

DISUNITY IN TRANSITION: A Comparative Analysis
of Organizational, Policy and Leadership
Conflicts within Western Separatist Groups -- West-
Fed and WCC (February, 1980-August, 1982)

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a case study of West-Fed Association and Western Canada Concept. As the two major separatist organizations in western Canada, operating in the early 1980s, these two groups have received an abundance of curious attention from the media and academics alike. Yet little of this attention has been focused on the internal structure and workings of the two associations. This study's objective therefore, is to gain a clearer understanding of how West-Fed and Western Canada Concept functioned as political organizations. More specifically, the paper will highlight those internal conflicts which severely weakened and dramatically altered the two groups; of particular interest will be the importance and scope of each association's organization, policy and leadership components as contributors to the creation and development of the several conflicts. In the end, however, the essay will argue that neither West-Fed nor Western Canada Concept have suffered a greater degree of internal dissension than any other political organization, suggesting that the two groups can (or could have) decrease the severity of future conflicts once they establish a clear sense of priorities.

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1975 - Victoria lawyer, Douglas Christie, writes letter to editor of city's newspaper promoting western separatism
 - Committee for Western Independence (CWI) founded
- 1979 - CWI changes name to Western National Association (WNA)
 - Christie becomes leader of WNA
- 1980 (Feb.) - Edmonton businessman Elmer Knutson writes letter to Edmonton Journal criticizing Quebec-based, Francophone-supported Liberal party
- (May) - West-Fed Association incorporated under Alberta Societies Act
- (June) - Christie leaves WNA to found Western Canada Concept (WCC)
- (July-Dec.) - Both Christie and Knutson begin touring western Canada speaking on the inequities of Confederation
- (Nov.) - Christie attracts 2,700 people to Edmonton's Jubilee Auditorium
- 1981 (Mar.) - West-Fed Calgary executives voice their dissatisfaction with Knutson's centralized control; Knutson's attempt to censure them results in the Calgary executives resigning "en masse"
- (May) - First "elected" WCC executive takes office
- (June) - WCC national executive confronts Christie on his unitary state policy
- (July-Aug.) - Christie tours western Canada
- (Aug.) - West-Fed's annual convention results in Knutson's move from the presidency to the leadership, support for a motion from the Calgary riding associations to turn West-Fed into an outright separatist group, and a mandate to negotiate a merger or coalition with WCC.
- (Sept.) - WCC national executive meets to organize Alberta provincial party
 - Christie writes letter to members opposing the national executive's move; he tenders his resignation

- (Oct.) - Christie's resignation accepted through non-support; WCC's national office ceases to exist; most former national officers assume positions in new WCC (Alberta) party. WCC is now two autonomous provincial parties in B.C. and Alberta
- (Dec.) - West-Fed Calgary executives, dissatisfied with lack of progress on negotiations with WCC, decide to leave West-Fed to work for WCC.
- 1982 (Jan.) - Other West-Fed constituency organizations follow the Calgary lead; soon after the entire B.C. contingent defects to WCC; West-Fed effectively dead.
- (Feb.) - Gordon Kesler elected in Alberta riding of Olds-Didsbury in by-election under WCC banner; B.C. wing starts to take shape under pro-tem presidency of Don Munro.
- (Mar.-Apr.) - Kesler adopts a moderate stance on the importance of a separatist image for the party; ensuing confrontation with Maygard and Westmore (leader and president, respectively); the two latter individuals resign; Kesler appointed interim leader.
- (June) - WCC (B.C.) annual convention; Christie defeats Munro for the leadership
- (Aug.) - WCC (Alberta) annual convention; Kesler defeats long-time party organizer Howard Thompson for the leadership.

INTRODUCTION

In any new political party or movement, the greatest threat to the continued existence of the organization is from the members themselves. The direct and indirect actions of the membership determine whether the emergent association will survive the initial stages of development. Internal conflict, not external factors, is the first enemy. Yet dissension is virtually inevitable in any political organization as there are bound to be divergent opinions on matters when a disparate grouping of politically-motivated individuals are brought together.

Certainly dissension is not foreign to Canadian political parties and movements. The Progressive Conservative party has a long history of internal conflict -- the most recent incident being the displeasure with the Joe Clark leadership voiced publicly by a large number of party and caucus members. The Liberals have also experienced internal unity problems as witnessed by the letter sent to Prime Minister Trudeau by ten Liberal Members of Parliament from Quebec questioning his high interest rates policy. As for political movements, the British Columbia anti-racist organizations are currently embroiled in a heated, and sometimes violent debate over the best tactics to use in furthering their cause. Still, these conflicts, serious as they are, have not resulted in the wholesale destruction of the respective organizations. One reason these groups have been able to survive the disputes when a newer political association may not, lies in the distinction between internal and external factors.¹ Established organizations have the advantage of a clearly-defined external threat; if the external

threat is perceived by the members as being of greater import than internal factors, then internal disputes should not have grave debilitating consequences. For the Liberals and the Conservatives the greater threat is from each other, not Clark's leadership or Trudeau's policies. Similarly B.C. anti-racist groups are at one in their perception of the common enemy being the racists. New political organizations often do not have the benefit of unanimity as to the correct external adversary, however.

Invariably the people who join newly-formed political groupings come with different opinions as to what constitutes the greatest threat to them. For example, in western separatist organizations the members' views of the leading external foe range from Confederation itself to the Liberal party, to Trudeau, to metrification or bilingualism. Hence, unless or until there is a consensus on what poses the greatest threat to the freedom and liberty of a new association's members, they will often turn their energies inwards, concentrating on internal issues instead.

The object of this paper is to come to a better understanding of the internal forces which caused the destruction of West-Fed and the near destruction of Western Canada Concept (WCC). In addition, I want to test the assumption that one reason emergent political organizations are more prone to self-destruction by internal conflict than more established groups is because the former have yet to gain general agreement on what constitutes the greatest external threat. In this sense it will be argued that the two western separatist² groups were the architects of their own problems. The internal disunity which severely weakened both organizations was not much different than that suffered occasionally by the established political

associations. But, internal conflict proved to have very serious consequences for West-Fed and WCC, largely because neither was able to divert the members' collective energies towards a generally accepted external threat. Further, the paper attempts to discover the types of disputes -- be they over organization, policy or leadership -- which were the cause of large-scale disunity.

It is hoped that the paper will be a significant addition to the western separatism literature, if only because it fills a void. Much attention has been granted this recent phenomenon called western separatism. The television and print media have reported the size and tenor of separatist meetings, they have aired the separatists grievances, conveyed their policies, and delighted in unearthing their unity problems; the pollsters have gauged the degree of support for secession; academics have endeavoured to discover the roots of separatist sentiments, have systematically dismantled separatist complaints trying to discern their validity, or have analyzed the feasibility of an independent west. My interests do not lie in these areas. Much of this research on western separatism deals with factors external to the two organizations. My concern is exactly the opposite: I want to analyze the internal constitution of the two groups, paying particular attention to those areas which were sources of disunity. Hence, the paper will be primarily a case-study of the two associations.

The format of the essay is based on a belief that both parties and movements can be broken down into three component parts -- organization, policies and leadership.³ These variables will be reviewed for each organization so their specific contribution to internal conflict can be

ascertained. It is expected that each is a potential source of disunity. If the organization of the decision-making process is viewed as illegitimate, if the policies drafted are unrepresentative of the members' interests, or if the leadership is not respected due to perceived incompetence or disinterest, then dissension will likely result.

The first section of the paper is a discussion of the background of West-Fed and WCC, the main purpose of which is to familiarize the reader with the individuals, events, issues, and decisions which played a major role in the conflicts to be discussed later. The second and third sections review the organization, policy and leadership characteristics of West-Fed and WCC respectively. These parts will expand on the background material of the first section. The segment on the organizational qualities of both groups will emphasize the decision-making structure and process as a contributor to dissension. The policy component is designed to highlight those policies which produced the most controversy; leadership will be delineated with the intention of constructing a composite of the leaders' political qualities and distinctive personality traits. In these sections the discussion is geared towards providing answers to questions of why dissension surfaced and from where it emerged. In later sections the similarities and differences between West-Fed and WCC with respect to organizational, policy and leadership conflicts will be compared. As well the inter-relationship among the three variables operating within the individual organizations will be analyzed. Finally, it will be argued that the internal disunity suffered by the western separatist groups was not characteristically different from that experienced by other political associations;

internal conflict can thus be relegated to a position of secondary importance, especially if the members can direct their attention to external concerns.

BACKGROUND: WCC AND WEST-FED

Although West-Fed Association of Alberta (West-Fed) and Western Canada Concept sprang into public view at approximately the same time (Fall, 1980) and, although both were founded as a response to the Liberal election victory of February 1980, the background of the two groups formation are quite distinct. WCC enjoys the longer history. It was in 1975 that twenty-nine year old Victoria lawyer Douglas Christie wrote a letter to the editor of the city's newspaper explaining the necessity and merits of western Canadian independence.⁴ The number of encouraging responses prompted a few meetings of the interested parties; from these informal discussion groups the Committee for Western Independence (CWI) was formed. Later incorporated under the British Columbia Societies Act, CWI was a political movement aspiring towards separation by educating the B.C. public as to the inequities of Confederation. From 1975 to 1979 CWI limited their activities to B.C. and restricted themselves to a study group format -- there was no attempt to establish a political party.

The year 1979 saw the fortunes of Doug Christie and CWI shift. First, in the spring the executive changed the name of CWI to the Western National Association (WNA) -- a move designed to broaden the group's support base by deleting the separatist connotation.⁵ A few months later Christie emerged as leader of what was formally a political party (but which retained more characteristics of a movement⁶). Christie's incumbency as leader proved to

be temporary however, as he held the position for only three months. In June, 1980 he left WNA to form his own party.⁷

The reasons for Christie's departure from WNA are twofold -- both relating to policy differences between the leader and the executive. First, Christie favoured the expansion of operations into Alberta, while most of the executive officers were determined to confine party energies to B.C. Second, Stan Bennett and several other prominent members were pressuring the executive to adopt an immigration platform of racial equality in entrance quotas -- a programme Christie was not prepared to accept.⁸ The departure of Christie also marked the beginning of a lengthy court battle between Christie and WNA over party records, especially membership lists.

It was within days of his rejection of WNA that Christie founded Western Canada Concept; it was within weeks that WCC was incorporated under the B.C. Societies Act. Christie claimed (perhaps incorrectly⁹) that a few months later -- Summer, 1980 -- WCC was registered as a political party in B.C. and Alberta. Therefore, well before the establishment of WCC, Doug Christie was actively involved in western separatist endeavours. And not surprisingly, events which had marred Christie's short tenure in WNA (policy disputes, leadership conflicts) would also become the nemesis of WCC.

