glen Clark suddenly changed his tune. "...but mind that as a member of the powerful inner cabinet, Mr. Clark helped reinforce Mr. Harcourt in the course of action on the NCHS that so undermined his leadership. Then he helped prod Mr. Harcourt into resignation. And now that the boss is on the way out, Mr. Clark endorse the very measure that might have save Mr. Harcourt, had he done it three or four years ago. They don't call him "Clark the Shark" for nothing." 428

Clark's other major concern was earlier characterizations of himself as a big spender and an ideological New Democrat. To this end, he made a startling admission. Early in his leadership bid, he claimed to be a 'fiscal conservative.' Clark went on to suggest that the "shrinking middle class" deserved tax relief and that the provincial government had become too big. "We may have to eliminate ministries. We may have to literally take a meat cleaver to the management layers in bureaucracy." 429 These kind of comments provided what little fodder there was for substantive policy debate during the leadership race. For many in the NDP, Clark's leadership bid symbolized the ideological tug-of-war between old-style and new style socialism. Clark's attempts at positioning himself as a fiscal conservative combined with the NDP government's new "get tough" stance on welfare, including its three-month residency requirement for new recipients, disturbed many in the party including leadership candidate Corky Evans. Many were taken in by these early comments. Pollster Angus Reid, for example, incorrectly suggested that by mapping out a centrist agenda, Clark was "...learning from the mistakes of Bob Rae in Ontario. He is learning moderation." 430

Once Clark had put together a strategy for his own positioning, he was able to start defining Gordon Campbell. If Clark was to be the protector of ordinary people, of the middle class, and of the less fortunate, the next step was to make clear who he was protecting this group from. Drawing upon historical NDP positions, his own background as a union organizer, and the influence of Tom Gunton and Robert Reich, it was an easy step for Clark to identify multinational corporations as the principal enemy of BC voters.

427 An interesting example of Clark's focus on his political challenges and his lack of concern about the ethics or irony inherent in these decisions. Former Media Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 14, 1999
428 Vaughn Palmer, The Vancouver Sun, January 20, 1996, pp. A6
429 BC Report, "Leadership candidate Clark makes a futile bid to appear moderate," January 22, 1996, pp. 8-9. These comments were somewhat at odds with earlier Clark statements. For example, when asked previously about job creation, Mr. Clark had stated, "We wouldn't rely exclusively on the private sector (for job creation), because that doesn't work. We believe that government can play a positive role - a positive role in our social life, a positive role in our economic life." Transcripts of Glen Clark speeches from 1987 and 1992.
430 From Ian Hayson in the Montreal Gazette, February 16, 1996, A10
More challenging was the task of positioning Gordon Campbell as the enabler, defender and puppet of these same corporations. As it turned out, Clark was assisted in this enterprise in part by Campbell’s own public policy admissions.

5.4 The Three Billion Dollar Promise

As discussed earlier, the resignation of Mike Harcourt hit the BC Liberals harder than they knew. Not only had much of their anticipated election rhetoric been prepared based on Harcourt being premier, but with the NDP slipping so badly in the polls, the spotlight of media scrutiny had been shone directly on the Liberals. Throughout the fall of 1995, the press had pushed the BC Liberals for details of their campaign platform and explanations for their general promises of a balanced budget and tax cuts. The Liberal camp was of two minds on the issue. In the minority were organizers who pointed out that giving detailed policy platforms so far in advance of a general election would only provide the NDP a target to shoot at.

In hindsight, this group should have also pushed aggressively on the point that the Liberals could not make promises on fiscal issues because, at the time, they had no clear indication as to the true state of the NDP’s finances. In the fall of 1995 however, while there was a general sense amongst the Liberals that the NDP were hiding expenditures in crown corporation budgets and using other accounting techniques to ‘cook the books,’ most assumed it was on par with what the Socreds had done in the past. No one guessed the degree to which the NDP had gone to make their fiscal situation look palatable.

In the majority, or at least in the positions of greater influence, were people who felt Campbell had to act quickly and decisively to counter the NDP’s positive bounce from the Harcourt resignation. They felt that Campbell himself was not well understood by the BC electorate and that a detailed policy announcement would help define Campbell and the BC Liberals. Campbell was drawn to the latter arguments, in part, because the idea of being elected on the merit of his policies had been one of the motivating forces behind his initial involvement in politics.

One senior staffer remembers this as a particularly difficult time in the BC Liberal camp. “Gordon’s key strategists had a number of discussions about finding out what the ideal size of government is as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product). After examining all available research they found that there was no ‘ideal’ size as it was dependent completely on what one would envisage government should do. They did, however, hit upon the idea of going back to the size that government as it was prior to the NDP’s election in 1991. Depending upon which year one chose, this worked out to about 16 per cent of GDP.” The Liberals’ basic calculations suggested that at the fiscal year end - March 1995 - the BC government as a percentage of GDP was about 19 per cent. The principal ramification of this calculation was that by holding the size of the economy static, going from around 19 per cent of GDP to 16 per cent of GDP implied a cut to government spending of about $3 billion.

431 BC Liberal staffer, Interview, January 7, 1999
The dissenters on Campbell’s staff felt that the announcement was too esoteric and complicated, as it involved complicated percentages and economic terms such as ‘GDP.’ But key staff felt they needed to indicate that the BC Liberals were serious, knew what they were doing and were committed to significant change. As one BC Liberal explained, there was not a lot of discussion of the matter. “Any challenges made or doubts communicated were shouted down and ignored. At that time I did not realize to what extent Gordon was being manipulated. There was never a discussion about how the announcement could be attacked by the NDP. The bullying that occurred in and outside of various meetings resulted in poor decision-making. In addition, there were occasions where the leader was kept in the dark deliberately by his senior advisors in order to push him to make a decision that they wanted. He ended up being isolated from anyone who would actually give him an honest opinion.”

Thus, on November 20, 1995, at the BC Liberal’s annual general meeting, Campbell made the promise. He stated that, if elected, his party would cut the government’s share of the economy to 16.6 per cent by the end of his first term. This represented a reduction of approximately 15 per cent. Campbell was immediately attacked by the media and was intensely scrummed on the details and ramifications of the announcement, particularly on what specific government programs would be cut to meet his goal. He struggled throughout the convention to explain his promise, at one point suggesting that it meant cutting a total of $3 billion over a five-year mandate. Adding to the media’s consternation was the fact that there were no details on which ministries would be cut to make up the savings. Campbell attempted to clarify his earlier statements by suggesting that the cut represented $3 billion in today’s dollars, but with inflation, growth and other factors, it could mean a larger or smaller cut by the final year of the next term of office in BC. However, by this point the announcement was being panned for being overly complex and ill advised.

The break they were looking for...
When Clark’s strategists heard Campbell had made this announcement and when they saw the media’s lukewarm initial reaction, they knew that this was the opening they were looking for. To understand the magnitude of the $3 billion announcement from the NDP’s perspective, one has to go back to the BC general election of 1983. The NDP leader and former Premier, Dave Barrett was leading comfortably in that race when the issue of the Compensation Stabilization Program came up. This program had been designed by the Socreds to limit salary increases in the public service unions. When asked about the program, Barrett unwisely blurted out, “I’d scrap the whole thing.” The Socred leader, Bill Bennett, jumped on Barrett’s statement, saying that this was proof that the NDP were just shills for the unions and that they could not be trusted to manage the government’s finances. The election momentum completely shifted on this issue and the NDP ended up losing that election. To the NDP, Campbell’s statement about cutting $3 billion from government spending had all the hallmarks of the Barrett error 12 years earlier.

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432 BC Liberal staffer, Interview, January 7, 1999
For over a year the NDP had been attempting to paint Campbell as having an overly close relationship with BC’s business class, most often referred to as the ‘Howe Street crowd.’ They pushed hard on his experiences as a land developer and his close relationship during his tenure as Mayor of Vancouver with key Vancouver business people like Peter Brown. The NDP also played up an earlier Campbell promise to eliminate the corporate capital tax. Cutting the capital tax had been a key demand of the province’s business community. As such it was seen by NDP strategists as an opportunity to portray the Liberals as the pawn of big business, despite the fact that Premier Mike Harcourt had himself promised to eliminate the tax.

While Clark and the NDP had some preliminary success with this approach, it was not until the $3 billion announcement that the attack came alive. From the NDP’s messaging perspective the $3 billion cut was crucial in filling in the whole Campbell picture. The cut explained how Campbell was going to give a billion dollar tax break to his friends in business and at the banks. It connected the NDP’s key messages. Not only was Campbell going to reward his friends, he was going to do so by cutting the health care and educational services of those who needed them most, the middle and lower classes.

As one NDP strategist outlined, “...when Campbell announced the $3 billion in cuts, that’s when the Clark committee really got into gear. It gave us an opportunity for linkage between the tax cuts to corporations and the reduction of core services. It also gave the NDP the opportunity to remind BC citizens that the NDP were essential. We were able to show once again that we are needed as protectors of those less fortunate. We once again had value for average British Columbians. And once we cemented the message, the challenge was to maintain the same messaging through the leadership, the interim and the beginning of the campaign.”

The other key for the NDP was the need to react immediately. That same weekend NDP message spinners were tasked with explaining how the Liberals were going to gut government, especially health care and education. That Campbell hadn’t explained how a Liberal government would reach its targets, that it wasn’t necessarily a $3 billion cut, or that the banks only paid a small percentage of the capital tax was all superfluous information. As one media outlet reported, “When Gordon Campbell proposed a 15 per cent reduction in government spending, his opponents were quick to react to the impending financial apocalypse. Finance Minister Elizabeth Cull suggested in a published letter that such a cut would mean the end of all municipal grants, funding for BC Transit and Pharmacare. It would also mean the closing of universities in Burnaby, Victoria, and Prince George. In a similar move, just before Christmas the NDP sent a 25 page anti-Liberal package to 200 public sector union officials. Paid for with taxpayers funds, the letter was addressed to ‘sisters and brothers’ and charged that the Liberals were planning to eliminate Pharmacare, close 2,000 hospital beds, cut $1,000 in education spending per pupil, eliminate highway maintenance and snow removal. All of these allegations were false.”

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434 NDP Assistant Campaign Manager, Interview, November 5 1998
435 British Columbia Report, February 5, 1996, pp. 8
The BC Branch of the Canadian Taxpayers Association also pointed out that the attacks on Campbell were blatant politics. The reasons given were that: a) the NDP had already committed to cuts of their own of more than $2.1 billion; b) Mr. Campbell’s plan “doesn’t not necessitate a cut at all – only a willingness not to increase spending;” and c) Campbell’s plan was eminently doable. Troy Lanigan of the Taxpayers Federation pointed out at the time, “…that in the first two years under Premier Klein, provincial government spending as a percentage of gross provincial product in Alberta had been reduced from 19.6 per cent in 1993/94 to 16.3 per cent in 1995/96, which is a 17 per cent reduction.”

Despite of these attempts to defend Campbell’s announcement, the NDP continued their attacks and were able to inflict significant damage. Early in 1996, they launched a series of television advertisements directly on this point. A communications advisor close to Clark explains. “Our first series of ads were triggered by the Liberals tax cuts for banks and the $3 billion mistake. It allowed us to attach the tax cut for banks to service cuts for ordinary British Columbians. The visual backdrop for the ads was a series of basic shots of Campbell giving remarks at a public function. In the ads he sounds very shrill and mean and he is moving his one arm in a movement akin to a ‘Siege Heil’ salute. It wasn’t the reason we used the shot but it certainly had a subliminal affect. We called these ads, the ‘indelible inking’ of Gordon Campbell. It couldn’t have been more effective. We were surprised first that Campbell had given us such a big target with the $3 billion – we were even more surprised when they didn’t respond to our ads. There’s an old saying – its tough to tattoo someone when they are moving. With the $3 billion announcement he stopped long enough for us to tattoo him pretty good.”

NDP provincial secretary, Brian Gardiner gave another reason for the ad’s impact when he stated, “The 30-second ad was successful to a large degree because it was launched when no one expected it.”

The $3 billion mistake was magnified for the Liberals by their lack of an effective response. One media outlet explained the Liberals difficulties. “Last week, in a television ad, the NDP accused Gordon Campbell and the Liberals of promising $1.1 billion in tax breaks – for banks and big corporations – through elimination of the corporation capital tax and the school tax on property. The ad also predicted ominous cuts to medicare and education. The Liberals cried foul. “NDP to launch deceitful ad campaign,” declared a Liberal press release. “The big lie in the TV commercial is a claim Gordon Campbell would remove the corporate capital tax from banks.” The problem for the Liberals is that prior to the NDP ads they stressed their desire to eliminate the capital tax. In a 1995

\[\text{\textsuperscript{436}}\text{It is important to note that the CTA is an interest group and not an impartial voice on these issues.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{437}}\text{Troy Lanigan, Canadian Taxpayers Federation Newsletter, February 2, 1996}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{438}}\text{Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999. Of equal interest is the fact that no one questioned the fact that the entire media strategy, a strategy that was funded by the overall BC NDP had been designed and implemented by the staff of a leadership candidate in the run up to a leadership campaign. That Clark’s group had this power reinforces the notion that he was in complete control of the NDP and the government well before the leadership ballots were counted.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{439}}\text{Financial Post Daily, May 17, 1996, pp. 9}\]
speech, for example, Mr. Campbell said: “I can guarantee you that we will eliminate it in our first budget if the BC Liberal Party is ever in office.”

The media was clearly not in a mood to be kind to Campbell on this point. “The Liberal’s inept response increased the effectiveness of the NDP ad. Not only did they vacillate on the capital tax issue, they also failed to exploit the fact that the ad’s producer, NOW Communications (an agency made up of former NDP officials), has grown rich on government contracts. Moreover, the Liberals have failed to attack the NDP for its continued duplicity over the issue of spending cuts. The NDP insists that Mr. Campbell’s tax-cut promises add up to $3 billion in cuts from government spending. It’s expected that the Liberals would have to cut nowhere near that amount, thanks to revenue growth. Furthermore the NDP’s own Debt Management Plan requires a “cut” of $2.1 billion by 1999.”

After the New Democrats unleashed their attack advertisements, the BC Liberals publicly discussed counter strategies. However, as Vaughn Palmer pointed out, “...the Liberals counter-attack was so inept it ended up confirming that the NDP ad was very close to the truth. All part of the plan? So was Stalingrad.” As one senior BC Liberal advisor summarized. “No one understood the $3 billion announcement. It wasn’t $3 billion in cuts. It was actually a program to hold spending, let the government revenues grow and at the end 4-5 years the government would be spending $3 billion less than it is now. It was about freezing wages and cutting back things like industrial subsidies, it was not about massive cuts to health and education. That didn’t come through. The number caught the headlines and when Campbell couldn’t answer the question, “Where will the money come from, what will you cut? He was lost.”

As dictated by their overall strategy, the NDP continued this attack right up to election day. In the middle of the election campaign they released another leaflet designed to raise fears in the Indo-Canadian community about the impact of BC Liberal cuts to multicultural programs. The brochure said “Liberal leader Gordon Campbell’s plan to cut $3 billion threatens Punjabi language instruction in schools and means an end to anti-racism programs and multicultural programs. Ethics experts called the leaflet a classic example of attack advertising that takes liberties with the facts.”

The fumbling of the $3 billion announcement underscored a certain lack of cohesive direction in the BC Liberal camp. Some chalked this up to the fact that Campbell’s policy base was perceived as uneven and not fully developed. “...the depth of Campbell’s beliefs is the subject of wide conjecture in BC political circles. Many of his views appear only sketchily thought out: he would solve the constitutional crisis, for instance, by having Ottawa convene a constituent assembly of citizens chosen by lot, ‘kind of like a jury,’ he says, to rewrite the country’s fundamental law. Even among his supporters,

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440 *British Columbia Report*, February 26, 1996, pp. 10
441 *British Columbia Report*, February 26, 1996, pp. 10
443 Former Deputy to the Premier, Interview, January 5, 1999
there are many who concede they are not sure what Campbell stands for or what, beyond personal ambition, motivates his political involvement. His own mother, Peg Campbell, admitted to one journalist: “Who knows Gord? I don’t know Gord.” Others like author David Mitchell ask, “why is Campbell in politics? He doesn’t seem to enjoy it and he doesn’t seem to have any purpose. No one could ever ask those questions about Glen Clark.”

The Convention Result – A forgone conclusion
The night before the NDP leadership vote, Vancouver Sun legislative reporter, Tom Barrett, hypothesized about the reasons for the lacklustre nature of the race. “The NDP is pragmatic in part because it is a governing party on the eve of an election. The stakes are higher this time around and the party is united by siege mentality. But that is not the only reason the NDP has gone from an ideologically split opposition party to an electorally focused governing party in little more than a decade. One too many bruising defeats in the 1980’s, the defection of some of the party’s more radical members, the moderating influence of Premier Mike Harcourt and changes in the political spectrum have all given the party a more mainstream focus.” Blake, Carty, and Erickson, in their book, Grassroots Politicians, had surveyed the 1987 NDP convention and found that 87 per cent of delegates blamed the previous election loss on the disastrous leadership of Bob Skelly. Furthermore, in a real turnaround, over 75 per cent felt that leadership issues were now more important than policy issues.

Glen Clark won the contest on the first ballot with 71 per cent of the 1,132 votes; Corky Evans came second with 234 votes (21 per cent), followed by Joan Smallwood with 67 votes (6 per cent). Interestingly, despite Clark’s domination of the event, his handlers expected a much lower percentage of the first ballot support. In the end, the leadership campaign was exactly the kickoff that the Clark supporters had wanted. They spent a lot of money, but the result, a clear winner, plenty of exposure and a non-divisive campaign was worth it. As one reporter admitted, “The leadership was a charade. BCTV did a full five part series on Clark. It was quite hard-hitting series of 3-minute spots on subjects like the debt, his labour image and his fiscal record. Instead of being frustrated, Clark’s staff was very happy with the series because it gave Clark much needed exposure. We shot the series in a local east end restaurant, and ultimately it didn’t matter what Clark said, he looked good.”

447 Blake, Carty and Erickson in Barrett, pp. A-18
448 The explanation given was that “a large number of NDP delegates can always be counted on to vote against the front-runner because they are ideologically opposed to success. As the frontrunner, we expected much more backlash than we received.” Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
449 Although the spending limits for the leadership campaign were $100,000 per candidate, Clark raised over $125,000. BC construction unions donated over a third of that money while over one half was donated by unions generally. The Vancouver Sun, April 3, 1996
450 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
The only problem Clark had during the leadership campaign was that it was difficult to come out hard against Campbell, when his only real opponent, Corky Evans, was causing a mini-stir of his own with his grassroots charm and charisma. “Corky being Corky, a lot of people went for his off the cuff style and genuine nice guy nature. For Clark to be hard assed on Campbell at the same time would have been too much of a contrast.” Thus, despite the fact that Evans was little more of a placeholder, a candidate running just so the leadership would not look like a complete coronation, his presence did somewhat hamper Clark’s overall strategy.

Yet, in real terms, there was little or no internal division coming out of the convention. Clark was able to take advantage of this homogeneity of purpose, something very rare at a NDP gathering of any kind, by immediately launching into election campaign rhetoric during his acceptance speech. He gave none of the typical platitudes about the need for internal healing and party solidarity. Rather he focused exclusively on Campbell and the need for the NDP to rise up to meet the challenge, to protect the less fortunate against the imagined ravages of the BC Liberals. “Listen, the night that Clark won, there was a lot of emotion in the air, everyone had on campaign buttons and he gave a barn burner of an acceptance speech. One of the things that really impressed me was that he gave the speech for the cameras and the provincial audience as much or more that for the live audience of NDP faithful. He knew he could not waste the opportunity and even thought it meant a few dead moments with the crowd it was certainly worth it. He showed a lot of courage taking that route. As a result we carried a lot of momentum out of that convention, but there was still no one around who was thinking that we would win more than 25-30 seats.”

There can be no doubt that the NDP had manufactured a certain amount of momentum coming out of the convention. Harcourt’s resignation had given a significant bounce, the NDP’s attacks on Campbell’s tax cuts to banks had done well and the spectacle and solidarity of the party coming out of the leadership all helped. However, as pollsters at the time confirmed, the NDP were not out of the woods. Most, including the mainstream media, felt strongly that the NDP had broken its word to BC voters with regard to honesty and integrity in government and that the party would have to work doubly hard to regain that support. One pollster, CV Marketing Research showed that just after the NDP leadership, electing honest and truthful politicians was ranked as the more important issue by more than 83 per cent of BC voters.

5.5 “Hydrogate”

If the $3 billion dollar announcement was just the hook the NDP needed to attack Gordon Campbell, many argue that the Hydrogate scandal gave them the same opportunity to fully exorcise the ghost of Mike Harcourt. At 11:00 am on the day before Glen Clark’s swearing in as BC’s 31st premier, the BC Liberals released a host of documents showing

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451 Senior NDP consultant, Interview, January 15, 1999
452 Senior NDP consultant, Interview, January 15, 1999
453 CV Marketing Research poll, March 4, 1996
that an offshore deal approved by Clark in his capacity as the minister responsible for BC Hydro, appeared to benefit senior BC Hydro and NDP insiders. After eight months of exhaustive research, the BC Liberals were able to show that a BC Hydro deal to finance a hydroelectric project in Pakistan involved a large number of the private investors who were in fact, friends and colleagues of the NDP. As Minister of Employment and Investment, Clark had promoted this deal, saying that it would see a 24 per cent return on investment for private investors. The Liberals charged conflict of interest guidelines had been breached and demanded to know what Premier Clark’s role had been in the affair.

The BC Liberals message regarding, what was to be referred to as the ‘Hydrogate’ scandal, was straightforward, even if the details of the scandal were not. “Glen Clark and the NDP have broken their number one campaign promise, that there would be no more special deals for friends and insiders.”\(^\text{454}\) Before he could even get to the Premier’s office in Victoria Clark had a major crisis on his hands. Clark was actually on a Helijet to Victoria when the story broke, yet rather responding immediately to the allegations on the steps of the legislature, he wisely gathered his team at his old minister’s office. The issue was particularly difficult for Clark and his advisors because he was clearly the minister responsible for the situation. Moreover, there were allegations that he and his staff had been aware of the purported conflicts for some time.

“We spent about two hours going through our possible responses in the ministry office because the Premier’s office was too “hot” with reporters. We knew fairly quickly that this was a serious issue, that the head of BC Hydro, John Laxton, would have to be fired and that an inquiry or investigation would have to occur.”\(^\text{455}\) Clark understood that when he did speak to the media he would have to look decisive and be seen to be taking all action necessary to address the problem. While it was not discussed in detail, it was understood that if done properly, Clark’s response would give him an excellent opportunity to look decisive and as a Premier who dealt in actions rather than words.

Several hours later, after several postponed press conferences, Clark gave his response. It was clear and to the point. He stated that there would be an immediate investigation headed by former Socred, Attorney General, Brian Smith, and the two senior Hydro executives involved in the scandal, John Laxton and John Sheehan, would be immediately dismissed. As well, Clark stated vociferously that he had given BC Hydro officials ‘specific instructions’ not to invest their own money in the venture.

General conclusions around the handling of the scandal were very positive for the Premier. He was lauded as handling the crisis quickly and ably and in private many discussed how much more of a problem this would have been if Harcourt had still been Premier. That Clark was able to distance himself so effortlessly from the memory of Harcourt was seen not as political expedience, but as a sign that he was ready for the travails of governing. Furthermore, the crisis exemplified the fact that Clark’s issue management machine had been well put together. In fact it was so finely honed, that Clark’s advisors were able to spin public opinion to the point in which the Liberals ended

\(^{454}\) BC Liberal Houseleader, Gary Farrell-Collins, in Maclean’s, March 4, 1996, pp. 32-33

\(^{455}\) Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
up being publicly chastised for making the revelations about BC Hydro so close to Clark’s official swearing in.

“Hydrogate allowed Clark to look decisive and give the media a sacrifice at the altar of public opinion. By serving up Laxton, Clark appeased the gods of long-term memory and got something of a clean slate on more issues that just Hydro. John Laxton was symbolic of the old crowd, he was a good friend of Harcourt’s, he hung Harcourt’s wife’s art in his office, and Clark was pleased to be able to get rid of him.”

The other uniquely Clark wrinkle was his skill in making the scandal look as bad as possible. Rather than trying to downplay the issue, Clark did the exact opposite and reiterated that this was indeed a scandal – a scandal that went deep into the bowels of government, a scandal that would be difficult to drainsnake out. For example, even though Clark knew what he would say at the initial press conference within minutes of his strategy group’s first meeting, he delayed the conference for the better part of a day. This made his solution look that much more impressive. It was a classic situation of exacerbating a crisis and then getting the credit for solving it.

Finally, Hydrogate kicked off Clark’s new relationship with the media. His advisors felt that in the end, Harcourt had been severely pushed around by the Legislative press gallery, and if they changed anything, it would be this relationship. “Hydrogate was a good turnaround for the new government’s relationship with the media. We controlled the agenda, we delayed the media scrum until we were ready and then we worked hard to control the media’s access to the Premier.”

Clark’s handling of the Hydrogate scandal was so decisive and so un-Harcourt-like that many deemed it an actual plus for the Premier over the long run. However, one of Clark’s chief advisors saw the event much differently. “Hydrogate was devastating for the NDP, without that scandal Glen Clark and the NDP may have won as many as 60 seats in the subsequent election. Clark was already well on the way to secure his public positioning as a populist man of the people, who was also decisive. His separation from the previous regime was well underway and didn’t need the added push from Hydrogate.”

Others concurred, suggesting that the massive headlines that Hydrogate generated for the two weeks following the Liberals disclosures were sufficient to throw the NDP’s honed message machine severely out of whack. “We kept pushing our message every day for over two weeks but as a result of the massive Hydrogate coverage, nothing stuck. In fact it wasn’t until Clark’s car accidentally caught on fire and the sympathetic coverage that ensued that we got back on message. Hydrogate was very damaging politically, in fact as late as April ’96 we were still behind 10 per cent points in the polls.”

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456 Assistant NDP campaign manager, Interview, November 5, 1998
457 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
458 Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
459 NDP MLA, Interview, October 22, 1998
Globe and Mail columnist, Miro Certnig, had this to say about the long-term impact of the Hydrogate scandal: “...in the last year, the NDP has pretty much outed itself as a political party, showing it has the same warts as others. It’s been caught in scandals, been wooed by special interests and accepted money from corporations... Then there’s the fact that the NDP, which was out of office for more than 20 years before winning the 1991 election, seems to have as much an appetite for the pragmatic; deal-making of realpolitick as anyone else.”

Certainly, the Liberal’s disclosure cast a distinct pall over the premier’s swearing ceremony. People in the media scrum were particularly keen to get at Clark, at one point almost knocking over the red cordon that separated them from the new premier. As one scribe recalled, “It was just another job, but it was delicious, too, in a mean spirited and all too human way. The media had come to gawk. There had been a car wreck on the way to the coronation.” As the editors at BC Report stated, “No laws were broken, but any remaining illusion that the NDP stood on a moral high ground – above political cronyism and corporate greed – was shattered.”

In the final analysis however, the importance of Hydrogate as a tool for Clark to distance himself from Harcourt cannot be underestimated. “The BC Hydro scandal backfired on his opponents because it brought into sharp relief the difference between Mr. Clark and the anguishing Mr. Harcourt.” To NDP party members who heard about the scandal, the reaction went from resigned frustration to cautiously encouraged. “When I heard there was a scandal my stomach just clenched up. But Clark’s not dithering around for weeks wondering what he should do. I think if Mike Harcourt had acted quicker he would have been far better regarded.” Another NDP supporter concurred, “They reacted with seriousness but also with a great deal of control. From my experience with dealing with the Harcourt team – this seems like night and day.”

Even the bureaucracy noticed the difference, “He looked committed decisive. It didn’t really matter how bad the details were, British Columbians were so starved for leadership they naturally overlooked the details and just saw the fact that Clark was clearly strong in a crisis. This not only distinguished him from Campbell but also from Harcourt.”

Despite Clark’s expert handling, the scandal re-appeared a week before the election. On April 16, weeks after Clark thought he had disposed of the issue, the RCMP announced that its commercial crime unit was investigating the insider investment aspects of the Hydrogate scandal. BC Liberal Gary Farrell-Collins did his best to revive public outrage towards the NDP when he stated that the RCMP probe reveals Clark’s government to be “the most corrupt government this province has ever seen. I’ve never hear of a political party going into an election with one police investigation over its head, never mind

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462 *British Columbia Report*, March 4, 1996, pp. 8-11
464 NDP activists, Peter Norris and Jeff Keighley, in *The Vancouver Sun*, February 22, 1996
465 Brad Zubyk, in *The Vancouver Sun*, February 22, 1996
466 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999
two.”\textsuperscript{467} However, the RCMP investigation and subsequent comments like those of Farrell-Collins had minimal impact on Clark and his transition.

Finally, in May 1996, Hydro chair Brian Smith released his interim report on the scandal. He called BC Hydro’s creation of an international arm (IPC) to work on a Pakistani power project “poorly planned and executed.” Mr. Smith went on to say that former Hydro chairman, long-time NDP insider, John Laxton, was in a direct, fundamental, undisclosed conflict of interest through his purchase of IPC shares.” Smith’s report seemed to exonerate Clark in that he accepted Clark’s contention that he knew nothing about the share purchases or Mr. Laxton’s conflict of interest.\textsuperscript{468} For his part, Mr. Clark acknowledged, “... the report finds some criticism of me which I completely accept. I should have been more diligent.”\textsuperscript{469}

Most agree however, by the time Smith made his report, Clark had already accrued all the benefit possible from the scandal. “They say that in politics, timing is everything. In that regard, the timing of investigations in the Hydrogate affair appears to be favouring the NDP. For starters, the announcement of the RCMP’s investigation into the affair came in April, well before the election call. Further, the police probe would not be completed for several months – well after the election as is the case with the full report of the interim Hydro chair, Mr. Brian Smith.”\textsuperscript{470}

5.6 ‘60 Days of Action’

As a follow-up to the leadership and the swearing in, Clark and his team had a very straightforward two-part strategy. The first part of the strategy was to continue to push the key Clark messages, but to do so using the full resources of the government. Even before his leadership victory, Clark’s team was dispatched throughout the provincial government and crown corporations to find policies and programs that Clark could announce or re-announce on an almost daily basis. The second part involved drastically changing the way in which these announcements were communicated. Clark’s strategists had identified several weaknesses with the traditional NDP approach to the media and they were determined to take a new path. Dubbed ‘the 60 Days of Action,’ the plan was succinctly described by one NDP insider. “…Clark knew he had to seize the agenda and went back to Victoria, got every old announcement that was worth anything and then put...”

\textsuperscript{467} Canadian Press Newswire, April 18, 1996
\textsuperscript{468} This finding is in complete contradiction to Laxton’s own recollections. When testifying at his colleague, John Sheehan’s wrongful dismissal trial, Laxton said that Clark had been kept apprised of the plans through memos and minutes of their meetings and that Clark fired Sheehan to make himself look decisive. “Mr. Clark was involved in the discussions. This wasn’t the first time he heard about this.” John Laxton in the \textit{Victoria Times Colonist}, March 12, 1999, pp. A8
\textsuperscript{469} British Columbia Report, May 6, 1995, pp. 16. Some would suggest that Premier Clark’s mea culpa on this issue showed a new level of political responsibility. More cynical observers would point out that it is easy to apologize once you realize there will be no punishment meted out for the mistake you have made.
\textsuperscript{470} British Columbia Report, May 6, 1996, pp. 15
a strategy in place to re-announce all these initiatives in Vancouver, away from the more cynical Victoria press gallery.”

However, before he could fully implement his ‘60 days of Action’ strategy, Clark had to overcome several challenges, many of which were of his own making. In addition to the Hydrogate scandal, came other missteps such as his ill-advised appointment of David Mitchell as Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Clark appointed Mitchell, a former Liberal MLA and vociferous opponent of Gordon Campbell, largely out of political spite and gamesmanship. When the former commissioner questioned the entire hiring process Clark had followed, the appointment was rescinded. Another problem arose when Clark was chastised for his choice of words when referring to his opponents Campbell and Weisgerber and their approach to provincial finances. “...all they want to do is cut, cut, cut with a capital K.” It was a remark Clark had made frequently but was eventually called upon to apologize. The reference to the Klu Klux Klan was “a bit over the top. I didn’t mean any offense.”

However, these were small inconveniences compared to the victories Clark was began to realize as his ‘60 Days of Action’ strategy started to capture the public’s attention. One reporter correctly captured the essence of Clark’s approach. “Since he took over in February, Mr. Clark has proved a master of momentum. Rarely has a day gone by without some government announcement about what good things the NDP was up to. This is definitely an in-your-face election, launched by a master of the craft. For eight weeks now, in a kind of phony war, Mr. Clark has taken the game to his Liberal opponents, while they have hung about, inexplicably, waiting for something like an official Marquess of Queensberry start to the hostilities.”

Clark’s announcements during this period can be divided into three distinct types. There were the series of freezes to various government fees, including school tuition, auto insurance and electricity costs. There were the capital announcements designed to show Clark’s activist, interventionist persona. Finally, there were the announcements about shrinking the size of government used primarily to inoculate against Clark’s image as a big spender and stymie Campbell’s attempts to characterized the government as mismanaged. What all these announcements had in common is that the time spent on “message delivery versus time spent on policy research was roughly on a ratio of 10 to 1.”

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471 Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, November 8, 1998
472 Commentator Rafe Mair felt that after the Mitchell appointment went sour, “…things looked bleak for Clark. To the rescue came the federal fisheries minister who, with cruel indifference to the plight of the fishermen affected, cut the fishing season in half, allowing the premier to distract attention from his gaffes by bashing Ottawa, always a safe target in these parts.” In the Financial Post Daily, April 12, 1996, pp. 11
473 British Columbia Report, February 19, 1996
475 The long-term implications of an announcement have been traditionally of little concern to Premier Clark. For example, after the 1996 election he would announce that agreements had been reached to build 3 new aluminum smelters in B.C. The positive coverage of these announcements far outweighed any criticism later on when the smelters did not materialize. Senior Liberal MLA, Interview, December 18, 1998

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Moreover, all of the announcements had a populist angle and all had a distinct voter appeal. Unlike leaders such as Kim Campbell and Frank Miller, Clark made no announcements about reorganizing government agencies, setting up committees or reviewing government process. Clark was often quoted saying, “process is for cheese.” If an announcement did not have an immediate and significant public impact he had no interest in it.

**Mr. Freeze**

Of all his announcements, Clark’s move to freeze post-secondary tuition rates, auto insurance premiums and domestic utility rates proved to be the most popular. One of Clark’s communications advisor’s argued that rate freezes were a good way to run against a former leader of your own party. The freezes showed policy decisiveness but were not a total condemnation or personal attack of the former leader’s vision. “At one point a former head of the ICBC said he was against the rate freezes. This man was a non-NDP former senior government executive. These were the kind of comments we could run against.”

Another advisor recalls that their only focus at that time was to message and looking different. One example he gave was the freeze on post-secondary tuition. This freeze, in conjunction with the freezing of ICBC car insurance and BC Hydro rates was a major plank in Glen Clark’s pre-election platform. By setting the increase at only 8 per cent, the NDP in BC would have had the lowest tuition increase in Canada. But for Clark there were two problems with this strategy. First it was too much like something Harcourt would do. It was the middle ground. Having the lowest rate in Canada would be designed to appease students, poverty groups and other traditional NDP supporters, while having some increase would be a fob to taxpayer concerns. Trying to please everyone and usually ending up pleasing no one was a position Clark was reluctant to take.

Furthermore, an eight per cent increase would be a one-day news story, while a total freeze on tuition was a significant departure, obviously much different from the route taken by the other provinces and the type of issue that Clark could parlay into a series of good news meetings and events through the course of the election. So with this type of announcement, Clark could cut the through the haze of voter apathy while at the same time show that he was significantly different from Harcourt, that he was on the side of the under-privileged. As one longtime Victoria journalist surmised, “What the freezes accomplished was a lack of scrutiny on fiscal matters for Clark. Clark and his group were very proud of his rate freezes. He badly wanted people to refer to him as Mr. Freeze, but the nickname never took.”

**Capital Announcements – ‘Still Shoveling…”**

There can be little question that Clark’s promises through the period referred to as the ‘60 Days of Action,’ were comprehensive and dramatic. They were particularly dramatic given the obvious slow down in economic growth that most forecasters were predicting at

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476 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
477 Senior Media Personality, Interview, February 21, 1999
the time. Estimates of the overall cost of Clark’s promises ranged from $800 million to $1.3 billion. The Canadian Newswire attempted a tally of the cost of the promises on April 24, 1996, just over a week before the election was held. Their listing is as follows:

- Two-year auto-insurance freeze: $360 million
- Three-year hydro rate freeze: $120 million
- Health increase: $100 million
- School Technology plan: $100 million
- Post-secondary education increase: $66 million
- Student job program: $34 million
- Surgical waiting list reduction: $25 million
- Burnaby rest home renovation: $13 million
- Legal aid: $12 million
- Pollution-free buses: $8 million
- Women’s health services: $3 million
- North Thompson highway bypass; $2 million
- Other $10 million
- Total $853 million

Vaughn Palmer and his colleague Tom Barrett estimated the total amount to be closer to $1.3 billion. They included, amongst other things, the $90 million youth initiative, Victoria’s hospital expansion - $105 million, the new Nanaimo ferry terminal - $100 million and the controversial fast ferry project - $220 million. “Mr. Clark has strung out the announcements as a series of daily releases and most news organizations – including my own- have been obliging, giving him 10 times as much coverage as he would have received if he’ held everything until budget day. The more grievous burden for taxpayers is represented by the capital construction because all of that money will have to be borrowed, adding to a provincial debt that has expanded by more than 50 per cent under the NDP.”

Cutbacks – Clark’s ‘pillowfight’ with the public service unions

On March 7, in part to counter concerns about his free spending ways, Clark announced cuts to the civil service and the retirement of two crown corporations. By winding down BC Systems and BC Trade, Clark promised $71 million in annual savings and the elimination of 462 public sector jobs. When added to earlier promises, the announcement meant that Clark had promised cutting 2,222 jobs in total. Critics of this announcement were loud and vociferous. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation called Clark’s apparent battle with the public service a phony war. “The government pretends to cut jobs and the BCGEU pretends to be outraged. In the end, the NDP’s legacy will be that it increased the overall size of the public sector.”

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478 Canadian Press Newswire, April 24, 1996
479 Premier Clark’s spending policy is to keep on trucking, Vaughn Palmer in the Vancouver Sun, April 19, 1996, pp. A6
480 Troy Lanigan as quoted in the British Columbia Report, March 25, 1996, pp. 9. Some NDP activists would disagree with this assessment, suggesting instead that John Shields prolonged opposition to Clark, culminating in his bitter attacks on Clark at the 1999 NDP convention would suggest that, at the very least, the BCGEU’s criticisms were not wholly disingenuous.
At the time, the BC Liberals also attempted to discredit the announcement as simply more NDP pre-election conjuring, but were hamstrung by the fact that they were actually in favour of such reductions. This episode symbolized a major part of Clark’s strategy, which was to cherry pick key parts of the BC Liberal platform to use as his own. The BC Liberals had difficulty reacting to this strategy. One option was to delay release of their detailed policy platform information, but public pressure to know more about the Liberals made this difficult. The second option was to criticize the NDP for copying their platform, but too often this sounded like sour grapes. The final option was to praise the announcement, but criticize the NDP for being opportunistic and pragmatic. The BC Liberals had neither the credibility with the media, nor the political sophistication to be able to correctly implement this third option. Too often their criticisms were either not reported or were marginalized in media coverage.

**The Clark Transition – Politics before administration**

There were several reasons that Clark chose this announcement-a-day approach as his transition strategy. The first and most important reason was to continue to emphasize the innate differences between the Clark approach and the Harcourt approach. Clark’s goal with the announcement a day strategy was to show activity, youthfulness and decisiveness, to give a sense that the government was busy with an activist agenda. All this was designed to contrast with the plodding deliberate style of the Harcourt regime, particularly as it was perceived towards the end of Harcourt’s tenure. Moreover this approach allowed Clark to emphasize his focus on the need for more government intervention in the economy. Clark and his team understood that to distinguish themselves from Harcourt they would have to run a more labour friendly, left-leaning campaign.

The one event that, in particular, showed that Clark was decisive and obviously not attached to the previous regime was his calling for a public inquiry into the NCHS ‘Bingogate’ scandal. Also in a series of moves designed to appeal to organized labour, such as, fastracking the signing of collective agreements, settling the problems with the BCGEU and legislating the Surrey school board to accept the contract with the teachers, Clark was able to send an all important message that he was on the side of the worker. “Glen knew that other NDP leaders, particularly Harcourt, were very concerned about appearing too pro-labour and would have balked at signing agreements so close to an election campaign. To the contrary, these actions helped distance Clark from Harcourt, moved the party to the left and continued to help promote Clark’s move from regulated socialism to populist interventionism. His proudest moment was being able to “win from the left.”

Another important reason to inundate BC voters with policy announcements was to cover up past NDP government inadequacies. One observer noted that many of Clark’s initiatives during this period had not resulted from logical public policy processes and were released in an effort solely to maintain momentum. “In today’s political environment, the general public’s collective memory is significantly shorter. Clark’s blur

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481 Former Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
of activity covered his tracks and kept his weaknesses hidden. He was setting the agenda, he gave his opponents few opportunities to attack and even fewer to dredge up the NDP’s past record.

The final reason Clark used this strategy was he understood that while he had a significant advantage on his opponents, the advantage was time-sensitive. The Clark team’s approach was to dominate the debate for a short period of time with their own agenda. They could only do that for a finite amount of time because as one senior advisor stated, “…we knew that by the time the election came we would be out of gas. It is very difficult for an incumbent government to run on a platform of new ideas because it begs the question - why didn’t you do these things when you were in? Furthermore an incumbent government with a new Premier is typically unable to argue that their platform is phase two of a long term plan because inevitably the long range plans of the two premiers differ and more important must differ if the new Premier is to get out of the shadow of the previous leader.”

Clark knew that if he was able to grab the reins of power quickly and discipline the bureaucracy to his political agenda, he would be able to build momentum and extend his honeymoon with the provincial media. Moreover, his strategists were aware that while Campbell was high in the polls, his was a still a fledgling party and organizationally the NDP still had an advantage. By using the full resources of the government quickly and decisively to layout his position, Clark was able to outmaneuver the BC Liberals.

Throughout this roughly eight-week period, the Liberals had been largely mute. Some of their key organizers and senior MLA’s understood that the only way to fight the Clark announcement onslaught was with paid advertising. Unfortunately, many senior BC Liberals still had fresh memories of a series of ads inadvertently released by the last BC Liberal leader, Gordon Wilson. Wilson had incorrectly anticipated the 1991 election with a flurry of ads worth somewhere near $200,000. When the election wasn’t called, he was roundly chastised for wasting the party’s precious funds, which took several years to replace. Many of the senior party members were loathe to repeat the experience and as a result, the Liberals let Clark’s announcement salvos go unchallenged.

**Taking over government – setting priorities**

To properly execute his ‘60 Days of Action’ strategy, Clark had to be very specific about his approach to the administration of government. He knew that to be able to focus solely on the political challenges he would need full control of the government, particularly at the senior management levels in central agencies and key ministries, policy and communication staff and equally importantly, ministerial advertising budgets. He needed to take control of these areas and functions with minimal internal upset, so as not to distract people from their principal task of providing him with material for daily announcements. In sum, to be successful, Clark had to have high morale, complete control and little or no dissension amongst the ranks of the professional civil service.

