PARTY AND PRESS PORTRAYALS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CCF-NDP: 1937-79

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the way in which the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and its successor, the New Democratic Party, have been portrayed by their opponents and by commentators in the press. The study uses a method of content analysis to quantify the kinds of terms used to describe the CCF-NDP during British Columbia provincial elections from 1937 to 1979 and during the NDP's three years as the government of British Columbia between 1972 and 1975. The terms are grouped according to common themes that seemed to underly the evaluations of the party.

Analysis of the data suggests that the portrayal of the party changed during the almost fifty years of its existence. Originally seen as a revolutionary, atheistic movement, the CCF-NDP slowly began to be portrayed as a more legitimate political actor. By the time of its election to power in 1972, the party was viewed as a group of inexperienced idealists who possessed an unreasonable conviction that state intervention could cure all the ills of society. This portrayal was significantly less damaging to the party than was the old notion that the CCF-NDP was a communist front organization.

The events of the party's term in office served to halt and possibly reverse the evolution of legitimacy. To the party's opponents in the press and the legislature, it seemed that the NDP government's initiatives were the proof of many of the old accusations made against social democrats. The critics maintained that the government of David

Barrett had embarked on a program of nationalization of industry and centralization of power that would lead inevitably to socialism and a police state.

Despite the evolution of legitimacy the portrayal of the CCF-NDP retained two key themes that were used continuously and that implied that true legitimacy would always elude the party. The party's opponents always insisted that it was an alien entity in British Columbia because its values and methods were antithetical to those approved of by most British Columbians. Equally important was the portrayal of the party's members as individuals who always sought authoritarian solutions to problems. These two themes and their variations were the foundation of the campaigns against the CCF-NDP.

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CHAPTER 1

THE CCF-NDP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By 1972 the New Democratic Party (NDP) and its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), had been in opposition in British Columbia for thirty-nine years. It appeared that the party would never be able to attract the few extra votes it needed to unseat the twenty-year-old Social Credit government of W. A. C. Bennett. In August of 1972 this seemingly eternal state of affairs suddenly changed. When the election returns came in, British Columbians found themselves governed, not by a solid Social Credit majority, but by an equally solid NDP majority. The NDP, led by Dave Barrett, decimated the old guard of the Social Credit government. The victory was so complete that politicians and pundits alike doubted that the Socreds would be able to recover.

The belief that the Socreds were crushed infected the NDP as well. Secure in the thought of a legislature devoid of strong opposition, Barrett and his ministers pushed ahead with an ambitious, if poorly co-ordinated, program of innovation and reform. However, Barrett's sense of security was ill-founded. On December 11, 1975, after a stormy three years in power, he was swept from office by a reborn Social Credit Party. Led by W. A. C. Bennett's son, Bill, the Socreds had cleared away almost all vestiges of the old Social Credit Party. Strengthened by deserters from the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, the new Social Credit organization fielded a slate of younger

individuals who presented themselves as competent managers. Many former Socred voters who had cast ballots for third parties in 1972 returned to the fold, while traditional third party voters also joined Bill Bennett. In 1981 this party has two election victories behind it and continues to govern, although with a reduced majority.

The unusual fortunes of the CCF-NDP in British Columbia raise a number of questions. One interesting subject is the campaigns mounted against the party by its opponents and some members of the press. We know that the opposing parties presented negative portrayals of the CCF-NDP, in the hope of creating particular images in the minds of voters that would induce the voters to reject the CCF-NDP. The effectiveness of election campaigns in influencing voting behaviour has long been a subject for debate among political scientists.[1] It seems plausible to suggest that the campaigns against the CCF-NDP in British Columbia were at least partly responsible for the party's failure to attain power before 1972. However, regardless of their effectiveness, the attacks made on the party are interesting because they present useful insights into politics in the province. The portrayals presented by the parties and the commentaries presented by the press are indications of the attitudes of those agencies toward the CCF-NDP, the voters and politics in general. Those attitudes are the central concern of this study.

This study presents a description of the portrayals of the CCF-NDP. We shall ask a number of questions. How did the Socreds and others portray the CCF-NDP? Did that portrayal change? What caused

the changes? Were there any common threads to the changing portrayal? It is hoped that the answers to these questions will help us to understand what happened in 1975 and in the years before.

A Quest for Legitimacy

As the data for this study were gathered, a pattern seemed to emerge in the attitudes of the other parties and the press toward the CCF-NDP. We shall refer to this pattern frequently because it seems to describe the nature of the changes in the portrayal. The data suggested that, while the party was originally portrayed as a dangerous, alien force, that portrayal changed in the forty years that followed. The CCF-NDP slowly began to be viewed as a serious contender for power and as a party with some claim to political legitimacy. The party's opponents seemed to lose some of their fear of its policies and intentions. This change produced a less strident campaign against the party and may have helped it on its way to victory. This paper will try to trace the stages in this quest for legitimacy, stages that were quite clear in the changing portrayal of the party.

The notion of legitimacy is an important one in politics. In the case of the CCF-NDP, it is most enlightening to define legitimacy by defining its opposite. The illegitimacy that we suggest haunted the CCF-NDP for so long arose from the belief that the party was a threat to British Columbia and the values of its citizens. The attacks on its legitimacy centred on the ideas that it wanted to destroy all of the structures that gave British Columbians security and it wanted to

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destroy the value systems that gave British Columbians their identities. This party was portrayed as one that not only refused to play by the "rules," but actually wanted to abolish the game. Even if it were unable to abolish the game, the other parties insisted, its alien values and lack of experience would make it incompetent to run the province without creating economic disaster. The quest for legitimacy involved the slow death of this picture of the CCF-NDP and its replacement by a picture of the party as a well-intentioned, but misguided, political movement. This process of transition is far from complete.

The evolution of legitimacy progressed steadily until 1972. The CCF, which fought its first B.C. provincial election in 1933, emerged at a time of great upheaval. The ripples of the Russian revolution were still felt after almost two decades. There was a fear of communism as strikes and demonstrations heralded a new activism on the part of Canadian workers. In Europe, fascism threatened totalitarian government of a different sort. As the world's economy collapsed, even Canada seemed threatened with revolution. In this atmosphere any group that openly advocated radical changes in the existing system was branded revolutionary by many among the middle classes and the elites. The CCF was just such a radical group.

At first the party was viewed as a radical movement only slightly removed from communism. To many it appeared to be a truly dangerous organization. This portrayal was put forward by both the press and the other parties throughout the 1930s and most of the 1940s. The first stage in the quest for legitimacy was reached in the late 1940s. The

successful wartime use of economic planning by the federal government lent legitimacy to the CCF's policy of continuous planning. The return of prosperity in the post-war era led people to look for ways to preserve that prosperity. The CCF program suggested it was possible to avoid another serious depression. Finally, the CCF had been elected in Saskatchewan without any apparent economic or moral collapse. All these changes made the older portrayal of the dangerous revolutionary party less plausible.

The second stage was reached in 1961, when the New Democratic Party was formed. We will suggest that this was the most important of the stages. The NDP represented an important departure from the CCF traditions in that it was more clearly a party of electoral success than a party of ideology. It still retained a distinctive set of beliefs and programs, but now the old Regina Manifesto pledge to obliterate capitalism was gone. Where the CCF had originally been socialist, the NDP was clearly social democratic. The new party hoped to achieve the greatest possible equality of condition within a mixed economy. It was this acceptance of many existing structures and values that was the biggest step toward legitimacy. Analysis of the attacks on the NDP suggests that the party was still seen as incompetent and its priorities as disordered, but now it seemed to be moving toward a more acceptable ideological position that did not threaten complete disaster.

The third stage was reached during the NDP's term in office. We shall suggest that this stage was almost a reversal of the trend; it certainly halted the evolution toward legitimacy. The NDP's successes

and failures in government provided support for those who had always denied the party's legitimacy. Initiatives such as the government's acquisition of several private companies and its freeze on the sale of farmland appeared to be the first signs that Barrett intended to bring true socialism to British Columbia. Although the holding and exercising of power carried with it some measure of legitimacy, that legitimacy was not acknowledged by the party's opponents. The NDP's performance and its apparent attitude to governing seemed to provide evidence for all the dire predictions that the other parties and the press had made. Forty years of evolution had been stalled by three years in power.

Image and Portrayal

The overview of the thesis presented in the preceding pages introduced a number of concepts that are central to our study. The first of these concepts is that of "image." Images, the simplified mental pictures we have of people or concepts, are very important in politics. We acquire images through a complicated process that involves labelling the characteristics of the objects with which we come into contact. These labels describe the object in terms that are meaningful to the individual, although they may have different meanings for others. Images are used to guide our behaviour because they suggest the ways in which the object affects our own interests and values. The decisions we must make in life are often very complicated. Images reduce the number of aspects of a problem we must evaluate and so speed up the decision-making process.

In politics the voter tries to reduce complex issues to simple terms and tries to discover or predict the positions the parties will take on those issues. This effort results in the formation of simplified images of both the issues and the parties. Although political scientists have studied voting behaviour and public opinion for more than thirty years, we know very little about the way in which people acquire particular images. The authors of *The American Voter* tell us that the formation of an image is at least partly a rational process.[2] It is probable that most voters develop a sketchy list of their priorities and then find some means to discover the attitudes of the parties and the candidates to these priorities. These attitudes are discovered through the statements of the party or its opponents or by a process of inference in which certain party beliefs or characteristics are used as indicators of other beliefs. The voter thus develops an image of the party that he can use to predict the party's attitude to new issues and the way in which the party will treat his interests. To this will be added an image of the party's ability to govern effectively. This is not to suggest that the image remains fixed. Instead, it is tied, however loosely, to the facts and so changes as the facts change.[3]

Of course, image-formation is not a completely rational process because it is essentially a process of simplification. Aspects of a party's image are often determined by this simplification as much as by the facts. For example, Butler and Stokes note the way that British parties are identified by their supposed allegiance to particular classes in society.[4] These allegiances may no longer exist in reality

but they remain powerful images because they greatly simplify decision-making. As with many images of political parties, the notion of a connection between class and party is potent not only because it helps speed up image-formation, but also because it is handed down from parents to children so that it becomes accepted as given. Images are also irrational because they are formed on top of existing images. For instance, a person who holds an image of a particular ethnic group will be influenced by that image if he is confronted with a politician who belongs to that ethnic group. The voter's emotional reaction to the ethnic group may colour his impression of the politician, thereby making it impossible for him to evaluate rationally the politician's statements or record.

Political parties recognize the importance of simple images and as a result they attempt to create images that serve their partisan interests. Parties try to create positive images of themselves and negative images of their opponents. The goal of this image-making is to influence the voting behaviour of the electorate. Because each individual has a different way of forming an image and a different set of concerns, the parties can never predict with certainty the outcome of their efforts. Nevertheless, this method is often perceived as more effective than attempts to debate issues.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that there are two concepts involved in political image-making. The first is the image that a voter acquires of a party or candidate. The second is the portrayal presented by a party or by the press. This paper is

concerned almost exclusively with the second concept, the portrayal. We will look at the way in which parties and the press have portrayed the CCF-NDP over the past fifty years. This portrayal is interesting in itself because it tells us a great deal about the way the parties and the press perceived the CCF-NDP and the way they perceived the electorate. It must be remembered, however, that the portrayal is not equivalent to the image held by the voters. Although a portrayal is presented in order to create an image, it is unlikely that the portrayal will have the desired effect on all the members of the electorate. Most people will filter the portrayal through their own attitudes and desires and so create a unique image for themselves. Thus the portrayal and the image are two separate, though related, phenomena.

The theoretical orientation underlying this project pictures political rhetoric as symbolic expressions indicative of the way opinion leaders would like the public to perceive the object of their rhetoric. We are thus concerned with the terms on which elections are fought. If parties are characterized on a strong-weak scale by opinion leaders, we expect the public at least to be inclined to think in this way, if only because the leaders will not fight on any other terms. The relationship between the public and the opinion leader is, to a certain extent, reciprocal, so that politicians pick symbols they believe will strike a sympathetic chord with the voters. In this respect, politicians reflect prevailing attitudes as well as trying to shape them. Press commentators play a similar role to that of politicians, although the press's portrayal is not necessarily intended to produce a particular partisan

image. Instead, it usually is an unco-ordinated mixture of personal biases, popular attitudes and the portrayals put forward by the parties.

Method

The bulk of this study is an attempt to detect changes in the nature of the portrayal of the CCF-NDP. The method employed is content analysis, a technique that uses written text as the source of its data. Content analysis has been defined as "the use of replicable and valid methods for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of the source."[5] In this paper we will use the data to infer the attitudes of the people who created the portrayal. The text studied will be newspaper election reports, editorials, opinion columns and advertisements.[6]

Laden though it is with pitfalls, content analysis is an important tool in the study of politics because politics relies on the communication of images and values. The reports printed in the press or broadcast on radio or television convey to the recipient certain evaluations of a politician or party made by other politicians or by the reporter. These evaluations usually refer to specific qualities of the person being evaluated. Frequently, there are certain types of qualities that are evaluated while others are ignored. The types that are chosen are the dimensions or "scales" along which an individual is measured when he is considered as a candidate for office. These scales may include evaluations of such things as honesty, competence, charisma or courage. Taken as a whole, this collection of scales represents the political

"terms of reference." The terms will vary both between polities and within polities. For instance, one polity may place an emphasis on competence while another may ignore competence in favour of honesty. This difference in emphasis may exist in one polity between different parties, so that one party may be evaluated on honesty and another on competence. Content analysis gives us linguistic clues to the political terms of reference and to the way in which those terms of reference are applied to specific parties. In this study we will call the evaluation scales "themes." The combination of themes referring to a specific party makes up that party's portrayal.

As we have noted, content analysis provides us with a method of studying text through quantification. Quantification is at once the most important and the most controversial part of content analysis. Almost all content analysis is reduced to a set of numbers, which are taken to be representative of the relationship between characteristics of the content. For instance, a study of racial bias in literature might count certain derogatory terms, such as "lazy," "dishonest" or "immoral." This count could then become the basis for a comparison between portrayals of races.

The problem, of course, is, what do these numbers really mean? In order to answer this question, the analyst must justify carefully his choice of indicators and, wherever possible, check them for validity. The problem cannot be avoided easily because content analysis deals with such a large volume of material. Only some form of quantification will reduce the data to manageable proportions.

The usual method of quantification is the identification of standard units for comparison. Berelson identifies five types of unit used: words, themes, characters, items and space-and-time measures.[7] Items are such things as books, stories, slogans, speeches and jokes. Space-and-time measures are such things as column inches, pages, film footage and minutes. The particular unit used will be determined by the aims of the researcher. In this study we will use words as our units because we are concerned with the specific vocabulary used to create the portrayals. Any larger unit of measurement would obscure the subtleties of language that are central to political discourse.

The method of content analysis used is evaluative assertion analysis. This technique involves locating sentences that make evaluative assertions about the matter being studied and then breaking these sentences into simple subject-predicate assertions. The predicate may contain an object or a symbol describing the subject. The analyst can then categorize the subjects, verbs, objects and symbols or "common meaning terms" in order to develop a detailed picture of the characteristics of the text. Following North and his associates, the reported statements of politicians, journalists and groups are broken down into assertions.[8] The symbols and verbs comprise the "dictionary" of political rhetoric. Each assertion is further described according to the degree to which it has been distilled into a simple form, its source, its subject, its object, the directness of the verbal linkage, whether the verbal connection is positive or negative and the degree to which the symbol is weakened or exaggerated by modification. All these

aspects are then coded onto computer cards and fed into a program that groups the dictionary terms into categories. An example of the kind of analysis involved can be seen in the sentence: "The CCF and their Russian masters hope to destroy the initiative that has made this country great." This sentence contains two assertions regarding the CCF. The first is, "The CCF is controlled by Russia." The second is, "The CCF hopes to destroy Canadian initiative." The common meaning terms are "Russia" and "initiative." The verbal connectors are "is controlled by" and "hopes to destroy."

The categories used in this study are designed to identify the major types of common meaning terms used to describe the NDP. The literature on content analysis is sparse and usually focusses on specific subjects such as international crises or the personalities of the leaders.[9] As a result, the systems of families used to group units of data are not easily transferred from one study to another. Because this thesis deals with a subject not previously studied, it was decided to devise an original set of families that would describe the kinds of portrayals found in the data.

There are two systems of categories. The first system groups all of the terms into seven families or general themes. The second is a set of smaller categories which deal with very specific criticisms used against the CCF-NDP. The second system does not include all of the terms in the dictionary. This second list was created when it was discovered that the first was too broad to measure many of the themes that appeared in the data. The two systems are listed below.

FAMILIES	ANTI-CCF/NDP CRITICISMS
Moral Character	Spending Practices
Competence	Intelligence
Relations with People and Groups	Totalitarian Attitudes and Methods
Ideological Symbols	Greed and Opportunism
Basic Values	Socialism and Communism
General Character	Connection to Labour
Other Symbols	Alien Character
	General Economic Program

The first system consists of seven families of terms. The first family includes those terms that reflect the moral character of the party or its members. This family is most often represented by terms relating to honesty, but it also includes terms that suggest the party is willing to deceive voters or undertake legal but questionable activities. This family includes terms like "conspiracy," "deception," "flim flam," "gangsters," "indefensible methods," "junkets" and "sleazy." As the terms suggest, this family is one that is concerned largely with election strategies and public relations strategies. The Moral Character family does not include references to the party's sense of justice in its dealings with others. Justice as an attribute of a government is included in the Relationships with People and Groups family.

The Competence family deals with the party's ability to manage the public business. Its terms relate to efficiency, competence, experience and leadership. This family also evaluates the effects of the party's administration on the government and the economy, although not on individuals or groups connected to government. The family includes terms such as "clumsy," "costly programs," "debt," "dumb,"

"inept," "out of his depth," "squandermania" and "wasteful."

The Relationships with People and Groups family covers a wider range of terms than the previous categories because it is concerned with the party's relations with a large number of political actors. A large part of the judgements made of a party or a government have to do with its connections to and treatment of various social and economic groups. It must not favour the "wrong" groups. It must deal fairly and honestly with all groups. Naturally, many of the terms in the portrayal of a party by its opponents suggest that the party is connected to the wrong groups or does not favour the right groups. Terms in this group also reflect the party's fairness in its dealings with all people and groups. Terms in this category include "confrontation," "compassion," "dictatorial," "heavy-handed," "labour support," "manipulation" and "slave labour." In creating this family, we were not interested in the specific groups involved or the nature of the relationships, but rather the degree to which such references were used in the portrayal. In this way we hope to be able to tell whether relationships were, for instance, more important than the party's competence as an administration.

The Ideological Symbols family includes those terms that refer to the basic political beliefs of parties and the "isms" used to describe beliefs. This family is included to give us an idea of how frequently the opposing parties make reference to the fundamental beliefs that are alleged to underly differing policies. These references are not always reasoned political criticisms. Instead, they are often crude attacks that use the party's supposed beliefs to elicit emotional

reactions. These terms include "conservative," "creeping socialism," "fascism," "fuzzy socialist thinkers," "individual enterprise," "left" and "state socialism."

The family we expect to account for the largest proportion of terms is the Basic Values family. It evaluates the party's adherence to commonly held values and identifies the values the party does hold. In essence it asks the question, does this party belong to our society? We expect this family to be the largest because much of political rhetoric hinges on values. Values are the guideposts of society, so they serve politicians by providing many of the scales on which to judge each other. The terms in this family include "Christian," "character of the people," "double standard," "brave dreams," "public good," "Hitler," "independence," "layabouts," "participation" and "unity."

The General Character family includes words that evaluate a party or individual in terms of character. It covers all those personal qualities not included in other families. Some of the terms used in this family are "audacious," "blustering," "humble," "low key" and "strident." These terms are not political in nature but rather evaluate the party as if it were a person with an identifiable personality.

The Other Symbols family is a miscellaneous category for those terms that do not fit elsewhere. It includes symbols and terms as diverse as "chance," "crisis," "fantasy," "heir," "party" and "Sirois Report."

The second system for categorizing the data is designed to describe more specific criticisms of the CCF-NDP. This second set of

scales was devised after the data had been gathered. Its components were selected because they were used frequently to refer to the CCF-NDP. The scale for each specific criticism consists of all the terms that seem to reinforce that criticism. The terms in a given scale will not necessarily fall into the same family, although many do. For convenience in this paper we shall refer to these scales as the anti-NDP criticisms.

The first anti-NDP criticism refers to the spending practices of the party. The Spending terms describe the way in which the party would spend public money if it were elected to office. It includes twenty-one terms such as "cavalier disregard for public money," "excess," "free-spending," "give-away" and "socialist potlatch."

The Intelligence criticism is similar to the Competence family in the first system, but is specifically concerned with the innate capabilities of the party. This index is not concerned with the effects of the party's administration, its experience or its leadership. This group describes the party as if it were a person. It consists of sixty-eight terms that include "able," "economic idiots," "failure," "goofs," "losers," "obtuse," "sloppy" and "woolly."

The Totalitarian Attitudes and Methods criticism measures the emphasis on the notion that a CCF-NDP government would control all aspects of life in British Columbia. The totalitarian scale equated socialism with dictatorship. This group includes thirty-six terms such as "authoritarian," "Big Brother Government," "domination," "expropriations," "heavy-handed," "regimentation" and "strong-arm tactics."

The Greed and Opportunism criticism refers to a type of attack that is often used in politics. It is related to the Moral Character family but is more concerned with the motives behind the party's immoral actions. These attacks accuse the party of desiring power for its own sake and of being unscrupulous in the pursuit of power. There are twenty-nine terms in this group, including "ambitious," "greedy," "influence seekers," "lust for power," "Machiavellian," "pork barrel politics" and "sleazy tactics."

The Socialism and Communism terms use a very common anti-NDP criticism. The NDP has not been able to shake off the socialist label or avoid the emotional attacks that focus on it. This group consists of twenty-one terms that include "communism," "Marxist," "Russia," "social democracy," "socialist hordes," "sterile socialism" and "Waffle Manifesto."

The Connection to Labour criticism uses the idea that the NDP was dominated by organized labour. The fifteen terms in this group include "big labour," "labour bosses," "labour problems," "labour-oriented," "soft-touch labour laws" and "union government."

Another criticism referred to the party's allegedly alien character. The Alien Character group of terms suggests that the party was foreign to Canada and to Canadian values. There are fifteen terms in the set, including "aberration," "Canada," "foreigners," "outsiders," "unBritish" and "American takeover."

The final anti-NDP criticism counts the references to the party's economic policy and the effects of that policy. This index includes

forty terms such as "bankruptcy," "economic growth," "economic chaos," "financial losses," "inflation," "penny-pinching" and "unhealthy investment climate."

As will be seen in the following chapters, the families which were culled from the data themselves seemed to support at least four broad themes that were used in campaigns against the CCF-NDP. Although other themes will be examined, the varying emphasis on these four helps to illuminate the change in the portrayal and the evolution of legitimacy. The first is the "threat to Canadian values" theme, which reinforced the notion that the party, if elected, would undermine the values and institutions held dear by British Columbians. The second is the "socialism" theme, which emphasized the supposed connection between the party and socialist or communist parties. The third is the "competence" theme, which evaluated the party's specific policies and its ability to govern. Finally, the "labour connection" theme noted the CCF-NDP's ties to organized labour. Each of these themes will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

The Sample

The sample for this study was designed to trace the change in the portrayal of the NDP over time, but to put extra emphasis on the period between 1969 and 1975. There are two parts to the sample, each part drawn in a different manner. The first sample, which we will call the "election sample," was used to examine the portrayals used during election campaigns. It consists of all references to the CCF-NDP that

were found in newspaper reports, advertisements and editorials. It does not include the CCF-NDP's references to itself. The elections were chosen so as to yield two elections close to the turn of each decade. Thus the sample includes coverage from the elections of 1937, 1941, 1952, 1953, 1960, 1963, 1969, 1972 and 1975. Additional data were included for 1979 to give an indication of changes that might have occurred after the NDP fell from power. In each case, the sample consisted of all the reports, advertisements and editorials that appeared in the *Victoria Daily Times* and the *Vancouver Sun* during the week immediately preceding the election. It was hoped that this final week of the campaign would yield the greatest number of election reports and references to the party. For 1969, 1972 and 1975, the second week before the election was added to give a larger sample. The sample also includes election editorials for the month preceding the election taken from weekly and small daily papers around the province. Because the data for the early elections did not produce large numbers of assertions, the years have been combined into groups to allow more valid inferences to be made. Thus, 1937 has been added to 1941, 1952 to 1953 and 1960 to 1963. The distribution of assertions that resulted from this sample is shown below.

PERIOD	1937 1941	52 53	60 63	69	72	75	79
ASSERTIONS	74	50	84	166	87	286	73

The second sample deals with the period in government. We shall call it the "press commentary sample." It consists of the political

commentaries written by the *Vancouver Sun*'s editorial writers and its two star columnists, Marjorie Nichols and Allan Fotheringham. The commentaries were taken from every other month beginning with January 1971 and ending with August 1972. After August 1972 every column and editorial was used up to the 1975 election. These three sources were chosen for several reasons. First, the *Sun* is generally recognized as the newspaper of record in the province and its reports are often quoted in the Legislature. Second, these sources frequently commented on provincial politics. Nichols wrote exclusively on British Columbia politics while the others usually addressed specific issues as they arose. Third, the three sources represented different ideological perspectives. Nichols was a staunch conservative; the editors consistently defended free enterprise and supported the Liberal Party; Allan Fotheringham originally was sympathetic to the new government, although his attitude changed. Fourth, the writers were perceived as influential. Their columns were widely read and were often the sources of controversy. Fifth, although they often commented on issues, the writers were free to raise their own questions and to carry on a running appraisal of the government. In fact, Fotheringham and Nichols devoted several columns to evaluations of one or more cabinet ministers. All the writers used their freedom to comment on a wide range of government activities, whether topical or not. Finally, the three sources commented not only on issues raised by the opposition parties but also on issues raised by individuals and groups. As a result, their comments included the criticisms of many sectors of society. The second sample yielded the

following distribution of assertions:

PERIOD	Jan. 1971 Aug. 1972	Sept. 1972 Feb. 1974	Mar. 1974 Dec. 1975
ASSERTIONS	27	356	620

The sampling procedure places certain limits on the study. The two samples are not completely comparable because they were drawn in different ways. We shall use the election sample to describe the changes over the long term and the press commentary sample to describe the changes during the period in government. However, we cannot say with certainty that the changes in the second sample describe the process of change that produced the differences between the 1972 and 1975 elections. The second sample only suggests the changes in attitude undergone by the editorialists and party strategists between 1972 and 1975. It is also possible that the results could be affected by the different methods used in various periods of the election sample. In the early elections we used assertions from the week preceding the election while in the 1969, 1972 and 1975 elections we used the two weeks preceding the election. An examination of the data, however, makes it clear that most of the differences between data in the first week and those in the second were differences of volume rather than differences of kind.

The sampling procedure provided us with a large number of assertions, although not as many as we might wish for in the early years.[10] This distribution yielded a total of 1,823 assertions for the whole study. These assertions in turn yielded a dictionary of 669 different

common meaning terms and 163 different verbal connectors.