With the founding of his new party, Christie focused most of his energies on ensuring WCC would become a political force in western Canada. He spoke in any city or town in B.C. and Alberta where a meeting could be organized. Attendance at the meetings was less than encouraging however, (averaging about fifty people with some attracting less than ten) as it

appeared attendance was dependent on federal government actions. The highlight of Christie's speaking tours was thus the November 28, 1980 rally in Edmonton attended by 2,700 Albertans seeking ways to protest the recently-enacted National Energy Program. Christie was publicly undaunted by the low attendance figures, which continued through his July, 1981 tour of the two westernmost provinces. Instead he emphasized the internal strength of the organization.

Western Canada Concept's internal unity was not as solid as Christie liked to claim, however. It was precisely at the time Christie was conducting his 1981 tour that the foundation of WCC began to crack and the framework to bend. Problems similar to those Christie experienced while with WNA came to the fore. First, Christie's long-standing adherence to a policy of creating a unitary state after independence was questioned by the Alberta-dominated national executive in June, 1981. He was coerced into accepting a policy which allowed for a post-independence referendum to decide if a unitary or federal state was preferred by the public. Then, on September 12, 1981, the Alberta members of the national executive, under the direction of president Al Maygard, held a membership meeting in Edmonton to discuss the possibility of organizing an Alberta wing of WCC. By the time the small meeting (less than 100 members attended) had been adjourned, not only had a pro-tem provincial executive been elected, but a policy had been ratified rejecting any concept of a unitary state, restricting the spending of all Alberta-derived funds to Alberta, and most important, refusing to recognize Doug Christie as having any control over the Alberta members. Personality and policies were cited as the cause of Christie's rejection.¹⁰

The following day Christie wrote a letter to all WCC members claiming the Albertans had acted undemocratically, had failed to properly notify members of the meeting, and had established an Alberta executive when there was no need. He then called on all members to support him in his opposition to the move, threatening to resign within a month if the support was not forthcoming. Due in part to an aggressive campaign in defense of the Alberta initiative made by the party newspaper (by this time, controlled by anti-Christie dissidents), Christie never received his support.¹¹ By November, 1981 the national office of WCC, depleted by the defections of the Alberta executives to the provincial wing and the tacit acceptance of Christie's resignation by the membership, ceased to operate.

Devoid of a national executive, WCC became two autonomous provincial groupings: one in Alberta, the other in B.C.¹² Yet, the move to form an Alberta branch did not save the party from further dissension. Only months after the Albertans split from the national association, they had entangled themselves in another power struggle. The three major actors in the dispute were Maygard (now leader of WCC Alberta), Wes Westmore (provincial president), and Gordon Kesler (deputy leader and recently-elected MLA for Olds-Didsbury). Maygard and Westmore had long advocated that independence was the first and foremost issue, all other concerns being secondary.¹³ Initially Kesler did not oppose the independence-first stand, then, his position strengthened by his new-found support base from the February 17, 1982 by-election, he made his view known. He was of the attitude that the highest priority of a party was to see its candidates were elected; the goal should be therefore, to appeal to a greater portion of the electorate than was presently the case.

As such the party should curtail the separatist rhetoric, concentrating instead on addressing provincial matters and discrediting the Lougheed government. This is not to say Kesler is not a separatist, rather he believed the party could not succeed in a provincial election campaign by carrying only a separatist banner. The dispute came to a head in May, 1982 with both Maygard and Westmore, apparently realizing they were in the minority, tendering their resignations. They were accepted shortly thereafter.

Hence, WCC has endured two rather major conflicts in its short history. The first saw Christie rejected as national leader by the Alberta wing of the party (undoubtedly the largest faction) as well as the formation of an Alberta provincial WCC party. The other conflict involved a policy dispute between Kesler and Maygard and Westmore over the emphasis to be placed on the separatist issue.

West-Fed's roots do not reach back as far as those of WCC; nor was West-Fed able to survive as long as WCC has. Whereas the latter is still politically-active, the former is effectively dead -- a spent political force. Rocked by dissension and dismantled by mass defections, West-Fed is not even a shadow of its former self. Yet it merits attention here if only because its demise was due largely to internal disunity.

The origins of West-Fed can be traced to the Liberal election victory of February 18, 1980. The victory prompted Edmonton businessman Elmer Knutson to write a letter to the Edmonton Journal severely criticizing the Quebec-based and Francophone-supported party. According to Knutson, the positive response to his letter was so overwhelming he felt compelled to

organize the disaffected respondents. For the next year, Elmer Knutson and his West-Fed Association were to command the curious attention of the majority of western Canadians. Knutson's message was straightforward: westerners must gain greater input into Confederation; since they could not do so via the electoral route, they must band together to form a western federation thus enabling them to speak to "the easterners" with one, unified voice. West-Fed rejected the possibility of forming a political party because "it was slow process and westerners didn't want another political party."¹⁴ So Knutson toured the western provinces (confining his speaking engagements to the major cities) encouraging the public to become politically active.

On the surface West-Fed seemed to be a reasonably stable, united organization. They had a larger membership than WCC (approximately 20,000 as opposed to WCC's 3,000) and more money (\$30,000 of which was Knutson's own). So too were they more successful in attracting people to their meetings. But much of this apparent stability was due only to the fact West-Fed was a political movement and not a party. As a movement, western Canadians were more willing to voice their grievances with the federal government by joining a protest group, rather than a party. Membership in a party is considered a more serious and involved commitment than supporting a movement. Hence for one year, Knutson was able to convince himself that he headed a strongly-supported movement.

By the fall of 1981, however, internal events proved that West-Fed was not the homogeneous association Knutson portrayed. At that time some of the sub-groups under Knutson's umbrella leadership began to rebel; they

cited policy differences and lack of input into the decision-making process as their main complaints.¹⁵ Unable to come to terms with Knutson, some of the Calgary constituting organizations decided to encourage their members to join WCC. Very quickly, other Alberta riding executives followed suit, then the entire B.C. faction of West-Fed officially declared they were disbanding to move into the WCC camp.¹⁶ By March, 1982 West-Fed was non-existent. Although still registered as an association in Alberta and still the recipient of some members' annual dues. West-Fed today is no longer a political force in any region of western Canada.

Finally, both organizations membership figures should be discussed briefly. As noted West-Fed had the larger membership, due primarily to it being a movement. Throughout its history, West-Fed executives' claims as to the number of members ranged between 15,000 and 40,000. This latter figure is highly inflated; it was derived from an incorrect calculation by the Calgary officers who had added the members in the Calgary area to national list -- thus counting Calgary members twice. A closer figure would be the one of 21,183 Knutson made public in December, 1981.¹⁷ This number is likely an exaggeration as well, for at that time the organization was dead. My sense is that the figure of 20,000 relates to the number of members who had ever paid a membership fee during the groups' two year history. Of those members, Knutson said approximately sixty percent were Alberta residents, twenty percent from B.C. and the rest divided almost evenly between Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The same apportionment among regions was evident in WCC's membership. Their list, though shorter, also fluctuated.

In July, 1981, Christie claimed the party had 2,700 members (the same number as in the fall of 1980); in June, 1982 Don Munro said the B.C. wing had over 4,000, while WCC (Alberta) claimed 10,000 members in July, 1982.¹⁸ More important than numbers of members, however, is the inter-relationship between the membership lists of both associations. Most likely, a large portion of the active West-Fed members at the constituency level also held membership in WCC. This would be particularly true in the later stages of West-Fed's existence. Thus, when West-Fed disbanded, those members with WCC cards could easily direct their attention to the other organization.

The information above is not intended to be an in-depth survey of the conflicts which severely disrupted both organizations. Rather its purpose is to bring to the reader's attention the two disputes experienced by WCC and the one destructive conflict which was West-Fed's downfall. We can now make a more systematic and informed analysis of these disputes, furnishing more thoughtful answers to the questions concerning the origins, scope and consequences of the internal dissension. Were the disputes primarily over policy, or did leadership and organization also play a role? Which policies occasioned the most controversy? Who were the people who formulated the disputed policies?

WEST-FED:

Organization

The salient point in analyzing either West-Fed or WCC's internal organization is to decide, through an appraisal of the authority hierarchy and decision-making process, whether the groupings' structures were a

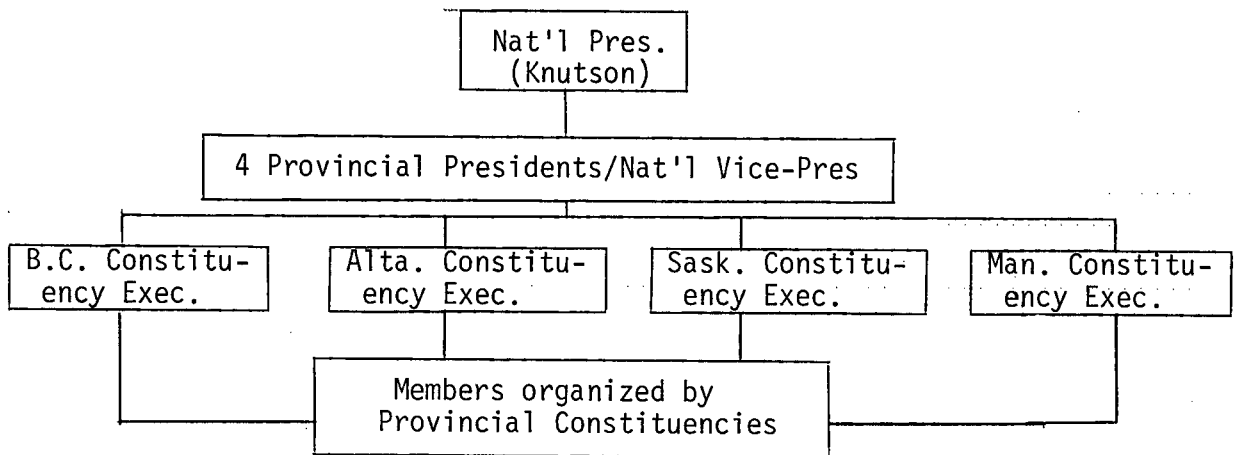
source of or contributor to disunity. So too should a discussion of organizational characteristics include a review of membership recruitment and their input into the groups' affairs, along with a mention of the associations' funding.

Undoubtedly the most significant feature of West-Fed's internal organization was the very obvious discrepancy between the way the organization was supposed to be structured and the way it actually operated. Elmer Knutson delighted in emphasizing the populist base of the association¹⁹ -- this was a grassroots movement, created by and for the people, and run by the general membership. This was a movement which attracted people from all occupations and political affiliations. This was a movement which was willing "to give Canada one more chance" by following the "not necessarily separatism, but separatism if necessary" line. However, as events proved, Mr. Knutson's delight was unsubstantiated as West-Fed was, in reality, a highly-centralized, elitist organization. It did not resemble the structure portrayed by Knutson.