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482 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, January 15, 1999

483 Former Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
Interestingly, there was not a concentrated effort at this time looking at either the transition or the election. If there was any extra time it went towards putting together announcements geared towards Clark’s message. Clark’s strategist felt that the best NDP deputy ministers – Maloney, Gunton and McArthur, were capable of organizing the transition. As a result of his close ideological ties with these deputies, Clark was comfortable with them handling the governmental and logistical side of the transition. Particularly during the leadership contest, the last thing the Clark people wanted to do was give the impression that they were preparing for government. It would have sent the wrong message to supporters and would have shown arrogance and a disregard for the need for a leadership contest. He got around this by allowing the deputies to do the work he needed done.

Overall, the Clark people thought that Harcourt did everything he could as outgoing Premier to help smooth the way. He tasked the deputies and ministry staff with preparing briefing books for the new Premier and he stayed out of the way on contentious issues even though they may have reflected badly on him. The only issue that may have been perceived as having caused the incoming Premier some problems was Harcourt’s signing of the Nisga’a Agreement in Principle. As it turned out the Clark people saw this as helpful, but the signing of such an important document by a lame duck Premier could have been a problem.

Generally, Clark did not spend a lot of time on transition planning because a) as a former minister of Finance and of Employment and Investment, and particularly as a result of his experience as head of Treasury Board, Clark was fairly comfortable taking on the reins of power. He had been a central player and had intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the central agencies.

As well, by this time, Clark had a well-developed sense of what this government would look like and how it would run. He knew it was going to be more centralized than the Harcourt government – and the centralized issue management team that came in to make the pre-election announcement only reinforced this theme. With logistics and other governmental issues largely taken care of, the only major transition issue left for Clark was personnel and the swearing in. Personnel was not a big issue because most of his key team was already in place and would move easily over to positions within government. The emphasis Clark placed on politics versus governmental transition was exemplified by some of his first pronouncements to his new cabinet. “Moments after winning the NDP leadership in February he explicitly told his senior cabinet colleagues to ‘get the hell out of Victoria and stop listening to bureaucrats.’

From the civil service perspective, there was no formal transition. Clark was seen as already being comfortable with the levers of power. The civil service saw Clark’s retention of McArthur, Gunton and Dix as an indication that there would be little change. There was a formal civil servant committee to oversee the transition. There were several deputies involved with this exercise. The committee met over a period of a couple of months on a biweekly basis.

As soon as Premier Harcourt resigned, deputies across the government were asked to prepare briefing books and to monitor policy statements made by all leadership candidates and by the leader of the official opposition. As government staff our job was to ensure that there was an implementation plan in place for whoever became the Premier. We had to ensure stability. We prepared the binders in anticipation of a new premier. There was a very short timeframe in which to prepare. There was a convergence of events. On top of the new leader there was also an upcoming budget and a new legislative session to consider. There were also concerns about the prospects for initiatives not connected with the upcoming election. Therefore we had to monitor all the candidates for premier, that monitoring of what they were doing and saying was a big part of our operation. In many ways we went through two transitions from November to early July. In the 1980’s and 1990’s in BC, there was high level of public distrust of the civil service. The good thing about the intra-party transition is that level of distrust is usually less prevalent and in this case, more or less non-existent.\textsuperscript{485}

A much more important committee was the civil servant team put together to map out action plans and activities around Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ announcements. This committee met more than once a week, one deputy and one communications team member was assigned to each action plan. On top of announcement strategies, this group also tracked everything said by opposition politicians. Key bureaucrats from this group met with Clark on several occasions during the leadership campaign, and as a result, the moment Clark was sworn in the group was able to step the whole announcement process into high gear. “We were able to put a well developed plan in front of him the day he came into power. The strategy was to build announcements around themes such as education and on your side”. Of all the policies, the education freeze went very well, as did the negotiations with the public sector unions.\textsuperscript{486}

The most important element regarding this committee was that it was up and running not on the day Clark won the leadership, but rather, the day Harcourt quit. The committee was able to adapt quickly, in part, because, the central agencies in the BC government are much more issue management oriented than is the case in other provinces. Both the Premier’s office and the Deputy Minister to the Premier is much more focused on the issues of the day than on some pre-conceived notion of how these agencies should be structured. Perhaps as a result of the closer than usual working relationship between the central agency civil servants and the senior politicians in BC, many viewed the Cabinet Office as more of a quick response office than a typical central agency. The cabinet office’s significant involvement in issues like the CORE land use process and the finalization and marketing of the Nisga’a agreement both lend credence to this argument.

While the changes in the civil service were minimal, there were some, mostly involving efforts to centralize. The biggest change at the bureaucratic level was that Gunton took over the communications function immediately upon Clark taking over. This was largely seen by the bureaucracy as an outcome of Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ strategy and as

\textsuperscript{485} Senior Deputy Minister, Interview, December 15, 1999
\textsuperscript{486} Senior Deputy Minister, Interview, December 5, 1998
having little impact on the government as a whole. “The spate of announcements that

came out of the Premier’s office did not need a lot of input from the bureaucracy because
they were not that detailed. Clark was not really well known by the bureaucracy. Most
saw Clark as a man in a hurry but realized that his attitude towards wholesale change in
the civil service was, “why would I initiate disruption in the civil service – I’m the leader
now.” While there is always some consternation around change, overall we knew that
everything in Clark’s background is about issues and issues management, not about
organization or process.”

There was no question that Clark had very quickly centralized the decision making
process. But for the bureaucracy this wasn’t really a big problem. “The time period was
too short for the bureaucracy to get pissed off at the total centralization. The problem
came when he didn’t spread the circle after winning the election. You have to evolve
your team from the leadership and then again after the election. Not doing this led, in no
small part, to Clark’s eventual undoing.”

Centralization – A key to Clark’s success

Undoubtedly, the major administrative change implemented by the Clark group after the
leadership was a consolidation of the decision-making processes to a central location in
the premier’s office. Under Harcourt there had been many policy and decision making
pods. There was PIC under the Premier’s Chief of Staff, Chris Chilton, GCO under Evan
Lloyd and CPS under Doug McArthur. Clark’s group rolled all these into one large CPCS
office, under Gunton.

The net result of these changes was that the Premier’s office became very nimble, able to
respond quickly to issues and massage the media as needed. It was a small group
committed to Clark and anyone perceived not to be a Clarkocrat, was moved out. Doug
Allen for example, long time civil servant and the person most thought would move into
the secretary to cabinet, was moved out of government. Morale in other ministers’
offices was not of great importance because people in those positions took on
significantly less importance in the Clark government. People close to Clark, suggest
that as a result of Clark’s leadership qualities many key people came on board during that
all-important 10 weeks between leadership and election call. Other NDP supporters, less
close to Clark suggest this boost in commitment may have come as much from fear than
from admiration.

One of the reasons Clark was able to centralize so quickly and thoroughly was because
the leadership race was not divisive. There were a number of outgoing MLA’s including,
Darlene Marzari (a strong Harcourt advocate right to the end), Art Charbonneau, Colin
Gablemann, Jackie Piment, Tom Perry, but with the exception of Piment who eventually
joined the Progressive Democratic Alliance, none of these people were of any trouble to
Clark. Joan Smallwood, a failed leadership candidate, was not a big fan of Clark’s but

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487 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, March 23, 1999
488 Former Deputy Minister, Interview, March 23, 1999
489 From Interviews.
she stayed in cabinet and behaved, while Corky Evans, the candidate who came second in leadership masterfully spun his way into an improved cabinet portfolio.

One example of Clark’s hands-on, centralized style of governing was in the area of education. Harcourt would have left this type of sector up to his Minister, with perhaps the odd joint announcement if the issue were major enough. Premier Clark on the other hand, was completely involved with the day-to-day of education policy from the moment he was sworn in and was personally instrumental in trying to slow down the ‘liberal attitudes’ he felt were creeping into the educational system. Clark worked hard to get back to a more regularized curriculum and education management system that gave more stability to teachers. Clark followed through with the downsizing of the school boards, whereas when his Minister dropped the ball on this, Harcourt let the issue drop. Clark’s priorities were to ensure that teachers have adequate resources and that they understand that the government was on their side. Clark’s strategists ensured that there were pockets of potential supporters like the teachers attached to every ministry in government and that these groups understood that Clark was making the key decisions on their behalf.

Choosing a Cabinet
Clark’s announcement of a new cabinet represented the first major shuffling of the NDP cabinet since Mr. Harcourt substantially reorganized the upper levels of government in 1993. For Premier Clark, building a cabinet was not about matching cabinet ministers to the portfolios where they would be the most effective. Nor was it about anticipating certain governmental challenges and anticipating those with certain key appointments. Moreover, because of the ease with which Clark won the leadership race, he was unencumbered by any pressure to appoint leadership opponents or their key supporters. Rather, Clark’s cabinet was all about preparing for an election and squeezing every political advantage possible from the media interest that accompanies the announcement of a new cabinet. The only real restraint on Clark’s cabinet building process was the fact that several senior NDP MLA’s had formally announced that they would not be seeking re-election, thereby implicitly showing little faith in Clark’s ability to avoid defeat.\(^\text{490}\) Transportation Minister Jackie Pement, Education Minister Art Charbonneau, Energy Minister Anne Edwards, Municipal Affairs Minister Darlene Marzari, Speaker Emery Barnes, and former Premier, Mike Harcourt, were all on the list of non-candidates in the next election.\(^\text{491}\) The cabinet was also smaller by three ministers, both as part of Clark’s response to the BC Liberals call for smaller, leaner government and as a result of the fact that he had no intention of taking much direction from his cabinet, preferring instead to run an “executive style” government with the decision making centralized in his own office.

To their credit, several media personalities picked up on the political agenda behind Clark’s cabinet choices and decisions. “During Mike Harcourt’s final stormy days as premier, they were known as the Gang of six, a powerful group of cabinet ministers thought to have their own agenda. Now Premier Glen Clark’s first cabinet shuffle shows

\(^{490}\) Many insiders suggested it was not just a lack of faith but overt hatred that compelled these ministers to abandon Clark.

\(^{491}\) BC Report, January 22, 1996, pp. 9
he and his five colleagues are putting that agenda into action – and they’re ready for a bitter fight in the BC election that must be called this year.” Political columnist Mike Smyth suggested another, albeit related reason for his cabinet choices. “Premier Glen Clark tried to cool the scandal that dogged his first week in power by introducing a streamlined, election ready cabinet.”

The gang of six all received senior positions in Clark’s cabinet. Dan Miller received the key position as Deputy Premier, Elizabeth Cull - despite being touched by the NCHS scandal - retained the finance portfolio while Moe Sihota hung onto the environment portfolio even though he was under investigation by the BC Law society at the time. MacPhail remained social services minister, while Petter was promoted to health and intergovernmental affairs. NDP insiders, at the time, stressed the election readiness aspect of Clark’s cabinet building. “These are people who believe they can win another election. They’re a very tough, determined group.” Clark himself made it clear what his priorities were when choosing his cabinet, in particular regional backbenchers such as Lois Boon and Corky Evans, “… I want them in their own communities, talking it up. We’ll give the people a clear choice in the election.”

Vaughn Palmer examined the appointments of Evans and Boone plus the appointment of another backbencher, Dennis Streifel, MLA Mission Kent as Minister of Forests. Palmer pointed out that none of these backbenchers had any experience that would prepare them for these posts. In four sessions of the legislature, Streifel, a former supermarket worker, had never spoken on the subject of forestry. Similarly, neither Boone nor Evans had ever said or done anything substantial in their portfolio areas of municipal affairs or transportation in the five years the NDP had been in government. “…it is hard to think of why Premier Clark chose these ministers for these portfolio, other than the obvious political reason that he thought it might save their hides in the next provincial election.”

The main personnel job of the new Premier, picking a cabinet, was not a problem for Clark. There were not a lot of cabinet ministers in the leadership race and it was not a divisive race, so there were not a lot of egos that needed massaging. Clark had a couple of key ministers, Miller, MacPhail and sometimes Petter, but for the most part, the cabinet were bit players. Clark took the unprecedented step once in office of only having cabinet meetings when he was available.

**Clark’s approach to the media – a new paradigm**

The second element of Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ strategy was a complete reworking of the NDP’s approach to media relations. One of the big reasons the Clark’s team felt there was need for a change was their sense that Harcourt never got full credit for his

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492 Canadian Press Newswire, February 29, 1996
493 Canadian Press Newswire, February 28, 1996
494 Canadian Press Newswire, February 29, 1996
495 Canadian Press Newswire, February 29, 1996
496 “What better reason could there be for these cabinet appointments?” Vaughn Palmer, *Vancouver Sun*, February 29, 1996, A6

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accomplishments. “Harcourt’s primary problem was that his administration had many serious miscues that they received legitimate bad press for. Harcourt had several excellent accomplishments such as the protection of the Tatenshini that the government simply didn’t get the press they deserved.” Clark’s people wanted to rectify this second problem by ensuring they got maximum press coverage for the announcements they could control.

The second mistake the Clark people thought Harcourt had made was that the former Premier had been overexposed to the media, particularly to the Victoria Press Gallery. “In one of his last scrums, I watched the Premier try to answer questions on the NCHS crisis for over 40 minutes in a media scrum. It was brutal. He was brutalized. It was very important for Clark to set a different tone and take control of the media situation.”

The basic strategy for the Clark team was to devise a very strict program of trying to capture the morning and afternoon news cycles with as many new announcements as they could muster up until the government could release a budget and call an election. The only criteria for these announcements were that they could be implemented quickly and easily, thereby making them seem different from standard ‘pie in the sky’ campaign promises. As well, they had to be designed in such a way as to distance Clark from the previous regime, portray Clark as an outside government populist, someone who was “On your Side” and re-attract the disaffected labourers and families that had deserted the NDP for the federal Reform Party in 1993.

The messaging for these announcements also fell into two straightforward categories. The first message was that Clark was a vigorous activist who was younger and more in tune with society than either Gordon Campbell or Mike Harcourt. The other message simply involved a fine-tuning of his “On your Side” leadership speeches. Throughout the ‘60 Days of Action,’ Clark’s handlers were quite often able to combine the two messages.

“Glen did a number of populist style photo-ops like the skateboarding scene, the MTV interview and the motorcycle riding. This was done as much to inject some enthusiasm into the NDP activists who would be so key during the election, than anything else. The most important thing to come out of the 60 days of decisions was it gave the whole team comfort. The period of time went so well that the group psyche went from one of desperation to guarded optimism.”

**On your side**

In an interesting dichotomy, the major BC media outlets identified Clark’s “On your Side” mantra soon after he became premier, yet did not really question the underlying strategy until after the election was over. “Glen Clark’s campaign theme, ‘On your Side’ served as the focal point for another dizzying round of electioneering by the NDP leader last week. In a $45,000 BCTV infomercial, Mr. Clark reiterated his claim to be a

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497 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
498 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
499 Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, November 8, 1998
champion of 'ordinary' people.” He said his latest round of tax cuts for the middle class proved that his government is not on the side of the powerful and privileged. “I know where I’ve come from and which side I’m on,” Clark stated unequivocally. Campbell, when asked to respond to Clark’s paid advertisement was equally blunt. “I saw Glen Clark trying to ignite the class war in BC. He tried to re-ignite the “us versus them” politics of the past, the politics of division.”

As one NDP observer remarked, “Clark did more than pick issues, he picked language. He didn’t talk about supporting education he talked about “protecting” it, presumably from the right wing Liberals. He consistently made statements that were overtly political, and despite the fact that people had low tolerance for such messaging, it worked.” Miro Certnig of the Globe and Mail suggests that while Campbell was correct in his assessment, the spectre of the NDP’s obviously intimate connections with organized labour wasn’t as haunting to British Columbians as it had been in the past. “Indeed, Mr. Clark is actually trying to score points these days by making a point of his union connections and blue-collar sentiments. This week (in what the BC Liberals considered a major miscalculation) Clark unabashedly walked into the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver and made a fiery, pro-union speech to his “brothers and sisters” in the movement. “I was here today and proud of it,” the Premier declared.”

This wasn’t the only forum that the Premier used to reinforce his public support for organized labour. Since becoming Premier in February, Clark pledged that he would renew the controversial ‘Health Labour Accord.’ The accord, which critics referred to as a ‘sweetheart deal’ for BC’s unionized hospital workers, was a three year deal which guaranteed more than a 10 per cent pay increase and job security for almost 50,000 workers. Clark also reiterated his support for controversial NDP labour policies such as the fair wage law, increased enforcement of BC’s Labour Code and the Employment Standards Act. Clark asserted during this period that all violators of these codes should be banned from bidding on government work for at least a year.

Clark inserted the “On your Side” message into all of his key announcements. Less than a week after he became premier, Clark had already started turning discussions on all subjects back to his main theme. On tax cuts he said, “…we’ll look at cuts to the size of the administration and see if we can’t protect health care and education and squeeze a little bit out to show that we are on the side of the average person.”

501 “It’s time to choose sides, NDP leader tell voters,” The Vancouver Sun, April 24, 1996, pp. A1
503 Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, January 14, 1999
504 Miro Certnig, “Premier not afraid to play the labour card,” Globe and Mail, May 16, 1996, pp. A2
505 British Columbia Report, February 5, 1996, pp. 8. There is nothing more consistently controversial in BC politics than labour legislation. The business class suggests that issues such as sectoral bargaining and the lack of a secret ballot for union certification prove that the NDP are puppets of organized labour. Similarly, left leaning activists would suggest that attacks on Employment Standards and the minimum wage are barbaric and mean-spirited.
506 The Vancouver Sun, February 20, 1996, pp. A1
Once Clark had chosen his audience, dug up his content and refined his message, all that remained were tactics. The first of these had to do with pure volume, in other words, ensuring that Clark’s messages got out to the largest number of BC voters possible. He achieved this with a myriad of methods. There were the previously mentioned TV and print advertisements about Campbell’s tax cuts for banks, the free publicity from the announcement themselves, the massive government advertising campaigns that accompanied each of these announcements, the estimated $2 million in advertisements bought by sympathetic interest groups and finally, just before the election, the previously referred to infomercial hosted by Clark himself. The coordination of these mediums was a Herculean task, but was invaluable as a method of saturating Clark’s key audiences with his messages.

While many argued that this onslaught of advertising was unfair and impolitic, at the time, there was little anyone could do. Just before the campaign was officially announced the NDP released a $45,000 30-minute infomercial. The video was taped at Nootka Elementary in East Vancouver, which was positioned as the institution where Premier Clark received his elementary school education. In reality, Premier Clark only went to Nootka for Kindergarten. The balance of his elementary days were spent at a private Catholic school, St. Jude’s, a fact that was conveniently never mentioned.

The lower key, feel good approach of Clark’s infomercial was enhanced by a series of soft political ads funded by third-party interests that ran prior to the election writ. In addition, throughout the spring of 1996, the BC Teachers Federation ran a series of ads worth more than $1.5 million stressing the need for educational spending. Similarly, a coalition of environmental interests spent almost $100,000 on newspaper ads questioning each party’s commitment to the environment. A senior Vancouver-based advertising executive estimated the pre-election cost of both government and union ads was approximately $10 million, a level unprecedented in British Columbia’s electoral history.

The second related tactic employed by Clark involved speed. Through his relentless schedule of announcements, Clark was able to effective gain control of the media reporting process. Many times during this period, he spoke privately about the understanding the media beast and process of keeping it properly fed. By cramming so much into so short a period of time, Clark was able to avoid scrutiny and editorializing about the overall direction of his government or about validity of his individual announcements. This strategy also helped Clark in his efforts to get the electorate to forget past NDP mistakes and the Harcourt legacy. “Tielman and Clark particularly understood how to steer the vehicle – able to avoid the past by being a whirlwind – They were able to control the news cycle. No time for looking back in history. This was

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507 British Columbia Report, May 6, 1996 pp. 8-9
508 ibid., Financial Post Daily, May 17, 1996, pp. 10
509 British Columbia Report, May 6, 1996 pp. 8-9 Clark supporters respond to this charge by suggesting that in constant dollars, the cost of these ads was comparably to the anti-NDP ads run in the 1970’s and 80’s.
particularly true around Hydrogate. He was able to avoid getting called to task on Hydro because he made news, the media had to cover it, no time to editorialize’.  

When discussing the flurry of NDP activity one BC Liberal MLA points to the ridiculous situation immediately preceding the call of the 1996 election. “Deliver the Throne Speech on Thursday, settled the a school strike in the largest school district in the province on the weekend, Read the Budget on Monday and call the election on the Tuesday election – and people wonder why the NDP were able to avoid detailed scrutiny.”  

Regardless of the complaints, the strategy worked. Furthermore, the NDP were particularly adept at avoiding one of the key mistakes in concentrated media campaigns like this one; that is, stepping on their own stories.

A third tactic had to do with location. Clark and his handlers were wary of the more cynical Victoria Press Gallery. Clark was worried about their institutional memories and the vicious nature of the Victoria press scrums, something that had evolved from the days of Bill Vander Zalm and had continued with Harcourt. Clark’s response was to make as many of his announcements as possible outside of the Victoria precinct. It made it easier to push out the new message without the cynical Victoria media close at hand. This strategy was also helpful to Clark in his efforts to cultivate good relations with the less adversarial ethnic media in the Lower Mainland including Ming Pao, Sing Tao and The Link.

“The entire NDP media strategy was to make all their announcements in Vancouver. They were trying to avoid the scrutiny of the press gallery. At one point my assignment editor got so fed up he flew me to Vancouver to one of Clark’s ‘press conferences.’ It was a joke. No one knew what to ask and the questions that were put to the Premier were all softballs because no one in the Vancouver media has done extensive political reporting. I ended up asking all the questions, but I was clearly outnumbered in the new media relations reality that Clark had put together for himself.”

A telling moment was when, as part of Clark’s new media strategy, a major announcement was made in Vancouver. The Vancouver Sun, thought the announcement sufficiently important that they flew senior columnist, Vaughn Palmer, over from Victoria. Palmer was the only press gallery veteran in the audience. He started the questioning with a particularly nasty remark, typical for Victoria, but unheard of in Vancouver. “The rest of the media laughed at Vaughn, they were so unused to that type of treatment of a major political personality.”

The final, related tactic involved selectivity. The NDP’s media strategy at this point was to continually get big, favourable headlines. They decided that their best vehicles for this approach were the Vancouver Province newspaper and the BCTV television station, because these outlets were province wide and the other outlets, particularly the

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510 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
511 Senior BC Liberal MLA, Interview, December 18, 1999
512 Vancouver Newspaper Journalist, Interview, January 18, 1999
513 Former Communications Advisor, Interview, January 14, 1999
_Vancouver Sun_ were not friendly to the NDP. Clark’s staff concluded that BCTV was going to have the numbers to significantly impact the election result. They also felt it was fortuitous that BCTV’s primary political reporter, Keith Baldrey, was new and needed the exposure that Clark could provide. They regularly gave exclusives to the _Province_ and BCTV. Many of Clark’s staff felt that this got Clark some grudging respect from the gallery. “It showed Clark was different and it showed the media they were not going to dictate the agenda.” Clark’s staff blatantly curried favour with these outlets by strategically leaking key stories. “The ICBC story that was exclusively carried by BCTV was the best example of strategic leaking.”

The following two examples help explain Clark’s marketing savvy and his understanding of the power of selectivity. The first was when Clark announced his run for the NDP leadership. Rather than announce first to his riding association, Clark chose to announce live on BCTV at 6:00 pm. More than that, BCTV couldn’t get a live hook-up into Clark’s riding so they transmitted from New Brighton Park which is actually in Joy MacPhail’s riding. This kind of choice of media expediency over geographic accuracy was a no-brainer for Clark. “He would take exposure over tradition or protocol every day of the week.”

The second situation occurred when Clark was Minister of Employment and Investment. “Clark realized then that the _Vancouver Sun_ is heavily marketed on the Westside of Vancouver, while the _Vancouver Province_ was marketed and read on the Eastside. He understood the political ramifications of this and adjusted his strategy accordingly. This was his big political advantage over Campbell.”

Again there was little that Clark’s opponents could do in response to these tactics. As one senior Liberal MLA surmised, “the Premier had remarkable control over the provincial communications vehicle, in part through the blatant buying off of Keith Baldrey at BCTV. He absolutely took advantage of the media awe. It was just like Vander Zalm all over again.”

### 60 Days of Impressive Results

Regardless of the complexity of reasons given for Clark’s ultimate success, the fact remains that ‘60 Days of Action’ was one of the most radically successful political strategies in the history of British Columbia. The NDP had taken a new leader, someone who had been an integral part of a formerly hated regime, someone who had also presided over a freshly minted scandal in the form of the Hydrogate affair and had, in less than three months, moved that leader from a poor second in the opinion polls to a virtual tie. In the Spring Edition of their BC Reid Report, Reid pollsters wrote, “The BC political scene has given itself a different look as the NDP government edges towards the final months of its mandate... Since his ascension to the top job in the province, premier

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514 Former Communications Advisor, Interview, January 14, 1999  
515 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999  
516 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999  
517 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999  
518 Senior BC Liberal MLA, Interview, December 18, 1998. Typically in BC, both sides loudly denounce the media during elections for playing favorites. Bob Hackett of SFU did a study of the media during the 1996 campaign and concluded that, on balance, the BC Liberals received more favourable media coverage than did the NDP.
Clark has wasted little time in distinguishing himself from his predecessor, Mike Harcourt...Any gap between the Liberals and the NDP has virtually closed up over the past three months. The NDP has moved up dramatically in the polls, largely through gains from the ranks of the undecided.\textsuperscript{519}

5.7 The Legislative Pause

Hot on the heels of their extended public relations success, the NDP opened the BC legislature on Thursday April 25, 1996, with the Lt-Gov. Garde Gardom delivering the Speech from the Throne. Incredibly it had been 264 days since the BC Legislature had last sat. By delaying the opening of the Legislature, the NDP also went against a principle they fought for long and hard in opposition, the principle being that BC cabinets should not spend taxpayer's money without first getting approval from the legislature. Because of the delay, the NDP spent some $5.6 billion dollars on “special warrants” a method of spending that negates the need for parliamentary approval.\textsuperscript{520}

It was also ironic that Gardom, a former Socred cabinet minister, was forced by the NDP to give an address that was peppered with political sideswipes and thinly veiled attacks on opposition leader, Gordon Campbell. Directly on the NDP’s message of “Us versus Them,” Gardom stated, “…The people of this province face a choice between two very different visions of governing. One is the vision that has taken hold in some of Canada’s provinces, resulting in higher unemployment and cuts to health, education and social services. It maintains that government’s role is to convince people to lower their expectations.”\textsuperscript{521} Highlights from the 1996 Throne Speech were: more money for health and education, 100 new police officers, a crackdown on teen prostitution, proclamation of victims’ rights law, a commitment to force the forest sector to create 21,000 new forestry jobs over five years, salmon preservation and a reiteration of Clark’s earlier promises regarding tax cuts and freezes to auto-insurance, hydro and university tuition rates.

On the next day, the Throne Speech was debated and the Surrey School Board situation was discussed. Regardless of the topic, the NDP’s key messages remained the same. One speaker, NDP backbencher, Jim Beattie, succinctly summarized what the NDP message had been for the last 9 weeks and would continue to be throughout the campaign. “But what courses will survive the $3 billion cut of the Liberals? How much will tuition fees have to go up when these cuts are combined with the massive offloading and cuts from the federal government, cuts which the leader of the BC Liberal Party said didn’t go far enough? Yes, hon. Speaker, the Liberal Party is transparent. The public sees that their policies don’t add up. You can’t give huge tax breaks to corporations and to the wealthy, and cut $3 billion from spending in the BC budget, without hurting

\textsuperscript{519} BC Reid Report, “Political Scene,” \textit{BC politics}, Spring 1996, pp. 1-2

\textsuperscript{520} The Auditor General chastised the NDP for this flip-flop in a harshly worded report that was made public later that year.

\textsuperscript{521} 1996 BC Legislative Hansard, 5\textsuperscript{th} Session, 35 Parliament, April 25, 1996, volume 22, No. 1
education and medicare. The public, the ordinary middle-class working people in this province, know that it’s they who will pay the price of Liberal policies.”

On the following Monday, having legislated a solution the Surrey School Board labour dispute, the NDP government got down to business not of governing but rather of positioning for the commencement of a political campaign. When asked a question about his government’s lack of a coherent job strategy, rather than give a sense of what his government planned to do, Premier Clark went on the attack. He moved the debate wholly into the realm of the political by demanding an apology for the BC Liberals “Glenocchio” television advertisements. “I have a question for the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition. Last night I was watching television with my family, and I saw for the first time in Canadian history a negative, American-style ad against me personally, with a distortion of my face. I would ask the leader of the opposition to apologize to me and my family and to pull the advertisement from the airwaves.”

Receiving no apology, Clark and his colleagues continued to use their time in the Legislature as an opportunity to attack Campbell. In fact almost all of their debate time was used to attack and to push key NDP messages. Even when NDP policy was discussed, it was in terms of “defending” the middle class and the less fortunate from the evil Liberals. “Let’s look at what the Leader of the Official Opposition has set out as his program for the future, and let’s test its implications for health care and education. His number one priority is to cut $3 billion from public services – 15 per cent. His number two priority is to give a third of that - $1 billion – in the form of tax breaks to large corporations and the banks.”

The 1996 Budget – The ‘Fudget Budget’
On Tuesday, April 30, the Minister of Finance, Elizabeth Cull delivered her budget speech and then, less than two hours later Premier Clark visited the Lt.-Governor to ask him to dissolve the house and thus launch the election campaign. The five principal elements of Cull’s budget were as follows: A two per cent cut in personal income tax over two years, a one point tax cut and a tax holiday for certain small businesses, a second balanced budget with a surplus of $87 million, a decline in overall debt by $99 million and the maintenance of funding to health care and education. “This budget will ensure that BC taxpayers continue to have the highest provincial credit rating, the lowest debt-servicing costs and the lowest per capita debt in the country.”

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522 NDP MLA Jim Beattie, BC Legislative Hansard, April 26, 1996
523 Premier Glen Clark, BC Legislative Hansard, April 29, 1996. The Premier was referring to the now famous Glenocchio ads. The ad takes the form of a fairy tale with appropriate nursery-school music and a sing-song voice-over, dripping with sarcasm, beginning: “Once upon a time there was a premier...” The narrator goes on to recall the NDP’s promise to control the debt and clean up patronage payoffs. For each “broken promise,” a picture of Clark grows a computer-generated Pinocchio nose. In a moment of great irony, Clark attacked the Liberals for their personal attack and American style campaigning, this despite the fact that the NDP had attacked Campbell regularly. Even more ironic is the fact that the BC Liberals eventually pulled these ads largely because of many of their own supporters felt they were too negative.
524 Andrew Petter, BC Legislative Hansard, April 29, 1996
525 Finance Minister, Elizabeth Cull, BC Legislative Hansard, April 30, 1996
of the budget had been leaked during the previous nine weeks as part of the ‘60 Days of Action’ strategy.

Nevertheless, the budget was quickly held up to ridicule by the government’s opponents. “Call it a ballot-box budget,” said BC Business Council president Jerry Lampert, “A shell game,” said Troy Lanigan of the Canadian Taxpayers, “deceitful” declared Reform Leader Jack Weisgerber.526 While the majority of professional spokespeople expressed grave doubts, none were prepared to go on record at that point and make formal accusations about the magnitude of the government’s duplicity in presenting the budget.

In a deadly accurate bit of foreshadowing, BC Liberal Finance critic Fred Gingell predicted how the budget debate would unfold. “This budget is simply a further attempt to defer the truth till after the election. One has only to ask: what is the point of this budget? The House is going to be dissolved, and the budget won’t be passed, I expect. Why do we go through this exercise? It’s for the purpose of dressing up a bunch of election promises, to put them before the voters, to tell them about the state of the government’s finances and expectations. There will no check on it. There will be no debate. I expect no estimates. They can promise all they want and paint as rosy a picture as they like, knowing that none of it will be tested. It won’t be found to be lacking until after the election. The Premier, like a caricature of a used-car salesman, doesn’t care what he says to sell this budget, because once he gets it off the lot he can’t be held accountable.”527

Postscript – The 1996 Budget Aftermath
By the fall of 1996, the full extent of the government’s obfuscation around the 1995-96 budgets was made public.528 Former NDP cabinet minister Jackie Pement upon finding out about the more of the details lashed out with a public accusation that Premier Clark knowingly misrepresented the government’s finances before the May election and planned all along to raid the Forest Renewal Fund for $300 million in extra revenues. In a letter she wrote to the NDP to explain why she was quitting the party after 30 years of support, she wrote, “I am aghast that both party and government members are powerless to intercede as this government continues to present the provincial budget with such dishonesty and the outright breach of trust in the raid of the Forest Renewal fund.”529 Sources inside the Premier’s office at the time confirm that senior executives were aware of the availability of the surplus in the Forest Renewal Fund and had always considered that money available once the election was taken care of.

The story broke when newly minted Minister of Finance, Andrew Petter, stood up just days after tabling his June 26 budget and announced that the budget for the fiscal year just ended had not been in balance, but indeed some $235 million in deficit. Mr. Petter’s suggestion that faulty forestry revenue forecasts and forestry shortfalls were the root of

526 The NDP’s Vote Grabber Budget, The Province, May 1, 1996, pp. 1
527 Fred Gingell, BC Legislative Hansard, April 30, 1996
529 Jackie Pement, in British Columbia Report, October 21, 1996, pp. 8
the problem was quickly dismissed as politically motivated mistruths. Forestry Minister Dennis Streifel later admitted, “I wasn’t aware of any shortfalls. There was no communication about problems in the harvest.”

The story started to unravel when a Ministry of Finance “transition analysis” was leaked. The document showed that ministry officials had warned their political masters that the 1995-96 fiscal year would end in a $140 million deficit, not a $16 million surplus and the 1996-97 fiscal year would end in a $1.038 billion deficit, not the $87 million surplus promised in Mr. Petter’s budget. All of this after Finance Petter had just put the brakes on $250 million worth of capital projects, many of which had been featured prominently in the election campaign. Later, a massive amount of ministry briefs, projections and memos would be released under the Freedom of Information Act, chronicling how Mr. Petter and his predecessor, Elizabeth Cull, “turned a blind eye to their staff’s best estimates of revenues and spending in order to deliver on promises of two successive balanced budgets.”

When the story broke, the media stories were predictable. “Clark’s bogus campaign promises were based on bogus growth estimates. It’s the oldest and most predictable ploy in Canadian politics: A government is elected on the promise to deliver more services and balance the budget. A few days after the election, a grim-faced leader says the previous government left the books in such bad shape that taxes will rise or programs will be dropped.” “A disturbing situation had developed in BC. A government that lied to the public on a core election promise is running the province.” “The deliberateness of the deception can’t be doubted.” Premier Clark campaigned on a budget that was best wishful thinking and at worst an outright fraud. In the Legislature that fall, Minister Petter was criticized for his “relentless lying.” Opposition finance critic Fred Gingell, using language that was foreign to himself and in most normal legislative precincts, stated, “…The minister had no right to disregard the best information available to him from his own officials. He has no right to table a budget in the House that was clearly false.”

Later, one of Premier Glen Clark’s chief policy advisors would suggest that the difference between a $16 million dollar surplus and an $80 million deficit in the 1996-97 budget was well within the margin of error for provincial budget forecasting. He would even point to an article in the Monthly Economic Review to back up his claims. Evidence on both sides was heard in the David Stockell case against the provincial

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530 Forestry Minister, Dennis Streifel, in The Vancouver Sun, July 4, 1996, pp. A6
531 British Columbia Report, July 15, 1996, pp. 8-9
532 British Columbia Report, September 23, 1996, pp. 8
533 British Columbia Report, June 17, 1996, pp. 6
534 Vancouver Province, editorial, September 12, 1996
535 The Vancouver Sun, September 12, 1996, pp. A1
536 The Vancouver Sun, Editorial, October 31, 1996, pp. A*
537 Fred Gingell, BC Legislative Hansard, September 1996
538 Bob Jenness and Stephane Arabackyj, “Budget forecasting records of the federal and provincial government,” Monthly Economic Review, Volume XVII, Number 1, August 26, 1988, pp. 1-21
government. Stockell has taken three MLA’s to court charging that they lied about the provincial government’s balanced budget as a means for securing public office.\textsuperscript{539}

In March 1999, Auditor General George Morfitt released a detailed analysis of the events and decisions surrounding the contentious budgets. He found that the $16 million surplus forecast by Minister Cull was “overstated in a material way. Crucial information was missing and consequently the prudence and appropriateness of budget decisions could not be properly examine by the Legislative Assembly and the public. The budget was a political imposition that was not disclosed to the public.”\textsuperscript{540} As a result of his findings, the Auditor General proposed that an independent advisory panel review the workings of the budget process. That panel would eventually recommend sweeping changes for the BC government’s budgetary and estimates processes.

One longtime political columnist summarized the 1996 Budget scandal and its impact for the NDP in the following terms. “The truth was that B.C.’s economy was stagnant. The budget was a stark contrast to the truth. Ministry of Finance officials were setting off alarm bells about major drops in government revenue as early as February 1995. There was eighteen months of hard evidence that the economy was failing and yet the government did nothing. The government was frantic that the budget be done quickly and that the truth not be uncovered. It was critical that people not find out that the budget was not balanced. The root of the lie can be found in the February 1995, Ministry Revenue Estimates – the Treasury projected deficits and somehow the budget pronounced surpluses. It is important to remember that Clark had no options, there was no way he could reveal the truth. As the former Minister of Finance and as the defacto Premier throughout 1995, Clark was the author of the fiscal mess. Furthermore, fiscal mismanagement was the NDP’s weak point, their Achilles heel, and they simply could not afford to have it come out. It was not so much that the budget gave the NDP an electoral boost; it was more like an inoculation in an issue area that they were particularly weak.”\textsuperscript{541}

Many observers felt that the key line for the NDP with regard to budget 1996 was Gunton’s plea to Brenda Eaton that ‘more revenue optimism was needed.’ It is critical to understand how high the stakes were for the NDP. Clark was directly tied to the economic and fiscal performance of the NDP government. A deficit went to the NDP’s weakest point. “A deficit had to avoided at all costs.”\textsuperscript{542}

Avoiding the fiscal legacy of the NDP was a key component of Clark’s strategy. As one observer noted: “Typically, good politicians are able to separate themselves from bad issues. For example, Clark turfed the people close to him that were associated with the Nanaimo Bingo scandal. Similarly, Vander Zalm had called for a public inquiry into the Coquihalla Highway overspending fiasco. Even though Socred fortunes at the time were closely tied to highway construction and contracts, Vander Zalm was able to distance

\textsuperscript{539} A court decision is pending.
\textsuperscript{540} Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, Press Release, March 16, 1999, pp. 1
\textsuperscript{541} Longtime Political Columnist, Interview, January 15, 1999
\textsuperscript{542} Longtime Political Columnist, Interview, January 15, 1999
himself somewhat from this issue. So Clark's ability to distance himself from the fiscal problems of government certainly was a key element in his election victory."  

5.8 The 1996 BC General Election

The kickoff's
By the time Clark called the election for May 6, 1996, both teams were ready. Clark was riding high following his '60 Days of Action' strategy, while Campbell was still in contention and had spent considerable time on election readiness. Despite this higher state of readiness, however, both campaigns got off to somewhat rocky starts. Both had troubles extricating themselves from controversies arising during the short legislative session. The Speaker of the House thwarted the NDP's attempts to ram through passage of Bill 21, a bill designed to prevent public sector unions from striking during the election. The rejection meant that the legislature had to sit through the weekend to debate the bill. The condemnation of the NDP during this weekend session was particularly bitter and was led, interestingly enough, by independent MLA and former NDP cabinet minister, Robin Blencoe. In exchange for the no-strike ban, Bill 21 also allowed cabinet the power to impose arbitration awards on public-sector unions. This worked in the unions' favour particularly in Surrey where the NDP imposed an arbitration that the school board there thought was excessive.

The BC Liberals may have been able to fan the flames of public outrage on Bill 21 with greater success if they had been able to avoid problems of their own. Immediately after the special debate, Richmond-Steveston MLA Allan Warnke rose to announce he had quit the BC Liberal caucus and party. In and of itself, the loss of Warnke was not a particularly big problem for Campbell, Warnke was a weak, argumentative member and Richmond Steveston was anticipated to be a strong riding for BC Liberals with whoever decided to run there. The problem however, was with Warnke's parting remarks in which he expressed doubt in the BC Liberals longstanding pledge to cut spending by $3 billion without touching health care and education. "Maybe it will square up, "Mr. Warnke commented, "but I see no evidence of that." Mr. Warnke's ill-timed comment played perfectly to the NDP strategy. Not only did it overshadow the charges of opportunism leveled at Premier Clark during the Bill 21 debates, it also reinforced his self-portrayal as the defender of ordinary British Columbians. Therefore, while both parties had trouble getting out of the gate, the NDP ended up with a slight advantage in the first few critical days.

As is often the case in BC elections, the personalities of the leaders played a much larger role than did discussions about policies or about the merit of their respective parties. The media in particular was relishing the battle between Premier Clark, a product of Vancouver's gritty East End, and Campbell who was raised in the 'tony' Point Grey area. "From the very beginning, it was clear that the one big undercurrent of this election

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543 Longtime Political Columnist, Interview, January 15, 1999

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campaign was going to be East End boy versus West End boy.” Much of this perception was due to Clark’s pre-campaign positioning of himself as the underdog and defender of the middle class and while painting Campbell as the puppet of big business. As the underdog Clark had an added benefit in that his policies and positions were afforded much less scrutiny even though his was an incumbent government.

The Teams
The NDP team, on the other hand, was representative of the broad coalition of supporters that Campbell had amassed during his pre-election activity. Social Credit, Federal Conservatives, Federal Liberals, Provincial Liberals from BC and other provinces, Provincial PC’s from BC, Ontario and Alberta, BC provincial and federal Reformers and even ex-NDPers were all represented in Campbell’s coalition and, to a lesser extent, were all part of Campbell’s campaign team. Rather than having time to jell, many of the Liberal campaign team members did not meet each other until well into the first two weeks of the campaign. Interestingly this potpourri approach to campaign team construction did not lead to acrimony, rather it led to an odd unconstructive politeness. “Because we didn’t know each other, we couldn’t have the knock down fights you occasionally need to get things done, we didn’t know each other well enough to disagree or, more importantly, stand up for the positions we thought were right. The only time there was real disagreement at the end of the campaign when some of Campbell’s team approached the Social Credit about a vote-sharing deal. This caused a real fight, in which opinions were honestly discussed, but by then it was too late.”

In addition to this lack of cohesiveness, Campbell’s team was often criticized as being too policy oriented, with little or no concern for messaging and positioning. The “policy wonks” or “policy wankers” as one BC Liberal referred to them, were accused of

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546 Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999
547 When asked whether or not the campaign team should take an hour during the second week of the campaign for a get acquainted session, the response from Campbell’s top strategist was, “We’ll have a party when we win, not before.” From an interview with a Senior BC Liberal Staffer, December 15, 1999
548 Senior BC Liberal Staffer, Interview, December 15, 1999
spending an inordinate amount of time crafting key Liberal documents such as the Hydrogate package and the BC Liberal Taxpayer’s Plan and not nearly enough time on getting the message out.

The Strategies
BC Report suggested at the time that the NDP’s key election strategy was to blur the political lines between the three parties before the vote. “This is exactly the scenario the NDP hopes will unfold in the province. If voters are unable to tell NDP policies from Liberal and BC Reform ones, then the campaign comes down to a popularity contest, and the young, confident and media-friendly Mr. Clark wins hands down.”