Each chapter of the paper analyzes a different period. The next chapter deals with the period from 1937 to 1972, chapter three with the first half of the period in government and chapter four with the last half of the period in government. The final chapter offers some conclusions. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the events of the period. The data are then explored according to major themes. The themes are described by changes in two or more families or specific anti-NDP criticisms, which are displayed on bar graphs. There were several possible ways of breaking down the data, including separating press commentary between metropolitan and hinterland papers. After the data were analyzed, however, it was clear that the small number of assertions from hinterland papers and the small differences between press and party assertions did not justify such breakdowns. Instead the graphs present the assertions from all sources while any important differences between press and parties are noted in the text. In chapter four separate graphs are included for the press commentary sample and the election sample. This scheme of organization is designed to make clear the way in which identifiable themes in the portrayal appeared and changed.

Footnotes

[1]See Colin Seymour-Ure, *The Press, Politics and the Public* (London: Methuen, 1968). There is a thorough examination of the debate, along with an extensive annotated bibliography, in Sidney Kraus and Dennis Davis, *The Effects of Mass Communication on Political Behavior* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976). A discussion of one aspect of the debate in relation to British Columbia appears in R. Jeremy Wilson, "The Impact of Communications Developments on British Columbia Electoral Patterns, 1903-1975," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1980, 13:509-35.

[2]A. Campbell et al., *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960), p. 43.

[3]Ibid.

[4]David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 359.

[5]Klaus Krippendorff, "Introduction to Part 1," in George Gerbner et al., eds., *The Analysis of Communication Content: Developments in Scientific Theories and Computer Techniques* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1969), p. 11.

[6]This selection of text provides, of course, an incomplete picture of the portrayal of the CCF-NDP. The period 1937-1979 saw the growth of radio and television as important media for political communication. It is possible that the portrayal that appeared in the broadcast media differed from that found in the press. However, because of the transitory nature of radio and television coverage, only the print images remain. There also exists the problem of how to analyze a medium that is made up of motion pictures as well as words. A major task of political research in the future must be the development of methods for studying the output of the broadcast media.

[7]Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York: Hafner, 1971).

[8]R. C. North et al., *Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), pp. 91-100.

[9]See Doris A. Graber, "Press and TV as Opinion Resources in Presidential Campaigns," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1976, 40:285-303.

There are also several useful applications in Gerbner et al., eds., *The Analysis of Communication Content*.

[10]The 1930s and 1940s were still an era of ill-concealed bias in newspapers. The *Sun* gave very little coverage to the CCF while Premier Pattullo could almost always count on front page coverage of his campaign speeches. Pattullo reserved most of his rhetoric for attacks on the Conservatives rather than on the CCF. This situation was responsible for the small number of assertions found in the early years.

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The formative years of the CCF-NDP were tumultuous ones for Canada and for the party. There were many currents in the politics of the time. This unique period cannot be understood fully through empirical methods. For this reason, this chapter dwells at length on a subjective evaluation of the party's portrayal.

Although the works of Young,[1] Black,[2] Robin[3] and others deal with the CCF-NDP or British Columbia politics, there has been no systematic analysis of the political campaigns waged against the party in British Columbia. The popular works of Kavic and Nixon[4] and Persky[5] deal with questions of image and party strategy but only in a casual manner. The closest we can come to a rigorous examination of the portrayals of the CCF-NDP is a study of the CCF in Ontario, Gerald Caplan's *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism*.[6] Drawing primarily on newspaper reports, advertisements and contemporary documents, Caplan traced the portrayals of the Ontario CCF between 1932 and 1945. Many of the themes Caplan discovered in Ontario were also to be found in British Columbia. Even though the politics of the two provinces differed markedly, the tactics used against the CCF were remarkably similar, as this chapter will show. Although it is impressionistic rather than systematic, Caplan's study is a useful introduction to the period.

Caplan attributed the Ontario party's failure to three major factors: poor organization, ignorance of practical politics and the

campaign mounted by its opponents. He saw the last factor as particularly effective in keeping the party from power. Although Caplan may have overestimated the effect of the anti-CCF campaign, it seems certain that it was a powerful weapon. Starting out as an election tactic in the 1930s, the anti-socialist campaign expanded in the 1940s to become a battle of almost religious intensity that was taken up by private groups as well as by political parties. The portrayals that were presented by these groups frequently exceeded even the most inflammatory party rhetoric. It may be that these exaggerated views were not held by many of the voters, but the portrayals were still significant because they reinforced the grounds on which the CCF was criticized. The anti-CCF groups took the central points used by the parties and with them built extravagant accusations against the CCF. As we shall see, it was those central points that were common to British Columbia and Ontario.

Caplan found that the early critics of the CCF portrayed it as a violent, revolutionary party that was sympathetic to, if not directed by, Russia. Connected to these notions was the portrait of the CCF as atheistic. It is clear that this was seen as a party unlike any other in Canada. Its alleged desire for rapid social change was foreign to the Canadian (read British) tradition. The CCF as a threat to Canada was not a concept propounded exclusively by the other parties; Caplan found that the press made the same evaluation and did not hesitate to put that evaluation into print.[7] The campaign against the party during the 1930s was based almost exclusively on these themes.

The efforts of the old parties were not successful in crushing the CCF, although its early years were marked by few electoral victories. At the beginning of World War II the CCF experienced a surge of popularity in Ontario, just as it did in British Columbia. This phenomenon may have been the result of the federal government's wartime policies. Part of the Canadian war effort included economic planning on a scale unknown in previous years. It soon became evident that such planning, a key CCF policy, was an effective tool. The party's platform thus became more attractive to more and more people. To fight this current, the CCF's opponents turned the emphasis of their campaign to demonstrating "how miserable life would be under socialism."[8] This has remained a major tactic up to the present day.

Caplan gleaned four main themes from the political literature of the 1940s.[9] The first theme connected the CCF with the Nazis. The Russian connection was temporarily unusable because Russia was an ally. The Nazis provided an even more effective substitute, however, because they were a very real danger. The link was a tenuous one, but the accusations implied that the CCF would create a police state like that in Germany. The Ontario Conservative Party began to refer to the CCF members as National Socialists, an appellation that reinforced the supposed connection. The second theme was related to the first. It identified the CCF as a party that would create absolute regimentation, totalitarianism, and an end to individual freedom and choice. The old parties and the other individuals who opposed the CCF emphasized that the party was totalitarian in nature. Like the Nazis, it would intro-

duce a dictatorship that would destroy freedom. The critics mounted a large-scale campaign to convince the voters that the aim of the CCF was to take away all the rights and privileges of Canadians and reduce everyone to a servant of the state. A large number of the advertisements attacking the CCF were placed by banks and insurance companies. These advertisements promoted free enterprise and warned that the CCF would confiscate all personal savings and insurance policies.

The third major theme emphasized that the CCF would undermine "the Canadian way of life," particularly because it was led by foreigners and Jews. This notion was one that had been used in the 1930s. It was almost an appeal to Canada's "national spirit," so that it was reminiscent of the nineteenth century British attitude to foreigners. The CCF was seen to be composed of people who were not like "us." Their ideas threatened to corrupt the purity and strength of the Canadian spirit. Finally, the propaganda used an anti-intellectual theme to denigrate the academics and dreamers of the CCF. This was a common notion, with several variations. The prolific Ontario anti-socialist campaigner, B. A. Trestrail, emphasized that the CCF members were inexperienced in the ways of government and business. Other critics were concerned less with the party's inexperience and more with its utopian dreams of bringing about impossible changes in society. Still others criticized the CCF for its unrealistic view of human nature, which held that competition was not inevitable.

During the 1945 federal and provincial election campaigns in Ontario, the attacks reached their peak. Copies of several anti-CCF

tracts were distributed to thousands of homes across Canada. *Reader's Digest* condensed F. A. Hayek's anti-socialist *The Road to Serfdom* and distributed it in bulk for delivery by mail and in the pay envelopes of employees of a number of companies. Unlike the 1930s, the major themes were not violence, atheism and revolution, but dictatorship, control and "foreign" ideas. In both the federal and provincial elections, the Ontario CCF suffered crushing defeats. Caplan believed that the CCF's defeat could be attributed largely to the campaign, which created a fear of the party. Caplan concluded:

> It is evident that business's attempt to foster a fear psychosis in the electorate was highly successful. Because its propaganda campaign brought out such vast numbers of anti-socialists who had rarely voted in the past, the CCF had to increase its vote merely to stand still; it failed to do so and thereby, relatively speaking, fell far behind.[10]

The CCF in British Columbia

The campaign against the CCF in British Columbia was very similar to that in Ontario. Although individuals and groups were not as important in promoting the cause of free enterprise, the themes that appeared in attacks on the CCF were parallel to those used in central Canada. The earliest identifiable theme that was common to the whole period was found in our analysis of the 1937 election. This was the portrayal of the CCF as a threat to Canadian values and the Canadian way of life. This criticism held that the CCF did not support the values and traditions supported by most Canadians. Moreover, the values it opposed were central to the concepts of "Canada" and "Canadian." As we have seen, this was the kind of portrayal put forward frequently by

those who identified the early CCF members with such allegedly revolutionary elements as the organizers of the march on Ottawa and the Winnipeg General Strike. Those organizers were seen by many people to be anarchists dedicated to the destruction of the existing social order. We have suggested that this portrayal changed in later years to de-emphasize the revolutionary aspect and concentrate on the party's opposition to business and free enterprise. Despite the change, however, the message remained the same: the CCF-NDP opposes "our" values.

To some extent, the CCF's opponents in British Columbia had an easier job than their counterparts in Ontario because there appeared to be more evidence that the British Columbia party was an alien entity. Walter Young tells us that the CCF in British Columbia was more radical and more clearly influenced by alien ideologies than were branches in the rest of Canada. "British Columbia socialism was more militant and highly spiced with Marxist or 'scientific socialism'."[11] During the 1933 federal and provincial election campaigns some members of the British Columbia CCF made extreme statements that raised the spectre of revolution and violence in Canada. The statements of the British Columbia radicals were used to discredit the national party.[12] This alien character was further emphasized by the backgrounds of the CCF members. In Saskatchewan the party was led by influential local figures, such as leaders of co-operatives and farmers, but the British Columbia contingent was composed of "the 'outsiders' of society, the determined nonconformists."[13] This demonstrable characteristic of the party made it easier for opponents to fashion potentially believable negative portrayals.

The terms used to illustrate the "threat to Canadian values" theme were varied. Frequently, the accusations related to the party's alleged lack of concern for individual rights and liberties. In both 1937 and 1941, Premier Duff Pattullo declared that the party was an "essentially autocratic"[14] one which would create a large and dictatorial bureaucracy that would govern the province by force.[15] Pattullo said the CCF would govern like the Nazis. He told an audience,

> A bunch of gangsters are in control in Germany and if you don't agree with them off comes your head. That is what would happen here if the CCF were elected.[16]

This situation, said one cabinet minister, would be so hateful to British Columbias that they would fight to regain their freedom and the result would be "bloody revolution."[17] The party was also objectionable because it was "unBritish." Its members were impatient, a trait that was unforgivable among Englishmen.[18] During the Second World War the Tory leader accused the CCF of trying to help the enemies of Canada.

> The CCF has mentioned no word of co-operation for they are out to retard the war effort. It is because of the British Navy that we are safe and to think the CCF member Mr. Cameron stood up and said: "Thank God I'm not an Englishman."[19]

These terms and others illustrate attempts to portray the party as a foreign entity whose beliefs and character were dangerous to British Columbians.

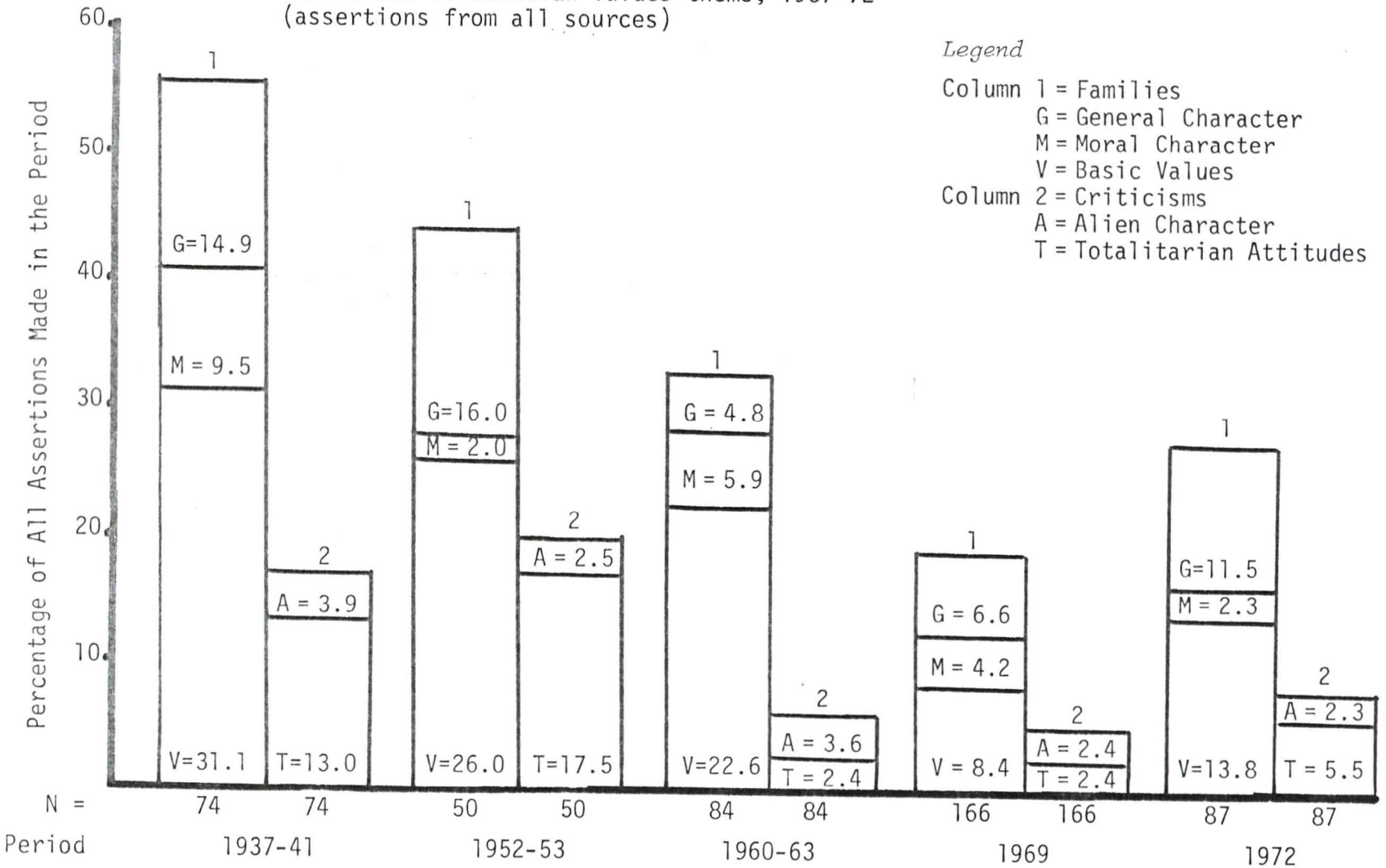
The "threat to Canadian values" theme included several of the families and specific anti-NDP criticisms in our system. The Moral Character group related to the party's supposed nefarious motives and willingness to go to any lengths to achieve its goals. The General Character category included terms that described the party's impatience

and other allegedly unsavory qualities. At the same time the Basic Values family listed terms that described the party's opposition to fundamental Canadian and British beliefs. More narrow aspects of the theme were described by two of the specific indicators: the Totalitarian and Alien Character categories. The totalitarian group of terms focused on one of the main attacks made on the CCF, namely that its members were essentially authoritarian and would create a police state in British Columbia if they were elected. The alien group of terms related specifically to the party's unBritish or unCanadian character and its devotion to foreign values.

Figure 1 shows the emphasis put on all of these categories in descriptions by both opponents and commentators. We see that in the 1937 and 1941 campaigns, the Basic Values, Moral Character and General Character families accounted for more than 55 percent of the terms, with the Totalitarian and Alien Character criticisms accounting for about 16 percent of the terms. Terms such as "autocratic," "bureaucratic," "dictatorial," "failure," "impatient" and "irresponsible" were prominent, as were assertions drawing negative connections between the CCF and positive symbols such as "British Columbia," "freedom," "integrity" and "truth."

The "threat to Canadian values" theme was concerned with fundamental beliefs. It dealt with the notion that the CCF was not an acceptable party because its character and beliefs were both foreign and dangerous. The CCF seemed to threaten the rules of the political game with its talk of a "co-operative commonwealth," its opposition to

Figure 1
The Threat to Canadian Values theme; 1937-72
(assertions from all sources)



profit and its acceptance of socialism. The Totalitarian criticism was important because it reflected the central concern of the critics. That was, the CCF wanted to replace traditional freedoms with centralization, control and dictatorship. In 1937, the Liberal G. M. Weir warned voters that the CCF would introduce "planning councils for every phase of activity. It [means] . . . that 'everybody will have something to say about everybody else's business'."[20] It was clear that the critics wanted to emphasize that this was a party antithetical to the spirit of Canada.

We can see from Figure 1 that the "threat to Canada values" theme did not remain strong throughout the whole period. The theme as a whole declined steadily in succeeding years, recovering only partially in 1972. The Basic Values, Moral Character and Totalitarian groups declined most sharply. This change is in keeping with our speculations about the party's march toward legitimacy. The old notion of the CCF as a threat to the basic interests and beliefs of British Columbians was used less frequently. It appears that opponents came to accept that attacks on these themes would be less credible. It is probable, as we have suggested, that much of the force was taken from this argument by the events of the Second World War. It became less plausible to argue that the CCF-NDP was opposed to fundamental Canadian values such as freedom, democracy and prosperity. This is not to say that the party agreed with all the current values or was portrayed as agreeing. However, it was not portrayed as being as rigidly bent on creating a new order as had been thought in the 1930s. Of course this portrayal was

not entirely the result of a change in perception on the part of opponents and the press. The period following the Second World War saw a rethinking of the party's philosophy that ultimately resulted in the formation of the NDP. The party altered its portrayal of itself, gradually discarding the more radical of its socialist beliefs. Thus the change in theme we have seen owed much to the CCF's slow evolution into a social democratic party.

The change was most pronounced during the 1960s, when the General Character and Basic Values families declined significantly. Basic Values dropped from 26 percent of the total assertions in 1952-53 to 8.4 percent in 1969. It appears that unlike the CCF, the NDP was not viewed as a threat to Canadian values and was treated more as a party than as an entity. This last tendency toward reification was present through most of the life of the CCF, which was discussed as if it were a person with unpleasant characteristics rather than a party with policies. The decline of this idea was reflected in the drop in General Character terms, which evaluated the party in a personal manner. The fact that the use of the Totalitarian theme also dropped supports the idea that the NDP was seen as less of a threat. It is probable that the formation of the NDP had a great deal to do with this trend. The policies put forward by the new party called for fewer fundamental changes. The party seemed to accept much of the status quo. It was only in 1972 that the decline of the "threat to Canadian values" theme was reversed. There were increases in the General Character, Basic Values and Totalitarian groups, although none of these groups reached

the proportions seen in the first two election periods. We will suggest later that this resurgence was largely the result of changes in other themes in 1972.

The opposing parties did not use the "threat to Canadian values" theme in the same way the press did. The two emphasized different aspects of the theme. The parties placed little emphasis on Moral Character in the early years, while the press used Moral Character terms three to four times more frequently in the same periods. Conversely, the parties favoured the Totalitarian theme almost five times more heavily than did the press. The press and the parties also treated the "threat" theme differently over time. The parties used a fairly high proportion of "threat" terms in the early years, but this emphasis declined later. On the other hand, the press used an almost constant proportion of those terms so the drop is not noticeable when we look only at press commentary. The press preferred a less inflammatory, more reasoned attack on the CCF. An excellent example of this appeared in an editorial in 1941.

> The CCF stands for a new system of society. If we should, on October 21, vote into power a CCF government, we cannot establish complete socialism even in a single province, but we can inaugurate for British Columbia a large measure of government ownership and a new limitation on private initiative. We can indicate to the nation our wish for socialism throughout Canada. That is what a CCF victory would mean.
>
> The CCF leaders are sincere men. We have never questioned that. But we do not believe that British Columbia wants socialism or is willing to turn over its affairs, at this crisis, to a gigantic experiment, leading no one knows where.[21]

This argument makes it clear that the CCF represented so fundamental a change that it was best considered an "experiment." This idea, coupled

with the notion that socialism could only be achieved on a national scale, served to reinforce the parties' heated assertions about the alien nature of the CCF.

The second and related major theme to be found in the data began at the same time as the first. This was the concern of the critics with the CCF-NDP's connection to socialism and communism. As has been suggested, the older parties and the press played upon the public's inability to distinguish between the two ideologies. It was stated frequently that socialism was the first step that led inevitably to communism. Communism was identified as a police state ideology akin to those of Russia and Nazi Germany. Socialism tended to be portrayed as a smothering paternalistic system that sapped people of their initiative and made them obedient future communists. In the early years, the terms used most frequently to emphasize this theme were "communism," "socialism," "socialized industry" and "Russia." Later, however, the communist label was dropped, to be replaced by a wider variety of references to socialism. These included many with emotional undertones such as "creeping socialism," "sterile socialism," "socialist machine" and "socialist hordes." Terms like "fuzzy socialist theories" equated socialism with utopianism and impracticality as well as with state control. These terms and those related to communism are included in the Socialism criticism, while references to these and other political beliefs are grouped under the Ideological Symbols family in the more inclusive category system. The Ideological Symbols family includes references to the party's attitude to capitalism, free enterprise and

other beliefs of its opponents. On the left side of Figure 2 we see that, in the early years, Socialism and Ideological Symbols accounted for about 10 percent of the terms in each election. The Ideological Symbols family was consistently larger than the Socialism criticism except in 1937-41, when a high proportion of socialism terms, such as "Russia" were not specifically ideological. The figures indicate that a considerable amount of attention was paid to the socialist connection in those years.

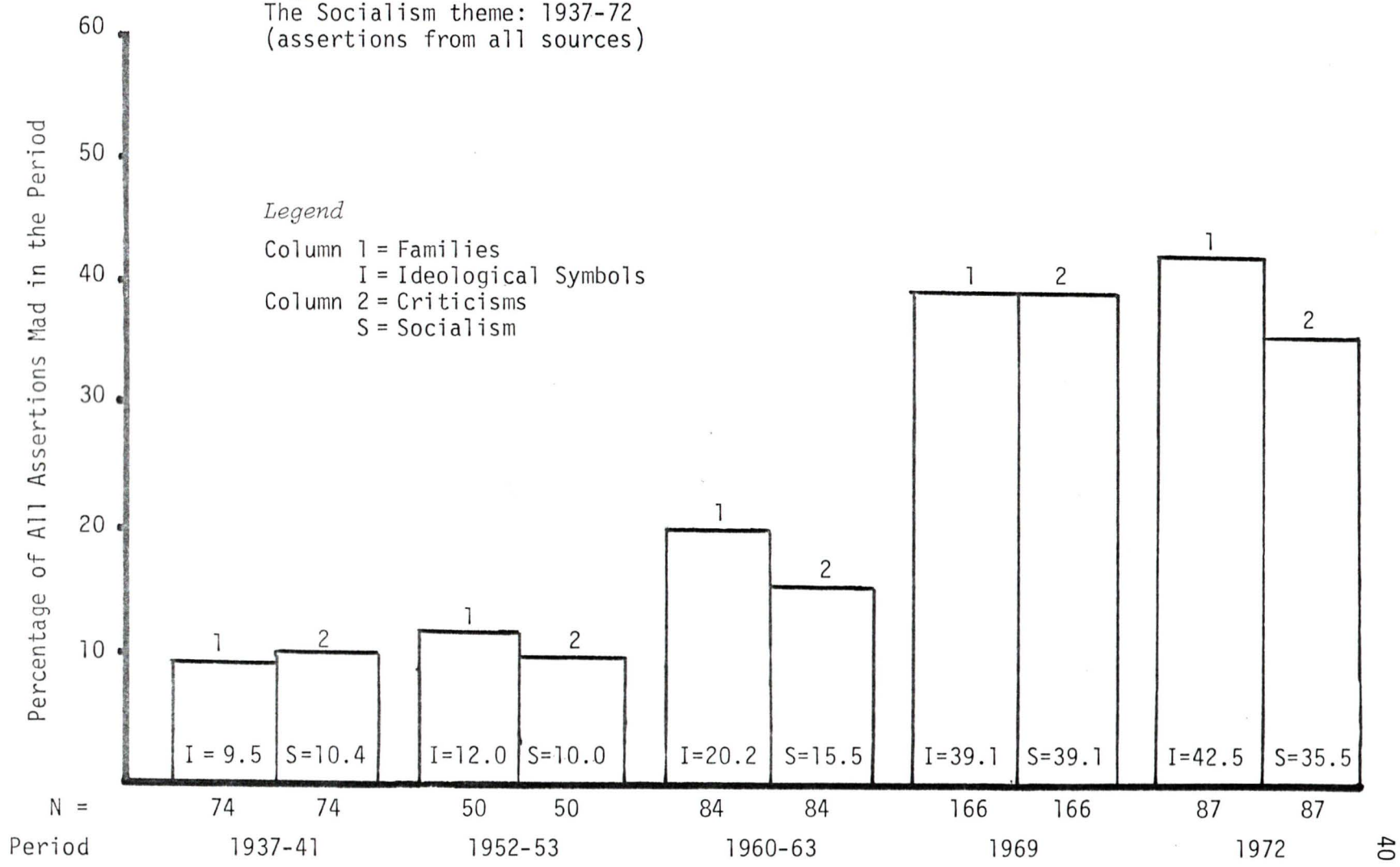
We would expect that as the communist connection became less plausible and as the CCF-NDP began to put distance between itself and socialism, the proportion or Socialist terms would decline. In fact, however, the figures show that the Socialism theme increased from 10.4 percent to 35.5 percent by 1972. The Ideological Symbols family increased from 9.5 percent to 42.5 percent. This increasing emphasis on socialism reflected the campaign style of W. A. C. Bennett. Examples of his campaign speeches between 1952 and 1972 show his dependence on the socialist bogeyman as a rhetorical weapon.

It was in the 1953 election that Bennett discovered the benefits of a full-scale anti-socialist campaign. The Social Credit Party and its supporters used newspaper advertisements to drive home their view of the socialist menace. One advertisement told the voters:

> Don't Risk the Future of B.C. . . .
> Social Credit saved British Columbia from socialism.
> The industrial future of B.C. hangs in the balance.
> Don't take any chances in this, the 1953 election.[22]

Bennett made it clear that he and his government were all that stood between the good people of British Columbia and the evils of socialism.

Figure 2
The Socialism theme: 1937-72
(assertions from all sources)



These evils were usually the same ones cited by the Liberals and Conservatives.

> Socialism breeds discontent, dictatorship in government and robs the worker of his rights under British law. Socialism rules but never governs. There is a difference.[23]

As in Ontario, the government was joined in battle by the representatives of free enterprise. In both the 1952 and 1953 elections the B.C. Federation of Trade and Industry placed advertisements that both condemned the CCF and supported free enterprise.