First, the membership was not drawn from diverse backgrounds. At all levels, in all provinces, the majority of members were over sixty coming from small business or rural occupations; they were conservative individuals desiring a return to the days of small government. Approximately sixty percent were Alberta residents. Also, a healthy portion of the members were avowed separatists, refusing to comply with West-Fed policy that the movement was not a sponsor of independence. Most of these separatists were based in the Calgary region.²⁰ The funding of the group was more in line with the grassroots image as most of the monies came from

membership dues (which dropped from \$20 to \$5 in one year) and a few small donations. Yet West-Fed also had some more generous benefactors (Knutson being one) who contributed upwards of \$20,000 -- indicating the grass was greener in some areas than others.

Second, and more importantly, the association was neither as decentralized nor as democratic as Knutson represented. Ostensibly all power was to emanate from the bottom; Knutson told members to organize themselves by provincial constituencies, then elect a riding executive. In turn, all constituency executives would elect a provincial president who would automatically serve as national vice-president. Overarching the coterie of provincial executives was Knutson's office of the national presidency which was to be elected by the membership at large.



For several rason the system did not function as described. On the one hand, the fact the upper echelon of the national executive was intact before any membership drives were initiated caused some problems. The executives'entrenchment meant they were not to be held responsible to the general membership since they were elected (or appointed) by a small group at one of the founding meetings. Further, most of the members neglected to organize themselves by constituency and were thus left without an effective voice in the association. Those members who did choose to organize riding associations were primarily located in the Calgary area. Finally the structure did not operate as designed because Knutson had decided that the important areas of policy formulation and funds allocation were to be the exclusive prerogative of the national president, himself. Therefore, West-Fed's internal organization must be classified as anything but democratic and decentralized. For the most part the members declined to become involved in internal affairs. Even if more ridings had been organized, those members would have discovered (as the Calgary region did) that their influence was minimal as they were without any measurable control over decisions on policy or allotment of funds. The original structure then was highly centralized with Knutson clearly holding the balance of power.

Not surprisingly, the centralization of the decision-making process produced some dissension within West-Fed. Dissatisfaction with the internal structure emerged from two areas beginning in the spring of 1981 -- first from the Calgary area executives, then from the national executive itself. Both groups' dissatisfaction appeared to stem from Knutson's unbridled

control over the movement. It was the actions of the Calgary executives which set in motion a process which began to "snowball" and only ended with the destruction of the entire organization.

In March, 1981 the Calgary constituency executives began to voice their disapproval of the decision-making structure and the policies which it produced. They also stated publicly that they rejected Knutson's plan to "give Canada one more chance", claiming separatism was the only option. Knutson's unsuccessful bid to censure those executive officers responsible was an exercise apparently so deficient in diplomacy that the entire Calgary executive resigned "en masse".²¹ The new executives elected shortly thereafter were no more acquiescent, however. They were instrumental in turning West-Fed into a separatist grouping at the August, 1981 annual convention, then deserting Knutson to join Western Canada Concept in December of that year.

Undeniably, the August, 1981 meeting was the pivotal point in West-Fed's existence, as three events occurred which effectively killed the organization. The first was a move by the national executive to force Knutson to shift from the presidency to fill the newly-created office of movement leader. This action was significant because it should have removed Knutson from his erstwhile position of preeminence,²² as West-Fed had been structured (by Knutson) in such a fashion that the president held the important portfolios of policy and finance. In his new office Knutson was to be relegated to little more than a platform speaker.²³ For whatever reasons -- perhaps they desired more power themselves or thought the constituency executives should have more -- the national

executive wanted Knutson to hold a less dominant position. The second event was the strong support given the Calgary sponsored motion to turn West-Fed into an outright separatist organization;²⁴ the third was a mandate allowing the executive to negotiate some type of merger or coalition with WCC.²⁵ Whether by design or disinterest, the convention members had removed virtually all the characteristics which had distinguished West-Fed from WCC.

Regardless of the membership's expectations of the negotiations, no merger or coalition with WCC was forthcoming. The mandate had been given to the national executive, meaning Knutson was to assume a major role in the success or failure of the negotiations. That the discussions resulted in nothing constructive and that Knutson was, at this time, beginning a campaign to have West-Fed transformed into a political party in its own right,²⁶ can only indicate that Knutson was less than sincere in his efforts. In December, 1981 the Calgary executives -- once again discouraged by their lack of control over the organization's direction -- convened a meeting to discuss their future involvement. At one point, the meeting chairman, Pat Stein, asked the less than eighty members in attendance if they favoured joining the Alberta WCC party.²⁷ With ninety-three percent supporting the informal motion, West-Fed's Calgary executives ceased operations and, accompanied by their supporters, joined WCC (Alberta). Of course their defections were then followed by other Alberta riding associations and then the entire B.C. contingent. By March, 1982 West-Fed was defunct.

In sum therefore, the organizational structure of West-Fed was

characterized by centralized authority: so centralized, in fact, that it's not clear the provincial presidents had any measurable control over Knutson's action. Knutson's contention that the power of the movement was to be found at the grassroots level is not sustained by the evidence. Most of the members were uninvolved, and those who did become active never enjoyed a position of influence and power vis-a-vis Knutson. Even the action undertaken by the Calgary constituency associations cannot be viewed as an exercise of power. Those executives had only two options -- either to remain under Knutson's control or leave the movement. Certainly the ability to defect, even if it means the destruction of the organization, is not a classic exercise of power. Hence, the organizational structure which Knutson instituted must be viewed as a source of disunity within West-Fed.

Policy

The Calgary riding executives' disenchantment with their lack of influence in the organization was directly related to the policies which Knutson formulated. One may speculate that their dissatisfaction would not have been as vocal if Knutson had developed more acceptable policies. Since Knutson's policies were not in line with their own thinking, the Calgary executives' natural reaction was to call the centralized decision-making process into question. What, then, were these policies which the Calgary West-Feders found so objectionable? The simple answer is that many of the Calgary-based executives, being separatists, disagreed with Knutson on the ideological orientation of the movement -- they could not accept Knutson's refusal to turn West-Fed into an outright separatist

organization. Of course they could neither assent to the policies which were derived from Knutson's ideological line. Thus, the Calgary executives' rejection of Knutson's centralized control was produced, in part, by their disagreement with Knutson on the ideological basis of the movement and the two major policy proposals which stemmed from his ideology. In turn, these two policy proposals were so foreign to political and legal reality that they too became counterproductive and divisive.

As of July, 1981 Knutson had developed two policy platforms. One addressed a programme which would either give the west a greater voice in Confederation, or withdraw it altogether; the other attempted to argue that a Canadian federation no longer existed.

On the first point, Knutson proposed an extra-parliamentary strategy. West-Fed members were to join the provincial political party of their choice, become active, then form a subgroup to pressure the MLA to support the concept of a western federation. If the MLA did not respond positively to these advances, more pressure would be applied; first by forcing the constituency executive to hold a special meeting at which (stacked with West-Fed sympathisers) there would be a call for the election of a new riding executive; at the election meeting (similarly stacked) it was expected West-Fed members would form the new executive. Once in control of the executive, the West-Fed members could demand the MLA's support threatening to sponsor a more sympathetic candidate at the next nomination meeting if his support was not forthcoming. Ostensibly the MLAs would have yielded to the pressure and, together with similarly deferential MLAs, would become an advocate of a western federation.

The lobbying of MLAs would be considered complete once the four western premiers (either simultaneously or individually) had been persuaded to accept the formation of a western federation.²⁸ At this point, the west, although still a part of Canada, was to have been able to speak on dominion-provincial relations with one voice. Once West-Fed reached this stage the next step was to invite the other three regions (Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada, but not Ottawa) to negotiate a new federation.²⁹ Now, if the other three regions were either unreceptive to the west's overtures or unwilling to accept the highly decentralized structure, then the west would elect a constituent assembly, write a constitution and establish an independent state. According to Knutson, it would be only at the point of rejection by the east that West-Fed could be labelled separatist.

The only problem with Knutson's programme of forming a western federation is that it was politically unrealistic. In thinking or even hoping events would follow the route mapped out above, Knutson and his few followers only demonstrated how extremely shortsighted they were. It is my belief that West-Fed could not have succeeded in gaining eastern acceptance of the plan to form a new federation, neither could they have succeeded in securing sufficient MLA support within their eighteen month schedule, nor could they have recruited the some 200,000 to 300,000 members (based on an average of 1,000 per provincial constituency) which Knutson admitted were required for his programme to be effective. On the last point: to expect to enlist this number of members in eighteen months or even eighteen years is little short of a blind aspiration. Not only are there important variables beyond West-Fed's control (federal and provincial

government actions, general economic conditions) to be considered, there is also the history of Canadians' political apathy and non-involvement. No political association in Canada is able to boast the membership rolls which Knutson envisioned.

Second, even if West-Fed had succeeded in their recruitment programme, the possibility of gaining adequate MLA support for their position in eighteen months is slim indeed. Politicians, especially Canadian ones, tend to view themselves as trustees of the public interest (as defined by their parties) rather than delegates elected to protect the changing interests of their riding associations. As such, an MLA could have deflected any pressure exerted by West-Fed sympathisers by declaring that the electorate had not given him a mandate to support a western federation. Further, any attempt by West-Fed to usurp control of a constituency executive would have been met by equally determined efforts by non-West-Feders to defeat the initiative.

Again, Knutson revealed his ignorance of Canadian political reality by thinking it would be acceptable to westerners to have their federalist interests articulated by one pan-provincial organization. A recall of the divergent positions adopted by the western provinces in the recent constitutional debate, and the different emphasis placed by each on shared concerns should attest to the belief that western interests cannot be represented by one group alone. The Vancouver businessman and Saskatchewan farmer do not have the same political priorities. So too was Knutson likely mistaken in his expectation of eastern receptiveness to his programme. He could not have honestly expected the other three regions to enter into

negotiations when the agenda of a highly decentralized state was set by one party alone -- the Knutson proposal was more a ratification vote for West-Fed demands than a format for a newly negotiated compact. Moreover, it would be illogical to anticipate eastern involvement in these negotiations if, as Mr. Knutson says, the prime economic concern of eastern Canada is to "plunder the west". Finally, regardless of Mr. Knutson's views on Confederation, the national government is both a legal and political entity within Canada, and any attempt to exclude it from the proposed negotiations would have been an unconstitutional usurpation of their legitimate role in Confederation. Even the provincial premiers would have agreed Ottawa had a role to play.³⁰ Very briefly then, Knutson had devised a plan for a western federation highlighted by insufficient forethought, imprecise drafting, politically unpalatable concepts and unrealistic expectations of success. That West-Fed never came close to the anticipated membership nor MLA support proves how idealistic the programme was.