While this scenario did have some merit, it did not explain the whole picture. For the NDP the main strategy during the first few days of the election was to simply continue what they had been doing for the previous six weeks. They continued with their announcement a day strategy, with the only nuance being that Clark’s travel was somewhat constricted so he did not stray too far from the principal Lower Mainland media outlets. With the budget and other initiatives designed to inoculate Clark’s weaknesses, he spent the first few days of the election reminding the voters of the NDP’s core strengths, health care and education. Deciding where to stage Premier Glen Clark’s photo opportunities during the BC election campaign, for example, was one of the easiest strategic decisions Clark’s advisers had to make. “It’s a no-brainer. When you’re attacking your opponent on health and education funding, you want your guy on TV at schools and hospitals every night.”

The BC Liberals on the other hand had an elaborate announcement-a-day strategy of their own. Anticipating a much higher degree of media coverage than they had received during the pre-election period, the Liberals had put together over 150 single day announcement packages based, in large part, on the successful Mike Harris daily announcement strategy. Each daily file had a policy initiative complete with policy backgrounder and a suggested location appropriate for the announcement. For example, if the Liberals were going to make a statement about cracking down on government spending, they staged their announcement in front of a furniture store offering lower prices than those of government suppliers or in front of a roadside rest-stop that had cost the NDP over $200,000 to build. While this integrated strategy was sophisticated and imaginative, it had two obvious weaknesses. The first was the media. The major media outlets made it very clear in the campaign that they would not blindly follow the politicians around the province covering canned media announcements and for the most part they did not. The second problem was that these staged announcements took Campbell to a wide variety of locations outside of the Lower Mainland. This had the effect of short circuiting any momentum Campbell was able to build.

The Ads
Another key element of both campaigns was their respective advertising strategies. Advertising expenditures in the 1996 election were unprecedented. As was reported at

549 British Columbia Report, April 29, 1996, pp. 10-13
550 Canadian Press Newswire, May 6, 1996
the time, “…the winning candidates won’t be the only ones smiling when British Columbia’s election results are known on May 28. For the province's top advertising agencies and media outlets, the election is proving to be a cash cow. An estimated $17 million will be spent on advertising before the voters go to the polls.”

In the important battle of the ads, pundits on both sides gave a unanimous decision in favour of the NDP. The NDP ads were consistent with their messages from the pre-writ period and therefore looked like they were part of an overall strategy. The other major plus for the NDP was that their ads were very fast. If the Liberals came with an attack or there was some kind of change in the election dynamic, the NDP were able to respond within hours with a new hard-hitting advertisement. The Liberals ad campaign on the other hand was characterized by the now famous shrinking pie ad. The ad was supposed to explain the NDP’s inability to grow the economy, but it came across as too complicated and esoteric. The Liberals were also slow to pull the ad once it became clear that it was not having the desired effect.

The Slogans
The party’s election slogans were inextricably linked to strategies and performances of the election combatants. The BC Liberal slogan, ‘The Courage To Change’ promised change from the tax, borrow and spend policies of the NDP. The NDP slogan, ‘On Your Side’ – NDP slogan suggests Liberal spending cuts would hurt ordinary working families. It reinforced message that NDP government has built schools, hospitals, and highways for the people. Even the Reform slogan, ‘On Law, One People, One Country’ was controversial because it raised key Reform plank stating that self-government for aboriginal bands as negotiated by NDP would create separate system of laws. The slogan also drove home the Reform’s opposition to special constitutional status for Quebec, which Premier Glen Clark once supported but later recanted.

The Policies
Overall, the platforms of the Liberals and the NDP were much more similar than would be expected given the polarized rhetoric of the pre-campaign period. For example, on the question of debt, the Liberal program called for $8.2 billion in direct debt by the year 2000, the NDP’s program, $8.9 billion. In overall government spending, the numbers are also similar - $20.9 billion for the Liberals and $21.26 billion for the NDP. The Liberals did have larger tax cuts on personal income and corporations and had several labour law changes planned, but the overall differences were not as large as in other provincial elections, particularly between the NDP and Mike Harris’ Conservatives in Ontario.

On social issues, the parties were also not far apart. The Liberals were calling for an end to teachers right to strike, but were not in favour of the more social conservative policy of charter schooling. On health care, the NDP ended up “borrowing” several of the

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551 Financial Post Daily, May 17, 1996, pp. 9
552 Canadian Press Newswire, May 5, 1996
553 The NDP’s debt projections have to considered within the context that the NDP government had regularly missed its debt reduction targets over the previous 4 years, and that Premier Glen Clark had made pre-election promises in the range of $1.6 billion
Liberal’s health care ideas, including the institution of a scholarship program to entice young doctors to locate in northern or rural communities. Nor were the Liberals advocating any type of private health care facilities. The Liberals were anticipating savings of more that $400 million in social services spending through efficiencies and a crackdown of welfare fraud. The NDP campaigned on a reduction of welfare benefits for single employable claimants and savings through job creation. Total savings - $350-470 million. On the protection of parkland, the Liberals were calling for 12 per cent of the land base and an expansion of marine parks.

There were a number of micro-level differences between the two platforms. However, only two or three had significant impact on the campaigns. One was the Liberal decision to sell BC Rail as part of a larger program of fiscal responsibility. Despite government studies which showed the NDP was also considering selling BC Rail, the Liberals were severely criticized for not understanding the issues of northern British Columbia. Also costly for Campbell was his decision to cut the number of MLA’s in the legislature from 75 to 60. The NDP worked very hard to convince voters in northern BC that this move would mean less representation in the more remote northern ridings. Both positions were seen as significant detriments to Liberal candidates in the ten northern BC ridings, ridings that would be critical to the overall election result.

One of the techniques used in the election was the use of pledges, or guarantee documents. Both the Liberals and the Reform had their candidates sign pledges to quit office if certain key promises were not kept. Premier Clark got in the act at a sawmill lunchroom in Comox where he promised he would resign if his government didn’t cut personal taxes by two per cent over the next two years.

The First Two Weeks
Many observers suggested that the NDP lost all momentum starting from when they released their budget (two days before they called the election) and continuing through to when Campbell made his half hour videomercial on BCTV. As stated earlier, the NDP had no real plan for the campaign other than a continuation of their earlier tactics, therefore, they were particularly vulnerable on the fiscal issues.

While contrasting Clark with Campbell was obviously the focal point of the Clark campaign team, they did not forget about the need to continue to distance from former Premier Harcourt. During a mid-term editorial board Clark discussed his hope that his new government would be able to work out some sort of truce with the BC business community. However, Clark’s approach was clearly and consciously different from the conciliatory tone his predecessor, Mike Harcourt, had adopted with the business community. “It’s really important that the government work with the business and its also important that it doesn’t work exclusively for the business community.”

554 Glen Clark quoted in the Vancouver Sun, May 27, 1996 (emphasis added)
Both sides attempted various stunts to capture media interest. In an effort to emphasize Clark’s propensity for reckless spending, organizers had Gordon Campbell shoveling coin-like wafers back onto a dump truck after a mock Glen Clark had shoveled them off.

Similarly, Clark’s organizers went to great lengths to show that Campbell was indeed a close friend of the rich. At one point Clark announced the salaries of several British Columbian CEO’s and then made estimates of the tax savings these people would receive under a Liberal government. As the Financial Post pointed out the next day however, “The potential savings by wealthy NDP supporter John Laxton were not mentioned, perhaps because Laxton has a better grasp of offshore tax shelters.”

One of the key election myths was that the election was about class warfare. Thoughtful Liberals like Fred Gingell and others chastised Premier Clark for his unfortunate political strategy of trying to pit one economic group against another. Campbell, in an effort to show that he is “of the people” and not beholden to wealthy special interests attempted to do a series of campaign events and advertisements in plaid shirts rather than his typical business attire. As columnist, Robert Mason Lee pointed out at the time, the effort was seen as insincere and only worked to reinforce the stereotype. “To control the damage, Mr. Campbell recently walked reporters through his clothes closet to show them he owned, in fact, three plaid shirts. It was pathetically earnest, but it missed the point. It was almost like suggesting that Brian Mulroney might have been a working-class hero today but for the want of a pair of Doc Martens amid all those Gucci’s.”

“Premier Clark has been remarkably successful in containing flashpoints that could have become embarrassing. One of the last pieces of legislation passed before the writ was dropped prevents any public service strikes before July. Clark has been equally adept at appropriating causes, the latest example being gasoline prices, which are up 5 cents a litre this spring. With three federal NDP MPS advocating a boycott of Imperial Oil, Clark has hinted at BC government action as well. The issue is bogus since gas prices will retreat later this year when crude oil supplies normalized; but it is effective political theatre.”

The BC Liberal “Taxpayer” Plan
More than two weeks into the campaign on Thursday, May 10, Campbell finally came clean with his fiscal vision for the province. In a half hour infomercial, Campbell released a 66-page document entitled the ‘Taxpayers Plan.’ The plan was described as an ambitious, surprisingly detailed look at the government financial situation including a series of recommendations for change. The plan exploded two myths that had been perpetuated by the NDP throughout the “60 days of Action” period; first, the Liberals had no plans to remove the corporate capital tax on banks and, second, they did not plan to cut property taxes for large corporations. While there were questions about its overly rosy economic forecasts and its anticipation of significant revenue from reducing welfare fraud and selling crown assets, generally the plan was well received. Noted columnist

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555 Financial Post, May 11, 1996, pp. 19
557 Financial Post, May 13, 1996, pp. 19
Vaughn Palmer thought the plan compared favorably to the budget introduced by the New Democrats just before the campaign. “...the Taxpayer’s Plan offers a clear, cool alternative...”

But the telecast on that Thursday evening was not just about releasing the BC Liberals fiscal package; it was also about the repackaging of Gordon Campbell. In a direct response to the NDP’s positioning efforts, the infomercial contained clips, photos and testimonials talking about Gordon Campbell the person, his modest upbringing, his passion for his work and his earnestness about running the provincial government. Some of the clips showed the Liberal leader ironing his shirt on the campaign trail and singing his anti-Clark folk song to a child in a wheelchair. Campbell had avoided such direct efforts to publicize his background, upbringing and personal ideology in the past. The potential reasons for this are many and varied. That he is a private person by nature, that as a true believer in policy and new ideas, he believes his platform, not his personality should be the motivation for voters, that he is proud of his personal success and therefore does not want to dwell on his humble beginnings or that he did not want to dignify the NDP positioning with a response, all may have played a factor in delaying the release of this information.

Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that Campbell’s half hour infomercial kick-started his faltering campaign and began the process of bringing the BC Liberals back into a dead heat with the NDP for the remaining two weeks of the campaign. A Marktrend poll conducted between May 10 and May 12 placed the Liberals and the NDP neck and neck at 40 per cent in public opinion, a rise of between 8 to 12 per cent for the Liberals in a little more than two weeks.

Mr. Clark’s response to the BC Liberal “Taxpayer’s Plan” provided a small window into just how thin the NDP really were on issues of fiscal credibility. Three or four days later, Clark would regroup and attack the Liberals plan with formidable vigour. But the night after its release he was simply not prepared to give comment. “Mr. Clark didn’t seem to be in command of his material: he had little data to back up his claims; and the one pie chart prepared by his staff was wrong, as he admitted part way through. His answers were shaky, too.”

This two day episode typified the Liberal fortunes throughout the campaign. On the Thursday, Mr. Campbell had a major success with the release of his taxpayer’s plan. The plan firmed up his party’s policy platform and showed the public that the BC Liberals had direction on focus. Rather than staying in Vancouver and strategizing about how to take further advantage of this new source of momentum or hitting Clark back for his weak response, Campbell left the next morning for the interior. Clark was left in Vancouver with a free rein and open stage to attack Campbell’s plan. As it turned out Campbell committed a gaffe on the road by “throwing his arm around a woman reporter in a gross and thoroughly unprofessional display of familiarity.” He later apologized

558 Vaughn Palmer, in The Vancouver Sun, May 10, 1996, pp. A6
559 Vaughn Palmer, in The Vancouver Sun, May 11, 1996, pp. A6
560 ibid
but by weekend, much of the momentum generated by the Taxpayer’s Plan had dissipated.

The other financial element that turned things around for Clark was Campbell’s economic plan. As a former Ministry of Finance critic, Clark had the ability to focus in on one part of a complicated financial document and make his points using just the one point. He asked his staff to pour over the Economic Plan with the same intention of finding one or two key points he could tee off on. They found the discrepancies in the post secondary grants section and he was away. His words to staff when they found this section, “I’ll hammer them”. This was the only time Clark presided on the press gallery to turn up for one of his press conferences. He got some of them out of bed to attend and what they saw was a polished dismantlement of Campbell’s economic platform based on one or two small mistakes in the document.

The Debate
On May 16, the province wide television debate was held. The debate held special significance in the campaign because just five years earlier, then Liberal leader Gordon Wilson had parlayed a particularly effective debate exchange into the turning point that eventually won he and his caucus 17 seats in the legislature. The debate was also important because it was the one situation in which Clark was not the underdog. By that time it was clear, Clark was the much more confident and aggressive campaigner and it was widely assumed he would easily win the debate. For that reason, the debate questioners were uncharacteristically rough on Clark, particularly on his fiscal record and lack of credibility. While Clark was not an outright loser, he did not perform as well as expected. The Liberals had reason for quiet optimism that the momentum built by the release of the Taxpayer’s Plan would carry through the debate. As was the case with other spurts of Liberal momentum, this one was stopped in its tracks the next day when Campbell could not adequately explain why his plan did not include any provisions for post-secondary education.

On that one hook, Clark was able to grab a foothold towards discrediting the entire plan. As was his nature when in opposition, Clark seized the opportunity and did not let go for the remainder of the campaign.

The Media
One of the significant factors in the 1996 election was the increasingly important role of the media. In 1996 the BC media saw themselves somewhat as arbiters in the election result. Campbell was consistently way out in front in the public opinion polls and the media felt obliged to make the race as close as possible. Campbell was scrutinized and criticized with a level of intensity usually reserved for governments and Premiers.

The media situation in British Columbia is unique in that the news is so dominated by one news source – the BCTV 6:00 p.m. news. This newscast is one of the largest non-network news shows in North America with a nightly viewership of upwards of 600,000

561 As one journalist stated, “...we have a special pride about our impact on the democratic process. We know we run the elections in B.C.”
souls. BCTV and its political reporters have a huge influence on the outcome of any
election in British Columbia and none more so than the provincial election of 1996.
Typically, 50 per cent of all media resources in BC go directly towards covering BCTV
generated stories. BCTV is very aware of their dominance and of their importance to the
election process. Since 1983 they have actively tried to take control of election in B.C.
“BCTV kind of took over the election with our nightly seven minute mini debates. The
media covered the 1996 election much differently. We want to talk to voters – questions
of the day. We turned the traditional campaigns on their heads and it really threw the
organizers for both the Liberals and the NDP.”

“Before the election there was a big meeting at BCTV about how we were going to cover
the election. It was a conscious decision not to simply report what the leaders were going
to do, rather we were going to drive the process and cover the election from the voter’s
perspective. And it worked. There was one poll that showed Gordon Wilson actually
went up two points immediately after a good performance on one of our mini-debates.”

The mini debates were very influential. In one debate Campbell “just kept talking. He
wouldn’t let anyone else speak. He came off looking mean and rude, a bully.”
Interestingly, the BC Liberals did very little to prepare for debates and it obviously
showed. As another journalist stated, “There is no question that the BCTV debates were
instrumental in the election outcome. No other media sources paid much attention to the
debates because the other media were so resentful of BCTV’s coup in being able to line
up the nightly debates.”

Clark understood faster than the other candidates the reality of
BCTV’s impact and reacted accordingly

About two weeks into the campaign one senior media personality had occasion to share a
ride with the Premier, “Clark just started yelling at Baldrey about BCTV’s coverage –
screaming, “your not covering our campaign” – he was livid.” The Premier felt that
his group was working hard on daily announcements and that BCTV was simply not
covering it. This attitude helped explain Clark’s actions around the BC Liberals
Economic Plan. When Clark had worked out his strategy to oppose the Plan, he actually
called Baldrey and Palmer late at night and demanded they come over and cover the
NDP’s announcement. “We did go and cover their conference and this became a turning
point in the election.”

The Run for Home
Globe and Mail columnist Robert Sheppard called the BC election, “...one of the most
cynical campaigns ever inflicted on an unsuspecting population. Glen Clark started it
when he took over the premier’s job and used every perk of power at his disposal to try to

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562 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
563 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
564 Senior BC Liberal campaign staffer, Interview, December 15, 1999
565 Long-time Political Columnist, Interview, January 15, 1999
566 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999
567 Senior Media Personality, Interview, January 15, 1999

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bury the sins of the past. Mr. Campbell cannot be accused of running the most open and fair minded of campaigns either.”

Sheppard’s reference to the Campbell campaign was partly in regard to the spectacle of “one minor party after another claiming that the front running Liberals were twisting arms to get opposition candidates to withdraw from the race rather than split the anti-NDP vote.” The Liberal party would later admit that key members of their team had met with Social Credit leader Larry Gilanders about a scheme that would see 20 Social Credit candidates quit in exchange for Liberal support in Gilanders’ home riding. “We believe they were out of line. We are running an independent campaign. It was an unfortunate act on their part.” Gilanders resigned as a result of not being able to secure the deal. This story received significant media interest in the last crucial week of the campaign. Media observers note that similar back room negotiations between the NDP and the Green Party were ignored by the media.

“But the relentless polarizing of the electorate by Mr. Clark, and the showy concentration on leaders and personality, seem only to have awakened the “sleeping giant” of ordinary voters who are not enamored of the labour leaning NDP for one reason or another.”

In the run up to the vote, three items help right the NDP’s ship. First, there was very little scrutiny of the budget. A number of people said it was a fabrication but it was not until after the election that the negative coverage of the budget really hit home. Second, during the election itself, while NDP observers suggest the NDP did not improve in the polls but they stopped dropping because of the mistake Campbell made in the debate with regard to his understanding of his own platform documents particularly on college spending. Finally, they felt that Campbell looked mean for not wanting to raise the minimum wage.

**Election Aftermath – A Desperately Close Result**

In the end, the NDP pulled out a slim majority victory, in one of the closest election results in British Columbia’s history. In fact, while the NDP won six more seats than the BC Liberals 39 to 33, the Liberals received almost three per cent more of the popular vote 42 per cent to 39 per cent. 61 per cent of the people voted against the government. Also of great significance in this election was the 15 per cent of the popular vote that went to the BC Reform and Progressive Democratic Alliance. It is not difficult to argue that these vote percentages came at the expense of the BC Liberals and most certainly cost the Liberals the election. Later analysis would show that less than 2000 votes, selectively placed around the province, would have resulted in a BC Liberal majority government. As one BC Liberal staffer recalls, “At 8:30pm on election night, I was in my hotel room and we had a comfortable lead. By the time I had made it down to 225

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569 BC Liberal Campaign Chair, May Brown, in *The Vancouver Sun*, May 27, 1996, pp. A2
571 This result would contribute to the strengthening of a significant proportional representation movement in British Columbia.
the convention room where the Liberal celebration was going on, less than 15 minutes later, we had lost.”

A BC Liberal loss?
With such a close result, it is understandable that there was no shortage of explanations for the BC Liberal defeat. Given the massive lead the BC Liberals had enjoyed just months before the election call and with the margin of defeat being less than 2000 strategically placed votes, it is also easy to see any successes the BC Liberals may have had during the election period were overshadowed by questions of ‘What if?’ and ‘If only…’

One NDP campaign assistant suggested that Campbell was unprepared for the Clark onslaught. “For most of 1995, Campbell had a free ride. Harcourt was in freefall and Campbell was having all the good issues just handed to him. When Clark got up and running and started to actively oppose Campbell, the Liberals just folded. They weren’t tested and they weren’t ready to inoculate against their weaknesses.”

Others picked up the refrain. “The Liberals haven’t elected a government since 1941 and there is a reason. British Columbians, always alienated from the rest of Canada, have felt more comfortable with a party not prone to play foosty with its Ottawa cronies.”

“They should have won. They had a huge popular base seven months ago, almost 50 per cent, and they squandered it. I may be slightly overstating the case, but it was one of the most mismanaged campaigns I have ever seen.”

Subsequent to the 1996 election, one senior BC Liberal campaign staffer was tasked with executing a formal and comprehensive debriefing of all Liberal campaign workers and strategists. With over a hundred interviews as reference, he identified the four keys to the BC Liberal loss. In his estimation they were, in order of importance:

1) lack of experience at the riding levels. “When an election is this close, a lot depends on the ability to get the vote out at the local levels. We had neither the training, nor the experience at the local level to get this done.”

2) The Reform/PDA split “These two parties consistently polled two-three thousand votes each in specific ridings that the BC Liberals lost by only hundreds of votes. One was not more of a problem than the other. Both had an impact, in some ridings it was the Reform candidate that hurt us, in other the PDA candidate and in a few, it was both.”

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572 Senior BC Liberal campaign staffer, Interview, December 15, 1999
573 NDP Central Campaign Assistant, Interview, January 14, 1999
574 Rafe Mair, *Financial Daily Post*, May 17, 1996, While federal provincial issues did not play a large role in the 1996 election, Mair raises an interesting point about BC’s political culture. Many Campbell advisors agonized over the possibility of a name change for the party before the election. Instead it was decided that the Liberals would aggressively distance themselves from their Liberal counterparts. This was only partly effective.
575 Political Scientist, John Redekop, June 10, 1996
3) The campaign committee had no money prior to the election. “The donations did not come in prior to the call of the election. This had a devastating effect on the campaign. When Clark went out with his ‘60 Days of Action,’ we could not respond because we did not have the funds. Moreover, we weren’t sure that the funds would come in even when the writ was dropped. We were very concerned about losing donors to the Reform Party. In the end this was not a problem and the BC Liberal party spent near its limit on the campaign. Unfortunately at the key moment in the weeks running up to the campaign, the BC Liberals could not afford to advertise and this hurt them significantly.”

4) Not knowing the true state of BC’s finances. “If some more information had been leaked during the campaign about the true state of BC finances, the NDP would have been caught out for the liars they are. We tried to make noise about the falsehoods perpetuated in the budget, but nothing stuck. If more of the evidence that came out later had come out during the campaign, we would have won.”

The politics of personality
Others pointed to Campbell’s personality as a key to the BC Liberal’s loss. Throughout the campaign, pundits and voters alike had struggled to find words to describe Campbell’s problem, his strange “political anaemia.”

One magazine pundit concluded, “The problem is that Campbell is seen as a ‘suit.’ Whether Campbell’s critics called him plastic and hollow, a blow-dried blue blood, an A-type ectomorph, or a quintessential GQ man, they were all thinking the same thing. Made to measure. Mass politics are difficult for suits for the simple reason that voters, whatever facts or ideas are thrown at them, really prefer to choose with their imaginations. They want leaders who seem to transcend ordinariness, to operate beyond the usual limits of human nature and exhibit a mastery of life unavailable to mortals. Walter Bagehot observed over a century ago that ‘human imagination so much loves to surpass human power.’

At one point in the campaign, in a moment of candour, Campbell’s wife, educator Nancy Campbell suggested, “Gordon likes to govern, but he doesn’t like politics.” Allan Fotheringham pointed to this statement as being at the root of Campbell’s loss. “Gordon Campbell really should be in another trade. He apparently believes in the divine right of kings, liking to be boss and run things, but not wanting to get down in the messy business of “politics” and fight for it. It’s a strange concept, but his public sense he believed in it, saw that he had no fire in the belly and pulled back from electing him. Ontario voters couldn’t see a leader hidden within Lyn McLeod and wiped out her 20-point lead in one election campaign. BC voters did the same with Campbell and deprived him of a victory that should have been a cinch.”

The other Campbell mistake the NDP benefited from was the last minute negotiations between the BC Liberals and the Social Credit party about vote sharing. “That issue was

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576 Key BC Liberal Central Campaign Organizer, Interview, November 15, 1999
577 Kenneth Whyte, Campbell’s Suit, Saturday Night Magazine, September 1996, pp. 17
578 Bagehot in Whyte
580 Ibid
a mess for the Liberals and it came at exactly the wrong time for them. Gordon Campbell should have immediately fired the people responsible for initiating the contact with the Socreds. Instead he put 80-year-old women in charge of investigating the mess. This issue clung to the Liberals right into the voting booths."\textsuperscript{581}

The Liberals were equally weak in other areas of their communications strategy. “Their advertisements were weak, their infomercial was disjointed, Campbell never really recovered from the Plaid Shirt fiasco and much of their platform – particularly the tax slashing elements rang hollow. No one believed he could deliver. Campbell also brought back images of the Bennett protest of the early 80’s. If there was an opportunity to look confrontational, he seemed to jump at it. Most people of both sides of the labour disputes of the early 80’s generally have bad thoughts about that period.”\textsuperscript{582}

**Or a NDP victory?**

“What the NDP did particularly well was use the apparatus of government properly. We understood what government mechanisms, policies and communications vehicles existed and we utilized them to their full political potential.”\textsuperscript{583}

Clark’s personality and his ability to imprint indelibly and very quickly his distinct personality on the electorate was the key to the victory. Clark made it clear very early and very decisively that he was different than Harcourt and that he had, in his own words, ‘a very strong personality, sometime bordering on arrogance.’ Even as early as the leadership race, Clark made it clear to delegates early on that he and only he could possibly win the next election. Cull or any other leadership candidate we had simply could not have done this and the key NDP’ers knew that.”\textsuperscript{584}

Regardless of the narrowness of his victory, it must be remembered that there was a tremendous amount of pressure on Glen Clark to be victorious. “Provincially and nationally, this was a crucial election for the NDP. A loss in British Columbia would likely have spelled the end of the NDP as a national political force – especially after the party’s crushing defeat last year in Ontario and its near devastation in the most recent federal election.”\textsuperscript{585}

One senior NDP staffer suggested that he was most surprised that Clark was able to get out from underneath the Bingogate scandal so easily. He was and is consistently surprised by the manner in which Campbell and the BC Liberals continue their vicious attacks not on labour union leadership but on the labour unions themselves. He suggests that the Socreds never attacked the unions directly and consistently received strong support particularly from the forest workers.

\textsuperscript{581} Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, November 8, 1998  
\textsuperscript{582} Former Communications Advisor to the Premier, Interview, January 14, 1999  
\textsuperscript{583} ibid  
\textsuperscript{584} Senior NDP Consultant, Interview, November 8, 1998  
\textsuperscript{585} *Financial Post*, June 1/3 1996, pp. 21
The same staffer was, in retrospect, most proud of his government’s handling of the school crises that occurred during the 10-week interregnum – specifically the issues around amalgamation and negotiation. He was also proud of the way they dealt with other union issues such as collective agreements and the public service union dustup, of the NDP not denying their labour roots and running a transition and campaign from the left and that most of all, that, unprecedented in Canadian history, an NDP government won a second term.  

5.9 Conclusions

Ultimately, it must be concluded that the NDP did not run a particularly strong election campaign. Indeed, during the first 10 days of the campaign, depending on which polling data is believed, the NDP had anywhere from a 4 to 11 per cent lead in the opinion polls and by the end of the campaign, they were three points down. The NDP were actually outperformed during the election period. This fact only reiterates the importance of Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ pre-election strategy. As one senior Liberal MLA concluded, “Clark’s victory train was rolling well before the election started, by uncovering Hydrogate all we did was throw a body in front of that train.”

There is no question that Glen Clark’s victory represents one of the most significant turnarounds in Canadian history. He took over a party that was 25 per cent down in the polls, one that had never before held office in back to back terms and, within a period of just more than six months, he won a majority government. One perspective on Clark’s amazing turnaround is that the BC Liberals brought the result on themselves. They were directly involved in three specific issues that helped propel the NDP back into power. Liberal research did a lot of work to keep the NCHS story alive, a story that eventually led to the resignation of Harcourt. There is little question that if Harcourt had stayed on the NDP would have been defeated in the election. Similarly, they broke the Hydrogate story, one which Clark turned to his advantage by contrasting with Harcourt. Finally, the Liberals announced the $3 billion plan which kick-started the NDP’s very effective positioning of Gordon Campbell. It is unfortunately little more than a hypothetical question, but one that still bears asking. If the Liberals had stayed quiet on these three issues, would the results have been significantly different?

However, as is often the case with hypotheticals, these questions do little to advance our understanding of the Clark transition. While these miscues obviously played a role, there may have been other unintended or unforeseen consequences if the BC Liberals actions had been different. What is clear is that if the election period itself is considered a tie or a slight loss for the NDP, this only dramatizes even more the magnitude of their success through the pre-election transition period. From more than 25 per cent down in the polls, Glen Clark through his efforts to distance himself from his predecessor pulled out an unprecedented second term for the BC NDP.

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586 Senior Aide to the Premier, Interview, December 15, 1998
587 Senior BC Liberal MLA, Interview, December 18, 1998
Chapter Six

Ralph Klein: The Miracle on the Prairie
**KLEIN TIMELINE**

- **Mar. 20**: Klein elected PC MLA for riding of Calgary-Elbow
- **Apr. 14**: MLA Pay Issue
- **Sept. 17**: Klein announces leadership bid
- **Dec. 5**: Klein wins leadership
- **Dec. 15**: Cabinet is announced
- **Jan. 21**: Financial Review Commission named
- **Mar. 1**: Ministers' salary cut 5%, Deputy Ministers' cut 3%
- **Mar. 28-29**: First Budget roundtable held in Red Deer
- **Mar. 31**: Financial Review Commission Reports
- **1980**: 1980
- **1981**: 1981
- **1982**: 1982
- **1983**: 1983
- **Nov. 1**: Don Getty becomes Premier
- **Sept. 9**: Don Getty resigns as Premier
- **Nov. 28**: First round of leadership voting Belkowski leads Klein by 1 vote
- **Dec. 14**: Klein sworn in as Premier
- **Feb. 6**: Six Deputy Ministers retired
- **Mar. 28**: $50m. loan guarantee given to Pacific Western Airlines by Alberta Government
KLEIN TIMETABLE...

Apr. 15
Family and Social
Services Minister
Mike Cardinal,
announces 3 year
welfare
restructuring plan

Apr. 30
Premier Klein
announces changes
to MLA legislation

May 6
1993-94 Budget Tabled
and Deficit Elimination
Act introduced

May 16
Election
announced
for June 15

June 15th
Progressive Conservatives
win Majority Government,
taking 51 of 83 seats and
44.3% of the popular vote
6.1 Introduction

Until that cool evening in May 1993, everything had run smoother than the two senior political strategists could have hoped for or imagined. It had been less than six months since their leader and boss, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, had been sworn into office, and to that point, the two officials had written and executed a formidable script. By putting together a capable strategy team within twenty-four hours of the leadership win, Klein had hit the ground running, had implemented some newsworthy innovations and was beginning to see real progress for his party in the popular opinion polls.

But now a single issue was jeopardizing all their gains. The public, spurred on by the newly organized Alberta Taxpayers Association, was in an uproar about the richness of the elected members' (MLAs') pensions. The Alberta MLAs had the richest pension plan of any elected officials in Canada, a plan in which the government paid out six dollars for every one contributed by the elected member. Furthermore, former Premier, Don Getty's cabinet had recently voted itself a 30 per cent raise in salary and other benefits that the people of Alberta now clearly felt the politicians didn't deserve.

In response to this display of collective anger, Klein and his office had quickly pieced together legislation that would limit all MLAs pensions in the future. However, the two senior officials had canvassed their friends in cabinet, the caucus, the media and the general public and as they huddled together late that evening in an Edmonton restaurant, it was quickly agreed that the new legislation wouldn't fly. “We had been wearing the pension issue for more than four days and it was killing our momentum. We had had an excellent 3-month period after the swearing in, to the point we were actually considering a much earlier date for the general election call. The pension problem was big enough that we knew it would take over the election debate, something we couldn’t afford.”

Even though it was after 10:30 at night, the aides knew they had to call Klein in his Edmonton apartment and convince him to take a new course. He agreed to meet them that night and when they arrived and before they could even say a word, Klein looked at them both and said simply, “Guys, we’ve got to get rid of this pension thing.” Those ten simple words not only reinforced Klein’s reputation as having some of the best political instincts in the country, it also cemented the Alberta Progressive Conservative’s chances to win an unprecedented seventh majority government in one of the most remarkable turnarounds in Canadian political history.

This chapter will chronicle the transition of a government in crisis, mired at less than 20 per cent in public opinion polls, to that of a government cited internationally as an overwhelming success story with one of the strongest mandates for change in Canadian

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588 Senior Klein staffer, Interview, Calgary, October 18, 1998
589 Senior Klein staffer, Interview, Calgary, October 18, 1998
590 From a policy perspective, there are some who would disagree with this description (See Kevin Taft, Shredding of the Public Interest, and Laxer and Harrison, The Trojan Horse). However, in terms of public popularity, Klein’s government has been an unqualified success, regularly topping sixty per cent in public approval surveys even 6 years after his election as Leader of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party and Premier of Alberta.
history. This examination will focus on the factors most responsible for Ralph Klein’s success, particularly his ability to distance himself from the previous government and make his own distinct imprint on the office of Premier of Alberta.

6.2 Background – The making of a king

To gain a proper understanding of the underpinnings of Klein’s success, it is important to consider the political events that led up to his transition period. The next section focuses on the circumstances surrounding the resignations of Klein’s two immediate predecessors, Premiers Lougheed and Getty, and the events and personal motivations that lead Ralph Klein to seek the leadership of the venerable Alberta Progressive Conservative Party.

1970-1990: Alberta’s awkward adolescence

By 1967, ideas about the economy, the role of government and Canada’s role in the international arena had undergone massive change. Huge advances were being made in technology and science, the United States government was seen as the driving force behind change such as the NASA space program, and Canada had hosted the world at the very successful World’s Fair, Expo ’67. Governments were becoming increasingly involved in society, not only through various levels of social services provision, but increasingly, as a significant player in economic development.

Alberta was not immune to these fundamental changes. Social Credit had run successful governments in Alberta for over 20 years. But two important developments in Alberta helped precipitate the end of the Social Credit legacy. First, Ernest Manning retired. He had brought an evangelical zeal to the politics of small government, balanced budgets and low taxes. As well, he had organized and maintained a complex relationship with the major oil companies that had propelled Alberta to new levels of prosperity. When Manning retired the Social Credit party was already worn-out and the new leader, Harry Strom, did little to revive or regenerate the party or the Premiership.

The other important change was demographic. Alberta’s prosperity was attracting new people from all over the world, largely to the urban centres of Edmonton and Calgary. In 1941, the last census before the Leduc oil discovery, the population of Alberta was 796,000. By 1971, the population was 1,628,000, an increase of almost 200 per cent in thirty years. 591

Under the leadership of Peter Lougheed, the Progressive Conservatives eventually made a dent in the Social Credit’s armour when in the 1967 general election they won six seats. By 1971, the Tories were ready to govern and won 49 of 75 seats. The Lougheed victory represented a major shift in political power bases in Alberta. Lougheed’s Conservatives were dominated by urban, professionals who felt Manning was overly dependent on the

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natural resources industries - agriculture and petroleum. Lougheed’s group felt there was a ‘third way’ in which forward and backward linkages could be made to diversify Alberta’s economy. Lougheed felt that Alberta had depended on outside capital interests for too long and for real prosperity to occur it would have to involve value added Albertan industries and indigenous capital sources.

This paradigm shift occurred within the larger context of increased demand for Alberta oil and gas. As a result, oil companies were becoming very powerful, and as political scientist Barry Cooper suggests, the Lougheed response “was to mobilize its own talent, power, and energy to strengthen its control over the Alberta economy, to foster regional capital accumulation, to reduce Alberta’s dependence on external political and economic forces, and to diversify the economy away from primary resource production in order to decrease its long and short term vulnerabilities.”

Lougheed’s massive changes to government and government’s role were well accepted during the first years of his Premiership. The civil service in Edmonton expanded to almost 40,000 employees and the provincial debt ballooned, but, on the strength of the oil and gas bonanza, by the end of his first term, Lougheed’s budget surpluses had reached $600 million a year, the government had purchased an airline and the Premier was a local hero for continually pushing back against Central Canadian technocrats.

By the early 1980’s however, things had started to change. The massive bureaucracy did what organizations of that size have a tendency to do – continue to grow without focus or increased productivity. While the government had some success with diversification, particularly in the petrochemicals sector, this massive economic experiment was largely judged a failure. In fact, by 1984 the government was arguing publicly that economic diversification had never really been a policy goal at all.

In conjunction with these government setbacks came the 1982 oil market glut. Prices fell and the protracted battle with the industry and the federal government over rents put the Alberta government in a very vulnerable position. Robert Mansell, an economist with the University of Calgary, for example, calculated the toll of the NEP on Alberta’s economy as at least $40 billion. A current cabinet minister and former oil patch financial controller pegs the amount at closer to $120 billion. It was estimated that as many as 7000 jobs were lost in the oil and gas industry in Calgary alone. From 1981-1983 the provincial unemployment rate went from 3.8 per cent to 10.2 per cent. Two new western banks, Canadian Commercial Bank and Northland Bank, both of which had invested heavily in Alberta, collapsed. These facts, combined with an interest rate hovering at around 20 per cent, meant that many of the Progressive Conservatives’ middle class supporters had to endure significant economic hardship.

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593 op. cit., Barr and Smith, pp. 255
594 ibid Cooper, pp. 41
595 op. cit., Barr and Smith, pp. 255
A 1982 by-election loss to the newly created separatist Western Canada Concept Party startled the Conservatives, and although they attempted several measures to reinvigorate the economy, by 1985, Lougheed could see the writing on the wall and quit. There can be little question that Lougheed’s was a remarkable legacy. He had been elected four times, left a $13 billion Heritage Fund that was the envy of every other province in Canada and a party facing an opposition of only four in the provincial legislature.

**The Getty Era – Fore!**

Don Getty, a former quarterback for the Edmonton Eskimos, and a former provincial minister of energy, replaced Lougheed. Getty had left government in 1979 to work in the oil business. Many would suggest that Getty won the leadership and the premiership as much by default as any other one deciding factor. A party supporter and senior civil servant explains, “…Lougheed was a ‘demi-god’ who started believing his own press clippings. When it was clear that the Premier was retiring, Getty won the opportunity to replace him because Getty was the only one who could stand the test of being compared. Getty was a successful athlete (like Lougheed) of high moral character who could not be disparaged.”

Unfortunately for himself and the Conservative Party, Getty’s return to provincial politics coincided with one of the worst economic downturns in Alberta’s history. Oil and gas prices had rebounded somewhat in 1984 and 1985, but then fell from $27 a barrel to $8 a barrel in April 1986. Smith outlines the extent of the downturn. “Of 80 Alberta oil firms on the Toronto Stock Exchange in 1985, only 42 survived in 1986. Of 500 oil rigs in the province, only 60 were working. In total over 45,000 oil workers lost their jobs, including many professional engineers.”

Despite the weakness of these numbers, Getty was obliged to go to the polls in 1986. He fought the campaign on a platform of limited tax holidays and low interest loans for farmers. The Tories won a reduced majority and did particularly poorly in Edmonton, where the NDP expanded their dominance, taking 11 MLAs into the legislature and creating the first formidable opposition in Alberta’s history. Whereas in other provinces, winning a majority government would have been considered a major accomplishment, in Alberta the 1986 election was a failure that would haunt Getty for the remainder of his Premiership.

His perceived weak showing in the 1986 election and the difficulties attributed to the low oil and gas revenues were not Getty’s only problems. He was now also deprived of one of Lougheed’s principal political weapons. Lougheed had elevated attacks on Ottawa and the avaricious Liberal government to something akin to a political art form. Getty was not able to utilize this relationship in the same way because his party was now linked in name with the new federal government in Ottawa presided over by Progressive

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596 It is said that Lougheed, who was as close to royalty as Alberta ever had, knew it was time to quit, when, for the first time in 10 years, he was booed when introduced at a Calgary Stampeders football game. Ironically, Ralph Klein was booed at a Calgary Flames game late in 1998. Some have argued that this is perhaps an important precursor of future events.

597 Alberta Government civil servant, Interview, October 16 1998

598 op. cit, Barr and Smith, pp. 25
Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Any political advantages of this association were short lived, because, in Albertans' eyes, Mulroney's government seemed just as obsessed with Quebec as Trudeau had been, and Alberta's new Conservative MP's seemed as susceptible to being "Ottawashed" and captured by federal group think as their predecessors.599 When the time came to properly oppose the federal government, Getty was unable to overcome the association to his advantage.

Lack of political acumen was just one of the many criticisms made of Premier Getty during this period. Despite the fact that he was presiding at a much different and less prosperous time in Alberta's economic history, Getty continued to suffer from comparisons to his predecessor. Of the dozens of people interviewed for this study, no one would offer any charge against Premier Getty's honesty, integrity or sincere desire to improve Alberta as a place to live. Several of his defenders pointed to Getty's dogged determination on constitutional matters and his successes in getting Albertan opinion across on such issues as a Triple-E Senate.600 These same people were equally adamant, however, that Getty was ill suited for the position of Premier and that the province had suffered as a result of his leadership.

As one long time Progressive Conservative activist suggests, "Getty often gets characterized as a not too intelligent former star football player. Some of this characterization is true. When Getty first became Premier, Kurt Burris, the Edmonton Eskimo's star centre who had passed the ball to Getty countless times, remarked, 'you can't let that guy be Premier, he had to write all the plays down in his helmet.' There is another side to Getty that is often overlooked, however. As one oilman related, "The first time I saw Don Getty in action was at a major oil company meeting. Getty didn't know which way to vote but he did know enough to watch the smartest person in the room and voted in conjunction with that person. It was at that moment I knew Getty could run as premier, he didn't necessarily have the answers, but he knew enough to listen to people who did have the answers."601

According to Don Shrake, a MLA under both Getty and Klein, "Don Getty was no Peter Lougheed. In the end, Getty seemed utterly incapable of making any significant

599 op. cit., Cooper, pp. 42
600 It is instructive that while Getty gets the most praise for his work on constitutional matters, he resigned just before the Charlottetown negotiations, thereby considerably weakening Alberta's negotiating position. This is still a sore point with even the most ardent Getty supporters.
601 Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
602 ibid., October 19, 1998

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decisions. Caucus meetings showed a complete lack of reality because the Premier just wanted to be praised and left alone. He was virtually unavailable outside caucus, and caucus was hardly a forum either for debate or for the implementation of a well-considered agenda. This bunker mentality was the last straw for many Conservative supporters. "The government had lost touch with the electorate and the Premier had lost touch with his own party."\textsuperscript{603}

Getty’s distancing of himself from the political fray, particularly towards the end of his leadership, has been attributed to his general lack of political knowledge, his distaste for criticism of any kind and his overall lack of interest in the position of Premier. Others suggested that his lack of interest had financial underpinnings. "Getty had too much money to be Premier. He never seemed to enjoy the job and he certainly didn’t enjoy the criticism, especially at the end. He had little or no vision for the province as a whole and of course he was particularly interested in golf."\textsuperscript{604} Referred to by one respected Edmonton journalist as having “a Neroian passion for the game of golf,” Getty seemed to withdraw more and more into the game as the criticism of his premiership grew. In the late 1980’s the game was regarded, particularly in Alberta, as a pastime for the elite and the moneyed set. Getty came across as being uninterested in the day to day concerns of average Albertans and as the barbs mounted, he simply perpetuated the vicious circle by withdrawing even further.

**Fiscal Mismanagement – the end of an era**

Many of the people interviewed for this study suggested that it was a fateful game of golf during the Principal Group collapse that ultimately led to Getty’s demise. On June 30, 1987, the Alberta government sought a court order to put two major investment firms, First Investors Corp. and Associated Investors Corporation into receivership. These two firms held hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate and financial assets for the Edmonton-based Principal Group and the government action sent thousands of investors scrambling for their money\textsuperscript{605}. When reporters learned of the initial collapse they tried fervently to reach Premier Getty in his office. His assistant told the media that Getty was unavoidably detained in another meeting. Shortly thereafter, the media ascertained that Getty’s “meeting” was actually on the golf course and a public uproar ensued.