> This province is arriving industrially. So British Columbians are entitled to ask those who say they would socialize all industry—Where would YOU find the money to continue the development of B.C. if you frightened away the capital needed to build up this province?
>
> The question is an important one. No investor risks his savings if he fears a socialist government is waiting to take over what he builds.[24]

> Only free competitive enterprise can carry British Columbians forward under the Canadian freedom system of life . . . , can inspire confidence, create more jobs, rising standards of living and security, more wealth for wide distribution, good union contracts, more public purchasing power, more opportunities for young British Columbians. Vote Free Enterprise 1 - 2 - 3.[25]

These advertisements show the major aspects of the Bennett style of campaign. There was a great deal of emphasis on the notion that economic collapse would follow a socialist victory. The people would be oppressed. Prosperity would vanish. Bennett set out to make himself the best friend of all British Columbians, including the unionized workers who were the main source of CCF-NDP support, by stressing the "growth versus socialism" choice.

This anti-socialist campaign reached its peak in 1969 when Bennett found himself fighting what many media pundits thought was a losing

battle against the NDP's Tom Berger. During the 1969 election campaign the premier took Berger as the focus of his attack, repeatedly calling the NDP leader a "Marxian socialist." These tactics were a reaction to growing public dissatisfaction. Press commentators wrote that the public had begun to perceive Bennett as old and outdated. There seemed to be increased demands for new blood and new ideas, demands that struck at the weakest point of the Bennett armour. To defeat these attacks, Bennett drove home the point that he was the province's only defence against socialism. The campaign was judged to have been successful when Berger went down to defeat and resigned the leadership of the party. In 1972, as the data in Figure 2 show, Bennett tried the same tactic again. This time, however, public attention focused still more intently on Bennett's failings and the blunders of his cabinet ministers. NDP leader Dave Barrett was able to laugh off the rhetoric, put forward a calm, humanitarian image and capitalize on the anti-government sentiment.

The increase in the use of the socialist theme appears to contradict our speculations about the NDP's steps to legitimacy. It may be, however, that the increase actually supports the observation. We have seen that the references to communism were found mostly in the early years, while later attacks favoured such terms as "sterile socialism" and "state socialism." Thus, the increases in the socialist theme were the result of a greater use of these latter terms rather than of terms relating to communism or the excesses of Russian-style communism. It was the communist connection that held the strongest connotations of illegitimacy, especially during the Stalinist period. Although the

socialist terms still implied illegitimacy, they were not as damning as the communist connection. The expansion of the dictionary of socialist terms occurred in the 1960s, after the NDP had separated itself from the co-operative commonwealth notion. The opposing parties hoped to identify the NDP's mixed economy and welfare state policies with socialism. This appeared to be a useful tactic because the NDP had not been able to banish all of the popular doubts about its intentions.

The emphasis on socialism was common to both the parties and the press. The opposing parties' use of Socialism and Ideological Symbols increased rapidly until each of them accounted for 50 percent of the total references in 1972. On the other hand, the press began with a comparatively heavy emphasis on Socialism and Ideological Symbols, but increased that proportion to only about 30 percent in the case of the Ideological Symbols category. The Socialism criticism fluctuated but ended up only one point higher than its original level.

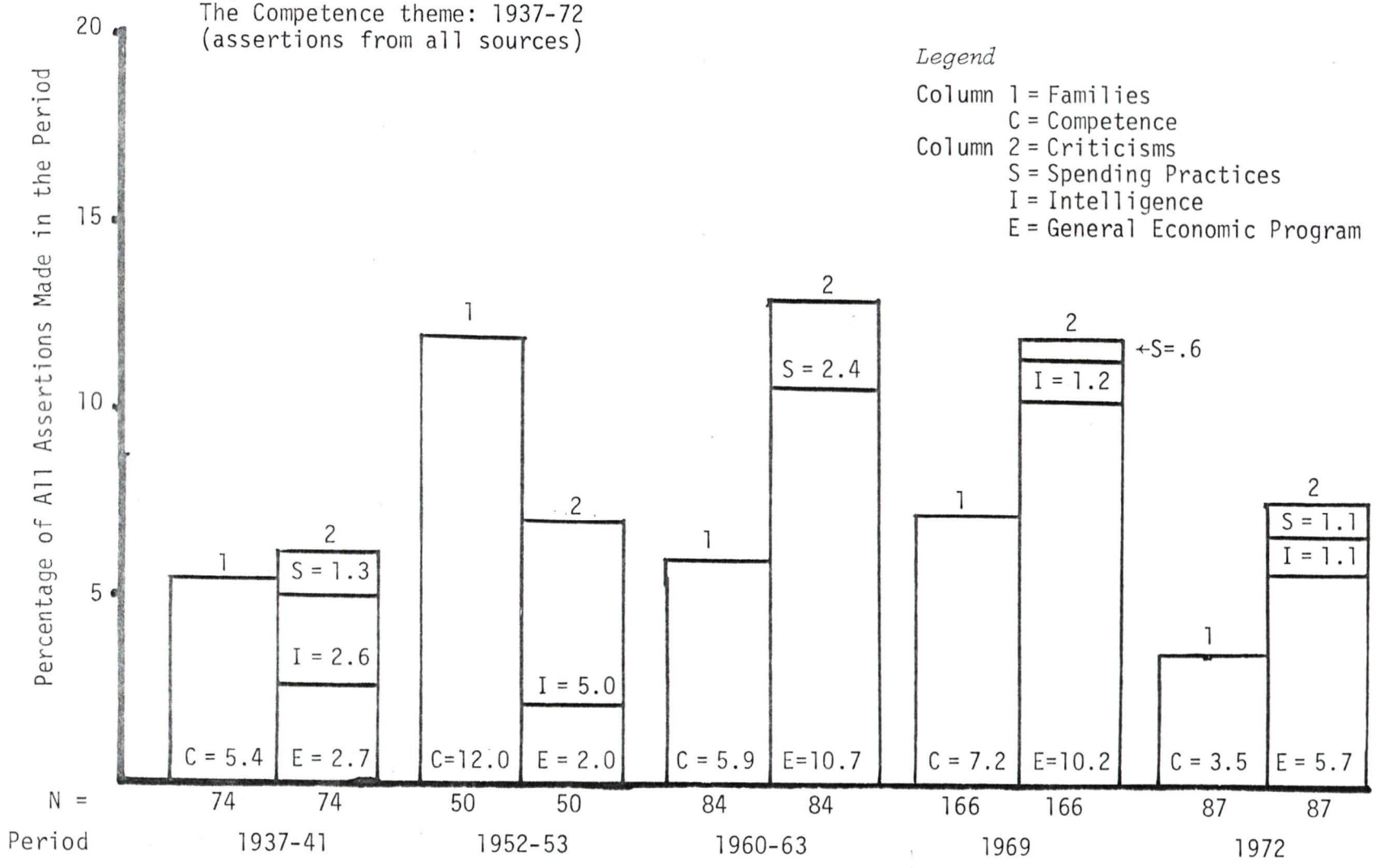
The third characteristic of the early period was not a theme so much as it was a tactic that guided the attacks on the CCF-NDP. This tactic was the refusal to deal with specific NDP policies or the competence of its members. This tendency is common to most electoral discourse but in the case of the CCF-NDP it seems to have been very pronounced. The parties and the press insisted on discussing the CCF-NDP as an entity that had certain characteristics rather than as a party that had policies. The discussion seldom focused on the specifics of the party's program. To be sure, this at least in part, was a result of the CCF's early refusal to put forward the kind of platform familiar

to the old-line parties. The old parties were unable to criticize a program that denied the legitimacy of traditional definitions of efficiency, effectiveness and appropriate government policies. However, even in later years the critics continued to condemn the party for its alleged beliefs rather than for its concrete policies.

The problem we face in trying to measure the use of this tactic is that we have no basis for comparison. We cannot say that the CCF was subjected to more of this kind of attack than were other parties because we have no data on other parties. We cannot set a proportion of specific criticisms and call it a typical or desirable balance. We can only look at the proportion of specific criticisms and compare it to the emphasis placed on other themes.

In terms of our indicators, a pattern of specific criticism would emphasize Competence, General Economic Program, Spending Practices and Intelligence, as these categories are most closely related to competence and policy. Figure 3 shows that, with the exception of Competence, little emphasis was placed on these more specific concerns during the 1937-41 period. Spending Practices accounted for 1.3 percent of the total, Intelligence for 2.6, Economic Program for 2.7 and Competence for 5.4. In succeeding years, emphasis on almost all of these indicators remained low, so that their totals were generally between 1 and 6 percent. When compared with the heavy emphasis on Ideological Symbols, Basic Values, Relationships with Groups and Socialism, this theme seems to receive very little attention.

Figure 3
The Competence theme: 1937-72
(assertions from all sources)



As mentioned above, the CCF was seen as being fundamentally alien to the values of Canadian people. In 1952 a Social Credit speaker noted that "CCF plans are only a pink copy of what is going on in Russia."[26] This remark was typical of the way the CCF-NDP's program was labelled without being specifically evaluated. A few policies, such as nationalization, were used as proof that the party's program and character were dangerous. No further discussion was necessary. The CCF-NDP was not criticized on specific policies or abilities because its salient characteristic appeared to be that it rejected the traditional principles underlying the political-economic system. The critics tried to hammer home to the public the idea that if the CCF-NDP were elected, everything would change—and for the worse.

The major exception to this continuing refusal to address specific policies occurred in the Economic Program criticism. There was a sharp rise in the use of this theme from 2 percent in 1953-53 to 10.7 percent in 1960-63. The figure dropped only slightly in 1969 and then was cut in half in 1972. The unexpected change in the early 1960s seems to have been one of the effects of the formation of the NDP. We have suggested that the formation of the new party brought with it a change in the political tactics of Canadian social democrats. Talk of the co-operative commonwealth was abandoned, the alliance with organized labour became formal and the new policies regarding a mixed economy were set out in more concrete form. These actions had several important results but one of the most significant in terms of this study was the redefinition of the grounds on which the party could be attacked. The jump in

the number of attacks centring on the economy theme reflected this redefinition. The development of policies that resembled traditional old party policies and the apparent acceptance of some free enterprise under an NDP government provided ammunition for critics to attack the party on its economic programs.

The continued lack of specific criticism suggests two possible causes. First, it may provide more evidence of continuing legitimacy problems. The other parties and the press devoted comparatively little time to criticism of the NDP's specific policies or the abilities of its members. The majority of the terms focused on the party's character and beliefs. We would expect a truly legitimate party to receive more specific criticisms because its fundamental beliefs would not be in question. The second possible cause is the lack of evidence for specific criticism. Political attacks require some kind of evidence as a basis, evidence that often does not exist if a party has never held office. Thus, concrete criticisms of the ability and competence of the NDP members were hard to make because there was no evidence of the party's performance. The same was true, to a lesser degree, of the party's economic policies, many of which had never been tried in British Columbia. The Saskatchewan experience was held up as an example of the economic chaos that resulted from socialism but there was no attempt to evaluate systematically the events in that province. The other parties and the press could only criticize the NDP's policy statements; they could not criticize its actions as a government.

The parties appear to have followed the general trend quite closely. The same low level of emphasis on specific critiques was evident. The press, however, showed a different pattern. The emphasis on concrete criticisms fluctuated. The emphasis on the Competence family in the press's depiction of the party was quite high in the early years, although it declined. The proportion of terms dealing with General Economic Program did not increase suddenly in 1960-63, but increased steadily over the whole period.

A comparison of press and opposition party depictions reveals a significant difference in overall emphasis on Competence, our measure of attention to a party's aptitude for governing and experience in administration. The press gave more than twice as much emphasis to the Intelligence criticism, although the proportions were low. For the first time we see a clear and consistent difference between the two sources of images. The press used more evaluations of specific abilities related to government than did the parties. The explanation of this probably has more to do with the press's image of itself than its image of the NDP. The avowed intention of most newsmen is to present a fair and balanced picture of events. In writing editorials this generally takes the form of an effort to make only those criticisms that can be supported by facts and sound argument. Appeals to values and ideology are usually too loaded to be discussed in the rational manner the press writers hope to use. Despite these differences between the critics, it remains clear that criticism of the CCF-NDP relied far less on criticisms of competence or specific policy proposals than on general

symbolic themes.

The last important theme is realted to the significant events of 1960-63. In addition to specifying economic policies, the new party also allied itself closely with organized labour. Given the often acrimonious labour relations climate in British Columbia, we might expect this alliance to be seized as ammunition for the province's political cannons. This was the case.

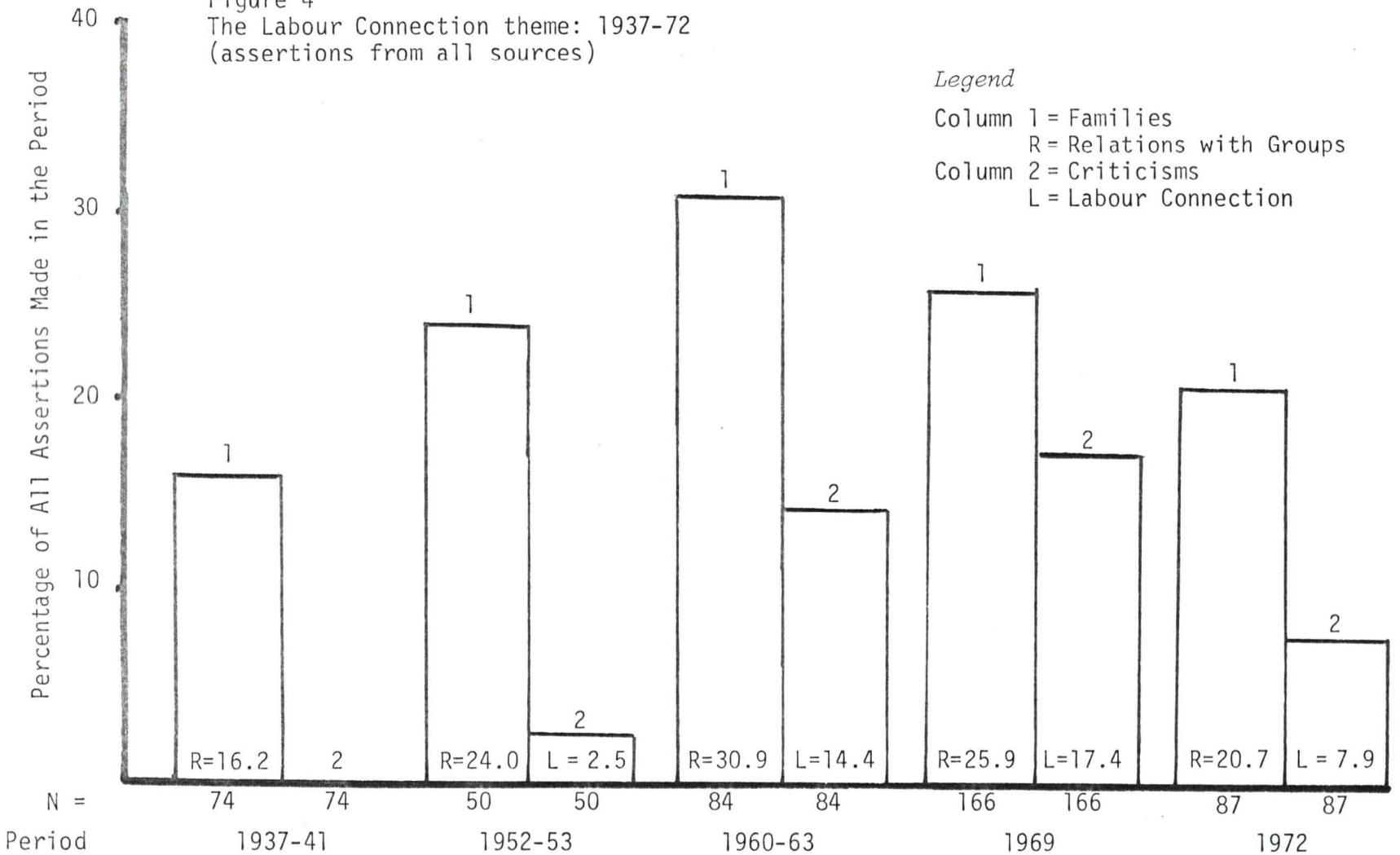
The labour connection was a useful campaign weapon for at least two reasons. First, the word "union" is a powerful symbol in British Columbia. Dominated by large natural resource companies and militant, British-style unions, the province's labour relations scene has seldom been calm. On one hand unions are hailed as the forces that secured worker prosperity and safety while on the other hand they are decried as greedy troublemakers responsible for strikes that damage the province's propserity and ability to compete in world markets. The two views of unions have come to reflect a political as well as a social dichotomy. The forces of the centre and right generally advocate less union power while those of social democracy support strong unions. The formal alliance represented by the formation of the NDP was all the proof needed by W. A. C. Bennett and others that the party stood with the forces that opposed prosperity and economic health. A distrust of the alliance with labour was even held by some union members and sympathizers. Many people believed that even if unions were legitimate economic actors, they had no place in politics. If unions began to take part in politics they would jeopardize their own interests as well

as those of society as a whole.

The second reason for the adoption of the labour connection as a weapon was more general in nature. It appeared to politicians and others that the NDP had allied itself with a minority group in society. Instead of attempting to govern on behalf of all the people of the province, the party had taken up the cause of a few whose interests did not coincide with those of the rest of the population. In the case of the labour alliance this was made to seem even more pernicious because of the allegations that the unions in fact dominated the NDP and would be the real government of the province should the party be elected.

The strength of this theme is measured by two indicators. The first is the specific Labour Connection criticism, which includes a variety of terms such as "big labour," "labour bosses," "soft-touch labour laws" and "union government." The second is the Relations with Groups family, which looks at the party's treatment of different groups and individuals. We can see from Figure 4 references to the labour connection did not appear in our sample until 1952-53, when they accounted for 2.5 percent of the total. In 1960-63, however, they accounted for 14.4 percent of the assertions. In 1969 there was an increase to 17.4 percent before a decline in 1972. The Relations with Groups family did not experience such a dramatic increase, although it peaked at 30.9 percent in 1960-63. It is clear from the first indicator that the labour connection was given little consideration before 1960. It was only during the election of 1960, when rumours of a labour-CCF alliance became common, that the theme achieved prominence. As early

Figure 4
The Labour Connection theme: 1937-72
(assertions from all sources)



as the 1960 election, Conservative Deane Finlayson told voters, "Now labor leaders are seeking to redress their grievances by imposing on this province the CCF."[27]

The peaks that occurred in 1969 are evidence of the second half of W. A. C. Bennett's massive campaign against Tom Berger. In addition to the "Marxian socialist" label, Bennett referred to Berger as a "slick labour lawyer." He made much of Berger's connections with the unions in the province. According to the Bennett campaign rhetoric, Berger had finally put together the massive electoral machine that the NDP needed to overwhelm the forces of free enterprise. Bennett warned,

> Now they are moving hundreds and hundreds of their troops into B.C. from Ontario, from Manitoba, from Saskatchewan, canvassing everywhere, throwing political dust everywhere, and their labor boss money coming in from New York and Washington, D.C.
>
> The socialists won because Manitoba was asleep. If they win here, it won't be because you have not been told.[28]

The press made it clear that Berger's ties to labour were a serious matter when striking oil workers set up illegal pickets. This poorly timed action was held up as an example of the untrustworthy character of the union leaders.

> Because the NDP is the political arm of organized labor, Mr. Berger was asked to explain the party's policy in such instances. He wouldn't do it. Perhaps he couldn't do it without disclosing the full range of his own commitments to the B.C. Federation of Labor. . . . He is asking the public for a mandate to govern this province for five years with himself as premier. He is in the political debt of the unions for the conclusive support their delegates gave to him in the party leadership contest. How, when or if he attains power, is that debt to be repaid? What has Mr. Berger got to hide about the nature of the labor laws that a government led by him would write? How can he ask the citizens of B.C. to vote him into office if he refuses to take them into his confidence?[29]

The parties and the press did not follow the same pattern. The parties showed a sudden dramatic increase in the theme in 1960-63, a peak in 1969 and a decline in 1972. In this case the decline was not a long one; the proportion of Labour Connection terms dropped from 14.9 percent in 1969 to 10.8 percent in 1972. The press, again, gave the theme a different treatment. As with the parties, the Labour Connection appeared in 1960-63 and peaked in 1969. In this case, however, the first appearance accounted for 9.6 percent of the total while the peak soared to 38.7 percent. A breakdown of the labour connection criticism shows that in 1969 the press used three terms in the list: "labour," "unions" and "American unions." In each case the assertions stressed that the NDP was connected to, sympathetic to, supported by or controlled by organized labour. It appears that the press writers absorbed a considerable amount of Bennett's union-domination theme.

From this study we can identify some common threads that ran through the portrayals of the CCF-NDP before 1972. Many of the observations noted in the impressionistic part of the study are supported by the data. For most of the period the press and the other parties were concerned mainly with the CCF-NDP's apparently alien nature. It was depicted by opponents as a party that rejected the traditional rules of the game, as a party that did not seek power to change administrations but rather to change the structure of society. Depsite the CCF-NDP's acceptance of the parliamentary system and its rejection of violence, the party was portrayed as revolutionary. The party's socialism was seen to be linked to communism. It seemed to be authoritarian in

character and to desire extensive limitations on personal freedom. Throughout the period this attitude influenced much of the criticism of the CCF-NDP.

Our recognition of the common threads in the portrayal must not blind us to the changes that occurred during the party's formative years. We have suggested that these changes were successive steps toward legitimacy. The other parties' portrayal of the CCF-NDP slowly became less inflammatory. In the portrayals we have examined here one can see the CCF-NDP slowly gaining acceptance as a credible and legitimate opponent.

Footnotes

[1]Walter Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-61* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

[2]Edwin R. Black, "British Columbia: The Politics of Exploitation," in Hugh Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1972), pp. 225-36.

[3]Martin Robin, "British Columbia: The Politics of Class Conflict," in Martin Robin, ed., *Canadian Provincial Politics* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1972), pp. 27-68.

[4]Lorne John Kavic and Garry Brian Nixon, *The 1200 Days: A Shattered Dream: Dave Barrett and the NDP in B.C., 1972-75* (Coquitlam: Kaen, 1978).

[5]Stan Persky, *Son of Socred: Has Bill Bennett's Government Gotten B.C. Moving Again?* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979).

[6]Gerald Caplan, *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

[7]Ibid., p. 16.

[8]Ibid., p. 100.

[9]Ibid., p. 123.

[10]Ibid., p. 195.

[11]Walter Young, *Democracy and Discontent: Progressivism, Socialism and Social Credit in the Canadian West* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1969), p. 61.

[12]Caplan, p. 46.

[13]Young, *Democracy and Discontent*, p. 62.

[14]*Vancouver Sun*, May 25, 1937, p. 1.

[15]Victoria *Daily Times*, May 28, 1937, p. 1.

[16]*Sun*, October 18, 1941, p. 3.

[17]*Sun* October 17, 1941, p. 12.

[18]*Sun*, May 29, 1937, p. 4.

[19]*Sun*, October 18, 1941, p. 2.

[20]*Sun*, May 27, 1937, p. 24.

[21]*Sun*, October 17, 1941, p. 6.

[22]*Sun*, June 5, 1953, p. 12.

[23]*Sun*, June 3, 1953, p. 21.

[24]*Sun*, June 9, 1952, p. 12.

[25]*Sun*, June 4, 1953, p. 6.

[26]*Sun*, June 4, 1952, p. 3.

[27]*Sun*, September 1, 1960, p. 12.

[28]*Sun*, August 20, 1969, p. 1.

[29]*Sun*, August 16, 1969, p. 4.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW GOVERNMENT:
AUGUST 30, 1972 TO MARCH 10, 1974

We have seen that a number of themes lay beneath the attacks made on the NDP before 1972. Although the themes were not necessarily devised to form the parts of a whole, coherent portrayal, they did suggest a kind of patchwork portrayal. The goal of those who put forward this portrayal was to create an image in the minds of voters. Ideally, that image would be identical with the portrayal. If the critics were successful in creating such an image, what might it look like? What picture might an average voter have had of the NDP when it became the government of British Columbia?

As we have suggested, the portrayals put forward in the late 1960s and early 1970s were of a party that was recognized as being a strong contender for power, but not a legitimate contender. The portrayals put forward by the other parties reflected the popular acceptance of the NDP. This is not to say that the other parties approved of the NDP but, rather, that they avoided the extreme statements that had been used in the early years. It was no longer claimed that an NDP victory would mean the introduction of communism and the emergence of widespared violence. Instead, the other parties insisted that an NDP government would damage the health and prosperity of the province by introducing waste, experimental government, mismanagement and excessive bureaucracy. The NDP members were impractical dreamers who hoped to solve the world's

problems by government spending and regulation. In this, the portrayal was very similar to the criticisms of American Democrats that are made by American Republicans. The critics in British Columbia, however, harped on the socialist roots of the party's policies, roots that presented the threat of even more government intervention than the party promised during elections. Not only was the NDP in favour of government intervention, it actually opposed free enterprise. If the party were elected to power, its hatred of business might rise to the surface and create economic hardship in the province.

The NDP was portrayed as unique in other ways. Its socialist ideas betrayed an authoritarian strain. The party was seen to be unconcerned with traditional freedoms and more concerned about centralized planning. Planning and centralization were usually portrayed as ends in themselves. The NDP did not advocate planning as a route to some social goal, rather the party accepted it as a matter of dogma or as a means of expanding governmental power. The portrayals made it appear that the NDP desired power for its own sake. It was argued that one of the party's tactics to gain power was its alliance with organized labour. The alliance was portrayed as a self-serving move by two greedy organizations whose aim was to achieve together the power neither could achieve alone. It was often alleged that this alliance had backfired on the NDP by enabling the unions to seize control of the party. If the NDP were elected to office, it would really be the unions who would rule British Columbia.

Unattractive though the portrayal was, it was a far cry from that put forward in the 1930s. During the 1930s and 1940s the party had been portrayed as a sinister communist front organization that would rule by force and would sap the strength from the Canadian spirit. On the other hand, almost all of the criticisms used in the late 1960s and early 1970s suggested that the party's unsavory characteristics did not reflect a sinister purpose but, rather, an unavoidable consequence of socialism. This new portrayal implied that no matter how noble the intentions of an individual socialist, his ideology would force him to become authoritarian and to reject the values and methods of democracy. Thus, the new portrayal made it clear that the NDP was unavoidably dangerous because it was willing to deny British Columbians their fundamental rights in its pursuit of socialist ideals. The new portrayal was more subtle in its condemnation of the NDP but it was potentially effective because it continued to deny the party legitimacy. Although sinister motives and violent methods were no longer attributed to the party, it still appeared to be a threat to British Columbia. Reading the new portrayal, one could almost feel pity for the misguided New Democrat who wanted the best for British Columbia but had sold his soul to the devil to get it.

This then, was the image of the NDP that a voter would have formed had he believed the portrayals of the party. Such a voter would naturally view the new NDP government with some suspicion because of its supposedly anti-democratic tendencies. At the same time, however, a considerable degree of optimism greeted the new government, if only

because it was a change after twenty years of Socred government. Even many of those who suspected the NDP's motives welcomed the chance to clear away some of the old Social Credit deadwood. For many, the NDP program seemed to herald more than a simple change of personnel. It also held the promise of a new direction in government thinking that many people welcomed. It was clear that the NDP placed more emphasis on social programs than on economic ones. Thus, the voters could hope for two changes: a younger, more modern administration and a revised set of public priorities.

