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*these projects are subject to confirmation of funding by the Summer Youth Employment Program
For More Information contact Nolan Astley
c/o Rm. 259 SUB, or 432-4236
Application Deadline 10 April, 4 p.m. Rm. 259 SUB.

Western power a myth

by Julie Green

A shift of power westward from central Canada is more of a myth than a reality, decided participants in a two-day Canadian Studies conference at the U of A this weekend.

"Westward shift is an overblown term. The West has been growing but then so has the rest of Canada," said U of A economist Michael Percy at *Power Shift West*.

Some activity called westward shift is actually a reallocation of capital and labor within the West rather than a movement from central Canada to the West, he said.

"Economic power rests with the multinationals and a westward shift of their power has not taken place; financial institutions have extended west rather than moved west," said sociologist Patricia Marchak of the University of British Columbia.

"Alberta has a newly found wealth as a growing financial center in Canada, but it has no more power relative to the rest of the country to affect national

policies than it had 20 or 30 years ago, said historian David Bercuson of University of Calgary.

"Financial power has not yet produced a complementary political or economic power and it is not likely to unless Alberta's population triples, and its industrial base expands," he said.

Other conference participants disagree with the premise that the West is completely unchanged.

"It is very easy to exaggerate the degree to which the Canadian economy is undergoing interregional changes, yet Western Canada is not as it has always been," said political scientist Larry Pratt of the U of A.

"The fact that the western provinces have matured politically is more significant than a westward shift, he said.

"A shift of power within the political framework is real enough though federal control of international trade and monetary policy still limits western growth, said Marchak.

People are isolated in regions and they see the phenomena of the growth of the

provincial state as specific rather than national, said Wallace Clement of McMaster University.

The perception of a power shift has caused a power shift west, claims historian David Alexander of Memorial University. The power shift is demonstrated by the little signs from society. For example, on an airline travelling west, the food is better than if you were travelling east, he said.

What will the west do with its wealth and perceived power?

"The west has the potential to take a positive direction and this potential is not yet realized," said Pratt. "The region won't fit until the government becomes more active in controlling the market and distribution of economic rents," he said.

"It is easier to abuse power than to use it well and Westerners will be watched to see if they are any wiser than those from other parts of the country whom they have been inclined to revile, said Alexander.



CINEMA

tues 1

WILD WEED

PLUS

Reefer MADNESS

wed 2

COUSIN COUSINE



thurs 3



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COUSIN COUSINE
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