

# Russell and Gray have their say

by Richard Watts

WCC candidate Mer Vrey says he fought for Canada in two wars and he is still fighting for his country.

"It's a great country, all we're looking for is equality in Confederation," says Gray.

Gray says if there was an elected Senate with equal provincial representation the WCC would disappear tomorrow.

"There would be no reason for us to exist," asserts Gray.

The WCC says Gray feel there will be no diversification of the Alberta economy until political equality for the West has been achieved in Ottawa.

"Right now all the tax breaks and money is to the industries that operate in the East," says Gray.

Gray also cited the freight rates set in Ottawa as a step to diversification of the Alberta economy.

Gray is an ardent free-enterpriser who feels "the government has, absolutely no place in business."

In that regard Gray feels the sale of PWA is totally justified.

"It's been shown time and time again that governments just cannot run businesses effectively and efficiently and even something like an airline although it is an asset for the province should be turned over to businessmen," says Gray.

On the handling of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Gray was quite critical of Conservative Government's handling of the money.

Gray says the WCC have plans to

inject money into Alberta Trust which would be provided for businesses and potential homeowners at advantageous rates.

Gray answered questions concerning the role of natural government monopolies and crown corporations.

He did admit the government has some role to play but says, "the government must always think very carefully whenever they step into the business world."

The WCC's plans for giving every Alberta \$1,000 out of the Heritage Fund represent a billion dollar injection into the economy says Gray.

"That sort of boost will help everybody who receives it and will help small businesses as people buy the things they have been putting off buying because they couldn't afford to," says Gray.



WCC candidate for Parkallen Merv Gray

Addressing himself to public transport Gray stated the Provincial Government has to support LRT development in both Calgary and Edmonton.

The Provincial Government has got to make a large contribution to public transport in the two big cities, but we should not forget those people in the small towns," says Gray.

"A small town might need to have their streets paved and their need is just as valid as the big city's need, asserts Gray.

On the issue of funding for post secondary institutions Gray says the government has a major responsibility.

"Young people coming up are a major resource and that resource has to be developed," says Gray.

Considering accessibility of post-secondary education Gray was somewhat unsure.

He did admit to a belief that money should not represent a barrier to post secondary education, provided an individual demonstrated ability and worth.

"Like I said that person is a major resource of the province and should be developed, but there has to be a demonstrated worth," says Gray.

Addressing himself to the question of whether or not private industry should help support post-secondary education through private sector funding.

He did however admit that the fears that have been expressed on campus about the university becoming top-heavy with emphasis on business and industrial training were justified.

"Those fears are definitely justified, a person who comes out with a well-rounded education will naturally be a better citizen," says Gray.

MR. Gray expressed dismay over the way the media has portrayed the WCC and says the NDP are not the only alternative to the Progressive Conservatives.

"We're here with a story to be told and nobody is listening," says Gray.

"The media attack Gordon Kessler for what he is rather than for what he tries to do has done, they blow the ex-rodéo cowboy thing way out of proportion, the WCC could be good in opposition as well as in government."

Merv Gray is a 59 year old father of 7. He and his wife Beverly have lived in western Canada all their lives except for a brief stay in the U.S.A. when he was transferred there by the company he was working for.

"But I had to come back because I found my values had been formed as a Canadian and I just couldn't live in the United States, their values being so different," says Gray.

Mr. Gray is currently retired and lives in the Lansdowne area.

## And Jim Russell says...

by Allison Annesley

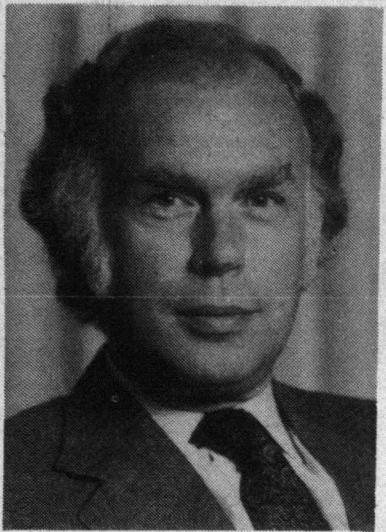
Parkallen MLA candidate for the NDP, Jim Russell has plans for large scale economic changes and criticisms of Tory spending.

