NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY ROBERT N. THOMPSON

TO THE

WESTERN CANADA CONCEPT - THE VOICE OF THE WEST.

Red Deer, Alberta
November 28, 1981.

GREETINGS -

My comments tonight are generally directed to Canadians believing in and accustomed to thinking they already possess FREEDOM. Particularly they are addressed to Western Canadians who in their vision of and struggle for Freedom developed this vast land from the Lakehead and the Red River Valley, across the Prairies, over the foothills and the mountains to the Pacific. Specifically they are addressed to Albertans who so often have spearheaded this quest for Freedom and who by force of circumstances now frustrated and threatened, have again picked up the struggle. In this light and as a champion of Freedom for some 50 years it is a great privilege and pleasure to share my thoughts with you.

Canadians are faced with the most critical internal problems, both political and economic, since Confederation. The separatist movement in Quebec is but one evidence of this crisis. The alienation and frustration of Western Canadians is another, equally as explosive and in being based largely in economic terms rather than cultural and language terms is perhaps of greater potential force than that of Quebec. In fact through the power hungry, short sighted, self centered, and bigoted attitudes and policies of Ottawa's politicians the Country stands in imminent danger of blowing itself to pieces.

of Politics

As a practical student and participant for a dozen years and for some 15 years as a student and teacher of Political Science, I would ask you first to share with me in a few basic principals of politics. Plato once said that, "Man is a political animal". Basically the question of human associations and government is philosophi cal, as ever since man has strived to govern himself, the central problem has been how to provide himself with a government which does not become a tyrant. Lord Acton, noted British historian and Christian philosopher correctly stated that,"All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely". From this one can assume that all government is a necessary evil and that in minimizing this evil, it is necessary that the power of government should be curtailed and decentralized as far as possible. Rejecting the Christian

absolute that the ultimate source of all authority is God, as Malcalm Muggeridge has so clearly stated in his essay, "the Great Liberal Death Wish", the liberal mind stresses what ought to be instead of accepting reality as it is. You Albertans know so well that this has become the basic philosophy of the Trudeau Government and the proof of this is found in the fact that the Liberal Party has lost all of its elected representation in the West except for two members from the St. Boniface area of Winnipeg and that the Prime Minister doesn't have his counterpart in even a single Province. In fact the Liberal Party is no longer a factor in the politics of B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba.

It is the tendency of all governments to assume and consolidate power unto itself, and the Conservative government of Alberta is no exception, much less that of Ottawa. James Guthrie in "Our Sham Democracy" puts it this way, "Governments are a very convenient means of taking power from the individual and handing it over to a legal abstraction called the 'State' ". Guthrie stresses that genuine democracy requires effective decentralization of power, with government as close to the people as possible. The elevation of government as an end in itself, instead of being but a means of serving the individual,is the very attitude displayed by Mr. Trudeau as he attempted unilaterally amendment and patriation of the Constitution of Canada. The history of the modern political society is largely the history of the struggle of the ordinary citizen to exercise some influence on his government and his repeated failure to accomplish that very basic democratic objective is the root cause of upheaval and revolution. This is the reason why you delegates are here tonight even as it was in 1935 when as a young school teacher I was part of the Social Credit movement which successfully fought the battle for economic freedom. Even the freedom of the democratic vote loses its meaning as there is no means expressed in that vote to effectively curb the power of government except through that of political upheaval, which your movement now threatens the establishment. In this respect the American constitution has provided a framework that has enabled the American citizen to have some semblance of control as seen in the tax reform precipitated by Proposition 13 in California a few years ago. True democratic Government must be the servant of its citizens - not the Master. Otherwise dictatorship whether from the left or the right is the result.

