

**Plenty of Land but Not Enough Houses:
Discursive Struggles over Public Land and Housing in British
Columbia's First Socialist Legislature (1972-1975)**

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A Note from the Author:

The following pages are an excerpt of my masters thesis for UiO's *Masters in Development, Environment and a Culture Change* that will be submitted in November. I have chosen to include my Introduction, Theory, and initial part of my Analysis chapters, as shown in the Table of Contents below:

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Housing Chaos in Canada

At the quarter of the twenty-first century, here is a snapshot of the Canadian housing market: The rental vacancy rate is at a historical low of 1.5 percent nationwide. Eleven percent of the population are in core housing need, meaning they spend over thirty percent of their income on housing.¹ 3.5 million additional housing units are needed over the next five years to restore affordability.² Less than half of emerging 1.9 million Canadian households will be able to own a home.³ “An entire generation has been locked out of home ownership,” describes contemporary Canadian housing analyst, Carolyn Whitzman.⁴

The largest housing supply gaps are concentrated in Ontario and my home province, British Columbia (henceforth “BC”).⁵ “BC is drowning in people but starving for homes” is the title of an opinion piece from *Business in Vancouver* media outlet.⁶ The influx of foreign investment and rapid population growth have collided into a reality where demand has extraordinarily outpaced supply. Housing experts estimate that there is shortfall of 450,000⁷ to 570,000⁸ units in the province. BC is the fastest growing province in Canada and is expected to add another one million residents by 2030.⁹ The trends in unaffordability are forcing residents to turn towards other markets, such as BC’s next-

¹OECD, *OECD Economic Surveys: Canada 2025* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1787/28f9e02cen>.

²Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Estimating How Much Housing We’ll Need by 2030,” Sept 13, 2023, CMHC, www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/blog/2023/estimating-how-much-housing-we-need-by-2030.

³RBC, *Housing Report 2024*, RBC Thought Leadership, 2024, https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/wp-content/uploads/Housing_Report_en_2024.pdf.

⁴Carolyn Whitzman, *Home Truths: Fixing Canada’s Housing Crisis* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2023), 3.

⁵Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), “Estimating How Much Housing We’ll Need by 2030,” *CMHC Observer*, September 13, 2023, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/observer/2023/estimating-how-much-housing-we-need-by-2030>

⁶“Opinion: B.C. Is Drowning in People but Starving for Homes,” *Business in Vancouver* (blog), May 21, 2025, <https://www.biv.com/news/opinion-bc-is-drowning-in-people-but-starving-for-homes-10689900>

⁷BCREA, *How Soon Is Now? The Future of Affordability* (September 2024), accessed May 15, 2025, <https://udi.org/pdfs/blog/BCREA-Outlook-How-Soon-is-Now-UDI-Okanagan.pdf>

⁸Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Canada’s Housing Supply Shortage: Restoring Affordability by 2030,” June 23, 2022, CMHC, accessed May 15, 2025, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/blog/2022/canadas-housing-supply-shortage-restoring-affordability-2030>

⁹Pegasus Lending, “BC Housing Affordability Crisis: Government Policies Impacting Housing Supply and Affordability,” October 16, 2024, Pegasus Lending, accessed October 15, 2025, <https://pegasuslending.com/blog/housing-affordability-crisis/>.

door neighbor Alberta, where the average home costs fifty-five percent less than in BC.¹⁰ In 2023, BC's interprovincial migration was negative for the first time since 2012; the province lost 8,000 residents to other Canadian provinces.¹¹

The hottest markets are Canada's metropolises: Vancouver is at the epicenter of the housing crisis, and my hometown, Abbotsford, absorbs the aftershocks. A 2024 report ranks Vancouver as the third most expensive housing market in the English-speaking world, just after Hong Kong and Sydney, and the metropolis has held onto this ranking for the last sixteen years.¹² Housing prices increased 105 percent between 2013 to 2023,¹³ and in the year 2025, the average cost of house is \$1,266,441.¹⁴ High-income households earning 250 percent of local median income are unable to afford their first homes,¹⁵ while 'lucky' homeowners spend an average of 92.9 percent of their income on mortgage payments¹⁶.

The City of Abbotsford, located about forty-five miles east of Vancouver, is a prime 'spill over market.'¹⁷ Abbotsford is the fifth most populous city in BC and the centre of the Fraser Valley region. Municipalities in the Fraser Valley have typically enjoyed a more affordable housing market, but the ongoing shortages in Metro Vancouver have put pressure on the region. Many young individuals and families see Abbotsford as an "attractive alternative"¹⁸ to the unaffordability of Vancouver. The city's 2024 *Interim Housing Needs Report* reveals an increase of thirty-four percent in the average rental cost from 2015 to 2019 and an overall vacancy rate of 1.5 percent.¹⁹

¹⁰WOWA, "Canadian Housing Market Report," accessed October 15, 2025, wowa.ca/reports/canada-housing-market

¹¹Angus Reid Institute, "Is BC the Place to Be? Amid Affordability Woes, One-in-Three Residents 'Seriously' Consider Leaving the Province," accessed October 15, 2025, <https://angusreid.org/bc-investment-migration-housing/>.

¹²Wendell Cox, *Demographia International Housing Affordability, 2024 Edition* (Belleville, IL: Demographia, 2024), 10.

¹³Pegasus Lending, "BC Housing Affordability Crisis."

¹⁴WOWA, "Canadian Housing Market Report."

¹⁵Whitzman, "Home Truths: Fixing Canada's Housing Crisis," 3.

¹⁶Dahms, Currie, and Black, "Affordability Improves for a Fifth Consecutive Quarter in Q1 2025," 2.

¹⁷Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Housing Market Insight: Vancouver CMA*, NH12-278-2017-5, accessed August 15, 2025, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/schl-cmhc/nh12-278/NH12-278-2017-5-eng.pdf.

¹⁸GPRA, *Abbotsford City Centre and Historic Downtown Commercial Market Study* (City of Abbotsford, February 2017), accessed October 15, 2025, <https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/202102/HDNP%20Commercial%20Market%20Study.pdf>.

¹⁹City of Abbotsford, *2024 Interim Housing Needs Report*, November 5, 2024, page 14, accessed July 19, 2025, <https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2024-11/2024%20Interim%20Housing%20Needs%20Report.pdf>.

Vancouver and Abbotsford both showcase some of the worst horrors of the housing affordability crisis: high levels of homelessness visible on their streets. In Vancouver, Hastings Street runs east of the city into the downtown core, with several blocks occupied by homeless individuals, their encampments, and open drug use. There are churches, soup kitchens, and police presence, and a café openly advertising the sale of recreational drugs. In Abbotsford, the homeless encampment moves around—in my childhood, it occupied a narrow strip beside the railroad, in recent years it has manifested as a protest occupation of the parking lot by city hall. Since 2018, the BC government has funded *Point-in-Time Homeless Counts* across all major municipalities. A 2023 report summarized this data to show a total 11,352 individuals experience homelessness in BC (4,821 in Vancouver and 1,094 in the Fraser Valley),²⁰ a thirty-one percent increase from the 2020/2021 Report.²¹

The home is the foundation of our lives, and it is little wonder why this topic is top of mind for the Canadian electorate. Yet, housing challenges in Canada is not a new phenomenon. The crisis rhetoric around the housing access and affordability has circulated Canadian politics for several decades. In the wake of the Great Depression, housing starts plummeted to a historic low; by 1933, there was a thirty-one percent decrease in housing starts from the 1929 levels. Unemployment was high, incomes were low, and lending institutions suffered increasing numbers of loan defaults.²² In 1935, as a response, Canada launched its first official piece of federal housing legislation: the National Housing Act. A decade later, during the Second World War, the country again faced a significant housing shortage, due to the demand created by the men and women working in defense-oriented industries and the veterans returning home. The federal government intervened at an extraordinary scale that has not been seen in the country since: they created a Crown corporation, *Wartime Housing Limited*, and developed 1.5 million homes²³ “in virtually every major town or city in Canada.”²⁴ The majority of these homes were built from pre-approved designs; they were prefabricated, assembled on site,

²⁰Homelessness Services Association of BC, *2023 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.* (Burnaby, BC: BC Housing, 2024), 21-22, accessed May 15, 2025, www.bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2023-BC-Homeless-Counts.pdf.

²¹Homelessness Services Association of BC, *2023 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.*, 49.

²²Peter H. Oberlander, Arthur L. Fallick, and John Anderson, *Housing a Nation: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 12.

²³CBC, “The Time Canada Built a Million Cheap Homes,” *Front Burner* (transcript), accessed October 15, 2025, www.cbc.ca/radio/frontburner/the-time-canada-built-a-million-cheap-homes-transcript-1.7063726.

²⁴Veterans Affairs Canada, “Victory Housing,” accessed October 15, 2025, www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canada/victory-housing.

featuring “one-and-a-half stories with a steep roof, shallow eaves and no dormers.”²⁵ During this era, Canada established its housing development arm, *the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation*, and built its first public housing development in Regent Park, Toronto.

1.2 A Lack of Developable Land

The brief overview of Canada’s housing challenges posits a question: Why does one of the largest countries in the world persistently face housing supply issues? Canada is the second largest country by land mass in the world, but ranks among the lowest density countries in the world.²⁶ According to the *World Bank*, Canada is the fourth most sparsely populated nation.²⁷ Moreover, the Canadian populus congregates along just a few corridors: two out of three people (sixty-six percent) live in just four percent of the nation’s territory, within 100 kilometres of the Canada-United States border,²⁸ and approximately thirty-three percent live within the Great Lakes region.²⁹ The entire Canadian populous—currently around forty-one million—can easily fit into the State of California, the Basque Country in Spain, or Metro Tokyo in Japan.³⁰

The answer to the question is multifaceted: Demand for housing has skyrocketed due to high international immigration, changes in household compositions, an influx of foreign investment, and speculative land holding.³¹ New construction has been hindered by bureaucratic obstacles such as restrictive zoning, permitting delays, and political gatekeeping, as well as the rising costs of materials, labour, and development charges. Housing policy lacks a coherent strategy and has been fragmented across federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Further, the system for non-market housing construction has been dismantled since the 1990s. The stickiest factor of all, and the topic of this thesis, is the lack of available land for housing construction in Canada—despite the nation having

²⁵Veterans Affairs Canada, “Victory Housing.”

²⁶“Countries by Density,” *World Population Review*, accessed October 15, 2025, www.worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-by-density.

²⁷World Bank, “Population Density (people per sq. km of land area),” World Bank Data, accessed October 15, 2025, www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST?.

²⁸Statistics Canada, “Table 1: Population density, provinces and territories, 2021,” *Daily* (February 8, 2024), accessed October 15, 2025, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/170208/dq170208a-eng.htm.

²⁹Government of Canada / Environment and Climate Change Canada, *Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes*, accessed October 15, 2025, www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environmental-protection-act-registry/publications/canada-ontario-agreement-great-lakes.html.

³⁰Statistics Canada, “Dwelling Condition, 2018 Census of Population,” *Catalogue no. 71-607-X*, accessed October 15, 2025, www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2018005-eng.htm.

³¹Cox, *Demographia International Housing Affordability*, 10–11.

jurisdiction over 1.58 percent of the earth's total surface.³² Developable land is scarce, keeping housing prices high, and the government holds onto massive amounts of public land, even in urban areas.³³

The reason for the scarcity of developable land for housing is a political thicket, with different sides of the political aisle espousing different discourses to explain the phenomenon. My initial digging through archival material and academic literature showed general patterns in the political discourse: Conservative governments spoke of offloading land to private developers, while liberal governments talked about keeping land for the social good. Conservative politicians discussed the importance of the private ownership of land (represented in homeownership incentives, condominiums legislation, fee-simple title) while liberal politicians discussed the necessity of state control of land for housing (represented in long term leaseholds, cooperative housing, public housing). In the 2025 federal elections, the Liberal Party spoke of *leasing* public land to public and nonprofit housing entities for the development of social housing, while the Conservative Party spoke of *selling* the land to private developers for the building of privately owned homes: “Canada has the most land to build on, yet we have the fewest homes per capita in the G7,”²³ queried Pierre Poilievre, the leader of the Conservative Party, just a week before the 2025 federal election. Poilievre pledged to sell fifteen percent of federal land for home building “so that Canadians can buy homes that belong to them and that give them the pride of home ownership and home equity.”²² The leader of the Liberal Party, Mark Carney, announced twenty-five billion dollars to be dedicated to *Build Canada Homes*, an “entirely new entity” that would “unleash the power of public-private collaboration.”³⁴ Carney promised to “make good on the promise to unlock federal land on a post-war scale,” alluding to the federal government’s construction of ‘Victory Homes’ in the post-war period.

1.3 Unlocking Public Land for Housing

I became curious about the origin of these conflicting discourses in the Canadian electorate, and how they emerged through the past policy efforts to ‘unlock’ public land for housing. Today, when the

³²Nicholas LePan, “How Much of Earth’s Surface Is Covered by Each Country — in One Graphic,” *World Economic Forum*, January 28, 2021, accessed October 15, 2025, www.weforum.org/stories/2021/01/earth-surface-ocean-visualization-science-countries-russia-canada-china.

³³Whitzman, “Home Truths,” 31.