In order to understand what happened to the portrayal of the NDP between 1972 and 1975 we have chosen one of several possible ways to examine the subject. Our study of the NDP's period in government focuses on three sources of criticism: Allan Fotheringham, Marjorie Nichols and the *Sun*'s editorial writers. These three sources were chosen because they were widely read and were reputed to be very influential in shaping public attitudes. The *Sun* is generally recognized as British Columbia's newspaper of record and its reports are frequently referred to by politicians. The opinion columns of the *Vancouver Sun* provide us with a running record of the NDP's term in office. Nichols and Fotheringham each wrote about four times a week while the editorial writers usually delivered two or three political comments in a week. Their comments covered almost all of the major events of the period in detail, but their reactions to those events did not seem to be determined by any coherent ideology. Thus their portrayals were not consistent attempts to create a certain image. At first, the party seemed to go through a

kind of apprenticeship, when it was given the benefit of the doubt in many controversies. As time went on, the columns developed a kind of consistency as the authors began to paint fairly consistent portraits of the NDP government. Marjorie Nichols began to portray the activities of the government as the manifestations of a sinister purpose. The editorial writers came to the defence of the free enterprise system. Fotheringham, meanwhile, came to stress the government's alleged incompetence. The comments of the three sources provided us with a way of getting a sense of how long the NDP's apprenticeship lasted and what created the negative attitude that led to the party's defeat. It appears that many of the voters who held the "middle ground" on the ideological spectrum switched their allegiances to Social Credit in 1975. These people played a significant part in the defeat of the NDP government. It is quite possible that these middle voters were influenced by the portrayal of the NDP that was presented by its opponents.

In 1972, Fotheringham, like many people, was tired of W. A. C. Bennett. Fotheringham attacked the old premier for his arrogance and anachronistic attitude to governing. The columnist wrote:

> Bennett spurns the advice of many qualified people. He has few advisors, fewer friends. Instead he surrounds himself with the Ekmans, the Clanceys, the Kenmuirs, the Worleys—flacks and salesmen of Social Credit.[1]

Fotheringham and others believed the old Socreds had been too long in office and should be replaced by younger blood. Possibly as a result of this attitude, Fotheringham wrote that he welcomed the election of Dave Barrett, whom he characterized as concerned, young and honest. Although Marjorie Nichols was not quite so optimistic, she appeared to

be ready to give Barrett the benefit of the doubt. The editorial writers also reserved judgement on the new government.

In October 1972, the *Sun*'s editorial writer produced a guardedly optimistic article to inaugurate the new government's legislative session. That editorial, entitled "Off on our great new experiment," included the caution that was to colour all future commentary, become the main focus of opposition party criticism and haunt the government for all of its three years in power.

> There are many things that the public is anxious to know about this government. Mr. Barrett will have to keep in mind that the voters, who showed such an astonishing eagerness to dump the Social Credit regime, did not thereby endorse all of his personal views and policies. People who decided it was time for a change did not automatically commit themselves to the full program of the New Democratic Party. The Eternal City of social democracy will not be built in a day.[2]

The reminder that only a minority of the voters cast their ballots for the NDP would be repeated frequently in the coming years.

The period on which the writers commented was an eventful one by any standards. Determined to bring about the changes he had promised during the campaign, Barrett wasted little time in introducing new programs. In his enthusiasm he neglected any kind of public education program to familiarize the public with the goals and methods of the NDP. Instead, the government forged ahead with a poorly co-ordinated series of initiatives that seemed to leave many commentators uneasy. At first, the novelty of reform enabled people to forgive the new government a certain exuberance, but the novelty soon wore off. Barrett found himself attacked from many sides, a situation that persisted until the defeat of the government. The brief review that follows highlights the

main events of the period as seen by the commentators.

The events of the term in office can be divided into four types: new programs, reforms of existing programs, administrative incidents and political incidents. There were several new programs during the first half of the term in office, beginning in early 1973 with the Land Commission Act. This act was introduced to provide machinery that would control the use of land in the province. The government's aim was to prevent the loss of agricultural land to commercial development, but this intention was not viewed favourably by spokesmen for farmers and developers. Both groups staged demonstrations against the act. This program was followed by the government's takeover of the Pacific National Exhibition site in Vancouver, the promised introduction of government monopoly automobile insurance and the purchase of the failing Ocean Falls newsprint plant. All of these initiatives were very controversial and provided much of the ammunition for the critics in the opposition and in the press.

Although generally less controversial than the new initiatives, the NDP's reforms of existing programs were numerous and wide-ranging. In a brief session of the legislature shortly after the election, Barrett abolished the B.C. Mediation Commission and raised the minimum wage, although not as far as had been promised. Following the session the government appointed David Cass-Beggs to head the important B.C. Hydro and Power Authority. The Barrett government also introduced a number of long-awaited reforms in the House. For the first time, MLAs were to be paid full salaries to enable them to become full-time

legislators. In order to justify the salary increases, the government decided to hold a fall session as well as the traditional spring session. A question period and a full Hansard were introduced. Together with other reforms, these moves greatly increased the influence of the House and the strength of the opposition parties.

Administrative incidents provided a great deal of newspaper copy because they occurred frequently as the government adapted to its new responsibilities. These incidents were of two kinds: matters of administrative competence and matters that involved dealings with various groups. The first accusations of incompetence were levelled at Barrett shortly after he took office. In order to avoid conflict within the caucus Barrett had decided that the only criterion for cabinet membership would be previous legislative experience. This left possibly able new MLAs in the backbenches while some less than competent veterans became ministers. The error in Barrett's plan soon became apparent as some ministers appeared unequal to the task of administration. Barrett steadfastly refused to reorganize the cabinet. In the months that followed, the accusations of incompetence became quite frequent, with a few ministers being singled out for attention. Human Resources Minister Norm Levi was seen to be permissive in the distribution of government money and incompetent in the administration of his department. When a summer strike by employees of the crown-owned B.C. Ferry Corporation was settled on terms favourable to the union, Transport Minister Bob Strachan was accused of being weak. Education Minister Eileen Dailly was brought to task over the John Bremer fiasco. Bremer had been hired

by Dailly to study educational reform but he had exceeded his terms of reference and had set himself at odds with the government. In an apparently spontaneous move, Barrett announced in the middle of a television interview that he was not pleased with Bremer's performance. Dailly was obliged to fire the consultant. The incident made it appear that Dailly had no control over her department. The opposition crowed that such were the results of hiring too many "experts" and not enough competent managers.

The second type of administrative problem concerned the government's dealings with various business and interest groups. A considerable amount of criticism revolved around the view that the government had adopted a dictatorial manner in its relations with local governments, business, industry and interest groups. A frequent focus of these attacks was Forests Minister Bob Williams, who appeared to antagonize the forest companies and who was depicted by the press and opposition as the most rigid ideologue in the cabinet. Williams was identified as the major culprit behind a series of legislative moves that assigned allegedly unprecedented and unrestricted powers to ministers and bureaucrats. Critics feared the abuse of these grants of discretionary power. The other cabinet minister who received a lot of criticism for his attitude to interest groups was Municipal Affairs Minister Jim Lorimer. Lorimer was accused of being dictatorial in his dealings with municipal officials, particularly over plans to develop mass transit in Greater Vancouver and Victoria. Later, Lorimer's attitude toward local officials appeared to have expanded to include most members of the public. His apparent opposition to public participation in urban

transit planning was heaped on top of similar secretiveness in the areas of northern development and the fate of the University of British Columbia endowment lands. These accusations were particularly damaging to a party that had prided itself on introducing open government.

The political blunders that drew the most attention from the commentators were made by Barrett himself. Barrett was able to score some points during the November 1973 party convention when he made it clear that the convention would not be permitted to dictate government policy. The writers were relieved but wondered what the convention's demands meant in terms of the NDP's real attitude to democracy. Unfortunately for the premier he followed up his convention performance with some injudicious comments on the subject of Quebec and Canadian unity. He flew to Montreal where he met with Parti Québécois leader René Lévesque but ignored Premier Robert Bourassa. Barrett's overtures to Lévesque and his snub to the Quebec government angered national NDP leader David Lewis. In January 1974 Barrett seemed to recognize the need for some kind of public education program to build support for his policies. Unfortunately, his choice of medium was a poor one. He decided to revive the B.C. Information Service, an old Social Credit propaganda machine against which Barrett himself had railed in the past.

During most of this early period in government, the press was willing to treat the new government kindly. It was usually admitted that an inexperienced group was bound to make mistakes and so the NDP was given good marks for effort if not for performance. If there was a specific time that could be pinpointed as the end of this forgiving

attitude, that time was early March 1974, when the so-called chicken-and-egg war erupted. In the first week of March, Liberal leader David Anderson accused Barrett of lying to the House. The incident involved a farmer's dispute with the B.C. Egg Marketing Board in which Barrett allegedly had threatened members of the board in order to convince them to settle the dispute out of court. Barrett denied that he had used threats but Anderson was able to produce evidence that the denial was a lie. For critics, the final straw was not the lie itself but Barrett's reaction to the accusation: he steadfastly refused to order an inquiry into the incident. The writers insisted that Barrett had deserted his principles; he could no longer be given the benefit of the doubt in any controversy.

Themes

The first half of the NDP's period in government saw a swift change in the portrayal of the party by the press. Our data show that the critics shifted their focus from the NDP's promises and ideology to its concrete actions. For the first time in its history, concrete policies and administrative ability could serve as the basis of an evaluation of the NDP. It can be argued that success in the area of administration would allow the party to hurdle the last of the legitimacy challenges. The NDP would be perceived not only as a strong contender for power, but also as a legitimate, effective government.

The first major theme used during the period in government dealt with the evaluations of administrative ability. Before 1972 questions

of ability and competence could not be raised easily because there was no evidence of the competence of the NDP members. The closest one could get to such evidence were facts about the occupations and career successes of individual NDP candidates or the records of other NDP governments. Thus, it was pointed out from time to time that many New Democratic Party members and candidates lacked experience in business. These criticisms did not account for a large proportion of the comments made before 1972. Once the party was in power, however, the critics were handed an abundance of facts. The facts or "evidence" led to different conclusions depending on one's allegiance and interests. The important point, though, was that there was now a legitimate reason for discussing the competence or lack of competence of the NDP.

The sudden importance of the theme can be seen in the data. Figure 5 shows the changes in the way the press portrayed the NDP between 1971 and the early part of 1974. The increase in the Competence family is clear. Terms relating to Competence did not appear in 1971, but between 1972 and 1974 there was a 10 percent increase in the incidence of terms like "inexperienced," "inept," "mess," "mismanagement" and "miscalculation." A similar pattern held for the Intelligence criticism, which comprised 3.7 percent of the assertions in 1971, disappeared in 1972 and jumped to 11.4 percent during the first part of the period in government. Before the election, the term often used was "naive." After the election a wide variety of others were added, including "amateur," "fuzzy," "hasty," "silly," "sloppy" and "stupid." For the first time in the data, Intelligence accounted for more than

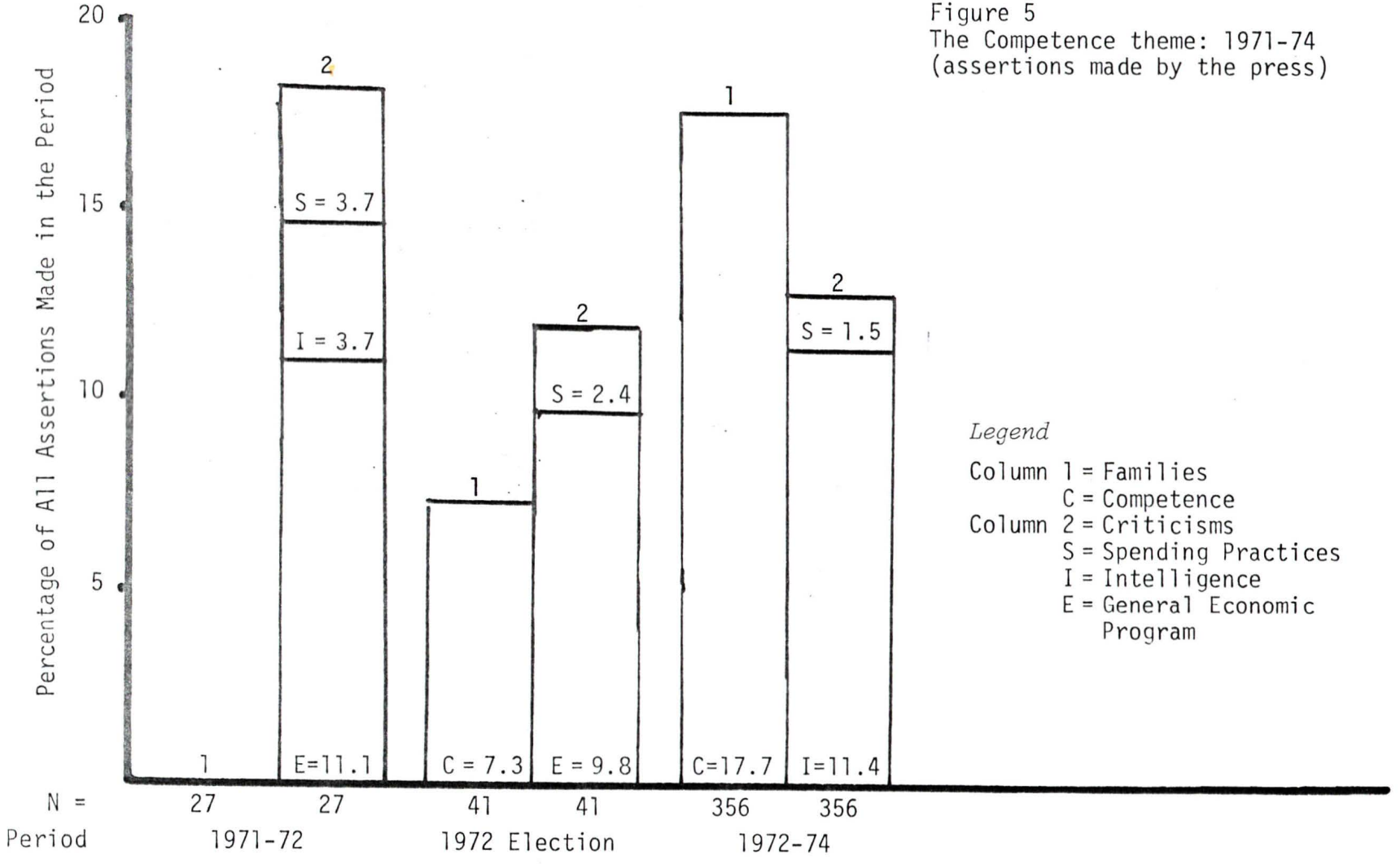


Figure 5
The Competence theme: 1971-74
(assertions made by the press)

10 percent of the terms. If we compare these figures to figures in the previous chapter, we find that the Intelligence criticism was significantly higher in this period than at any other point.

Not surprisingly, then, the period in government produced a sudden focus on terms related to administrative and financial competence. These evaluations were consistently negative. Although the mistakes were at first excused as being the result of understandable enthusiasm, such errors were never ignored. From the beginning of the term in office, the press lost no opportunity to point out the failings of Barrett and his cabinet. Thus, we see that the accusations of incompetence against some ministers began as early as October 1972. The major part of the accusations were references to financial competence rather than administrative competence. The writers saw financial incompetence in the spending practices of the government. Critics saw the decision to buy Ocean Falls, the increase in welfare funding and changes in assessment procedures as poor financial moves. The other signs of incompetence were evidence of poor judgement, indecisiveness or poor public relations. Barrett's overtures to René Lévesque and the John Bremer incident were taken to indicate that the premier lacked the self-control and the authority to run an effective government.

The character of the criticisms can be conveyed through examples of the reactions of the writers to some events of the early period. Always the sharpest of the three critics, Marjorie Nichols took Barrett to task over the early failings of his cabinet ministers. She said the poor choice of ministers was the result of "haste" and "misjudgement."[3]

The editorial writers and Fotheringham were slower to attack but by January 1973 they were closing in on the government. In January a controversy developed over demands to move the ferry terminal out of Horseshoe Bay. The editorial writer chastised Barrett for carelessly creating a situation that was "ambiguous and ridiculous."[4] Again in March the editorial writer called the Land Commission Act the "ambiguous" result of "hasty amateurism."[5] As suggested, the business-minded editorial writers opposed the purchase of the Ocean Falls newsprint plant, accusing the NDP of a lack of "business sense."[6] Certain ministers were singled out as lacking competence. Labour Minister Bill King "botched up" a labour relations inquiry.[7] Human Resources Minister Norm Levi was given to "sloppy talking."[8]

The most common type of incompetence attributed to the NDP was a lack of financial restraint. From the beginning of its term, the government was attacked for its apparent delight in spending large amounts of money. Allan Fotheringham objected to the high salaries paid to new government appointees, which were proof of

> . . . a small disturbing pattern that has become apparent and is sweeping through to a wider audience and does disturb a number of people who hold the best wishes for the idealistic new NDP government of this province. It is that the new people in power are rather too quickly fulfilling the old cliche that socialists are too careless with the other people's money.[9]

Later, the same writer, in a sarcastic article, took Norm Levi to task over the minister's expensive new desk.

> Mr. Speaker, if I may place a few questions on the Order Paper. Is it true that the celebrated new office desk of Human Resources Minister Norm Levi measures eight feet by forty-one and a half inches? Is it true that the desk cost in excess of $2000? . . .

> Leather lasts longer than fabric, Mr. Speaker, and down-filled cushions may be softer than those foam-filled, in a cabinet minister's waiting room, but is this really a demonstration of efficiency this early in the game? Further, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Human Resources, who has to receive delegations from welfare groups and the unemployed, the proper one to be leading the sweepstakes with an office out of Homes Beautiful? Finally, is there not a danger that the NDP government's courageous work in basic fields will be nullified by public fascination with such silliness as eight-foot, imported Japanese oak, Early English-styled desks?[10]

As the term in office continued, the range of terms broadened, adding "inconsistent" and "unrealistic." The terms indicated clearly that—in the writers' opinions—the NDP members lacked basic management and leadership skills. The government's goals were seen to be unrealistic, its methods inefficient and its performance inadequate. The NDP MLAs were portrayed as enthusiastic amateurs whose hearts were true but whose abilities fell far short of the mark. For the most part, this attack seems to have centred on the party's new initiatives. Legislation was portrayed as being poorly conceived. The whole legislative program was said to lack co-ordination and coherence. It was put together hastily with little attention paid to practical considerations. Fotheringham wrote of the new Insurance Corporation of British Columbia:

> Prime example of the fumbilitis is the ICBC mess. There was no way the thing could be ready by March 1—a vain promise to fulfill a campaign boast—and the new government will have to back down, with another loss of . . . face when it finds itself with several hundred thousand rioting motorists who theoretically would be barred from driving March 1 without their tabs.[11]

According to the writers, it was clear that the party's enthusiasm had run ahead of its practical knowledge and would have to be held in check until experience could smooth out the rough edges.

If we look at the criticisms that began about the middle of 1973, however, we find a slight change in this emphasis. Evaluations of the B.C. Ferry Corporation, the ferry strike, new staff appointments and departmental efficiency began to suggest that the incompetence appeared in day-to-day management as well as in the formulation and implementation of new policy. When labour troubles created major ferry delays on a holiday weekend, the editorial writer was quick to attack Transport Minister Bob Strachan.

> As the cabinet minister chosen to run the provincial automobile insurance corporation and perhaps, one day, the provincial telephone system, Mr. Strachan surely recognizes that an essential public service cannot be arbitrarily or frivolously chopped off during a time of peak demand. As a representative of a government that has suggested acquiring its own merchant marine, Mr. Strachan must know that its competence at managing even the excellent ferry fleet it inherited very much remains to be proved.
>
> Alas, all that was proved by the Victoria Day weekend ferry debacle was that his government's answer to inadequate ferry service is to provide no service at all.[12]

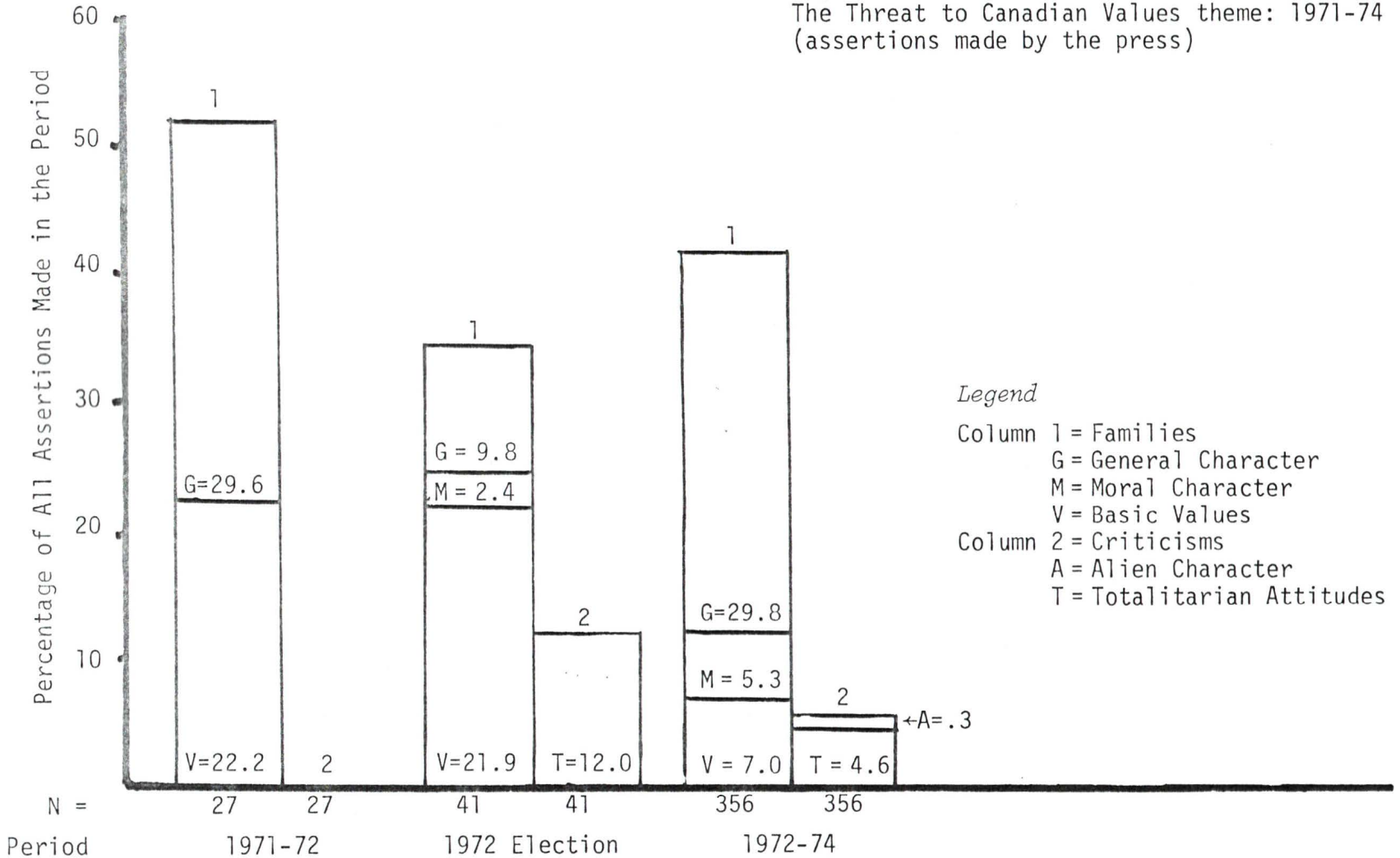
The critics began to hint that the problem was more than one of inexperience and overzealousness. The government, they wrote, was simply inept.

Were the accusations of incompetence justified? The definition of competence is sufficiently vague to allow a range of interpretations of a party's record. It is clear that the NDP's actions in its first year of power provided evidence for at least one commonly held definition of incompetence: lack of co-ordination. The NDP's new policies were brought in as discrete units rather than as a comprehensive package. It is probable that enthusiasm did outrun experience in the conception of these programs so that they were difficult to implement. We can

suggest, however, that the key factor was a problem that touched all aspects of the party's term in office and affected the new programs most directly. That problem was, in the free enterprise idiom, poor public relations. In more precise terms, it was a failure to educate the public and interest groups to understand the goals and methods of the NDP program. Hidden thought it may be, this was the area in which Barrett was truly incompetent. He himself laid the blame at the door of a hostile press but the fault was his own. It is possible that if the premier had developed a careful public education plan to demonstrate the interrelationships between various initiatives and their ultimate benefits, he might have altered the party's portrayal substantially. This is not to say that education would have brought agreement. It would, however, have removed the grounds for many of the accusations of incompetence by making it clear that the policies were coherent, co-ordinated and aimed at some purpose.

The competence theme seemed to grow as an older theme declined. We can see in Figure 6 that the importance of aspects of the "threat to Canadian values" theme dropped off. The Basic Values family accounted for smaller and smaller proportions of the total value while the Totalitarian Attitudes criticism dropped from 12 percent in 1972 to 4.6 percent during the first months in government. The Alien Character criticism was almost non-existent. Only the Moral Character and General Character families showed increases. The large increase in General Character terms is misleading, however, because it did not represent the old tendency to see the NDP as an entity rather than a party.

Figure 6
The Threat to Canadian Values theme: 1971-74
(assertions made by the press)



Instead, the General Character terms here were references to the abilities and personalities of individual ministers, or more commonly, to Barrett.

It seems probable that the rise of the competence theme and the simultaneous decline of the "threat" theme was more than a coincidence. The two represent very different ways of evaluating a party. The older theme relies on the voter's allegiance to certain commonly held beliefs and attitudes while the newer one is addressed to the voter's concern with his own interests. Government ideology can be ignored by most people, but it is difficult to forget that government incompetence can cause added expense or dangerous conflict. The rise of the competence theme is significant in terms of our discussion of legitimacy. The competence theme is one that is likely to be used to refer to a legitimate party whereas the spiritual theme is more suitable for evaluating an illegitimate party. An emphasis on the competence theme implies that the party differs from others only in its ability to manage the public business, while an emphasis on a more value-laden attack implies that the party differs from others in more fundamental ways.

The writers' preference for the competence theme probably was to some extent a reflection of two aspects of press commentary. First, press commentary essentially attempts to characterize the performance or output of a government. This is how it differs from news reporting, which simply records performance or output. Commentators are more at home commenting on facts than speculating on beliefs or values. The facts of the NDP's activities in office made a better basis for commen-

tary than did the party's alleged attitudes to traditional values. It was thus a natural shift for the writers to turn their attention to the government's performance. Second, the shift was also natural in light of the press's perception of itself as the "watchdog" of society. There is a view among reporters and editors that a major function of the free press is to act as a check on the tendency of governments to become inefficient or corrupt. Since corruption did not seem to be a problem, the writers devoted their time to the competence theme. This treatment of the NDP served to increase the legitimacy that the press had already tacitly acknowledged. Evaluations of competence imply legitimacy because they presume that the party is willing to function within the existing system and accept its definition of competence. At the same time, however, if those evaluations suggest that the party does not meet accepted minimum standards of competence, then the evaluations hinder the quest for legitimacy. Had the NDP been judged competent, it could well have become legitimate in the eyes of its critics.

As we have noted, one aspect of the "threat to Canadian values" theme that did receive emphasis in the government period was the notion of the NDP's preference for authoritarian solutions to problems. When the Land Commission was introduced, the editorial writer saw it as only one example of the party's anti-democratic nature.

