

servatives had moved right and elected Walter Weir, an undertaker from the small town of Minnedosa, as leader. The Liberals, the official Opposition party, followed suit, electing Bobby Bend, an Anglo-Saxon fiscal conservative, to replace their Franco-Manitoban leader.

The shifts left a large part of the political spectrum—the left and centre—up for grabs. The NDP, led by Ed Schreyer (now Canada's Governor General), grabbed it.

Schreyer was a vigorous supporter of Prime Minister Trudeau's bilingualism and biculturalism programs. Bend, the new Liberal leader, was not.

In the 1969 election the Liberals, who had been getting more than a third of the popular vote, took less than a fourth, and the NDP passed both of the established parties and formed a minority government.

Larry Desjardins, the St. Boniface Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly, then switched to the NDP, giving them the extra vital seat and carrying a great many Franco-Manitobans with him.

In 1977 the Liberals moved back to the left and lost many of their remaining rural voters. This time their misfortune benefited the Conservatives and Sterling Lyon became Premier.

The NDP's somewhat surprising sweep last year seemed to end, for the time being at least,

Lyon's experiment in "neo-conservatism." The Conservatives campaigned on the promise of three "megaprojects"—an \$800 million Alcan aluminum smelter, a \$600 million potash mine near the Saskatchewan border and a multibillion-dollar hydro grid to carry the province's surplus power to Saskatchewan and Alberta. The three projects, which were far from final form, did not apparently catch the voters' interest; and memory of Lyon's earlier lifting of rent controls, cutting of the provincial civil service by 1,300 and putting universities, hospitals and social programs on tight budgets lingered on.

Since the election the NDP has pursued a moderate course.

Premier Pawley is committed to some fairly large public expenditures, including \$50 million for housing construction, \$20 million for a proposed government oil company, \$23 million in interest-rate assistance for homeowners, farmers and small businesses, a \$10 million expansion of the government's forestry complex and a \$1.5 million program in rural redevelopment.

One of Lyon's "megaprojects," the aluminum smelter, was postponed indefinitely by Alcan because of slackened demand, and the power grid has been postponed for two years. The potash program is still alive, but the industry is in a severe recession.

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## The Garrison Diversion

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As a recent public opinion poll showed, 98 per cent of Manitoba's citizens are opposed to the diverting of U.S. river water into Canada through the Garrison Diversion.

The project has been pushed with varying degrees of energy by North Dakota since 1889. Congress authorized it in 1965.

It is a complex and expensive proposal: the best estimates are that it would cost \$1 billion. In its full form a dam, already in place, and a series of canals, pumps and reservoirs would take Missouri River water and carry it east and north to irrigate some 250,000 acres of dry North Dakota farmland. The main problem from the Canadian standpoint is that the diversion would move water from one river basin to another. Some water that would normally flow down the Missouri and into the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico would run off into the Souris and Red Rivers and ultimately into Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis and Hudson Bay.

Scientists believe the water would transfer three predatory fish species, and this would reduce the fish populations that are the basis of Manitoba's large commercial and sport fishing industries by 50 to 75 percent.

The hazards first became apparent in the

mid-1970s. The Canadian government argued in a series of notes to the U.S. State Department that the project would violate the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, which says that the "water herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other."

The two governments referred the question to the International Joint Commission in 1975. The Commission concluded that "the construction and operation of the Garrison Diversion Unit as envisaged would cause significant injury to health and property in Canada as a result of adverse impacts on the water quality and on some of the more important biological resources in Manitoba."

Support for the project in North Dakota, which has been solid for ninety years, has recently been less so. The Committee to Save North Dakota, a group of farmers whose land would be appropriated, argued that to construct a project to irrigate 250,000 acres, some 225,000 acres, much of it productive farmland, would be turned into canals and reservoirs. One of the twenty-five counties that had been part of the Garrison Conservancy District withdrew from the program, and four other counties have considered doing the