³⁴“Mark Carney unveils Liberal housing plan —,” YouTube video, duration 42:19, uploaded by cpac, upload March 31, 2025, accessed May 15, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05Ys9GaJiTY>.

population has doubled, we are building fewer homes than we did in the mid-1970s.³⁵ From 1973 to 1977 an estimated quarter of a million homes were constructed in Canada. During this historical era, the ‘first socialist government’ was elected in my home province of BC.

The rise of the 1972 New Democratic Party (“NDP”) government in BC marked a significant departure from the preceding twenty years of rule by the Social Credit Party (“SOCREDS”). From 1952 to 1972, BC was governed by the ‘free-enterprising logic’ of Premier W.A.C Bennet, whose government subscribed to “a free enterprise or free market philosophy,” that believed in “the doctrine of laissez-faire and the private ownership of property...that government intervention is only justifiable if it promotes and not hinders private capital accumulation.”³⁶ Thus, when the province fell into the hands of ‘the socialists’ in 1972, the political landscape was transformed. From the establishment of public auto insurance to an agricultural land reserve to the construction of 13,000 units of social housing, the 1972 to 1975 NDP government worked quickly, guided by the premise of its leader, Premier Dave Barrett, who instructed that they were “there for a good time, not a long time.”³⁷ For three brief but dynamic years, Premier Barret’s government led the province and implemented radical reforms—passing an astonishing 367 government bills.³⁸

For the first time in BC’s history, the complete transcript of legislative debates were documented in a system known as Hansard and new procedures such as ‘The Question Period’—a daily fifteen opportunity for the Opposition to ask questions—were implemented.³⁹ Moreover, the legislative session of the Barrett government were far longer and more grueling; from 1972 to 1975, the legislature sat for an average of 110 days per year! This is in contrast to W.A.C. Bennet’s government which only had the legislature in session thirty-eight days per year in the 1950s and about forty-five days in the 1960s.⁴⁰ While the NDP legislative debates were described as “lively centers of political life,” the W.A.C Bennet government was described in the words of Walter Young as “the real

³⁵Whitzman, “Home Truths,” 29.

³⁶Beverly Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985.” (Simon Fraser University, 1985), 2.

³⁷Geoff Meggs and Rod Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power, 1972–1975* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 2012), 15.

³⁸Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible*, 16.

³⁹Interestingly, the first oral question was asked by W.A.C Bennet on the subject of the sale of poisoned lettuce.

⁴⁰Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible*, 21.

business of government did not concern debate or party politics...the legislature, in many respects, was not the real world.”⁴¹

As a result, not only do the legislative transcripts of this period exist but they are robust and lively. The Opposition party, mainly composed of the SOCREDS, were loud with their questions and fierce in their criticism. The transcripts thus reveal a unique era of Canadian history, in which various policies for unlocking public land for housing were implemented through loud, dynamic, and unpredictable conversations in the legislature. This thesis applies the methodological tools of historical discourse analysis to the legislative debates of 1972 to 1975 (the thirtieth parliament of BC) that pertain to the utilization of public land for housing. The research is two-fold: it provides the history of public land use and housing policy and the discursive formation of these policies. Ultimately, this thesis aims to capture the nature of housing discourses, the ideological structures that underpin them, and the evolution of discourse into concrete housing policies.

1.4 Research Question and Outline

My main research question is summarized as such: *How were public land use and housing policies discursively formed through the legislative debates in BC's first socialist government (1972-1975)?*

To guide my research process, I used the following questions as guidance:

- *What policies regarding public land use and housing were implemented during the 1972 to 1975 reign of the NDP government in BC?*
- *What discourses emerged during legislative debates on these topics?*
- *What ideological structures underpin the discourses that emerged in the legislature?*

⁴¹Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible*, 23.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framing

2.1 Using the Past to Understand the Present

“Forgetting is the emblem of the vulnerability of the historical condition taken as a whole.”

—Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*⁴²

The 21st century has brought high levels of immigration, the acceleration of climate-change events, and the flood of opiate dependency disorders—all factors that have put extreme pressure on the housing market. Despite adjectives like ‘unprecedented,’⁴³ the housing challenges facing Canadians today contain traces of the past.

My research is a recovery of these ‘traces’, a term borrowed from the German historian Kocku von Stuckrad. “Human lives,” he writes, “produce a huge amount of traces that subsequent generations may or may not find, read, and engage with.”⁴⁴ The early decades of housing policy formation in Canada may be easily forgotten by subsequent generations of politicians, housing analysts, or other public officials. The work of history is to remember—to wade through the ‘traces’ and write them “into a meaningful plot,”⁴⁵ or, as historian Hayden White puts it, “a verbal structure in the form of narrative prose discourse.”⁴⁶

If we go back to the 1970s, we find a country dealing with similar housing challenges. The 1977 monograph by economist Lawrence Smith features a revealing title, *The Anatomy of a Crisis: Canadian Housing Policy in the Seventies*, or the 1992 book, *Housing a Nation: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy*, which aptly titled Part III as “Responding to Turbulent Times: Canada's

⁴²Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 284.

⁴³C.D. Howe Institute, *Housing Policy for a Growing Canada* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 2025), 4, <https://cdhowe.org/publication/housing-policy-for-a-growing-canada>.

⁴⁴Kocku Von Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis: The Entanglement of Past and Present,” in *Discourse Research and Religion*, ed. Jay Johnston and Kocku Stuckrad (De Gruyter, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110473438-005>.

⁴⁵Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 77.

⁴⁶Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), ix

Housing Policy in the 1970s and Early 1980s.” The authors define the ‘turbulent times’ as “unfavourable macro-economic conditions, rapidly rising housing costs, and growing private rental supply problems,”⁴⁷ which they attribute to population growth, changes in household composition, increasing urbanization, and vulnerability to world markets, causing economic recessions, fluctuating interest rates, and inflation.⁴⁸

Two important government documents—the ‘Curtis Report’ of 1944 and the ‘Hellyer Report’ of 1969, as they are known colloquially—also capture the housing challenges of the 1970s and 80s and foreshadow the present housing crises. The ‘Curtis Report’ detailed Canada’s post-war housing period, which saw “rapid changes in municipal planning, financial institutions, housing finance, and mass suburbanization,”⁴⁹ and estimated a shortfall of 300,000 housing units in Canada.⁵⁰ The ‘Hellyer Report’ suggested that Canada faced housing challenges “of far more than routine significance”: an increase in interest rates, rising costs, housing starts failing to match need, and urban unrest.⁵¹ Hellyer recommended a “minimum objective” of producing “1 million additional housing units within the next 5 years.”⁵²

In this thesis, I look to the past to understand the present. An examination of the 1972 to 1975 era can be used as a “tool to provide answers to present-day questions.”⁵³ A sample of present-day questions include: *Why is there limited innovation in housing policy today, as opposed to the 1970s? How do ideologies act as barriers in the passing of housing legislation today? To what extent are housing policies today the expression of ideological structures enshrined in history?*

A UBC master’s thesis from 1985 argued that “the changing underlying philosophies of the governments of British Columbia has determined the set of parameters for housing policy of each government, which, in turn has affected the government’s ability to deal with housing problems.”⁵⁴

⁴⁷Peter H. Oberlander, Arthur L. Fallick, and John Anderson, *Housing a Nation: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 64.

⁴⁸Oberlander, Anderson, and Fallick, *Housing a Nation*, 63.

⁴⁹David L. A. Gordon, “The Curtis Report as a Critical Juncture in Canadian Urbanism,” *Planning Perspectives* 39, no. 4 (2024): 761–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2023.2296922>

⁵⁰Leslie J. Cole, *Under Construction: A History of Cooperative Housing in Canada* (Ottawa: Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, 2008), 14..

⁵¹Paul T. Hellyer, *Report of the Federal Task Force on Housing and Urban Development* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1969), 1.

⁵²Hellyer, *Report of the Federal Task Force on Housing and Urban Development*, 22.

⁵³Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 86.

⁵⁴Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985,” 2.

Writing in 1985, Beverly Grieve described the complexity of housing policy—how the ‘philosophies’ of respective political administrations interfere with the capacity of Canada to deal with its housing problems. An understanding of the earlier days of these ‘philosophies’ is relevant to the present housing crisis. Thus, this thesis does not attempt a direct comparison of present-day housing challenges to those of 1970s Canada, but instead, tells the story of what happened in the past and reveals the discourses and their ideological underpinnings that arose during this period. Paraphrasing the words of Stuckrad, this thesis will *transform trace into sources into narratives*.⁵⁵ Moreover, this thesis will consist of a trifold of data, theoretical concepts, and narrative structure and will strive to be “generally poetic, and specifically linguistic.”⁵⁶

2.2 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)

To understand the past, I have selected the flexible and robust toolkit of the discourse-historical approach (“DHA”). DHA is both a theory and a methodology that draws from both history and discourse analysis traditions and as such, offers interdisciplinarity.⁵⁷ This historical ‘spin’ on the critical discourse analysis (“CDA”) tradition originated from the scholarship of Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl in 2001, when the pair investigated the way in which discriminatory ideas were produced, reproduced, and legitimized through language in the case of post-war 1980s to 1990s Austria. Wodak and Reisigl published their work in *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism* in 2001 and it became a foundational text for the DHA tradition—outlining its departure from other CDA approaches like the socio-cultural approach (Norman Fairclough) or the socio-cognitive approach (Teun A. van Dijk).⁵⁸

The two traditions that makeup DHA—history and CDA—offer different advantages to my research. First, the tradition of history brings an emphasis on context and chronology to the discursive events,⁵⁹ and second, the tradition of CDA brings the notion of ‘critique,’ allowing the researcher to take a non-neutral stance. A ‘critical stance’ implies that the researcher will get “closer to the data” and offer

⁵⁵Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 86.

⁵⁶Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 77.

⁵⁷Ruth Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020>, 26.

⁵⁸Christophe Datondji and Glod Amousou, “Discourse-Historical Approach to Critical Discourse Studies: Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis, Basic Characteristics, and Analytical Tools,” *European Journal of Language Studies* 9, no. 1 (2022): 70.

⁵⁹Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2001), 11.

“continuous self-reflection while undertaking the research.”⁶⁰ The researcher must be transparent in their position: I am a native to BC, Canada and I work in the affordable housing industry, with a hunch that current NDP housing policies have exacerbated the housing crisis in my home province. I use this ‘hunch’ as fuel for the research process, while ensuring that I justify my interpretations⁶¹ and provide a “careful, rigorous, and systematic analysis” along the way.⁶²

“The complexities of modern societies in our fast-changing world,” writes Wodak, “can only be grasped by a model of multicausal, mutual influences between different groups of persons within a specific society and relationships between different societies.” This is why DHA is especially useful for complex and multifaceted phenomena, such as controversies about climate change,⁶³ rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,⁶⁴ or tensions between nation states.⁶⁵ More concrete examples include the application of DHA to the racism and discrimination experienced by Roma migrants after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989⁶⁶ or the construction of European identities and European politics since Germany’s reunification and the transformation of the eastern European bloc.⁶⁷ In the case of Canada’s present-day housing crisis, it is a complex web of problems that affect all socio-economic levels of society, caused by policy decisions, market forces, regulatory systems, and cultural factors. Even a consensus on how to problematize the crisis is hard to reach. DHA provides a theoretical and methodological framework for peering into Canada’s past housing challenges, with a focus on discursive events and policy formation. DHA provides a wide-ranging toolkit and integrates many different types of sources towards understanding the problem.

DHA acknowledges that discourses are produced within a specific context and interconnected with different preceding discourses, meaning, as Fairclough writes, that “discourse is historical.”⁶⁸ As a discursive event involves “a considerable degree of assumed knowledge” as well as “historical and

⁶⁰Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” 24.

⁶¹Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” 25.

⁶²Norman Fairclough, Jane Mulderrig, and Ruth Wodak, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” in *Critical Discourse Analysis, Volume 1*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 80.

⁶³Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” 26.

⁶⁴Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism* (London: Routledge, 2001), 31.

⁶⁵Wodak and Meyers, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 4.

⁶⁶Bernd Matouschek, Ruth Wodak, and Franz Januschek. *The Semiotics of Racism: A Critical Discourse-Historical Analysis*. Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 1995.

⁶⁷Hannes Heer, Walter Manoschek, Alexander Pollak, and Ruth Wodak, eds. *The Discursive Construction of History: Remembering the Wehrmacht’s War of Annihilation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

⁶⁸Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 94.

synchronic intertextuality” and “the hybridization of genres,” the researcher must decide how much “contextual knowledge” to bring into the interpretation of the text.⁶⁹ According to Fairclough, this is the distinguishing feature of DHA: “its attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text.”⁷⁰ Wodak echoes Fairclough, stating that the distinctive feature of DHA is its “endeavor to work interdisciplinarity, multi-methodically” with “a variety of different empirical data as well as context theories.”⁷¹

While pure CDA restricts itself to the study of language, which is “only one of many aspects of the whole enterprise,” the addition of history allows the researcher to incorporate more background information, sources of data, and other empirical observations.⁷² “The approach is problem oriented,” writes Wodak, “not focused on specific linguistic items.”⁷³ In this way, Wodak describes DHA as ‘eclectic’ and always incorporating fieldwork and ethnographic methods.⁷⁴ As such, my research focuses on one primary text (the transcripts of legislative debates), but also incorporates interviews, government reports, academic literature, history books, and archival materials such as cabinet minutes and drafts of unpublished speeches—following the ‘principles of triangulation’.⁷⁵ In *Chapter Four*, I detail the ‘contextual knowledge’ that I deemed necessary for adequately understanding the discursive events of the BC legislature, and in *Chapter Five*, I weave ‘contextual knowledge’ such as political actors, explanations of policy events, and summaries of institutional procedures into my discursive analysis of the legislative debates.