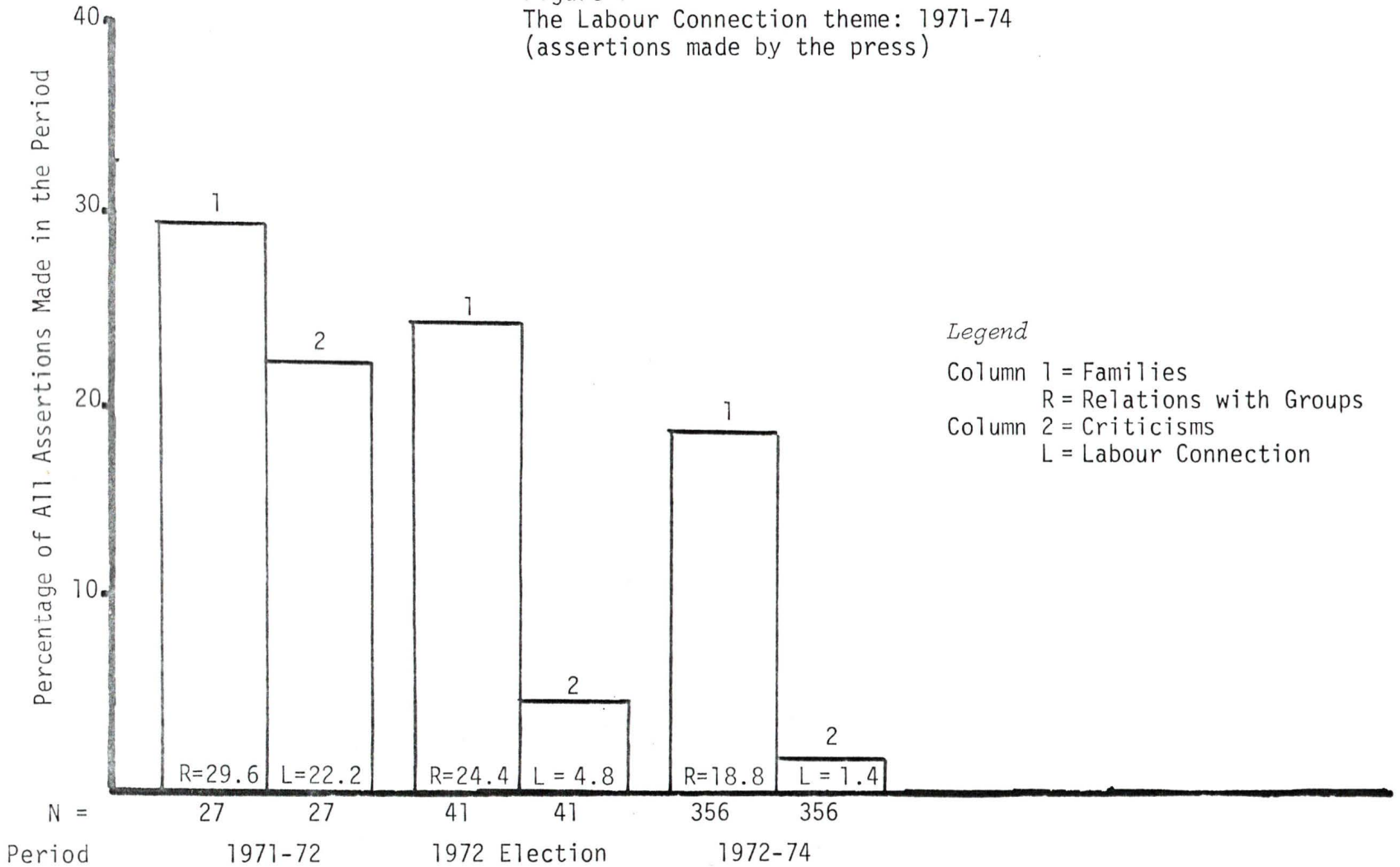
> A measure to put control of all land in the province in the grasp of five NDP appointees, without compensation and without the right of appeal, savagely violates most people's ideas of the principles of democracy. To be told after the event that the act cleared the cabinet with the attorney-general in ignorance that no appeal procedure has been provided casts a damning light on the quality of ministerial discretion.[13]

Such actions seemed to the critics to be proof of the traditional accusations that had been made against the CCF and the NDP.

A third and less central characteristic of the first year in office was the decline in importance of the labour connection. We can see from Figure 7 that the specific Labour Connection criticism dropped from 22.2 percent before the election to 1.4 percent during the period in government. Correspondingly, the Relations with Groups family dropped from 29.6 percent to 18.8 percent. Previous graphs showed the Labour Connection criticism appeared in 1960-63, peaked in 1969 and then declined quickly. The sharpest declines were from 1969 to the pre-election period and from the pre-election period to the 1972 election. The 1.4 percent figure was not much lower than the 4.8 percent in 1972.

This trend suggests that the press's fading interest in the labour connection was not affected by the period in government. The theme appeared after the formation of the NDP and soared during the heated campaign of 1969, probably in response to W. A. C. Bennett's insistence on it. The subsequent decline probably reflected the change in the party's self-image that accompanied Barrett's assumption of the leadership. Barrett took pains to put distance between himself and the labour leaders. The press picked up this new attitude and turned its attention to other areas. When the party came to power the labour connection received even less emphasis. This may have occurred because there was no evidence of collusion between the party and the unions. Indeed, many labour leaders were vocal critics of some NDP labour legislation. By the time of the B.C. Ferry strike, the criticisms of the settlement

Figure 7
The Labour Connection theme: 1971-74
(assertions made by the press)



accused the government of weakness rather than conspiracy.[14] It appeared that the government had surrendered to union demands but not that the NDP had paid off old debts.

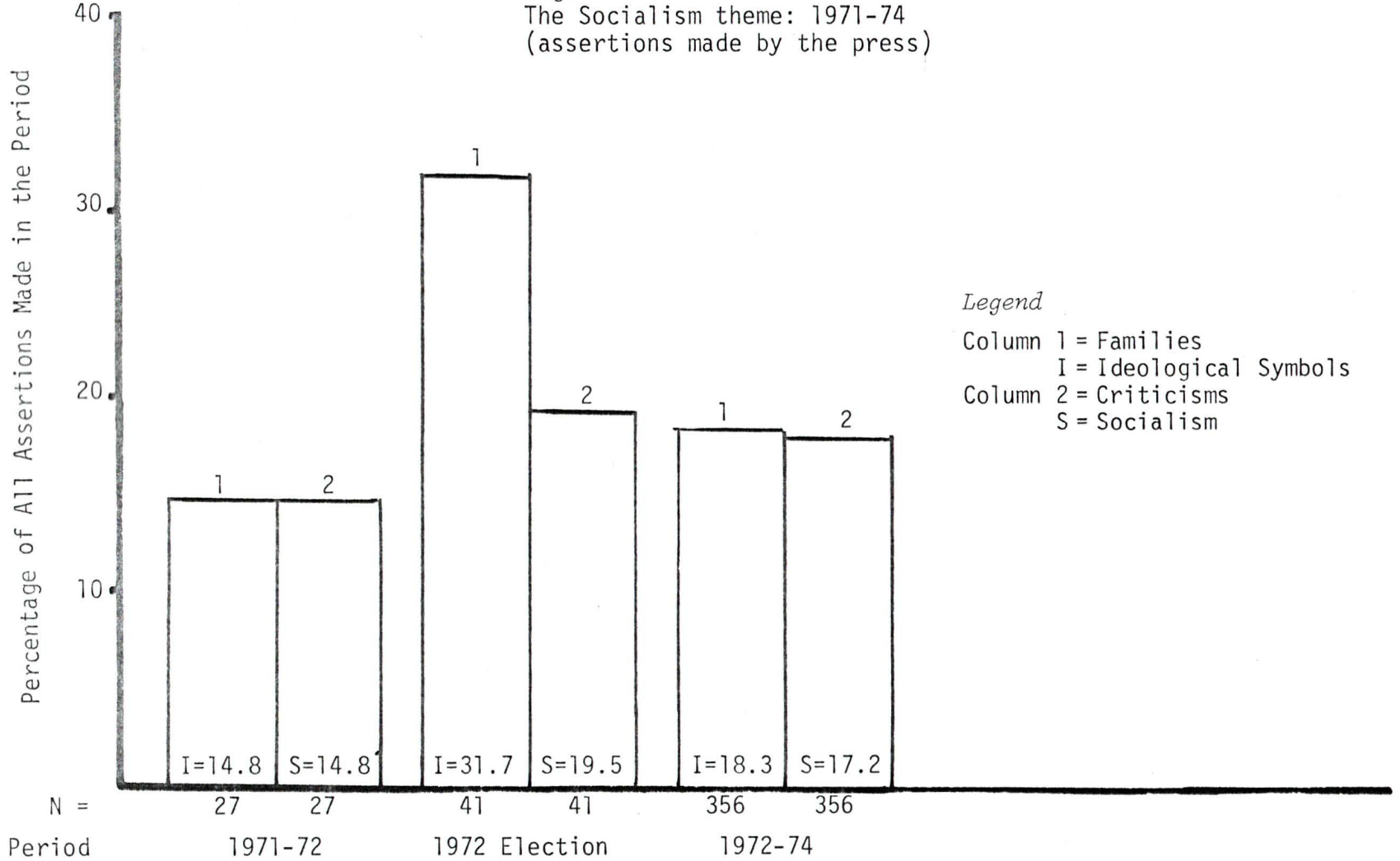
In Figure 8 we see that the socialism theme remained strong during the first months in government, although it declined after the election. The most significant change that occurred when the NDP took office was an expansion of the range of terms used. Before and during the election, the socialist terms were confined to references to socialism and the Waffle Manifesto. After the election, the critics added terms such as "democratic socialist," "fuzzy socialist thinkers," "socialized industry" and "socialist ventures." The extreme attacks used in the early years had almost all disappeared but the critics were still not prepared to forget the NDP's socialist roots.

The NDP's actions in office were used as proof that socialism—in addition to being odious—did not really work. As had been predicted by many defenders of free enterprise, the NDP in power seemed committed to an expensive program of social experiments. At the end of the first session of 1973, the editorial writer suggested,

> The voters at least must have by now judged that these first socialist ventures will not be the last this government undertakes. And they must surely have qualms when they consider the power for unlimited experimentation conceded to the government by this legislature, especially in view of the dismal, and in most cases, disastrous, experiments in other provinces where the NDP or its CCF predecessors have held power.[15]

To Marjorie Nichols, it seemed that even Barrett and his cabinet had concluded that free enterprise was the better system.

Figure 8
The Socialism theme: 1971-74
(assertions made by the press)



> Undoubtedly the most curious statement in the entire budget address, is Barrett's assertion that "not a single firm has been nationalized." . . .
>
> In context, it sounds strangely like a concession. The premier has, it seems, come to the realization that it would be foolhardy to tinker with a (free enterprise) machine that is running as smoothly as the B.C. economy.[16]

Another theme that deserves consideration appeared suddenly in 1972. Although it did not reach large proportions, it did flavour much of the writing as time passed. The theme was "arrogance." The terms in this theme included "arrogant," "lordly attitude," "cocky," "flippant," "smug" and others. The theme did not appear until the first year in office, when it accounted for 2.5 percent of the terms. During the second half of the period in office it rose to 4.7 percent before falling to 1.3 percent in the 1975 election. The implications of the second figure will be discussed in the following chapter. The sudden appearance of the theme is significant.

Even more than incompetence, arrogance is an accusation made against governments or those who have held power. We can imagine few circumstances in which an opposition party, lacking real power, could appear arrogant. Arrogance is generally perceived as a quality manifested by those who wield power and refers to the manner in which that power is used.

Arrogance and its resultant injustice are topics that generate emotional reactions far more intense than reactions to most other government failings. In British Columbia this has been true for many years. W. A. C. Bennett and his cabinet frequently were accused of

being arrogant during their twenty years in office. Bennett's takeover of the B.C. Electric Company, with its apparent rejection of free enterprise ideology, seemed to be the act of an arrogant man. The long delay in bringing charges against former cabinet minister Robert Sommers seemed to be an arrogant act. Sommers, while a minister of the crown, was accused and eventually convicted of accepting bribes, yet the attorney-general refused to bring him to trial. To many it seemed the government had used a blatant abuse of power to protect one of its own from the consequences of his criminal act. In the late 1960s accusations of arrogance and injustice increased. These incidents aroused the indignation of the voters and probably did much to ensure Bennett's defeat.

When the NDP came to power in 1972 both press and public had been well conditioned by the Bennett years. Although they hoped the new government might be more responsive than the old, the other parties had told them to expect a socialist government to be heavy-handed. The first real accusations of arrogance came over the introduction of the Land Commission Act and the decision to take over the PNE. The editorial writer called the second of these a "scandalous abuse of power."[17] By March of 1973 arrogance figured as one of the major qualities of the NDP in Allan Fotheringham's assessment of the first months in office.[18] It seemed that the government's desire for centralization and state intervention smacked of arrogance. Barrett was likened to W. A. C. Bennett in his disregard for the views of others.[19] To the commentators the arrogant strain was particularly noticeable in the government's

attitude to northern development, the fate of the University of British Columbia endowment lands and mass transit.[20] Municipal Affairs Minister Jim Lorimer in particular received angry attacks from the press over his handling of the mass transit issue. Lorimer told a radio interviewer that all meetings with Vancouver civic officials would be held *in camera*. He added that if any information were leaked from those meetings, they would be ended and the province would plan the transit systems without any input from local governments. Fotheringham was outraged.

> There is something absolutely breathtaking about the Lorimer thesis. The children, the inferior ones, the elected representatives of civic voters, are to remain silent unless spoken to. If they err, if they dare to throw out for public discussion matters of vital concern to the residents of Vancouver, God Above Across The Water will snatch it all away and will decide in its aloofness what is best for Vancouver.
>
> There is something most intriguing in Lorimer's reference to "the province"—as if it were some independent entity with a life of its own, some corporation almost, rather than just another servant, more remote, of the public. There ain't nobody here but us taxpayers. So this is the "open government"? Where have they been hiding this guy? How many more gems like him have yet to surface?[21]

In the picture of events conveyed by these commentators, power had gone to Barrett's head and he had lost his concern for people.

The arrogance theme reinforced the NDP's legitimacy problem. While it is true that W. A. C. Bennett was seen as arrogant without necessarily being illegitimate, in the eyes of its opponents the case of the NDP was different. The anti-CCF and anti-NDP election campaigns had always emphasized that socialists in office would abuse their power. This trait was portrayed as an inescapable part of the socialist character. When the NDP government exhibited signs of arrogance they meshed perfectly with these predictions. The party seemed to be willing to

ignore the wishes of the people in its effort to create a socialist state. Such a government could not be legitimate to those who opposed it.

The final theme of the first months in government dealt with Barrett and addressed his growing hostility to the press. This theme was so insignificant in statistical terms that it amounted to only 1 percent of the terms during that period. Despite this fact, it gave an important tone to the criticisms that outweighed its numerical strength. Barrett's hostility was important because he appeared to see conspiracies in the press. In his opinion he was harassed and treated unfairly by a press that did not share his beliefs. He was attacked by a capitalist press dedicated to muck-raking. The press, on the other hand, saw his increasingly evident attitude as simple paranoia and laid the blame for poor press relations at his door. The significance of this theme, which was ignored by the parties, was the way it coloured reporting of subsequent events. For the press, Barrett had become an unstable character and one who lacked the self-control necessary for leadership. His hostility appears to have been reciprocated to some degree by the editorial writers and columnists. Fotheringham wrote:

> The premier's stubborn belief that an early a.m. cabal of editors sits around each dawn over cups of blood, feverishly combing the news for some excuse to trap Barrett, does not promise well for a regime that has eight long years ahead of it and already in its infancy is discovering ghosts under the bed.[22]

The writers' perception of Barrett's instability led them to doubt his suitability as a premier so that they became less forgiving of his errors, an attitude that became stronger when David Anderson made his accusations.

This discussion of the first half of the period in government has shown that there were significant changes in the portrayal of the NDP by the press. Evaluations of the NDP's characteristics as a party were submerged in favour of criticisms of its characteristics as a government. Some old themes declined while others rose and still others appeared for the first time. Of course some aspects of the portrayal remained unchanged. For instance, there was still an emphasis on the party's supposed socialist beliefs. The changes, however, were clear and substantial. The effect of the period in government on the NDP's legitimacy is difficult to evaluate. It is probable that the party's ability to govern without creating chaos reassured some opponents. The fact that it was the government and controlled the institutions and symbols of public power gave it some legitimacy.

However, in the eyes of most of its opponents, the government's record as conveyed by the press offered evidence to reinforce the concerns of those who had not voted for the party in 1972 and who now saw the fulfilment of the dire predictions made about socialists. At the same time, it is probable that the developing portrayal undermined the faith of many NDP supporters as well. The NDP was portrayed as incompetent, authoritarian and arrogant. These three characteristics could be seen as proof that the party was unwilling to use power in traditional ways. It could not govern the province efficiently and as a result it cost the taxpayers money. It had little concern for the views of citizens and as a result it curtailed their freedoms. These problems effectively outweighed the positive effects of the term in office,

convincing the NDP's traditional opponents that their dire predictions had come true.

Footnotes

[1]Allan Fotheringham, *Victoria Times*, August 15, 1972, p. 5.

[2]*Vancouver Sun*, October 16, 1972, p. 4.

[3]Marjorie Nichols, *Sun*, October 17, 1972, p. 6.

[4]*Sun*, January 20, 1973, p. 4.

[5]*Sun*, March 17, 1973, p. 4.

[6]*Sun*, March 20, 1973, p. 4.

[7]Fotheringham, *Sun*, March 3, 1973, p. 37.

[8]*Sun*, March 8, 1973, p. 4.

[9]Fotheringham, *Sun*, August 28, 1973, p. 27.

[10]Fotheringham, *Sun*, October 12, 1973, p. 31.

[11]Fotheringham, *Sun*, February 2, 1974, p. 43.

[12]*Sun*, May 25, 1973, p. 4.

[13]*Sun*, March 7, 1973, p. 4.

[14]*Sun*, August 22, 1973, p. 4.

[15]*Sun*, April 21, 1973, p. 4.

[16]Nichols, *Sun*, February 12, 1974, p. 13.

[17]*Sun*, February 24, 1973, p. 4.

[18]Fotheringham, *Sun*, March 17, 1973, p. 39.

[19]*Sun*, March 5, 1973, p. 4.

[20]*Sun*, January 7, 1974, p. 4.

[21]Fotheringham, *Sun*, January 10, 1974, p. 39.

[22]Fotheringham, *Sun*, December 6, 1972, p. 29.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROAD TO DEFEAT:
MARCH 11, 1974 TO DECEMBER 11, 1975

For the remainder of the NDP's term in office, the memory of the chicken-and-egg war stayed fresh in the minds of opponents and commentators. They approached the government's new activities with a less forgiving attitude. A measure of the increased hostility was the commentators' emphasis on administrative and political incidents. In the eyes of its critics the Barrett government made blunder after blunder. When the election was called in November 1975, the opposition parties took up many of the criticisms that had been used by the press commentators, criticisms that those parties had often used to effect in the House. This chapter examines the portrayal that developed between March 1974 and December 11, 1975. Data from both the press commentary sample and the election sample are used.

Even in the area of new programs the NDP found itself loudly attacked. New mining royalties legislation was seen to be ill-conceived and dangerous to the economy. One of the critics' major concerns was a growing uneasiness about the effect of NDP policies on the forest industry. The minister, Bob Williams, was pictured by media and opponents alike as the most dedicated socialist in the cabinet. In late November of 1974, these critics sounded the warning that his vision of the province's economy soon would be realized, as he introduced the short-lived Timber Products Stabilization Act. The act provided for a

crown corporation to market logs and wood chips. Although the bill was amended many saw it as an indication of how far Williams was prepared to go to crush the power of private enterprise. In May 1975 the government introduced the Emergency Programme Act, which outlined the cabinet's powers to deal with natural disasters and other crises. Critics believed that the act was poorly worded, leaving it open to abuse. To some, it was the first step on the road to a police state. In June it was announced that the province would purchase the aging passenger ship *Princess Marguerite*, which made regular trips to Seattle, Washington from Victoria. The writers attacked the move both because it was done without legislative approval and because the minister involved—Williams—had nothing to do with transportation. The most unexpected bill was introduced in late 1975, when Labour Minister Bill King made what appeared to be a sudden shift in attitude. He brought in a bill to force striking pulp unions, supermarket employees, B.C. Rail unions and Nanaimo gas workers back to work for a 120-day cooling-off period. Many in the labour movement were shocked and angered. Although the commentators approved of the action, they doubted Barrett's motives.

In the area of administrative incidents, the writers focused on accusations of incompetence and authoritarianism. Further evidence of the NDP's allegedly autocratic tendencies was provided when Jim Lorimer unilaterally decreed that the municipalities would have to pay one-half the cost of urban transit. Education Minister Eileen Dailly's white paper on education was branded a thin document that did little except confirm the minister's incompetence in the eyes of her critics.

Perhaps the most damaging government errors were two that came to light almost simultaneously in the fall of 1974. The impact of these revelations was especially damaging because they occurred in areas that were central to the NDP's program: automobile insurance and human resources policy. Government-run automobile insurance had been an NDP platform plank for many years. It was one of the first major innovations put into operation. It was also one of the main rallying points for the defenders of free enterprise, who predicted disaster if the plan went ahead. To the press and opposition critics, the suspicions seemed to be proved when several executives of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia resigned and it was announced that the corporation had developed a large deficit in its first months of operation. Then Human Resources Minister Norm Levi admitted that a budget error in his ministry had resulted in an overrun of $100 million. The overrun and Levi's lack of concern over it seemed to prove that the NDP was bent on supporting welfare cases at the expense of the province's economic health. The $100 million overrun was probably the most important symbol used in the subsequent attacks on the NDP's competence. It was held up as the crowning example of the government's abysmal ineptitude.

Throughout the new session in 1975, the major topic of discussion and criticism was the cabinet. Critics and supporters made repeated calls for a cabinet shuffle. Barrett's decision to choose ministers according to legislative experience rather than ability still had not been changed. Several ministers—including Eileen Dailly, Bob Strachan and Mines Minister Leo Nimsick—were singled out for their incompetence.

The press and opposition demanded resignations. Barrett refused to make any changes. The problems caused by this refusal were compounded by news of a growing ICBC deficit, a $25 million loss in the crown-owned ferry corporation and then a strike by ICBC workers. It was not until October 1975 that Barrett bowed to the pressure and shuffled his cabinet. Leo Nimsick was moved to a less sensitive post and Barrett gave up the finance portfolio to be replaced by Dave Stupich, who, because of his training as an accountant, was generally considered competent. While the critics agreed that the shuffle strengthened the cabinet, Barrett was criticized for lacking the courage to oust Nimsick altogether. Barrett was also attacked for his failure to make the change earlier.

The government's political problems came in a variety of guises. One of those given a great deal of attention by the writers was Barrett's inability to control the House. He had introduced a Hansard and question period, had forbidden the late-night sittings that had been a hallmark of the old Bennett regime and had instituted other procedural reforms. One of the results of these long-awaited reforms was an increase in the visibility of the opposition parties. Barrett's problems in the House were not alleviated by the controversy surrounding Speaker Gordon Dowding, who was portrayed as having little notion of his proper role and taking challenges to his rulings as personal affronts. The critics also attacked Dowding for his expensive research expeditions to far corners of the world. The government's problems in the House became more unmanageable after Anderson's accusations were made. In an effort to force an investigation Anderson repeatedly called Barrett a

liar in the House, refused to retract and was ejected by the Speaker. These tactics served to focus still more public attention on the activities of the Legislature.

The Anderson accusations also spurred the press to watch the government more carefully and criticize it more readily, a campaign that quickly began to tell on the premier. The tension created by the barrage of criticism was soon apparent in the reactions of Barrett and his ministers. Their tendency to see conspiracies in the press became more pronounced. Barrett began to complain about his coverage. He became so incensed at the press attacks over the Anderson affair that he shouted obscenities at Marjorie Nichols in the corridor of the Legislature. Of course, the outburst created still more unfavourable press commentary. Barrett's press aide, John Twigg, added more fuel to the fire with his government newsletter, which was condemned as a taxpayer-subsidized propaganda organ of the NDP.

During the end of November 1974 the press occupied itself with speculations on the future of the Social Credit Party. Despite earlier predictions, there were signs of a Socred resurgence. With Bill Bennett installed as leader, there seemed to be a significant chance that he could create a unified "free enterprise option" to present at the next election. Many individuals and groups were calling for a united anti-socialist party to replace the Liberals, Conservatives and Socreds. Although that possibility seemed remote, many believed that one of the three parties must absorb the other two if the NDP were to be defeated. Liberal Allan Williams and other MLAs publicly flirted with the unity

idea. For the moment, however, there were no commitments from third party MLAs to join Social Credit. It was not until spring of the following year that several Liberal and Progressive Conservative MLAs deserted their parties to join Bill Bennett.

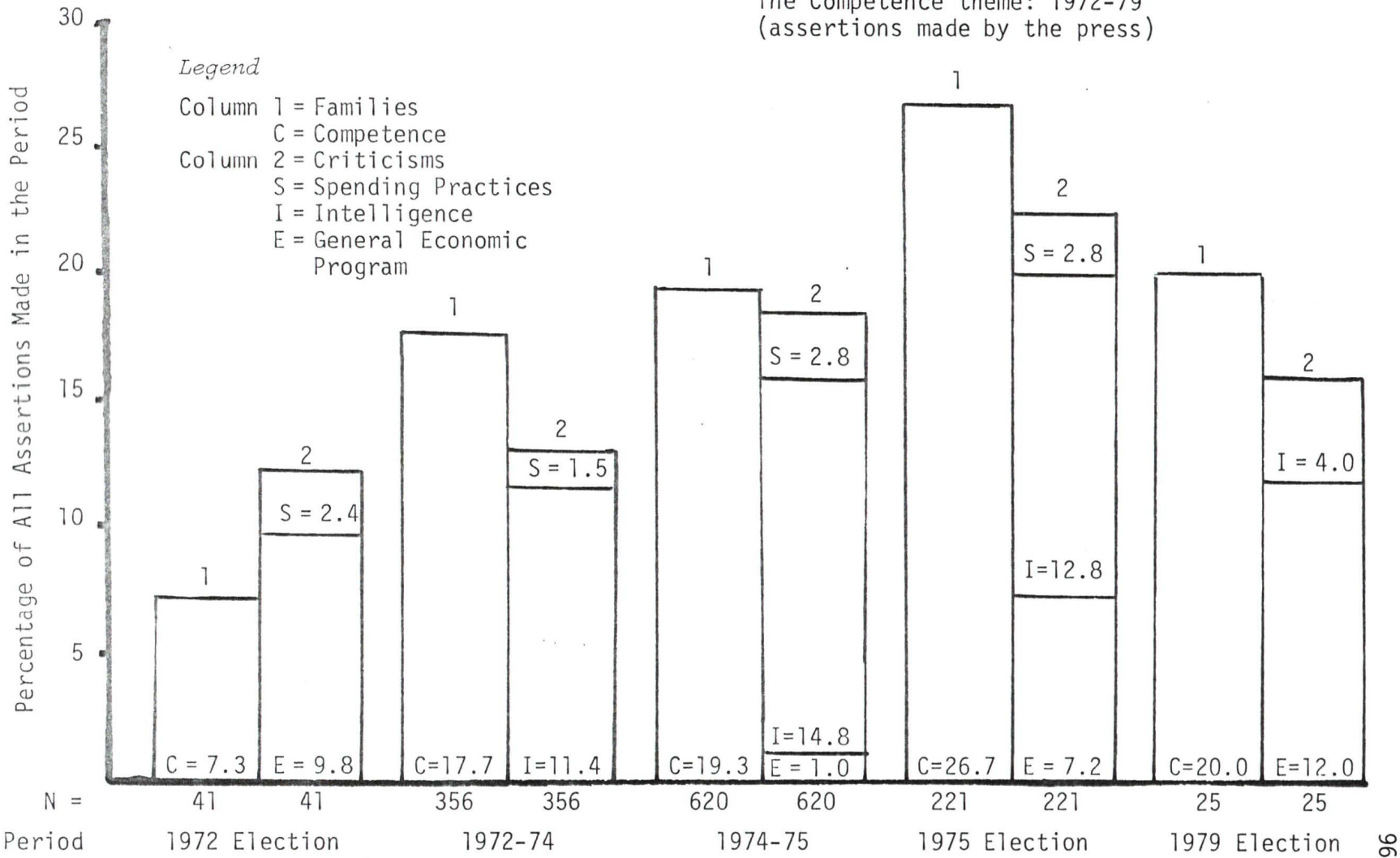
In November 1975 Barrett called an election when many believed he was only beginning to recover his popularity. Hard on the heels of the cabinet shuffle and the back-to-work bill, the election was deplored as an example of political opportunism. Opportunistic though it may have seemed, the election called proved to be the death knell of the Barrett government.