The term "democracy" comes from the Greek meaning the will of "demos" - or of the people. In the days of the Greek City States such as Athens and Sparta the representatives were selected by turn or by lots and thus the sensitivity of the citizens were reflected directly in their democratic government, especially when these "people" politicians were under threat of death if they did not produce satisfactory results. Socrates felt the lash of this discipline! We need today

the same effective check and balance to assure this kind of accountability. Otherwise as under the law and order of the Greeks surely our Ottawa politicians of this day would face the death penalty, or at least the politician death penalty. Even some of our provincial politicians would face the same fate. The tragedy of it is that the politicians of the present government in Ottawa seem insensitive to the citizens demands for relief from discriminatory and oppressive policies, and worse don't even seem to care. In spite of the apparent success the early Greek democrats struggled to avoid the power of government and to maintain individual liberty of the citizens. Thus they devised the technique of dividing power with inbuilt checks and balances through the bicameral system of government with a Lower House and an Upper House called the Senate. The Romans in their Empire Government borrowed the same system and so have we, except that the authority of the Canadian Senate has been emasculated to the extent that it has become almost a useless appendage of the Prime Minister and his authoritarian rule and rubber stamp Cabinet and caucus, instead of being the direct moderating voice of the Provinces and their people.

The civilization of Rome eventually collapsed, not because of the greater power of the Northern Barbarians but because of escalating debt, crushing taxation endless monetary inflation and the oppressive centralizing power of Rome itself in its vast Empire, with excessive growth of the bureaucracy and accompanying corruption.

What a lesson this should be today to our current politicians! It is all too clear that excessive centralization of power always results in destructive friction between individuals and groups. The world scene, as well as Canada, are witnesses of this fact. Conversely true unity is possible only when association respects the diversity of individuals and groups. The strength of a nation depends upon its unity - not on its differences. No liberal views of social structure or of economics will ever change this absolute. At this current critical crossroads we are losing the battle of a united Canadian nation. I am fearful of the future. People have lost listening contact with their politicians and our problems will not be solved until the power of government is returned to the people - and this will never be done with Prime Minister Trudeau in power.

Excessive centralization of power in Canada is responsible for the internal friction which now threatens to fragment Canada. This applies to economic and of monetary policy as well, as no effective decentralization of power is possible if it does not include the decentralization of financial power. The constituent

parts of any federal system must carry sufficient financial sovereignty to administer those responsibilities which are within their jurisdiction. This is where the current budget mess of Finance Minister MacEachern has exploded in his face. His reputation as an able economist has also taken a new low as within three days of the Budget presentation he was forced to reverse some of his basic policies. Because of his sloppiness his image in one of incompetence. The energy policy of the Ottawa government is not better. Not a single additional barrel of Canadian oil has been produced and the exploration capability of the Canadian energy program has been all but eliminated while tar sand and heavy oil projects have been suspended. The effect has been to raise the oil subsidization costs eliminating any chance of a decrease in the budgetory deficits. The goal of self-sufficiency oil supply is farther away than ever! Even worse, the Canadianization of the oil industry has resulted in a frenzy of takeover the cost of which has had to be paid to foreign companies, resulting in unnecessary higher energy taxes and a further drop in the value of the Canadian dollar from a comfortable 87 cent range down to the 82 cent range in comparison to the U.S. dollar. Beyond this the credibility of the Canadian financial structure has likewise plummeted. The pending catastrophe under present policies is inevitable.

This brings me to a brief analysis of the present situation. The Canadian West is not only alienated - it is disillusioned. Why?

There are 80 seats in the Canadian House of Commons from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. There are 95 seats from Ontario and 75 seats from Quebec.

There are 9 judges in the Supreme Court in Canada. 3 from Ontario, 3 from Quebec, 3 from the rest of CANADA - Nfld, N.B., N.S., P.E.I., Manitoba, Sask., Alberta, B.C., the Yukon and the N.W.T.

WESTERN CANADA produces 50% of the Cross National Product of Canada in the Commodity areas of Fisheries, Mining, Agriculture and Forestry. They do this with 27% of the population.

52% of all manufacturing in Canada is done in Ontario. 27% in Quebec, the rest of Canada - 21%.

A Japanese automobile pays a Federal Import Tax of 28.8%. This additional duty averages out to over $700. per car for the Western consumer, simply to protect Ontario car manufacturers.

There is a 40% Ottawa tariff on foreign manufactured clothing in Canada to protect Canadian clothing manufacturers, 82% of which are in Ontario and Quebec.

Average Western consumers pay 30% - 50% more for their appliances, radios, T.V.'s etc. than their American counterpart and 15 to 25% more than the Central Canada consumer.

The Parti Quebecois allows no bilingual policies in Quebec. Bilingualism is a Federal Policy now to be entrenched in the new constitution, for the rest of Canada.