The DHA approach offers a way to work against the notion of objectivity and decenter the authority of the historian.⁷⁶ With its strong emphasis on the researcher’s positionality and transparency, DHA moves away from the positivist view of history, also known as *scientific historiography* or *historical realism*, and objects to the “ideal of the historian as an objective observer or recorder of facts.”⁷⁷ The

⁶⁹Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 94.

⁷⁰Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 86.

⁷¹Ruth Wodak, “Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis,” in *Pragmatics of Discourse*, ed. Klaus P. Schneider and Anne Barron (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), 378.

⁷²Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA),” 26.

⁷³Wodak and Meyers, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2001), 11.

⁷⁴Wodak and Meyers, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2001), 11.

⁷⁵Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA),” 26.

⁷⁶“Historical Discourse Analysis,” in *SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 394.

⁷⁷“Historical Discourse Analysis,” in *SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 394.

‘anti-essentialist’ perspective of post-structuralism theoretically grounds this departure from positivism; if reality is ‘discursively’ constructed’,⁷⁸ then it follows that “historical arguments are made, but not made up” and history is a process of meaning-making.⁷⁹ Historical work then does not itself produce ‘facts’ but “representations of history.”⁸⁰ At the same time, historical work must be recognizably “factitious,” according to Stuckrad, in that the reader must recognize that “the (re)presented past has real empirical grounding.”⁸¹ The researcher does not need to ‘give up’ on the “differentiation between fact and fiction” but may acknowledge “the contingency of human knowledge.”⁸² Historical knowledge production depends on the positionality of the researcher, the selection of particular ‘traces’, the access to archival materials, and the interpretation of discursive elements. History depends on the present as much as the past. In Stuckrad’s words, “historians tell their stories to their contemporaries, not to the people of the past.”⁸³

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

To further situate DHA within the field of CDA, it is important to begin with a definition of ‘discourse’. Fairclough defines ‘discourse’ as “an analytical category describing the vast array of meaning-making resources available to us.”⁸⁴ More simply, Stuckrad states that “discourses are practices that (co-) create the realities they describe.”⁸⁵ ‘Discourse’ is both an analytical category and a practice, and in the case of legislative debates on housing policy, ‘discourses’ are a way of expressing concerns, influencing policy outcomes, or signaling allegiance to a political party. ‘Discourses’ can be abstract as well as concrete: *land is a basic natural resource to be preserved*, or *the policies laid out by Bill 42 are red tap for housing development*.

My research revolves around one aspect of the CDA agenda that Fairclough describes as: *the relations of dialogue, contestation, and dominance between discourses*. This agenda applies particularly well to the debate rhetoric contained within the transcriptions of the legislature and allows me to “show how

⁷⁸Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 84.

⁷⁹Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 86.

⁸⁰Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 79.

⁸¹Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 79.

⁸²Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 86.

⁸³Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 77.

⁸⁴Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 79.

⁸⁵Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 83.

difference discourses are brought into dialogue and contestation within processes of strategic struggle.”⁸⁶ The legislature is the arena of ‘strategic struggle’ and the legislative members are responsible for enacting provincial housing policy through a democratic process, consisting of firstly, their election to the legislature by the citizens of BC, and secondly, their debate contributions and votes on pieces of legislation. The legislature is where various discourses on utilizing public land for housing relate, contest, dominate and collide.

CDA is particularly concerned with the way discourses are involved with the enactment and reproduction of social and political power.⁸⁷ Fairclough describes the aim of CDA as “to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse as social practice.”⁸⁸ When legislative members discuss and debate housing policy, they produce discourses that are embedded in social and political contexts – discourses that are “socially constitutive as well as socially shaped,” that help “sustain and reproduce the status quo...and contribute to transforming it.”⁸⁹ CDA helps to “de-constructs the inferred and indirect linguistic devices as well as explicit prejudiced utterances”⁹⁰ that are contained within these discourses. In this way, the CDA approach is necessarily ‘critical’ or non-neutral, as referenced in Section 2.1. CDA is not a positivist approach, but it is “a form of intervention in social practice and social relationship” and most notably, it “openly and explicitly positions itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups.”⁹¹ In policy events, the ‘dominating group’ is the government and the ‘oppressed’ are the citizens of BC struggling to obtain adequate and affordable housing. This thesis is ultimately concerned with the recipients of the housing policy formed in the legislature.

2.4 Post Structuralism

The legacy of CDA goes back to its academic origins in ‘Western Marxism,’ its notion of ‘critical,’ rooted in the Frankfurt School of Philosophy; and its focus on ‘power relations,’ popularized by

⁸⁶Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 19.

⁸⁷Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 80.

⁸⁸Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 80.

⁸⁹Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 80.

⁹⁰Ruth Wodak, “Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis,” in *Pragmatics of Discourse*, ed. Klaus P. Schneider and Anne Barron (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), 49–72.

⁹¹Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 80.

Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu.⁹² Woven into these theoretical influences is the philosophy of ‘post-structuralism’ or ‘post-modernism,’ which Vivien Burr argues can be used interchangeably.⁹³ Where the modernists (or ‘structuralists’) were driven by the belief that hidden structures and rules could unveil a singular ‘right’ way, the post-modernists and post-structuralists rejected the notion of hidden structures and ‘ultimate truth’⁹⁴—i.e. classical music is no better than pop-music, reading a novel is no better than a blogpost, leasing land is no better than private ownership, etc. Post-structuralists suggest that language is the “prime site of the construction of the person,”⁹⁵ and thus concepts, notions of identity, aspects of personality—all are wrapped up and pre-packaged by language.

Another term for this is ‘anti-essentialist’: post-structuralism holds an “anti-essentialist perspective on language, identity, society, and social practices,”⁹⁶ suggesting that “meanings carried by language are never fixed, always open to question, always contestable, always temporary.”⁹⁷ The concept of ‘reality’ is “not constant,” Burr writes, “but an every-changing realm that is both discursively and practically constructed by people.”⁹⁸ To understand the world, then, we must look not to an individual’s personality or actions, but to the “linguistic space in which they move with other people.”⁹⁹ Discourses—materialized in books, articles, debate or interview transcripts, etc.—provide a tangible material to examine ‘the linguistic space’. Post-structuralism holds that discourses are not neutral nor apolitical—they are not merely words or texts—but constructions of reality, that *produce* and *maintain* systems of power.¹⁰⁰ “...every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations,” writes Fairclough et al., “that is the power of discourse; that is why it is worth struggling over.”¹⁰¹

The emphasis on power is largely attributed to Foucault, though he is often “charged with exaggerating the extent to which the majority of people are manipulated by power,” Fairclough

⁹²Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 82-83.

⁹³Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 13.

⁹⁴Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 13.

⁹⁵Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 61.

⁹⁶“Historical Discourse Analysis,” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 394–95, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n198>, 395.

⁹⁷Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 60.

⁹⁸Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 117.

⁹⁹Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 62.

¹⁰⁰Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 56.

¹⁰¹Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 91.

writes.¹⁰² Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow argue that Foucault is best read as moving *beyond structuralism*, opening the door to post-structural analysis. Though Foucault rejected the label, he is regularly grouped with post-structuralist thinkers, with scholars pursuing CDA in his namesake. ‘Foucauldian discourse analysis’, Burr writes, is most associated with “a concern to identify the ideological and power effects of discourse.”¹⁰³ To grasp the full meaning of a conversation, the ‘Foucauldian tradition’ argues, the researcher must “locate it within this wider social and material context”¹⁰⁴—which the DHA approach aims to do.

Post-structuralism, then, theoretically aligns with Stuckrad’s idea that “the past is a moving target in constant flux.”¹⁰⁵ Foucault, alongside the other heady French philosopher Jacques Derrida, challenged the role of the ‘effective historian’. “Historical truth,” in Foucault’s words, is not actually “accessible in our accounts of it,”¹⁰⁶ and thus the historian’s task is to uncover “the processes through which history becomes established as such” and approach history as “discursively produced”.¹⁰⁷ Analysis of the way language produces historical accounts or the historical stages of language itself is what Laurel Brinton terms “historical discourse analysis proper”.¹⁰⁸ However, the DHA approach, as presented by Reisigl and Wodak in their seminal text *Discourse and Discrimination*, is often applied more broadly to historical phenomenon—as this thesis does with the topic of discourses in the BC legislature.

2.5 Ideology and Hegemony

CDA approaches seeks to reveal the ideologies underpinning discourses. The concept of ‘ideology’ is considered to have first appeared in late 18th century France and thus over the past two centuries the term has taken on a range of functions and meanings.¹⁰⁹ J.B. Thompson describes ‘ideology’ as “social forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the

¹⁰²Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 56.

¹⁰³Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 20.

¹⁰⁴Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 179.

¹⁰⁵Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 81.

¹⁰⁶Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 81.

¹⁰⁷Laurel J. Brinton, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n19>

¹⁰⁸Brinton, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 139.

¹⁰⁹Wodak, “Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Pragmatics of Discourse*, 377.

social work.”¹¹⁰ Fairclough’s definition of ‘ideologies’ is non-neutral, in that he sees ‘ideologies’ as a “particular way of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation.”¹¹¹ As an example, discourse can be racist or sexist and try to “pass off assumptions...as mere common sense.”¹¹² The analytical process of CDA works to “‘demystify’ discourses by deciphering ideologies.”¹¹³

Wodak similarly considers power relations in her definition of ideology, using, however, more simple language to define the concept—describing ideology as ‘a perspective’ or ‘a worldview.’¹¹⁴ A fully developed ideology is a ‘grand narrative’—the ‘isms’—such as communism, socialism, liberalism, or capitalism. A discursive event may or may not ‘do ideological work,’ says Fairclough.¹¹⁵ To determine whether it does, one must go further than simply textual analysis and “consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have.”¹¹⁶ Typically ideologies are more or less obvious to the researcher, Fairclough believes, especially when key words like ‘freedom’ or ‘law and order’ are used evoke a particular assumption about the world.¹¹⁷ When NDP Member Mrs. Brown says, “land is a non-renewable resource, and we have to husband it...land belongs to all of us and is hereto benefit all of us,”¹¹⁸ the ideological implication is clear; if there are limits to growth, then land is a collective resource and is best controlled through public ownership.” The ideology is located in the discursive event itself, says Fairclough, in the “underlying language practice—be it a ‘code’, ‘structure’, ‘system’ or ‘formation’.”¹¹⁹ When the NDP MLA, Rosemary Brown, says that “land is a non-renewable resource and we have to husband it...Land belongs to all of us and is here to benefit all of us,”¹²⁰ the socialist ideology underpinning this statement is obvious: her evocation of an ‘us,’ the land as a single collective entity.

¹¹⁰Wodak, “Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Pragmatics of Discourse*, 377.

¹¹¹Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

¹¹²Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 80.

¹¹³Wodak, “Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Pragmatics of Discourse*, 377.

¹¹⁴Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, eds., *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, 3rd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2016), 25.

¹¹⁵Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

¹¹⁶Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

¹¹⁷Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

¹¹⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

¹¹⁹Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 57

¹²⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, February 21, 1973, 17.

A social institution, such as the BC NDP, can have “a sort of speech community” which is “perceived first as norms of the institution itself and second as merely skills or techniques which must be mastered in order for the status of competent institutional subjects to be achieved.”¹²¹ Yet, these ‘norms’ are not the property of the social institution itself but of an “ideological discursive formation” or IDF.¹²² What Wodak termed the ‘grand narratives’, Fairclough termed the ‘IDF’.

Ideologies work to maintain “shared social identities” among the legislative members, signalling their allegiance to their political party or their constituent particular political party, and “unequal power relations” through policy events: such as private landowners maintaining tax benefits or low-income families receiving subsidized housing.¹²³ It may seem obvious that a discursive event in the legislature would reveal competing ideologies; of course an NDP legislative member would present a discourse on land as a collective resource, revealing a socialist ideology. Yet, this would ignore human complexity, that people do not always say as they mean or mean as they say—that personhood is found not in the institution but in the ‘linguistic space’ where social, cultural, and political phenomena collide. “It is quite possible for a social subject to occupy institutional subject positions which are ideologically incompatible,” Fairclough writes, “or to occupy a subject position incompatible with his or her overt political or social beliefs and affiliations, without being aware of any contradiction.”¹²⁴ An NDP legislative member can be critical of labour unions, a SOCRED legislative member can evoke the concerns of the taxpayer while supporting public spending on social housing in the same breath.

As an ideology is established and reproduced over time, it can become embedded in the subconscious fabric of an institution, such as the government or a particular political party. Fairclough employs the term ‘naturalisation’ or ‘opacity’ to describe this phenomenon: “*Naturalisation* gives to particular ideological representations the status of common sense, and thereby makes them *opaque*, i.e., no longer visible as ideologies.”¹²⁵ When an ideology becomes *naturalised* and made *opaque* on the societal level, this can be described by “the theory of cultural hegemony”.¹²⁶ This theory was popularized by Antonio Gramsci, a founder of the Italian Communist Party and a critique of Benito

¹²¹Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 43–44.