Themes

As the preceding description suggests, the second half of the term in office was marked by increasing hostility on the part of the press. During the election in 1975 the parties joined in heaping criticism on the NDP government. It is clear that, although the critics paid more attention to concrete criticisms, that attention did little to further the NDP's quest for legitimacy. The continuing attacks emphasized the party's abuse of power and lack of management ability.

The competence theme continued to be important after 1973. Competence and the Intelligence criticism rose steadily between 1972 and 1975. Concern with the General Economic Program indicator also rose, although more dramatically in the press than in the statements of the parties. Figure 9 shows the steady increase in competence-related indicators during the term in office. The Competence family rose from

Figure 9
The Competence theme: 1972-79
(assertions made by the press)



7.3 percent in 1972 to 26.7 percent in 1975. The change is equally noticeable in Figure 10, which shows that emphasis on Competence and Intelligence increased dramatically.

The effect of the Anderson accusations was to increase the press's vigilance in all areas. Examples of incompetence were pursued more vigorously and with a less forgiving attitude. The criticisms used were more heated repetitions of the attacks that began during 1973. As before, the press blasted the government for its lack of experience and inattention to practical considerations.

> Where valid criticism falls is upon the doctrinaire crudity of the government's interventions. The facts have been made to fit the Procrustean bed of know-it-alls who could not possibly, out of the depths of their own practical inexperience, foresee the consequences of their own acts.[1]

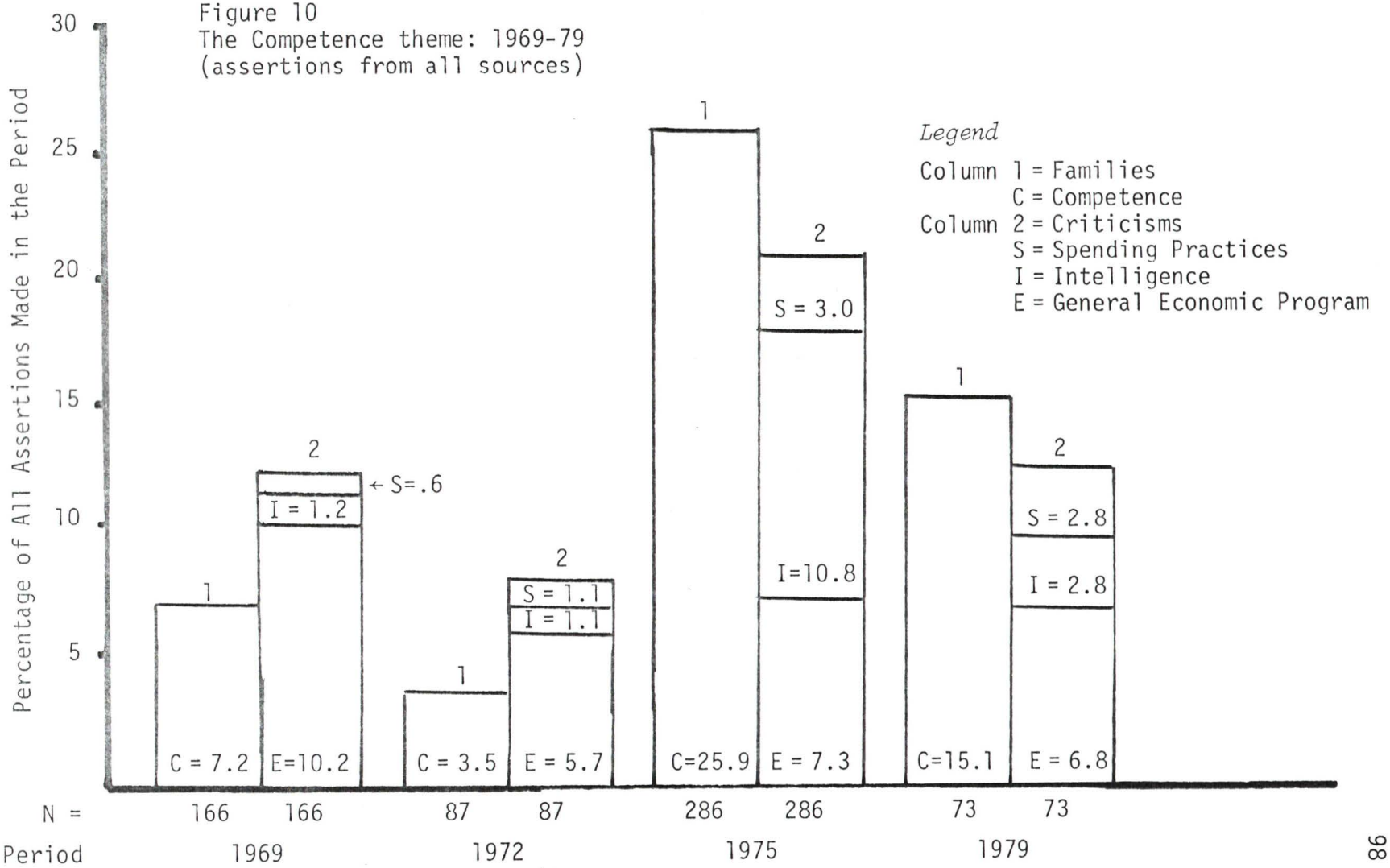
The most celebrated example of this incompetence was the $100 million overrun in the Human Resources department.

> Human Resources Minister Norm Levi stands convicted, out of his own mouth, of total incompetence in the administration of public money. His attempt to excuse a projected over-run of $103 million in his department's expenditures for the 1974-75 fiscal year is a pitiful chronicle of unrepentant ineptitude. A government with any regard for its financial credibility would displace him immediately.[2]

Before long, the $100 million overrun had become a shorthand symbol used to evoke negative reactions to the government. In the light of such errors, the editorial writers were angered that the government made no attempt to control the increases in budgeted expenditures. In 1975 the budget was greeted with renewed calls for restraint.

> Premier Barrett's new go-for-broke budget amounts to a shocking betrayal of a public trust.
>
> At a time of recession and inflation, when the federal government is pleading with all sectors of the economy to exercise

Figure 10
The Competence theme: 1969-79
(assertions from all sources)



> restraint, the New Democrats at Victoria are continuing the potlatch with ever-mounting irresponsibility.[3]

The writers were no longer willing to forgive these excesses on the grounds that the government's intentions were honourable.

> Apparently the government believes that the public is so inured to its history of extravagance, inefficiency and profligacy that the rules of accountability no longer apply. Those responsible for ignoring elemental business practices seem to think, as Mr. Strachan said, that their mistakes can be shoved under the blanket of a "social concept." In other words, they meant well even if their performance was atrocious.[4]

The difference between these attacks and the earlier use of terms such as "careless" is striking. The writers had begun to portray the NDP not just as inexperienced, but as inescapably and dangerously incompetent. The writers asserted that the party had had sufficient time to get used to power. If Barrett were still unable to govern effectively, there was no hope of improvement.

While the editorial writers focused on the failings of the cabinet as a whole, Nichols and Fotheringham devoted more attention to individual ministers. This campaign eventually produced the cabinet shuffle, but not on the scale that the critics had wanted. Nichols called Housing Minister Lorne Nicolson a "dud" and wrote: "If Barrett is wise, he will have Nicolson bronzed and placed in front of Casa Loma development as a lawn decoration."[5] Meanwhile, Fotheringham turned his pen on the three ministers he found most incompetent.

> Strachan has been the major disappointment as transportation and communications minister, his supposed canny skills as one-time party leader lost in his supercilious manner, his evasive, ill-prepared performance in the House and his patchwork record as ICBC boss.[6]

> Education Minister Eileen Dailly is well-meaning, well-intentioned but simply far out of her depth, and becomes the more indecisive and nervous as that becomes apparent. She wanted reform, then panicked when she discovered that some of the younger education types actually meant to provide it.[7]
>
> The other spot requiring surgery is mining, presided over by an oblivious cherub, Leo Nimsick. Leo is a harmless fellow, who wouldn't hurt a gopher. (In fact, he'd stop to talk to it. In the meantime, three more mines would shut down.) His only minor weakness is that he doesn't have a clue what he is doing. His department is run by the deputy minister.[8]

The most important new theme was one related to the Anderson accusations. This theme focused on Barrett's abandonment of his principles. It was, in the eyes of these commentators, a story of "moral decay." Until the chicken-and-egg war, Barrett's errors had been excused because his heart appeared to be in the right place. Now, however, it seemed that he had thrown away his principles. The writers portrayed him as a greedy, scheming politician "just like all the others." Figures 11 and 12 show that emphasis on this theme increased sharply during the period in government. The press's emphasis on Moral Character rose from 2.4 percent in 1972 to 8.5 percent in 1975, while the Greed and Opportunism criticism rose from 2.4 percent in 1972 to 5.7 percent in 1975.

More important than the proportions was the intensity of the reaction. The writers projected a sense of betrayal, as if lies were the last thing they had expected from Barrett. Marjorie Nichols declared that Barrett had finally "destroyed his credibility," was "corrupted" and was "unfit for office."[9] She mourned the loss of his former "high moral character."

Figure 11
The Moral Decay theme: 1972-79
(assertions made by the press)

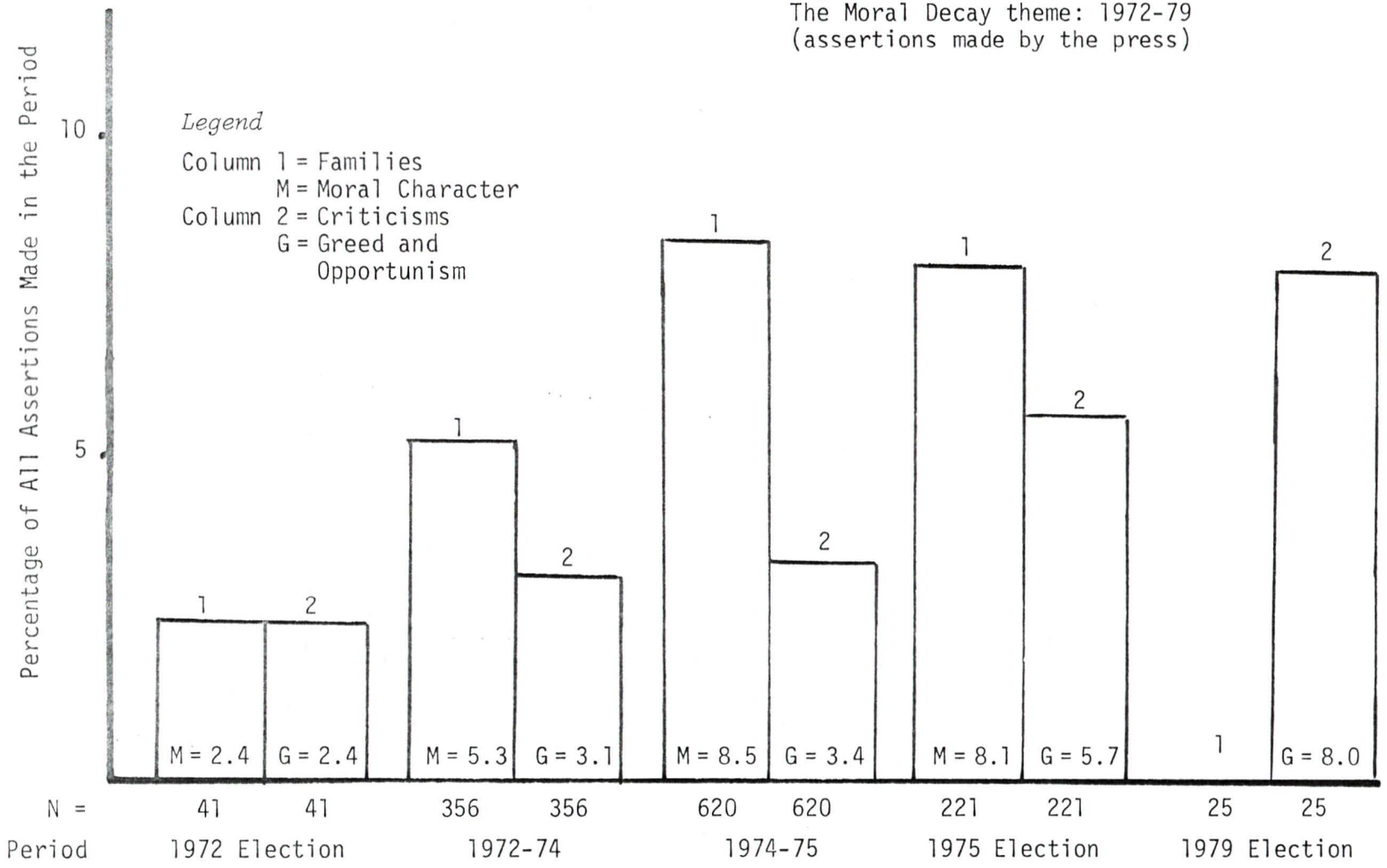
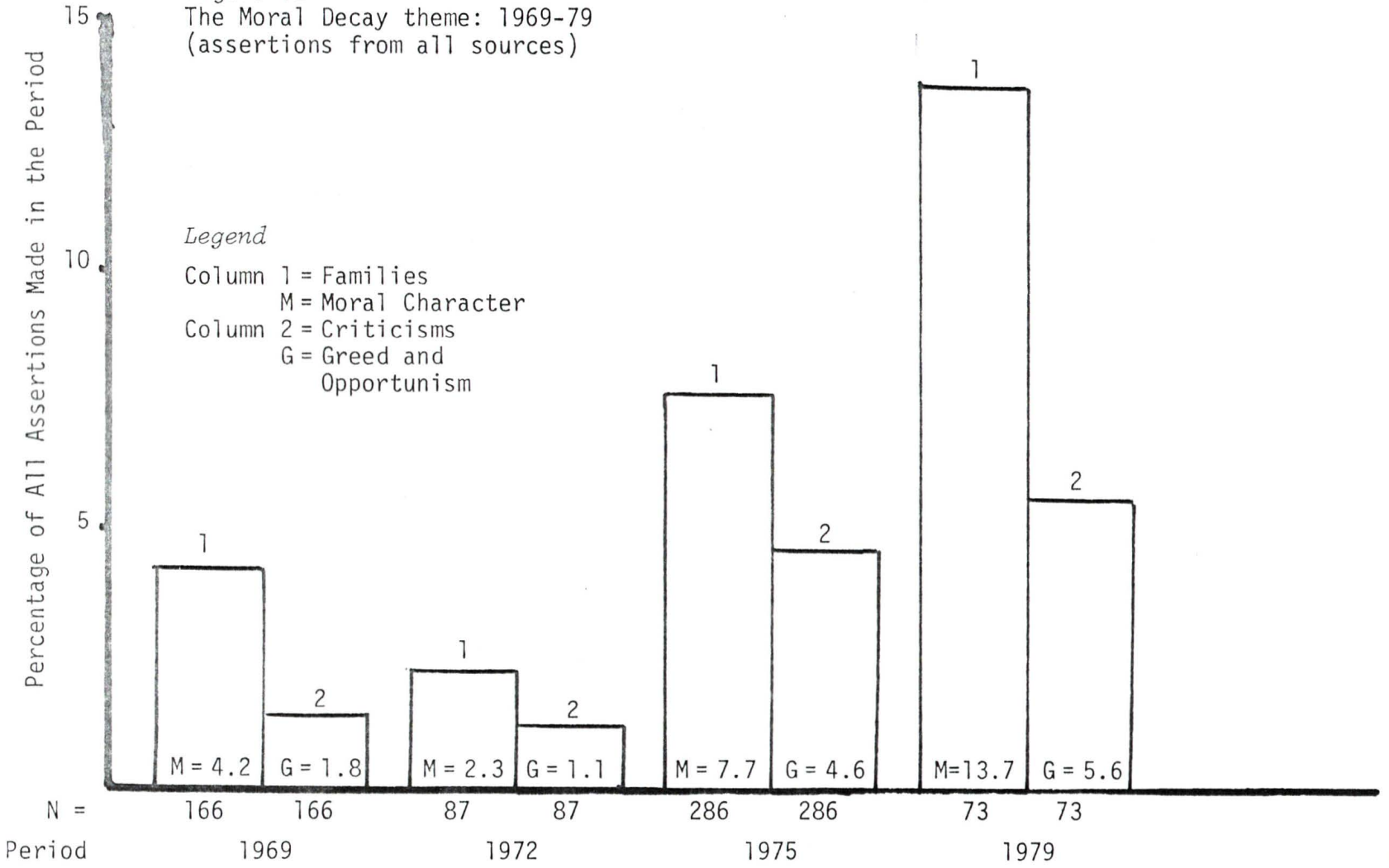


Figure 12
The Moral Decay theme: 1969-79
(assertions from all sources)



> There is heavy irony in this sad situation. Apart from his sense of humor, Barrett's unblushing candor was his most compelling asset.
>
> He was, we observers of his rise to power believed, a politician with a unique quality: He refused to obfuscate; he was totally honest.
>
> Now, there is no doubt, and it could be the end of the career that the pundits beyond the borders of this province have been predicting for . . . B.C.'s first socialist premier.[10]

Meanwhile, Fotheringham ladled out adjectives like "tarnished" and "indefensible."[11] The editorial writer warned:

> It is more than strange that a legislator of Mr. Barrett's experience should deliberately undermine the whole system. If he can get away with this flouting of elementary and basic tradition, he will be setting a precedent that will bring the whole legislature into disrepute. How could the legislature move in a subsequent case if an accused member simply denies a similar accusation and declines to have his veracity put to the test?[12]

In the months that followed, the notion of Barrett's betrayal permeated much of the writing about the government. Marjorie Nichols summed up her new attitude by writing: "The deviousness can no longer be written off to administrative bungling. It smacks of premeditation."[13]

Barrett's fall from grace was complete. To the writers, his perfidy was to be seen everywhere. So powerful was this notion that it coloured even the commentary on policies of which the writers approved. When the back-to-work legislation was introduced in October of 1975, the writers hailed the bill as evidence of courage and leadership, but they could not banish the memory of David Anderson's accusations. Nichols lauded the move but called Barrett's motives "impure" and his "soul a sooty black."[14] Fotheringham also approved but dubbed the move "shrewd" and a "brilliant piece of populist politicking."[15] Clearly, Barrett the idealist had been replaced in the minds of the writers by Barrett the politician. Not only could his good intentions no longer

be taken for granted, it seemed probable that there were no good intentions behind any of his actions.

The parties addressed the "moral decay" theme more frequently than they had at any other time. The increase in Moral Character terms and the Greed and Opportunism criticism occurred at a greater rate than that seen in the press. Unlike the press, those increases continued into 1979. It is not surprising that the parties found this theme useful. It is probable that moral values are more deeply held than political ones and therefore are perceived by politicians to be more useful in evoking the desired emotional responses and images. Moral strictures against lying are more deeply held than, for instance, strictures against nationalization of industry. Normally the use of moral attacks is strictly limited by convention. In this case, however, we see what must have seemed a heaven-sent opportunity to the opposition parties; a clear, public, moral issue that was supported by strong evidence.

An increase in the attention paid to the arrogance theme accompanied the heightened attention paid to morality. The other aspect of the Anderson incident was Barrett's continued refusal to order an investigation and his apparent lack of concern over the whole affair. To the writers, this was clearly an example of arrogance. Fotheringham used terms such as "smirking" and "sniggering" to describe Barrett's behaviour.[16] Not only was the premier a liar, he also appeared to enjoy his ability to get away with it. This could not be passed off as a careless, but unintentional, disregard for public opinion. The *Sun*'s commentators saw it as a blatant attempt to use the power of his office to escape the

just consequences of a reprehensible act. Again, the press displayed an almost melodramatic sense of betrayal. They had not believed it possible that Barrett, with his concern for people and with his desire for fair, honest government, could ride roughshod over the principles of justice. Lord Acton's famous observations on power were quoted several times.

As with all the fallout of the Anderson incident, the arrogance theme continued to reappear throughout the second half of the period in government. Actions that previously might have been put down to inexperience or incompetence were now presented as examples of arrogance. The government was criticized for its behaviour in the House; Barrett had lost control of the proceedings and his ministers reacted childishly to criticism. Fotheringham accused them of being "whining" and "arrogant" in the House.[17] Bob Strachan was singled out for his "swagger."[18] Outside the House, the government's actions also bore the stamp of arrogance. Nichols was angered when the government stepped in to decide the fate of Victoria's Inner Harbour after refusing to participate in the planning process. Nichols saw the action as "arbitrary and arrogant."[19] These and other minor examples paled before the apparent arrogance of Norm Levi when the $100 million overrun was announced. The editorial writer blasted Levi for his "audacity," "excesses" and "cavalier disregard for public money."[20] It was bad enough that the mistake had occurred, but the crowning injury was the minister's apparent lack of concern, his unwillingness to admit that there was a serious problem. To the writers, and the editorial writers in particular, this proved

that the party was too irresponsible to handle public money. In April of 1975 Barrett himself was again the focus of these accusations. During the middle of that month, in an effort to regain control of the House, he set time limits on the estimates debate. Nichols reacted with a torrent of criticism.[21] Barrett was "arrogant, arbitrary and autocratic"; he used "strong-arm tactics"; he had a "disdain for public I.Q." The litany went on through almost every phase of government activity over the remaining months. The NDP government, it repeated, used its power arbitrarily and with arrogance.

As the new themes increased in importance, two of the older themes received less emphasis. Figures 13 and 14 show that there was a significant decline in emphasis on socialism and questions of ideology. In the same way, Figures 15 and 16 show declines in the labour connection indicators between 1972 and 1975. There was little evidence for accusations regarding the labour connection, while the socialist theme was vague and difficult to support. On the other hand, competence and moral character clearly were issues. They were more specific criticisms and could be supported with stronger evidence. The substitution thus was a logical tactical move for the parties and an understandable shift in emphasis for the press writers, who preferred facts to back up their commentary. The change in emphasis still did not increase the party's legitimacy, despite the fact that the old socialist label was used less frequently and the "pernicious" alliance with labour was no longer seen as important. Of course, neither of these themes was completely discarded. The editorial writers still found examples of the evils of socialism.