The other arm of West-Fed policy was not so much policy as an interpretation of constitutional developments: a further attempt to repudiate the separatist image. Yet since Knutson promulgated the interpretation as if it were a policy, and since it was a source of dissension over policy, it warrants our attention. Knutson would argue that West-Fed was not separatist in intent since Canada, as a product of the 1864 to 1867 negotiations, was not a valid confederacy. If a confederacy had been produced, he said, then all the constituent units would have had to be previously sovereign so they could relinquish a portion of their authority to a new central government.³¹ I question from where Mr. Knutson receives his

information. Sovereignty of the individual constituent units is not a precondition to the legitimate formation of a federation. In neither India nor Nigeria -- two former British colonies which, like Canada, had a history of both direct and indirect rule -- were the states sovereign prior to independence as a federation. There is simply no basis in either law or politics to a contention that Britain had a legal obligation to ensure the existence of sovereign constituent units before granting independence. A colonial power may accord peaceful independence in any form it desires; its only concern need be that the product be viewed as legitimate by the former colonials.

To confuse matters more, Knutson would then argue that even if a confederation was constituted in 1867, the Statute of Westminster made the provinces sovereign in 1931. The statute, he said, was designed to upgrade the status of the British North America colonies equal to that of Great Britain. Since Ottawa was never a British colony, it must have been the provinces which emerged autonomous. Although Knutson's interpretation of the 1931 statute was obviously appealing to some western Canadians, it too was devoid of any substance. The intent of the Statute of Westminster was to have Britain relinquish, symbolically and legally, all vestiges of political control over the Commonwealth. Prior to 1931 Canada had allowed Britain to control (at one time or another) foreign affairs and the navy, as well as bind Canada to any international agreements to which Britain was a signatory. With the Statute of Westminster, control over those subject matters formerly held by Britain was granted to that level of government which had jurisdiction under the enumerated heads of

ss. 91 and 92. To saddle the statute with an intention to cede all power to the provinces, as Mr. Knutson did, was a practice which verged on fabrication. It mattered not that prior to 1867, Ottawa was not a British colony: what was important was that in 1931 Ottawa possessed legitimate jurisdiction over the subject-matters of s. 91, and thus became the beneficiary of the statute's provisions.

Therefore, by developing and promoting these two extravagant, confusing and unsubstantiated policies, Knutson virtually forced any politically-aware members of his organization (and the public) to question his credibility. Clearly the proposal for a western federation was deficient in its expectations of attracting one-quarter million members, of securing MLA support for the plan within eighteen months, of western Canadian acceptance to having their dominion-provincial interests represented by one organization, and of eastern approval for the creation of a new, decentralized Canada. Similarly, his interpretation of constitutional developments was so bewildering and contradictory it made little political or legal sense. The problem was further exacerbated when the two policy positions are read in conjunction. On the one hand, Knutson was saying that Canada was never an independent, federal state, or that if it was at one time, by 1931 the provinces became autonomous; on the other hand he proposes a plan which has as a long-term objective the removal of the west from Canada. If there is not a Canada, from what did West-Fed think they would secede? It was precisely this type of inconsistency and confusion which led the Calgary riding associations to reject the movement's central policies, to voice their dissatisfaction with the decision-making

process which formulated those policies, and to call Knutson's leadership into question.

Leadership

The information on organization, buttressed by that on policy, clearly indicates that Elmer Knutson was the prime West-Fed decision-maker. That being the case, a discussion of leadership need only be concerned with this one individual, as no other was able to command the power he enjoyed. Further, since the man was so closely associated or tied to his policies, a leadership review should highlight those qualities of Knutson's personality which influenced his policy choices.

Born in rural Saskatchewan in the early 1920s, Knutson left school at the age of thirteen (and at the height of the Depression) to seek employment. Spending a number of years with temporary jobs, he later moved to Edmonton where he began what is today a very successful tractor-parts business. The son of a Liberal party worker, Knutson has been exposed to party politics since his childhood. Although once a Liberal supporter himself, he long ago abandoned the party to become an active Progressive Conservative. The culmination of his active involvement with that party was an unsuccessful bid to gain the P.C. nomination in Edmonton-South in 1980. And yet despite an involved political past and an active present, Knutson consistently maintained he harboured no political ambitions, nor did he consider himself the ideal leader.³²

To develop a precise political composite of Elmer Knutson is a difficult task indeed. The problem does not lie in him eluding classification, but rather than he seems to fit himself into so many disparate categories.

If he were an academic he might be called a man of contradictions. Instead it is best to describe him as confused or naive with respect to political realities. Certainly the ill-conceived and incongruous platforms which were his policies sustain this claim.

Elmer Knutson is not a politician. Nor is he a leader or president. He is best suited to the role of founder: being the one to temporarily capitalize on the grievances of a disaffected segment of the western population, then able to rally these people for a time.³³ As a leader, however, he was incapable of devising the concise, coherent policies needed to lend a permanency to the initial support. Due largely to his negative public orations, he was not someone in whom the members were able to place their faith and devotion. As a president his weakness lay in an inability or unwillingness to delegate authority. He was definitely more comfortable working by himself or the provincial presidents than the constituency associations. There appears to be something in his make-up which prevented him from parting with any of his power. Whether his single-minded determination to remain the central figure in West-Fed at all costs was the result of some hidden conviction that his path was the correct one or of a hesitancy to permit someone else to assume control of the organization he founded, is unclear. What is evident though, is that despite Mr. Knutson's history of political involvement, he learnt little about policy formulation and authority delegation.

Nor did Knutson possess many of the qualities expected of a populist movement leader.³⁴ A soft-spoken, exceedingly candid grandfatherly figure, overly modest and retiring, Knutson is anything but the epitome of the

self-confident, aggressive leader. So too is he impaired by a lack of prescience, being unable to foresee potential challenges and acting accordingly to arrest them. When he did act however, he did so with neither tact nor diplomacy, as witnessed by the first resignation of the Calgary executives in March, 1981. Under circumstances such as these, it is clear why Knutson never received the respect of the few constituency associations needed for him to be an effective leader.

Hence, these characteristics of Knutson's personal constitution -- an inability to formulate acceptable, unambiguous policies, an unwillingness to delegate authority, and a lack of foresight and tact -- provided a leadership component to the organizational and policy grievances already held by the Calgary executives.

WESTERN CANADA CONCEPT

Organization

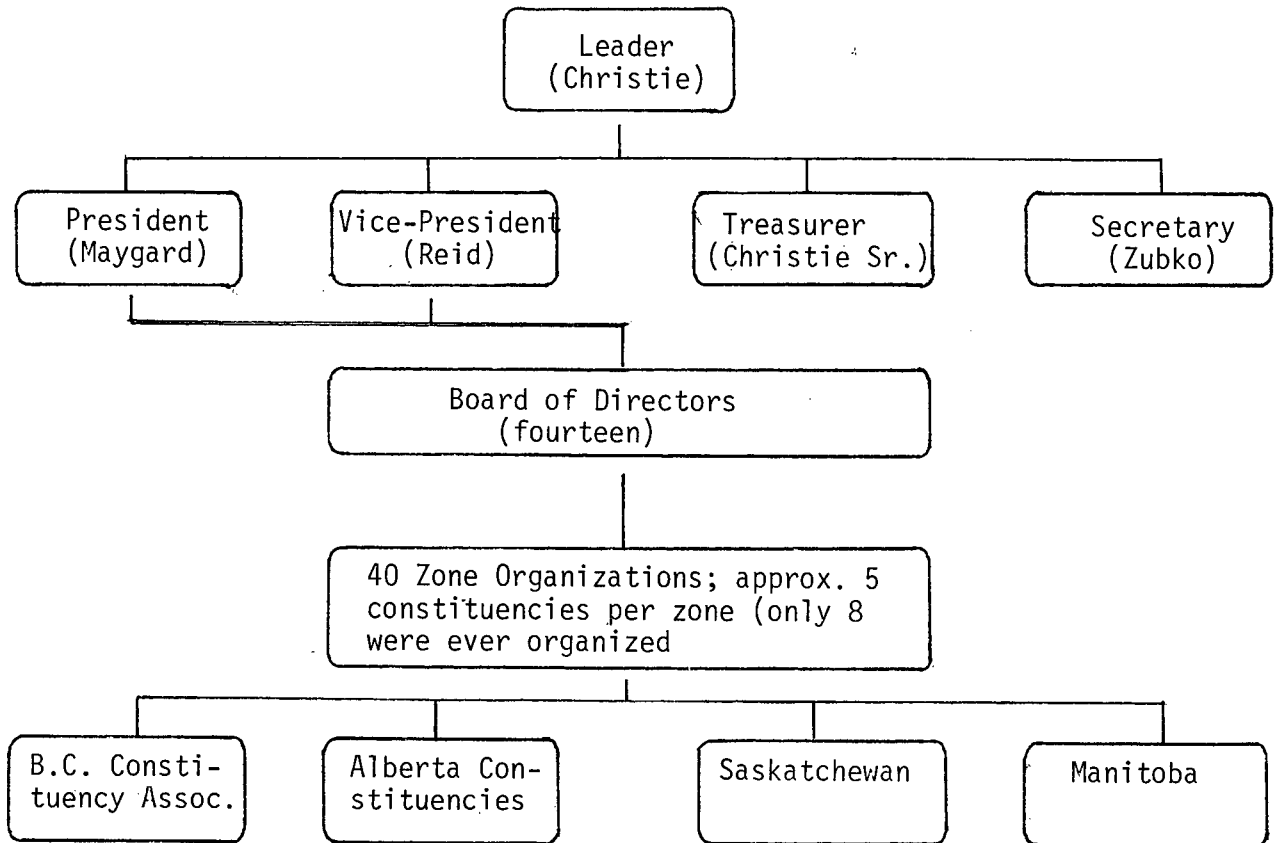
Since its founding -- after Doug Christie left the Western National Association in June, 1980 -- Western Canada Concept has had three different executive structures. The original one operated from Fall, 1980 to May, 1981, the second from May to September, 1981 when the third was established as a result of the split between Christie and the Alberta-dominated national executive and the subsequent creation of independent provincial parties.