¹²²Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 43.

¹²³Wodak and Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, 25.

¹²⁴Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 44.

¹²⁵Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 44, *emphasis added*.

¹²⁶Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 63.

Mussolini who wrote over 3,000 pages of history and political analysis during his long imprisonment, which were later compiled and published in *Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci put his own ‘spin’ on the Marxist tradition and characterized capitalist societies by their “struggle for hegemony—that is, for moral, cultural, intellectual and, thereby, political leadership over the whole of society—between the ruling class and, as the principal subordinate class, the working class.”¹²⁷

The practice of ‘gatekeeping’ can emerge and access to group membership can be controlled through access to specific discourses or public spheres. A contemporary (albeit controversial) example of this is the naming of pronouns while introducing oneself: failure to do so can alienate a person from the ‘liberal’ social identity, or in Canada, the membership to the NDP party. This is also what is meant by ‘identity politics’ or ‘virtue signaling.’ As historian Franz X. Eder says, discourses can eventually become “practices that systematically organize and regulate statements on a certain topic, thereby also determining the conditions of what (in a social group at a certain time) can be thought and said.”¹²⁸

Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony is especially apt for democratic societies, as he insists on the importance of *consent* in its formation. “The ‘normal’ exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent,” Gramsci wrote, “which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent.”¹²⁹ In this way, the ‘struggle for hegemony’ includes “constructing alliances and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes.”¹³⁰ Ideology then is not just found in the discursive event but also in *action*, i.e. “their social effects”.¹³¹

The theory of hegemony is “a critical point of engagement” for studying the field of popular culture, writes Fairclough.¹³² The housing crisis in Canada has risen to the level of popular culture indeed: every Canadian resident knows someone struggling to find adequate rental housing or afford their first property. That the housing market needs *saving* is common knowledge. Moreover, the ‘socialist’

¹²⁷Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 95.

¹²⁸Stuckrad, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” 82.

¹²⁹Antonio Gramsci, “Hegemony, Intellectuals, and the State,” in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Third Edition (Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 85.

¹³⁰Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 61.

¹³¹Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 62.

¹³²Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 96.

party has grown dominant on BC's political landscape: Since winning a minority government in a snap election in 2017, the NDP have held steady power; in 2022, and again in 2024, the NDP won a majority government under the leadership of Premier David Eby. On the federal level, approximately half of all NDP members of parliament are consistently from BC ridings. The Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives states that "British Columbia has long had a reputation as Canada's most progressive province."¹³³ The BC NDP have taken bold measures to intervene in the province's housing crisis. These policy events have, as Fairclough talks about, produced counter discourses, as they did in the 1970s, and they run along familiar class lines: those locked out homeownership and those peering at the market from the comfort of their own property. My low and moderate-income family members and friends talk supportively of government intervention like rent controls or rent subsidies, while my property-owning family members complain of government intervention. When I ran into a high school friend's father at the pharmacy, he told me he had escaped "draconian BC" and instead invested his property in the neighboring province, Alberta.

The NDP dominating BC's political scene in 2025 is not the same as the NDP of 1972, but it has inherited its discourses and carried its ideologies forward—possibly to the extent of hegemony. As Gramsci describes the central characteristic of "any group that is developing towards dominance" as the struggle to "conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals" and create a "strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity."¹³⁴ The institution of BC Housing is itself a *direct* descendant of Barrett's 1972 government. Thus, while the salience of the theory of hegemony applied to the BC government today is an important opportunity for future research, this study limits itself to the discourses and policy events of the 1970s and uses the concept of hegemony to theoretically inform the layered cake that is CDA: discursive strategies reveal ideologies which can become hegemonic.

¹³³Luke LeBrun, "The Rise of Zany Conspiracy Theory Politics - CCPA," April 1, 2025, accessed October 15, 2025, <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/the-rise-of-zany-conspiracy-theory-politics/>

¹³⁴Gramsci, "Hegemony, Intellectuals, and the State," in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 87-88.

Chapter Five: Analysis

5.1 Analysis Outline

This chapter features the analysis of the discursive event within its imbedded context. Utilizing Wodak and Reisigl's historical 'spin' on CDA, this analysis applies traditional CDA methods while weaving in "all available background information in the analysis".¹³⁵ The featured discursive event is the legislative debates of the BC legislature, occurring during the period of October 17, 1972, to August 29th, 1975. This first section provides the reader with the framework for discursive topics and strategies that are applied in the analysis.

This analysis seeks to understand the discursive formation of housing policy and the emergence of polarized ideological discourses in BC housing politics. The incorporation of background context gives insight into the ideological polarities showcased in the legislative debates: the 'socialists' versus the 'free enterprisers'. With the concepts of ideology (Wodak and Fairclough) and cultural hegemony (Gramsci) in hand, I show how discourses produced in the 1970s BC legislature produce and reproduce political conflicts—foreshadowing the political landscape of Canadian housing politics of the twenty-first century. To accomplish this, I follow the legislative proceedings of three major policy events related to the utilization of public land for housing development during the BC legislature of 1972 to 1975: the Supply Act and Special Funds Appropriation Act (Bill No. 77), the Land Commission Act (Bill No. 42), and the Department of Housing Act (Bill No. 49). Each policy event transformed the landscape of housing policy in BC and spurred lively debate in the legislature.

As this is a historical analysis, I take a chronological approach to the proceedings of the legislature and apply the CDA methodology along the way: 1) identifying the most frequent discursive topics, 2) analyzing the discursive strategies employed, and 3) determining whether a discourse 'does ideological work'. In each section of this chapter, I tell the story of how the legislation came to pass (or almost did not pass) and examine the discourses that that led (or almost did not lead) to their official enactment.

¹³⁵Fairclough et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis" in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 86.

The frequent discursive topics of the political parties offer a picture of their respective political platforms and hint at their underlying ideological structures. As I wrote about in Chapter Two, Fairclough states that a discursive event may or may not ‘do ideological work’¹³⁶ and an in depth study of the context (political, social, cultural, etc.) of the discursive event is required to “consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have”.¹³⁷ A fully developed ideology becomes an ‘ism’—in this case, ‘socialism’ or ‘democratic socialism’ and ‘capitalism’—and in a free society, Gramsci states, different ideologies ‘struggle for cultural hegemony’.

Figure 1 is an adaptation of Wodak et al.’s visual map of the “Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts.”¹³⁸ In **Figure 1**, the discursive topics are displayed and sorted into the categories ‘Socialist Discourses’ and ‘Capitalist Discourses’. I found that the discursive topics were remarkably consistent and naturally sorted into these expected categories; the legislative members that were vocal during debates were generally aligned with the ‘ideology’ of their respective political parties. That the legislative members spoke as expected, in line with their political party, offered an ideal scenario to study how political discourses compete and coalesce. Moreover, the 30th parliament of BC—where the long-reigning SOCREDs have been demoted to the Opposition and the newly elected NDP’s promoted to the Government—provide a natural experiment in political polarity: The NDP are the ‘socialists’ and the SOCREDs are the ‘capitalists’. The ‘pink menace’ versus the ‘greedy free enterprisers’. The polarized politics of the 1972 to 1975 BC legislature presents an ideal opportunity to study how “different discourses are brought into dialogue and contestation”¹³⁹ and how political groups struggle for “moral, cultural, intellectual, and political leadership over the whole of society.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

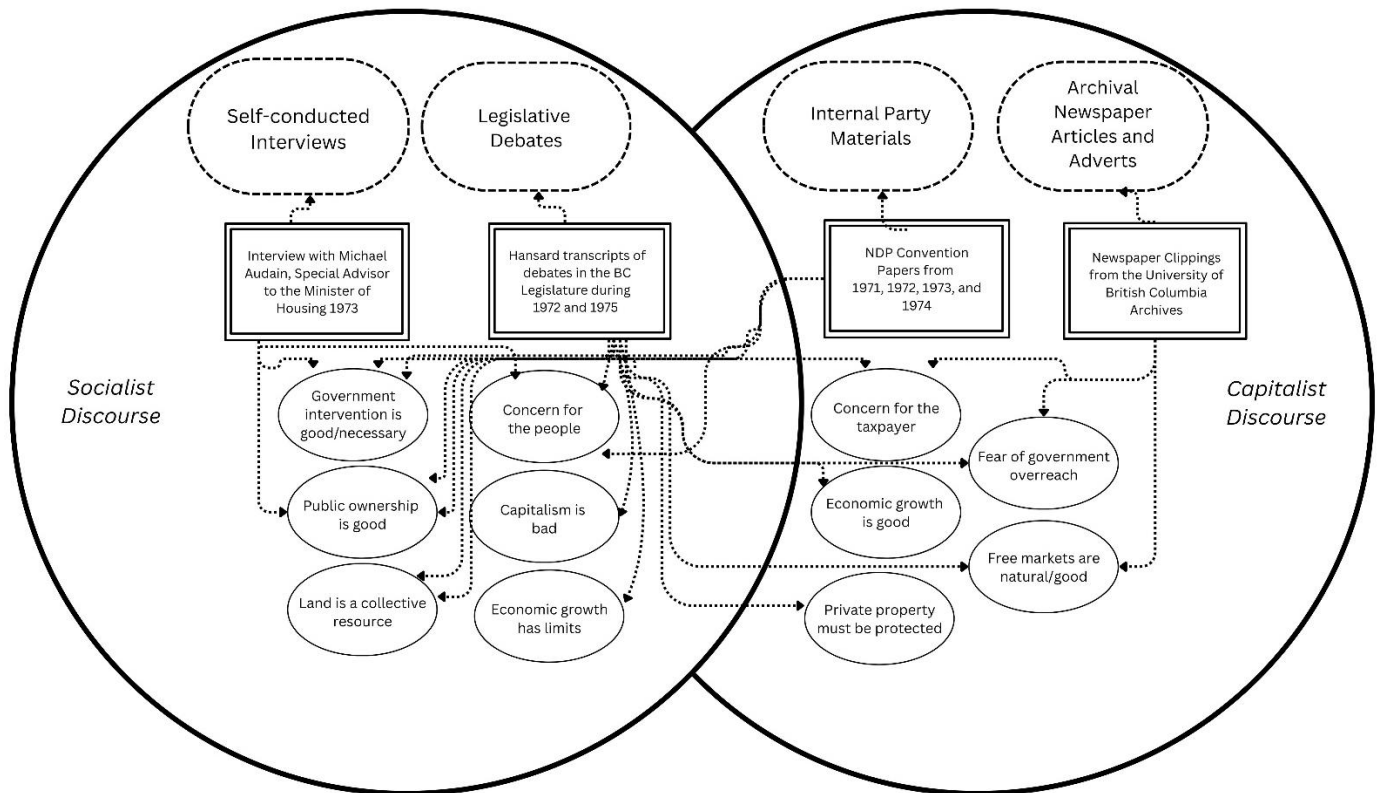
¹³⁷Fairclough et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis” in *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1*, 93.

¹³⁸Wodak et al., “The Discourse-Historical Approach,” 69.

¹³⁹Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 19.

¹⁴⁰Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 95.

Figure 1: Adaptation of Wodak et al.’s “Interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between discourses, discourse topics, genres and texts”



To understand the discursive strategies used in the legislature, I follow Wodak et al.’s five categories of analysis. Wodak uses the term ‘strategy’ to describe “a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices” and defines discursive strategies as “systematic ways of using language” located at “different levels of linguistics organisation and complexity”.¹⁴¹ Her categories of analysis provide a clear framework for the analysis of discursive strategies. **Figure 2** showcases the five categories of analysis:

¹⁴¹ Wodak et al., *Discourse and Discrimination*, 44.

Figure 2: Five Categories of Analysis¹⁴³

Discursive Category	Question	Definition
Referential/ Nomination	<i>How are persons named and referred to linguistically?</i>	Strategies used to “construct and represent social actors” ¹⁴² through creating “in- and out-groups” and using “explicit and deictic noun phrases.”
Predication	<i>What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?</i>	Relates closely to nomination strategies but is realized through the labeling of social actors through positive and negative attributes, employment of traits, use of adjectives, or presupposition, not merely noun phrases
Argumentation	<i>By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimize the exclusion, discrimination, suppression, and exploitation of others?</i>	Strategies used to justify the positive or negative attributes ascribed to social actors, realized in the <i>topoi</i> —parts of the argument that belong to its premises.
Perspectivation/ Framing	<i>From what perspective or point of view are these namings, attributions, and arguments expressed?</i>	How speakers position their point of view or include themselves in the discourse through strategies of “reporting, description, narration or quotation of relevant events or utterances that justify their claim.”
Intensification/ Mitigation	<i>Are the respective discriminating utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated?</i>	Strategies used to express certainty or uncertainty about a subject—defined by “modifying the epistemic status of a proposition” such as the “illocutionary force of utterances.”

5.2 Setting the Scene

This section equips the reader with a basic understanding of BC parliamentary procedures and politic for a thorough understanding of the discourse of the legislature process. The country that is today recognized as Canada was formally constituted on July 1, 1867. On this date, the British Parliament passed the *British North America Act* (“BNA Act”), designating Canada to be a federated country with self-governing status. The *BNA Act*, known today as the *Constitution Act, 1867* charts Canada’s birth out of the colonial British empire; it’s opening line declares Canada’s status as a constitutional monarchy and its intention to resemble the UK Parliament: “Whereas the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into One Dominion

¹⁴²Wodak and Reisigl, *Discourse and Discrimination*, 45.