The trail of improprieties involving the government’s handling of the Principal Group went back all the way to 1975 and, in the end, the scandal cost the taxpayers of Alberta over $100 million in compensation to investors and in investigative costs. The scandal was equally telling from a political perspective, both for the manner in which it cemented perceptions of the Premier’s general disdain for important matters of state and because it was indicative of an entire rash of bad investments and economic diversification exercises the provincial government would undertake throughout the late 1980’s and early 1990’s.

\textsuperscript{603} Quoted in Alberta Report, 20 December 1993 and from Cooper, op. cit., pp. 42
\textsuperscript{604} Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
\textsuperscript{605} For a detailed analysis of the Principal Group collapse and other related government investment scandals, please see Mark Lisac, The Klein Revolution, Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1995, pp. 31-40.
At what price diversification?

In the late 1970’s, laden with a flush public purse, Premier Lougheed had embarked on major, government driven economic diversification drive. Consisting of loan guarantees and the expansion of quasi-governmental agencies, this campaign pervaded the entire Alberta civil service and the thematic underpinnings of the resulting initiatives became rooted in government culture. Despite the fact that the province was facing much more difficult economic circumstances during his tenure, Premier Getty had neither the acumen nor the philosophical resolve to significantly alter the course set by these intrusive schemes. Instead, Getty continued the practice of throwing massive amounts of taxpayers’ funds into nebulous business deals, all the while hoping that oil and gas revenues would turn around and that the Alberta economy and government revenues would return to their past levels.

This abdication of leadership had three significant results. First, the bureaucracy, overblown both in size and its own self importance continued to get involved in these schemes with little or no guidance from their political masters. Second, the leadership vacuum allowed significantly more inappropriate involvement by the politically well connected. This in turn lead to the potential of embarrassing conflicts of interest and inappropriate practices being associated with these schemes. Finally, when many of these business deals went bad, instead of coming clean and saying, “whoa, it looks like we made a mistake on that one, we’ll try harder next time,” Getty’s government would rely on a series of denials and obfuscations that, in the long run, only served to exacerbate the government’s credibility problems.

As one observer stated, “There is no role for government in such exercises as the EMA - the Electrical Energy Marketing Act – which promised electricity would be roughly the same cost for all consumers regardless of their location within Alberta’s boundaries. This exercise was based on the notion, as so many others were during this period, that oil prices would stay high. When oil prices dropped in the mid-1980’s, by almost 50 per cent, many of these government schemes went seriously awry.”

The list of other projects that lost money for the government through the 1980’s is extensive. There was investment in a canola crushing plant in Peace River that lost over 60 million dollars while creating only 75 jobs. Another was in the transportation sector. For years Alberta had bemoaned the fact that it had no ocean port facilities and hypothesized that the future of the province’s economy could be assured if such a facility was realized. In the late 1980’s the Alberta government provided money for a private group to buy and expand the Alberta Pacific Terminals in British Columbia. In a rare insight into the Alberta government mindset at the time, a memo surfaced which stated that the Alberta government would find ways to ‘direct’ forestry and petrochemical exports to the Alberta Pacific’s docks in Surrey B.C. Just how a provincial government was going to ‘direct’ exports was understandably unclear. By 1990, the Alberta Pacific Terminals had gone under and the government lost at least $10 million in the process. In the food processing sector, a prominent Albertan, Peter Pocklington,

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606 Alberta Government Cabinet Minister, Interview, October 15, 1998
607 From Lisac, pp. 31-34
“failed to make payment on a $12 million government loan secured by an outdated meat packing plant: the Government foreclosed, acquired a lot of old equipment, and eventually sold it at a loss of $200 million.”

As Cooper suggests, the list of other failures included investments in steel plants, pulp mills, a computer design company, a magnesium plant, and a company that manufactured laser-cutting machines. There was very little or no commonality in any of these investments and all were a long way from Lougheed’s original plan of vertical integration within the existing oil and gas industry. The government motivations behind these decisions are fairly clear – to rescue all elements of Alberta commerce as a means of diversifying the economy and, as importantly, maintaining the status quo and avoiding criticism. The government obviously had the money to invest in such ventures, it had a plethora of close political contacts in each of the various sectors, the unprecedented Heritage Fund loomed in the background as a massive security blanket should anything go wrong and they had an over-staffed civil service eager to please their political masters. The only things missing were a clear sense of direction and a critical mass of the necessary know-how or infrastructure to properly support these misadventures.

Some analysts went so far as to claim that capital expenditures and associated operating costs, not program spending, were chiefly responsible for the province’s economic problems. Cooper points out that, “spending on what the Alberta Government classified as “Resource Conservation and Industrial Development” grew from $35 million in 1965 to a high of $3 billion twenty years later – an 85-fold increase. Alberta’s rate of spending in this area was between three and five times higher than other Canadian provinces.”

While the Principal Group’s collapse and Premier Getty’s perceived reaction to the collapse might have been the most galling for Alberta taxpayers, the most financially damaging investment surrounded the NovAtel fiasco. NovaTel was a joint venture between the Nova Corporation and Alberta Government Telephone. The original concept was to manufacture cell phones and thereby launch the telecommunications age globally from Alberta. The joint venture began in 1989 and by the time the company was sold in 1992, Alberta taxpayers had lost $566 million. Financial auditors eventually adjusted this number to upwards of $600 million. The reasons for the NovAtel fiasco are many and varied. Consistently poor management, a merger that didn’t take and an inability to compete with the major international players like Motorola in a rapidly changing marketplace are all cited as reasons. As Lisac states:

“If you listened carefully you could hear the reverberation of the same themes which had come out of Principal – sloppiness, excessive trust, patronage, overconfidence, too much money in the hands of a government acting with little scrutiny, weak regulation, pride.

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608 op. cit., Cooper, pp. 44
609 The largest 10, with the write-offs in millions of dollars in brackets, include NovAtel ($646), Swan Hills Waste Treatment Plant ($410), Lloydminster Bi-provincial Upgrader ($392), Gainers ($209), Millar Western ($199), Magnesium Company of Canada ($164), Syncrude (loan write-offs, $81), Chembiomed ($58), Northern Lite Canola ($51), and General Systems Research ($31). Data from Alberta Taxpayers Association (mimeograph).
610 op. cit., Cooper, pp. 43
NovAtel seared because it revealed the weaknesses of an entire political culture. The political bosses of Alberta had been living in a world of illusions. An epitaph on NovaTel would have read the same as the epitaph over many another corporate grave where hundred of millions of taxpayer’s dollars lay buried: Too few questions, too many friends.”

It is important at this juncture to remember that, while this type of massive economic development investment by a political party largely believed to be fiscally conservative, was certainly odd, it was not unique in Canada at that time. Only slightly earlier, the Davis Conservatives in Ontario had undertaken massive public investments, many of which went bad including the purchase of the oil company Suncor. What was unique about the Alberta experience was that it was contrary to Alberta’s political culture of government non-intervention. In large part, this investment strategy was responsible for the massive deficits that Getty faced in the last quarter of his mandate.

Deficits and failed investment schemes were not the only problems Getty faced as he led his government into the 1990’s. Despite the fact that Lougheed had initiated many of these schemes, Getty was held responsible for their demise. Getty was not personally prepared to handle this criticism, nor was his party. As the “ruling party” of Alberta, the provincial Tories had been weaned on a diet of discipline and denial. If mistakes were made they were not discussed. Lougheed perfected this political strategy and Getty tried to maintain it. The area in which this had the most negative ramifications for the party was with regard to the province’s finances. The combination of expensive investment strategies and rapidly falling provincial revenues meant that for the first time in the modern era the provincial government was facing massive deficits.

**Deficit and Debt – a new phenomenon for Alberta**

The Alberta provincial government ran substantial surpluses until 1986-87. The first deficit 1986-87 amounted to almost $3.5 billion, which, to put it in proper perspective, was equal to about 6 per cent of Alberta’s GDP. Between 1986-87 and 1992-93, the annual deficit in Alberta averaged $2.3 billion. As a result of these comparatively massive deficits another unique situation presented itself to the Alberta public – increased debt. For the period between 1986 and 1991, the Alberta government’s per capita debt increased by 340 per cent. It has been estimated that if proper accounting procedures were to be used, this number would be even higher. The next largest increase over this same period was for Quebec, where the increase was 42 per cent.

The other telling sign is that the projected deficits throughout the Getty era were consistently less than the actual deficits. The government’s strategy throughout this period was to continue to increase expenditures, downplay the significance of the deficits, underestimate them wherever possible and constantly push the notion that this

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611 op. cit. Lisac, pp. 36 and 38
612 For the definitive analysis of Alberta’s fiscal situation both before and during the Klein era, see Christopher Bruce, Ronald Kneebone and Kenneth McKenzie, (eds.) *A Government Reinvented. A Study of Alberta’s Deficit Elimination Program*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997. This paragraph is taken from the first article in the book entitled, “Fiscal Restructuring in Alberta: An Overview” by Robert L. Mansell, pp. 16-73
phenomenon was cyclical and would resume to a level of normalcy the moment oil prices went up. Alberta’s political culture was not one in which continuous increases in deficits and debts were easily understood or accepted. Frustration and opposition to the deficit strategy of the Getty government continued to grow and the numbers put out by Getty’s Provincial Treasurer, Dick Johnston, were losing credibility every quarter. At one point, in an unprecedented display, the Premier publicly disagreed with the Provincial Treasurer about the real size of the deficit.

Needless to say, the combination of annual deficits and a government that was becoming increasingly less communicative, left the voting public concerned about their fiscal well being and angry with their government. An example of the public mood came in mid-April 1992. A New Democratic Party backbencher named Gerry Gibeault found that many Conservative cabinet ministers were receiving the maximum allowable living expense of around $20,000 per annum, even though they lived only slightly outside Edmonton’s city limits. Given the design and lack of accountability of spending within most of Canada’s legislative precincts, this type of issue is raised from time to time, but typically causes little public stir. In Alberta in the spring of 1992 the reaction was altogether different. As Mark Lisac reported:

“The story appeared on April 14, (1992). At first it looked like another small bite from an opposition gadfly, one of hundreds over the years. Instead it ignited a frenzy. Within days, members of all three major parties were dragged in. Public outrage exploded. The anger spewing out in letters to newspapers and calls to radio phone-in shows astonished even some of the reporters who were finding new layers of padded income almost everywhere they looked. The affair was growing into an outpouring of rage against all politicians. Premier Getty finally gave in after a month of uproar. On May 12 he tabled a letter in the legislature asking the member services committee to obtain advice from outside experts. The gesture had the foot-dragging quality of any tottering regime forced to accept change.”

Getty handled the issue poorly and the government’s already badly shaken credibility took yet another significant hit. Pressure on the Premier to resign increased. Tory fundraisers were becoming “mail room nights” because while CEO’s were still, albeit reluctantly buying tickets, they were sending their most junior staff or just about anyone that wanted a free meal. However, Getty continued to play the role of Premier. Indeed, when he finally did announce his retirement the timing was particularly strange because the referendum on one issue on which Getty had shown some initiative, the Charlottetown Accord, was just getting underway. That Getty would choose to fight for the Accord as a lame duck Premier exemplifies either his lack of political judgement or his lack of input into the resignation decision.

The Getty Resignation
The events leading up to Getty’s resignation have not been documented. This is unsurprising in that little has generally been written about Getty and, to date, he has not

\[^{613}\text{Referred to as the ND party in Alberta.}\]
\[^{614}\text{Taken from Lisac, pp. 11-15}\]
penned his memoirs. Immediately following his announcement, the Alberta media were not kind; “Getty leaves fiscal house in disorder,” declared the Financial Post. The article went on to state, “Don Getty’s successor as Premier will have to come to grips quickly with a sagging economy, high unemployment and soaring government debt. The Getty government racked up seven years of consecutive deficits, including last year when promises of a balanced budget disintegrated into a $1.5 billion deficit”.  

According to several senior Tory activists, Getty’s decision to step down was characteristic of a lot of decisions made daily in Alberta’s oil patch: it was logical, straightforward, somewhat ruthless and without subtlety. And as many of the Premier’s decisions were characterized during this period, it was made for him. A group of staunch Calgary Conservatives, led by Jim Gray, simply called Getty in and told him it was time to resign. Despite a number of weighty issues such as the Charlottetown Accord that he was still involved with, Getty agreed and immediately announced his decision to step down.

To this point in time, history has not been kind to Premier Getty. He was seen as an affable, honest man who was stuck with the double disadvantage of following an icon like Peter Lougheed and governing during the one of the worst economic bust cycles in Alberta’s history. However, there is one element of Getty’s days in government that is the subject of controversy and perhaps in need of a historical realignment. When Ralph Klein became leader, he went to great lengths to suggest that government spending had raged out of control during the Getty years. While not pointing the finger directly, Klein made it clear that he considered Getty either unaware or unwilling to curb government spending in the face of major downturns in government revenue.

While there can be no question from historic records that Getty continually governed in expectation of an upturn in oil and gas revenues, it is not altogether clear that he allowed expenditures to spiral out of control either. Kevin Taft suggests that there is ample evidence that not only were program expenditures not growing during the Getty era, they were in fact being cut. He suggests that from 1985/86 to 1992/93 Alberta actually had, “the tightest controls on spending in Canada.” He also cites the Western Centre for Economic Research at the University of Alberta, which states, “Per capita provincial expenditures in Alberta…. greatly exceeded those of other provinces during the energy boom but then declined quite markedly from their 1982/83 peak over the following decade.”

There is no doubt that the Lougheed changes led to an unprecedented level of government subsidy of business. These expenditures in combination with the interest payments on the debt led to significant deficit positions. But to suggest that these deficits were solely as a result of spiraling program costs cannot be confirmed. Barry Cooper concludes that while program expenditure under Getty was not significantly cut back, it was not chiefly responsible for the government’s worsening financial position. He quotes University of Calgary political scientists Dickerson and Drabek who state categorically,

“if the government had not embarked on all its economic schemes, we would be a debt free province.”

However, while Getty may get some belated recognition for not letting government expenditures balloon, it cannot be said that he left a generous legacy to his successor. As a result of wayward government subsidy programs, growing debt and a seeming disdain for the Alberta voter, Don Getty had led his party to the basement of public opinion and to what was to seemingly be their first electoral defeat in two decades. Lisac summed up the challenge for the next Premier in the following manner, “Getty’s successor would have to overcome years of hesitation, of disheartening financial failures, of government isolation. The next leader would also have to set about building Alberta on a far different financial and social foundation than the one Conservative governments under Lougheed and Getty had known since 1971. Now the money was running out. Now the great era of building and urbanization was largely completed.”

6.3 Ralph Klein – The Alberta Populist

A historical examination of Ralph Klein’s preparation for the office of Premier of Alberta can be divided into three distinct periods: his early professional and political experiences, his time as Mayor of Calgary and the short period when he acted as the Minister of Environment in Don Getty’s Cabinet. The next short section will examine each of these periods with focus on the personal leadership qualities that are most often referred to when reflecting on Ralph Klein’s successful transition to Premier.

Humble Beginnings
Ralph Klein, a third generation Albertan, was born in Calgary in 1942. He has one brother who now resides in Victoria, British Columbia. After his parents divorced Klein lived with his grandparents. He visited his father in Edmonton in the summers. His father was a part-time professional wrestler and a fierce advocate of the Social Credit preachings of Ernest Manning. Ralph grew up in lower middle class households. He developed what would become a lifelong love of the outdoors, hiking with his brother in the Nosehill area of Calgary and fishing in the Bow River. After indifferent stints in high school and then the RCAF, Ralph eventually enrolled in at Calgary Business College. In a series of moves that has never been fully explained, Ralph became a teacher in the same college and then, very quickly, was promoted to principal of the institution.

Now a young professional, Ralph applied for and received a posting as the director of public relations for the Canadian Red Cross. In 1966 he took a similar position with the United Way of Calgary. These positions allowed Klein to integrate with a great number of business and community leaders in Calgary. This period also represented the beginning of his education in the ways of public relations and the inner workings of the media. Finally, it tapped his natural enthusiasm for community organization and

617 op. cit., Cooper pp. 43
618 op. cit., Lisac pp. 42
619 Phil Klein’s wrestling moniker was “The Killer”. He usually played the villain and wore a black mask.
developing a sense of spirit in Calgary. In his biography of Klein, Frank Dabbs suggests that during this six year period, Klein “grew in confidence, mastered the art of media management, connected with the highest circles in the city and learned how the invisible networks of power in the small-town milieu of Alberta’s cities works.”

Klein did not have a significant amount of political involvement throughout this period. In 1967 he had helped a friend, Gordon Reid, with news releases and media strategy during Reid’s run for school board trustee. In 1968 he volunteered to work for engineer and lawyer Peter Petrasuk who was running as a federal Liberal in the north of Calgary. Petrasuk was attempting to ride the Trudeaumania that was sweeping the nation, but despite this phenomenon and Klein’s assistance, Petrasuk still lost to the more established Conservative candidate. Some, like Dabbs, would suggest that this loss and the way a good Liberal candidate had been treated by the people of Calgary were pre-eminent in Klein’s decision to run for the provincial Conservative party almost 25 years later.

Originally, Klein felt that a short stint as a professional media person would round out his public relations resume. The local TV station, CFCN, was revolutionizing news reporting in Calgary and was looking for young, hungry reporters not afraid to buck the very entrenched local establishment of senior oilmen and ranch owners. Klein made an 11 year career as a TV reporter for CFCN, specializing in down-to-earth stories about the real life troubles of local native bands, gang members and the generally less fortunate of Calgary’s inner city. He won accolades for his stories about corruption at city hall and for his ability to get quality information about decisions that affected the lives of the underprivileged in Calgary.

Klein left CFCN for two reasons. First, he felt he was becoming too involved in his stories – that he was becoming more advocate than observer. Second, he became particularly involved in a dispute between the city and downtown Calgary residents and shop owners on East Eighth Avenue over a massive new civic centre development project. On the basis of these feelings and because of his disenchantment with the Mayor and the administration of the city, Klein declared himself a mayorality candidate in the 1980 race for Mayor of Calgary.

At the time his chances for election seemed so remote that when he told his colleagues at CFCN that he was running for mayor, his editor’s response was “that’s nice Ralph, now get back to work.” In typical fashion Klein took his scoop to a rival news source who ended up running the story.

**The Most Popular Mayor in Canada**

With no more than the $300 in personal savings and with no formal political experience, Klein started his campaign. While he had no organization to speak of, he did have good media contacts and an excellent sense of public relations from his days in the United Way. Shortly after Klein started the campaign another asset became available in the form of

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621 Dabbs, pp. 18
of Rod Love, a former Keg waiter and self described political junkie who hired on as Klein’s executive assistant and continued in that role for more than 18 years.

Love became Klein’s confidant, manager, speechwriter and media relations specialist. Love is often heralded as the mastermind of Klein’s political successes and is said to have kept a very short leash on the Mayor and then later the Premier. Closer to the truth perhaps is that Klein and Love had a strong personal friendship and a deep respect for each other’s complementary skill sets. Their combined forces would create a formidable political machine.

Love’s greatest attribute is that from very early on he recognized and harnessed the power of Ralph Klein’s everyman populism. From those early days of the first mayoralty campaign in 1980, Love understood that Klein’s ‘great guy’ qualities, including his seeming faults, could be significant political assets.

Certainly in the 1980 race for mayor of Calgary, they would have to make the most of those assets. Klein’s opponent in that election, long time Calgarian politician Ross Alger, is described as a “tall, good looking man, well spoken and patrician.” Alger was the choice for Mayor of the Calgary establishment and he had been instrumental in putting together Calgary’s successful bid for the 1988 Winter Olympics. Less than two months before the vote, polls showed that Alger had a comfortable lead, with the anti-incumbent vote split between Klein and another candidate.

With less than $22,000 to cover all of his election expenses, Klein ran an anti-establishment campaign. Symbolic of his style was the rust covered campaign van that he used to get to public appearances and the motley crew of volunteers that had to convince him to stay in the race when the situation looked desperate. Klein judged that the public was in no mood for the “old politics” and he managed his campaign and his media statements to reflect this judgement. He was not polished on stage. He gave rambling talks about the people’s need to feel good about living in Calgary. His only promises were to communicate better and be more accountable. Klein had to contend with vicious attacks on his personal life and his divorce at the hands of other candidates. Despite these handicaps, Klein parlayed his ability to wring endorsements out of unlikely sources and his understanding of the media and the public into the most surprising victory in Calgary’s history. Klein went on to win re-election in 1983 and 1986 with massive pluralities.

During his nine-year tenure as Mayor, some of Klein’s leading characteristics became more evident. The first was his ability to understand the need for average citizens to feel like they involved in the political process. One of his first actions as Mayor was to

622 op. cit., Cooper pp. 47
623 This “motley crew” would later become alternatively “Ralph’s gang” “the Klein Gang” or “Friends of Ralph Klein, FORK” a group that would remain instrumental in all his campaign activities through the Premiership.
624 By 1986, Klein was so popular that he was able to win 92% of the vote with a campaign based simply on the slogan Ralph ‘86 from Tamsin Carlisle, “Premier Ralph promises to be the life of the party,” Financial Post, January 16, 1993, pp. S14
persuade the Calgary Olympic Organizing Committee that the Olympics had to have special significance to average Calgarians or, regardless of any international exposure, the Games would fail. In a savvy political move, he forced the Committee to hand over ownership of the local side of the Games to the citizenry.

The Games also assisted Klein in developing the skills needed to move in the highest possible social and political circles. In an unlikely development, he befriended IOC behemoth, Juan Antonio Samaranch and as a result was later inducted into the Olympic Order. These types of relationships gave him confidence that his unorthodox, easy-going style would not only hold up, but flourish in the rarified air of elite society. His style was put to the test a number of times during this period, but never more so than when, in Sarajevo at an IOC function, having mistook the King of Norway for a parking lot attendant and then asked his Nordic Majesty to kindly fetch his car, Klein successfully joked his way out of the situation.  

The last example that the Games had given Klein an understanding of his own abilities came at the formal Olympic Games announcement ceremony. Klein was the chief cheerleader when Calgary was announced as the host country, but later, when he was asked to sign what were described as perfunctory documents formally awarding the Games to his city, he refused. While he was undoubtedly aware of the jubilant celebration going on mere metres away and although he was told in no uncertain terms that his refusal would put the award in jeopardy, Klein demanded that City of Calgary lawyers be flown to Europe to properly peruse the documents before any signatures were affixed.

His instinct was that Calgary could get a better deal, particularly in the area of revenues, and his persistence, while unprecedented, eventually paid off. The 1988 Calgary Olympics were arguably the most successful in Olympic history, with the City of Calgary being the main benefactor in terms of international exposure, revenue and the lasting legacy of several excellent sports facilities and public infrastructure projects.

As host of the 1988 Olympics, Klein was at the height of his mayoral power. Dabbs suggests that without the Games there was a possibility that Klein’s political career could have been “stillborn.” He was not particularly strong in council sessions and was disengaged in many of the city’s administrative functions. Without the Games, Klein’s novelty may well have worn thin. However with the Games, Klein matured tremendously and according to many, he was now ready for new challenges. “The Games allowed him the chance to develop his leadership style and to use it successfully. His enthusiasm for public life was undiminished, his gritty idealism untarnished. His mantra was still “Let’s have some fun and do some good. His horizons stretched, Klein’s training was over and he was ready to step into the larger ring.”

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625 This story is oft told and usually with different twists. Dabbs quotes Rod Love as saying the incident was with the King of Norway, while Carlisle uses the same source to suggest it was the King of Sweden. In both tellings, Klein’s unassuming candour charmed the national leader who found the informal tone of Klein, and the Games generally, to be endearing.

626 As told by a senior member of Klein’s Calgary campaign organization, Calgary, October 19, 1998

627 paraphrased from Dabbs, pp. 71
An Effective Minister of Environment

On November 15, 1988, Klein and then Premier Don Getty met privately to discuss the possibility of Klein running for the Conservatives in the 1989 general election. Klein left the meeting feeling that Getty would be Premier for an extended period of time and that he could expect a cabinet position immediately, albeit not necessarily a senior position, if successful in the election.

On January 10, 1989, Klein officially announced his retirement as Mayor of Calgary. He made the odd choice of Calgary Elbow as his preferred entry into provincial politics. This riding contains a number of upper middle class homes in a series of older communities in the south of Calgary. It was not a natural constituency for Klein, but its most compelling characteristic was its availability. On March 20, 1989, Klein was elected as the Progressive Conservative MLA for the riding of Calgary Elbow. He did not win the seat with a large plurality. He was seen as an interloper by some and as a question mark by even some of the more prominent Tories in the riding. Less than a month later he was sworn into Premier Don Getty’s cabinet as Minister of Environment.

Many felt that the Ministry of Environment was a bad choice for Klein’s first portfolio. Dabbs states, “...Klein walked into an ecotrap; he settled for a middle-level portfolio regarded, politically, as a necessary evil. His job, now, was to figure out how to fend off the hard-core environmentalists while the resource industries carried on business as usual, a task that guaranteed that he could satisfy no one. His ambition would flounder on disputes over pulp mills, prairie dams, toxic waste treatment and natural gas drilling in the foothills. Klein had thrown away, prematurely, the leverage of his popularity and reputation.”628

There is no doubt that the early days as a new cabinet minister were not easy for Klein. One senior civil servant that worked closely with him during this period, states, “...in many ways he was fighting for his political life. His government was not popular and he had catapulted directly into cabinet, without any caucus experience.”629 Throughout Alberta’s political history there is always a high risk attached with moving directly into cabinet. Contrary to the general consensus Klein was basically happy in his portfolio. Moreover, the Minister of Environment posting allowed him to apply three important lessons, lessons all learned during his time as Mayor of Calgary.

The first lesson was the understanding that his earthy personality was an important asset and that his lack of formal skills and education and his image as outsider were not elements of his character that should be hidden. “With Klein it was always personality over strategy. As Minister of Environment, he did not have a particular plan, he simply had an engaging personality. People wanted to do things for him. If anything his personality was his strategy.”630 Many people in contact with Klein during this period

628 op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 80
629 Senior civil servant, Government of Alberta, Interview, Edmonton, December 8. 1998
630 ibid., December 8, 1998
commented that he seemed to have developed a life philosophy that he was using effectively as his principal political roadmap.

An example of this was Klein’s first foray into the Legislative Assembly. A much more confrontational and partisan place than the city council chambers in Calgary, many Liberal and NDP opposition members were eagerly anticipating the opportunity to trip up the inexperienced new Minister of Environment. In the late 1980’s, the Ministry had become a hotbed of political and policy problems as the province came to grips with the conflicting demands of a resource based economy and growing public concerns about the quality and sustainability of their natural environment. Klein understood he would be a target and that, despite the fact he was then, and remains, a remarkably quick study, it was going to take time to absorb and understand the plethora of complex issues in the ministry. “Early on as cabinet minister, Ralph was the target in the Legislature. Environment critic, Grant Mitchell (who later become leader of the Alberta Liberals) was effective in the legislature and used to target Klein. As he worked on getting his feet under him, Klein often used humour to deflect criticism in the house. This was a new innovation for the overly staid Edmonton Legislature. Rather than boning up on every aspect of the ministry he and Rod (executive assistant, Rod Love) would instead work on one humourous zinger to be used in house each day.”

Klein also had to learn about the power hierarchies that were so entrenched in the Alberta Legislature. Jim Dau, then senior communications officer and Vance MacNichol, Deputy Minister of Environment, had to teach Ralph and Rod about party politics. One of the most important lessons was with regard to the Legislature and the “down delegation of authority” that was part of the Lougheed legacy. Lougheed was an autocrat. In his government things were done the Lougheed way or not at all. For some time Getty attempted to continue this model. Klein would have none of it. For example, early in his mandate as environment minister, Klein was asked to comment on his involvement in a controversial forestry decision. Rather than toeing the party line on confidentiality and saying ‘no comment,’ Klein would say, ‘Sorry, I’m under orders, I can’t talk.’ Ralph was very comfortable with “up delegation” and not comfortable with the restrictions placed on him by cabinet, caucus and party. He would learn.

As he got more comfortable with the Ministry, Klein continued to let his frank and open manner dominate his public persona. In one memorable public meeting in Athabasca, Klein exchanged one-finger salutes with angry environmental protester Randy Lawrence. Klein’s action was caught on film and there was a small public furore. Rather than being a problem for Klein however, these frank displays of emotion in public made him more endearing. In a telling commentary, Klein’s advisor, Rod Love, would state on several occasions, “…Ralph has not changed one iota since he came into politics. Why should he? It works.”

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631 Senior Communications Officer, Government of Alberta, Interview, October 16, 1998
The second thing Klein knew from his time as Mayor of Calgary was public relations. At what became immediately clear to him about the Ministry of Environment position was its potential to raise his profile provincially. “As Minister of Environment, Klein seems to have known instinctively that if he got out to meet voters and if he developed good relationships with the best people in government, things would work out and opportunities would come his way.” The opportunity to effect this strategy came in the guise of a new environmental protection act for the Province of Alberta. The legislation was long overdue and had been worked on for some time, but it is Klein who is credited with working the legislation through one of the most comprehensive consultation processes in Alberta’s history and then effectively moving it through the legislative approval process. While getting this bill approved was a worthy achievement, particularly given Klein’s mediocre record as a legislator in Calgary, the real genius was in his management of the two-year consultation process. In many ways this process acted as a precursor for Klein’s later stint as Premier. He was determined to open the process up to the people, and for the first time, ensure that there was a public understanding of the government’s desire to listen in a meaningful way, something unheard of during the Lougheed and Getty eras.

The consultation process, along with the other ministerial duties, allowed Klein the opportunity to visit many of the smaller Albertan communities he had never seen before. Says one senior bureaucrat at the time, “Ralph knew very little about rural politics until he got to Edmonton. The then Agriculture Minister would send a staffer with Ralph on his visits to rural Alberta to explain which crops farmers were planting and how the agricultural industry worked.” Klein also took the opportunity as Environment Minister to visit MLAs in their ridings. This personal touch is one of the reasons so many MLAs supported Ralph in the leadership campaign.

Klein also understood that as a former mayor of Calgary he was automatically perceived as being uneducated and unconcerned with regard to the plight of average Edmonton voters. When he first moved to Edmonton as a new MLA, he worked particularly diligently at establishing a base of support in the northern city. He scoured Edmonton, searching for a bar that would replace his beloved St Louis in Calgary. For a while he thought it might be the Old Strathcona Hotel, but he just never felt comfortable there. He also actively worked the Italian district of Edmonton. Despite the fact that his rival, Liberal Leader and former mayor of Edmonton, Laurence Decore had very strong ethnic support, Klein ate in almost every Italian restaurant in Edmonton and eventually became very popular in Edmonton’s ethnic communities. This was his style and his method of learning about what people wanted from their government. During the 1993 election, Klein would boast that he knew Edmonton much better than Decore knew Calgary.

The last important lesson Klein brought from the mayor’s office was the importance of quality advice and a strong team. During the 1989-1993 period, overall civil service morale was down and the best civil servants were embarrassed by the deficit position of the government. In the Ministry of Environment Ralph Klein got along very well with

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633 op. cit., Senior Civil Servant, Alberta Government, Interview, December 8, 1998
634 op. cit., Senior Communications Officer, Government of Alberta, Interview, October 16, 1998
his civil servants. He likes people and had no disdain for public servants. The interface between senior civil servants and Ralph was excellent. He grew a particularly strong bond with the Deputy Minister of Environment, Vance MacNichol. While MacNichol was a lifetime professional civil servant with connections throughout Canada’s public service and had an impeccable record of non-partisanship, he and his senior staff were drawn by Klein’s forthright, populist manner. The advice they gave, particularly during Klein’s first year in office, had as much to do with deportment and strategy as with policy or public administration.

Klein developed a relationship of trust with MacNichol similar to the one that he had had with the Calgary City Commissioner, George Cornish. Cornish, in fact, called Klein when he first took office and explained that MacNichol was the best deputy in the Alberta government. As a result of this trust, Klein eventually became less reluctant to engage in open debate on matters with technical and financial detail. As he became more confident, he became more comfortable leading his cadre of ministry staff and experts and experimenting with ways to make the ministry’s deliverables more effective. For example, on his own initiative, Klein would take all his senior civil servants on a once a year retreat for a frank assessment of his strengths and weaknesses as Minister. These functions added to the excellent relationship with the public service and helped blur the line between the political goals of the Minister and the more general goals and objectives of the professional civil service.

With some exceptions, Klein’s tenure as Minister of Environment was seen as an unexpected triumph. He had run into some difficulty with issues such as the Paddle River Dam, which included a badly mishandled lawsuit against the ministry, but for the most part he was credited for having successfully walked the tightrope between resource and environmental interests. Not only had he overseen the passage of one of the strongest environmental bills in Canada’s history, he had also created the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Round Table on Environment and the Economy and had revamped the Environment Council of Alberta. He had traveled the province extensively, consulted widely, corralled and strengthened one of the more controversial ministries in government and done all this at a time when the economy and the Conservative government were floundering badly. In the face of significant odds, Klein had taken a mid-level portfolio and, in three years, had turned it into a viable platform from which to launch further political activities. Once again, Klein was ready to take to take the next step.

6.4 The Leadership Race – Opportunity from Adversity

Premier Getty finally announced his resignation on September 9, 1992. Many saw this as a sign that the Conservatives were as good as dead in Alberta. The public anger was not just directed at Getty but at the “old politics” in general. Having run the government for what seemed like a generation, there was a public consensus that the Tories were too tied to the past to even consider the steps necessary for rejuvenation. As Cooper points out,  

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635 op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 87
"At under 20 per cent in the polls during the fall of 1992, defeat seemed likely no matter who replaced Getty."

Regardless of this seemingly overwhelming adversity, several prospective candidates were making preparations to enter the race. In the fall of 1992, Klein was not one of them. While many had the impression Getty had given Klein an inside track to the Premiership, this was not true. According to Dabbs, "... Getty had lost patience with Klein’s freewheeling style and his socializing ‘indulgences.’ It appeared that Getty was, in fact, impeding Klein’s leadership prospects, particularly with his surprise retirement announcement. Getty had said he would not retire before the next election, and Klein believed him."

Klein had the natural aspirations of any typical cabinet minister, but his run for the top job was not pre-ordained. Staff in the Ministry of the Environment felt that it was Rod Love, not Klein who initially saw the possibilities and potential of a Klein candidacy. This being said there was no lack of discussion about the leadership from 1990 up to Getty’s announcement. By the early 1990’s, Conservative MLAs were very frustrated with having to perpetuate the myth that the budget was balanced and everything was well with the government. Treasurer Johnston’s budgets were shaky at best, based on $48 a barrel oil and other faulty economic information and forecasts. This was a holdover from the Lougheed regime whose mode of operation was to never admit weakness.

From the perspective of the civil service, the leadership was something of a non-event. Generally during the 1989-1993 period civil service morale was down with the best civil servants being mortally embarrassed by the government’s deficit position. Transition planning was not something high on their list of priorities, in fact, because the government so rarely changed hands, transition planning was not an integrated part of the bureaucracy’s service offering. During the leadership, deputies were not asked to prepare any special documents for the transition, nor were they asked to monitor the statements of the leadership candidates or the leader of the opposition, in anticipation of putting together briefing books for whom ever might be the new Premier. Again this might have been because of the low morale at the time or it may have been because no one in government anticipated the width and breadth of change a new leader like Klein might perpetrate on the system.

In the bars and restaurants around the Edmonton Legislature, however, the leadership was the main topic of discussion. It was very evident that people inside were unhappy with Getty’s leadership and thought there should be change. The issue of concern was fiscal credibility. Even at that early time it was clear to the MLAs that they would lose the next election if they were not seen as getting their financial house in order. Specifically, it was felt that there was no time to mess around with incremental change. It was felt that public skepticism was so high that only dramatic change would suffice.

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635 op. cit., Cooper, pp. 51. In fact, Ashley Geddes of the Financial Post reveals that at one point under Getty, the Tory party was languishing in the polls at “about 10 percent support”, Financial Post, January 22, 1994, S14

637 op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 91
One-Person One-Vote – Modernizing Alberta Conservatives

At the time, Klein and Love agreed that he would not run for the leadership unless the party had adopted the one-person one-vote format. “Love wanted nothing to do with old style politicking associated with the candidate selection and nomination meeting format. With its backroom deals and bloc voting it represented everything that was wrong with the Alberta Conservative Party.” At the spring 1991 convention, there were a number of constitutional changes, the implementation of the one-person one-vote rule being the most important.

The Tories who voted for this new system hoped this change “would allow individuals to develop a more direct stake in the party, revitalizing it through an infusion of new members and otherwise providing the party with a more “populist” image.” The idea was to keep the voting format very simple. People had been voting for their Mayors and Reeves for decades using a simple ballot system. There was no need to go to an electronic system because the infrastructure for the ballot system was already in place. A person showed their Conservative party membership card and they got a ballot. All in, over 70,000 people voted for the Conservative leader of their choice using this method.

Stewart suggests that this change was instrumental in ensuring the recovery of the Conservative party in Alberta. He points to the massive increases in people involved – there were over three times the number of voters in this leadership compared to the last – and the positive press that was generated. According to Conservative Speaker of the House, Stan Schumacher, “the adoption of a direct election format had a dramatic and rejuvenating effect on the PC party and has created genuine excitement and prominent media coverage.”

The only serious concern about the leadership selection process was around the matter of a cutoff point for membership sales. Some party organizers felt that there needed to be a date after which a new member would not be eligible to vote. The Klein team quickly squelched such talk, demanding that memberships could be purchased between ballots and right up until the voting started on the second ballot. This would turn out to be a very fortuitous move.

The Klein Candidacy- Eclectism Personified

The Klein campaign was built upon a skeletal organization. Of the 51 sitting Conservative MLAs, 35 were Klein supporters. These MLAs had the very real jobs of acting as area captains and were responsible for delivering the vote from their constituencies. These MLAs were led by Peter Elzinga and Peter Trynchy in the north and Pat Black (later Nelson) in the south. Ironically, although there were eight other leadership candidates, Klein was the only candidate to solicit caucus support in a serious way. After the

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638 Former Senior Political Staff person in the office of Ralph Klein, Minister of Environment, Calgary, October 16, 1998
640 Quote from the Edmonton Journal, October 29, 1989, A7
campaign, Labour Minister and leadership candidate, Elaine McCoy, described the result "as the revolt of the caucus against the cabinet."

Ralph’s rawness and disarming candour were evident in his very first news conference as a leadership candidate. In one famous encounter, Klein was asked, “Are Albertans ready for a drunk Premier?” Without missing a beat, Klein responded, “I can change.”

Rather than worry about the implications of his answer, Ralph came across as earnest and forthright. Ralph continued to try and take the Ranchmen’s approach but rural party stalwarts like Elzinga, Don Sparrow, Ernie Isley, Peter Trynchy and Ken Kowalski told him he was listening to the wrong people.

Everything in the Klein campaign was aimed at separating Klein from the traditional Tory way, right down to the pamphlets and billboards. “The black and white advertising was to symbolize that we were not of the monied set, which worked out since we had very little money. As well, it worked as an indication that there was a clear alternative for Alberta – “as clear as black and white” was the slogan. The decision to run Klein’s campaign in a way that emphasized his significant differences with Getty was immediate and unanimous. Klein had supporters but little money. The Calgary ranchmen came to the rescue, putting serious dollars into his campaign. Many of the ranchmen wanted to transform Ralph into a business-man’s candidate. The ranchmen brought in Pat Cashion to run the campaign like a business.

One of the most famous Klein stories revolves around his pictures for the first leadership campaign literature. The ranchmen wanted a head and shoulders shot of Ralph in a tie and blazer to epitomize his business like campaign. Klein’s supporters favoured a full length shot of Ralph with his blazer off, his sleeves up and his ample midsection prominent. They said this better portrayed Ralph as himself – a man of the people. This dispute was one of the largest of the leadership campaign – at first there was a compromise as both photos were used – but eventually, the friends of Ralph prevailed as the more casual picture adorned billboards and election campaign material.

A Makeshift Policy Platform
The policy focus of Klein’s campaign was a five-point strategy that he suggested would reduce the deficit and return Alberta to a balanced budget position in fiscal 1995-96. He outlined this set of principles at his first campaign speech October 1st, 1992, in Leduc. The first idea was to set up a roundtable of economists and decision-makers to see if there was a better method for projecting government revenues (the Conservative government had been wrong in its revenue projections in four of the six previous years). His second proposal was a four-year plan of expenditure cuts to balance the budget. He promised to “more specifically outline the details of this plan over the coming weeks, before the leadership vote.” The third step was to ensure that there would not be further deficits in Alberta by passing legislation that mandated balanced budgets. Fourth was a downsizing of government ministries. On this point, Klein suggested that there had to be

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641 Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
642 Ralph Klein, Leduc High School speech, Leduc Alberta, October 1, 1992, pp. 5
a new way of looking at the problem. “...but when people ask me which ministries would be cut?" I think we need to approach the question from the other direction. We need to ask ourselves “which ministries do we keep?”

Klein’s final principle was one of moving more government program delivery into the private sector. More like a CEO addressing his or her senior managers than a politician three months away from a leadership debate, Klein concluded his address by stating, “...it goes without saying that the entire plan will require all of the strong management skills we possess: leadership, teamwork, strategic planning, goal setting.... Those are the keys to any successful management plan.”

Overall, the party machinery was not a problem for the Klein team. His two biggest challenges were polling and the weather. For several days before the leadership vote, the Calgary and Edmonton newspapers were running polls showing Ralph to be comfortably in the lead. This led many would be voters to decide that Ralph had it wrapped up and there was therefore no need to get in to vote. The second problem was the weather. From Red Deer south there was a horrific freezing rainstorm that prevented many Klein supporters from voting. Klein’s strongest area of support was Calgary and southern Alberta so the storm was a significant factor.

The most difficult part of the leadership campaign (and the subsequent election campaign) for Klein were the very personal attacks made by other candidates and the media on Klein’s personal habits and private life. While difficult for Klein, it was something he was accustomed to. Terry Milewski of the CBC had to run a national apology to Klein for comments he had made during the campaign for the mayoralty of Calgary.

First Ballot Results – An incredible dead heat
In what would be the first major surprise of the race, on the first ballot, Klein and his main challenger, Nancy Betkowski, were in a dead heat, with Betkowski leading by a single ballot, 16,393 to 16,392. The overconfidence of Klein’s supporters had come home to roost. It was only after the first ballot that people realized this was a real battle and moments after the results were released the phone began to ring. The media, seeing that most of the other leadership candidates had gone over to Betkowski, suggested that “Klein had no room for growth”.

The other seven candidates dropped out of the race and announced their support for Betkowski. While at first glance this universal show of support for his opponent may have seemed to be an insurmountable problem for Klein, it actually helped position him as once again it looked like the establishment was closing ranks against him.

Some (primarily Betkowski supporters) would argue that this massive swing of candidate support to Betkowski may have secured her victory in more traditional delegate based leadership race. This is a fairly compelling argument whose only counter is that Betkowski and Klein’s support was significantly ahead of all the other candidates, which would have made them little more than fringe players in a typical leadership convention style race.

643 ibid., pp. 12
644 ibid., pp. 17
645 Some (primarily Betkowski supporters) would argue that this massive swing of candidate support to Betkowski may have secured her victory in more traditional delegate based leadership race. This is a fairly compelling argument whose only counter is that Betkowski and Klein’s support was significantly ahead of all the other candidates, which would have made them little more than fringe players in a typical leadership convention style race.
Klein staff suggest that Klein purposely did not court any of the defeated candidates: “We had to continue to be seen as outsiders, as outside the process and the fact that most of the prominent leadership candidates went to Betkowski was a blessing and we knew it.” Klein argued that Betkowski was part of the Lougheed/Getty establishment. While she had been a cabinet minister for slightly longer than Klein she had been involved with the government as a staffer. As well she was highly educated, a career politician and seen to be in favour of lavish social programs.