The first executive structure of WCC was really no executive at all. For the first year Christie clearly controlled all facets of the organization, there being no evidence of any elected executive officers. Those

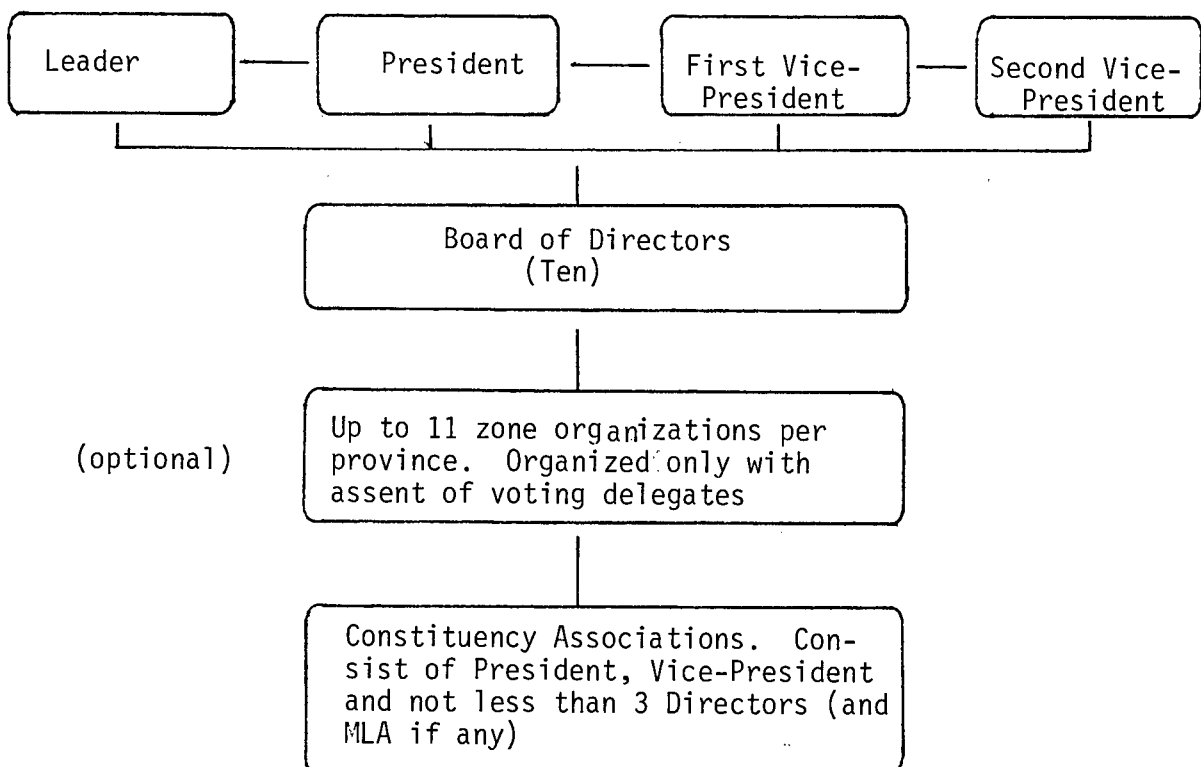
people who were involved in WCC did so in the capacity of rally organizers -- either self-appointed or appointed by Christie. It was not until one year after WCC was formed that it was large enough to take on a semblance of internal organization. On May 2, 1981 the second executive was elected at a small (seventy members attended) convention in Edmonton. Purely national³⁵ in design and intent, without provincial organizations, the executive was constituted by a leader (Christie), a president (Al Maygard), vice-president (Gordon Reid), treasurer (Doug Christie, Sr.), secretary (Keltie Zubko) and a Board of Directors.³⁶ The most noteworthy feature of this executive was the geographical centralization of the elected officers' residency. Of the fourteen directorships, thirteen were filled by Albertans and one by a British Columbian; members from Alberta also held four of the five top executive posts, with Doug Christie being the sole non-Albertan.³⁷ Saskatchewan and Manitoba were devoid of representation on the national executive. It was this preponderance of Alberta executive officers which allowed for the formation of a separate provincial party in Alberta.

While Christie had enjoyed a free hand in running the organization's affairs prior to May, 1981, he quickly discovered he was not going to be afforded similar liberties under this new executive. Within one month the executive had decided Christie's policy of creating a unitary state after independence was unacceptable. The new policy position was to institute a post-independence referendum on the question of whether a federal or unitary state was preferred. This conflict was just the beginning of a heated debate between Christie and the executive officers concerning

Second Executive Structure (National):



Third Executive Structure (Provincial):³⁸



organization, policy and leadership which was to split the party within five months.

On the organizational side of the conflict: the Alberta-dominated executive was interested in preparing for an anticipated provincial election. After consulting Alberta's Chief Electoral Officer, it was discovered that WCC could not contest a provincial election because Christie had failed to register WCC as a political party in Alberta (something Christie had told the executive had already been accomplished). Further WCC could not run an election campaign in Alberta under the leadership of a B.C. resident (Christie).³⁹ Hence the need for an Alberta party. Christie, recognizing that such a move would all but destroy his already diminished control over party affairs in Alberta and shift the majority of members (and funds) to the provincial level, sought to arrest or at least stall the process. It appears Mr. Christie was contemplating moving to Alberta to seek the leadership of the Alberta party and thus wished to delay the matter until he had established his residency. Being unable to force a postponement, "his strategy ... (was) to create confusion and chaos in the hope that Party members (would) rally to his support."⁴⁰ Of course, the members shunned his attempts to gain their support and the fate of Christie as national leader was sealed.

The party then moved into the next phase of their organizational development. With the events of Fall, 1981 resulting in the demise of the national office, WCC became, in effect, a collection of provincial parties. Each is independent of the others, having complete control over policy, organization, funding and leadership; each may place as little

emphasis on the separatist image as is deemed advisable or necessary. In the main, however, there is not much difference between the organization of the Alberta or British Columbia parties.

Both are rigidly structured in an attempt to prevent one individual from gaining control of the organization. All directors are subject to expulsion from their offices by a two-thirds vote of the entire executive; the leader is constrained by being subject to a leadership convention on the written notice of twenty percent of the constituency associations. Further, the job descriptions of all executives are clearly defined,⁴¹ while all policy must be debated and ratified by the members. This organization is a vast improvement over either the one man control which Christie enjoyed for the first year of WCC's existence or the highly centralized, executive decision-making structure which characterized the May to September, 1981 executive. So, whereas neither the general membership nor the few constituency associations had any influence on the decisions made by the first two executives, with the formation of the third, as defined by the party constitution, the riding executives now hold the balance of power and the members have a greater say in policy decisions.

Although at the time of writing this new system has been in place only six months in Alberta and two in B.C., it seems to be operating effectively. The policy dispute between Maygard and Kesler over the emphasis to be given to independence overshadowed the organizational endeavours of the Alberta party. However, true to the party constitution the members rose to order a stop to the infighting and the constituency associations responded by giving their guarded support to Kesler. The British Columbia

branch has escaped the dissension experienced by the Albertans for two reasons. First, the pro-tem president, Don Munro, was an advocate of decentralized control -- he was determined to make the party executive representative of and responsible to the members.⁴² In line with his thinking, he supervised the establishment of thirty-five constituencies (up from the previous six) months before the permanent provincial executive was elected. So too did he ensure that the party headquarters were moved from Doug Christie's Victoria office to Vancouver.⁴³ Second, the B.C. members seem to have developed a consensus on a pro-independence stand. All the executive officers campaigned against any diminution of the separatism-first image; the tenor of the comments from the convention floor showed they received the members support.

In the first two years of WCC's brief history, therefore, the organization endured three distinct executive structures. For the first year Doug Christie enjoyed unbridled control over an organization operating on the national level; with the election of the second executive in May, 1981 Christie's dominant position weakened as the executive officers began to question his policies and his nationally-oriented organization. The split between Christie and the Alberta-dominated national executive occasioned the demise of the national office and the creation of independent provincial wings. To date the provincial parties have adopted a more democratic and decentralized approach to internal party organization than either of the two previous structures.

Policy

Both the Fall, 1981 split and the dispute Kesler had with Maygard and

Westmore had obvious policy components. While organization, policy and leadership were all contributing factors to the first conflict, the second was primarily caused by discord over policy with some leadership considerations.

WCC policy proposals have always gone beyond a simple call for independence; they have always included a programme by which independence is to be secured and the type of governing body to be established after separation. Beyond that there was little which constituted WCC policy⁴⁴ -- at least until mid-1982 when the party began to develop policies on other issues. None of the members of the two national executives ever hedged on the independence question: to them the only important objective was independence. Neither has there been disputes in any of the executives over the most expedient route to follow: there has always been a consensus on pursuing the electoral avenue. Similarly there has been general agreement to the strategy of initiating a referendum on independence after WCC had succeeded in forming a provincial government. So too has WCC policy continually rejected any notion of negotiations on independence with the federal government.⁴⁵ These are not points of contention within Western Canada Concept. Where disputes over policy have arisen in the past are in the areas of what form of government should preside over an independent west and how great an emphasis should be placed on separatist rhetoric during a provincial election campaign.

As noted, the divisions between Christie (and a few of his supporters) and the second executive dominated by Alberta members were produced in part by Christie's adherence to the formation of a unitary state. For the first

year of WCC's existence this policy had been a cornerstone of the grouping's programme. "One Nation; One Language; One Government" was WCC's original slogan.⁴⁶ Yet this "cornerstone" remained intact for only one month after the election of the second executive, as the new officers apparently felt the Alberta electorate would not accept a plan which would erode their control over their resources. Hence the policy was altered: first by giving the public a choice on the form of government, then (after Christie's demise as national leader) by advocating a federation more decentralized than the current division of powers and featuring a bi-cameral structure at both the federal and provincial levels with the upper houses elected by region.⁴⁷ Hence WCC's policy on the best form of government has experienced a number of changes as there was a transition from a no-option unitary state, to a referendum on the question, to a no-option, highly decentralized (and highly over-governed)⁴⁸ federation.

But the policy issue which created greater disagreement was the level of attention to be given the independence platform in provincial election campaigns. It is expected this issue will cause yet further conflict in both the B.C. and Alberta branches. In Alberta, Kesler's victory over Maygard and Westmore in gaining constituency approval for a diminution of the separatist stand did not permanently resolve the question. If Maygard had followed through with his plans to seek the Alberta leadership in late August, 1982, then the debate would have been resurrected.⁴⁹ Even after Kesler's victory, the divisions should likely remain, only to surface again during the provincial election campaign. In B.C. there has not been the same measure of discord on the subject as the B.C. members and executive

seem to be united in their desire to have independence as the major plank in their campaign platform.⁵⁰ Still this writer sees the potential for disunity on the topic come the next provincial election. Practical politics and the experience of the Parti Quebecois in the early seventies suggest that a party cannot run a successful campaign by addressing a separatist policy alone. If WCC (B.C.) expects to form the provincial government in one or two elections they will, perforce, need to focus more attention on provincial concerns. Due to time constraints, this could only be undertaken at the expense of their strong position on independence.