¹⁴³Wodak and Reisigl, *Discourse and Discrimination*, 44-45.

under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom.”¹⁴⁴ As such, the King of England, His Majesty King Charles III, is Canada’s official head of state, and the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor are his representatives on the national and provincial level, respectively.

The province of BC, as with the rest of Canada’s provinces and territories, thus follows the Westminster tradition of parliamentary government. At the federal level, the Parliament of Canada includes the House of Commons, the Senate, and the Crown. At the provincial level, the system is “unicameral” meaning that there is no Upper House (i.e. Senate) and thus the Parliament includes only the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia contains 93 seats as of 2025¹⁴⁵ and contained 55 seats in 1972¹⁴⁶. Each seat is represented by an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (“M.L.A.” or “Member”), who represents a geographical area known as a ‘riding’. When the Legislative Assembly gathers it is called a ‘sitting’ and a group of sittings is called a ‘session’. All sittings take place in the House, located not in the well-known City of Vancouver but across the Strait of Georgia, in the province’s capital city, Victoria. Each sitting follows distinct rules of procedure, as detailed in the *Standing Orders of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly*, first created in 1930.¹⁴⁷

Rules of Debate, found in Chapter III, outlines “unparliamentary language”: no member is to speak disrespectfully; use offensive language, including profanity; or engage in personal accusations or disclosures towards other Members. Members shall not respond twice to a single question, nor speak about irrelevant or repetitious subjects.¹⁴⁸ Speeches have a time limit, which depends on whether the speech giver is a Party Leader or whether the debate regarding the budget, an amendment, or a new bill; generally, Members cannot exceed two hours in a single speech. Just as there is ‘unparliamentary language’, there is also ‘parliamentary language’ that defines the decorum of legislative debates. A

¹⁴⁴Legislative Services Branch, “Consolidated Federal Laws of Canada, THE CONSTITUTION ACTS 1867 to 1982,” April 9, 2024, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/>.

¹⁴⁵“Legislative Assembly - Province of British Columbia,” accessed October 17, 2025, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/legislative-assembly>.

¹⁴⁶Elections British Columbia and the and Legislative Library, *ELECTORAL HISTORY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA 1871-1986* (1988), 311.

¹⁴⁷Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, *Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia*, accessed October 17, 2025, https://ppbc.leg.bc.ca/standing_orders.html.

¹⁴⁸Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, *Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia*, Standing Order 40.

Member might request a ‘point of privilege’ or ‘a point of order’ when they believe that the rules of the House have been violated. Where a ‘point of order’¹⁴⁹ is concerned with the misapplication of the rules of debate, a ‘point of privilege’¹⁵⁰ is concerned with an impediment to a Member’s ability to perform their parliamentary duties, such as a case of obstruction or intimidation. The origin of ‘privileges’ in the House is inherited from a time in which the House of Commons in the United Kingdom faced a real threat from the power of the British Crown and House of Lords. The concept has evolved over the centuries and since Canada became a sovereign state, but today the *Canadian House of Commons Procedure and Practice* describes:

“Privilege essentially belongs to the House as a whole; individual Members can claim privilege only insofar as any denial of their rights, or threat made to them, would impede the functioning of the House.”¹⁵¹

In line with the Westminster tradition, the BC parliament does not have a standing date for when elections must occur but rather a framework. Elections are called by the Premier at his discretion and must be within a period of five years.⁴ As such, the length of any given parliament varies considerably. The NDP led the Government for a total of twenty-nine months or 1,200 days, from August 30th, 1972 to December 11th, 1975; and the 30th parliament met for a total of five sessions over the course of three years. During this period, the NDP government passed 367 pieces of legislation, more than any government before or since.¹⁵² The 30th parliament ended when Premier Barrett called an election and was defeated by SOCREDs again—this time led by son, Bill Bennet, of the long-reigning W.A.C. Bennet.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, prior to 1972, the Legislative Assembly did not sit regularly, nor did it keep a public record of transcriptions of the debates that took place within the legislature. The introduction of the Hansard system—also borrowed from the Westminster tradition—brought a

¹⁴⁹Marc Bosc and André Gagnon, Chapter 13: Rules of Order and Decorum, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Third Edition, House of Commons of Canada, 2017, https://www.ourcommons.ca/procedure/procedure-andpractice-3/ch_13_4-e.html

¹⁵⁰Marc Bosc and André Gagnon, “Parliamentary Privilege: A Definition - Privileges and Immunities,” *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Third Edition, House of Commons of Canada, 2017, https://www.ourcommons.ca/procedure/procedure-and-practice-3/ch_03_1-e.html.

¹⁵¹Bosc and Gagnon, “Parliamentary Privilege: A Definition - Privileges and Immunities.”

¹⁵²Pat Johnson, *Remembering Dave Barrett*, March 23, 2018, <https://www.jewishindependent.ca/remembering-dave-barrett/>.

complete verbatim transcript of the legislative proceedings, thus offering a glimpse in the dynamics of the BC parliament like never before. My research takes advantage of this critical act of democracy and transparency.

Both sides of the political aisle express positive regard for the new Hansard system. One of the most vocal Members of the Opposition, Mr. McGeer, offers an emphatic congratulations towards the new Government:

“I just want very briefly to compliment the Minister and the new Government for taking this step. It's so long overdue. Like many members who sat in the Opposition for years, I suffered the frustrations of the unwillingness of the former government to put on record things that were said in the House and in committee...What a change!”¹⁵³

The NDP appointed Minister of Highways, Mr. Strachan, is equally pleased with the changes:

“How far we have come in a few short months, Mr. Speaker. Look at it — *Hansard*, day after day after day. Every word that has been said in the House. Now we are going to have it in committee. Twelve months ago, Mr. Speaker, when we sat in this House, not only were we not entitled to have any record of what was said in the committees — we weren't entitled to any word recorded or available to us — not even what was being said in the present debate...How far we have come in 12 short months — this is another step forward and I'm supporting it.”¹⁵⁴

In Westminster style government, a political party represents a ‘political platform’ which is associated with a specific set of values. Politics are derived from the essence of one’s worldview and boil down to one’s ontological and epistemological positioning—what one believes is real and true. If one believes in the Christian God exists and the Hebrew Bible is true, this belief can manifest in politics in myriad ways: a cherishing of ‘traditional values,’ such as rigid gender roles or heteronormativity standards, or the prioritizing of the fetus’ life and unborn child over the mother or ‘pro-life’ politics. If there is an objective morality or natural order of the world, then it must be protected at all costs. In a different way, if one sees survival as the result of individual merit and the rights of the individual as supreme, this belief is manifest in a commitment to free speech, private property, or capital

¹⁵³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 38.

¹⁵⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 38-39.

accumulation. Politics are tied our deepest, most fundamental and enduring understandings of the world around us.

A political party is not always consistent in its values and can, at times, adhere poorly to one distinct ideological ‘grand narrative’ such as capitalism, socialism, feminism, or environmentalism; this is because political parties are as complex, varied, surprising, and disappointing as human beings. Sometimes the self-proclaimed ‘socialists’ give a big tax break, sometimes the ‘free enterprisers’ invest significantly in social services. Yet, a political party serves to unite many people under a single banner. In this way, a political party is a quintessential site of the struggle for “moral, cultural, intellectual, and political leadership over the whole of society”¹⁵⁵—i.e. the ‘struggle for cultural hegemony’, as Gramsci conceptualizes it.

In a democratic country, like Canada, the nature of politics is to swing between the various political parties. One singular party never reigns for too long. The longest running provincial government in BC was W.A.C. Bennet’s leading the SOCREDs for twenty years, from 1952 to 1972, and the longest federal government rule was the Liberal Party of Canada led by William Lyon Mackenzie King for twenty-two years, from 1935 to 1957. That the nature of politics is to swing suggests a fundamental quality of human nature: not all human beings see the world the same way. A system in which worldviews can synergistically coalesce is the vision of democracy. The nation of Canada was established as a constitutional monarchy but the expansion of democratic features over the past two centuries have resulted in a modern democracy.

The ideologies discussed are ‘socialism’ or ‘democratic socialism’ and ‘capitalism’, represented in the SOCREDs and NDP parties. Consensus suggests that the term *socialism* first appeared in England in the 1820s, France in 1830s, and Germany in the 1840s.¹⁵⁶ To attempt a neat definition of socialism would be impossible, however, as even *The Communist Manifesto* resists a singular definition and instead offers multiple iterations of socialism: three types of “Reactionary Socialism,” the “Conservative or Bourgeois Socialism”, and “Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism”.¹⁵⁷ The later hints at the emergence of ‘democratic socialism’: prominent ‘early socialists’ (like Robert Owen,

¹⁵⁵Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 95.

¹⁵⁶Richard McIntyre, “Democratic Socialism,” *Rethinking Marxism* 35, no. 1 (2023): 24–35, 25.

¹⁵⁷Karl Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, One (Progress Publishers, 1969), Marxists Internet Archive (marxists.org), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>.

Henri de Saint Simon, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon) were criticized by Frederick Engels and Karl Marx as “utopians” without the means to produce real societal transformation. Thus ‘democratic socialism’ offered a more realistic way to transform society. In Engels words, in his 1847 seminal text *The Principles of Communism*, the ‘democratic socialists’ “favor some of the same measures the communicates advocate...not as part of the transition to communism, however, but as measures which they believe will be sufficient to abolish the misery and evils of present-day society.”¹⁵⁸

A 2022 journal article by Richard McIntyre traces the evolution of ‘democratic socialism’ from the nineteenth century to the present-day. McIntyre shows how the term used to be associated with more *moderate* systems of change—i.e. “socialists taking power without revolution—but today “it is the more radical term” that signals a “commitment to systemic transformation, not just changing this or that law.”¹⁵⁹ McIntyre defines ‘socialism’ as “that program that seeks to democratize the workplace and to reorient the state to primarily serve human need rather than capital” and then ‘democratic socialism’ is the democratic implementation and functioning of ‘socialism’, stemming from popular support.¹⁶⁰ This definition serves the selected case study.

A definition of capitalism....

5.3 New Beginnings

The story begins on October 30th, 1972. The NDP have just won a majority government, ending the “20 years of one-man rule in this province,” as Progressive Conservative M.L.A. Mr. Curtis puts it.¹⁶¹ The long-time leader of the SOCREDs, W.A.C. Bennet, had built major highways and rail lines, beefing up the province’s infrastructure, helping his party to “maintain its broad base of support”¹⁶² for two decades. In 1972 though, the SOCREDs were beginning to “show signs of fatigue”; seventeen

¹⁵⁸Frederick Engels, “The Principles of Communism,” in *Selected Works*, One (Progress Publishers, 1847), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11/prin-com.htm>.

¹⁵⁹Richard McIntyre, “Democratic Socialism,” *Rethinking Marxism* 35, no. 1 (2023): 24–35, 25.

¹⁶⁰Richard McIntyre, “Democratic Socialism,” *Rethinking Marxism* 35, no. 1 (2023): 24–35, 26–27.

¹⁶¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 23.

¹⁶²Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985,” 33.

of the SOCRED cabinet ministers had been in office since the early 1950s.¹⁶³ The 1972 election of the NDP marked “a critical juncture in BC history,”¹⁶⁴ as UBC scholar Della Roussin writes.

At the advent of the new NDP government, this is the temporal and geographical context: The Canadian constitution is just over 100 years old and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is working to evolve federal-provincial relations and repatriate the constitution from Britain via the *1971 Victoria Charter*. It is just over two decades since the Second World War and one decade since the Cuban Missile Crisis. The estimated 55,000 British Columbians that served the war effort have returned home. Reintegration services like the Veterans Land Administration and Wartime Housing Limited—critical programs in the 1950s and 1960s—are winding down due to the CMHC shifting their focus away from veteran housing and towards social and cooperative housing. Marxist ideals are pumping through the disillusionment of postwar capitalism and the Vietnam War fatigue, with many people beginning to embrace socialist and anti-imperialist ideals. Media outlets are publishing messages about Cold War anxiety and the fear of the ‘pink menace’ or ‘red scare’.

For the past several decades, the political parties in BC have arranged themselves to keep the ‘socialists’ out of office. Writing in 1985, Beverly Grieve describes the politics in BC as “largely a history of a series of attempts to keep the CCF/NDP from power.”¹⁶⁵ Explicitly quell the threat of CCF victory—the party that preceded the NDP—the Liberal and Conservative parties formed a coalition government in 1941 and governed until the 1952 election of the SOCREDs.¹⁶⁶ The 1952 SOCRED victory “represented ‘a new form of coalition’” to stave off the “socialist threat,” Benjamin Isitt wrote in his book *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972*. Isitt frames the twentieth century as the struggle between the ‘capitalist class’ and the ‘working class’, describing BC politics as “a tug-of-war between labour and capital over resource wealth, corporate consolidation and rising opposition to American resource firms.”¹⁶⁷ In the post-war years,

¹⁶³Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985,” 33.

¹⁶⁴Della Roussin, “Political Legitimacy and Regime Change - The 1972 British Columbia Election” (Master of Arts in The Faculty of Graduate Studies (History), University of British Columbia, 2012), 43.