The people of Alberta lose 50% of potential revenue from oil resources to subsidize Central Canada's oil purchases made from Venezuela at world prices for a net deficit to the Canadian taxpayer of more than $2 billion.

Freight charges to Toronto or Hamilton from the West are 20 to 30% higher than freight charges from Toronto and Hamilton to Western points.

The West already has a balanced budget - the equalization payments prove it as do the balanced budgets of each of the Western Provinces. The increasing financial clout without a viable political voice in Ottawa policies, threatens the Trudeau government with Western separation even more dangerous in long range potential than the present secession situation in Quebec.

Prime Minister Trudeau has alienated the Western half of the nation in spite of the fact that it contains most of the natural resources and where the money and the population is flowing.

Even more offensive than the direct cause of this alienation is that the policy of discrimination against the West is apparently one of deliberate intent. Dr. Joseph Katz of the University of B.C. in a recent major policy study states that -

"The federal government of Canada is bent on arresting the westward thrust of Canadian development and denying to Western Canadians their place in the sun.

The present administration in Ottawa wants to freeze Canada into its 20th century stance and keep Quebec and Ontario front and centre requiring the Canadian West and the Atlantic provinces to support the centre in the lifestyle to which it has become accustomed.

What Ottawa is doing essentially is ignoring the fact that the westward movement of western civilization, begun in the Mediterranean a couple of millenia ago, moved through Europe to North America, is the motive power which is thrusting Canadian development westward. An examination of any map showing the movement of population in North America westward is a reality.

The political policies presently being pursued by the federal government are jeopardizing the social, economic, scientific, technological and cultural development of Canada and contributing to a bleak future.

Indeed, these policies are condemning the youth of Western Canada to being hewers of wood and drawers of water - slaves to Eastern Canada's dictates. Were these conditions to prevail, in all probability the youth would seek less hostile climes elsewhere.

The pronouncements which have been coming out of Ottawa in recent months suggest that political myopia at the centre is being sold to Canadians under the guise of progress. Whether we look at what the federal government is attempting to do about energy, the railways, ports, education, research, trade, manufacturing, tariffs, the story is the same: do whatever is necessary to protect Ontario and Quebec from the ravages of time and the flow of money and power to the West, to say nothing of significant changes in the Atlantic provinces.

Another instance of deprivation of western development is to be found in federal control of western ports. The port of Vancouver has been denied control of its own facility and in the process has allowed the port to fall behind its real potential. And this at a time when Pacific trade is increasing by leaps and bounds and promises to continue to increase in the future.

There is no doubt that Ottawa is oblivious to what is necessary, indeed, essential. Ottawa still thinks in European terms apparently unaware - despite cross-Pacific jaunts from time to time - that Canada reaches from sea to sea and is in the course of cultivating one of these seas to new horizons. The most recent example of Ottawa's intransigence with respect to port development is to be found in its obvious reluctance to contribute to the port development necessary to make the coal fields in northern B.C. viable.

The federal government is getting ready to enter into discussions with the provincial governments on the fiscal arrangements act whereby federal monies are made available to the provinces for health and education. Prior notice has been given by Jean Chretien that the goal of the federal government is to reduce these funds by approximately two-thirds, leaving the provinces to find the differences in their own treasuries.

Part and parcel of this federal exercises is to pour immense funds into French-language training while English-as-second-language programs are being cut back drastically. The irony of this whole language fiasco is that most countries of Asia as well as of Europe and the rest of the world are emphasizing English-language training because English is the primary language of science, of technology, of trade and diplomacy.

This is not to say that French-language programs ought not to continue and to be supported, but rather to ensure that there are equitable opportunities for those who express a desire for English-as-a-second-language. Newcomers to Canada ought to have the opportunity to learn English if they so wish - and most do."

It is this discriminatory language policy which is making it virtually impossible for western young people to qualify for future federal civil service jobs as one cannot become fluently bilingual where there is little or no opportunities for usage, essential to language fluency.