In the main, however, there has been little disagreement on policy matters during WCC's history. Today, both the B.C. and Alberta parties concur on the other issues -- agriculture, health, education, welfare, resource and economic development, foreign investment and taxation⁵¹ -- all reflecting the conservative, non-interventionist doctrines of the party. Yet two policy conflicts (post-independence form of government and importance of separatist rhetoric) were instrumental in the Christie - Alberta split and the Kesler - Maygard dispute respectively.

Leadership

If a review of the Western Canada Concept leadership had been undertaken in 1981, only one individual, Doug Christie, would have been discussed. Undeniably until the summer of 1982 Doug Christie was WCC: he made the policy decisions, he was the sole platform speaker, and he personally censured any dissidents. However, the changes of late 1981 to Summer, 1982 brought new actors to the stage -- so today an analysis of WCC's leadership

involves at least a cursory review of some of these other individuals. Still, due to Christie's continued prominence, he will command most of the discussion.

His background is that of neither the privileged nor working classes. Douglas Christie -- born in Winnipeg in 1946, the son of a civil servant in the Department of National Revenue -- took his undergraduate degree at the University of Manitoba, graduating with a double honours major in Philosophy and Political Science. He then earned an L.L.B. from the University of British Columbia, before settling in Victoria. A devout Catholic, Christie is single, very much a loner, and reticent, to the point of secrecy, about his personal life. In a political vein, Christie is no newcomer to party politics. A card-carrying member of the national Progressive Conservative party, Christie has been president of two riding associations and has made an unsuccessful bid for a nomination. With the addition of an independent campaign in the 1979 B.C. election, one receives a fairly clear indication of the scope of Christie's political ambitions.

Christie's past record in WNA, coupled with my discussions with Al Maygard (past national president), Don Munro (B.C. pro-tem president), and Elmer Knutson, along with my interview with him provide more than adequate material for an assessment of Christie's political personality. Douglas Christie is the type of individual who seeks to gain as much control as possible over those organizations with which he is involved. He is self-confident, with an attitude towards any authority (but his own) bordering on contumacy; he is a man convinced that his assessments, opinions and beliefs are correct and any opposing ones are wrong. He is

suspicious of the media, academics and his own members; he is vindictive, ready to use private discussions, public arenas and the courts to discredit those detractors who he feels have impugned his reputation.⁵² On the other hand, there is no question of Christie's commitment to the cause. He is an indefatigable, intense political activist, willing to leave a good law practice for weeks at a time so he can tour western Canada. Until mid-1981 all these qualities acted in unison, one complimenting the other, and thus enabled Christie to maintain a strong grip on the organization.

Leadership conflicts were partly responsible for the split between Christie and the Alberta-dominated second executive. Although the dispute was initially over organization and specifically the formation of an Alberta provincial party (which Christie then transformed into a policy argument on the unitary state issue), there was also an indirect link to leadership. The connection is found in the inability of the national executive to work with Christie. It seems Christie was trying to run the organization by himself, much as he had done from June, 1980 to May, 1981 when this national executive was elected. After trying to work with him for five months, they decided his arrogant and recalcitrant behaviour made the effort futile. The respect then national president, Al Maygard, had once held for Christie quickly turned into disrespect, then open contempt.⁵³ Neither Maygard nor Wes Westmore expressed any regret for Christie's departure.⁵⁴ Hence the leadership question did play a role in the original schism.

Leadership has also caused some problems in the newly-formed provincial

parties. In B.C. the demise of the national office and the subsequent retreat of most of the executive officers to the Alberta party, meant B.C. was devoid of official leadership. Within two months however, Don Munro (the retired postmaster for White Rock) had stepped in, assumed the pro-tem presidency, and began building a provincial organization. Christie was appointed pro-tem leader for a six month period. Yet it was not Doug Christie who was to provide the initial leadership in WCC (B.C.); for probably the first time in his political career Christie maintained a low profile, undoubtedly still bitter about his fall from power. Instead, Don Munro was the force behind building and strengthening the organization in preparation for a convention called for late June, 1982.

The leadership election was one of the most interesting developments at the convention. Particularly noteworthy was the margin by which Christie retained his incumbency, and the person over whom he was victorious. He was elected on the second ballot by gaining 158 of the 281 general membership votes (there were no delegates) thus defeating his challenger, Don Munro, by 25 votes. It was a significant event not only because two ballots were needed for Christie to secure the leadership, but also because Munro did not decide until that morning to contest the leadership.⁵⁵ Apparently Munro decided to run after realizing the other two candidates did not pose a serious challenge to Christie. The final vote suggests the members sent a message to Christie: he must abide by the party constitution and adhere to the ratified policy, or else face being removed from office at the leadership review session in October.

Like B.C., Alberta has also experienced some difficulties with the

leadership as the dispute Kesler had with Maygard and Westmore had strong leadership implications -- the joint resignation of the latter two.⁵⁶ That Kesler gained the support of the constituency associations only resolved the issue temporarily. Although it was expected the debate would be started anew at the August leadership convention, the absence of Maygard as a candidate prevented a continuation of this policy conflict. Both Maygard and Knutson had stated they would contest the leadership.⁵⁷ But for some reason, Maygard changed his mind; that Knutson was a candidate was insignificant as he was dismissed with three others, on the first ballot.⁵⁸ In the end the leadership battle was between Kesler and long-time organizer Howard Thompson, with the former emerging victorious by forty votes cast by the over 600 members in attendance. The question of the importance to be placed on a separatist rhetoric was not a major issue however, as Thompson concentrated more on image -- portraying himself as the one person able to unify the party. Yet, as with B.C., it is expected that both during and after the next provincial election campaign the issue of the separatist image will be debated again.

Very briefly then, the history of WCC's leadership has been a chequered one indeed. From a beginning of Christie's single-handed control over all facets of the organization, WCC has fallen prey to a number of debilitating internal power struggles. First was the rejection of Christie's leadership (as a response to accumulated grievances with his unitary state policy, his nationally-oriented organization, and his personality) by Maygard and the rest of the Alberta-dominated national executive. Soon after the newly-formed Alberta wing was embroiled in their

own dispute over the importance of the independence issue, while in B.C. the members were giving guarded support to Christie as provincial leader.

DISCUSSION

To this point, the paper has been primarily a broad delineation of events within West-Fed and WCC which were, to varying degrees, causes of the disunity suffered by both organizations. Although the description has at times focused on particular incidents or issues and has involved some analysis of those points, it is hoped that the overall tenor of the preceding material is still general in content. The purpose of the discussion, therefore, is more specific: to review, compare and analyze those points in an effort to determine the scope of their contribution to the two groups' internal unity problems. Whereas in the sections above we were interested in discerning from where and why dissension emerged, we now shift our attention to furnishing answers to slightly different questions. Accepting that organization, policies and leadership were all sources of conflict in West-Fed and WCC, which caused the greatest measure of dissent in each association? Did both groups suffer from similar types of organizational, policy or leadership conflict? Did the three determinants operate independent of each other, or did one serve to exacerbate or diminish the disunity sponsored by another? It is thus anticipated that this analysis and discussion will first crystallize the understanding of the two groups internal problems gained from the sections above, while demonstrating that dissension of this order need not be totally destructive as other Canadian parties and movements have experienced similar or greater conflicts and

survived.

In both West-Fed and Western Canada Concept internal organization proved to be a source of disunity. The decision-making process instituted by Knutson was highly-centralized, his office being responsible for policy formulation and most of the funds allocation. The few constituency executives had little input into either national or provincial decisions. Without any measurable input, without control over most of the funds they collected, relegated to a role of promoters of West-Fed rallies, the constituent units became understandably restless. Despite Knutson's proud declarations that the movement was a "grass-roots" one, it was obvious the decision-making process did not reach down that far. So, when the Calgary executives rebelled in December, 1981 the policy differences were buttressed by a firm rejection of the centralized organization of the movement.

The conflict over the future organization of the party had profound implications for WCC as well. The organizational component of the first WCC schism was based on a need to form an independent provincial party (in compliance with the Alberta Elections Act) if the Albertans wished to contest a provincial election. On this note the thinking was purely practical and was not vindictive towards Christie. The Alberta members had every reason to believe their best chance of electoral success was in Alberta, and to expect an early election call. The sooner they organized themselves into a provincial unit, the better. But Christie only aggravated the situation -- by writing a letter to members claiming the salient issue was the federal state option, he sponsored the membership

confusion which later polarized the party. In effect it was Christie who turned a simple organizational issue into a leadership struggle in a vain attempt to maintain his paramouncy in the party.

It will be noted that the organizational dispute which disrupted WCC was quite different from that which led to West-Fed's demise. The latter concerned the centralized decision-making process of the association, while the former centred on the future direction of the party. Although the WCC decision to become a provincial party had a far-reaching effect on the party hierarchy and decision-making structure, the initial dispute was not, as in West-Fed, a question of centralized party control.

The policy conflicts experienced by the two groups produced divisions which were only resolved in West-Fed when the association disbanded and have been only temporarily repaired in WCC. In West-Fed disagreement over policy was present from the movement's inception. With a significant percentage of the membership being avowed separatists and Knutson developing policies designed to counter a separatist image, it was inevitable that the two would clash. The confrontation was further heightened by the two confusing and contradictory policy positions Knutson promulgated. His policy of creating a western federation had always been viewed skeptically by the pro-separatist members, particularly those based around Calgary. They, more than he, were aware of the deficiencies: that the membership recruitment program was overly presumptive, that the lobbying of MLAs could not be brought to fruition in eighteen months, that western interests could not be articulated by one organization, and that the eastern regions would be unreceptive to West-Fed demands. After one year of listening to Knutson's

hollow vision, the Calgary officers made their move. Thus by first declaring themselves separatists, then gaining membership approval for their position in August, 1981, the Calgarians effectively laid to rest the very concept upon which West-Fed had been founded.

The constitutional development argument did not produce the same degree of marked discord, likely because members benignly accepted it, did not understand it, or chose to ignore it. Still the potential for disunity was present as any politically-aware members would have realized Knutson's interpretations of Confederation and the Statute of Westminster contradicted each other as well as the western federation policy. Moreover, the interpretation was too restrictive, based solely on the semantics of the applicable documents rather than their intent. Any disunity caused by these arguments was likely a result of Knutson's determination to draft policies and arguments with the express purpose of downplaying the independence issue. Yet since an influential portion of the members favoured unilateral secession, the policies proved counterproductive. While doing little to correct West-Fed's image problems, these two policies did irreparable damage to the internal unity of the movement.