¹⁶⁵Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985,” 30.

¹⁶⁶Grieve, “Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945–1985,” 30-31.

¹⁶⁷Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972* (University of Toronto Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442690158>, 19.

the fear of communist ideas loomed large and came to be known as ‘the red wars’¹⁶⁸ and ‘the communist scare’.¹⁶⁹ A 1953 newspaper article from the *Financial Post* described communism in BC:

“Strategically placed as Canada’s Gateway to the Pacific and as an ever-growing source of much strategic material for the Canadian and allied defense efforts, British Columbia today is one of Canadian Communism’s most fertile spawning grounds, a bastion in the over-all Canadian Communist disruptive strategy.”¹⁷⁰

The fear of Soviet influence was not without merit, as Isitt writes: “Throughout the Cold War, BC communists retained close relations with the Soviet Union and travelled to the socialist heartland on numerous occasions.”¹⁷¹

After decades of trying to keep the ‘socialist’ party out of office, the NDP win a majority government and assemble the 30th parliament of BC. **Figure 3** provides a summary from the Elections British Columbia and Legislative Library provides a breakdown of the 1972 election results:

Figure 3: 1972 Election Results ¹⁷²

SUMMARY				
	VOTES	%	MEMBERS	CANDIDATES
Communist Party of Canada	862	.08	—	5
Independent	1,184	.10	—	9
Liberal Party	185,640	16.40	5	53
New Democratic Party	448,260	39.59	38	55
Progressive Conservative Party	143,450	12.67	2	49
Social Credit (Party)	352,776	31.16	10	55
TOTALS	1,132,172	100.00	55	226

The 30th parliament of BC opens with a total of fifty-five Legislative Members, broken down in **Figure 3** above. The 1972 election marked the defeat of twenty-eight former SOCRED MLA’s and

¹⁶⁸Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972*, 55.

¹⁶⁹Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972*, 61.

¹⁷⁰Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972*, 55-56.

¹⁷¹Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972*, 55-68.

¹⁷²Elections British Columbia, *ELECTORAL HISTORY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA 1871-1986* (Victoria, BC, 1988), Legislative Library, https://elections.bc.ca/docs/rpt/1871-1986_ElectoralHistoryofBC.pdf, 311.

the election of the first black women, Rosemary Brown, to any provincial legislature in Canada.¹⁷³ The leader of the NDP and first NDP Premier is the Honourable Dave Barrett.

Authors of the book *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power, 1972-1975*, Geoff Meggs (a Vancouver city councilor) and Rod Mickleburgh (a journalist), explore the rhetorical question asked by Barrett on their first day in office: “are we here for a good time, or a long time?”¹⁷⁴ A review of the book by the quarterly academic journal *BC Studies* suggests that “something like a one-term revolution was imagined” by the Barrett’s government. “Meggs and Mickleburgh,” Allen Seager writes in the book review, “clearly belong to what used to be called the ‘grin and Barrett’ school of thought and draw more inspiration from the story than simply a cautionary tale.”¹⁷⁵ My analysis of the book is similar; the authors seem to write from the vantage point of admiration for the Barrett government legacy. Nevertheless, the book provides detailed information on the NDP’s policy-making and archival information.

Dave Barrett was about to turn forty-two years old when he became the province’s first socialist Premier. Barrett was the son of politically active parents, Sam and Rose Barrett; Sam was “a politically active East Vancouver grocer who supported and revered 1930s CCF leader Ernest Winch” and Rose was “a Communist who participated in many of the Depression-era campaigns against poverty and colonialism.”¹⁷⁶ Meggs and Mickleburgh describe Barrett as “a powerful and spontaneous speaker” and “clearly the most talented front-bencher on the NDP team.”¹⁷⁷ Barrett described himself as “a free swinging humanist” that aimed to make the NDP ‘more human,’ representing the “the common interests of the common man.”¹⁷⁸ These descriptions run contrary to the author’s descriptions of Barrett’s predecessor W.A.C. Bennet, who was “a man in power who sees himself in an almost divine right position...he sees not a cabinet around him, but rather a court.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³“1972 - The First Black Woman Elected in Canada | Legislative Assembly of BC,” Legislative Assembly of BC, accessed October 17, 2025, <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn/discover-your-legislature/1972-rosemary-brown-becomes-the-first-black-woman-elected-in-canada>.

¹⁷⁴Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 51.

¹⁷⁵Allen Seager, “The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power, 1972-1975,” *BC Studies*, no. 178 (June 2013): 151–151.

¹⁷⁶Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 27.

¹⁷⁷Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 28-29.

¹⁷⁸Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 34.

¹⁷⁹Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 36.

Quoting a column in the *Vancouver Sun*, Meggs and Mickleburgh write: “‘There ‘is no socialist government in North America...the one place it could happen is BC’ and Barrett could be the man to do it.”¹⁸⁰ They capture the absolute novelty of the 1972 NDP victory in BC: “...the news of a socialist government in free enterprise, *booming BC* made the paper in Europe, through the United States and across Canada.”¹⁸¹ As a BC native, I found this surprising to read. Today BC has the “reputation as Canada’s most progressive province,”¹⁸² writes the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives.¹⁸³ This reputation is owed to its early adoption of same-sex marriage (*Barbeau v. British Columbia*, 2003), inclusion of trans and non-binary rights (*Human Rights Code Amendment Act*, 2016), legal affirmation of multiculturalism (*Multiculturalism Act*, 1993), institutionalization of Indigenous Rights (*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, 2019), and leadership in climate-friendly policies (*Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, 2007; *Climate Change Accountability Act*, 2018). Moreover, the province’s political landscape is dominated by the NDP: Since winning a minority government in a snap election in 2017, the NDP have held steady power. In 2022, and again in 2024, the NDP won a majority government under the leadership of Premier David Eby. At the federal level, half of the NDP’s total seats come from BC ridings: During Premier Justin Trudeau’s government (2019 to 2024), thirteen out of the twenty-five NDP seats came from BC, and in the most recent federal election (2024), three of the seven NDP seats came from BC.

At the point in which “other discourses pose a real threat,” Burr writes—like the socialists gaining real power in the 1972 election—they will always be “contested by other discourses.”¹⁸⁴ Through my close analysis of the legislative transcripts, I saw that the SOCRED Opposition was fierce, at times verging on volatile. One SOCRED MLA, Donald McGray Phillips representing the north-eastern district Peace River South, stood out for his long-impassioned speeches (often seen as ‘filibustering’), hostile remarks, and tireless critiques from the bench—particularly on matters of housing legislation. Another MLA, Jim Chabot representing the South-Eastern district of Columbia River, was relentless on interjecting with ‘points of privilege.’ (A ‘point of privilege’ is legislative speak for when a Member believes that their rights or the rights of the House have been infringed upon.) Other notable

¹⁸⁰Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 29.

¹⁸¹Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 48.

¹⁸²Luke LeBrun, “The Rise of Zany Conspiracy Theory Politics – CCPA.”

¹⁸³Luke LeBrun, “The Rise of Zany Conspiracy Theory Politics – CCPA.”

¹⁸⁴Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 128.

MLAs were SOCREP Patricia Jane Jordan representing Okanagan North and Liberal Patrick Lucey McGreer representing Vancouver-Point Grey.

5.4 First Legislature Session

The first legislative session of the 30th parliament of BC begins at 3pm on October 17th, 1972. The Session opens with the MLAs taking the prescribed oath, signing the parliamentary roll, and taking their seat in the legislature. The new Speaker of the House is chosen—Gordon Hudson Dowding—and he commits to “wisdom, temper, and prudence” and to protect “the freedom of speech in their debates.”¹⁸⁵ Dowding is part of the NDP and represents the Burnaby-Edmonds district, and his job will be to “preside over proceedings in the Chamber,” which includes applying the procedural rules, maintaining order, and defending the rights of the MLAs.¹⁸⁶ (As a note, the Speaker of the House is distinct from the Chairman of the House; where the Speaker presides over the whole Legislative Assembly, the Chairman presides *only* when the House is in the ‘Committee of the Whole,’ which focuses on the details of particular legislations or budgets. As Dowding accepts the position of Speaker, it is though he is peering in the future when he says: “I also wish to say that eight Speakers have been killed by the King in early days for bringing in bad news from this assembly. I rather hope that in the future it will be an orderly House.”¹⁸⁷ In the years that follow, Dowding will be forced to repeatedly shout ‘order’ and ask MLAs to be seated, and he will be accused of abusing the power of the chair by the Opposition. In another act of foreshadowing Meggs and Mickleburgh describe Dowding as “considered less than reliable as a partisan.”¹⁸⁸

Next, the Crown’s representative, the Lieutenant-Governor—at this time, the Honourable John R. Nicholson—takes his seat at the Throne and delivers the Throne Speech, a formal statement on the elected government’s priorities and proposed legislation. The statement is delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor but written by the new Premier and Government, and a debate always follows

¹⁸⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17th, 1972, 4.

¹⁸⁶“Speaker of the House of Commons - Role of the Speaker,” House of Commons of Canada, accessed October 17, 2025, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/speaker/en/role>.

¹⁸⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17th, 1972, 2.

¹⁸⁸Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power*, 49.

the Throne Speech. The debate following the Throne Speech should not exceed six sitting days, as indicated in the *Standing Orders*.¹⁸⁹

The opening Throne Speech of the 30th parliament of BC is brief. The Lieutenant-Governor discusses his retirement and bids farewell to the legislature (though he later decides to stay an additional term). He wishes his successor “good wishes,” remarks on the passing of two former MLAs, and announces “the first guaranteed minimum income of \$200 per month for senior citizens established anywhere in North America.”¹⁹⁰ This legislation, the *Guaranteed Minimum Income Assistance Act* will “cost a substantial amount of money,” but he reassures the legislature, “this wealthy province has the funds available.”¹⁹¹

The Lieutenant-Governor’s announcement of this costly bill sets the tone of the new NDP government: they are willing to innovate and they are willing to spend money. This legislation for senior citizens was the first of its kind in Canada and would be used as a model for other provinces looking to enhance federal social programs. It served as a ‘provincial top-up’ to the federal guarantees of the Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement, assuring that even seniors with no or low income would not fall below a set income floor—the program gained the colloquial name “Mincome”. This legislation was first introduced by the former leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. McGeer, as fellow Liberal M.L.A. David Anderson proudly points out.¹⁹²

The Opposition is quick to criticize the brevity of the new Government’s Throne Speech. SOCRED MLA, Francis Xavier Richter of Boundary-Similkameen district (an eastern region in the province’s desert region), remarks it was “the shortest throne speech in the history of Canada” and probably within the Commonwealth as far as that’s concerned.”¹⁹³ Liberal M.L.A. David Anderson representing the province’s capital, Victoria, seconds this observation: “[the speech] is difficult to comment on directly, in that very little was contained.”¹⁹⁴ Mr. Anderson is shocked that the new government has “taken the time of the House” and the “expense of the public” for such an insubstantial speech.¹⁹⁵ The

¹⁸⁹Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, *Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia*, Standing Order 40.

¹⁹⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17th, 1972, 5.

¹⁹¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17th, 1972, 5.

¹⁹²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 8.

¹⁹³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 8.

¹⁹⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 8.

¹⁹⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 9.

brevity of the Throne Speech is thirdered by SOCRED M.L.A. James Chabot, who comments that it was “so brief it's almost impossible to find it”¹⁹⁶ and contained “absolutely nothing.”¹⁹⁷ The brevity of the Throne Speech hints at how the new NDP government will be criticized for failing to be transparent and clearly articulate its priorities.

The Opposition is worried about rumors of forthcoming legislation. Mr. Anderson has “been told that B.C. Hydro rates are to be increased for industrial consumers” and that these costs will be passed on to consumers. “The government,” he says, “has already indicated that it intends to have an increase in the cost of living *forced* upon the people of British Columbia by the government itself.”¹⁹⁸ Mr. Anderson’s use of the verb ‘forced’ is a strong illocution and suggests an accusation of power being weaponized. Just a few days into the new Government, the Opposition assembles into a loud crescendo: our right to debate is being stifled, they suggest. “It is unfortunate,” Mr. Anderson expresses, “the government of the day has seen fit to restrict discussion in this first ‘emergency,’ now ‘special’...session of the House.”¹⁹⁹ The verbs—‘forced’ and ‘restrict’—reveal an equally forceful illocution and suggest an aggressive tone.

Mr. Chabot builds on the statement presented by Mr. Anderson: “I am saddened by the type of direction my province...is heading under this new Government.”²⁰⁰ Mr. Chabot voices predictable concerns: he worries about the business community, saying the new Government has “certainly shocked the business community of this province,” and about possible “government takeovers” which will result in millions of lost dollars for investors.²⁰¹ B.C. Telephone is the example he gives, which derived from a “wild and irresponsible statement” made by the Premier to a reporter of the Vancouver Province.²⁰² “If they do have intentions of taking them over,” Mr. Chabot urges, employing a dramatic tone, “take them over now.”²⁰³

The NDP MLAs, on the other hand, excitedly anticipate the new government. Mr. Graham Richard Lea, representing the north-west district of Prince Rupert, asks the legislature “to not prejudice the

¹⁹⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 26.

¹⁹⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 30.

¹⁹⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 9, emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 10.

²⁰⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 29.

²⁰¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 26.

²⁰²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 26.