Second Ballot Results – A decisive victory
A week later, on December 5, 1992 a second ballot would be held as a type of a runoff. In the space of a week Klein signed up thousands of new voters, while Betkowski, in what would later be called, the biggest miscalculation in Alberta’s political history, did not campaign. “...she decided on the basis of a one-vote lead to concentrate on the transition of power from Don Getty to her. Can you believe it?” Betkowski’s people felt that Klein’s second ballot support was going to be weak. They felt that if they could come to within five to seven per cent of Klein on the first ballot, they had a chance to win. When they actually polled ahead of Klein on the first ballot they were ecstatic.

Their overconfidence was to be their downfall. One senior Klein organizer summarized the turn of events this way: “The other thing was that all the bucks and prominent types were going to the other more “establishment” type candidates. I actually think this was very helpful in terms of Klein’s ability to distance himself from the previous government. Even though he was a cabinet minister and had several cabinet ministers and MLAs supporting him, Klein was still cast as the outsider and the anti-status quo candidate in the leadership race. I think this helped him in the long term.”

The organizer went on to describe how this outsider quality manifested itself on the ground. “We had a semi-homeless gentleman come into the campaign office. He had sold enough empty pop cans to buy a $5 dollar PC party membership. One of the workers suggested that they should give the guy the membership, as he seemed to be down on his luck. Not only did Ralph understand that it was important to take the gentleman’s five dollars, but he worked to find a hostel that would take him. That particular person is now, almost 7 years later, still a valued campaign worker and one of the first people we call when we are organizing in downtown Calgary.”

As mentioned, Betkowski did not campaign in the intervening week, while Klein mounted a concentrated campaign to call Ms. Betkowski on her apparent ambivalence towards a provincial sales tax; challenge her to a televised debate; and seize every news media opportunity. When he was in front of the cameras Klein continued to hammer two themes. First, that Betkowski did not have the “right stuff” to win the next general election, and, second, that large numbers of Liberals had voted for Betkowski on the first ballot. “I don’t know if the Liberals are voting for Nancy because they like her. I think

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646 Alberta Report, Vol. 20, No. 1, December 21, 1992, pp. 6
647 op. cit., Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
648 ibid., October 19, 1998
649 ibid, December 21, 1992, pp. 7
the Liberals who are voting for her think that I’m going to be Laurence Decore’s worst nightmare.”

This aggressive campaign style combined with the inherent strength of Klein’s political machinery in Calgary and rural Alberta led to his convincing second ballot win, 46,245 to 31,722.

One senior Klein supporter summarized her feelings about the results this way. “On the night of the second ballot, the first set of results came in from Drumheller and Klein was up 3 or 4 to 1, that was the minute I realized he was going to be Premier. I felt good because the Klein camp came out victorious and owed nothing to the special interests. The people we owed were the backbench and that was fine, because even then it was clear that the backbench would have a much more important role in developing policy and direction for the government.”

In the final analysis, Klein had significantly beaten the establishment candidate, Betkowski, by a 60 per cent to 40 per cent margin. He had almost 50,000 people take the time to buy a five-dollar membership in what was only recently a completely moribund party and vote directly for him. The new voters, particularly on the second ballot, were not long time Conservative activists; they were simply the general public. In many ways, Klein had transformed the entire party into his own image. Indeed, several pundits referred to the Alberta PC party as the “Ralph” party immediately after the win. As a result of the one-person one-vote system, Klein also believed he had, for the short term at least, secured a mandate to govern. With his obviously able team of political workers and his newly created political machine, Klein was ready to tackle his next challenge – winning the general election as Premier of Alberta.

6.5 The Klein Transition – Carving a New Path

As demanding as the leadership race was, it paled in comparison to the challenges that lay ahead for Klein. Public opinion polls at the time show that while the PC’s in Alberta enjoyed a spike in popularity immediately after the leadership race, their support soon leveled out to approximately the 20 per cent range by the end of 1992. Furthermore, Klein had significant splits in his own party. Unsuccessful leadership candidate Ruben Nelson summed up his perception of Klein’s future by stating, “There will be no honeymoon with Klein and the voters.”

Outsiders had difficulty initially seeing any change occurring as a result of Klein’s win, particularly because of what were perceived to be Klein’s big-spending ways as Mayor of Calgary. The Toronto Star reported, “It looks like business as usual in the conservative province of Alberta.” Others were concerned about such an untested and volatile person taking over the top job in Alberta.

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650 Edmonton Journal, December 1, 1992, pp. A5
651 Interestingly, Klein’s desire to not have a cutoff is somewhat at odds with his desire not to see bloc voting in the leadership. Late cutoffs are notorious means of allowing blocs of people, often new Canadians, to enter the process even though they have no strong party affiliation.
652 op. cit., Alberta Government Cabinet Minister, Interview, October 15, 1998
653 Alberta Report, Vol 19, No. 52, December 14, pp. 9
654 Toronto Star, December 6, 1992
“Frankly, I’m skeptical. I’m not sure that what we need at this point is a populist premier.”

Regardless of the naysayers, the stagnant economy and the low public perception of his party, Klein had come from behind to win the most exciting leadership race in Alberta’s history and he had momentum as a result. Since his leadership victory on December 6, 1992 had come so close to the holiday season, many of Klein’s supporters and those in the media assumed all new activity from the Premier’s office would take place in the new year. One senior organizer from Calgary remembers, “…after the leadership, many of us, particularly in southern Alberta, thought we might get a bit of a break. I was very surprised to receive a phone call the next day saying I was needed immediately in Edmonton to begin the “restructuring process. It was December 15, 1992 and a lot of us thought we would get Christmas off, but the key Klein people, especially Rod Love, understood that if we were going to be ready for an election, we had to get going right away.”

This staffer knew instinctively that they could not afford to quit running. “We didn’t slow down after the leadership and we are still, in a sense, in that mode.”

The first days – many paths to choose

After winning the leadership, Klein had several possible courses of action available to him. The first option would have been to call a snap election. Although his party was low in the polls, the leadership race had done much more than expected in terms of re-igniting interest in the Conservatives. Moreover, many could have argued that Alberta always votes Conservative and support that was currently parked with other parties would come back to the PC’s during an election period. While it was true that the Getty years were not to be held up as shining examples of fiscal excellence, neither were they a complete disaster. Alberta’s deficit was not out of line nationally, taxes continued to be the lowest in Canada and “there was always the Heritage Fund.” Finally, a snap election would have negated the opportunity for Klein and his staff to fail as Premier. Klein and his group were obviously excellent campaigners but were untested in the top office. With Klein’s less than guarded style, mistakes were bound to occur, so why not run on Klein’s stellar record as Mayor and minister rather than invite disaster as a rookie Premier?

Surely, Premier Klein would have been justified in taking the time as a new leader to try to mend bridges with disgruntled long time cabinet ministers and backbenchers, to

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655 Gerry Protti, former Alberta government bureaucrat, former President of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers reported in the Financial Post, January 16, 1993, pp. s15
656 Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
657 Alberta Progressive Conservative Party activist, Interview, Calgary, October 19, 1998
dispense patronage and oversee capital projects, to build new relationships with the loyal and effective civil servants while rooting out and downsizing those who were either incompetent or too attached to the previous regime. Klein did not have a history of being a fiscal conservative during his tenure as mayor, yet he had been elected leader on a vague, yet clearly conservative platform for leader. Common sense suggested he needed time to implement these ideas and establish a history as a capable leader before risking the Conservative legacy at the polls. Dabbs points out that early in his mandate Klein publicly stated that he would treat the 78,251 votes cast on the second leadership ballot as a wide test of opinion and treat that as a mandate for a year. \(^{658}\)

There was significant precedent for this last position. Premier Harry Strom had taken over the Social Credit party after the popular Ernest Manning resigned. Strom did not do enough to establish his own credentials as Premier, was subsequently defeated and was generally held responsible for demise of the Social Credit juggernaut in Alberta. Klein and his staff were aware of the “Strom curse” and therefore it would have been understandable if they had thrown themselves into the maelstrom of governance the moment Klein was elected leader.

There was one other less noble reason for taking advantage of the spectrum of powers afforded the office of Premier rather than prepare immediately for an election. Barry Cooper poses the hypothesis that Klein did not run full out for the leadership, particularly in the stage running up to the first ballot, because the prospects of the Conservatives in the next election were so poor that whoever won the leadership was just going down to defeat in the subsequent general election anyway.\(^{659}\) Following Cooper’s thesis to its logical conclusion, Klein may have been justified in extending his tenure as Premier to as long as possible and then prepare to win back the office not immediately, but four years in the future having served an apprenticeship on the opposition benches.

Klein and his staff however chose neither of these routes. From discussions with key staff and advisors who were integrally involved during this period, it is clear that from the moment Klein won the leadership, the sole focus of his transition to power was winning the next election. It was decided equally quickly that the only way this feat was going to be accomplished was by distancing Klein as far as possible from the record of the Getty administration.

**The “ad-hoc” committee – outlining a basic strategy**

The morning after the leadership win, Love hastily organized the key members of the campaign team for the first strategy meeting in Edmonton. From this the strategy group an ad-hoc committee was formed. It included Love, cabinet ministers Peter Elzinga and Ken Kowalski, the government whip, and the soon to appointed Deputy Minister of Executive Council, Vance MacNichol. This group met every Monday and continued to meet regularly for the next five years. It’s composition changed over time but it remained a very pragmatic group concerned with issue-management. “The group’s purpose was not

\(^{658}\) op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 100

\(^{659}\) Op. cit., Cooper, pp. 57
to discuss long range plans or vision but rather to talk about what happened last week and what will happen next week.”

What is important to remember is that the ad-hoc committee was not set up as method of controlling or overseeing the existing governance structure. Rather, its primary function was to anticipate government issues and gauge their implications for Klein’s general election prospects. “The committee did not look at long term issues or bureaucratic matters. Our only agenda items were issues that could impact the new Premier and his election chances.”

One of the first items on the committee’s agenda was to extend what the committee recognized as one of the key elements of the leadership win. It was decided unanimously that the only way the upcoming election was going to be “pulled out of the fire” was by continuing to distance Klein as far from the record of the Getty administration as possible. The problems with the Getty government were that it was seen as cold, arrogant, impersonal, distant and deaf to the people’s concerns about the size of government and its fiscal record. Ted Byfield of the weekly Alberta Report astutely observed, “Klein realizes that political parties no longer represent anything permanent or even definite…Hence all attention focuses upon the leader, or at least on the media’s image of the leader, and Klein’s image is about as far removed from Peter Lougheed’s and Don Getty’s as it’s possible to get.” Barry Cooper picks up this theme when he suggests, “there was, in fact, no real need for continuity or for business as usual, even in the conservative province of Alberta. Indeed, Klein had every reason to change the image of the Conservative Party. His first task therefore, would be to distance himself from the burden of the Lougheed-Getty legacy.”

To maintain distance from this legacy, the general principles of Klein’s strategy would remain the same as during the leadership race. Klein was to continue to meet people individually, continue to listen to their concerns about the economy and the state of the government’s finances. From a communications perspective, Klein’s style was to run from the lead. His best format was for the government to make an initiative and then have the media and the opposition react. He wanted to avoid situations where the government was constantly reacting to news. The strategy group’s purpose was to ensure that Klein’s model was being followed.

The other distancing principle that was originally suggested by Rod Love, but quickly adopted by all members of the committee, was that, in direct contrast to Getty, Klein was going to be seen as a leader who “did what he said he would do.” This was to be done for three reasons – to give Klein a record of success and make him look ‘Premier-like,’ to build party credibility and to provide an alternative to the Getty and Lougheed era where, particularly fiscally, the government’s record was more of ‘say one thing and do another.’

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660 Senior Advisor to Premier Klein and member of the “ad-hoc” committee, Interview, Calgary, October 16, 1998
661 Senior official, Alberta government, Interview Edmonton, December 8, 1998
662 Alberta Report, December 22, 1992
663 op. cit., Cooper, pp. 55
Klein made only a few promises during the subsequent transition period and election campaign, but the ones that were made were designed to show a break from the past. According to the committee, his future electoral hopes now depended not so much on the content of the promises, but on whether or not he was actually going to carry them out.

The last related principle that directed Klein in those early days was the sense of teamwork. As underdogs in the leadership race, Klein’s ‘team’ had come through with flying colours. They had already significantly changed the face of the Progressive Conservative party and it was understood that, if they hung together, they would preside over the same type of change in the Alberta government. Many of the key Klein supporters were more than ready to be part of a dramatic revolution as long as Klein was leader. The backbenchers had spent two years being blamed for a bad government that they were not even really a part of. Klein told them all that there would be significant opposition to his platform, particularly those parts which included cutting the size of government. The MLAs response was basically, “We’re already being beaten up by our constituents. If we are going to get flack at least it will be for the right reasons.” Klein responded well to this type of loyalty. Although he promised nothing to anyone who supported him, he was not about to forget the MLAs who were the basis of his leadership campaign organization. “I have 36 MLAs who have been there since the beginning, have hung in there with me and I’m going to pay very special attention to those MLAs. There is no doubt about that.”

Guided by these principles, Klein’s team set out to prepare for the next election. Originally, the group felt that October 1993 was the “election window” best suited to maximizing Klein’s chances. “On December 12, 1992, our internal research showed us at 17 per cent in the polls. Given our plan to distance ourselves from Getty and actually implement Klein’s leadership promises, the ten months until October seemed like barely enough time to accomplish our objective.”

One interesting (and seemingly contradictory) departure from the campaign strategy, however, came in the area of communications and media relations. Rather than trying to bring focus, excitement and media attention, as was the case in the leadership campaign, Klein and his new government team sought to keep themselves out of the media spotlight as much as possible. “You have to understand what being as low in the polls as 17 per cent feels like over a two year period. We were definitely in a bunker mentality, trying wherever possible to stay out of the news and get the things done we needed to do. Our feeling was there was no such thing as good press and we kept this up throughout the election as well.”

After the leadership race, the first real opportunity to distance Klein from the Lougheed-Getty legacy came as a result of having to deal with Nancy Betkowski. After a week of sulking, she came out in her first post race press conference to suggest that a Klein-led

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664 Senior Conservative MLA, Interview, December 8, 1998
665 Ralph Klein in the Calgary Herald, December 9, 1992, pp. A5
666 ibid., December 8, 1998
667 ibid., December 8, 1998
party would not win the next election and she wasn’t sure she wanted to be part of it anyway. She then met with Klein and demanded, on the strength of her 40 per cent showing on the second ballot, that she be made Treasurer, that she have something akin to a veto on policy and that she be put in control of all patronage. Typically after a difficult, somewhat fractious leadership contest, the mending of fences is the most difficult job for a new Premier. Improperly done it can lead to rifts in a party that take literally years to heal. However, Betkowski’s breathtaking lack of political acumen, during both the last stages of the leadership contest and then directly afterwards, made Klein’s decision infinitely easier. When, as custom dictates, it came time to put his chief rival in cabinet, he simply said, ‘no.’

Instruments of Change
On December 14, 1992, Ralph Klein was sworn in as the 12th Premier of Alberta. He broke with tradition to dance on the steps of the Legislature with a group of aboriginals, in a ceremony that was replete with drums and burning sweetgrass. He went into the Premier’s office saying the same things he had said when voted in as Mayor of Calgary. “I interpret my mandate as a vote of confidence in me to be able to talk to people, to listen to people to become somewhat personally involved in their problems, and to act on their behalf.”

Then, using his full powers as cabinet maker, he immediately undertook what has been referred to as the “biggest, bloodiest purge in Alberta’s political history.”

Cabinet-making Klein style
Klein reduced the size of cabinet from twenty six to seventeen ministers, dismissing sixteen Getty ministers and five, including Betkowski, who had opposed him in the leadership. Klein’s changes represented the highest turnover in the cabinet (44 per cent) since the Tories replaced the Social Credit government of Premier Harry Strom in 1971. The Klein cabinet was also, on average, three years younger (50) than Getty’s (53) and had a much higher percentage (81 per cent to 68 per cent) of ministers from ridings outside Calgary and Edmonton. Klein’s was the first cabinet in modern Albertan history not to have a minister from Edmonton and generally his cabinet had fewer career politicians and bureaucrats than Getty or Lougheed. The depth and range of Klein’s cuts were important for three reasons.

By ruthlessly dealing with Betkowski - an established Tory – Klein sent a clear message that the years of the privileged elite in the Alberta Conservative party were over. Typically, the notion of completely cutting out one’s main political rival may seem overly risky, but Betkowski played into Klein’s hand. If she had stayed on in some capacity and let the anti-Klein forces coalesce around her, Klein would have had a much more difficult time governing. The second benefit of this move was that Klein had seen first hand the dissent caused in the Getty cabinet by Lougheed loyalists. By casting off the Getty loyalists, Klein ensured smoother passage for his platform of change and he also sent a strong signal to his backbench that they would be rewarded for their loyalty.

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668 op. cit., Lisac, pp. 78
669 op. cit., Dabbs pp. 100
670 see the Alberta Report, December 28, 1992, pp. 6-7
Cabinet Shuffle – impacts on an entrenched bureaucracy

While these political considerations were no doubt forefront in Klein’s mind at the time, the third, perhaps unintended, circumstance may have ultimately proved to be the most important. Typically in Canadian politics, when a new Premier takes the dynamic step of downsizing a cabinet, the impact on the bureaucracy has been minimal. If the Minister of Mines is cut from the cabinet table, for example, his or her ministry would shift quietly to someone else’s portfolio such as the Minister of Natural Resources. This usually would involve little more than a re-working of an organizational chart and typically would not involve layoffs or downsizing of redundant bureaucrats. Most Premiers who trim the size of their cabinet, do so by combining ministries into larger entities. Sometimes deputies are sacrificed, but rarely, if ever, are there major rationalizations of staff. This can lead to further duplication and lack of cohesive productivity within the civil service.

When Klein cut his cabinet, the effect on the Alberta civil service was dramatically different. Largely on the initiative of Klein’s new Deputy Minister of Executive Council, Vance MacNichol, the cabinet downsizing was interpreted as a signal to drastically reduce the size and scope of government. When Klein did not appoint a Minister of Technology, Research and Science,\(^671\) for example, MacNichol ensured that the Ministry was not moved but dismantled.

In fact, MacNichol’s principal responsibility through the first days of the transition was to choose the 10 deputy ministers to be let go. As one senior official put it at the time, “You cannot underestimate the importance of the downsizing of the cabinet as an important factor in the overall success of the Klein regime. The downsizing was the cornerstone of the restructuring of the civil service. Klein was able to build on a small announcement that looked to the public like something that was actually a personal sacrifice and develop it into the catalyst for a major re-engineering of government.”\(^672\)

In Klein’s case he used the opportunity to get rid of 10 deputies and then significantly rationalize the people under them. Perhaps most interesting is that he did all this under the guise of making the personal sacrifice of cutting back his own cabinet. Furthermore he did little to antagonize the civil servants or make the exercise look like a vendetta. He stayed above the fray and let MacNichol handle the tough stuff.

The Civil Service Transition Committee

MacNichol handled the formal transition through another ad-hoc group which consisted of Kowalski, Elzinga, a representative from the Public Service Commission, the Director of Communications and five or six key deputies. The deputies involved represented a cross section of government and they were chosen for their policy instincts and their managerial skill. The formal transition group met immediately after Klein became Premier and met regularly for the following two years. The principal activity of this

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\(^671\) Dismantling this ministry was particularly symbolic in that it had managed the $600 million collapse of NovAtel, a scandal, Frank Dabbs suggests, that ranked second only to the Principal Group case as a symbol of the Getty administration’s incompetence. op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 100

\(^672\) op. cit., Senior official, Government of Alberta, Interview Edmonton, December 8, 1998
group was to properly react to the downsizing of the cabinet. They worked on the understanding that Klein’s first instinct was that government was too big and not efficient. This was their guiding principle throughout.

The other major function of the committee was to manage internal disputes. Each ministry in government was initially re-organized by a deputy and when that work was completed, the formal transition committee would examine the changes, make recommendations and then approve. One of MacNichol’s most difficult tasks on this committee was to arrange severance packages, not just for the 10 departing deputies, but for the dozens of other senior civil servants who were asked to leave. Typically the cost of severing a senior deputy, particularly one with decades of experience can be very high. “Our richest payout was 18 months salary. This was based on a precedent set in the federal bureaucracy. When we were questioned about this we said we were trying to be fair and were using accepted federal precedents as our guide. We got much less flack on this issue than I originally anticipated.”

The other factor which made the layoffs more palatable for the Alberta public, was that the Alberta oil patch had just gone through a downsizing of its own. People were comfortable with the idea that the provincial government had to tighten its own belt through layoffs.”

The final element that may have been in the government’s favour at this time was, interestingly, their lack of representation in Edmonton. With only two MLAs on the government side from the Edmonton area, there was little pressure on the Premier’s office to protect civil service jobs, the majority of which are based in Edmonton.

In a related, but equally important maneuver, Klein tasked the transition committee with the job of redesigning the government committee system. The feeling was that these committees were too “internal” and that even when good work was done it was invisible to the public. The government was getting no credit for the committee work and the ministers were being distracted and overburdened by the “busy work” coming out of the committee system. In response, the committee assisted in creating four “super-committees”, whose policy areas were: economic planning, agriculture and rural development, natural resources and sustainable development, and community services, which replaced the 16 existing cabinet and Tory caucus committees. Klein went even further by disbanding the powerful priorities and planning committee, which, because it had been staffed by cabinet ministers only, had been a source of discontent for backbench MLAs during the Getty administration. He eventually replaced the committee with a new agenda and priorities committee (A&P), which received input from backbenchers.

He even announced that he would allow backbenchers to sit at the cabinet table to ‘represent the views of their respective committees.’ Klein’s rationale for this opening up of the decision making process becomes clear when he stated, “Far too often, MLAs are

673 former Senior official, Cabinet office, Government of Alberta, Interview, Edmonton, December 8, 1998
674 ibid., Interview, December 8, 1998
on their way home to their constituencies when they learn about a new government program or policy on the radio. That’s not the way it should be.\footnote{675}

The senior reporter for the Globe and Mail’s Alberta bureau, Miro Cernetig described the impact of Klein’s attempts to open the government up. “The new decision-making structure signals a major shift in style from the government of Premier Donald Getty. Mr. Klein says he wants a “bottom-to-top” government, which is consistent with his philosophy that politicians must listen to what the people need instead of giving them what they think they need.”\footnote{676} Two points need to be highlighted regarding this kind of media coverage. First, it is a remarkably positive story about a part of the workings of government usually considered too arcane and internal to warrant coverage. Second, not only does the story reiterate Klein’s preferred key messages, the reporter goes on to point out that when Klein was asked about an apparent oversight in his announcement, rather than rationalize or disassemble, the new Premier took out a pen and wrote down the suggestion, once again highlighting Klein’s refreshingly different approach to governance. Positive coverage during any new Premier’s honeymoon period is expected, but the media’s fascination with Klein’s surprising approach led to a series of similar articles throughout the first two months of his premiership and led, in part, to Klein’s revival in the polls.\footnote{677}

This is not to say that Klein’s changes went unopposed. The Calgary Herald editorial board asked rhetorically whether Klein’s changes were based on revitalization or revenge. They suggested at the time that Klein’s changes were not by design, but a result of the fact that so many Tory stalwarts had stepped down. They point out that the new A&P committee still consisted of long time Tory insiders such as Kowalski, Elzinga, Isley and Dinning. “Klein’s populist politics look a lot like the old politics of patronage. Klein says he is a politician for the people, but this cabinet by and large represents the status quo.”\footnote{678} The Herald also took Klein to task for what they perceived was the first broken promise of his tenure. During the leadership campaign Klein repeatedly said he would keep his former environment portfolio if elected premier. During the early months of the transition however, this type of coverage was in the minority.

\textbf{Klein the populist}

Klein’s next step was to inject a populist touch in the day-to-day workings of the Legislature and specifically, the Premier’s office. On his first day in office started a process of bringing the government out of “Getty’s bunker.” For example, Klein insisted that the door to the Premier’s office and the door to his own office would remain open. This created the new phenomenon for visitors to the Legislative precinct to be able to see

\footnotetext{675}{op. cit., Ralph Klein quoted in the \textit{Calgary Herald}, December 9, 1992, pp. A5}
\footnotetext{677}{On the other hand, if one takes a longer view of the Alberta media’s coverage of provincial politics, there is a tradition of deference to the Government in general and, in some parts of the media, downright sycophancy. While the Getty era represented a bit of a departure, governments of other western provinces would have been willing to pay for the kind of kid-glove treatment that even Getty’s government received.}
from the foyer, their new premier working in his office, often in his shirt-sleeves. As well, as a symbolic gesture, Klein had all the red carpet in legislature removed for the swearing in of his new cabinet.

Within a week of his victory, Klein had met with each of the government backbenchers, which in concert with the committee changes, gave the caucus, particularly the rural caucus, a whole new feeling about being involved in government. Stan Schumacher had been a MP in Ottawa for eleven years before he was elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1986. With the election of Klein, he told an Interviewer, “I’ve waited all my political life to feel really comfortable. Now I really feel comfortable. I’ve never had any influence. Now I have some influence.”

But Klein did not stop there. Press gallery veterans were amazed to see their new Premier delivering press releases to them personally in their basement quarters. In an equally populist gesture, after hearing that Don Getty had leased posh Edmonton office space at taxpayers expense and did not plan to attend the Legislature regularly, Klein suggested in no uncertain terms that the former Premier was to cover his own rent and if he wanted to be paid a wage he should plan on coming to work.

With regard to these actions, political scientist, David Stewart observed, “These measures to distinguish himself from Getty flew in the face of Klein’s victory statement that he had become a Conservative because of Mr. Getty and the effusive thanks he bestowed on Getty in his victory address. This somewhat ruthless attack on the former Premier displayed a sensitivity to popular opinion and helped further the perception that a new government was in office. Klein continued to work long hours, crammed his schedule with personal appearances across the province and maintained his image of being available to listen to people’s concerns.”

These symbolic gestures, combined with Klein’s apparent enthusiasm for getting Alberta back on track and Albertans “feeling better about themselves”, were all relatively small public relations instruments that could be implemented quickly and over which the Klein team had significant control. By the end of January 1993, Klein and his new cabinet had won some small victories but were about to face a much bigger challenge, that being the increased public exposure and scrutiny that came with the reactivation of the Legislative Assembly.

6.6 The 1993 Legislative Session – Initiation by Fire

Klein was forced to recall the legislature earlier than he may have wished in 1993 because the Tories had one outstanding legislative priority to deal with. In order to be ready to fight an election, a previous commitment to redistribute the riding boundaries in
the province had to be honoured.681 This change could only come about through a legislative process. Despite Klein’s initial successes, his team was more than apprehensive about the potential pitfalls inherent in even a shortened session of the legislature. “What many people don’t realize was how vulnerable we were in that two week session. If someone had introduced a controversial issue or bill, we had little or no idea how over 30 per cent of the Conservative caucus would vote. Over 30 per cent of the caucus had voted against Klein on both ballots in the leadership race and many were clearly disgruntled. If a couple of MLAs had missed a vote, there could have been some major political ramifications.”682

The Tories had other concerns about the start of the sitting as well. The first order of business when the legislature resumed on January 25, 1993 was the introduction of the new Liberal MLA from the Three Hills riding, Don MacDonald. At the time the Three Hills riding extended from the northeastern outskirts of Calgary to south of Red Deer. It is considered a rural riding and the Liberal win was widely reported because it represented the first break in the Conservative stranglehold on rural Alberta ridings since 1971. The Liberal polled more than double the vote of his Tory rival in a victory that was called “A Watershed Win” by the Calgary Herald. The then Labour Minister Elaine McCoy suggested the loss “sent a loud, clear message that Albertans are unhappy with the government’s performance.” By taking a seat in the opposition, Mr. MacDonald, a federal Reform Party member, symbolized the depth of public anger directed at the Conservative Government.

The other major problem was the relative newness of a number of Klein’s cabinet members. Dianne Mirosh, the outspoken new Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, had already landed Klein in hot water with gay and lesbian interest groups, when the minister made further inflammatory comments supporting the government’s decision not to go ahead with planned legislative changes to the Individual Rights Protection Act. Further miscues by his new cabinet were bound to be magnified within the highly scrutinized environment that the Legislature provides. Klein could not afford too many of these types of headaches given his incredibly narrow window of opportunity for electoral success.

An analysis of this sitting reveals two important elements. The first was the manner in which Klein embraced the challenge provided by the legislative sitting, turning it into an opportunity to continue his agenda of small, but significant changes. From a legislative perspective, this meant introducing new laws that would reiterate his commitment to change and underline the difference between Klein and the Lougheed-Getty legacy. In addition to Bill 55, the Electoral Divisions Amendment Act, the legislature also passed the Deficit Elimination Act, the Conflict of Interest Act and the MLA Pension Plan Amendment Act. All of these bills were designed to address problems that the Getty administration had been unable or unwilling to address. By tackling them head on, just

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681 In fact in January 1993, the usually reliable Alberta Report suggested the process of redrawing the boundaries for the provinces 83 electoral districts would take a minimum of six months. The changes were actually made and voted on long before that.
682 op. cit., Senior official, Alberta government, Interview Edmonton, December 8, 1998
weeks after he was sworn in as Premier, Klein defined himself publicly as an action oriented Premier.

A second significant feature of the legislative session was the particular language used by Klein and his ministers. Throughout the session there are numerous examples of speech and rhetoric designed to illustrate the inherent differences of Klein from former Conservative Premiers, the wholesale amount of change that the new government had undertaken and the thoughtful, democratic nature of this change. Klein’s objective was to show that his government was humbled and chastened as a result of past mistakes and was now ready to listen closely and to act on what they were told.

On the first day of the Legislature, for example, long time Tory insider, Ken Kowalski, stood up and claimed the direct election of Klein to be “innovative, courageous and historic.” He compared Klein’s win to the election of the first woman MLA and the first election of a Canadian senator. Kowalski stated, “In 1992 Ralph Klein became the first Premier directly elected by the people. All Albertans were given the opportunity to participate... The process was unique, innovative, imaginative and constitutes a significant political reform of the British Parliamentary model.” Words like imaginative and innovative were never used to describe the Getty administration and were therefore important in his distinguishing Klein’s government from that of his predecessor.

Klein responded by stating, “I said I would like to set for this party and this government a new tone and a new style, and I think that the events that have unfolded over the past six weeks have indeed demonstrated that this is a government that is about to set out on a course of change and renewal.” Later that same day Klein reiterated the point by stating, “Mr. Speaker, what we have is a leader who is about to set a new tone and new style to the government, and basically everything is on the table. We are under new management. Everything is open for discussion. There is a new leader. There has been a dramatic change in the makeup of government. Basically, I’d like to put up a sign that says; under new management. So allow us to make the changes: allow us to put our stamp on this government, let’s not dwell on the issues of the past.”

That Klein was able to make these bold claims, particularly on the strength of only six weeks in office, speaks to his confidence and the fact that his polling told him he was on the right track. By continually repeating his claims of newness and openness, Klein paved the way for positive media coverage of later reforms, particularly in the fiscal arena.

As effective as Klein’s repeated change message seemed it be, equally interesting is how poorly the opposition performed in response, particularly in the early part of the legislative session. Their inability to connect Klein in any meaningful way with the former Getty administration put them at a distinct disadvantage as Klein continued to roll

683 Ken Kowalski, Deputy Premier, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Hansard, January 25, 1993, pp. 1839
684 ibid.,
685 Ralph Klein, Premier, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Hansard, January 25, 1993, pp. 1840
686 ibid., pp. 1841-1843
out his reform agenda through the spring of 1993. Given the fact that Klein as well as most of his senior ministers and advisors were intricately involved with most of the key decisions being made in the Getty administration, the opposition parties’ inability to make an impact on this issue is, in retrospect, dumbfounding.

Certainly, the opposition’s failure was not from lack of effort. Ray Martin, leader of the NDP, was respected as one of the sharpest MLAs on the floor of the Legislature, yet he was unable to dent the new Premier and his cabinet. On the first day of the Legislature for example, Martin stated, “... I can understand the new Premier trying to run away from his record in cabinet and the record of the government. It’s not a very glorious record. I understand that, but I say they can’t do it.”687 Days later, Martin returned to this theme; “Mr. Speaker, I’m sick and tired of excuses coming from this government. This Premier doesn’t have the luxury of saying that this is a brand new government. He sat in cabinet across that way.”688 With regard to the Getty’s fiscal mismanagement, Martin nears incredulity when he states, “Now, the Premier says, ‘Heck, it’s not my fault.’ They all sat around the cabinet table; they are all responsible.”689

The future Leader of the Alberta Liberals, Grant Mitchell, moved on the same theme when he said in the house, “It’s budgetary déjà vu, hardly new management. It’s one of the same old ministers in the same old government giving us the same old story of fiscal failure.”690 In what sounds more like desperation than effective rhetoric, Mitchell reiterates this theme the next day. “Every time I hear the Premier trying to distance himself from that previous government, I’m reminded of those other flakes: try us again for the first time. Will the Premier please drop all the cute quips and spin doctoring, will he please cut through all the media relations façade and tell us why after four years in this same old government he still doesn’t have a plan for bringing this fiscal nightmare under control?”691

In hindsight, the level of frustration the opposition leaders felt with Klein’s ‘renewal façade’ was understandable. Although Klein had run an effective leadership campaign and had had some quick successes in implementing his change mandate, his ability to deflect legitimate criticism about his and his minister’s attachment to the old government was uncanny. When pressed on this issue, Klein would fall back to two standard answers. Often he would simply say, “That was then this is now.” And when asked why Albertans should believe him, he regularly stated, in all seriousness, “Because they like me and trust me.”692

Many people when asked about the root of Klein’s success pointed to these types of examples of what was referred to as his ‘disarming candour.’ “He is often so forthright, that even if you disagree with him, you can’t help but admire his boyish enthusiasm for

687 Ray Martin, Leader of the Opposition, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Hansard, January 25, 1993, pp. 1854-55
688 ibid., January 27, pp. 1907
689 ibid., January 27, pp. 1907
690 Grant Mitchell, Liberal MLA, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Hansard, January 28, 1993, pp. 1931
691 ibid., January 29, 1993, pp. 1976
692 Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Hansard, January 27, 1993, pp. 1907
The key to this enthusiasm, however, was, in part, Klein’s growing dedication to a new type of fiscal conservatism heretofore untried in Alberta’s modern history.

6.7 The Fiscal Framework

Evolution of a Fiscal Plan

Of all the issues, it was Klein’s ability to distance himself from Getty’s record of fiscal mismanagement that most frustrated the opposition. Starting from his first leadership speech in Leduc, during which he announced his five-point plan, the most important element of Klein’s entire approach was his call for a balanced budget and a return to fiscal certainty. During the leadership campaign, Klein made the fewest number of concrete promises of any of the nine candidates. However the bulk of his promises revolved around balancing the provincial budget. “It is my proposal to make balanced budgets the law in Alberta. This grounded approach will eliminate the deficit by 1996. I will also remain committed to maintaining low corporate and personal taxes and implementing no sales tax.”

Immediately after the leadership, Klein began elaborating somewhat by promising the rollout of a financial plan to: bring Alberta’s mushrooming deficit under control, slash government spending, end the Tory government practice of “picking winners” in business by subsidizing particular companies, and work to attract business to the province though promotion and by building up Alberta’s infrastructure. These promises, while somewhat more detailed, were still easily digestible and were seen publicly as a direct contrast to the Lougheed-Getty legacy.

The reasons for the opposition’s frustration with Klein’s approach were many and varied. There was the fact, for example, that Klein and his Provincial Treasurer, Jim Dinning, were getting credit and public support for the notion that planning and consultation had to take place before changes could be made. The opposition’s point was that the Conservatives had had four years to plan. Deficits had been a problem for eight years for the Conservative government, a government that Klein and his ministers had been a part of, and yet the public seemed comfortable with giving Klein a chance to consult and plan.

The Alberta Liberal Leader, Laurence Decore, desperate to link Klein to the government’s past record, asked Klein to give details of a fiscal plan he had outlined in the house two years before as Minister of Environment. Klein responded, “You have to...
have time. You just can’t wipe out $2.6 billion or whatever the deficit is going to be without seriously affecting services. There will be a plan, a four-year plan, an orderly plan to pay down the debt and to eliminate the deficit. What I’m saying to the opposition parties is: stay tuned. Stay tuned, but in the meantime help us along. If you’ve got any good ideas, any good thoughts, pass them along. I’m sure we can use them.”

Throughout this period, Klein continued to respond to these types of questions and criticisms as if the government had only started the day he became Premier. He purposely and audaciously ‘restarted the clock’ in a manner that led people to believe he deserved another chance. Klein was also brilliant in his ability to distance himself from both Getty and the opposition without overly disparaging either. In the new politics of the “Ralph party” all ideas were on the table, even those put forth by members of the public or the opposition. Instead of criticizing his opposition, he disarmingly asked for help. Klein’s behaviour suggested that the standard politics of cutting down someone to further your own political goals was no longer seen as acceptable in Alberta politics.

The Marginalization of Opposition Leader Laurence Decore

The genius of this approach was it allowed Klein to steal ‘liberally’ from the platforms of his opponents without looking expedient. Particularly galling to the Liberals was the fact that they had agonized for years internally about an ideological move to the right. Their leader, Laurence Decore, had been very successful as Mayor of Edmonton in keeping that city’s fiscal house in order. As well he had run his own business profitably. By late 1992 he had realized that the only way to restart the Alberta economy was to radically restructure the government using fiscally conservative benchmarks. Decore began calling for “brutal” cuts to the civil service in order to attack the deficits and restore fiscal order. An example of the right wing drift of Alberta Liberal party was the aforementioned 1992 Three Hills by-election. The Liberal candidate and eventual MLA from that riding was also a federal Reform member. Klein’s response to this right wing shift was to steal the parts of the Decore platform that made the most sense and attack Decore on fiscal issues on which the Liberals were wobbly, such as the institution of a sales tax, something that was anathema to average Albertans.

However, it was not just Klein’s wholesale raiding of their platform that confounded Liberals. As importantly, they were totally unprepared for Klein’s reincarnation as a fiscal conservative in the first place. When Klein won the leadership, the Liberals, like many interested observers, looked at Klein’s record as Mayor of Calgary and assumed his premiership would bring continued big spending in the tradition of Lougheed and Getty. Much has been made of the fact that when Klein left Calgary it was reeling under the burden of a $1.6 billion debt.

One Calgary based political scientist put it this way, “It is important as well to remember that Klein started as a Liberal. The most cynical would suggest that he looked at both parties to see which would provide the quickest path to the Premier’s chair. The best evidence of this is Klein’s expedient move towards fiscal conservatism. As mayor of

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697 op. cit., Ralph Klein, Hansard, January 25, 1993, pp. 1843
Barry Cooper in his book, *The Klein Achievement*, disputes Mayor Klein’s image as a big spender. He suggests that it was the city planners who, encouraged by Calgary’s massive growth during the 70’s and 80’s, pushed city council to invest in expensive infrastructure projects such as arterial road extensions, sewer and water main construction and the extension of the Light Rail Transit System into the northwest quadrant of Calgary. As well, Klein presided over “some of the most spectacular civic related building” in the city’s history in connection with the 1988 Olympics. Cooper points out that these projects were cost-effective because costs were shared with the provincial and federal governments, while the assets themselves remained in Calgary in perpetuity. Finally, Cooper points to the fact that when the bottom dropped out of the Calgary economy in the late 1980’s and the provincial finances were tanking, Klein, with the help of his City Commissioner, George Cornish, was setting up mechanisms to reduce the city’s debt. “The Klein initiated-plan has succeeded in reducing the percentage of debt servicing costs from 24 per cent of the operating budget in 1985 to 15 per cent in 1994.”

Cooper’s contentions, however, contrast with other evidence, casting doubt on the depth of Klein’s commitment to fiscal conservatism. For example, he contended throughout the leadership race that the debt, which in early 1993 was approximately $17 billion or $15,500 per family, was not a problem. It was more than offset by the highway, hospitals and other assets the government owned, Klein said at the time. Similarly, soon after becoming Premier, Klein opined that he hoped to eliminate the government’s annual deficit without massive civil service firings, reductions in government services or tax increases.

Others point to his suggestion during the 1993 election debates that telethons and lotteries would fund health increases and that there would be a minimum of pain felt as a result of cutbacks in that sector, as an example of the tentative or improvised nature of his thinking on fiscal matters. Klein also distributed literature during that campaign hinting at funding increases in education. As well there was significant talk about the possibility of installing a sales tax as had recently been done in New Zealand. Whether these issues were just trial balloons or not is beside the point. What they do point to is that Klein’s fiscal conservative public persona was not ideologically based, but was instead a result of a confluence of ideas and circumstances that coalesced over time, not as his supporters suggest, immediately upon Klein’s declaration as a leadership candidate.

**The Re-education of Premier Klein the Fiscal Conservative – Seeing the Light**

Klein himself suggests that his own epiphany came when, as Minister of Environment, he had to sit through Getty’s last provincial budget in 1992. It promised to balance the budget that year – an objective that Klein says those around the cabinet table knew even...
at the time could not be achieved. About the same time, Ray Speaker, a senior minister, left the government to run federally for the Reform party. “I didn’t like Ray for going”, said Klein, “but what he was ostensibly saying is, this government is not doing what it said it would do – it is not addressing spending.”

Burdened with the embarrassment that he was part of a government that was spouting deliberate mistruths, Klein buried himself in his work as Minister of the Environment. The position took him to see thousands of Albertans, many in communities he had never visited before. People all through the province, and rural MLAs particularly, talked to Klein not just about environmental issues but about the number one subject on people’s minds, the poor economy and the malaise in Edmonton. Immediately after Getty resigned there was an extensive three-month “listening exercise within the Conservative caucus.” Klein and other cabinet ministers who sat on the Cabinet Communications Committee were subjected to the core of people’s concerns and complaints about the government, feelings that were sparked by the departure of Getty.

The leadership race also provided a forum for Klein and the other leadership candidates to get the full brunt of what Albertans were feeling about their province and their future. Because of the one-member-one-vote system, candidates generally, and Klein specifically, were obliged to spend serious amounts of time listening to the grassroots of the party. The other new phenomenon in Alberta politics to impact Klein’s views was the growing predominance of professional public polling. In 1992, Southam owned Angus Reid polling and for the first time in Alberta history, the daily newspapers were running extensive political polls as news stories. Not only did these polls relay the sorry state of the Conservatives’ electoral chances they also involved in-depth questioning about average Albertans’ political and economic concerns.

Finally, there was a process that had been initiated by Getty in 1991 referred to as ‘Toward 2000 Together.’ Its purpose was to act as generally as a consultation process to solicit opinions from Albertans on a broad range of issues and strategies, many dealing with the economic future of the province. The process culminated in a conference in Calgary. There were over 500 participants in the roundtable exercise. The subsequent report said participants considered the government “too big and too arrogant” and felt that taxation and royalties particularly in the energy industry “should be reduced sharply... A shortage of capital is a serious impediment to progress and must be addressed.” The importance of the Toward 2000 process to the origins of the Klein plan are unclear. When Klein’s senior advisors were asked about the impact of the process, they generally felt that it had little or no impact. On the other hand, senior civil servants when asked the same question, there was more of a recognition of the process and particularly of the conference’s importance.