Policy also played a major role in contributing to the two schisms in WCC. The first split in Fall, 1981 was at least partially due to the debate between Christie and the Alberta-dominated national executive concerning the desirability of the creation of a unitary or federal state. Christie, after already backing down from his original unitary state policy by accepting a referendum on the subject, refused to acquiesce to the pro-federalist policy proposed by the Albertans. The rejection of Christie's

Leadership was to follow shortly thereafter. Likewise policy differences were a significant factor in the Kesler-Maygard power struggle. Similar to the West-Fed experience, the new Alberta party was divided between the vehement separatists and those willing to suppress the separatist rhetoric in an effort to enrich the party's popular appeal. The interesting point in the WCC (Alberta) debacle was that moderation on independence had never been a contentious issue -- not until Kesler had been elected and secured his internal support, did the question come to the fore. I do not think, however, that the timing of the conflict indicates Kesler had any immediate plans to assume the party leadership; rather that he took a pragmatic approach to electoral politics by appreciating WCC would enjoy more success at the polls with a less militant stand on independence. As Maygard and Westmore were deposed, it appears the membership shared Kesler's opinion. Still the debate is not finished, as this issue, more than any other policy concern, poses the greatest threat to party unity in the near future.

Policy is of prime importance in any analysis of conflict within a new movement or party. It is policy, not leadership and certainly not organization, which constitutes the initial appeal of the new grouping. Yet if the policies are unsound, contradictory or confusing, then dissent will result. West-Fed was a classic example of an organization bound for destruction simply because the policy decisions were so foreign to both political reality and the expectations of the members and executives alike that conflict over policy was assured. That West-Fed's had originally attracted numerous separatists who then succeeded in securing executive

positions in the Calgary region only exacerbated the situation, particularly when Knutson was attempting to repudiate the separatist image. Policy was no less important to the second WCC conflict. While the first split had been occasioned by debate over the unitary state policy, it also had strong leadership and organizational overtones; the Kesler-Maygard controversy was primarily a result of policy differences.

Finally, the material suggests that leadership in general, and the influence of the leaders' personalities on policy choices in particular, were sources of conflict in both West-Fed and WCC. The question of competent, credible leadership played a substantial role in the Calgary executives' rejection of Knutson as well as the dispute between Christie and the Alberta-dominated national executive. Even in WCC's provincial parties, leadership was a problem. The West-Fed leadership had always been of concern to the movement; Knutson himself would freely admit he was not the ideal leader. Yet despite his modesty, he proved unwilling to vacate his office and part with the power accompanying it -- even amid obvious dissent within the ranks. His continuing inability to develop policies which were understood and accepted by the general public, much less his own members, coupled with his attempts to control almost all facets of the internal organization were not the leadership qualities West-Fed needed. As such he never enjoyed the type of respect from the provincial presidents and constituency executives which are required of a popular movement leader. Thus when the Calgary executives confronted Knutson, complaining of their lack of input into policy decisions, they were actually calling his leadership into question.

Just as Knutson was afflicted with a lack of respect in West-Fed, so too was Christie in WCC. But the reasons behind the disrespect afforded each were as different as the two men's personalities. Whereas Knutson's respect problems stemmed from an honest appraisal of his political abilities, Christie was not respected more out of fear and contempt for the man himself than for his political efficacy. It was Christie's arrogance more than any other of his personality traits which engendered the lack of respect toward him. It was this arrogance which made it difficult for him to work with Munro and impossible to work with Maygard. When a man possesses a confidence in his own political abilities and worth to a point where all other opinions are secondary, one cannot expect him to be an asset to the political team. And teamwork is a requisite in any political party. Similarly, a leader cannot expect to receive the respect of his associates when all know he is ready to seek legal redress if their public statements are even slightly critical. Hence, Christie's arrogant and suspicious nature cannot be viewed as the foremost qualities of a party leader. Despite a keen sense of politics and an emotion-stirring platform style, Christie's early leadership of WCC will be remembered primarily as the time when one man tried to maintain complete control over the organization.

In sum, Knutson was a victim of his inabilities, Christie was a victim of his personality. With Knutson being incapable of drafting sound policies and unwilling to delegate authority, and Christie being resolute in his self-esteem, neither man was able to retain the respect of his executive officers. And since legitimacy is usually directly proportional to the level of respect, both lost their legitimacy.

Finally, leadership was also a concern in the provincial wings of WCC. In Alberta, Kesler's attack on the policy associated with the pro-separatist leader and president (Maygard and Westmore) was also an attack on their leadership. Similarly, Munro's belated decision to challenge Christie for the WCC (B.C.) leadership was a direct rejection of the man and his brand of leadership. While Munro's action did not have any profound consequences in B.C. -- aside from showing Christie was not accepted by all members -- the provincial leadership question did have significant ramifications in Alberta as witnessed by the resignation of the two chief executives.

Very briefly then, organization, policies and leadership all contributed to the major debilitating conflicts suffered by West-Fed and Western Canada Concept. Although the primary causes of disunity may be listed under these three general headings, it must be stressed that within each variable the causes of disunity were quite different. So the leadership problems in West-Fed were the product of Knutson's political naivete and inability, while WCC's early leadership conflicts were due to Christie's personality, particularly his arrogance. The leadership component of the Kesler-Maygard dispute involved neither the leader's inabilities nor his arrogance but was rather a struggle between two divergent perceptions of the most efficacious route to electoral success. Likewise the organization conflicts experienced by the two groups differed. For West-Fed the pivotal question was the degree of centralized decision-making; for WCC the issue was a practical realization of a need for a provincial party. Where the two organizations did share the same conflict, however, was in the policy

area. Although West-Fed never fell prey to any measurable dissent over the question of a unitary/federal state option, they, like WCC were divided on the emphasis to be placed on the independence issue.

Given that leadership, policies and organization were all responsible for the promotion of party and movement dissent, is one then able to discern the interrelationship among the three variables? Did they act independent of each other; or did they act in unison with leadership exacerbating the policy conflicts or policy compounding an organizational dispute?

Looking first to the West-Fed situation it will be noted that the revolt of the Calgary executives was the culmination of their dissatisfaction with Knutson, his policies and his centralized organization of movement affairs. All three variables were present with each influencing the others. It is near impossible to distinguish Knutson from his policies, the two being so closely aligned they acted as one. Detractors of Knutson's leadership based their criticisms not on the man himself but on his steadfast adherence to policies they rejected. The rejection, by the Calgary executives, of an accommodationist policy and the ratification of a pro-separatist one, was equally a rejection of Knutson's leadership. Similarly there was a close nexus between the leadership/policy conflicts and the dispute over organization. Undoubtedly, if the regional officers had been allowed greater input into policy matters, via a decentralized decision-making format, then the policies they so vehemently opposed would never have been formulated. Instead the highly centralized structure enable the development of policies which were viewed as unpalatable. But

it seems that the situation could not have been otherwise, for there was something in Knutson's nature which prevented him from relinquishing any of his authority. The whole argument quickly devolves into a circular one -- which is precisely the point. The downfall of West-Fed was a combination of dissent towards leadership, policies and organization -- each acting upon and influencing the others -- culminating in the frustration and eventual desertion of the Calgary executives.

The close relationship among leadership, policy and organization variables was also evidenced in the two WCC conflicts. The first schism began as a simple attempt to establish a provincial branch of the party. Very quickly, however, the arguments took on an organizational component as Christie became worried about his diminished role in the party and his loss of input into the decisions which would control its destiny. To deflect attention Christie emphasized the corollary argument of the unitary/federal state option, trying to show the Albertans as rejectors of a policy ratified by all the executives. Hence the conflict adopted policy overtones. And, since it was Christie who drew the lines between himself and the Albertans (who by this time were convinced of the inadequacies of his leadership) the debate had strong leadership implications. One variable did not operate independent of the others. For the most part, it was Christie who brought old leadership and policy disputes to the fore; once present the three worked in conjunction to discredit Christie and secure his demise as national leader.

Similarly there was a close relationship among the three variables in the Kesler-Maygard dispute. When Kesler began to champion moderation

of the independence issue he was not only questioning policy -- he was directly challenging Maygard's leadership and the decision-making process which had ratified the policy. Although the dispute was primarily a policy concern, it had important leadership and organizational ramifications; as witnessed by Maygard's attempt to turn the dispute into a leadership conflict by emphasizing Kesler's religious affiliations, the resignations of Maygard and Westmore and their subsequent replacement in the decision-making hierarchy by Kesler supporters.

Therefore, a analysis of the relationship among the three variables provides sufficient evidence to conclude that each did not act independently in either the West-Fed or WCC conflicts. Rather, leadership, policy and organizational dissent seemed to work in unison with each supporting and reinforcing the others. This is an important observation, as it shows that the conflict was not some isolated event caused by the chance union of the three variables at the same time and in the same place. Instead, the close connection among the three virtually dictated that conflict originating from one of the variables was destined to be influenced by the other two.

Although the systematic dissection of conflict into its component parts of organization, policies and leadership makes for interesting analysis and, I think, allows for a more thorough understanding of West-Fed and WCC, we must not lose sight of the fact that what the two groups suffered was only internal dissension. It is fine to be specific about the nature of the conflict under investigation, but in the end we must return to the more general -- realizing that neither group experienced anything not

suffered by other political organizations. Dissension is present in all political associations; indeed it is virtually a requisite to the organization's healthy, democratic development. Certainly one would not expect the organizational, policy and leadership problems which split WCC or destroyed West-Fed to have a similar effect on the Liberals or Conservatives.

Even the two major separatist groups in Quebec in the early sixties were able to endure major internal conflicts. The Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale (RIN) was continually plagued with internal rifts during its eight year history from 1960 to 1968. In that time the party survived three significant splits over ideology and the best strategy (either extra-parliamentary or electorally) with which to gain independence. That the RIN disbanded in 1968 does not mean its demise was a product of internal disunity, but rather that a more credible and politically-acceptable group (Levesque's Parti Québécois) had usurped the RIN's power base.⁵⁹ Similarly, the Parti Québécois (PQ) has experienced internal dissension particularly during its first eight years. From 1968 to 1976 there was an ongoing debate within the party centred upon -- like WCC (Alberta) -- the importance of a separatist image in an election campaign.⁶⁰ Yet the PQ survived these conflicts.