²⁰³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 26.

democratic socialist government you have in British Columbia today,” despite many people having been “programmed from childhood into a certain way of life and a certain way of thinking.”²⁰⁴ Mrs. Daisy Webster, representing Vancouver-South, delivers a brief history on the NDP government—introducing the NDP’s central discursive theme of concern for the people.

Mrs. Webster nominates ‘the people’ as a distinct social group that refers to working-class people, women, and other marginalized groups. Mrs. Webster dates the history of democratic socialism in British Columbia to “the beginning of the century,” to the loggers and miners “who concerned themselves with working conditions in the woods.”²⁰⁵ Her speech paints the NDP with the colors of ‘socialism’ and ‘social justice’ values explicitly. She remarks on the party’s fight against the discrimination of Canadian-Japanese peoples during the Second World War as well as advocacy efforts for the rights of Indigenous peoples.²⁰⁶ In Mrs. Webster’s words, “no field has been left untouched” by the party and “the entire fabric of our society has been altered as a result of the pressure on governments by these early pioneers for social reform.”²⁰⁷

Mrs. Webster introduces another discursive topic central to the NDP platform: economic growth has limits. In a “technological era,” with “the rapid changes in urban living and high inflation,” it is important to “realize the importance of services to people and not merely a policy of growth for growth’s sake,” she shares.²⁰⁸ In the years to come, the NDP will routinely refer to the Club of Rome’s report *The Limits to Growth*, which explicitly challenges GDP growth as a policy goal and advocates for an alternative path of sustainability. The report was published just seven months earlier on March 2nd, 1972, and quickly became a bestseller, translated into many languages, as well as a controversial subject, sparking conversations about unregulated industrial growth and environmental protectionism on both sides of the political aisle. For the NDP to align themselves with the ‘limits to growth’ rhetoric was a bold and polarizing act.

After the Throne Speech debate, on October 20th, 1972, the NDP government stated its intentions to amend *The Municipal Act* (Bill No 3.). Bill No. 3 gave the province and regional districts more authority in land-use planning. In the initial discussion during the first legislative session, the NDP

²⁰⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 6.

²⁰⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 3.

²⁰⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 4.

²⁰⁷ British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 4.

²⁰⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 18th, 1972, 5.

MLA from Delta, Mr. Carl Oswald Liden, warns of the rapidly disappearing farmland that is “changing into industrial lands and into residential lands.” Mr. Linden explains that “large tracts of land” are held by “large development companies” that are “sometimes registered in other parts of the world.”²⁰⁹ In a single sentence, he summarizes the fear—felt by many NDP MLAs—that foreign investors and big corporate players are profiting off BC’s natural resources. The only Progressive Conservative MLA in the legislature, Mr. Hugh Austin Curtis, representing the northern suburbs of Victoria and the southern Gulf Islands, acknowledges “perhaps the most important function given to local government in this province today is control of land use.”²¹⁰

The first bill (Bill No. 1) to be introduced by the 30th parliament was fittingly in the realm of land ownership. Bill No. 1—an Act to amend the Land Registry Act.²¹¹—focused on the transparency of land ownership records. The Attorney General, A.B. Macdonald, described Bill No. 1 as “a simple little bill that may be described as *the people’s* bill which is introduced in a formal way so that the House may assert its prerogative in respect to the Crown.” This ‘little bill’ provided “ordinary people” with access to the land registry system in BC—another nomination to the people.²¹²

Before the passing of Bill No 1., only barristers or solicitors—those with diplomas or professional certificates—were able to become registrars in the land registry offices of BC. The amendment marked a shift in the transparency of landownership records. To ‘own a piece of your own country’ rests on the security of land title and the effectiveness of the land registry system. Giving citizens access to the land registry system enhanced transparency and strengthened ownerships security. Bill No. 1 was passed a few days later, on Wednesday, October 25 1972 in an afternoon legislative session.²¹³ And just like that, the NDP’s three-year term in office began with a proclamation on citizens’ access to BC’s land. The remainder of the first legislative session passes without any notable legislation on housing policy.

²⁰⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 20th, 1972, 3.

²¹⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 20th, 1972, 4.

²¹¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17th, 1972, 6.

²¹²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 19th, 1972, 31.

²¹³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 25th, 1972, 31.

5.5 Second Legislative Session

The second session of the 30th parliament of BC opens in the new year, on the afternoon of January 25th, 1973. The Honourable Mr. L. Nicolson returns as Lieutenant Governor, despite bidding the legislature farewell four months prior. The Throne Speech is only slightly more robust than the previous one; it contains the government's intentions to "live in harmony with our special environment" and "depart from the acquisitive North American values that have seen profligacy and waste on all sides."²¹⁴ This statement is an example of two discursive topics of the NDP MLAs: natural resources need protection and economic growth has limits. Though the Lieutenant Governor is speaking on the government's relationship to the natural environment, there is an irony in this statement: over the next two years, the NDP government will go on to acquire industry to create new Crown corporations and tracts of land to build more housing—repeatedly accused by the Opposition of wasting taxpayer money.

In the throne speech debate, the MLA from the northern Cariboo region, Mr. Fraser nominates the 'taxpayer' in several instances. He describes his constituents in the northern Cariboo region as having "always paid their way" and never expecting "any handouts from the public treasury."²¹⁵ A few paragraphs later, he reminds the legislature that "when somebody said he gave some money to something it's the taxpayers' and the citizens' money."²¹⁶ Mr. Fraser is concerned with what he calls "takeovers"—using the term three times in a single breath. The term 'takeover' can be seen as a discursive strategy of intensification; its implication is that the NDP's activities are aggressive, non-democratic. Mr. Fraser suggests the NDP has planned for "*the takeover* of so many activities in this province"; the examples offered are "the natural gas pipelines, oil pipelines, B.C. Telephone Company, the car insurance, a life insurance... and all privately held land."²¹⁷ This last phrase—'all privately held land'—is an intensification, arguably hyperbolic, as it is unlikely that Mr. Fraser actually believes the NDP government would abolish *all* private land ownership. He displays the Opposition's fear of public control, stating that: "The socialists are advocates of a no-growth policy."²¹⁸

²¹⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., January 25, 1973, 2.

²¹⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 18.

²¹⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 18.

²¹⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 18.

²¹⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 18.

Another MLA, Mr. Curtis, the only Progressive Conservative, echoes “there is growing concern about the distinct possibility of ‘bureaucracy out of control’ in our British Columbia”²¹⁹—introducing a frequent discursive topic of SOCREDs in the 30th parliament of BC: concern for government overreach. The single Progressive Conservative MLA, Mr. Curtis, urges that “we need to start preserving farmers and the farm unit as well as farmland” and in the same breath, express concern for “the serious problem of foreign investment in British Columbia land.”²²⁰ Two months later, the NDP government will introduce the *Land Commission Act* as a way of protecting farmland and preventing land speculation. This policy will protect the farmland but disproportionately affect the farmers.

5.6 The Socialist’s First Budget

The new budget of the NDP Government is introduced to the Legislative Assembly on the afternoon of February 9th, 1973. The budget process in the BC parliament follows the Westminster tradition, beginning with the Lieutenant Governor, as a neutral figure and representative of the Crown, presenting the budget estimates to the Legislative Assembly as the *Estimates of Sums Required for the Service of the Province* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1974. The Premier then requests a motion to have the House to assembly into the Committee of the Whole of the Committee of Supply²²¹—when the entire legislature meets in a less formal setting to go through the budget estimates line by line. The budget debate cannot exceed six sitting days.²²² As is stated in the *Standing Orders*, the Speaker of the House does not preside over the house when the parliament goes into ‘Committee of the Whole’; instead, the committee is presided over by the by another Member, the ‘Deputy Speaker’—in this case the Honorable Hartley Douglas Dent, elected during the parliament’s first session.

After the legislature resolves into the Committee of the Whole of the Committee of Supply, the Premier delivers the budget address and introduces the estimated expenditures and spending priorities

²¹⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 22.

²²⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 1, 1973, 20.

²²¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 2.

²²²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 6.

of the new government. At this stage, the budget presented is an *estimated* spending plan and a proposal of the new government's financial policy. As MLA Mr. Hall describes, "the budget is a plan...a schedule of adjusting expenses during a certain period to the estimated or fixed income for that period."²²³ After the budget address is the budget debate—and after the budget debate, the estimated expenditures are legitimized through the *Supply Act* or the *Interim Supply Act*, if more debate time is needed, and additional expenditures are legitimized through the *Special Funds Appropriation Act*. These legislative acts do not represent a new law or change in policy, as with other bills, but provide a guidebook to the upcoming fiscal year's spending and grant the government the statutory authority to official withdraw money from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the fiscal year. In this case, the Interim Supply Act was introduced on March 10th, 1973 and the Special Funds Appropriation Act (Bill No. 77) was introduced on February 9th 1973, the same day as the budget address, and passed on April 13, 1973.²²⁴

The new budget is "the largest single year increase ever for the province,"²²⁵ totaling over a quarter of a billion dollars more than the previous year. The Premier blames the SOCREd's failings for the budgetary increases: "it is made so because of past deficiencies and the need to restore the level of provincial government services."²²⁶ The increased expenditures are necessary, he argues, "to bring social and economic stability."²²⁷ Meggs and Mickleburgh describe the budget similarly "[it seeks] great economic equality and social justice."²²⁸

The new budget contains novel expenditures on housing: an increase to the basic homeowner grant, \$89 million over the next year; \$10 million towards the Land Acquisition Fund²²⁹; \$50 million to the Home Acquisition Fund²³⁰; and an additional appropriation of \$50 million towards new housing activities. Funds for the already existing housing programs are legitimized through the *Supply/Interim Supply Act*, while the additional \$50 million appropriation—typically for designated capital projects—go through the *Special Appropriation Fund Act*.

²²³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 3.

²²⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 19.

²²⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 8.

²²⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 8.

²²⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 8.

²²⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 8.

²²⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 10.

²³⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 10.

Many times, the explicit philosophical differences between the Government and the Opposition are articulated by the Members. Mr. Strachan asserts “there is certainly a demarcation—a distinct difference between the policies, the hopes and the aspirations of the Opposition in this House and those of the NDP and their philosophies.”²³¹ Mr. Strachan alludes specifically to a distinct philosophy within the NDP platform and highlights the discursive topics concern for the people and economic growth has limits: “for the first time in this province, in this socialist budget, we have a document that reflects a philosophy that people come first; that reflects a philosophy that the economy must exist to help people and not vice versa.”²³² NDP MLA Mr. James Gorst suggests that BC is on its way to becoming a model of social democracy. “There are many people out there who are hopeful that they somehow can bring about the kind of programme we are going to have in British Columbia,” he says.²³³ Mr. Gorst speaks of change and the implementation of a new political philosophy: “[the world] may witness a new society and be convinced that they too should adopt our political philosophy.”²³⁴

The Opposition’s Mrs. Jordan also refers to the NDP’s socialist affiliations but assigns a negative predication, employing revolutionary rhetoric: “he is encouraging socialist revolution rather than sound social reform based on sound economic policies and a thorough understanding of economics.”²³⁵ She asserts the position of the Opposition—“the philosophy in this budget is exactly opposite to the philosophy we stand for”²³⁶—and evokes the Roman emperor Cesar Augustus, casting a sense a doom and tyranny on the new government. “There was a Caesar then and it looks like there is a Caesar now, and it will lead to his downfall...” she says.²³⁷

The Premier’s budget address—a speech that offers more about the new government’s ‘philosophy’ than the two previous throne speeches put together. Premier Barrett leads with the most frequent discursive topic of the new NDP Government: concern for the people. “This budget heralds a new era for *the people* of our province, an era where the rights of the individual are supreme,”²³⁸ and a

²³¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 69.

²³²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 69.

²³³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 31.

²³⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 31.

²³⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 60.

²³⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 62.

²³⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 61.

²³⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 2.

few breathes later, “the economy should serve *the people*, not people the economy.”²³⁹ The budget’s social expenditures—which is claimed to be 69% of total expenditures—is a “record expenditure” that “reflects the Government’s philosophy of *people-oriented* policies,” says Premier Barrett.²⁴⁰ The Premier then asserts what seems to be obvious: that his government is philosophically ‘separate’ from “the Opposition over there,” through its intention to protect resources “for the best interests of *the people*, not just for political expediency through development.”²⁴¹ “We proposed a new deal *for people*,” the Premier continues, “and *the people* of British Columbia accepted this proposal.”²⁴²

Premier Barrett’s budget speech also features the discursive topic economic growth has limits. “We do not desire more growth for growth’s sake, but rather growth on terms suitable to this province.”²⁴³ The NDP is not shy in expressing its alignment with the ‘limits of growth’ ideology, as popularized by the previously mentioned 1972 Club of Rome report. “For too long, governments of most of the major industrial countries have been obsessed with economic development,” the Premier shares, “falsely equating a high rate of economic growth with rapid social improvement.”²⁴⁴

In the budget address, the Government’s intention to utilize public land through leasehold tenure is made clear and the discursive topic of public ownership is good is introduced. The new government is clear about its intention to acquire land for housing development, adding to the province’s already plump portfolio. In the province that has 95 percent of its land in public control, the Premier evokes a sense of scarcity, saying that land will be acquired “while it is still available.”²⁴⁵ The Land Acquisition Programme is “a major priority” for his government, says the Premier, and he does not agree to “all the details of the Home Acquisition Programme” and thus does not wish to ‘lock in’ the funding but tie it to the Land Acquisition Programme.²⁴⁶ “[This land acquisition] will help ensure our citizens have an opportunity for adequate housing,”²⁴⁷ says Premier Barrett.