There can be little doubt that this series of opportunities to talk and listen extensively with a broad cross section of the Alberta electorate had a major influence on Klein. Dabbs suggests that this period of professional listening had a profound effect on Klein,

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702 op. cit., Lisac, pp. 54
enabling him to get in touch with that part of Alberta’s political culture which historian John Barr refers to as Alberta’s ‘folklore of protest.’ “In his three years as the Conservative Party’s advocate in every small town across the province, Klein absorbed through his skin the political, economic, and intellectual alienation Barr described as the basis of the Social Credit hegemony created by William Aberhart and perpetuated by Ernest Manning. Now he began to restore the governance trim and true that Manning shaped to turn Aberhart’s social conscience into something constructive and useful.”

Klein certainly “heard” about the need to restore the small governments, low taxes and strong economies of the past and this period was undoubtedly a major determinant in his choice of principles found in the “fiscal framework” speech in Leduc. However, the Leduc speech and Klein’s other major forays into fiscal reform throughout the leadership campaign and even into the first few months of his tenure as Premier always tended more to the general than the specific. The extent and nature of the fiscal reforms took significantly more work and input from a wide variety of sources.

One important source was the professional civil service in Edmonton. During the leadership race, the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association sent a questionnaire to all candidates. Klein sent back a six-page letter, the content of which had been written by officials in the Policy Development and Co-ordination Branch of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The fact that a leadership candidate had access to such material raised several tough questions about the political influence of both Klein and the then Minister of Economic Development, Peter Elzinga. A senior official states, “...that letter was a bit of a mistake. Minister Elzinga had the letter constructed in the ministry and then sent it over to Ralph’s campaign manager, Rod Love. Love had Klein sign it and send it to the CMA, but our ministry fax number was still on the letter. It got out that the ministry had had a role in the construction of Klein’s response to the CMA and it was somewhat embarrassing.”

Embarrassing or not, Lisac points out that the bulk of the reforms suggested in the letter, such as lower corporate tax rates, a smaller cabinet, fewer ministries, less government duplication, an end to business subsidies and an independent Commission to review Alberta’s finances, all eventually became key elements of the Klein agenda. Lisac suggests that this ‘remarkable letter’ set the roadmap for the Alberta government. “Virtually everything came about and became the centre of the government’s public strategies. It must have been based on extensive policy work already done, possibly as early as 1991. Within eighteen months the only element missing was the oil sands plant.”

Lisac was not mistaken with regard to the government’s work on significant public policy reforms prior to the 1992 Conservative leadership race. Kneebone and McKenzie, for example, recently interviewed a large number of senior ministers and officials in an

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703 op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 101
attempt to analyze the process behind Alberta’s institutional reform. They found that virtually all their interview subjects agreed that “some of the groundwork for institutional change in their ministries had been in place prior to the election of the Klein government.”\footnote{Kneebone and McKenzie, “The Process Behind Institutional Change in Alberta”, in Bruce, Kneebone, and McKenzie, pp 180} The Ministry of Family and Social Services had been looking at welfare reform since 1985, while the Ministries of Health and Education had been working on paradigm-shifting changes since before 1992; officials indicated that they were just looking for the “right time” to implement the changes. Many went on to say that most of these reforms never received “political buy-in” and it was only during Klein’s tenure that bureaucrats felt comfortable bringing their ideas forward.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 180}

Despite the “Yes Minister” chill one gets from such comments, almost as if senior officials have a policy ready in a drawer for every occasion, it is not difficult to imagine Klein being open to ideas from within the civil service. He had an excellent rapport with his own civil servants in Environment and his new Deputy Minister of Executive Council, MacNichol, and was reported to be well respected throughout the civil service. Although there was no formal transition planning undertaken by the Alberta government in 1992-93, it would not have been hard for savvy mandarins to see Klein’s direction and prepare themselves accordingly. It is fairly clear, however, that while ideas were available from the professional civil service, it was not in a position to “drive” the policy agenda with Klein in the Premier’s chair.

Mansell, in his excellent overview of Alberta’s fiscal restructuring, suggests that the Reform Party of Canada also had a major role in driving Klein’s policy agenda. He points to polls conducted in November 1990 which indicated that only 15 per cent of respondents would vote for the Conservatives, while 57 per cent said they would vote for a provincial wing of the Reform Party of Canada.\footnote{Robert Mansell, “Fiscal Restructuring in Alberta”, in Bruce, Kneebone, and McKenzie, pp. 45. The poll Mansell refers to were reported in the \textit{Alberta Report}, November 12, 1990, pp. 7-11} Obviously, these types of numbers and the general influence the Reform party was having in Alberta had to have had a significant effect on Klein and his key supporters. While Klein has very ingeniously stayed away from the socially conservative side of the Reform agenda, he was no doubt aware of their populist ideas for shrinking the size and scope of government.

One senior political scientist in Calgary suggests, “the real reason for the fiscal conservatism is the phenomenon of the Reform party federally in Alberta. Not only was the party espousing fiscal conservatism as its main election plank, but it also had Preston Manning as its leader, the son of Ernest Manning, arguably one of the two most influential Social Credit leaders in Alberta’s history. Reform exploded onto the scene and forced the agenda. Ralph filled the vacuum created when the Reform party decided not to run provincially.”\footnote{Op. cit., Professor of Political Science, University of Calgary, Interview, October 18, 1998} Reform’s single most important contribution to the Klein success is that they re-created and nurtured the political awareness of debt and deficit issues in Alberta. Reform was able to cut through the haze and present the Alberta populace with a very compelling argument as to why the deficit had to be on the top of
the political agenda. Klein had little choice but to pick up this gauntlet and run with it. Through his taking the pulse of the electorate, Klein knew the platform he had to run on and in real terms it meant running significantly to the right of Betkowski in the leadership race.

As confirmation of the potential linkages here, Klein’s main advisor, Rod Love, became actively involved with the promotion of Reform Leader Preston Manning’s “United Alternative” plan. As was discussed earlier with regard to the Alberta Liberals, Klein was not above poaching good ideas from other political parties. His later efforts to sell Alberta’s low tax rate and favourable business climate as the “Alberta Advantage” to business and governments outside of Alberta and Canada, reflect his approach as Mayor but also mirror similar successful efforts by the then Premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna.

**Literary Inspiration**

One unlikely source of policy inspiration came from former Tory Labour Minister and leadership candidate, Elaine McCoy. While other candidates had kept their leadership promises fairly vague, she offered a detailed plan and handed out copies of Ted Gaebler and David Osbourne’s book, *Reinventing Government*. McCoy floated ideas such as running ministries using a business model, with each ministry having accountable goals to reach and being overseen by a quasi board of directors. She argued for permanently shrinking the size of government and revisiting the concept of public private partnerships. McCoy had instituted many of these new ideas in her own ministry, with the result being a 50 per cent reduction in management and an increase in revenues. McCoy put in place several innovations to her ministry’s budgeting planning process that made it clearer, more accountable and more focused on costs. While McCoy’s ideas were largely ignored during the leadership race, the whole government would, under Klein, eventually adopt the budgeting methods she pioneered in 1986. Klein officials confirmed the Premier has kept in regular touch with McCoy since the leadership and asks her advice on a variety of subjects.

McCoy was not the only senior Albertan politician to rely on books espousing the reinvention of government process. Much has been written about the other literary sources of inspiration for Klein and his government. The most discussed relationship was with Sir Roger Douglas, author of *Unfinished Business*. Douglas’ book about how New Zealand tackled its debt and deficit problem and radically altered the way its government does business became a must read for members of the Klein government. In fact Douglas, a former Labour Finance Minister in New Zealand, spoke to the Alberta government caucus in 1993 about the benefits of radical change. “It was great” enthused

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710 University of Alberta political scientist, Allan Warrack on the Gaebler Osborne text, “…probably two-thirds of what’s being done (in Alberta) comes from there” in the *Edmonton Journal*, March 6, 1994, pp. D2

711 Lisac outlines some of McCoy’s innovations such as five-year business plans and the application of standard business methods. pp. 67-69

712 McCoy was not the only cabinet minister with strong views on downsizing the role of government in society. Steve West and Mike Cardinal, both influential cabinet ministers in Klein’s new government, had many original and bold ideas in this regard.
MLA Pearl Calahasen, emerging after Douglas’s speech, “he said just what we had to do.”

Douglas’ core message is that New Zealand’s massive neo-conservative changes depended on comprehensiveness and speed. The message was based on the notion that government cannot continue to provide programs it is ill-suited to deliver. Privatization and the increased utilization of user fees would bring more accountability and efficiency to the wildly inefficient government systems that exist today. The Douglas “program” starts with symbolic cuts at the top to send messages of equitability, which are then followed by massive cuts across the board. The reason for the size and speed of the cuts is to ensure a significant shake-up of the status quo, to keep opponents and naysayers off balance and to mitigate interest group opposition by attacking all groups evenly. Douglas explained that there were going to being difficult days for any government attempting this radical surgery, but that it was vitally important to imbue a spirit which includes rallying cries such as “We’re not kidding” and “We won’t blink”.

While these two phrases definitely became part of Klein’s lexicon during his first months as Premier, there were other parts of the Douglas model that Alberta did not accept, particularly New Zealand’s adoption of a new sales tax. Overall, the reasons for the influence and successful adaptation by Alberta of the New Zealand model are not exactly clear. Obviously the two regions were facing similar problems. In his excellent comparative work on the two jurisdictions, economist Herman Schwartz states, “demographically, economically and electorally, Alberta is quite similar to New Zealand.” This similarity no doubt aided in the transference of ideas and policy models.

Other influential texts included Madsen Pirie’s *Blueprint for a Revolution* and Milton Friedman’s *Tyranny of the Status Quo*. Pirie’s 1992 book detailed British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s privatization and restructuring efforts to create a system where authority flows through citizens from bottom to top. Friedman’s book, considered at the time to be the bible of the Provincial Treasurer Jim Dinning, claimed that change had to occur quickly because after the first 24 months in office, politicians inevitably become overwhelmed by pressures against change mobilized by the civil service.

The Dinning Influence
Where Dinning got his inspiration is particularly important, because, from all accounts, he was, if not the owner, certainly the architect and lead contractor on the house of reforms that Klein wanted to build. Dinning was unique in that he was the only

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715 As a matter of historical curiosity, New Zealand, like Alberta, developed a following for the reform ideas of Major C.H. Douglas in the 1930’s, out of which Social Credit parties were established. Social Credit had representatives in the New Zealand Parliament until the 1980’s.  
717 “Jim Dinning and the Alberta Treasury’s presence lurks in the background of virtually every aspect of (Klein’s) reforms” in Kneebone and McKenzie, pp. 183
cabinet minister who supported another candidate in the election to eventually end up in Klein’s cabinet. Instead of pouting after the conclusion of the leadership contest, Dinning took the extraordinary step of walking over to Klein’s office and stating simply that he wished to be Treasurer and had ideas for furthering Klein’s fiscal framework. Twenty-four hours later, Klein called and said, “Go ahead and do it.” Dinning later commented: “It was an exceptional opportunity but it was also somewhat daunting. It was like the analogy of the dog chasing the car and then not knowing what to do when he catches it.”

Peter Newman described Dinning at the time as a “42-year old ex-Dome Petroleum executive with a quick mind, alert instincts and blackjack dealer’s eyes. As Provincial Treasurer, chairman of treasury board and a key member of the powerful agenda and priorities cabinet committee, Dinning creates financial realities out of Klein’s musings.” Something of a lost soul in the Getty government, Dinning was not considered seriously as a leadership candidate because it was generally felt that he was too left wing. To the contrary, he showed early that he was comfortable with the ideas of Gaebler and Osborne and felt strongly that government must focus only on the core areas of education, health and social services, highways and utilities, law and order, and get out of everything else. Dinning’s advisor, Stephen Murgatroyd, himself an author of several books on the public sector, said that, “Alberta has taken cues from Gaebler, Thatcher and New Zealand’s Douglas, as well as a variety of U.S. mayors, and melded those ideas to fit this province’s unique circumstance.”

Yet, in conjunction with Dinning’s expanding influence, arguably the most compelling reason for Klein to re-invent himself as the fiscal crusader was his political need to distance himself from the previous regimes of Getty and Lougheed. Transition literature shows that a significant part of new leaders’ strategies for entering office is based on the desire to do things differently than their predecessors. Klein evidently saw that, for the purposes of political survival, he needed to do something different and when faced with the public’s displeasure about the state of the economy, he had three distinct choices.

He could have updated Lougheed’s approach of intervening in the economy with grants, loan guarantees and infrastructure projects, he could have promised economic prosperity through tax cuts, or he could have chosen the fiscally conservative route of attacking spending. The problem with the first option was that in 1992 there was no guarantee of a rebound in government revenues and therefore no new funds to drive such a program. As well, there was no public support for the government to go more deeply into debt or to raise taxes. Secondly, given the massive amounts of government funds committed to economic development by the Alberta government in the 1970’s and 80’s, it would have been difficult for Klein to “outspend” Getty and Lougheed to the point where his approach would be seen as radically, or even sufficiently, different.

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718 taken from Newman, *Maclean’s*, December 5, 1994 and from other Interviews
719 ibid., Newman, December 5, 1994
720 Stephen Murgatroyd quoted in the *Edmonton Journal*, March 6, 1994, pp. D3
The inherent problem with the second scenario, pursuing a “taxfighter” persona, was that Alberta’s taxes were already the lowest in Canada, so any economic benefit from such an approach, in theory, should already have accrued to the province. Therefore, if the original goal of distancing was paramount, the only logical direction for Klein was one of fiscal crusader, attacker of excess government spending, and balancer of provincial budgets.

Creating a crisis – Throwing open the books
Although there was no shortage of mentors, motivations or precedents for Klein and Dinning to take a fiscally conservative stance, the outstanding question was: how far could they go and still expect public support? Klein was the undisputed master of flying trial balloons and “sniffing out” the public’s mood. The problem was that the “hits” anticipated as Klein’s reforms took hold, would come harder and faster than anything Albertans had experienced previously. The answer lay in the pre-selling. While there were large amounts of anecdotal evidence, Klein and his cabinet had to ensure that the public was sufficiently concerned and outraged about the state of the province’s finances, that they would support his so called “tough love” initiatives. To do this they took the unique step of opening the books of the previous government and show just how bad the financial situation really was. In a manner of speaking their goal was to do what the media and the opposition had been doing for the last three years, only on a grander scale. That they were able to get away with subtle style of criticism of their own government is a testament to Klein’s aforementioned candour and Dinning’s mastery of the consultation and reporting process and the populist language which gave credibility to both.

To create the environment necessary to support their planned reforms, Klein and Dinning took two principal steps. The first was to continue to talk about the fiscal problems of the Alberta government at every opportunity. On the first day of the legislature, Klein stated, “Our first and foremost priority is to put our financial house in order. Our economic strength has been our natural resources, but after seven years of depressed prices for our resources we are at a financial crossroads.” In an interview with the Calgary Herald, Dinning was asked if his government could seriously tackle the deficit in an election year. “Do you feel the public will accept either tax increases or service cutbacks and still vote the Conservatives back into office? Dinning: We have no choice. Albertans are going to judge us by our actions to begin to get our house in order.”

Secondly, Dinning attempted to find third party validation of the fact that the government was in fact in fiscal crisis. Dinning took several steps between, December 5, 1992 and June 15, 1993. First he released the Alberta Government’s Public Accounts. The document was several months late in release, but this had become normal practice for the former administration. In an effort to show openness, Dinning told his staff to “get it out and get it out quick.” Then, five weeks after coming to office, he announced the establishment of the Alberta Financial Review Commission (AFRC). The Commission’s mandate was to look into the province’s accumulated debt and spending habits and the

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721 op. cit., Ralph Klein, Hansard, January 25, 1993, pp. 1853
722 Jim Dinning quoted in the Calgary Herald, April 23, 1993, A1
appropriateness of the accounting principles currently used by the Government of Alberta.

**The AFRC Commission and other Third Party Validators**

The government turned to respected acquaintances to run the Commission and give it the necessary credibility. The Commission was chaired by the recently retired chair of TransAlta Utilities, Marshall Williams. The executive director was Klein’s right hand man at the City of Calgary, George Cornish. There were also two oil industry representatives, the financial head of Nelson Lumber Company and five partners of accounting and management consulting firms on the team. The Commission was given free rein to examine any government material and to Interview any government staff. In fact, Klein made it clear that if any information was withheld the guilty party would be immediately dismissed. The Commission did not hold public hearings. It studied the books, talked to staff and examined management practices in British Columbia and New Zealand. The Commission was given a very short time frame to conduct its business and was mandated to report out by March 31, 1993. Dinning was able to get cabinet support for these type of initiatives because he and Klein, while fairly new to each other, had a number of allies in common.

In addition, Dinning and Klein began to publicly embrace the findings of Auditor General Donald Salmon. For a number of years Salmon had recommended significant changes in the way the government handled and reported its finances. Emboldened by his role in reporting on the NovAtel scandal, Salmon began to speak out more and was encouraged to do so by the new Klein regime.  

Finally, Dinning took the unprecedented step of publicizing the pre-budget consultation process with a series of province-wide roundtables. Dinning opened the first of the roundtables in Red Deer with 140 Albertans by saying, “the province’s finances are serious and complex and to find solutions we all must put aside our sacred cows.”  

Norm Wagner and Ralph Young, the co-chairs of the roundtables, then distributed a comprehensive workbook describing Alberta’s economic situation in detail previously obscured by the Alberta Treasury.

The workbooks showed that oil and gas revenues had dropped almost 60 per cent since 1986, and income from the Alberta Heritage Savings and Trust Fund had dropped more than two thirds since 1986. Furthermore, at the end of March 1992, the Alberta government had accumulated debts of almost $15 billion. Armed with these sobering figures and Mr. Dinning’s admonition that “the problem is not revenue, the problem is spending,” the widely divergent participants all came to roughly the same conclusion: the government must move swiftly to cut spending drastically. If it failed to act immediately, within three to six years its debt would be so enormous recovery may not be possible, and Alberta might become another Saskatchewan.  

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723 from Interviews and Lisac, pp. 82
724 “The slash and cut summit,” *Western Report*, Vol. 8, No. 11, April 12, 1993, pp. 10
725 ibid., April 12, 1992, pp. 8
Cooper suggests that the most important outcome from the Red Deer exercise was the generation of two symbols that evoked clearly what the Klein Government saw as the chief problem and the most effective solution. “The problem was “hitting the wall,” and the solution was “cutting the stupid way.” The first referred to the fiscal crisis, the second to across-the-board, rather than surgically refined, cuts.\textsuperscript{726} The politically smart thing about “cutting the stupid way” was that, in the Sir Roger Douglas tradition, it was fast and would hit all interest groups at the same time.\textsuperscript{727}

At the end of the roundtable process, both Klein and Dinning continually emphasized that “the people” had spoken. Dinning reinforced the theme that the voters knew what they wanted, smaller government, balanced budgets and that his major challenge was overcoming opposition within his own caucus. When pressed, Dinning would even lash out at the bureaucracy as a method of show camaraderie with his fellow Albertans. “This place is run by a damn bunch of socialists” he bellowed in front of reporters in the Legislature. “Alberta’s government will be smaller, more efficient, less costly and less interventionist as long as the ‘damn socialists’ don’t get their way.”\textsuperscript{728}

Of all the Klein government’s moves to actively separate itself from the Getty-Lougheed legacy, his critics argued that this “demonization” of the province’s finances was the most problematic. At one end of the continuum, milder critics suggested that Dinning and Klein used political instruments to make the fiscal crisis seem worse that it appeared. Lisac suggests for example, that the roundtable exercise, was one of Dinning’s “key political tools – the crossover point between grass roots populism and decision making by an invisible leadership of corporate executives, cabinet ministers, and key bureaucrats.”\textsuperscript{729} At the other end, Klein’s most severe critics suggested that the government was deliberately suppressing information that proved government spending was not out of control, but in fact, in key ministries like health and education, had actually gone down.

**Public Spending Crisis – Fact or Fiction**
Kevin Taft, a longtime government bureaucrat, alleges in his book, *Shredding the Public Interest*, that the Klein government was aware of a comprehensive report on seniors’ care in Alberta which showed definitively that public funding in that sector had actually decreased through the Getty years. According to Taft, this comprehensive report was directly contrary to Klein’s and Dinning’s political objectives of highlighting government spending out of control. In fact, Taft states, the report showed that Alberta had the tightest controls on spending in Canada through the very period Klein said was the problem. “We found that spending on seniors in many areas had been falling since the mid-1980’s, sometimes dramatically. In housing it had dropped 14 per cent per senior, in

\textsuperscript{726} \textsuperscript{op. cit.,} Cooper, pp. 57
\textsuperscript{727} Opponents suggest that across the board cuts is the politically soft option. They suggest that a ‘tougher’, more courageous and intelligent approach would have been a selective or ‘surgical’ approach, based on a careful assessment of spending priorities. As their proof, these critics point to Alberta’s heal system, which they suggest was needlessly devastated by the blunt instrument approach to deficit reduction.
\textsuperscript{728} Jim Dinning, in *Alberta Report*, October 18, 1993, pp. 6
\textsuperscript{729} \textsuperscript{op. cit.,} Lisac
transportation 15 per cent and in social services, which includes many preventive programs, 31 per cent.”

Taft goes on to say that when adjustments are made for inflation and population growth, studies have shown that Alberta’s level of support for public programs had already fallen 15 per cent in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. This is obviously in direct contrast to statements made by Klein and his Treasurer throughout the transition period from December 1992 to June 1993. Laxer and Harrison attribute the capacity to manufacture and sell this type of “crisis” for political purposes as being all part of the populist mythology that has characterized most Alberta Premiers, with the exception of Don Getty. “As in the past, the turn around can be attributed to the mythical leadership of one person – Ralph Klein – and his government’s ability to once again use a “crisis” – this time, the debt and deficit – to rally Albertans. This is not to say the debt and deficit are not problems, but they are not the overwhelming crisis (emphasis theirs) that Klein and company make them out to be. In Alberta, the Tories created the debt. Later, they also created, and benefited from, the subsequent imagined crisis and its solutions. Like a perverse Phoenix, the Tories rose from the ashes on the wings of their own past incompetence!”

This type of argument is in keeping with similar criticism that has recently surfaced in New Zealand. According to Tim Sinclair, a former New Zealand treasury official, “there was no debt crisis. It was contrived to advance a right-wing agenda. It is increasingly evident that a hoax has been propagated about the New Zealand ‘debt crisis’ to achieve an ideological end.” The article suggests that further proof of this hoax was the firing of Sir Roger Douglas in December 1988.

There are some problems with attempting to relate the New Zealand experience to Alberta however. First, in New Zealand, much of the dispute is about politics, not about philosophies toward public policy approaches and therefore the level of rhetoric and innuendo is much higher. Second, given Alberta’s fiscally conservative political culture, it is not too much of a stretch to make eight straight years of deficit financing into a problem of crisis proportions. Indeed, in their recent study of the Klein reforms, Kneebone and McKenzie stated that, “despite interviewing 46 individuals, from the Premier to school trustees to the heads of charitable agencies, we came across no one who challenged the need to reduce the provincial deficit.” That Klein focused on social spending more so than on the Tory’s incredible reckless history of economic development failures has to be balanced with the fact, that in his effort to bring the deficit crisis message to Albertans, he implemented a series of legitimate reforms that brought transparency to government financing for the first time in Alberta’s history.

Positive Action – Positive Results

Taft, pp. 7

op. cit., Laxer and Harrison, pp. 8


The response to opening up Alberta’s financial and budgetary processes was immediate and dramatic. Received by the government on March 31 and released to the public on April 5, the report of the Alberta Financial Review Commission came as a shock to taxpayers, reporters and even MLAs who had heretofore paid little attention to the province’s debt issues. Despite the fact the Commission used information and facts that were in the public domain, headlines included, “We’re headed for disaster” from the Calgary Sun and “Now, that’s incompetence” from the Edmonton Journal. Dinning said he had to hold onto the report for five days because the results were so dramatic, he needed time to explain them fully to the caucus. With the report of the Commission however, Dinning now had the full-blown fiscal crisis he needed. What the Commission did was put all the figures together in one place and focus public attention on the bottom line. “Under Mr. Getty and former Treasurer, Dick Johnston, the information had been deliberately dispersed to prevent close scrutiny.”

The Commission’s report mirrored what those who paid attention inside government had known as early as 1989. There were two principal findings in the report. First, the Commissioners made it clear that the government should get out of the loan guarantee business. In all, the government had wasted $2.1 billion in this area since 1985. The second major finding with important policy implications was “that the province has a structural deficit, a condition in which expenditures will continue to exceed revenues, even in an improving economy.”

The Commission went on to recommend that the government’s books be kept using only Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that the government implement logical fiscal plans, take a business-like approach to governing, cut spending and generally shrink the size of government. Klein and Dinning complied with the spirit and intent of the report and these reforms can certainly be considered part of the distancing process from the Getty-Lougheed Legacy. The real value in the report, however, was political. The report clearly stated that Alberta’s deficit was structural, not cyclical, as Getty and Johnston had contended for over five years. By publicly embracing the report, Klein had committed his most brazen act of disregard for the Getty administration to date. He had formally, publicly, condemned the Getty approach. He said to the Alberta public, “this problem is huge, its structural, but it’s mine and I will attempt to solve it.”

In many ways the Commission report laid out in step by step increments the a comprehensive political vision ready made for Klein’s embrace.

The other interesting and important element of the Commission’s report was its utilization of savvy, populist language. Although deemed independent, one cannot help but see the hand of Klein and Dinning advocates in the style and presentation of the report. The final document for example is not, as is typically done, addressed to the Premier or the Treasurer, but is instead simply entitled, “Report to Albertans.” Moreover

734 Lisac puts it much more graphically when he suggests, “Klein and Dinning now had a believable bat in their hands to beat the message of the deficit and debt into Albertan’s heads.” pp. 89
735 Western Report, “How to win an election without buying votes,” Vol. 8, No. 12, April 19, 1993, pp. 6-9
736 Alberta Financial Review Commission, Report to Albertans, March 31, 1993, pp. 17
737 Western Report, “How to win an election without buying votes,” Vol. 8, No. 12, April 19, 1993, pp. 6-9
the first page of the report restates the Commission’s mandate as attempting to improve the province’s management and reporting systems, “so that they more clearly communicate the province’s financial situation to its citizens. In establishing this Commission, the Minister made it quite clear that our responsibility was to report directly to all Albertans, and not to him or the government.”

The report is written in layman’s language, itself a major accomplishment for three CEO’s and a handful of accountants. Despite its pedigree, the Commission’s report had a very strong “us versus them” sense to it as the broad and positive coverage of its findings bears witness. It was an honest, hard-hitting document prepared by credible outsiders and it laid the groundwork for the fiscal reforms to follow.

In retrospect, Klein could not have handled the release of this report better. The seriousness of the ramifications of the report was on everyone’s mind. Edmonton Journal columnist, Mark Lisac, ventured that if the Tories were to win re-election with the report in circulation, “It would be the biggest political miracle of the half-century.” Klein’s feigned shock and disbelief played well with the public and his subsequent announcements regarding reforms showed him to be decisive.

**The implementation of the AFRC report – the beginning of a plan**

In anticipation of the report, some of its recommended reforms had been pre-announced. On February 6, 1993 in a move designed to symbolize sacrifice at the highest levels, Klein announced that he would cut six deputy ministers. He followed this up with announcements on March 1, 1993 that all Ministers’ pay would be cut by five per cent and that deputies’ salaries would be cut by two per cent. Civil service wages were frozen and all grants to hospitals, schools, colleges and municipalities were frozen for 1993. Klein had foreshadowed changes in the civil service as early as December 1992, when he sent a letter to all provincial civil servants alerting them to an unspecified but “new reality” – a year-long government streamlining drive. Opposition to these anticipated cuts was minimal. When asked why he was going back on a promise to increase spending to hospitals, Klein gave his hallmark answer, “I wouldn’t put it that way. That was then, this is now.”

With regard to the cut in pay, Klein had boxed in the opposition. It was obviously very difficult to go against any cutback to MLA perks or remuneration. This did not stop Deputy Premier Ken Kowalski, who launched into a 10-minute speech in the Legislature about how politicians are threatening the stability of democracy in Alberta by docking

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738 ibid., pp. i

739 It was also effective. As a result of the implementation of the report’s recommendations, Mansell states categorically, “that with respect to accounting, reporting and budgeting, Alberta arguably now has the most accurate and complete accounting among senior governments in Canada.” Mansell, pp. 49

740 Lisac, as quoted in “Klein of the Times,” by Kenneth White, in *Saturday Night Magazine*, May 1994, pp.47.

741 op. cit., Lisac, pp. 84. One can only speculate that the lack of a formal two or three party system, the lack of a legacy of strong opposition and his own personal credibility that allowed Klein to get away with a statement like this, one which would draw so much more criticism in any another jurisdiction
their own pay. His rationale was that only wealthy people would stand for office thereby creating a modern plutocracy.\textsuperscript{742}

Klein’s next major cost cutting foray was in the area of social services. In one of the most inspired (or expedient, depending on your perspective) pieces of cabinet making in Canadian history, Klein made Michael Cardinal, an aboriginal, Minister of Family and Social Services. Cardinal had grown up in a community with 15 per cent employment and he knew the ills of dependence on the social welfare system. In his first year as minister, Cardinal cut over 1.5 per cent off the province’s $1.6 billion welfare budget and ended nearly a dozen special perks available to the province’s welfare claimants. His pledge was to transform Alberta’s social system “from a passive one that encourages dependence, to an active one that encourages independence.”\textsuperscript{743}

The media characterized Cardinal, as an “archetype politician” who entered cabinet with a fervent ideological bent to cut welfare rolls. Alberta’s welfare cases went from 100,000 to 30,000 under Cardinal. Nor was Cardinal slowed down with policy discussion of workfare or other social service remedies. His experience dictated that best approach was to reduce welfare as much as possible, even if this meant cutting benefits for single mothers. For the Conservatives to be able to cut a single working mother’s rates significantly without significant backlash, was a testament to Cardinal’s personal credibility and to the political capital the party had amassed in a very short period of time.

On May 6, Klein moved to fulfill one of the major planks of his leadership campaign platform. His new \textit{Deficit Elimination Act}, enshrined in legislation Klein’s commitment to balance the budget by the end of the 1996-97 fiscal year. The legislation included a plan outlining the consolidated deficit for each of the intervening four years. Other provisions of the Deficit Elimination Act required that:

- Any slippage from targets be made up in subsequent year;
- Revenues over budget estimates be applied directly to the deficit and debt;
- Windfall revenues from asset sales be applied to the deficit and debt;
- Special warrants not be used except for emergency situations;
- Albertans to receive quarterly updates on the budget; and
- Future deficits be outlawed once the budget was balanced.\textsuperscript{744}

The bill was not as strong as was the case in other jurisdictions. For example there were no penalties attached for ministers or governments that did not balance their budgets.\textsuperscript{745}

\textsuperscript{742} Kowalski in the \textit{Alberta Report}, Vol 21, No 2, December 27, 1993, pp. 11. Even this outburst helped Klein’s cause. Kowalski was one of the few remaining old guard in Klein’s cabinet. By clinging to the old style of governing Kowalski was eventually forced out of cabinet but with very little backlash for Klein.

\textsuperscript{743} Mike Cardinal, Minister of Family and Social Services, quoted in the \textit{Alberta Report}, Vol. 20, No 32, July 26, 1993, pp. 6

\textsuperscript{744} For an excellent overview of the first two years of the Klein regime, see Jim Campbell’s, “The Klein Government at Two, Staying the Course,” GPC, Winter 1995. Quotation taken from pp. 10-11

\textsuperscript{745} Paul Taylor, executive assistant to Dinning and architect of the Deficit Elimination Act said the original draft did include penalties. That draft, “contained a provision that would have lowered the salaries of
But the legislation was light years ahead of anything Getty or Johnston had done and Klein made the most of that fact. He also attached himself closely to this bill, saying that he had similarly restrictive legislation as Mayor of Calgary, under which he worked quite comfortably, so the new legislation would not be a problem.

As part of his commitment to root out waste and duplication, Klein also announced during this period that four government companies would be sold, thirteen advisory committees would be shut down and nine government agencies would be rationalized into four. This was all part of a larger goal Treasurer Dinning had laid out to remove as much spending from the remaining quarter of the 1992-93 fiscal year as possible. Despite the fact they had only 75 days, Dinning, Klein and the other ministers found approximately $140 million in savings in that year.

Obviously, this was an extremely busy time for the Treasurer. In conjunction with his assault on the province’s 1992-93 finances, he oversaw the Financial Review Commission as well as developed an Economic Development Statement and strategy for the province. Moreover, he was working with the Government Reorganization Secretariat attempting to root out duplication and waste in the government’s crown corporations, agencies, boards and commissions, and holding public forums and roundtables on finances and health. In addition, he was preparing a budget for presentation on May 6, 1993.

**Alberta’s 1993-1994 Provincial Budget – a blueprint for change**

By May 6, 1993, the Klein government had many small victories in their campaign to distance themselves from their predecessors. They had shown a willingness to listen, a commitment to open government and given some early indications that they were going to run the government in a fiscally responsible manner. It was not until Treasurer Dinning delivered the 1993-94 Provincial budget, however, that Albertans began to understand the sheer enormity and potential impacts of the Klein government’s direction. There were two cornerstones to Dinning’s budget. The first was the government’s commitment to cut government spending by $700 million, which would in turn reduce the government’s consolidated deficit by over 22 per cent. The second was that the entire budget was based on what were considered to be “very moderate” revenue projections. Dinning projected a decline in government revenues of 0.7 per cent or $80 million. Jason Kenney, Director of the Alberta Taxpayer’s Association noted that Dinning had wisely erred on the safe side with his revenue projections. “Only once (1987-88) in the seven budgets he engineered, did (former treasurer) Dick Johnston get his revenue projections right. Jim Dinning is smart to avoid that trap.”

At the heart of Dinning’s spending reduction exercise was a hard goal of cutting all government expenditures by 20 per cent. In 1993-94, this would mean a significant decrease in 14 out of 17 ministries and the loss of nearly 2,600 civil service positions.

MLAs, ministers and senior bureaucrats one percentage point for every percentage point that government spending exceed the deficit-reduction target”. The deterrent clause failed to pass the Tory caucus. From *Alberta Report*, Vol 20, No. 22, May 17, 1993, pp. 7

Officials claimed that the 20 per cent figure was chosen for the simple reason that this was the number required if the deficit was to be eliminated without raising taxes. Others suggest that political optics were important, as the 20 per cent number is one Klein had used during his first leadership speech in Leduc.\footnote{This assertion is made in the Kneebone and McKenzie article entitled, “The Process Behind Institutional Change in Alberta”, in Bruce, Kneebone, and McKenzie, pp. 177. However, this must have been an off the cuff remark, as there is no reference to a 20 per cent cut to be found in the written version of Klein’s Leduc leadership address.}

The other important factor behind the 20 per cent cut figure was it forced “ministries and agencies to think carefully about what they were doing, how they did it, and whether or not they should be doing it at all. One senior bureaucrat opined that a cut in excess of 10 per cent was necessary for real reform to take place. A minister noted that the size of the cut had the effect of “unleashing innovation and positive energy within ministries and agencies.”\footnote{Ibid, Kneebone and McKenzie, pp. 178}

With regard to the speed of the cuts, Klein and his ministers had a variety of metaphorical answers they used to express the need to get the pain out of the way as soon as possible. “You can’t cross a ditch in two jumps,” “If you waited to until all the ducks were in a row, you’d wait forever” and “Is it kinder to cut a dog’s tail off one inch at a time?” were all examples of Klein’s frequently used spin on the government cuts. These, combined with Klein’s detailed symbolism about Alberta being a home in need of renovation and the stress a family has to endure when such renovation takes place, all assisted in selling the cuts and making them seem more humane.

Dinning’s budget also structurally changed the manner in which the Alberta government operated, both in terms of expenditure and in terms of process. Typically, in most ministries and departments in Canada, the system is structured in favour of those who spend their entire annual budgets. In Dinning’s system, a ministry has to negotiate with the Treasury \textit{after} an expenditure level was decided, thereby negating the “spend everything” incentive. In the Alberta case, each ministry was tasked with budgeting for 20 and 40 per cent cuts. This immediately put deputies on the defensive and made them justify why programs should stay rather than defend why more programs or more money should be added.

\textbf{Budget 93-94: Surprisingly Well Recieved}
A long time Edmonton journalist pointed out that one of the reasons Dinning’s budget was so successful was that it was immediately embraced by the financial media. “The press and particularly the Eastern press liked the fact that Dinning and Klein were trying to fix the financial reporting system. They looked like they legitimately wanted to remove Johnston’s fudging from the budget.”\footnote{Ibid., Lisac, pp. 287} Interested observers were particularly impressed with Dinning’s innovative use of quarterly reports, standard forecasting techniques, and revenue cushioning (ministers had to budget for only 90 per cent of their
expected revenues.) As well, his budget introduced three-year business plans and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in each ministry. Both these innovations were important because they brought accountability and transparency to the process. Each department now has a plan against which performance and progress can be accurately measured. For many, the headlines, “Has Dinning’s Budget cinched the Election” (Alberta Report) and “Dinning deserves credit for being honest” (Calgary Herald) while applauding the Treasurer’s seemingly courageous and conservative plan, could just as easily have been directed at Dinning’s innovations in the areas of budgetary and fiscal process.

One senior Treasury official admitted that a large degree of the 1993-94 budget’s success came from ignorance. “We didn’t know what couldn’t be done.” The most important element of the success of this budget was the speed and depth of the change. “That we were making large structural change struck a nerve with the professional civil service. As is usually the case, many of them had seen for some time what needed to be done. We tapped into a deep well of “give me a chance to help.” Later the civil servants told Dinning they only became convinced that the Klein government was serious when it re-engineered welfare rates. They said to him, “for the government to attack that hornet’s nest with real change only seven and a half months into their mandate, we knew then that this was for real.”

In the end, the 1993-94 budget did exactly what it was supposed to do. It established Klein as a leader with vision, without fear of the tough decisions and someone with a concrete plan to undo the mistakes made by his predecessor. What was unexpected was that the document would become the catalyst and the base for all of Klein’s election efforts from that point forward. One senior cabinet minister, later revealed that the entire exercise was equal parts good planning and good luck. “…the budget became the campaign strategy document. I’m not sure that’s the way it was supposed to work out, it just evolved. It came about because the order of events ensured that the fiscal agenda became the first order of business for the government.”

**The Pensions Issue – A Potential Momentum Crusher**

While the budget may have been the key Conservative election plank, it was the way in which Klein handled the delicate MLA pension imbroglio that would ultimately determine his, and his party’s, electoral success or failure.

Through the month of April 1993, the Klein team was more than satisfied with their progress. The ad-hoc committee had originally slated October 1993 as their election window, but on the advice of Ken Kowalski, the group started to look more seriously at a possible June election. At first, there was not much agreement with the prediction, however the strategy team started planning on two tracks, with the priority on October and a back-up plan for June. As the Tories continued to do better in the polls, June became more and more of a possibility and October became the back-up plan.

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750 op. cit., Senior Treasury official, Government of Alberta, Interview, October 20, 1998
751 op. cit., Senior Treasury official, Government of Alberta, Interview, October 20, 1998
752 Senior cabinet minister, Interview, October 20, 1998
In reaction to public pressure and wary of other similar remuneration issues under Getty such as the 1989 pay raise fiasco and the accommodation expenses crisis, Klein introduced a revised pension plan scheme in the legislature. The timing of the bill was of particular importance because almost half of the 59 Tory caucus members were resigning. Some of the veterans from the Lougheed era stood to collect over $80,000 a year. The benefits for the retiring group were estimated at over $40 million. However the statistic that truly brought the issue to a head was fact that for every dollar an MLA put into the plan, the taxpayers paid six. The bill was criticized because it was not harsh enough and because it did not take effect until after the pending election. Encouraged by the Alberta Taxpayers Association (ATA), voters found their voice to oppose this bill. “For voters stuck with the financial consequences of that group’s failures, for voters already unhappy with politicians and other former leaders in society, the pensions became the symbol of incompetent, self-serving arrogance.”

Hindsight would suggest the answer for Klein would be straightforward. Get rid of the pensions and use the issue to further distance the new government from the Getty-Lougheed legacy. However, in the middle of a transition and faced with an unhappy and possibly unruly caucus, Klein did not, at first, know how to react. For ten days he resisted, he didn’t think it was fair to renege on any type of pension plan regardless of the recipient. In fact, he defended the rich pensions, arguing that taking them away retroactively would be immoral and probably illegal.

However, pressure was mounting. The ATA released 30,000 letters that supported immediate rollbacks. The opposition Liberals were ecstatic at their good fortune. Every day in the house, Liberal leader Decore characterized the new Premier as the defender of the richest pension scheme in Canada. Klein’s reputation suffered further when, in front of TV cameras, he lost his temper with ATA Director Jason Kenney. Suddenly, the MLA pensions issue was the hot issue. Internal polling showed that while recent good works had improved the Tories’ support base, with the pension issue, the “numbers just dropped off the side of the table.”

On April 27, 1993, Klein came out of his office and, without notifying caucus, acknowledged public opposition of the bill and committed himself to making amendments. His revised plan would cut out the 30 per cent pay raise MLAs had received in 1989, thereby, apparently, cutting pension benefits by the same 30 per cent. This solution satisfied no one. Pension critics pointed out the amendments only affected the last four years and therefore actual pension amounts would only go down by a few percentage points. Getty and Lougheed loyalists in the caucus were furious that their benefits had been sacrificed for Klein and the newer MLAs who would go on to fight the next election. Outgoing cabinet ministers “took advantage of the situation for a little get-even. Klein had disposed of them: now they made his life miserable by threatening to break cabinet solidarity and even bring down this government.”

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753 op. cit., Lisac, pp. 92
754 op. cit., Senior official, Government of Alberta, Interview Edmonton, December 8, 1998
755 op. cit., Dabbs, pp. 108-109
The caucus debate that ensued was furious and heartfelt. It went on for two days and regardless of the outcome was bringing Klein’s leadership into question. Depending on one’s viewpoint, what happened next was one of the most vivid examples of pure Machiavellian political maneuvering, or simply dumb luck brought on by frustration and a lack of viable options. Inside caucus, newer MLAs had it explained to them that the only way to get out of this political box was to forfeit their own pensions. One of the new MLAs explained the decision this way, “The class of 1989 was fiercely opposed to having their pensions reduced. Eventually this group realized that the pension issue would have taken the focus off the fiscal framework message. They then went to Klein and told him the pensions would have to go, that the PC’s couldn’t afford to let this issue dominate the election. We understood that half measures would simply not work here. That this was going to be a big election issue and it had to be cut off at the root.” From all accounts, the new MLAs, having made a significant sacrifice, then proceeded to pound the veterans into submission.

While several groups and individuals now take credit for getting Klein to change his mind, the fact of the matter is that he did and did so vigorously. Rather than continuing to fine-tune the bill, Klein announced that, not only would there be retroactivity, the entire plan was to be scrapped. ‘No ifs, no ands, no buts, no pensions.’ Klein had understood he had made a mistake and his contrite reversal was a refreshing change after the bunker mentality of Getty and Lougheed. The real brilliance of the situation is that Klein consciously relaxed caucus discipline and let the veteran Tories publicly vent. The more they talked, the less sympathy they received. Klein let the older Tory MLAs take the brunt of the criticism, and then neatly captured public approval for himself. As columnist, Don Braid eloquently stated, “Klein walked away from a political train wreck without creasing his slacks.”

When asked how he could walk away from a $80,000 a year pension, Klein replied, “I have never been an average politician.” Klein then walked across the street to talk to candidates and campaign managers at a Tory election “college” in Edmonton. A participant recalls the scene. “Over 100 people were there, Elzinga came in and announced that the Premier had just abolished pensions and the place went nuts. The candidates didn’t care that their benefits if elected were going to be slashed, they were totally excited about their suddenly increased chances of electoral victory.”