The salient point in these brief delineations is to illustrate that West-Fed and WCC do not hold a monopoly on dissension. The older, established national parties and the more recent Quebec separatist groups have all endured internal unity problems. The specific reasons behind their survival (be it the tradition, patronage resources or bureaucracies

of the old-line parties or a tacit consensus among the Quebec separatists that the most serious threat came from outside, not within, the organization) seem secondary to the fact they have overcome these conflicts. Certainly West-Fed is not able to boast such a record; only the events of the next few months or years will tell how WCC has fared.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this paper were twofold: first to gain a clearer understanding of the internal forces which caused the destruction of West-Fed and the near destruction of Western Canada Concept; second, to suggest that the two groups experienced only that which is common in any political organization. On the first point, the two associations were broken down into organizational, policy and leadership components, thus permitting a more in-depth analysis of the sources of disunity. It can be concluded that in the two major conflicts within WCC and the one destructive dispute in West-Fed, all three components played a discernable role. Further, the three did not act independently of each other, as policy conflicts accentuated leadership and organizational problems, as leadership was a cause of organizational and policy disputes, and so forth. Yet finally we must return to the general proposition that dissension is virtually unavoidable in any political organization, especially a newly-formed one. Perhaps the only way for new political associations to ensure dissension does not have grave debilitating consequences is to have a clearly defined external threat and receive a consensus on that threat being of primary importance. While the Quebec separatist appear to have

been able to achieve such an accord, the western separatist have not. To date they are still divided over whether Confederation, the federal Liberal party, Trudeau, bilingualism or metrification is the greatest enemy. Only recently have they begun to concentrate some of their energies on provincial matters. The prognosis thus seem to be along the lines that unless or until the provincial wings of WCC reach a consensus as to what poses the greatest threat, they will continue to focus their attention on internal matters.

FOOTNOTES

1. This is not to say that established organizations survive internal conflicts only because there is a consensus on the greatest external threat. There are other reasons, be they the age of the organization, its traditions, the ability to attract seasoned politicians, an established internal bureaucracy, patronage resources, and so forth. Yet the inverse proposition is still important: that new groups which have yet to gain general agreement on an external threat are more likely to fall prey to debilitating internal dissension.
2. I use the word "separatist" to describe West-Fed even though the founder, Elmer Knutson, has repeatedly denied the group's purpose was to promote secession. I use the separatist label for several reasons: a large number of West-Fed members were avowed separatists, the association's original policy can only be logically viewed as separatist in intent, and in late 1981 the association formally adopted a separatist platform.
3. This is a general categorization. To be sure, organization can be divided into membership characteristics (age, sex, occupation, subjective social class), funding, decision-making process, executive structure and so forth. Further, policy can also include ideology. Ideology, meaning the placement of the association on a left/right axis, will not be closely examined here because there is a general consensus that both groups held conservative, small-government orientations. The more specific ideology of the role of separatism within the groups will be discussed in the policy sections.
4. The information on the background and organization of WCC was derived from an interview with Doug Christie recorded at Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. in the Memorial Hall on July 1, 1981, and will not be subsequently footnoted.
5. Vancouver Province, (February 25, 1980), A4.
6. Calgary Herald, (March 24, 1980), B4.
7. Vancouver Sun, (July 2, 1980), D14.
8. This is a confusing policy. It appears Mr. Bennett wanted, at the least, a more liberal immigration programme allowing equal entrance opportunities for all races. Or he may have wanted equal quotas for immigration from all races. If the latter was the case then his policy would have been racist. Yet it was Christie who was labelled the racist after he opposed Bennett's plan. Still the more important point is to show how a disagreement over policy was sufficient to remove Christie from WNA.

9. Don Munro, WCC (B.C.) pro-tem president (December, 1981-June, 1982) claims WCC was not registered as a B.C. party until Spring, 1982; Al Maygard, past national president claims there was not an Alberta party until Fall, 1981.
10. For an indepth, pro-Alberta view of this split, see The Independencer, Official Publication of WCC, 1 (October, 1981) 3, pp. 1-4.
11. Vancouver Sun, (October 14, 1981), A7.
12. Discussion of the Saskatchewan and Manitoba branches of WCC has been omitted; the same is true for the material on West-Fed. Neither association made a serious attempt to organize the two provinces, save for WCC's activities during the recent election campaign in Saskatchewan.
13. Interview with Al Maygard recorded at WCC (B.C.) convention at Delta River Inn, Richmond on June 26, 1982.
14. First interview with Elmer Knutson conducted in his Edmonton office on July 2, 1981. As with the WCC material, much of the information in this section is derived from the interview and will not be subsequently footnoted.
15. Calgary Herald, (December 19, 1981), D21.
16. Interview with Don Munro, pro-tem WCC (B.C.) president and former West-Feder, recorded in his North Delta home on June 10, 1982.
17. Calgary Herald, (January 21, 1982), B1.
18. Maclean's, 95 (July 26, 1982), 30, p. 10.
19. First Knutson interview.
20. Knutson freely admitted that West-Fed had attracted too many separatists, adding the ones in Calgary were a constant problem.
21. Calgary Herald, (December 19, 1981), D21.
22. I say "it should have" removed Knutson from his pre-eminent position because in reality Knutson was able to force his way back into being the movement's central figure.
23. Vancouver Sun, (August 10, 1981), A16.
24. Vancouver Province, (August 11, 1981), B1.
25. Calgary Herald, (October 23, 1981), B14.

26. Ibid., (December 19, 1981), D21.
27. Ibid., (December 30, 1981), A8.
28. Knutson expected the lobbying process would succeed in about 18 months.
29. Knutson contended that the product of these "negotiations" would be strikingly different from the current division of powers -- central authority would be severely circumscribed as residual powers were to rest with the four regions. He further asserted that any federal representatives would be drawn from the regional legislatures, and would remain responsible to those institutions.
30. Since the western federation scheme was certain to be rejected by the east, the long-term objective must be secession.
31. From our conversation it appears Knutson makes no distinction between a federation and a confederation.
32. It will be recalled that officially Knutson was the national president, but he also assumed the role of movement leader.
33. Knutson's initial speaking engagements were a success only because people wanted to hear that their complaints about federal government actions were shared by others. Knutson always employed a very negative style spending most of his time criticising the federal government. Very little, even the western federation plan, was voiced in a positive tone. After people had heard Knutson's rendition of western grievances once or twice, they stayed away from what were redundant rallies.
34. In this sense I am thinking of the Aberharts, the Douglasses, and the Levesques -- all of whom enjoyed great success by adopting an almost evangelical approach to their politics.
35. The 'national' epithet meant only the four western provinces.
36. The Independencer, 1 (June, 1981) 1, p. 4.
37. Also note that of the seventy members at the May, 1981 convention, nineteen were elected to the executive or the Board of Directors.
38. Alberta and B.C. are organized identically, as B.C. adopted the WCC (Alberta) constitution. The only difference is that Alberta originally had a deputy leader (Kesler) before he assumed the leadership in May, 1982.
39. This explanation was offered by both Don Munro and Al Maygard in separate interviews.

40. The Independencer, 1 (October, 1981) 3, p. 3. From a column by Tom Pappajohn. Mr. Pappajohn, who the writer has talked to once, is a former aid and supporter of Doug Christie, having worked with him since 1976. He is an open, honest individual and a person whose assessment of events this writer accepts.
41. From WCC (B.C.) and WCC (Alberta) party constitutions.
42. Don Munro interview.
43. A feat Munro considers to be his most significant achievement.
44. The lack of policy on other issues (social services, education, industrial development) was due to Christie's belief that it was not up to him, or the party, to decide the path an independent west would follow. According to him these were matters best left until after separation. Obviously other members did not share his belief as both the B.C. and Alberta parties drafted definitive policy positions on these issues in the summer of 1982.
45. Information derived from 1980 WCC handbills and pamphlets, Christie interview and a review of similar policy positions adopted by the B.C. and Alberta parties; see The Independencer, 1 (March, 1982) 6, p. 8.
46. From the original WCC pamphlet.
47. Although both the B.C. and Alberta parties consider this to be their positions on the matter, neither of them expend much energy promulgating the policy.
48. The interesting point here is that the proposed form of government would make an independent west the most highly governed state in the world -- even more than Canada is now. By advocating two houses in all provinces and two at the federal level, they seem to contradict their belief that we need less government.
49. Maclean's, op. cit., (Note that Maygard did not contest the leadership.)
50. From an assessment of the comments made on the issue during the policy debate at the WCC (B.C.) annual convention on June 25 and 26, 1982.
51. The Independencer, 1 (March, 1982) 6, p. 8, and policy proposals ratified at WCC (B.C.) convention in June, 1982.
52. Since the spring of 1981, Christie has initiated two lawsuits for defamation of character. One involved the publisher of the party newspaper. It was due to Christie's proclivity to seek legal redress that Don Munro declined to talk candidly about his personality on tape.

53. Maygard is not the only prominent member to voice his dissatisfaction with Christie's brand of leadership. Both Don Munro and Tom Pappajohn have lamented their difficulties in working with Christie. Soo too have many other members, see Letters to the Editor in The Independencer, 1 (October, 1981), 3. pp. 2-3.
54. Calgary Herald, (October 13, 1981), A24.
55. And this was the man who had told me just weeks before that he was looking forward to leaving the executive so he could enjoy his retirement.
56. There was an additional component to the Kesler-Maygard dispute. Shortly after the conflict surfaced (and in what seems to have been an attempt to deflect attention away from the policy disagreements) Maygard began to emphasize Kesler's religious affiliation with the Mormons. Maygard contended that Kesler was consciously turning WCC (Alberta) into a Mormon-dominated organization by having other Mormon appointed to positions of influence; see Maclean's, op. cit., p. 9. Yet only six of the 24 member Board of Directors were Mormons. To this writer the important observation is how Maygard tried (as Christie had tried before) to transform a policy debate into a leadership contest.
57. From separate interviews with Knutson and Maygard on June 26, 1982.
58. Maclean's, 95 (August 30, 1982) 35, pp. 14-15.
59. For a more indepth analysis of the RIN's internal problems see: A. d'Allemagne, Le RIN de 1960 à 1963: Etude d'un groupe de pression au Québec. (Montreal: Editions l'Entincelle, 1974), pp. 50-55; D. Cameron, Nationalism, Self-Determination and the Québec Question. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1970), pp. 130-40; R. Denis, Luttes de classes et question nationale au Québec. (Montreal: Presses socialistes internationales, 1979), pp. 515-20.
60. On the Parti Quebecois see: H. Milner, Politics in the New Québec. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), pp. 149-55; M. Pinard and R. Hamilton, "The Parti Quebecois Comes to Power: An Analysis of the 1976 Quebec Election," in Canadian Journal of Political Science, 11 (December, 1978) 4, pp. 739-57; J. Saywell, The Rise of the Parti Quebecois, 1967-76, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) pp. 100-18.

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