The legislature reconvenes after the weekend and the budget debate continues in the afternoon of Monday, February 13th. Member of the Opposition, Mr. Morrison, marvels at what he coyly dubs

²³⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 3.

²⁴⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 11.

²⁴¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 3.

²⁴²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 13.

²⁴³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 3.

²⁴⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 5.

²⁴⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 10.

²⁴⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 10.

²⁴⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 1st Sess., 30th Parl., October 17, 1972, 10.

“Hall’s hollow threat”—a play off the Member Mr. Hall’s claim the previous week that the NDP party would not “fitter away this opportunity,” referring to the first budget of the new Government.²⁴⁸ Mr. Morrison and the rest of the Opposition ‘backbenchers’ have been waiting “with bated breath” to discover the new Government’s budget, but were “shocked” to find a budget that “lacks imagination” and is like “a faint, fluttering candle”.²⁴⁹ The percentage of the budget dedicated to social services (69 percent)—which Premier Barrett announced was a “record expenditure” that reflected “the Government’s philosophy of people-oriented policies” in his budget address²⁵⁰—is the same percentage dedicated to social services as the year previous, he says. Mr. Morrison adds a jilt of humor to make his point, referring to the previous SOCRED administration as the ‘Dark Ages’: “...we turn to page 28 of that so-called document from the Dark Ages, 1972, and we find, Mr. Speaker, that in the last budget 69 per cent was spent. Where is the bright new era in that comparison?”²⁵¹

Mr. Morrison’s speech features the discursive topics most frequent to the Opposition. His concern lies primarily with ‘fiscal responsibility’ the ‘burden’ that the business community and the individual taxpayer will carry as a result of the new Government’s financial policies. Mr. Morrison employs the new Government’s rhetoric of concern for the people against them: “The grand expectation that this would be a people's budget must have struck them as ironic.”²⁵²

After the budget address, assembled in the Committee of the Whole of the Committee of Supply, the budget debate commences, and legislative members offer their responses and reactions to the estimated expenditures. Nearing the end of the budget debate, NDP Mr. Strachan summarizes the various responses of the House:

“The Social Credit House Leader said it was a Social Credit budget. The Conservative House Leader said it was a socialist budget. The lead-off speaker for the official Opposition said it was a tinker-toy budget. The former Liberal leader said it was a shell game. The present Liberal leader, the pro tem present Liberal leader, said it's more of the same.”²⁵³

²⁴⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 12, 1973, 2.

²⁴⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 12, 1973, 2.

²⁵⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 9, 1973, 12.

²⁵¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 12, 1973, 2.

²⁵²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 12, 1973, 2.

²⁵³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 64.

Responses are predictably polarized on both sides of the political aisles. Most days, the House is clearly filled with lively and impassioned debate, and sometimes, the House is heated with agitation and vitriol. The most vocal Members of the Opposition during the budget debate are Mr. James Chabot and Mrs. Patricia Jordan. On one of the final days of the debate, Mr. Chabot declares that the Premier “is attempting to mislead this House” and is forced to withdraw the statement. The withdrawal is unsatisfactory to the Premier, as he quips that “it’s very interesting that one can use a technique of saying something and then withdrawing it.”²⁵⁴ Mrs. Jordan’s cutting remark in an afternoon sitting suggest agitation; after she has expressed disappointment at the site of many empty seats in the legislature, she snaps at the Provincial Secretary—“why don’t you calm down and become a Canadian.”²⁵⁵ Mrs. Jordan was later forced to withdraw this comment.

I noticed that the Opposition primarily expressed concern with the taxpayers and business owners and their right to operate in a free-market capitalist system. This was demonstrated through discourse that suggested concern for the taxpayer and the belief that capitalism is natural and economic growth is good. Mr. Chabot uses intense language to describe the budget: “[the] take over and squeeze out budget”²⁵⁶, “an illusory budget”, and “a vacant budget”²⁵⁷, he describes. He employs negative predication to describe the new Government, calling the NDP a “steamroller government” that is trying to “destroy private enterprise”:

“I want to say that this little group here will not sit idly by while that large 38 Member steamroller Government tries to destroy private enterprise in British Columbia. We will fight at every turn in the road against that steamroller government that is trying to squeeze out and penalize all industry in this province.”²⁵⁸

Mr. Chabot suggests the budget will bring about “punitive taxation against industry and the small businessman,”²⁵⁹ showing concern for the taxpayer and the business community. Mr. Chabot announces, decidedly, that he will be voting against the budget.

²⁵⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 36.

²⁵⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 48.

²⁵⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 9.

²⁵⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 15.

²⁵⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 9.

²⁵⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 9.

Another SOCRED M.L.A., Mr. Schroeder, nominates the taxpayer as a distinct social group: “it is the people of British Columbia that have built this sound [economic] base”.²⁶⁰ When Mr. Schroeder delivers an impassioned speech, arguing for the right of the ‘corporation’ to pursue a profit, he rhetorically implores: “I want to ask you—what is so undesirable about a corporation making a profit?”²⁶¹ He rails against ‘government-owned enterprises’ that treat profit like “an ugly word”²⁶² and then “stand back and ogle with covetous eye the profits of a successful corporation” only to then “leap upon them like a vulture”.²⁶³

Mrs. Patricia Jordan too argues against the claims of the new Government that their 69 percent dedication of the budget to social services is no ‘record expenditure’:

“This is no spectacular contract when one compares the percentage allotted to each of these people’s services during the last four years of the Social Credit regime and the budget increases provided under this budget.”²⁶⁴

Mrs. Jordan describes the budget as “theatrical—and really quite vacant in content,” pointing out that the acclaimed allocation towards social expenditures are “exactly the same 69 percent that was provided in the last social credit budget.”²⁶⁵

NDP Mr. Robert Strachan offers a defensive comment on the budget’s similarity to the previous government:

“There were people who indicated...that there really wasn’t much difference between this budget and the previous budget. They perhaps were misled by the fact that the budget contained a substantial number of large figures and that the estimates are divided into the same departments as they always have been.... But there is a substantial difference in how these figures were handled.”²⁶⁶

Of course, many NDP Members express support for the budget. Mr. Alexander McDonald, representing East Vancouver, describes the budget as “living force... a little bit of the blue sky of a

²⁶⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 9.

²⁶¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 12.

²⁶²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 12.

²⁶³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 12.

²⁶⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 55.

²⁶⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 55.

²⁶⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 64.

bright future for British Columbia.”²⁶⁷ “The socialist approach in this budget,” Mr. Strachan states “[will] help the people that need help in the Province of British Columbia.”²⁶⁸

In the NDP Member’s responses, I noticed that many painted a negative picture of the ‘free enterprisers’ and articulated that capitalism is bad. Mrs. Brown describes the free enterprising mind as “devious” and “dishonorable” whom “indulge in and participate in immoral deals”.²⁶⁹ “Lack of corporate morality,” says Mrs. Brown, “has caused the free enterprisers to fail”.²⁷⁰ Mr. MacDonald calls for Premier Barrett to “put a stop” to the “foreign speculators and profiteers” whom have “crisscrossed this province like predators, leaving nothing behind for the people of this province but devastation”.²⁷¹ Mr. Strachan delivers an accusation directly to the Opposition bench: “We’re suffering from many years of *your* kind of free enterprise economy,”²⁷² while Mr. PF Young exclaims that “B.C. has too long been the happy hunting ground for the corporate rip-off.”²⁷³

In the case of housing, the NDP MLA Mr. GH Anderson declares that the culpable free enterprisers are the land speculators that “have been robbing us for so many years.” His solution is to acquire more public land and “lease it out”,²⁷⁴ a clear nod to public ownership is good. NDP MLA Mrs. Brown reads from the NDP Programme, explicitly highlighting the NDP’s preference for leaseholder tenure:

"Land is a basic natural resource to be preserved. Not a commodity to be bought and sold. An NDP Government will establish an aggressive land bank programme around urban centres, financed by senior governments in conjunction with a policy of leaseholds.”²⁷⁵

NDP MLA Mr. Anderson claims “Some of the best news to me is the beginning of the land accumulation for land banks.”²⁷⁶

The Opposition members are not all pleased to hear about the accumulation of land for the new land bank program. Mr. Chabot says he is “opposed to the approach which the Government is taking on

²⁶⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 8.

²⁶⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 67.

²⁶⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁷⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁷¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 3.

²⁷²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 23, 1973, 69.

²⁷³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 24, 1973, 26-27.

²⁷⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 24, 1973, 26.

²⁷⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 16.

²⁷⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 14, 1973, 26.

this most important matter [of housing for low-income persons].”²⁷⁷ He employs a negative predication, ascribing the word ‘obsession’ to the new government’s land policy. He describes the *obsession* which the Government has to purchase land, almost at any price,”²⁷⁸ and again a few pages later, “the *obsession* which the Government has to buy land at almost any cost.”²⁷⁹ Mr. Chabot further accuses the Government of wanting to “make a fast buck in housing”.²⁸⁰

The debate circles around the subject of land and natural resource protection. Mr. Gorst speaks about land as collective resource, urging the House to “not be misled by those who expound the theories of unlimited land, limitless wildlife and overabundant fisheries.”²⁸¹ Mr. Nunweiler shares the perspective of his indigenous constituents:

“We don’t always appreciate and consider seriously enough the landscape which has always been at our doorstep and which we tend to take for granted. I am referring to the natural landscape of British Columbia — the abundance of wilderness areas accessible to the public. We should underline the fact that the landscape as it is today presents the greatest resource that we have. But it may not always be here if we do not safeguard and preserve its natural order. That is, the natural order of the land. If we wait until we deface it, it will never be restored.”²⁸²

The phrase ‘natural order’ suggests that discourse is ‘doing ideological work’. Mr. Nunweiler’s statement about the ‘natural order of the land’ implies that land has a natural order that requires protection and safeguarding. This suggests that it is natural to place a limit on forms of growth that inhibit the land’s ‘natural order’. Another NDP MLA, Mr. Wallace, hints at the limits of economic growth; “...everybody should have gainful employment in this province,” he states, “but that does not have the corollary that people should have the jobs at any expense, or that we should rape the landscape, or that we should give away our resources.”²⁸³

²⁷⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 13.

²⁷⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 10.

²⁷⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 10.

²⁸⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 10.

²⁸¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 35.

²⁸²British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 22.

²⁸³British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 31, 1973, 39-40.

Mrs. Brown chimes in, “for, as has been said before, land is a non-renewable resource, and we have to husband it,” and continues, land belongs to all of us and is hereto benefit all of us”.²⁸⁴ Mrs. Brown declares that the new government must “work towards a commitment of planning, developing and leasing of land for the good of all people and not for just a few — no speculation, no rip-offs, neither by people nor municipalities.”²⁸⁵ The ideological work’ done by these statements are clear; if there are limits to growth, then land is a collective resource and is best controlled through public ownership.²⁸⁶ The ideological structure that upholds land as a collective resource is the notion of ‘rights’: the ‘right’ to the province’s land runs parallel to the ‘right’ to housing. Reading directly from the NDP Programme again, Mrs. Brown states: "Housing is a basic right, and must be provided on the basis of need rather than profit,"²⁸⁷ suggesting too that economic growth has limits.

Mr. Schroeder says the news of the government’s decision to keep the homeowner grant “does my heart good.”²⁸⁸ Mr. Dent suggests “there should be a system worked out so that property tax is about the same everywhere in the province.”²⁸⁹ Mr. Chabot suggests that the housing budget expenditures would be better directed at subsidizing rents, rather than constructing low-cost housing on public land.²⁹⁰ This idea follows the national housing models of countries like Norway, who subsidize rents to low-income persons, immigrants, or single-parents renting on the private market, thereby partnering with the business community rather than competing as another housing developer in the market. Mr. Chabot worries about the ‘ghettoization’ of neighborhoods that can occur with large public housing projects, when low-income persons congregate rather than integrate with the rest of society. The ‘ghettoization’ effect has been exemplified in ‘the projects’ in New York City, the gang ridden sections of Stockholm, or in the public housing in Toronto.

Mr. Chabot suggests, instead, that the housing budget expenditures are better directed at subsidizing rents, rather than constructing low-cost housing.²⁹¹ This idea follows the national housing models of countries like Norway, who subsidize rents to low-income persons, immigrants, or single-parents,

²⁸⁴British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁸⁵British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁸⁶British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁸⁷British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 17.

²⁸⁸British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 10.

²⁸⁹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 13, 1973, 10.

²⁹⁰British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 10.

²⁹¹British Columbia, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly (Hansard)*, 2nd Sess., 30th Parl., February 21, 1973, 10

thereby partnering with the private market – this as an alternative approach to the government playing the role of housing developer. Mr. Chabot worries about the ‘ghettoization’ of neighborhoods that can occur with large public housing projects, when low-income persons congregate rather than integrate with the rest of society. The ‘ghettoization’ effect has been exemplified in ‘the projects’ in New York City, the gang ridden sections of Stockholm, or in the public housing in Toronto.