As if this wasn’t enough, the Liberals then played directly into Klein’s hand by denouncing the government for going too far. A number of Liberal MLAs stood to lose their benefits if they lost the next election and Decore was suddenly extremely uncomfortable with the issue. Indeed, many legislators privately felt the decision was too harsh. One Tory cabinet minister felt that the response of completely eradicating the pensions was correct politically but was overkill from a legislative policy perspective. “It

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756 Cabinet Minister, Government of Alberta, Interview, Calgary, October 16, 1998
757 Don Braid quoted in “Klein of the Times”, by Kenneth White, Saturday Night Magazine, May 1994, pp.50
758 Ralph Klein in the Globe and Mail, May 3, 1993, pp. 14d
759 Former Klein constituency assistant and Senior Conservative Party volunteer, Interview, Calgary, October 18, 1998
was like we had gangrene of the foot and we took off the whole leg. It was necessary but overly severe.”

Regardless of private concerns, there was almost a universal understanding of the importance of this decision to Klein’s electoral chances. “In a single, dramatic act, the novice Premier had closed the book on the Getty years, wiping the Tory slate clean and ensuring his own personal credibility and popularity.” Dabbs goes on to point out that the pension decision was also key in bringing major oil money into the campaign as the oil patch began to see the toughness and fiscally conservative side of Klein. Others pointed out that this issue became the defining symbol of the Klein’s break with the past. “What Klein did on the pension issue is exactly what John Turner should have done on the patronage issue, use it as a measure of distancing from the previous regime.”

Only those advisors closest to Klein (and those with the best access to polling information) look back at the pension issue with mixed feelings. “We had already begun the process of distancing ourselves from the Getty government, the polls were coming nicely and then support just plummeted over the pension issue. It took us off message and off plan. If the issue hadn’t come up the Conservatives would have won the election just the same.” In contrast, others’ felt Klein’s role in the pension issue had an immediate impact on the upcoming election. Former Getty Minister John Gogo, went home to Lethbridge after the pension issue was decided. He said people told him Klein’s pension cut would win the election and he believed it.

6.8 Election 1993 – The Coronation

Regardless of the true impact of the pension decision, one thing was for sure. It gave Klein one more piece in an election strategy puzzle that, in the span of less than six months in office, would be based on the slogan, “Premier Klein – He listens, He cares”. Within days of the pension issue, the Conservatives had taken out full-page ads in the daily newspapers, proclaiming, “Premier Klein on Pensions: you have spoken and we have listened.” Saturday Night Magazine summed up the importance of pensions as an election issue when it said, “… the pension plan win changed the popular image of Premier Klein. He’d run up against a bunch of Tory politicians found fattening themselves at taxpayers’ expense and he’d made them bleed on their way out the door. He’d made voters forget that he himself was a Tory and a politician.”

This was the theme that Klein had pushed from the moment he won the leadership race and it was the theme that he would reinforce throughout the election. On May 18, 1993 the legislature was dissolved and a general election was announced for June 15, 1993. In his very first speech, Klein proclaimed, “We have given the people of Alberta 164 days
of change, and we seek a mandate to continue that process.”

Klein’s strategy was simple — to continue to find ways to show the contrast between himself and the previous administration and to take advantage of his own personal popularity. “The Tories want the campaign to become a referendum on Ralph Klein, the opposition want to make it a referendum on Don Getty.”

People on the Klein strategy team concurred with this assessment. “We did not run negative ads against Decore, we did not openly criticize Decore or Martin, if anything we were running against Getty. The whole essence of the “He Listens, He Cares” slogan was that it was in direct contrast to the Getty years in which very little listening went on.”

The other important element of the campaign was to keep Ralph in front of the voters and away from the media. “We felt that the media, particularly the legislative press gallery were more cynical than the general voting public. It was not an accident that Ralph would consistently be in one part of province, like Northern Alberta, in the morning and then in Calgary or Lethbridge in the afternoon. By keeping him somewhat out of the spotlight, he avoided scrutiny and was more able to be just Ralph.”

Despite his successful 164-day run-up however, it was not altogether clear that being, “just Ralph” was going to be enough to win the election. Long time political observers at the government relations firm, GPC, observed that, “many observers felt that the Liberals had a good chance to defeat the Conservatives and form a minority government, at least. The Liberal candidates and campaign team had been in place for two years, while many of the Tory candidates were chosen in the two months before the election was called.”

Pollsters were suggesting that while Klein went into the election with a slight lead it was not an insurmountable one. Miro Cernetig of the Globe and Mail summed up the race when he stated, “Certainly, Mr. Klein is facing the greatest electoral battle the Alberta Conservatives have encountered since sweeping to power in 1971.”

The Opposition Liberals — Their best chance in over 100 years
But then there were the Liberals. With a stable of experienced, fairly well-known candidates, an unprecedented war chest of over $3 million (almost on par with the Conservative coffers) and a detailed platform for reducing the deficit and bringing prosperity back to Alberta, the Liberals seemed more than ready. Laurence Decore hit the campaign trail armed with a black briefcase he referred to as his ‘CD player,’ CD being an abbreviation for Conservative Debt. The briefcase contained an electronic box with blinking lights showing the minute by minute rise in Alberta’s provincial debt.

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766 Ralph Klein, election kickoff speech, reported in the Globe and Mail, May 19, 1993, pp. A2
767 David Taras, Political Scientist, University of Calgary, quoted in the Globe and Mail, May 19, 1993, pp. A2
768 Senior Campaign Strategist, Ralph Klein Election Readiness Team, Interview, Calgary, October 16, 1998
769 ibid., Interview, October 16, 1998
771 op. cit., the Globe and Mail, May 19, 1993, pp. A2
772 One of the reasons Decore’s ‘Debt Clock’ was not more successful was that by the time he unveiled it, the concept was no longer novel in Canada. The Fraser Institute erected its own debt clock at the offices of the Vancouver Board of Trade in 1988. Another such device was set up in Ottawa in 1991 and officially unveiled by then Tory Finance Minister Michael Wilson.
Such props showed that his campaign was high tech and polished, yet Decore’s campaign never got off the ground. Some like Lisac, blame Decore’s lack of personality, particularly in comparison to Klein. He had a “wooden and aloof presence on the speaking platform” and seemed unable to relate to average Albertans.

From the Liberal strategy team’s perspective, however, the beginning of the campaign gave cause for real optimism. They felt the campaign platform was strong, having been based on two years of special focus group or “skeptic group” sessions that Decore had held with small business people throughout Alberta. The other factor to overcome was that Decore had developed cancer in 1991 and it had reappeared just before the election. When the campaign started, however, he assured his team he was ready to go. Decore’s plan for the election was to hit the government hard for the first 20-30 days on fiscal issues and then run the last section of the campaign purely on leadership issues. This campaign strategy was put together while Getty was still Premier and very little was changed when Klein became Premier.

The Alberta Liberals had real momentum at the beginning of the campaign. They were well on the way to establishing themselves as the group with the plan and the people to implement it. Then, four days into the campaign, Decore was asked a question about abortion. He stated that he was against free-standing abortion clinics. He did not disclose his full position, that he was also in favour of hospital abortion clinics. His stance was taken as anti-abortion and two hours later the media descended on him. Decore had an opportunity to clarify his position, but instead he made comments that made him look even further entrenched on the side of the anti-abortionists. Many Liberals felt that the major reason for this issue management breakdown was that, at the time of the radio statements, Decore had two young aides with him, both of whom were fervent Catholic church supporters. Kevin Feeney at the law firm Milner Fenerty was one of these aides. Rather than telling Decore that his comments were offside and potentially damaging, these aides encouraged Decore to be unrepentant after his first set of comments.

It took two days before there was a clarification from the Decore camp about his comments. It was five days before the issue was put to rest. This position severely undermined the Decore campaign, alienated many female supporters, including his wife and daughter, and generally sapped any momentum the Liberal campaign may have had. A large part of the problem was that the Decore camp no doubt believed that it had to appeal to Klein’s right wing voters. Their error was to mistake people’s deep-set concern over the deficit as being part of a sweeping wave of social conservatism. While there is a strong socially conservative voice in Alberta, the Liberals did not need a majority of this group to win the 1993 election. If anything the Liberals could have exploited this issue to show rifts in the Progressive Conservative caucus.

On the Tories’ side, Decore’s misstep was a manna from heaven. Klein’s handling of the issue not only exemplifies his natural political instincts but also his deep understanding of Alberta’s political and social fabric. Immediately upon receiving Decore’s position, the

773 op. cit., Lisac, pp. 99
media made a bee-line for Klein. Unaware of Decore’s comments, Klein was asked directly, “what is your position on abortion?” In a moment that only political staffers can truly appreciate, Klein did not go off on some personal ramble on this issue, nor did he appear flustered by one of the most difficult questions a politician can be asked. Rather he responded with a question of his own, “…why do you ask?”

This gave him time to understand the situation and get a quick briefing on the context of the question. He then responded with his standard answer, “This is an issue between a woman, her doctor and her god.” By bringing a religious bent to the standard answer, Klein left some delicious ambiguity in his wake, certainly sufficient to contain angry social liberals within his political tent. Furthermore, as with many other issues, Klein seemed to have the ability to distance himself from difficult issues by claiming he neither has the expertise in or the authority to pass judgement. One of the interesting elements of running an anti-government, non-interventionist government is the opportunity it provides to not be involved in a variety of difficult moral, social or even economic issues that heretofore were seen as legitimate government concerns.

The Election Run-up
From this point forward, the election result was more or less predetermined. The Decore group had badly underestimated Klein and his ability make people forget about the Getty administration. “The Decore team’s problem was that it never shifted gears. There was nothing to suggest that Klein would embark on this kind of mission and the Liberals therefore had nothing prepared when he did.” In the middle of the campaign, the Decore team did focus group testing. In Edmonton there was some suggestion that Decore was arrogant, elitist, removed and clipped. The key focus group was 24 people - all undecideds from Calgary. Their response was in fact a lot different. It was a lot more positive on Decore, particularly in Southern Alberta, they were impressed with his intelligence. They liked Klein more as a crude uncle than as a Premier. Civic debt was also seen a legitimate comparison. The groups were quite clear that they liked Decore, but they didn’t know him and wished they knew him better.

Instead of doing more advertisements on Decore and his contrast to Klein, the last days were spent discussing Decore’s fuzzy ideas about vision and statesmanship. The ads the Liberals did play were pre-taped. Decore was told there was no time to change. Unfortunately, this meant that there was no time to show Decore as a former 21 year-old successful entrepreneur or as a former Mayor who had reduced his city’s debt. The ads could have made financial comparisons between Edmonton and Calgary or shown the awards that Edmonton had received for its debt retirement schemes.

On the Klein team, the strategy of “let Ralph be Ralph” stayed the same. He met thousands of people in small towns across Alberta and pushed his message of getting Albertans feeling better about their province and their lot in life. Hendrik Stuuk, a Bow Island farmer, who had been forced out of his profession because of downturns in the economy put it this way, “…I’d rather vote for Ralph than some lawyer, Let’s see what

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774 op. cit., Conservative Cabinet Minister, Interview, Edmonton, October 14, 1998
he can do in four years,” 775 That Klein had been part of the Getty government for almost four years was now officially forgotten. Towards the end of the campaign, Decore, the Edmonton lawyer, watched Klein’s ability to separate himself from Getty’s record and said, “It’s the most perplexing thing that I have ever tried to sort through.” 776

The mid-campaign debate was uneventful. Klein, with his years as a TV reporter, seemed much more calm and comfortable, but there were no telling blows or serious mistakes to swing momentum in one direction or the other. Klein continued to talk about the future rather than the past and voters responded favourably. A good example of the “new politics under Klein were the notorious “streeters” that all serious campaigns used as a persuasion tool.

There was a long history of Conservative ads in Alberta where people off the street are asked their opinion of the party or particular candidate. After a several years, Albertans finally began to realize that these “impromptu” interviews are actually staged. The whole exercise became even more cynical because in the election immediately preceding Klein’s, it was also evident that the producers knew that the audience knew that the ads were staged. Even with that cynicism the premise has changed little over the years. Klein changed it. He would not allow a staged “streeter” to be a part of his campaign or any subsequent campaigns he was involved in.

**Election Day**

In the end, the election hinged on personalities. Klein and Decore’s policy platforms were very similar. Decore had called for “brutal” cuts, Klein for “massive” cuts. Both candidates were in favour of shrinking the size of government and aggressively attacking the deficit and debt. That Decore had more experience in these matters became immaterial. Klein stole the election from Decore on the strength of what people called the “cult of his personality.” On election day, the Conservatives won their seventh straight majority government, with 51 of 83 seats, down five. The Conservatives had captured 44 per cent of the popular vote to the Liberals 40 per cent. The Conservatives continued to be shut out of the City of Edmonton. While there was a heady euphoria from this extraordinary turnaround, it still remained the Tories’ weakest victory since 1971.

Many people have called Klein’s election win – “The Miracle on the Prairies.” However, it would be more accurate to say that, barring outright disaster, Klein’s team had the election won well before the writ was dropped. The real miracle lay in the political turnaround engineered by Klein from the time he became leader in December 1992, until the election was called in May 1993. The election was simply the “coronation”.

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775 from Lisac, pp. 108
776 Decore in Lisac, pp. 109
6.9 Conclusions

In the six years since Klein’s 1992-93 transition, he and his party have enjoyed considerable political success. In the 1997 Alberta general election, Klein was re-elected with a massive majority. Indeed, almost up to the day the writ was dropped, many commentators publicly contemplated the possibility of Klein’s Conservatives winning all 83 electoral seats in the legislature. Most saw the increased majority as the Alberta voters’ means of rewarding Klein for keeping his promises about cutting the size of government and improving Alberta’s fiscal framework. Since 1993, Klein and Dinning actually sped up the process of cost-cutting with the result being a balanced budget one year ahead of schedule and significant government surpluses ever since.

The debate about how much of this was good management compared to good luck does, however, take on significantly more validity after 1993. With the combination of increased oil and gas, agriculture and even forestry revenues and with the extremely large windfall revenues from expanded gaming in Alberta, there is a legitimate argument that Alberta’s rosy economic and fiscal picture is as much a result of luck and upturned business cycles as they are prudent government planning and cutbacks.
Chapter Seven

Analysis and Conclusions
7.1 Introduction

From a macro perspective the transitions of Frank Miller in Ontario, Glen Clark in BC and Ralph Klein in Alberta seem to lend themselves to comparative analysis. Each case occurred in roughly the same epoch, each in a Canadian province with generally similar legislative and political traditions. Granted, Ontario is much larger in geographic, demographic and economic terms, and has somewhat of a longer and more comprehensive history of civil servant activity around transitions, but within the context of this analysis, the differences are not restrictive.

Moreover, from an economic perspective, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia are all seen as “have” provinces, and at various times in history have each been considered the economic “driver” of the Canadian economy. Similarly, all three provinces have large land masses compared to other provinces or other parliamentary districts, all have a significant gap between core and periphery communities and all continue to depend on natural resources as one of the key elements of their GNP growth.

From an institutional perspective, Ontario has a much larger legislature, yet, there are still many similarities amongst the three provinces’ governance structures, their central agencies and their general legislative histories. All three provinces have experienced one-party dominance in the modern era and yet each province has also had at least two strong opposition parties. With regards to the leaders involved in these transitions, all three were basically career politicians, although Miller was significantly older and had had more private sector experience than Klein or Clark.

Both Clark and Miller had been Finance Ministers, while Klein had been Minister of Environment for almost three years and also had significant political experience as Mayor of Calgary. All three had a relatively short period of time between when they became leader and when they called the subsequent general election.\(^\text{777}\) Similarly all three had about the same amount of time before the end of their respective mandates. As well, all three were fighting against a Liberal opposition, a Liberal opposition that had not been in power in any of the three provinces at any time in the modern era.

However, the principal element common to all three case studies is the fact that they all represent cases in which the results were directly contrary to expectations. In the past there has not been a lot of credence or importance given to the transition of an intra-party leader. Typically the performance of a new intra-party leader is more linked to the legacy of the predecessor than to any other factor. Moreover, new intra-party leaders are often overlooked because often they are taking over under surprising or unexpected circumstances.

Also typical is the fact that, when an existing leader dies, retires or is forced from office for political reasons, the result is uncertainty and the subsequent intra-party transition is seen as an irregular, ad hoc, event. Therefore the new leaders are typically seen as lame-

\(^{777}\) Glen Clark – 3 months, Frank Miller – 4 months, Ralph Klein – 6 months (See Chapter Three, Table 3-13 for a listing of all intra-party transition time periods).
duck placeholders who are only expected to perform at and often below the expectations. For example, immediately after the tragic news of President Kennedy’s death, no one focused on Lyndon Johnson’s transition strategy and political maneuvers. Similarly, most people expected BC Premier, Rita Johnson and Canadian Prime Minister, Kim Campbell to lose after both took over governments in which the former leaders cast long and negative shadows.

In the case of Miller, Clark and Klein however, expectations were dramatically challenged by the reality of subsequent events. In this concluding chapter, an assessment will be made as to degree of success or failure experience by each of these intra-party transitions, followed by an comparative examination of the key variables responsible for this success or failure.

7.2 Measuring Success – A matter of degree

As discussed earlier, one of the advantages of studying intra-party transitions is the ability to reflect the success or failure relative to the results achieved by new intra-party leaders in their subsequent general election. For example, of the 26 intra-party transitions examined in Chapter Three, Miller, Clark and Klein received cumulative success rankings of 18\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th} respectively on the strength of factors related to their electoral results in the subsequent general elections.

Clark and Klein were similar in most of the measurements which, when combined, formed the basis for this ranking. For example, neither increased the size of their majorities significantly, nor did they win the subsequent elections with impressive vote percentages (ranked 13\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} respectively). In fact, when ranked by percentage of seats won, Klein and Clark had the two lowest rankings (10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th}) of those leaders who actually won their subsequent elections.

The one factor in which Klein did rank significantly higher than Clark was in the increase of vote percentage measurement. In the 1993 Alberta elections, Klein received a 0.2 percentage point increase in his vote total more votes than his predecessor Getty received in the 1989 election, for a 5\textsuperscript{th} place ranking overall. In contrast, in the 1996 general election, Clark received 1.3 percentage points less of the popular vote than his predecessor Harcourt received in the 1991 election, placing Clark 10\textsuperscript{th}.

Klein’s results were also much better than Clark’s in terms of the percentage of seats changed. Klein won 9.5 per cent fewer seats in legislature than did Getty in 1989, while Clark won 16 per cent fewer seats than Harcourt. Even Miller was better than Clark in this category, in that Miller had a 14.4 per cent drop in the number of seats elected in his 1985 election, compared to his predecessor Bill Davis’ total in 1981.

This, however, was the only category in which Miller scored anywhere near the same as Clark or Klein. Out of 26 intra-party transitions considered in this study, Miller consistently scored in the bottom third. In fact, in terms of vote percentage, Miller was
21st of 26 cases, receiving only 36.9 per cent of the popular vote in the 1985 Ontario election. This is of particular significance when considering the fact that his predecessors, Robarts and Davis, polled between 44 and almost 49 per cent of the popular vote in their intra-party transitions.

The true drama inherent to these three cases however, only becomes evident when comparing electoral results to general expectations. As discussed in Chapter Three, at their end of their mandates, Mike Harcourt in BC and Don Getty in Alberta and their respective parties were both at or below 20 per cent in public opinion polling. Glen Clark and Ralph Klein are the only two of the 26 intra-party transitions studied, who were able to overcome these extremely negative polling numbers and emerge victorious in the subsequent general election.

The only case that is even close to Clark and Klein is that of Bill Vander Zalm in 1986. Vander Zalm's predecessor, Bill Bennett, at his lowest levels of popularity, was around 30 per cent in public opinion polling. However, anecdotal testimony from key political observers active during that period suggests that unlike Harcourt and Getty, if Bennett had not retired and had run again, he had an even up chance at re-election.

The positive turnarounds engineered by Clark and Klein are, in fact, only matched in terms of pure dramatics by the massive collapse of Frank Miller in 1985. Of the 26 cases studied here, 10 intra-party transition leaders defied expectations of victory and lost their subsequent general elections. However, within this group, only Frank Miller consistently had public opinion polls in the high 50's. In fact, Miller's Conservative party was polling over 50 per cent mere days before Miller called the 1985 election. This, combined with the fact that the Conservatives had been in power in Ontario for over 42 years, meant that Miller's subsequent loss of power represents one of the most significant failures in Canadian electoral history.

Ultimately, when comparing the breadth of success versus failure of the three case studies, it is often enough simply to contemplate the subjective answer to the question, “If these Premier’s predecessors had remained and ran for office, would they have been victorious?” In the cases of Frank Miller, Glen Clark, and Ralph Klein the answers to these questions are not in question. Of the people interviewed in the Ontario case, all felt that had Bill Davis had stayed on, he would almost assuredly return a majority government. In fact, there was great surprise when he announced his retirement, most had anticipated an election call. Similarly, everyone interviewed in the Clark and Klein cases felt that if their predecessors, Mike Harcourt and Don Getty had stayed on, both would have led their governments to defeat.

To understand more fully, the reasons for Clark and Klein’s victory and, conversely, Miller’s defeat and what these cases had in common, a comparative analysis is provided below. As discussed in Chapter Two, there are two principal sets of variables that significantly impact the success or failure of intra-party transitions, exogenous or external variables and endogenous or internal variables. Within the exogenous grouping are the
subsets of structural and political variables. Structural variables include electoral and political history, political culture, and economic situation.

7.3 Exogenous Variables - Structural

Political History
With regard to political and electoral history, factors in Ontario in 1984 certainly seemed to favour Frank Miller. The Progressive Conservatives had been in power for over 42 years, had overseen several effective political successions and had a political machine in place, The Big Blue Machine, which seemed to have turned re-election into an art form. While critics of the Ontario PC party could argue that after 42 years change was inevitable, there is nothing in general political environment to suggest that this was the case. Presumably, this argument could have been made just as effectively for the thirty years previous.

Another argument is that Miller suffered from the fact that Brian Mulroney had just been elected in Ottawa. Some make the argument that Ontarians vote one way provincially and another federally. This is a spurious argument that has been disproved over time. While the party was weak and indebted when Miller took over, it had been that way in the past and had always recovered. The Ontario PC party may have been in disarray, but perhaps more than anywhere else in Canada, the Tories benefited from an almost universal understanding that they were the government party.

Moreover the constellation of tough policy issues inherited by Miller was no more contentious or difficult than those that Davis had been saddled with during his intra-party transition in 1971. Finally, as stated earlier, Miller also inherited a government with a healthy majority, a caucus of experienced legislative veterans, a cadre of loyal and professional civil servants and a large pool of some of the most experienced and successful campaign staffers in Canadian history.

While Ralph Klein’s Progressive Conservative party had also experienced a successful electoral history in Alberta, that is where the similarities ended. While Premier Lougheed had been revered, he had taken the province in a direction that was, by 1990, uniformly opposed by the people of Alberta. Moreover, Getty was seen as a reluctant and ultimately poor replacement for Lougheed. By the time Ralph Klein challenged for the leadership of the party, it was languishing at less than 20 per cent in the polls and both conservative MLA’s and senior civil servants were personally embarrassed by the deficit crisis and lack of accountability in the province’s legislature.

While some may point to Alberta’s largely one-party system and centre-rightist traditions as proof that the Alberta Tories would ultimately find some way to recover, the fact is that Progressive Conservatives were not necessarily the ordained party of the centre right in Alberta. The Social Credit had only been gone for little more than 20 years, the federal Reform party was, at the time, toying with the idea of having provincial representation and the Alberta Liberal party had adopted a fiscal strategy that many
would have argued was actually to the right of Klein's original platform in 1992. Thus, there were several possibilities of parties that could have taken over the dominant party mantle in Alberta and given the political baggage Klein was left with, such a paradigm shift was certainly a possibility.

On paper, Glen Clark’s situation was even more desperate. Like Klein he was succeeding a terribly unpopular premier and his party was mired in the low 20’s in public opinion polling. Unlike Klein and Miller, his party had a much more tenuous history as the party of government. As a result of a strong labour movement and a unique political culture, BC has a long history of supporting the NDP, and before it, the CCF. However, the NDP had only two experiences as the governing party in 1975-78 and 1991. The party had never been elected to two consecutive terms and even more damning, it had always fought elections based on the sanctity of its position as the defender of average British Columbians against the financial and corporate elites. With the NCHS scandal, the BC NDP now looked as expedient as any other party, a factor which should have had serious repercussions in the subsequent election.

Political Culture

The political cultures of the three cases have several similarities. From an international viewpoint they must be seen as very similar, as English-speaking Canada is surely viewed as one of the more homogenous societies in the world. But at a provincial level there are significant differences. In Ontario, political leadership had always been about competent managers rather than the populism of the west, a populism that had left wing roots in BC and right wing roots in Alberta. Moreover, personality and value driven politics seemed to be the norm in British Columbia, less in Alberta and even less again in Ontario. Finally, fiscal concerns dominate Alberta and Ontario’s political cultures, while a more lifestyle oriented, postmaterialism permeates BC’s political environment.

Despite these differences however, elements existed in all three provinces that cagey new intra-party transition leaders could have exploited to their advantage. The people of Ontario, for example, valued strong managerial leadership with an ability to effectively broker a large constellation of competing interests. Ontario’s political culture seemed tailor made for the serious minded, managerial chairmen of the board that the Ontario PC party regularly put forward as their leadership candidates. Furthermore, historically in Ontario, there had been a complex undercurrent of malevolence towards the United States and its political value system. In his background as Treasurer, Miller had all the qualities of managerial leadership and calm professionalism towards competing interests. He had held his tongue on numerous occasions at the cabinet table and had worked effectively with the “red tory” faction within the Ontario PC caucus.

Moreover, Miller could have displayed these characteristics without wholly abandoning his more right wing tendencies. As history shows, each previous PC premier had successfully acknowledged the overarching political realities of the province, while at the same time bringing their own personal characteristics to the table. Frost had been the builder, Robarts had been the manager, Davis had been the manager and Miller could have easily grown into a role as the “reformer.” Certainly there was evidence at the time...
to suggest Ontario could have benefited from a program of fiscal constraint and legislative and regulatory reform such as had been executed the year before in British Columbia and other jurisdictions. However, Miller had neither the foresight, the support nor the political sophistication needed to properly match his personal agenda with the province’s political culture.

British Columbia’s political culture also had elements, which, if properly harnessed, could contribute to the transition success a new political leader like Glen Clark. The province’s personality driven, populist, post material political culture combined with the brass knuckled, attack dog traditions of the media and the BC legislature all seem made to order for someone of Glen Clark’s temperament and style. Moreover, Clark continually showed that he understood the nature and nuance of BC’s political culture by casting himself as an interventionist builder of the economy like WAC Bennett and by his masterful exploitation of the class divisions unique to BC’s society.

Of all the new leaders in this study, interestingly, the one who had to make the most allowances for his province’s political culture was Ralph Klein. In retrospect, Alberta’s history of agrarian populism, fiscal conservativeness and rural roots, seem made to order for Klein’s right wing populist persona. However, the truth of the matter is that Klein had to adapt his image to fit Alberta’s political culture. As Mayor of Calgary, Klein was not known as a fiscal conservative, in fact he was one of the more profligate spenders in the city’s history and as a provincial politician questioned the need for concern over the province’s deficit. Moreover, upon entering provincial politics, it was not clear that Klein was a Conservative at all. He was reported as having expressed interest in joining the Alberta Liberal party and particularly, during the leadership campaign, had bristled under the tutelage of the province’s Conservative elites. Finally, Klein had little or no connection to Alberta’s rural heritage. It was only as Minister of Environment that Klein educated himself as to the ways and concerns of the strategically important rural voters.

Economic and Fiscal Environments
The premise behind this variable is straightforward. Presumably an expanding economy benefits an incumbent government and therein, a newly installed intra-party leader. In fact, a buoyant economy generally is considered to have such a powerful influence that other political deficiencies of a new leader may be overlooked. Certainly, one could make the argument that, in the United States for example, Bill Clinton has been saved a number of times by one of the most vibrant economic cycles in American history.

Of all three case studies, a positive economic argument is most cited as a significant factor for success in the case of the Klein transition. Klein’s detractors suggest that he simply rode the wave of economic prosperity and high oil prices that swept the prairie province in the early 1990’s. Certainly, increased oil revenues and expanded lotteries profits accounted for much of Klein’s fiscal success in his first elected term in office and allowed he and his Treasurer, Jim Dinning, to accelerate their deficit and debt reduction plans. However, while it could be argued that the economic doldrums that had beset Alberta for the previous six years provided Klein the benefit of a canvass against which he could offer a significant contrast, the fact remains that any buoyancy in the public
mood as a result of an economic upswing occurred well after Klein was safely ensconced in the premier’s chair and that therefore, the upswing did not play a significant role in the success of his transition.

Overall, during Miller’s ascendancy, Ontario’s economy was coming out of a long recession and was starting to really hum. Certainly the recession of the early eighties had hit Ontarians particularly hard, but by 1985-86, this was not a factor. Ontario was coming out of a major recession, but the signs of recovery were clearly evident during the Miller transition. If anything Miller did not capitalize on the recovery, but instead allowed Liberal Leader, David Peterson to present himself as a leader for the ‘new age and the new economy.’ Overall, there was nothing in Ontario’s general political, cultural or economic environment that should have seriously hindered an intra-party transition by a new PC leader in 1985.

The economic situation in BC was much more complex, but the result was the same. The economy had not yet cratered in BC in 1996. There were many raised eyebrows at the NDP’s rosy economic forecasts in their 1996 budget, but there was no hard evidence of the crash that was to befall BC in late 1996. Unfortunately, while BC Liberal Opposition Leader, Gordon Campbell tried to highlight the fact that the NDP were seriously mismanaging the economy and the government’s finances, the issue did not seem to take root with BC voters. The election and indeed the pre-election campaigning seemed to turn on issues of personality rather than substance. Some would argue that it was in fact, superior political management by Clark that kept the economy from being a key issue. However, this reality seemed to be caused despite Clark rather than because of him. Certainly, it could be argued that the Opposition leader could have done a better job of raising concerns about impending economic gloom, but facts show he made a very legitimate effort in this regard and for a variety of reasons, perhaps in part because the lengthy period of growth the BC economy had just experienced, his message did not spark the public’s imagination.

Exogenous Variables - Political

Outgoing Leader
The one factor none of the Ontario Conservatives interviewed for this study mentioned was the impact of former premier Bill Davis. Perhaps this was part of their revisionist recollection of Davis as the successful premier and Miller as the failure. Ultimately, however, Bill Davis did Miller no favours. Davis left the party in bad shape; he meddled in the leadership process and ultimately sabotaged Miller’s leadership by leaving behind contentious issues like the Catholic School funding mess. Miller is quoted as saying that Davis screwed him in terms of the timing and surprise behind his resignation announcement. Davis in fact had done to Miller exactly as had been done to him in 1971 and it put Miller at a significant disadvantage. Similarly, in regard to the leadership contest, by not allowing the candidates to debate certain contentious issues and by laying down arbitrary rules that seemed more about preserving his legacy than assisting the succession, Davis bred division and promoted mediocrity.
Davis was equally problematic during the transition. He meddled, got heavily involved in key personnel decisions and gave opinions, but at the same time refused to actually assist Miller. For Miller, this passive aggressive behaviour from a respected former premier was the worst of all worlds. However, it can also be argued that Miller was aware of the handicaps presented to him by Davis but did little to compensate or adjust for them. For example, Davis did leave his resignation announcement quite late leaving Miller little time to distinguish his own premiership. However, Miller could have waited several more months to call the election. His excuse at the time was that he didn’t want a September election because that would mean he would have to fight the Catholic School funding question with students in the classrooms. The possibility of student protests while potentially problematic was largely hypothetical and needed to be balanced against the greater problem of not having given Ontario voters sufficient time to get to know Frank Miller.

The Catholic School funding question is another Davis legacy blamed for the election loss. While the controversy did have a significant negative effect, the fact was that Miller did not properly assess the extent of the problem and therefore did not have a sufficient plan in place to deal authoritatively with the issue. The Peterson Liberals were on the same side of the issue and yet they had no problem diffusing the situation once in office. On top of the actual meddling and lack of assistance provided by Davis, Miller had another problem, that being the difficulty in filling the shoes of Bill Davis and contending with the Davis legacy. Party activists were aware of the problems Davis had left and the reasons for his departure, yet they were still totally unprepared psychologically for the void he would leave. Indicative of this fact was the ill-planned Davis farewell tribute held the night before the leadership race. The gift to Davis was cheap and inappropriate, and the parting comments weak and half-hearted, almost as if the party could not process the fact that a Premier with a 50 per cent approval rating and an almost guaranteed election victory in his hands for the taking was actually leaving. This lack of preparation manifested itself in the leadership campaign which was at the same time passionless and acrimonious, yet completely divisive. Overall, the Davis departure did have a significant negative affect on Miller’s transition.

In BC, Mike Harcourt couldn’t have handled his departure better from Glen Clark’s perspective. Harcourt announced his departure, took blame for the major scandal of the day and did not appoint an interim premier to oversee the government until a leadership race could be held. This allowed frontrunner Glen Clark to basically run government as the defacto Premier from November 1995 until the leadership in February 1996. It meant that Clark did not have to compete with an interim premier for media attention and political support. Harcourt said nary a word throughout the transition period, even when Clark took some less than subtle shots at the outgoing premier. Harcourt was perceived as having taken “one for the team” and Clark was a benefactor of this latent sympathy. Overall, the style and method of Harcourt’s departure was a significant benefit for Clark’s transition.
In Alberta, Getty had left the party in a mess. At less than 20 percent in the polls, and with no credibility, Getty was forced from office largely in disgrace. However, to his credit, Getty literally disappeared from the political landscape in Alberta. His only real impact was around the time Klein was being sworn in. Getty was attempting to use a government office to do private business and had hinted that even though he was still a MLA, he would not be attending the legislative sitting. Klein kyboshed both these ideas and used the opportunity to show how his administration was different than those that had preceded him. After this incident, Getty was not heard from again.

Overall, Klein prospered from not having big shoes, for example those of former Premier Lougheed, to fill and was rewarded by Getty’s speedy departure. Clark was equally fortunate, with Harcourt’s rapid and thorough departure. Only Miller suffered at the hands of his predecessor, both in terms of having to meet public expectations when comparisons were made to the successful Davis and as a result of Davis problematic interference during both the leadership race and Miller’s short tenure as Premier.

Leadership Contests
The leadership campaigns and the manner with which they were dealt, played an important role in the ultimate success or failure of all three intra-party leaders. In BC, the NDP leadership race could not have gone better for Glen Clark. With all of the other key NDP cabinet ministers in the notorious power group, “the gang of six” dropping out of the race, the campaign itself was simply a coronation for Clark. However, rather than allowing the lopsided affair and its incumbent lack of public interest slow his momentum, Clark used the freedom of being the only serious candidate as a proxy to immediately set up shop as the defacto premier. Combined with Harcourt’s total departure from the scene, Clark was able to focus the resources of the Premier’s office not so much on winning the leadership race, but on using the leadership race one more instrument to be used in winning the general election.

Indicative of this was Clark’s acceptance speech at the leadership contest. As there had been no real divisions during the race, Clark was able to focus all of his attention on the larger TV audience, the voting public and limit his comments to those that would be reiterated time and time again during the election itself. Clark had the luxury of using the leadership as an electoral springboard.

On the other end of the spectrum was the Ontario leadership race. In part due to Davis’ on-again off-again retirement plans, and in part due to his meddling during the race, from the outset, the leadership had the potential to severely divide the party. As it turned out, the 1985 Ontario PC leadership race was one of the most divisive of all time and created wounds so deep that many would go unhealed for over a decade. While many interviewed for this study suggested that the leadership race was a major factor in the demise of Frank Miller, the fact remains that a template for avoiding deep party divisions existed. Bill Davis had faced similar problems in 1971 and through a series of astute political manoeuvres was able to avoid the havoc that a divisive leadership can wreak.
Not only could Miller not recreate the magic of 1971, his attempts at reconciling the warring factions within the party only exacerbated the problem.

Arguably, the leadership convention in Alberta to replace Don Getty had the potential to be equally divisive. True, it could be said that there was less at stake in that most felt the new leader in Alberta would be saddled with a massive electoral loss within a year of winning the leadership. However, with nine leadership candidates and with the acrimony that was present in the run-up to the leadership vote itself, the potential for disaster was still omni-present. However, rather than having a negative impact on Klein’s transition, the leadership race actually provided some important keys to his ultimate success. The one person, one vote format of the convention truly tested Klein’s campaign team’s ability to organize at the grassroots and laid the groundwork for Klein’s excellent relations with the largely rural backbench members of his caucus.

The closeness of the vote also impressed upon the Klein team how much work had to be done and how big the challenge of retaining government actually was. When, on the second ballot all of the opposing candidates rallied behind Klein’s principal opponent, Betkowski, it significantly eased Klein’s ability to distance himself from the previous regime. As well, the leadership race provided a forum for average Albertan’s to vent their frustration with the government and its policies of the last two decades. Klein was exposed to this wrath and was able to use it in developing his electoral program. Finally, with almost 50,000 people voting for him on the second ballot, Klein was in the unique position of being able to say he had something of a mandate to govern, even though he had become premier without the benefit of a general election. The increased flexibility allowed Klein to discipline his caucus and adopt a more activist agenda.

Opposition Parties
In all three case studies, the new leaders contested their elections against leaders from the Liberal party. Even more interesting was the fact that not only had none of the Liberal leaders studied here ever served in provincial government, their parties had not been in power in their respective provinces during the modern era. Despite this fact, the opposition parties in all three cases played a major role in their opponents’ transition.

Nowhere was this more the case than in Ontario. Literally written off by Tory strategists, the Liberals had strength at the grassroots and an entrepreneurial leader who was able to capitalize on Miller’s perceived shift to the right. While it is difficult to blame Miller for not anticipating opposition leader David Peterson’s amazing transformation into an attractive, viable candidate for Premier in the 1985 election, Miller and his team did severely underestimate the overall political and policy strength of the Ontario Liberals.

Similarly, the opposition in BC was a strong group with excellent polling numbers, but several factors intervened. The BC Liberals were a relatively new entity, having been formally separated from their federal counterparts for less than five years. There were not a lot of experienced staffers involved in the 1996 election. Campbell had recruited staff and candidates from a broad coalition of political camps and the result was internal turmoil and a lack of effective political entrepreneurialism. This led to mishaps and
missteps particularly in the policy field, such as the three billion dollar promise and errors in the campaign platform. Further, Campbell was susceptible to repositioning by the NDP. Arguably, the BC Liberals single most important error was not spending money on paid advertising to combat Clark’s “60 Days of Action,” therein allowing Clark to gain valuable momentum in the run-up to the general election.

The opposition under Decore was the strongest ever seen in modern Alberta. Decore had a majority of support in Edmonton and amongst ethnic groups. Decore had the right image, money in the bank and a modern campaign structure. As it turned out, however, Decore ended up running a dreadful campaign. Not only was his own performance wooden and substandard, Decore seemed to be constricted by indecision both in regards to policy and the politics of personality. On policy, Decore’s party was split on the degree to which it should move to the right, particularly on fiscal issues. Furthermore, Decore could not make the distinction between fiscal prudence that permeates Alberta’s political culture and the social conservatism that many in his own party abhorred. As well, Decore’s Liberals had planned to campaign against Getty and were surprisingly ill prepared to campaign against Klein, particularly in many of the key swing ridings in and around Calgary.

Civil Service
For all new leaders involved in transition, one of the biggest questions is with regard to the state of the bureaucracy being inherited. Most transition leaders, particularly those involved in intra-party transitions, have mandates of which at least some parts must be implemented quickly to signify change and the ability to distance from the previous regime. In the case of Miller, Klein and Clark however, the state of the civil service did not have a major impact on the success or failure of their transitions. As a rule there was very little work done by any of the three province’s civil servants in the way of transition planning and policy briefings. In addition to the fact that transition planning was not a significant or ingrained part of these provinces’ histories, was the further notion that since these were leaders taking over from within the governing party, detailed briefings were less important. What was more important to these intra-party leaders was that they inherited bureaucracies that provided an environment in which their transition plans could flourish.

Inextricably, with regard to the civil service, Miller had the most difficult situation of the three. Even though Miller had an excellent working relationship with many of the top bureaucrats, particularly those in key central agencies, and despite the fact that Ontario had a much longer tradition of a professionalized civil service and a much greater number of experienced public servants than other provinces, by 1985 it was clear that the civil service in Ontario was in disarray. Much of this was as a result of the policy and administrative drift of the last three years under Davis. As a result, the civil service was unprepared for the scope of change from Davis to Miller. Moreover, there was significant change at the top, with key civil servants like Ed Stewart leaving.

However, much of the blame for low morale also lay with Miller and his inattentiveness to the bureaucracy through the early days of his transition. The civil service was
demoralized from years of policy drift and yet not only did Miller not have a plan for regeneration, neither could he provide the professional staff with any kind of policy or administrative vision. Instead, Miller had a few disparate ideas about how the public sector could work better, but this piecemeal dabbling only succeeded in driving morale even lower.

By contrast, Klein should have had a much tougher time with the bureaucracy he inherited and yet the eventual high quality of his relationship with this group could be pointed to as having a significant impact on his success. When Klein took over in 1992, the Alberta civil service was bloated and unaccountable. Lougheed and Getty had both let the public service grow unchecked and by 1992 there were a myriad of programs and offices that were in need of significant reform. One could assume that Klein, with his platform outlining the need for smaller government, deficit reduction, and accountability from government including the previously unheard of notion of business plans from ministries, could easily have been construed as the civil service’s worst enemy. And while there was significant opposition to many of Klein’s proposals – he eventually turned the civil service into a major ally, in part, because of two principal factors.

The first was that the best and brightest of the civil service, many of whom resided in the Minister of Finance, were truly and mortally embarrassed by the budget mistruths of the Getty era. With oil and gas forecasts wildly overestimated and with staff’s hands tied by the Lougheed edict that failure or mistakes are never admitted, high levels of frustration and low morale were palpable forces within the bureaucracy. Klein and Dinning’s opening up of the process and drive for fiscal respectability struck a chord with many of the best civil servants.

The second factor was Klein’s personal interaction skills. As Minister of Environment he won over scores of civil servants with his open, engaging manner, his disinterest in placing blame on underlings and his communicative, open, consensus gathering style. From his time as Mayor of Calgary, Klein knew the importance of having a loyal and committed professional staff and he worked hard to cultivate these relationships both as Minister and Premier.

Of the three cases, Glen Clark was affected the least by problems within the civil service. Since Tommy Douglas, the NDP have worked hard to integrate key political staff into all levels of the public bureaucracy. By the time Clark was ready to take the reins, he had loyal NDP staff at all key positions in government including in the ministry policy and communications shops. This synergy allowed Clark access to wide spectrum of resources and to focus these resources solely of the challenge of re-electing an NDP government in 1996. Clark was aided in this endeavour by a sympathetic deputy, highly politicized central agencies and a willingness by his cabinet to stand aside and allow him to deal directly with their ministry staffs. By centralizing decision-making directly to his office, Clark was able to harness the powers of the BC civil service even more effectively.
7.4 Endogenous Variables

The second major grouping of variables involves those factors over which the intra-party leader has some modicum of control. While a new premier may be able to respond to an economic downturn, a nasty outgoing leader or an intransigent civil service, those actions are largely reactive and often cannot do much to mitigate the damage. Endogenous variables are arguably the more important variables to be considered because they are not dependent on a particular situation or environment and can be approached in a pro-active manner by the new leader. As discussed in Chapter Two, for the purposes of this study these variables are divided into three sub-categories, Planning, Political Entreprenurialism and the overarching element referred to as Footprinting.