Figure 13
The Socialism theme: 1972-79
(assertions made by the press)

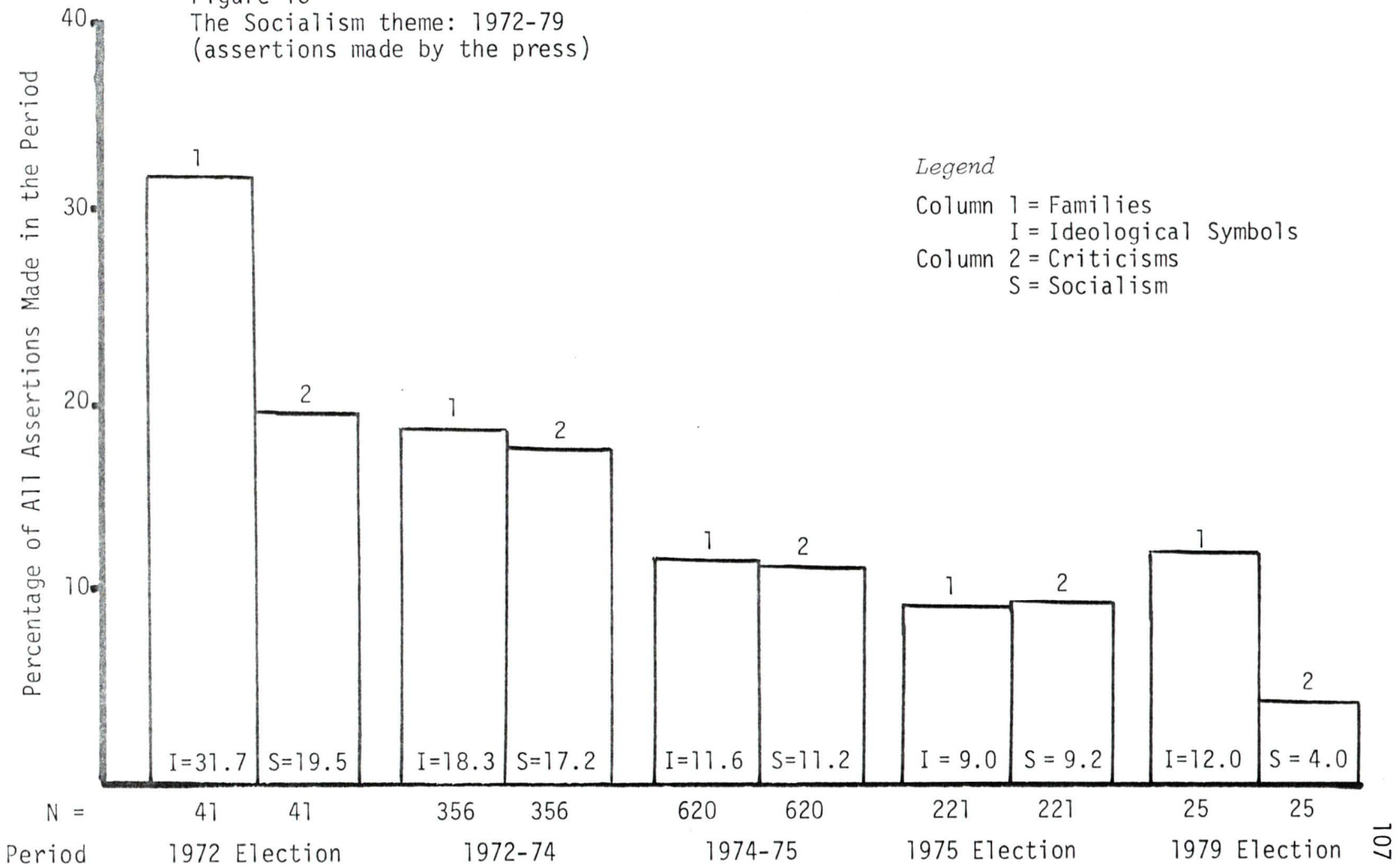


Figure 14
The Socialism theme: 1969-79
(assertions from all sources)

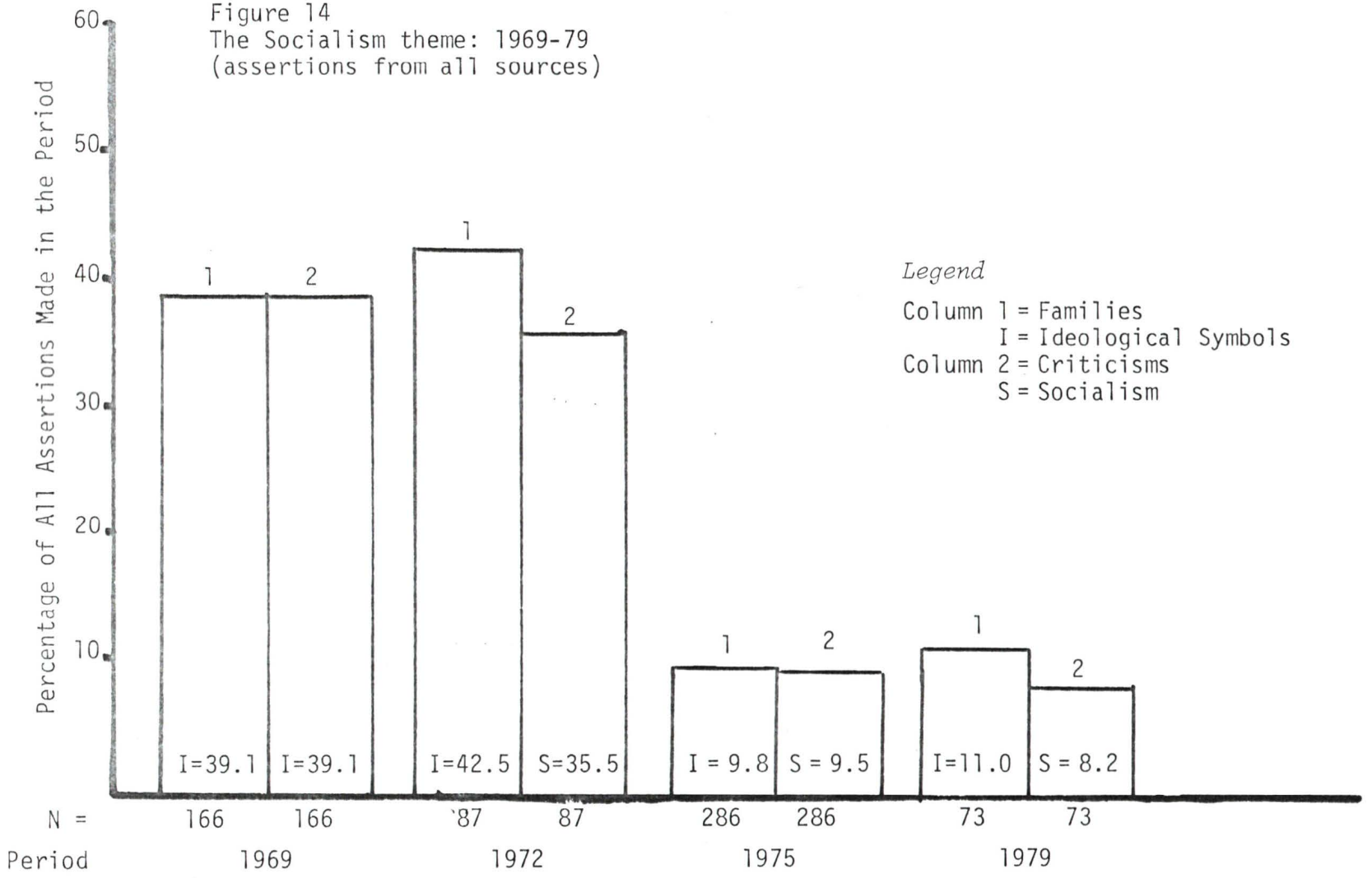


Figure 15
The Labour Connection theme: 1972-79
(assertions made by the press)

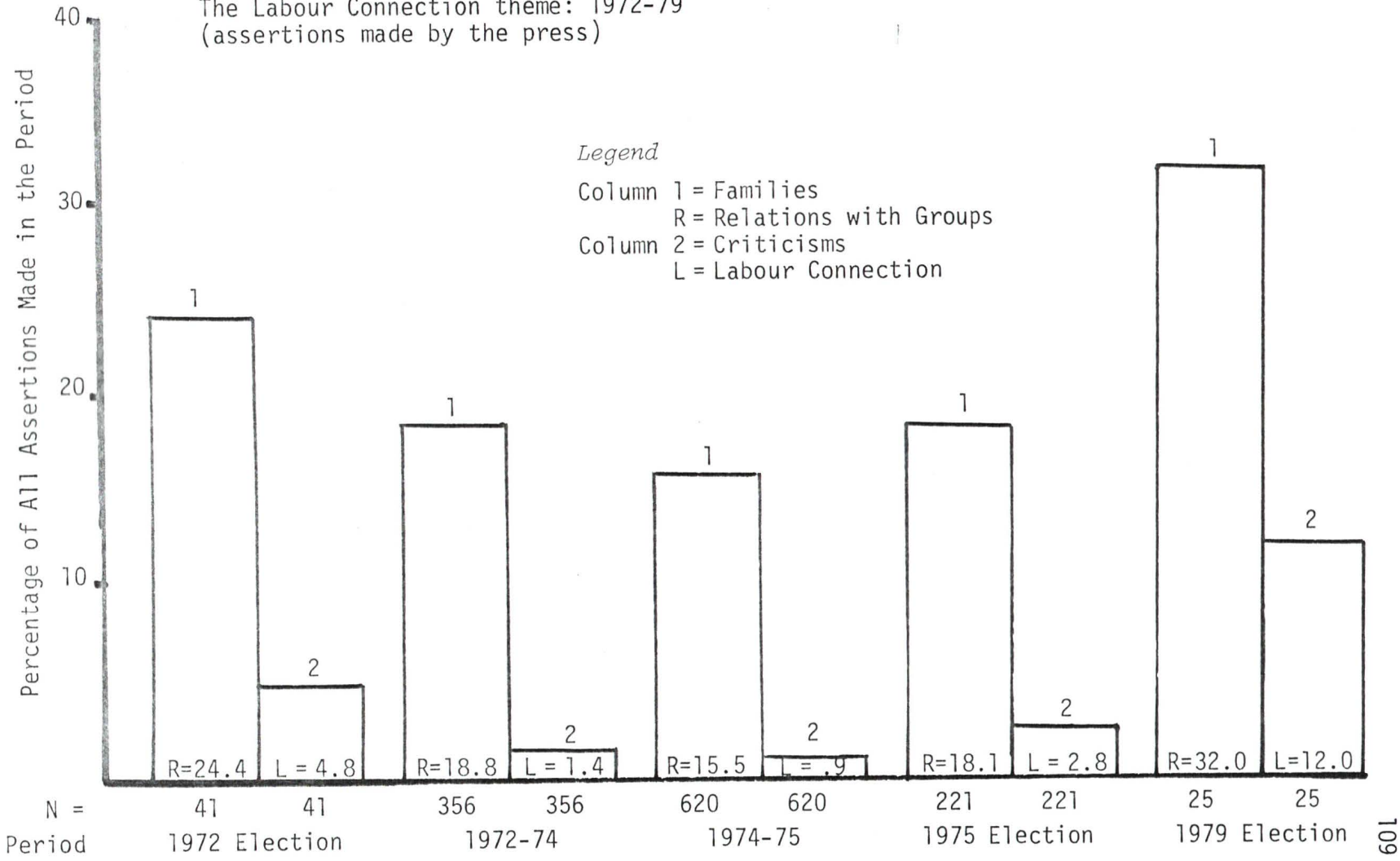
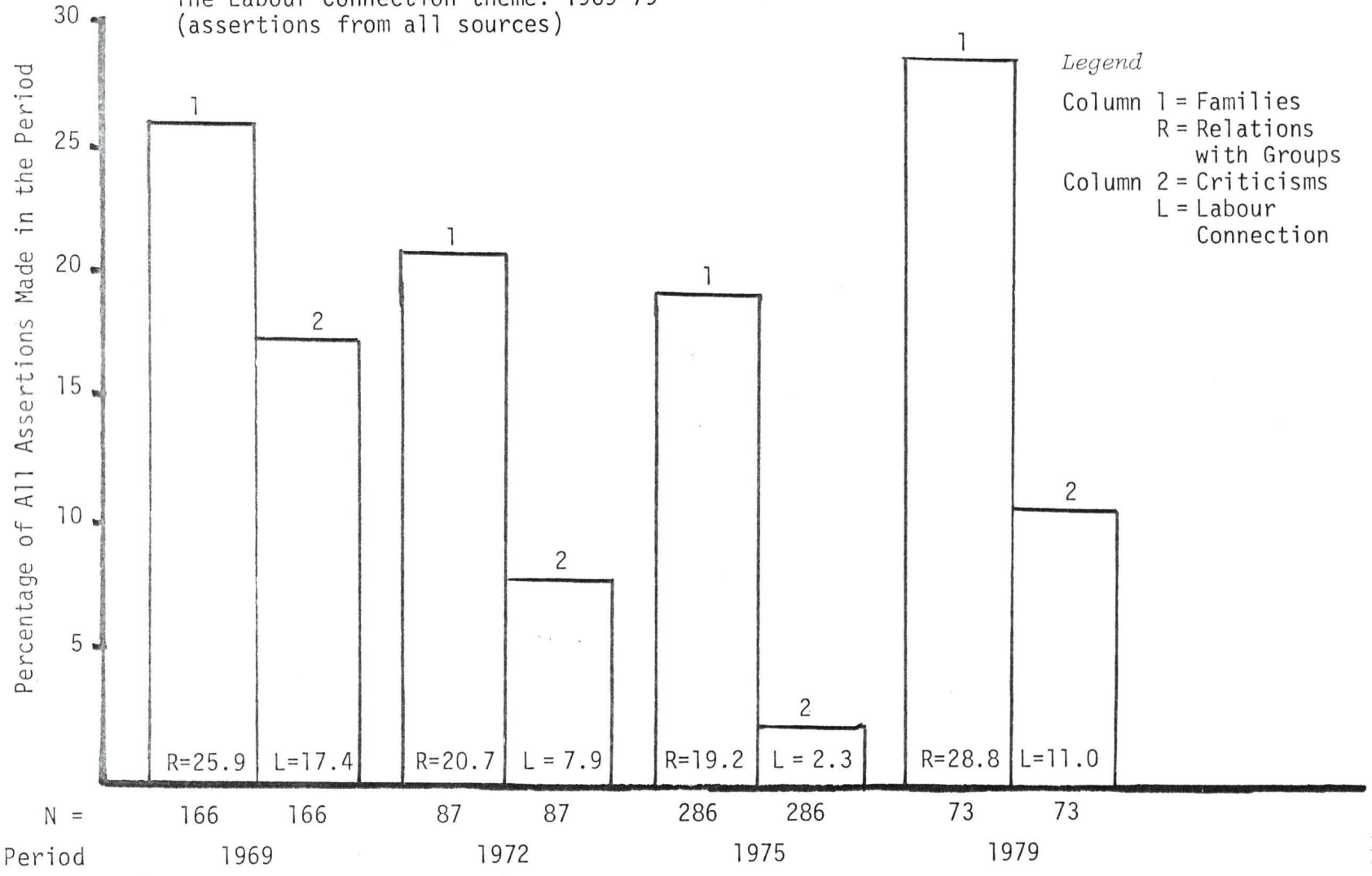


Figure 16
The Labour Connection theme: 1969-79
(assertions from all sources)



> The Forest Products Board, though shorn of much of its intended clout because of fierce opposition attack retains the sinister aura of pure socialism—an engine to regulate and perhaps devour, eventually, the private forest industry of B.C.[22]

It appears clear then, that the attacks on the party's legitimacy had shifted to more specific—and more supportable—grounds. The other parties could present evidence of incompetence and moral decay that was more persuasive than their evidence of socialism, but the essential portrayal of the NDP character had not changed. Incompetence was one of the main characteristics of socialists as seen by the NDP's opponents. The same was true of immorality. These were two of the reasons that British Columbians were expected to distrust socialists. Previously, incompetence and immorality had been inferred from an individual's allegiance to socialism. Now, there was direct evidence of incompetence and immorality among socialists. The parties could thus go straight to the heart of the matter without the use of the vague "socialist" label.

This shift to more specific aspects of the NDP character can be seen in Figures 17 and 18. In Figure 18 especially we see a steady increase in the proportion of terms in the Totalitarian Attitudes group. This indicator rose from 2.4 percent in 1969 to 9.7 percent in 1979. Like references to incompetence and immorality, references to totalitarian attitudes became central in the portrayals of the character of NDP leaders. The most obvious evidence was found in the party's desire for centralization. At the end of the spring session in 1974, Nichols and the editorial writer passed judgement on the government.

> The array of contentious legislation ground through the mill since last January 31 has served mainly to confirm the trademark of the Barrett government: Centralization of control in

Figure 17
The Threat to Canadian Values theme: 1972-79
(assertions made by the press)

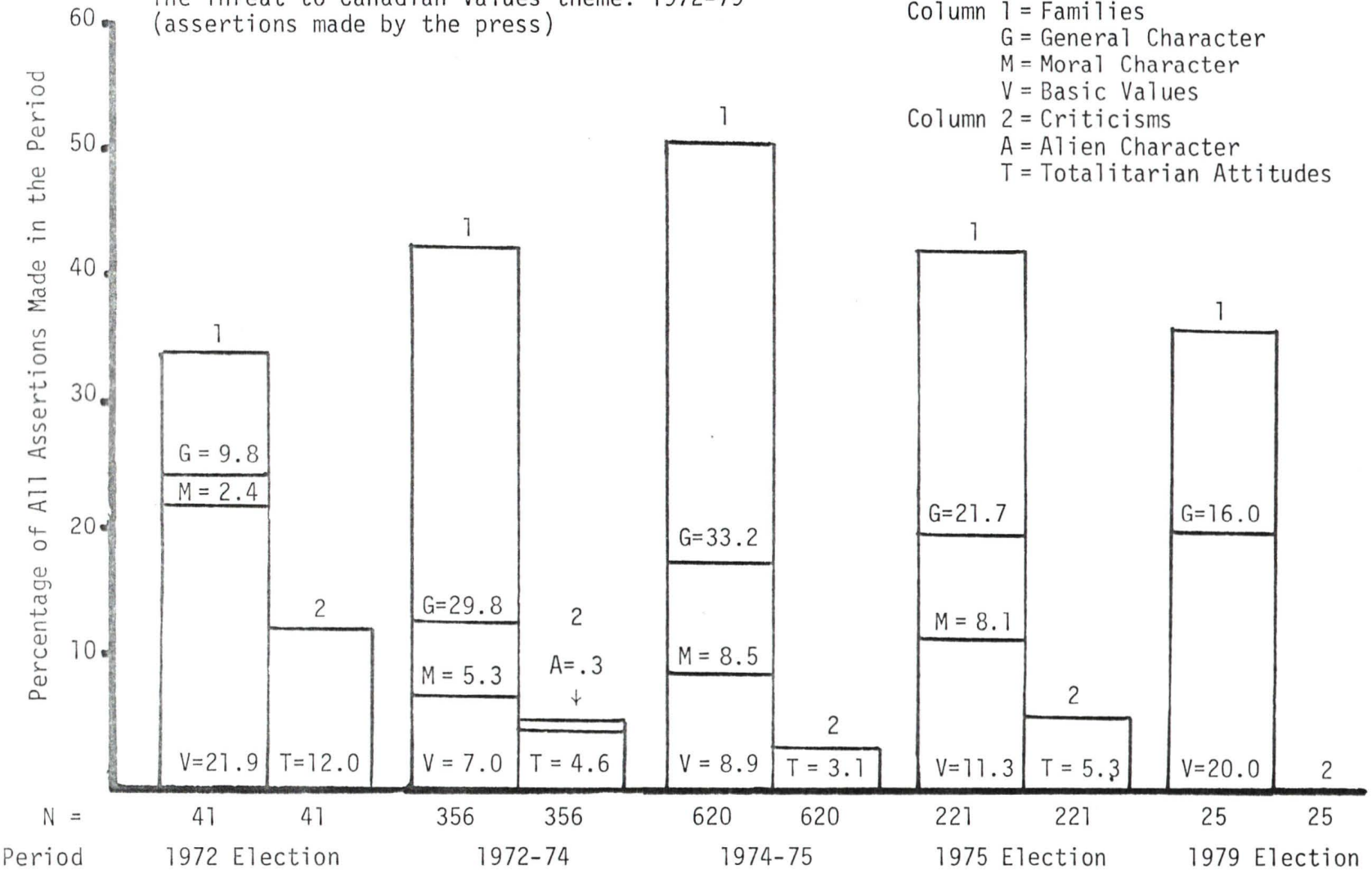
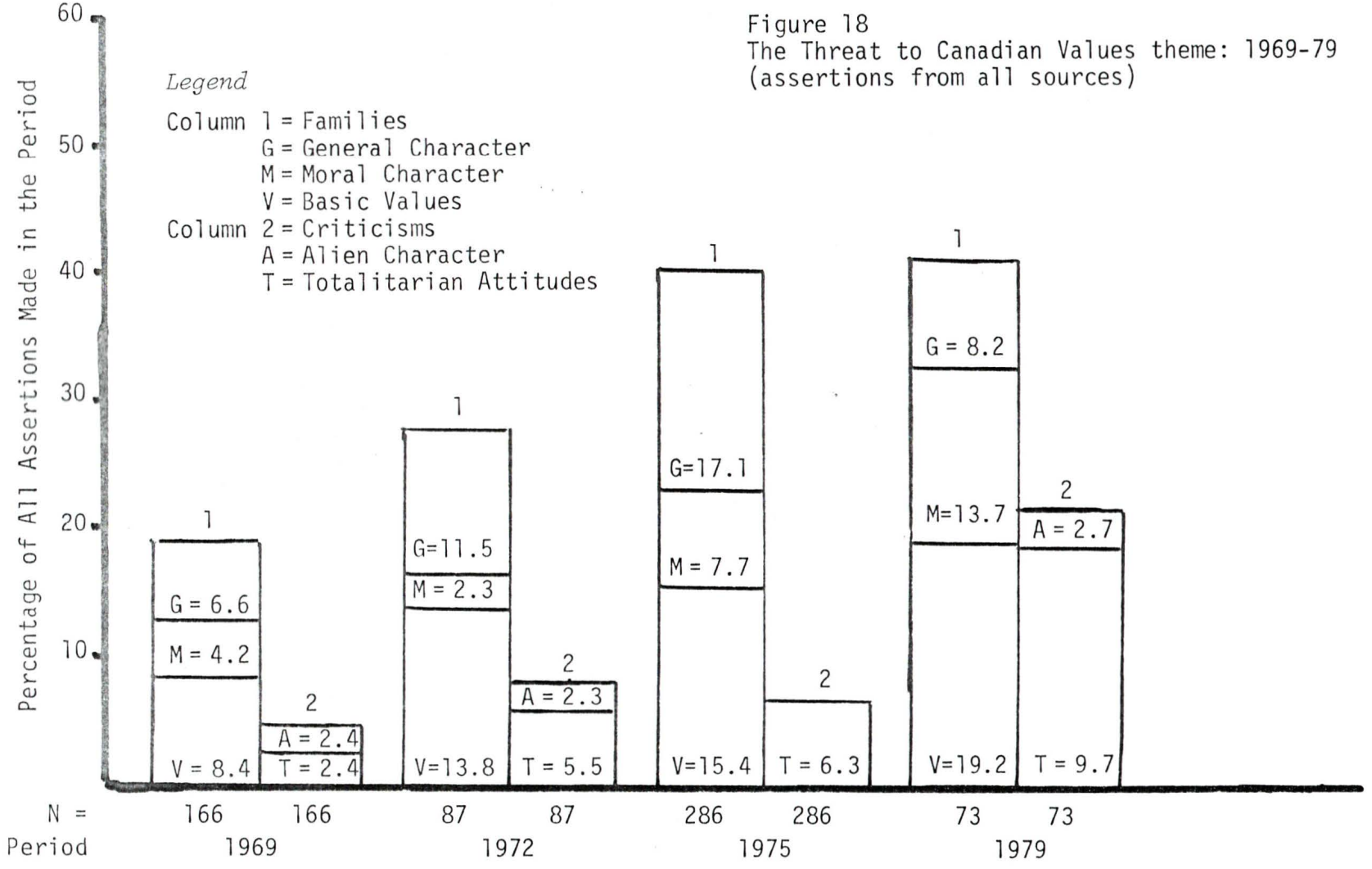


Figure 18
The Threat to Canadian Values theme: 1969-79
(assertions from all sources)



> Victoria through extension of excessive and arbitrary powers to ministers and their political appointees.[23]

> The adjournment of the legislature on Thursday found British Columbia moving quickly down the road to state socialism as espoused by the New Democratic Party government.
>
> Power to regulate, control or even abolish private ownership and private enterprise is being placed systematically in the hands of Premier Dave Barrett and his ministers. The stated intention is that these decisions shall be made at their discretion in conformity with what Mr. Barrett calls social democracy.[24]

By 1975 it seemed to the commentators that the NDP had passed beyond centralization of power and now was attempting to limit democratic freedoms. The first sign of this was held to be Barrett's attempts to place limits on the debates in the House.

> Barrett has fallen victim to the temptation that, one supposes, tantalizes even great democrats: Impatience with the unwieldy process.
>
> But that is no excuse for the strong-arm tactics now being employed by the NDP. Barrett is seeking, through application of brute force, to emasculate the opposition.[25]

Then came the notorious Emergency Programme Act. Under the headline "War Measures Act pale beside B.C. bill" Nichols warned:

> The loathsome War Measures Act is a cautious statute compared to the extraordinary emergency powers bill bootlegged into the B.C. legislature Thursday by the Barrett government.
>
> This alleged replacement for the Civil Defence Act is formally entitled the Emergency Programme Act (Bill 61). It would extend to the B.C. cabinet possibly the widest-ranging, most unlimited powers held by any democratically-elected government.[26]

Data gathered from 1979 are significant because they seem to indicate that some of the changes caused by the period in government were only temporary and that the portrayal returned to its former nature.[27] As the graphs show, some of the trends we have noted appear in a different perspective when we take into account the data from the election sample for 1979. We see that Competence rose to a peak in

1975 and then fell in 1979. The Intelligence theme also dropped after 1975. After a decline, the press's emphasis on Ideological Symbols rose in 1979, while the use of Ideological Symbols by the parties continued to decline from its 1972 peak. Both groups continued to lose interest in socialism and both ignored Totalitarian Attitudes in 1979. In the press, Basic Values continued their rise while the parties' emphasis on Basic Values declined. Finally, both groups showed a marked increase in attention to the labour connection in 1979.

The campaign conducted by Social Credit and several private groups in 1979 capitalized on the period in government to drive home the messages that were common before 1972. The Canadian League of Rights warned:

> The NDP are committed to bigger government, which means more government control over *you*, the individual.
>
> Remember: Any government big enough to do everything for you is also big enough to take everything from you.[28]

The old bogeymen of organized labour and socialism were used again with an added reminder of Barrett's alleged financial incompetence.

> Big socialist government run by the labor bosses. Strikes allowed in essential services. Ownership and control of investment by big brother government. Deficit spending. Succession duties returned. The Waffle Manifesto imposed.[29]

At the same time, Bill Bennett used a new tone of disgust in describing his opponents.

> [A]ll the NDP has left now is socialism 'because they lost their heart, they lost their conscience, they lost their programs'.[30]

He called the NDP a "sloppy, spendthrift group which brought B.C. into disrepute."[31] Finally, Bennett gave voice to the attitude that for a time had seemed to be dying:

> They would do anything for power. . . . They don't deserve to be government and they don't deserve to be in Opposition.[32]

Here again was a clear denial of the NDP's legitimacy as a political party in British Columbia.

The drop in Competence terms and other themes of the period in office may have been the result of the passage of time, which dulled memories or allowed for revisions of attitudes. The significance of these changes is difficult to evaluate. We have only figures for 1979; it is possible that future elections will prove 1979 to be an aberration or confirm it as the beginning of a return to the pre-1972 portrayal. It is clear, however, that the term in office had a significant impact on the portrayal of the NDP even if that impact does not prove to be long-lived.

The 1975 Election

The themes we have seen in the data focused on two central characteristics that were attributed to the NDP. The other themes were woven around these two to form a rich portrayal. The two central characteristics were authoritarianism and incompetence. The first of these had followed the NDP since its founding while the second had become important only during the term in office. Both had several aspects and were supported by evidence of some kind. By 1975 very little remained of the characterizations of idealism and selflessness that had once gone uncontested even by opponents. Although it could not be denied that the party placed its greatest emphasis on social justice, this emphasis was mentioned only as an explanation for the party's ignorance of financial

matters and its willingness to ride roughshod over traditional values.

The accusations of authoritarianism were based on the NDP's putative tendencies to centralize power, use discretionary power and make unilateral decisions. It is probable that in some degree at least these supposed tendencies actually reflected a lack of planning and a lack of co-ordination. In most cases, it was not the tendency as such that was irritating, but rather the areas in which it was manifested. The three tendencies were present in all governments. However, a social democratic party such as the NDP tends to centralize power more often than do capitalist-oriented governments and in areas most capitalists consider to be better left in private hands. The concept of economic planning, central to socialism and social democracy, requires more government intervention than capitalist ideology can stomach. The NDP's authoritarianism also included an element of what the critics saw as immorality. It seemed willing to do anything to achieve its ends.

In 1975 the NDP's alleged authoritarian tendencies were the most hotly attacked of its characteristics. From the beginning of the campaign, the Socreds and their allies tried to define their cause as a battle against the tyrannical socialist government. A Social Credit advertisement asked the question,

> Is B.C. headed for the fate of Sweden? The reality of this election is state control of British Columbia versus individual enterprise.[33]

This was only the beginning of the range of attacks. It was left to private groups to make the bitterest accusations. A large number of these groups paid for newspaper advertisements attacking the government.

They complained that Barrett was destroying the Canadian way of life and would ruin British Columbia's economy. The groups went by such names as A Group of Concerned Citizens and Foresters, the Committee for Affordable Housing, the Women's Mining Association, A Group of Concerned Businessmen, the Committee of Disillusioned Vancouver Citizens, and British Columbians Who Want a Secure Future. Individuals also placed newspaper advertisements warning of the folly of returning Barrett to office. These groups maintained that the NDP would not be satisfied with a mixed economy but would continue the move toward real socialism. The "interested and concerned British Columbians" wrote:

> Bob Williams . . . has said seven years will be time enough in which to impose full socialist economic theory on B.C. He has already had three years and look where we are now![34]

Those who were not convinced of the NDP's willingness to impose socialism were urged to consider its record, which provided evidence of a complete lack of moral values.