Russell also supports an increase in funding for the university, although he was unaware of the government participation study to determine which socio-economic groups least attend post-secondary institutions.

The study was in response to student demand for an accessibility

study during last year's march on the Legislature. The study will provide statistics but will not make specific recommendations. Russell's only comment: "When in doubt, study it some more."

Of university funding, Russell says, "I frankly don't think the government cares. Their attitude has been that if you're really good you'll go someplace else. The new scholarship to send Albertans to Harvard is ridiculous. There are some really first rate people here at the U of A."



NDP candidate for Parkallen Jim Russell

One of the NDP's objectives, according to Russell, is to maintain federal transfer payments in education. (Specifically Established Programs Financing.)

"We're fighting to trade on what we have that's good," says Russell.

Russell is flexible regarding private sector funding: "Under some circumstances it can be helpful but from my point of view, it is only valuable if it comes without strings. Directing funds is okay if there is no conflict of interest."

"IBM, for instance, donates funds to the study of mental retardation. I have no problem with that."

Russell has strong criticisms of the Tory mortgage subsidy program. Apparently, the NDP has estimated the government's cost of sending cheques alone at \$29 million and the maintenance of individual accounts for mortgage holders, at double that figure.

The NDP plan, Russell says, would forward capitol to the Treasury Branch for issuing mortgages at interest rates of 10 percent for families with an income of up to \$35,000 a year. (The median Alberta income, Russell explained) Homeowners would pay up to 14 percent interest as you go up the income scale, with the ceiling for

eligibility set at \$80,000.

"Peter Pocklington is eligible for the Tory subsidy scheme," says Russell, "and that's ridiculous."

"The Tory mortgage plan is a throwaway," the NDP candidate says, "you end up with no assets. Construction of the LRT creates jobs, puts money back into the economy and creates assets." (The NDP has committed \$713 million to cover two thirds of projected LRT costs.)

Another NDP promise calls for the construction of a heavy oil upgrader in the Lloydminster area, which Russell explained would be relatively modest, about one third the size of the proposed Allsands project.

The NDP upgrader, says Russell, "would be designed, owned, and constructed by Albertans." If built with private industry, Russell said, "the risk would be spread and we could share expertise. If not, we would still go through."

The NDP would maintain most crown corporations, which Russell believes to provide "the only way to do things efficiently in many cases. I would like to see diversification but there are some natural monopolies, like the telephone company," said Russell.

The Parkallen candidate feels that PWA was purchased for the wrong reasons: "They (the government) bailed out friends who were shareholders. They bought high and are now selling low."

"They don't know what to do with it anyway. They purchased new Boeing aircraft and have negotiated nothing in the way of benefits for Albertans."

"No one else in the world does that."

Russell would prefer an independent PWA and would appoint "hard-nosed people" to run it. He claims the NDP would "make sure it's used as an instrument to further the economic well-being of Alberta."

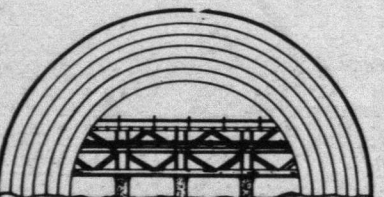
Jim Russell took 32 percent of the Parkallen vote in the last election and reports "good canvassing results" so far.

"Parkallen," says Russell, "is strictly a two way fight between the NDP and the PCs."

Russell, 44 is a medical scientist and professor of surgery at the U of A. He and his wife, Wendy, have one daughter, Trina, 15.

Although *The Gateway* contacted the Progressive Conservative constituency headquarters for Parkallen on the same day that the NDP and WCC agreed to interviews, Mr. Crawford was not available.

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