Endogenous Variables - Planning

One of the best examples of an endogenous variable over which a new leader can exert some control is the whole area of transition planning. Of all the accounts for this study and the various texts written on the subject, never has there been a suggestion that a transition failed because it was over planned.

Team

The first element of any good plan involves constructing a quality team. Clark and Klein had excellent teams, both had experience and had overcome issue management challenges, so that by the time the elections were called, the team members were tested and battle ready. Clark was able to get people from a variety of subgroups within the NDP, including several Harcourt people who should have been upset with Clark pushing Harcourt out of office. Klein had a great team and was able to co-opt rafts of civil servants in the communications areas as a means to getting his message out.

Miller’s team on the other hand, was a sad sack mixture of Big Blue Machine (BBM) holdovers and his own leadership team. His favoured people were too young and inexperienced and he made several mistakes even before he was sworn in, such as like the bunker incident. Miller frittered away his excellent relationship with the media, and he had too little confidence to run the campaign his wife and his heart wanted.

One fact that became evident during this study was – when someone is a popular down-to-earth populist, most backroom supporters are less intimidated and therefore believe that they know more about what people want and need than the leader does himself. These types of leaders seem more susceptible to being manipulated than others because there is less intimidation. Certainly this was the case with Miller. In the case of Klein, perhaps this was Rod Love’s greatest contribution – is that he was completely loyal and a pit bull for Ralph Klein – not easily put off by so called “experts”.

Miller did little or no planning for his transition. His character and his experience was such that he was only really interested in attaining office, not keeping it. The planning that was done was mostly vindictive scheming on how to screw other leadership hopefuls out of cabinet posts and advertising contracts with the government. Miller spent way too
much time worrying about internal administrative and governance matters rather than how to fight and win the immediately upcoming election. Miller made a mess of the post leadership healing process and made several dreadful personnel decisions. Similarly, Miller put little thought into his election management team. As one senior PC staffer suggested at the time, “Norman Atkins could have made this work. He would have known how to handle the transition and how to manage the election. He would have brought the disparate sides together and united them against the opposition.”

What bringing in Atkins doesn’t take into account, however, is that like Davis and Robarts before him, Miller needed to look different than his predecessors. Whether a charter member of the BBM would have been comfortable running a campaign to Miller’s strengths and away from Bill Davis’ legacy is unknown. Certainly Atkins had a history of being able to run unique, anti-establishment campaigns as he did for Allan Lawrence and for Bill Davis in 1971. Atkins would have brought other key elements to the table. His appointment would have appeased Grossman and kept Grossman out of Miller’s hair. As well Atkins was renowned for his ability to get people to work together – a team approach that the Miller campaign team desperately needed.

Clark’s planning and the construction of his team was all about the election. In fact, insiders suggest that Clark ran for the leadership not simply because he knew he could win, but because he knew he would dominate to such an extent that he would be able to act as the defacto premier from the moment Harcourt resigned. This is exactly what transpired and the result was that Clark had tremendous power, little scrutiny and no accountability right up until the day the leadership vote was held. It was during this period that Clark was able to mobilize the government forces including the unprecedented use of senior bureaucrats in his campaign, civil servant labour to work out and sell his policy announcements and most importantly, harness the massive amount of government advertising to his own political ends.

Clark’s team and strategy were designed to be seamless and workable from the moment he started the leadership race to the moment he won the general election. Everything at the party, government and public level was done for the election night. A good example was his acceptance speech after having won the leadership race. Rather than soothe the party faithful in the hall about healing the divisions created by the leadership, Clark took the opportunity to speak directly to voters of the province about the evil qualities of Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals. This is in contrast to Miller who plodded from one challenge to the next with little cohesion, synergy or momentum.

As a result of his tenure in key portfolios, Clark felt little need to do detailed transition planning. There was precedent in BC of this kind of activity in that Harcourt had senior bureaucrat George Ford working diligently on a transition plan in 1991. Clark’s planning was mostly on pre-election work. This focus paid off but, he eventually paid the price as issues such as the 1995-96 budget and casinos came back to haunt him and eventually drive him from office.

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778 Former Tory Campaign Manager, Interview, December 18, 1998
With Jim Dinning as Minister of Finance, and Rod Love as Chief of Staff, Klein had the right mix of policy and political planning. He planned for governance, but was able to never take his eye off the political ball. Indeed, these two sides actually meshed together so well that announcements and government strategies benefited both sides of the equation. Klein put together an excellent team and had his finger on the pulse of Alberta voters concerns and, equally important, the Social Credit sense of frugality and common sense. This was not all new insight. Klein had been using some of the same folksy populism as Mayor of Calgary. What he did not plan right away was his fiscal conservative message. That came through listening and other events. Miller was never sure he wanted to be Premier and was uncomfortable in the role once he got it. Miller was always very aware and intimidated by Davis’ shadow.

Avoiding hubris and naïveté
Another key element of successful transition planning is pre-acknowledging one’s own biases and weaknesses. Three of the most common and dangerous biases held by incoming intra-party transition leaders is that they have nothing to learn from the outgoing leader, that incumbency and longevity in office are a significant political benefit, and that the opposition is typically much weaker than it actual is. Not acknowledging these three political conceits can undermine even the best-laid transition plans.

Avoiding the feelings of overconfidence or cockiness can be particularly difficult for intra-party leaders because they inevitably are senior cabinet ministers in the existing government and have had significant experience in governing and politics. Typically, prideful new leaders forego transition planning as unnecessary, ignore political preparations because they are “too wrapped up” in the day to day of governing or, in the worse case, succumb to a false sense of security regarding the strength of their opposition. In the case of Frank Miller, all three scenarios applied. One of the principal problems during the leadership and the subsequent transition was the ingrained belief by most Tories that theirs was a divine right to govern in Ontario. Many supporters suggested they voted Miller in because literally anyone could have led the Tories to electoral victory in 1986. Their overconfidence bred by 42 years of continuous power was instrumental in the failure of Miller’s transition.

Avoiding hubris was much easier for Clark and Klein given their precarious political situations. Both were saddled with unpopular predecessors, low public opinion polls, governments that were in fiscal disarray and well established, well financed opposition parties waiting to strike. Both teams felt such pressure from the limited amount of time available during their intra-party transitions, that there was little time for arrogance or self-congratulation. Klein’s group learned earlier that they could ill-afford any hubris when they performed well below expectations in the first run-off ballot of the leadership race. Afterward Klein would consistently exhibit a refreshing down to earth humbleness, particularly in the way he continually asked for advice and suggestions from a wide variety of folk. Glen Clark’s group had a different problem in that they had contend with the leader himself, who by his very nature was cocky and occasionally supercilious. In interviews after the fact, Clark acknowledged that personality was sometimes over the
top and had to be reined in for the duration of the transition period. Overall, both Klein and Clark were able to generally avoid the traps and pitfalls associated with the over-inflated sense of self so often displayed by new leaders.

**Incorporating the Leader’s Style**

Another important part of quality planning is the need to incorporate the incoming leader’s personal style into the transition process. In the modern era and with the proliferation of mass media in the political process, constituency politics and party loyalty have taken a backseat to leadership driven politics. Elections are now about leaders and how well a new leader represents the proper and desired image to the voters. On the ground, this process involves critically examining the actions that have to be taken during the transition period, matching them with a candid account of the leader’s own strengths and weaknesses and then adapting the overall plan accordingly. Clearly what this study has shown is that, in this day and age of instant communication and constant media coverage, an increasingly sophisticated electorate will not stand for an overly packaged politician or the politician who tries to go against his or her own natural instincts.

The Clark transition was very much in the image of Clark himself. Clark handlers looked at the image of Clark, tweaked it to fit the demographics of the electorate and launched a massive and focused campaign. Clark and Klein’s teams both stayed totally focused on political rather than governance issues. There was no conscious shift from one to the other. Any governance issues that came up, by the very nature of the tight timelines that were before the Clark and Klein camps, had to viewed only through a political perspective. Not only did Clark understand the direction of his own image and campaign, he understood where he wanted the opposition to be. The ‘indelible inking of Campbell’ was as thorough and well put together as any positioning campaign in Canadian political history.

Klein was also very aware of what worked for him and he melded that with what people were looking for, particularly as a counter to what they had had before with Getty and Lougheed. Klein made a couple of key decisions, such as the campaign photo that ensured he would not be considered to be part of the Tory establishment. His staff, and particularly his long time executive assistant Rod Love, understood exactly that Klein’s folksy populism had a unique appeal to the Alberta voters and that policy and governance challenges would have be adapted to this character, not the other way around. Their commitment to this path, in the face of significant pressures from the Conservative elites in Alberta, was one of the key elements to Klein’s success.

Miller had no idea about his own image. From the moment he was elected to the Ontario legislature he was a study in contrasts as a French speaking urban professional who wore plaid jackets and yellow socks. He both embraced and repelled his populist image and the whole situation was colored by his love/hate relationship with Davis. He distrusted Davis’ red Tory roots but he immensely respected Davis’s pragmatic, brokerage managerial type style. In his heart, Miller wanted to run a Reagan-style populist, reformer type campaign, but his knowledge of the history of Ontario and the legacy of the
Tories prevented from doing this. As well, the BBM was at odds with Miller’s folksy populist appeal and didn’t adapt to it as Klein’s handlers had done so well.

During the 1985 Ontario election, each of the three leaders represented different constituencies and Miller’s staff’s inability to understand this speaks to their lack of understanding of their candidate. Miller’s vote was heavily weighted to the north, Peterson had suburban voters and Rae had the “ten-speed” vote in the urban and downtown areas. In Ontario, the Conservatives ran to the left so they could govern from the right. Davis, even with his dowdy Brampton background was able to position himself as urbane and sensitive to new trends. Miller was not a traditional Tory. In the leadership and afterwards he was seen by the rump of the party as taking them back to their roots.

In his effort to become leader, Miller made several key compromises. He stopped speaking to the press, he agreed to visit issues that were personally repugnant to him like rent control, and he kept silent on issues that he favoured but were publicly objectionable, such as the abolition of minimum wages. Furthermore, he made a critical mistake by heeding Davis’s ban on discussion of issues like full funding for Catholic schools and the purchase of Suncor. Some would argue that Miller did well in the actual leadership race because it was the one instance during the entire succession when he could in fact be himself. The majority of the delegates were older white males from outside of Toronto, a group to which Miller’s genuine ‘folksy’ charm played well.

According to Miller’s advisors, however, while this may have worked during the leadership campaign, there was no place for this “loose populism” in the Premier’s office. As a result, the compromises Miller had to make once he became Premier only intensified. Immediately upon winning the leadership, Miller spent an inordinate amount of time explaining that his group was not nearly as right wing as they had been painted. This seemingly unending need to explain that things weren’t quite as they seemed would be an oft-repeated theme throughout the remainder of the Miller succession.

However, it was not only in public style where Miller had to make compromises. In his heart Miller wanted nothing to do with Norm Atkins, whom he considered arrogant, nor any of the other Big Blue Machine members. He went back and forth on the issue of hiring Atkins to the point where he ended up with the worst of both worlds. His election team was a mixture of old and new and the result was an over abiding lack of trust and general dysfunction. The team in turn ignored Miller’s populist appeal and tried to make him over as a Davis clone. Even Miller’s preferred policy areas were rife with compromise. He only agreed with one-third of his small business package, suggesting privately that the loan provisions were contrary to his lassiez-faire tastes.

The end result of this state of constant compromise, of this conflict between the man and the politician, was indecision and loss of confidence. When this lack of direction was combined with his personal ideological conflicts, the political consequences were understandably negative.
Key events
While there are always crises and late-breaking issues during intra-party transitions that cannot be anticipated, there are several events which must occur during this time period that can be strategized around and planned for. In almost all cases of intra-party transitions, in a very short period of time, the new leader must organize a cabinet, deliver a budget and call an election. In some instances, such as the Clark transition, these last two events came within 24 hours of each other and the budget was never voted on, but that does not diminish the amount of planning that went into both.

Cabinet
Clark and Klein’s cabinets reflected their key operational and policy goals. Clark for example had talked about fiscal restraint and shrinking the size of government during the leadership race, but since these comments were not fundamental to the overall Clark vision, when it came time to construct a cabinet, his first criterion were political. Klein on the other hand, was attempting to distance himself from the excesses of the Getty-Lougheed era and therefore his significantly scaled down cabinet was in fact a political statement. Neither leader was overly concerned about appeasing past leadership hopefuls or maximizing governance capabilities with their new cabinets. Rather their sole concern was with helping individual MLA’s in strategic geographic areas retain their seats in the upcoming election.

Miller, on the other hand, was a study in contrasts as he preached fiscal restraint and yet named one of the largest cabinets in Ontario’s history. His excuse was packed in administrivia and showed no concern for the bigger political alarm bells it set off. Ultimately Miller’s cabinet building can be characterized as a lacklustre attempt at appeasing disparate leadership interests. Miller’s cabinet building was ultimately about trying to fix the past, while Clark and Klein’s efforts were entirely geared towards the politics of the immediate future.

Budget
The Clark and Klein budgets played a tremendously important role in their subsequent re-elections. Klein used the budget process as a vehicle for opening up a very closed, secretive system, for allowing public input into a heretofore elitist private process, and for symbolizing a significant changing of the guard at the Alberta legislature. Klein and Dinning’s budget had the dual purposes of distancing Klein in an extraordinary way from the previous regime and for laying the groundwork for the majority of Klein’s election platform. The 1992 budget and the process that led up to it were fundamental to Klein’s intra-party transition success.

For Clark, the budget represented a different, but no less important political challenge. The NDP were not going to run the next election on a fiscal management platform, but Clark had to inoculate himself on fiscal management issues to allow him the freedom to run the kind of campaign he wanted. Key to this process was being able to show voters that the NDP had delivered back to back balanced budgets. Many point to this proclamation to be the fundamental turning point in the NDP’s transition success. By
announcing consecutive balanced budgets, Clark had short-circuited concerns about the NDP’s ability to manage fiscal issues and it pre-empted the bulk of the opposition Liberals attacks. Despite the fact that these budget pronouncements were later found to be false and possibly fraudulent, the fact remains that, at the time, they effectively served Clark’s political purposes.

In Ontario, Miller’s decision to forgo both a budget and a legislative sitting speak both to his team’s complacency and lack of understanding of the need to establish Miller’s credentials. Miller had very little to fear by going back into the legislature and bringing down a budget in the spring of 1985. Ontario Liberal leader David Peterson was not a formidable legislative opponent and a Miller budget could have reminded the electorate of Miller’s excellent legacy as Treasurer. Most importantly a legislative session, even a shortened version, would have allowed Miller the time to heal the rifts left by the leadership race, season a campaign team, and make a personal mark as Premier. Instead, he rushed to the polls with nothing more for an economic plan than the ill-fated Enterprise Ontario, a plan that was immediately dismissed as election hokum.

**Election timing**

Clark and Klein called the election when they wanted to. They were not dictated to or squeezed into a corner on this all-important decision, a decision many say is the last real one a modern premier makes during the course of their tenure. In fact, Klein actually called his election several months earlier than he had originally planned, largely based on the fact that his intra-party transition was proceeding so smoothly. Similarly, Clark felt an imperative to go sooner rather than later for two reasons. First, there is a tradition in British Columbia of calling an election every three years. Waiting until the end of a mandate means most certain failure as exhibited by the Social Credit, who in 1991, took the government into its fifth year and were soundly beaten. Second, Clark and his staff were very aware of being seen as too close to the public service union of the provincial government, the BCGEU. The last thing Clark wanted was to be characterized as a ‘regulatory socialist’ who was used to the idea of government and maintaining government jobs above all else.

Miller was indecisive about the election call. He was intimidated by the Catholic School funding issue and was intimidated by the positive poll results. Several people felt that one of the main reasons for Miller’s loss was his choice to call the election too soon after the leadership race. “From discussions I’ve had with other deputies at the time, we felt that there were two things Miller should have done differently. He should have healed the rift with the BBM and he should have waited to call the election. If they had waited until September it would have given Miller a chance to govern.”

Their political counterparts felt the same. “The biggest mistake was going to soon. We should have brought the house back and let Miller govern. By not bringing in a Throne Speech and a budget, Miller was, even if unconsciously, trying to tie his wagon to the Davis parade. This non-action indicated that Miller did not see the need to carve his own path, to be recognized as the strong leader he was. This lack of recognition may have

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779 Senior Cabinet Office Official, Interview, December 11, 1998
sprung from a lack of confidence that he was indeed a strong charismatic leader. This then became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Added another campaign strategist, “In retrospect the Tories should have waited until the fall to call the election. Tories always do well in the summer.”

Endogenous Variables - Political Entreprenurialism

Issue and crisis management – sow’s ears and silk purses
A real test of any political organization is how well it performs under duress. The duration of a typical intra-party transition can cover a period as short as two months to a stretch of over three years. It is inevitable that during this period unforeseen items will come up, and an important measure of a new leader’s success and preparation is not only how well his or her team reacts to these crises, but as well, how they are turned to the leader’s advantage.

Miller did not have a good issue management team and his performance showed it. On the Catholic School funding issue, Miller actually had several months to properly respond to this issue. Instead, he dithered and got advice from outside sources and pollsters rather than from his closest advisors. This was indicative of Miller’s overall approach to issue management, there was no quick response team in place either before or during the 1985 election. Ultimately, Miller’s lack of decisiveness on the issue led to the blistering attacks on the Conservatives from both sides of the debate, attacks that were particularly damaging because they came at a period late in the election when Miller had just started to find his campaigning stride.

At no point should a leader’s issue management machine be more finely honed than during a general election. Unfortunately for Miller, his machine never ran properly. On the first day of the 1985 campaign, Miller was sideswiped by questions about massive federal gas price increases by his Tory counterpart in Ottawa, the newly-elected Brian Mulroney. Miller was so unprepared for these questions that not only were the specific stories negative, it began a souring of Miller’s relationship with the media – a group he had traditionally got on with very well as Treasurer. Miller had similar mishaps on issues such as the PCB spill in Kenora and when confronted with issues he was uncomfortable with, issues like pay equity.

In contrast, Glen Clark’s issue management was extraordinary. In addition to his successful repositioning of Gordon Campbell, Clark was able to build the perception of great positive activity from the government through his “60 Days of Action” plan. As well, he was able to inoculate himself and his government on difficult issues such as fiscal credibility. With regard to unforeseen issues, Clark and his team were equally adept. Part of the reason for Clark’s success was the speed with which he could respond to issues. When, in the pre-election run-up, the BC Liberals announced their $3 billion cost cutting platform, Clark responded within hours. Similarly, his reactions to the potential damaging ‘Hydrogate’ revelations were textbook, both in their speed and

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780 Former Senior PC legislative staffer, Interview, December 10, 1998
781 Former Tory Campaign Manager, Interview, December 18, 1998
clarity. During the election, Clark’s reaction to the BC Liberal ‘Taxpayers’ Plan’ took longer (over three days), but his eventual attacks were very effective.

Klein combined a natural acumen for issue management, built from years in public service and in the media, with a formidable team of experienced strategists to create an issue management team second to none. Indicative of the sophistication of this team was Klein’s deft handling of the MLA pension issue and his ongoing ability to keep social conservatives at bay while he implemented a reform-conservative agenda.

The other successful issue management technique utilized by Clark and Klein was their careful avoidance of the half measure. For example, the pension issue was problematic for Klein, but rather than trying to reach some complicated compromise, he simply cancelled the entire scheme. Many would argue that this was overkill, but the effect in the public arena was very clear, Klein was decisive and not beholden to the past. Similarly, Clark could have made tuition increases in BC the lowest in Canada but he decided to go further – for political emphasis and for maximum public relations benefit. Clark rightly understood the need to cut through the haze of voter apathy and cynicism when attempting to properly define his image as a new intra-party leader.

**Media Management – Feeding the Beast**
The final element of a successful issue management strategy is to have an up to date understanding of the media. The media’s impact on political processes is a growing, yet dynamic phenomenon. Media strategies from four years previous may be grievously out of date and intra-party leaders particularly must pay close attention to the care and feeding of the media beast if they hope to have any chance of extending their political ‘honeymoons.’ Of the three leaders, there was probably no one more attuned the shifting needs of the provincial media than Glen Clark. He had a detailed and dynamic strategy for dealing with the media which he stuck with throughout the transition period and general election. Klein was somewhat at cross purposes with the media in that he personally had a good rapport with many press gallery members, but his party was in such disarray that, at times, part of his media strategy involved media avoidance.

Another technique used successfully by both camps was to keep the leaders away from the more jaded legislative press gallery members and give preferred access instead to local beat writers and non-political journalists. At no time during his transition did Miller exhibit this level of sophistication. Immediately upon becoming premier, Miller alienated the press gallery, doubly troubling for him because of his earlier positive relationships with the media. Miller was also kept away from the media, but in a more cynical and ultimately more transparent way.

**Speed wins**
The last element of political entrepenurialism has to do with the speed with which a new leader can introduce and implement policy initiatives. Throughout the transition literature several references are made to the need for a new leader to introduce and implement small but symbolic initiatives early in transition to provide momentum and a sense of action to the enterprise. Nowhere is this truer than in an intra-party transition in
which the period of time available to a new leader is often much less than that afforded other types of incoming leaders.

The need for speed was completely lost on Miller and his team. Miller did not announce any particularly new or interesting policy initiatives during his first days as Premier and as a result his transition was characterized as lacking both direction and clarity. The potential reasons for this oversight are many and varied. Miller’s team did not include anyone who had been involved in the Davis transition, a remarkably similar situation in which Davis made several bold policy moves in his first days as an intra-party leader. Moreover, there was no sense of urgency in the Miller camp, partly due to the high public opinion polls and partly as a result of the Tory’s previous 42 years in office. Finally, some of the blame needs to go to Miller himself who simply had no plan subsequent to winning the leadership race.

In contrast, both Klein and Clark immediately understood the urgency of their positions and the need for quick policy ‘wins.’ Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ exemplified the speedy approach and gave his party a much-needed sense of momentum. Clark understood the advantage he had campaigning as the incumbent in the pre-writ period. During the election itself, the opposition would demand and receive equal media time. But during the pre-writ, Clark had the stage to himself to announce such initiatives as the tuition, hydro and car insurance freezes, the NCHS enquiry and a broad series of infrastructure improvements and he took full advantage. Clark’s ‘60 Days of Action’ however, was not as straightforward as simply repackaging and re-announcing old or moribund government initiatives. Clark was dealing with a sceptical public, a cynical press, a series of well-funded anti-NDP interest coalitions and fairly effective opposition. To be as well received as it was, ‘60 Days of Action’ had to be well organized, with quality content and orchestrated in such a way that the stories ‘did not step on each other.’ It was in the words of one senior NDP strategist, ‘the most effective two months in the history of the NDP in British Columbia.’

While Klein’s group could not match the volume or scale of the Clark announcements, it did have a clear understanding of the need for early momentum. Perhaps most indicative of Klein’s speed was the quality and quantity of bills introduced in the Alberta legislature in the short session following Klein’s swearing in as premier. Bringing in detailed legislation on such issues as deficit elimination, conflict of interest, in such a short period of time, conveyed Klein’s sense of urgency and seriousness.

**Endogenous Variables – ‘Footprinting’**

The final, yet arguably most important, endogenous variable involves an intra-party leader’s ability to distinguish himself from his predecessor and provide the voters with an indelible “footprint” which clearly identifies the new leader’s style and vision. As discussed in Chapter Two, effective footprinting encompasses all elements of transition activity and is the most difficult to execute in an intra-party situation. Not only is a new intra-party leader limited by time constraints, it is also much more difficult to distance oneself from the previous leader when that person is of the same political persuasion.

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782 Former Senior Advisor to the Premier, Interview, October 9, 1998
Given the legacy of Progressive Conservatives in Alberta, Klein’s ability to distance himself was inspired. To demand, for example, a full accounting of his government’s financial records, even though he had been a senior cabinet minister in that same government, and to be lauded for such an action, showed a chutzpah and political acumen unprecedented in Canadian history. Interestingly, Klein did all this without uttering one negative word about his predecessor Getty.

Klein and Clark knew from the beginning that they had to run against their predecessors. Miller didn’t realize this until after the election was over. Clark and Klein understood that there were questions about their leadership abilities and their vision for their provinces’ future. Miller’s understanding of these key issues was blurred by this party’s dominance of Ontario politics and the incredible legacy of his predecessor. As a result he did little to distance himself and relied on props and half measures, much like Kim Campbell did in her transition, to signify change.

In making an effort to footprint, Klein and Clark had to win the battle of personalities. Miller never put any effort into this because until almost half way into the election campaign, his team did not even acknowledge his Liberal opponent, David Peterson. To properly win the personality war, a detailed plan to position one’s opposition seems to be key.

Three factors led to Clark’s effective distancing from the Harcourt regime. Through his quick response on Hydrogate, Clark showed his decisiveness and leadership, both qualities Harcourt was deemed to have lacked. He reiterated this image by quickly and decisively by calling for a full inquiry into the NCHS scandal, something Harcourt had refused to do. Finally, by making himself the Minister of Youth, availing himself of a variety of youthful “photo-ops” and making key announcements around education and youth issues, Clark was able to show the generational differences between himself and his predecessor.

After Clark himself resigned from office under a cloud in 1999, he had this advice for the leadership candidates hoping to replace him. “...they should be taking positions critical of me, that’s totally fine.” He then recounted his version of the conventional wisdom that whoever seeks the top spot in a political party should distance themselves from the previous occupant.783

Miller was conflicted about distancing himself from the previous Tory administration. He deeply respected Davis, but knew that many of Davis’ last policy moves were deeply misguided. Miller had neither the wherewithal nor the support to actively reverse these decisions, nor could he distance himself properly from them.

With regard to making his own distinct “footprint” on the office of Premier, Miller never saw this as a priority. He preferred to try and fit the mould of previous Tory premiers even though his personal style and support base were so obviously different. This

783 Glen Clark in Vaughn Palmer, “That Old Pro Clark offers advice to NDP hopefuls,” in the Vancouver Sun, October 15, 1999, A7
dichotomy of styles was ultimately the main reason for his downfall. Many people suggested that Miller needed to have gotten out from behind Davis’ shadow. For the most part these are the same people who also suggested that Miller needed to avail himself of all of Davis’ former strategists. The contradiction of these two dictums was lost on most. “One of Frank’s problems is that he never developed a unique public persona for himself. The stop-start nature of his leadership campaign was as much to blame for this as anything else. Frank was exceptionally loyal to Davis, even though they disagreed ideologically. If Frank had of been truly keen on becoming Premier he would have never abandoned his leadership machine in 1984. This looked like vacillation and for the most cynical, expediency.”784

Most of the Tories interviewed for this study clearly had never come to grips with the fact Davis had actually left. They were not emotionally or intellectually prepared for his leaving. As one participant observed, “this is why Davis’ going away ceremony at the leadership convention was so half assed, this is why no one called him on his destructive meddling during the transition and this is why the Tories didn’t pull together behind Miller. In their heart of hearts, Miller was not their guy and the people who delivered the leadership for Miller were either too inexperienced or too spent to get the second, more important job done.”785

Others suggest that Miller would have distanced himself, but there was simply not enough time. “Miller had no time to define himself. He allowed himself to be defined by the other teams – the other leadership candidates, the opposition parties and when he alienated them, the media became alienated as well.”786

Miller himself acknowledged the need for distance, but did not realize the extent to which he had to go to achieve it. As he said to colleagues, “I understood I had to get out and set up my own image. That’s in part what the ethnic speeches were about. The media did not heavily cover these speeches. We did work very hard during the election. I especially remember working hard on the ethnic vote. That was an area that had traditionally flummoxed Tory campaign workers, and I was determined to make some inroads there. I gave speeches in French, Italian and German to try and garner support.”787

While Miller paid lip service to the need to distance himself from his predecessors, Ralph Klein took action. From the moment he entered the leadership race, Klein was determined to distance himself from the conservative status quo and carve out his own niche within the party and with the voters. Klein’s was arguably a much more difficult

784 Former Executive Director of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, Interview, December 10, 1998
785 Former Davis Appointee and Senior Party Activist, Interview, December 9, 1998
786 Former Senior PC legislative staffer, Interview, December 10, 1998
787 Former Senior Cabinet Minister, Interview, December 12, 1998. This statement shows an amazing level of naiveté. First because Miller giving a few speeches seems to be the extent to which the Tories seemed to work these constituencies and second that Miller thought that giving a speech in German was going to help the Tories with new immigrants to Ontario. If this was really their strategy they were about two and a half generations too late.
task than Clark’s because, while both were following unpopular leaders, Klein was involved with a much more entrenched and successful political party. For Klein to effectively leave his own stamp, he would have to walk a much finer line than Glen Clark.

And this he did. From the outset, Klein was able to insert his unique political persona into the equation without directly attacking former Premier Getty or the established Conservative elites. In the run-up to the leadership race he was able to maintain his easy going casual populist approach, but still managed to secure critical funding and support from the ultra-conservative cattlemen’s groups. During the leadership race, Klein used his influence as a cabinet minister to secure the support of over 35 caucus members yet still was able to portray himself as an outsider.

Upon winning the leadership, Klein did not embrace his leadership opponents as is so often done. Rather, in a bold political move, he shunned most of them including his main opponent, Betkowski. Klein understood that it was more important to be perceived as his own man distinct from the party of the past even if it meant giving up valuable internal political support. This understanding continued to permeate every decision Klein made throughout the transition period. At his swearing in Klein had native dancers and burned the traditional sweet grass, symbols of his interest in native spirituality and certainly a major departure from the legislative ceremonies of Getty and Lougheed.

In a series of largely symbolic, but important moves, Klein removed the red carpet from the legislature, delivered his own press releases, and eliminated many of the MLA’s cherished perks including the overly rich pension plan. Finally and most dramatically, in a very short period of time, Ralph Klein radically altered the way the government was run and money spent in the province. All of these moves show an awareness of the need to quickly and decisively lay out a perception of the new leader as distinct from his predecessor and unique in his own right. Perhaps out of ideological commitment or political urgency both Clark and Klein realized that this was the only path to transition success. Conversely, Miller did not adequately distance himself from his predecessor, nor did he leave a significant or positive enough ‘footprint’ to win voter’s support and secure what should have been a straightforward electoral victory. While the other factors discussed in this chapter all have an impact, it is the intra-party transition leader’s ability to leave a significant ‘footprint’ which will have the most impact on the that leader’s subsequent success or failure.

7.5 Conclusion

One of the most important lessons to be taken away from this study has to do with the importance of democratic transitions. Not only are they an important symbol of our modern democracies, but as well they play a significant role in the success or failure of governments and leaders. As was stated in Chapter One, transitions are to governments what take-offs and landings are to airplanes - infrequent but inordinately essential occurrences.
Yet, despite the essential nature of a well-executed transition, comparatively little has been written on the subject. Moreover, even less has been written about the less frequent but no less important, intra-party transition. If nothing else, this study has shown that a well-run intra-party transition can contribute to massive political turnarounds, as was the case with Clark and Klein, while a neglected intra-party transition can precipitate the collapse of a dynasty, as was the case with Frank Miller.

In Canada, there have been relatively few intra-party transitions at the provincial level and even fewer successful ones. This study has identified the thirteen successful transitions since 1960 and attempted to learn a little about what was behind their success. After examining an exhaustive list of factors that impact these political events, it is clear that the ability to properly footprint is a key variable to success. Both Clark and Klein exhibited this ability, albeit in strikingly different ways, and both had successful transitions.

Many of the lessons learned from the Clark and Klein transitions are transferable to inter-party transitions, to leaders of political parties and large organizations generally. One interesting conclusion is that Clark and Klein were able to grasp and master the levers of power so quickly and so comprehensively. In fact, they did it almost too well. It brings up the question of whether or not there should be more checks and balances to safeguard against this kind of transition. In both cases, new leaders who had no mandate from the public were able to fully utilize all government resources available to them to significant advantage over their opponents. In Clark’s case, he intimidated his way through an unfettered leadership race, he avoided any accountability to the public by using emergency special warrants to pay to keep the government in action. He allowed no debate on key government activities, most notably the annual budget. He mobilized huge government advertising contracts, he overwhelmed the media with government (not political) announcements, and he compromised key government ministries including the Treasury, all in a blur of activity that ultimately won him the post he sought – the Premiership. As Jones points out the transition paradigm has shifted.

Political operatives have listened closely to the lessons taught about the powers of the honeymoon and the opportunities available to those who utilize the transition period. What Clark and Klein have taught us is that, if done correctly, the new intra-party transition leader has even a greater political advantage heading into a general election, than would an incumbent leader. Someone who becomes leader as a result of an intra-party transition has all the advantages of incumbency – full access to government resources for political use, name recognition, favourable contacts in and outside government – and if properly managed, has the further advantage of carrying much less political baggage in to the subsequent campaign. An incumbent leader has the weight of four to five years of decisions to be judged against, four to five years of the inevitable scandals and bad judgements of their cabinet and caucus with which to contend. The intra-party leader has none of these. In fact, the intra-party leader, if wise, will actively run against their own government record as a means of ‘footprinting’ their own
candidacy. Furthermore, the intra-party leader has the added advantage of a ‘honeymoon’ period in which the media scrutiny is much less that would be the case for an incumbent leader attempting re-election. In the cases of Klein and Clark, this honeymoon was augmented by the fact that they were perceived to have been starting their campaigns so far behind those of their opposition. Not only was the media scrutiny of their opponents greater, the media worked to promote their campaigns in order to ensure that the ultimate battle for election was sufficiently close as to encourage readership and sales.

Finally, although it is beyond the scope of this paper, one of the last questions that should be addressed when considering the transitions of Clark and Klein is whether or not these intra-party leaders actually did too well. Previous to these two transitions in the early 1990’s, no intra-party leader had ever overcome expectations of failure and come on to win the subsequent election. By utilizing almost revolutionary methods of issue management, by fully harnessing the powers and resources of the Premier’s office for re-election purposes, by boldly abandoning the traditionally transition paradigm of grabbing the governance levers in favour of an all out political assault and by unabashedly and publicly distancing themselves from their predecessors, Clark and Klein achieved results unprecedented in Canadian history. As unelected leaders of government, they led their parties to majority governments using programs for which there had been no previous model.

In fact, so effective were Clark and Klein in their aggressive use of every political and governmental instrument available in an incumbency situation, a question could be raised regarding democratic fairness. Although there is a body of work on the political advantages of incumbency, the unique circumstances and possible advantages to a new intra-party leader have never been analyzed. Some may argue that this study has shown that there may be some weaknesses and some significant tests to fairness in a parliamentary system that allows entrepreneurial and politically dynamic leaders like Clark and Klein such significant political advantages.

In other words, are we now seeing a structural weakness in the legislative system that can be exploited by only the most talented of political operatives? Should the system be allowed to continue and these operatives rewarded for their skill and focus, or should we consider these types of campaigns abuses against our democratic institutions abuses that need to be reviewed and rectified. What safeguards could be implemented to ensure that any unfair advantage accrued in these situations be mitigated. Should the very successful intra-party campaigns of Glen Clark and Ralph Klein be left as examples of superior political strategy and planning or should they stand as examples of an abuse of situation and circumstance. In the second scenario, would something like a fixed election date or other legislative reform improve the situation? These important questions have all been raised as a result of this analysis but must remain, unfortunately, the subject for future study.

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784 Given their ideological differences, there is no evidence to suggest that the Clark team paid any special attention to, or studied in any way the Klein transition, which had occurred 3 years earlier.
Appendices
Table Appendix -1: Longest Serving Canadian Provincial Governments and Premiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Longest Serving Government</th>
<th>Longest Serving Premier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>Social Credit, 1952-72</td>
<td>WAC Bennett, 1952-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>Social Credit, 1935-71</td>
<td>Ernest Manning, 1943-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>CCF(1)/NDP, 1944-64</td>
<td>Tommy Douglas, 1944-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>Coalition(2), 1922-58</td>
<td>John Bracken, 1922-43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Prog. Conservative(3), 1943-85</td>
<td>Oliver Mowat 1872-1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>Liberal, 1897-1936</td>
<td>M. Duplessis 1936-39, 44-59</td>
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<td>N.B.</td>
<td>Liberal, 1883-1908</td>
<td>Richard Hatfield, 1970-87</td>
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<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>Liberal, 1882-1925</td>
<td>George Murray, 1896-1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>Liberal, 1935-1959</td>
<td>Alex Campbell, 1966-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>Liberal, 1949-1972</td>
<td>Joseph Smallwood, 1949-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
(2) United Farmers of Manitoba, Progressive, Liberal-Progressive
(3) Progressive Conservative

*789 All election results and data have been collected from a variety of sources including: the Canadian Almanac, 1998, Feigert’s Canada Votes, The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, Madden, Wayne D. (ed.). Canadian Guide of Leadership and Electoral History: 1867-1997. and from discussions with staff at Provincial Elections Offices across the country.*
Provincial Premiers – As of August, 1998

1. British Columbia Premiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Party</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>J. F. McCreight</td>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Nov. 13, 1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor De Cosmos</td>
<td>1872-74</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Dec. 23, 1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. A. Walkem</td>
<td>1874-76</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Feb. 11, 1874</td>
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<td>A. C. Elliott</td>
<td>1876-78</td>
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<td>G. A. Walkem</td>
<td>1878-82</td>
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<td>June 25, 1878</td>
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<td>Robert Beaven</td>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>June 13, 1882</td>
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<td>William Smithe</td>
<td>1883-87</td>
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<td>Jan. 29, 1883</td>
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<td>A. E. B. Davie</td>
<td>1887-89</td>
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<td>May 1, 1887</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Robson</td>
<td>1889-92</td>
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<td>Aug. 2, 1889</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore Davie</td>
<td>1892-95</td>
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<td>July 2, 1892</td>
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<td>J. H. Turner</td>
<td>1895-98</td>
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<td>Mar. 4, 1895</td>
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<td>C. A. Semlin</td>
<td>1898-1900</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Aug. 15, 1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Martin</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Feb. 28, 1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Dunsmuir</td>
<td>1900-02</td>
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<td>June 15, 1900</td>
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<td>E. G. Prior</td>
<td>1902-03</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Nov. 21, 1902</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard McBride</td>
<td>1903-15</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>June 1, 1903</td>
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<td>William J. Bowser</td>
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<td>Dec. 15, 1915</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harlan C. Brewster</td>
<td>1916-18</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Nov. 23, 1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Oliver</td>
<td>1918-27</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Mar. 6, 1918</td>
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<td>John D. MacLean</td>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Aug. 20, 1927</td>
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<td>Simon F. Tolmie</td>
<td>1928-33</td>
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<td>Aug. 21, 1928</td>
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<td>T. D. Pattullo</td>
<td>1933-41</td>
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<td>Nov. 15, 1933</td>
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<td>John Hart</td>
<td>1941-47</td>
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<td>Dec. 9, 1941</td>
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<td>Byron Johnson</td>
<td>1947-52</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. A. C. Bennett</td>
<td>1952-72</td>
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<td>David Barrett</td>
<td>1972-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Vander Zalm</td>
<td>1986-91</td>
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2. Alberta Premiers

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<th>Premier</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex Rutherford</td>
<td>1905-10</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Sept. 2, 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. L. Sifton</td>
<td>1910-17</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>May 26, 1910</td>
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<td>Charles Stewart</td>
<td>1917-21</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Oct. 30, 1917</td>
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<td>Herbert Greenfield</td>
<td>1921-25</td>
<td>U.F.A.</td>
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<td>John E. Brownlee</td>
<td>1925-34</td>
<td>U.F.A.</td>
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<td>Richard G. Reid</td>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>U.F.A.</td>
<td>July 10, 1934</td>
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<td>E. C. Manning</td>
<td>1943-68</td>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>May 31, 1943</td>
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<td>Harry Strom</td>
<td>1968-71</td>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>Dec. 12, 1968</td>
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<td>Peter Lougheed</td>
<td>1971-85</td>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>Sept. 10, 1971</td>
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<td>Don Getty</td>
<td>1985-92</td>
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<td>Nov. 1, 1985</td>
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3. Saskatchewan Premiers

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<tr>
<td>Walter Scott</td>
<td>1905-16</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Sept. 5, 1905</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. M. Martin</td>
<td>1916-22</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Oct. 20, 1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. A. Dunning</td>
<td>1922-26</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Apr. 5, 1922</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. G. Gardiner</td>
<td>1926-29</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Feb. 26, 1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. T. M. Anderson</td>
<td>1929-34</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Sept. 9, 1929</td>
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<td>J. G. Gardiner</td>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>July 19, 1934</td>
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<td>W. J. Patterson</td>
<td>1935-44</td>
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<td>Nov. 1, 1935</td>
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<td>Tommy Douglas</td>
<td>1944-61</td>
<td>C.C.F. *</td>
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<td>W. S. Lloyd</td>
<td>1961-64</td>
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<td>W. Ross Thatcher</td>
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<td>Allan E. Blakeney</td>
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<td>Grant Devine</td>
<td>1982-91</td>
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(*) Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.
### 4. Manitoba Premiers

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Boyd</td>
<td>1870-71</td>
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<td>Sept. 16, 1870</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. A. Girard</td>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Dec. 14, 1871</td>
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<td>M. A. Girard</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>July 8, 1874</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. A. Davis</td>
<td>1874-78</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Dec. 3, 1874</td>
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<td>John Norquay</td>
<td>1878-87</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Oct. 16, 1878</td>
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<td>D. H. Harrison</td>
<td>1887-88</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Dec. 26, 1887</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. Greenway</td>
<td>1888-1900</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Jan. 19, 1888</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. J. Macdonald</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Jan. 8, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir R. P. Roblin</td>
<td>1900-15</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Oct. 29, 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. C. Norris</td>
<td>1915-22</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>May 12, 1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bracken</td>
<td>1922-43</td>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Aug. 8, 1922</td>
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<td>S. S. Garson</td>
<td>1943-48</td>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Jan. 8, 1943</td>
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<td>D. L. Campbell</td>
<td>1948-58</td>
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<td>Nov. 11, 1948</td>
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<td>Edward Schreyer</td>
<td>1969-77</td>
<td>New Democratic</td>
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<td>Sterling Lyon</td>
<td>1977-81</td>
<td>Prog. Conservative</td>
<td>Nov. 24, 1977</td>
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<td>Howard Pawley</td>
<td>1981-88</td>
<td>New Democratic</td>
<td>Nov. 30, 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary Doer</td>
<td>1999-</td>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>Oct. 5, 1999</td>
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(*) United Farmer/Progressive, 1922-27; Coalition, (*) 1927-37; Liberal--Progressive, 1937-43.

### 5. Ontario Premiers

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<th>Premier</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<tr>
<td>J.S. Macdonald</td>
<td>1867-71</td>
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<td>July 16, 1867</td>
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<td>Edward Blake</td>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Dec. 20, 1871</td>
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<td>Oliver Mowat</td>
<td>1872-96</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Oct. 25, 1872</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthur S. Hardy</td>
<td>1896-99</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>July 25, 1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>George W. Ross</td>
<td>1899-1905</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Oct. 21, 1899</td>
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<td>Sir James P. Whitney</td>
<td>1905-14</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Feb. 8, 1905</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ernest C. Drury</td>
<td>1919-23</td>
<td>United Farmers</td>
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### Ontario Premiers cont’d

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### Quebec Premiers

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### 10. Nova Scotia

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11. The Prime Ministers of Canada

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1998 Canadian Global Almanac
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(2) Known as the Conservative Party until 1944.

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(3) Confederation of Regions

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Notes:
Alberta and Saskatchewan entered Confederation Sept. 1, 1905.
For the 1917 election, Conservative refers to "Unionists," a coalition of Conservatives and pro-conscription Liberals; Liberals, for the 1917 election, are sometimes called "Laurier Liberals" because of their support for Laurier's anti-conscription stand.
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Toronto Star
Vancouver Sun
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