> We have witnessed cabinet ministers grow rich from inflated salaries and enjoy the benefits of bloated expense accounts. We have seen the NDP try to strangle debate in the legislature on expenditure of public funds.[35]

The incompetence theme had at least two parts. The first was administrative incompetence. Critics maintained that Barrett and his ministers had no experience that would fit them for office. The NDP had not the first idea of how to run the day-to-day business of the government. It seemed that visions and broad goals were important while the details were ignored. The Group of Concerned Citizens and Foresters told voters that the NDP had poor relations with business and its incompetence scared off investors.

> Fewer jobs for your children. THE PAINFUL TRUTH— Investors have lost confidence in British Columbia's biggest industry— forest products.
>
> There have been no major investments during the past three years in B.C. by pulp and paper companies answerable to their shareholders. WHY NOT? — The main reason is that investors do not trust the NDP government to treat them fairly.[36]

The second part of the incompetence theme was extravagance. To supporters of free enterprise, the NDP's social schemes were luxuries. The New Democrats spent far too much on such programs and, indeed, far too much on the government as a whole.

It is clear that both of these themes were founded on an attempt to portray the government as having values antithetical to those of the average British Columbian. The NDP was said to place little importance on freedom, democracy, thrift and balanced books. Instead, it emphasized centralization, control, planning and regulation. Thus, not only did Barrett reject traditional Canadian values, he actually preferred foreign, undemocratic values. In all these campaigns, there was a feverish tone that had not appeared since the 1940s. The advertisements contained a catalogue of symbols and catchwords used frequently to elicit emotional reactions. Terms such as "state socialism," "creeping socialism" and "monopolistic totalitarianism" were used more for their emotive effect than for their denotative accuracy. Most of these advertisements focused on the economic impact of the NDP policies. The Group of Concerned Citizens and Foresters wrote:

> WHO NEEDS RULES? This socialist government plays by no known rules. It sets its own rules, as and when it sees fit. It has demonstrated that it feels at liberty to change or abolish any contract or commitment, and without notice and without consultation with the injured parties. WHO WOULD INVEST HIS OWN MONEY IN THAT POLITICAL CLIMATE?[37]

The Women's Mining Association also joined the campaign.

> 6000 jobs lost in the mining industry. 6000 families are voting free enterprise. Protect your job. VOTE WITH US.[38]

An argument that had developed during the period in government was used widely in 1975. Critics reminded voters that the NDP governed with only 40 percent of the popular vote. It was clear, then, that the majority of British Columbias did not support the government's initiatives. Although this situation frequently exists in Westminster-style legislatures, it was seen to be more serious in British Columbia because the NDP was "not just another political party." The difference was not between different political parties. It was between the NDP and a collection of other political parties. Social Credit, like the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, subscribed to "our" values. The travesty was that a minority with alien values ruled the good people of British Columbia. From this argument, it was a short logical step to calls for free enterprise unity. A "group of concerned citizens" insisted that it would be disastrous to split the free enterprise vote.

> CAUTION! DON'T split *your* vote. If you're really serious about B.C.'s future THINK.... A vote for the Liberals or Conservatives is a vote for Barrett. Vote for one strong party. Vote Social Credit.[39]

The notion of an oppressive, alien minority was the central theme of the short-lived Majority Movement, whose unifying role was usurped by the Socreds. The movement believed that the 60 percent of the voters who favoured free enterprise must unite so that the anti-socialist vote would not be split as it had been in 1972. The Majority Movement is interesting to us because it provides us with an indication of the depth

of feeling against the NDP. Majority Movement members seemed to look on their mission as one of almost religious importance. A fine example of the Majority Movement attitude is to be found in Paul Hurmuses' *Power Without Glory*, an intemperate analysis of the Barrett years, that was published in 1976. Hurmuses' attitude toward the NDP is exemplified neatly by a passage from the preface.

> How on earth could it happen here, I asked myself over and over. How could B.C. embrace socialism with all its costly and dehumanizing bureaucratic growth and control? Did I do the right thing coming home two years ago?[40]

Hurmuses goes on to describe himself as "cheated" by "the dishonesty of a system undesirable for free men."[41]

A distinguishing feature of Hurmuses' writing—like that of the Majority Movement in general—was the frightening images used to drive home the evil of the NDP government. For example, Hurmuses describes the Barrett government as "a regime that already had demonstrated itself to be the most authoritarian in the exercise of socialist power and in the ruthlessness of its execution anywhere in North America today."[42] The language in this passage conjures up visions of secret police organizations operating in British Columbia. It is apparent from Hurmuses' writing that he thought the NDP planned to use just such organizations. Important in these passages was the passion in the attacks. It was far more bitter than that found in normal Canadian political discourse. The excessive language seemed to reflect a deeply rooted belief and a deeply rooted fear.

As the preceding discussion notes, the NDP's image in 1975 differed from its previous image in two areas. First, the element of

incompetence was of central importance now that the NDP had been in power. This was useful because government incompetence strikes at the wallet of every voter, making it a more effective weapon than discussions of ideology. The impact of this theme was enhanced by the suggestions that the NDP's incompetence was not the result of stupidity but rather of alien values or even of some nefarious purpose. Second, the authoritarian element was given a greater emotional impact by the use of inflammatory language and symbols. The changes are important because they represent the effect of the term in office. Up until 1972, the NDP could be attacked only for what it *might* do if elected to power. Comparisons could be made with other jurisdictions, but there was no hard evidence. The term in office provided evidence. More accurately, it provided facts that could be used as evidence. Regardless of the other interpretations that might be placed on the facts, the parties could now muster "real evidence" to support their criticisms of the NDP.

The NDP government died because sufficient numbers of voters believed they must unite to defeat it. The intense opposition which fuelled that unity was certainly due in part to an internalization of some of the assertions that we have seen in the preceding pages. Although the portrayal of the NDP that developed over those three years was not consistent, it did have many facets that seemed well designed to outrage many different types of people. Seldom do we find any positive evaluations of the NDP. Each of the new facets was negative, while some of the old positive ones—honesty and idealism—were shattered. The NDP found that its legitimacy in the eyes of its opponents and the voters had suffered a serious blow.

Footnotes

[1]*Sun*, June 22, 1974, p. 4.

[2]*Sun*, September 24, 1974, p. 4.

[3]*Sun*, March 1, 1975, p. 4.

[4]*Sun*, April 30, 1975, p. 4.

[5]Marjorie Nichols, *Sun*, March 15, 1975, p. 22.

[6]Allan Fotheringham, *Sun*, March 19, 1975, p. 49.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Nichols, *Sun*, March 7, 1974, p. 7.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Fotheringham, *Sun*, March 7, 1974, p. 41.

[12]*Sun*, March 8, 1974, p. 4.

[13]Nichols, *Sun*, March 27, 1974, p. 16.

[14]Nichols, *Sun*, October 8, 1975, p. 6.

[15]Fotheringham, *Sun*, October 8, 1975, p. 25.

[16]Fotheringham, *Sun*, March 7, 1974, p. 41.

[17]Fotheringham, *Sun*, April 25, 1974, p. 39.

[18]Nichols, *Sun*, May 7, 1974, p. 15.

[19]Nichols, *Sun*, May 29, 1974, p. 8.

[20]*Sun*, September 20, 1974, p. 4.

[21]Nichols, *Sun*, April 18, 1975, p. 39.

[22]*Sun*, November 28, 1974, p. 4.

[23]Nichols, *Sun*, June 19, 1974, p. 11.

[24]*Sun*, June 22, 1974, p. 4.

[25]Nichols, *Sun*, April 18, 1975, p. 39.

[26]Nichols, *Sun*, May 9, 1975, p. 41.

[27]The *Sun* was closed by a strike during the 1979 election. For this study, it was replaced by the thrice-weekly strike paper, the *Vancouver Express*.

[28]*Express*, May 9, 1979, p. C4.

[29]*Times*, May 7, 1979, p. 14.

[30]*Times*, May 8, 1979, p. 29.

[31]*Times*, May 3, 1979, p. 9.

[32]*Express*, May 9, 1979, p. A8.

[33]*Sun*, December 9, 1975, p. 30.

[34]*Sun*, December 9, 1975, p. 57.

[35]*Times*, December 6, 1975, p. 23.

[36]*Sun*, December 3, 1975, p. 36.

[37]*Sun*, December 3, 1975, p. 18.

[38]*Sun*, December 8, 1975, p. 36.

[39]*Sun*, December 9, 1975, p. 20.

[40]Paul Hurmuses, *Power Without Glory: The Rise and Fall of the NDP Government in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Balsam, 1976), p. i.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., p. 2.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Method

As in any empirical study, it is important that we review the effectiveness of our method. To begin with, a great deal of the commentary in this paper deals with impressions of the CCF-NDP's portrayal. The use of impressions is hazardous because it leaves room for the introduction of the researcher's personal biases. When dealing with anything as subjective as political propaganda, it is easy to read in meanings that do not reflect the intentions of the writer. Nevertheless, the very nature of political rhetoric makes it possible to analyze in a strictly objective and systematic manner. Many words have several different connotations. Terms themselves are altered by their context. The intensity of emotion in statements varies greatly. Because of these factors, it is important that personal impressions be added to the analysis.

How well does our method work in describing that which can be quantified? The first step in the data gathering process is the coding of assertions. This process is quite straightforward. It requires the coder to note any assertion about the party being studied. For this study, only the clear assertions were included, although from time to time single words were substituted for the longer constructions that appeared in the text. This method worked well because most of the

assertions about the NDP were quite explicit.

Perhaps the most problematical part of the method is the assignment of common meaning terms to families. The difficulty is that we must devise families that are meaningful but also complete. Meaningful families tell us something about the data while complete categories ensure that each of the terms is included in a family. We hope to have as few terms as possible in a "miscellaneous" family. The conflict between the two goals arises because broad, all-encompassing categories are often too general to be of any use in the analysis. On the other hand, very specific categories become so numerous that comparisons are unwieldy. Overly refined categories also become hazardous because it is difficult to establish where a given term should be classified. When only a few families are involved, it is relatively easy to assign terms to families. The tension between the desire for detailed analysis and the desire for inclusive, distinct categories is reflected in our two-part system. In the system of families we have tried to design categories that are easily distinguishable and leave a minimum number of terms in the miscellaneous category; only 50 of our 669 common meaning terms fell into the miscellaneous family. The set of specific anti-NDP criticisms provides us with indicators that are more informative, although they are not inclusive.

The only noteworthy problems posed by our categorization systems were in the system of families. The General Character and Relations with Groups categories were very broad, but to have broken them down further would have produced an unwieldy set of families. The other

families were both broad and informative. The information that was lost in the broader families was usually captured by the more specific anti-NDP criticisms. These detailed indicators provided us with the best way to trace the development of the themes in the portrayal. Future studies would be well advised to design a system of specific indicators before the data are collected. One could thus measure the presence of more universal themes or themes used to describe other parties.

As is the case with many empirical studies, the most room for improvement is in the sample used. In general the time periods for the sample were well chosen because they allowed us to see the changes over time. Each of the periods coincided with events such as the Second World War, the election of Social Credit and the formation of the NDP that could reasonably be expected to influence the portrayal. While a larger number of cases would have been desirable, the sample was sufficient in every period except 1937 and 1941 when the other parties paid relatively little attention to the CCF. A further improvement could be made by expanding the sample for the period in government by including assertions made by the other parties. However, general impressions acquired from extensive reading of press accounts during the period in government provide no reason to suspect that the critical themes emphasized by the opposition parties were different from those used by the press. Finally, the use of the province's two Liberal papers could have introduced some bias, but the differences between the *Sun* and *Times* on one hand and the *Province* and *Colonist* on the other did not appear to be great. The use of the two Liberal papers enabled us to

avoid having to break down the data by ideology of newspaper, which would have made the results more difficult to analyze.

Legitimacy

We have seen that the portrayal of the CCF-NDP by the press and the other parties has changed since the 1930s. In general we can say that the more inflammatory "red-baiting" has died out and been replaced by a greater emphasis on specific character traits attributed to the party. The recent attacks on the NDP identify clearly the objectionable characteristics of the party instead of using only the blanket "socialist" label. The party's opponents no longer try to depict it as a communist front organization that supports violent revolution and the establishment of a police state. However, despite these changes, two key themes have persisted. The first of these is incompetence or the inability to function effectively in the British Columbia system. This incompetence is attributed to the NDP's inexperience and alien values, which make it unwilling to manage—as well as incapable of managing—a free enterprise economy. The second key theme is the party's alleged tendency toward authoritarian solutions to problems. From 1937 through the period in office, the other parties—and to some extent the press—have consistently portrayed the CCF-NDP as a party more interested in ends than in means, a party ready to disregard the rights of others in the pursuit of its goals.

We have suggested that the changes in the portrayal may represent a steady climb toward legitimacy in the eyes of the other parties and

the press. We have also suggested that this climb was halted and probably reversed during the term in office because the NDP's activities seemed to indicate to its opponents that there was some truth to their characterization of the party as a dangerous entity. To those who did not share the NDP's attitude toward society the party appeared to be authoritarian and incompetent, unacceptable qualities in a government. However, despite the setback created by the term in office, it seems clear that the party is now much more legitimate than at any time during the first thirty years of its existence.

It is possible that there are two kinds of legitimacy in the eyes of the older parties and the NDP has met the criteria for only one type. The NDP seems to have acquired legitimacy as an opposition party. The later criticisms do not question the party's right to compete in the political arena. Instead the recent attacks deny the NDP's right to form a government. It is seen to serve a useful purpose without being in office. If it were to gain office, however, it would create disaster because of its incompetence, "scrambled priorities" and dangerous attitude toward the use of power. The party's actions while in government served to confirm this fear. If the two concepts of legitimacy do exist, we can expect the portrayal to remain unchanged in future years. The older parties will not grant the NDP the second type of legitimacy because they believe their portrayal of the party's flaws. They also will continue to portray the NDP as a useful opposition because such a stance admits the party's laudable goals while leaving room to deplore its means and its character.

These speculations about the NDP's legitimacy in the eyes of the press and the other parties lead us to wonder how the party is viewed by the public. Certainly, the increases in the party's share of the popular vote from 28 percent in 1937 to 45 percent in 1979 suggest it has become more legitimate. We can hypothesize that its increased legitimacy can be seen in the willingness of non-NDP supporters to acknowledge that the party can govern the province without creating chaos. At the same time, however, if the press's depiction is an accurate representation of the attitudes of even some British Columbians, it would seem that many voters still doubt the NDP's competence.

The Portrayal and the Parties

In the first chapter, we suggested that an analysis of the portrayal of the CCF-NDP would tell us something about the parties that formulated the portrayal. The most striking characteristic of the campaign against the CCF-NDP was its intensity. The parties believed or wanted to appear to believe that they were fundamentally and bitterly opposed to the CCF-NDP. The portrayal made it clear that this dislike went beyond mere political rivalry; this was a difference in basic values. The conflict was seen as a conflict between liberty and state control as represented by their economic champions, individual enterprise and socialism. Ever since the CCF first rose to prominence in the 1930s, the older parties have characterized British Columbia politics as a contest between these two opposing ideologies. Martin Robin has conveyed this notion in his description of British Columbia politics:

> An extreme acquisitive individualism, which advertises a dynamic approach to the development of natural resources through private enterprise, with the government's role reduced to that of handmaiden, is opposed by a strong collectivism, engrained in the strong trade union and socialist movements and supported by other groups like conservationists, who maintain that private enterprise tends to exploit resources, human and material, wastefully and immorally, and who advocate restraint and preservation of resources in the interests of society. The two value strains are represented by the major political parties: the Social Credit Party bent on the preservation of private enterprise, and the New Democratic Party imbued with the values of collectivism.[1]

Robin's description suggests that the anti-NDP campaign was more than an election ploy, that the antipathy was both real and fundamental. Indeed, a measure of the depth of difference can be seen in the policy priorities of the governments. In 1972, Ed Black could write that,

> The emphasis of the [W. A. C. Bennett] government on economic matters rather than on, for example, services to people has been a characteristic of provincial politicians since British Columbia's earliest days.[2]

However, when the NDP came to power this emphasis changed. Economic matters were not ignored, but social services received much more attention than they had received in the past. These very different sets of priorities had been quite clear in the election platforms of the parties for some years. The portrayal of the CCF-NDP represented an attempt to convince the voters of the enormity of the difference and its implications.

The intensity of the portrayal and the extravagance of its language was the result of both tactical decisions and a genuine fear. Thus the early links between the CCF and communism seem to have been made not just because it was perceived that some voters were ready to believe but also because the party leaders believed them. Premiers

Duff Pattullo and Byron Johnson had great stakes in the free enterprise system that had created a boom in British Columbia. Their precedessors had been whole-hearted supporters of the province's industrial magnates.[3] For such people, socialism or the later CCF-NDP's social democracy constituted a real threat. Supporters of the old parties believed that social democracy would destroy the entrepreneurial spirit that was held to be the foundation of British Columbia's prosperity. W. A. C. Bennett and the provincial Liberals and Conservatives inherited this attitude, which was reinforced by the unprecedented prosperity of the 1950s and early 1960s. The economic surge during those years seemed to be proof of the value of free enterprise. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Socreds and the third parties saw socialism "not merely as a pernicious expropriative philosophy, but as a device for stunting economic growth and undermining full employment."[4]

The portrayal put forward by the parties is revealing because we see the party leaders attempting to create in the minds of the voters the fear of the CCF-NDP that the leaders themselves already possessed. This fear was the force that drove the parties to put so much intensity into their condemnations of the CCF-NDP. It is difficult to say where this fear originated. We have suggested that it was a fear that the opportunity for wealth and privilege would be taken away by a socialist government. However, it well may have stemmed from sources other than self-interest. To someone raised in a classical liberal tradition, the socialist desire for central planning and control must have seemed like simple greed. British Columbia's politicians and businessmen held that

society operated best when there was a healthy competition of interests. Government was seen as a necessary evil; to desire an unwarranted expansion of government power was to surrender to the evil.

Our discussion of the beliefs of the Socreds and the older parties must not obscure the fact that a large proportion of the portrayal was put forward for tactical reasons. Whether they believed their rhetoric or not is a debatable point. What seems clear is that they must have believed that a significant portion of the electorate would "swallow" their portrayal of the CCF-NDP. We can hypothesize that decisions on electoral strategy involve at least two key evaluations. The first is an evaluation of the political sophistication and educational background of the voters in a province or in a constituency. This is the judgement about what they will swallow. The second evaluation involves an attempt to identify the current concerns of the voters. It makes little sense to formulate a plausible attack on a party in an area of public policy that the voters ignore.

These criteria for tactical decisions may help to explain many of the changes we observed in our data. It can be argued that the political sophistication of the electorate has increased significantly with more and broader education. Thus the red-baiting attacks have become less plausible. The parties have had to make more carefully reasoned attacks on the CCF-NDP. At the same time, concerns have changed. The perceived threat of communism has declined with the cooling of cold war rhetoric. The electorate has been able to watch the NDP as opposition in the federal Parliament and as government in several western provinces.

If the parties perceived these changes, the portrayal suggests that they perceived no change in attitudes toward economic prosperity, individual freedom and traditional rights. The parties continued to attack the NDP in these areas. In this way the portrayal tells us a great deal about the parties' perception of the British Columbia voters. The voters are perceived as a people who have become more sophisticated but who retain a fundamental concern about their own well-being and the preservation of their traditional social and economic order.

The effect of the continuing Social Credit campaign against the CCF-NDP has been the elimination of the third parties from the political arena. In 1981 the provincial Liberals and Conservatives have no members in the Legislature and their organizations lack effective leadership. It is probable that this situation is due in large measure to Social Credit's insistence on the notion of a two-way fight between itself and the CCF-NDP. The calls for free enterprise unity that began in 1975 seem to have been heeded by many voters, who have moved into two large and distinct camps.

There are two interpretations that can be placed on the growth of a two-party system. The first is that politics in British Columbia has become polarized as a result of the campaign to define reality in terms of a free enterprise-socialism dichotomy. At first an election tactic, polarization has become self-perpetuating as feigned hostility is internalized to become real hostility. This polarization is eventually accepted by the electorate because the politicians refuse to fight on any other terms. The second interpretation takes a completely different

view. It is possible that the appearance of polarity is misleading. Instead we can suggest that the rhetoric is largely meaningless because the parties have come to be seen as very similar in their abilities and policies. British Columbia's two main parties may have moved closer to the centre in recent years as they strive to increase their shares of the popular vote. Indeed, we now see Dave Barrett courting business leaders and those leaders actively looking for common ground with the NDP. We see that Bill Bennett has kept a large number of NDP programs intact and has made significant moves into the social welfare and environmental protection fields. Of course, important differences remain, but they are not as significant as they once were. Of the two interpretations, the second is more in keeping with the general movement in western democracies toward centrist, managerial parties in place of ideological parties.

The Portrayal and the Press

We have suggested that many of the differences between the press commentary and the party campaigns were the result of the press writers' view of their own role. The press used terms relating to competence and ability more frequently than did the parties. This emphasis was related to the notion that the press must act as a watchdog on the activities of government. Fotheringham, Nichols and the editorial writers were concerned about the actions of governments but were only interested in motives to the extent that those motives predicted future actions. Beliefs and values were outside the areas where the commentators were

most comfortable. This attitude toward the press's role was probably responsible for the lack of commentary on the CCF-NDP that appeared before 1972. During the formative years the press writers usually confined themselves to speculations on the party's ability to put its plans into effect once it was elected. It was not until the party came to power that the press found anything concrete on which to comment. Although we have no data on the portrayal of W. A. C. Bennett, the writers appeared to use similar criticisms against Barrett and the elder Bennett. We have noted already Allan Fotheringham's references to similarities between the two premiers. Accusations of arrogance were a feature of his portrayal of both men. Thus we see that the press's desire to be "agin' the government" coloured much of the commentary and may even have produced very similar criticisms of two politically opposed regimes.

Our conclusions about the press would be incomplete if we were to ignore the similarities between the writers and the CCF-NDP's opponents. Despite the varying emphasis noted above, the press used many of the same themes favoured by the parties. Particularly during the formative years, the press accepted the views of the major parties as to the important features of CCF character and policies, although the writers ignored the more inflammatory party attacks. The early editorial writers were great champions of Duff Pattullo's assertion that the CCF could never hope to establish socialism in a single province. In the same manner, those editorials adopted the view that socialism was an experiment that British Columbia and Canada could not afford. These

criticisms had about them a patronizing air that seemed to say, "These poor benighted socialists. Why do they persist with their hopeless dreams?" This was a different tone from the red-baiting that flavoured the party campaigns but it was drawn from the portrayals put forward by the parties. In later years, the press continued to focus on the party's socialist character and its expropriative policies, although there were few references to liberty, values or human rights. In the 1960s the writers joined the parties in analyses of the NDP's relationship to organized labour. When the party came to power, the two groups of critics moved the attack to the competence and ability themes.

There are at least four reasons for the similarities between the portrayals put forward by the parties and those put forward by the press. The first is that the press writers can pick up, consciously or unconsciously, the attitudes of the people on whom they report. During an election campaign, reporters write about the things said by the various candidates. Some stories may record expressions of public opinion but by and large reporters and commentators focus their attention on politicians. We have used the expression "terms of reference" to denote the rules under which political contests are fought. It is easy to see how reporters could come to adopt the terms of reference of the major parties, without necessarily agreeing with the portrayals of a specific party. Thus in British Columbia the press came to accept the notion that the political battle was between free enterprise and socialism. The press accepted the notion that socialism was an experiment that could not succeed in one province. It did not claim that the CCF was a

violent party controlled by Moscow but it accepted the terms of reference within which such an accusation would be appropriate. The CCF-NDP's characterization of itself and its opponents would be lost among the greater number of opposing portrayals.

The second and third forces that help to create press-party similarity involve a similar process but with different agents. It is probable that the press in British Columbia was inclined to agree with the Socreds and the old parties without having to hear their arguments. During the 1930s and 1940s the papers were not very subtle in presenting their biases. It is not unreasonable to assume that many of the senior personnel in newspaper offices had definite allegiances to and interests in the free enterprise system. Third, it is possible that the press writers in British Columbia reflected the beliefs and attitudes of the voters in the province. If election campaigns have little effect on voters, they may also have little effect on journalists. The attitudes of the press could simply reflect the attitudes of the public, which change gradually between as well as during elections. Journalists are involved with people of all kinds throughout their working lives. Such contact cannot fail to affect the attitudes of the journalist himself. As a result, the concerns addressed by the parties could be found among reporters as well as among the general public. Finally, the similarity is at least partly the result of the press's influence on the parties. Many of the facts uncovered by the press go into portrayals that are subsequently adopted by the parties as useful campaign tools.

The Portrayal and the CCF-NDP

The final aspect of the portrayal that we must address is the role of the CCF-NDP itself. We have seen that changes in the party itself had some impact on the portrayal. Changes in policy and the formation of the NDP both led to the use of different types of attacks. We can see the gradual moderation of the party platform as an attempt to counteract the portrayals presented by the other parties. At the same time, however, this moderation was made unwillingly and unskilfully by people who believed that to alter their program to achieve success was to sell out the party's principles. The CCF in particular seemed to pay relatively little attention to the portrayals used against it. CCF leaders put forward their program, confident of its worth, but did not attempt to undermine the attacks made against it. The leaders denied the accusations of ties to Russia. However, the denials were a weak defence and were lost under the volume of conflicting claims. The same was true of the NDP. Denials were ineffective weapons but the party members were convinced their cause was right; it would be only a matter of time before the people recognized the fact and brought the party to power. Once the party was in power, the justice of the NDP cause was still not acknowledged. Again little attempt was made to make people see the party point of view. Initiatives were introduced without co-ordination and without any attempt to create support for them. As a result it seemed to many supporters of other parties that the NDP had created a flood of unnecessary and unwanted laws and reforms.

The period in government affected the NDP's portrayal because it was British Columbia's first experience of the party in power. Any party will suffer some change of image during its first term in office because it is faced with the political realities of governing. Promises cannot always be kept, so the party appears to have deserted its principles. Dominating the public scene requires a finesse unfamiliar after years in opposition, so the party appears heavy-handed. Power must be used over the objections of some, so the party appears to be arrogant. How much of the NDP's new image was the result of its own unique policies and how much was due to the transformation to be expected of any new government? This question defies a conclusive answer. Certainly the government was naive in its assumptions about the reforms it could institute safely. In areas, it unquestionably was incompetent, heavy-handed or foolish. Its biggest mistake, however, may have been to underestimate the power of symbols and images. If the portrayals we have seen were internalized by the voters, much of the blame can be laid at the door of the party itself. Many of the government's programs could have been used to increase the NDP's legitimacy, but Barrett and his ministers did not capitalize on them. Instead, the government's activities were evaluated almost exclusively by the press and the opposition, who found only evidence of illegitimacy. A continued and co-ordinated campaign by the government to present its own case and to prepare the public to accept the need for reform might have undermined this negative portrayal. The party was unable or unwilling to fight the criticisms brought against it. Like the CCF, the NDP government could not or would not play politics.

Footnotes

[1]Martin Robin, "British Columbia: The Politics of Class Conflict," in Martin Robin, ed., *Canadian Provincial Politics* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 40.

[2]Edwin Black, "British Columbia: The Politics of Exploitation," in Hugh Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 225.

[3]Robin, "Politics of Class Conflict," p. 38.

[4]Ibid., p. 42.

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NEWSPAPERS

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PARTY AND PRESS PORTRAYALS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CCF-NDP: 1937-79

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