"It is obvious that the Trudeauites in Ottawa have been attempting to take Western Canada out of the stream of history, out of the stream of westward-moving civilization. It is obvious, too, that the Trudeauites have been unable to shed their European mentality - witness the European option of a few years ago - which still adheres to centralist and authoritarian stances in favor of a governing philosophy which is able to accommodate West as well as East in Canada and East as well as West in the world at large."

This brings me to my third problem which is how can an answer be found to prevent complete political separation of Western Canada from the Nation itself.

The author of "Future Shock", Alvin Toffler, has in his recent book "The Third Wave" developed the theme that if decentralization of policy, authority and administration does not take place in the very near future, in the areas of politics, economics and big business the future of our civilization will inevitably lead to disintegration and collapse. I recommend the reading of this book to you, particularly to your policy makers. I am convinced that much of the bitterness and resentment in Canada today arises because of the greedy concentration of power in Ottawa.

My twelve years of experience in the national politics of the country has given me a multitude of factual examples to substantiate this statement. Ottawa has usurped provincial fields of jurisdiction to the point that the Trudeau government no longer seems to have the capability of administering her own legitimate areas of responsibility such as the Post Office, National Defence or even the financial affairs of the country as the current budget indicates. With a national debt of approximately $130 billion which on a per capita basis exceeds that of the United States. It becomes obvious to me that national bankruptcy is near at hand. It is absolutely impossible for the Government of Canada to pay off any of its national debt. Default is inevitable at the present rate of budgetary deficits. The interest costs of this debt now nears 15% of the national budget, the largest single item in the Budget. In the long run if government cannot pay its bills it is no different than an individual person or corporation. Furthermore how can we continue to justify the passing off of our current debts to our children and

succeeding generations for "good" life which requires such mortgage indebtedness. Bankruptcy is just around the corner, unless a war breaks out which will prolong the agony into the future even as did World War II.

There are two alternatives open to the nation. The first would be the immediate decentralization of power. This would mean the dismantlement of the present bilingual policy and withdrawal from the field. Language naturally belongs to the area of Education which constitutionally under the B.N.A. Act belongs to the Provincial, not the Federal jurisdiction. Likewise it would mean withdrawal from the Federal intrusion into the Provincial Resource field. It may be necessary to have a Petro Canada organization to deal with foreign governments in energy negotiations but the exploration and distribution of oil and its products, should go to exactly the same place as my "not requested" PetroCanada Credit Card went - into the garbage. The same thing should apply to a number of Federal programs and projects as the Federal Government withdraws back into its historical constitutional bounds. The practical implementation of such a policy could result in a new governmental concept which on numerous occasions as the Socred National Leader, I proposed as a viable alternative under a regional federal concept. Fifteen or ten years ago this was like talking to the wind - perhaps it makes more sense today, even though I have grave doubts that the Prime Minister, or very few of the Premiers would even give serious consideration to the proposal. However, I find it difficult to believe that they would be more willing to see the nation disintregrate and break up altogether.

Such a reform would mean the division of the nation into five regions or states, rather than the present ten provinces. This would mean that the four Atlantic provinces would join as one Atlantic State, Quebec, Ontario, the three Prairie Provinces projected north to include the Territorial Arctic and B.C. and Yukon as the Pacific West State. This division would then be followed by a restatement of jurisdictional autonomy, similar to the B.N.A. Act with the basic difference that any area of unspecified jurisdiction or responsibility would revert to the new regional States, not the Federal Government - as is the case in the United States. In other words, with the exception of defence, external affairs and treaties and related areas such as inter state commerce and transportation, All other responsibilities would belong to the regional states forming a clear cut and true federal system based on the premise that the most efficient democracy and democratic administration is the one which is closest and most sensitive to its people. The cost of government would

decrease and more important, the prospect and perpetuation of freedom itself would be more assured.

The other alternative is that which is your apparent objective - that of separation and the formation of a new country something which has already been projected as a viable economic proposition. It could hardly be a worse proposition than the political situation which presently exists.

I am reminded of the man who came to a friend with his two hands closed over his palms. He posed the question by stating - "I have a bird in each hand. In which hand do I hold the live bird? In which do I hold the dead bird?" After thoughtful consideration the reply was "Your question is unfair because you hold in your hand the power to kill the bird in the hand which I might designate as the one holding the live bird. The answer is not mine to give - you hold the answer in your own power! It is up to you!