

## Dr. Meekison of Alberta's FIGA Comments

"The election of a government which has as its ultimate objective the creation of the independent state of Quebec has raised the consciousness of Canadians about the adequacy or inadequacy of the constitutional and institutional arrangements. The fact that Quebecers will be called upon shortly—presumably within the next year—to make a choice about their future in a provincial referendum makes time a significant factor. . . .

"Without diminishing the importance of developments in Quebec, one should take into account other significant pressures for change within the federation. Among these are: the emergence of a new West, and the concern of many Canadians at what appears to be a strong trend towards centralization in the Canadian federation. . . . The tariff structure and the transportation system have placed the resource-rich West and the At-

lantic provinces in a position of being an economic hinterland for Central Canada which has an economy based largely on manufacturing. . . .

"To the Alberta government the belief in provincial equality is one of the most crucial components of its position. [It] does not believe in first and second class provinces. It is not seeking a privileged position within Confederation nor is it seeking to impose its feelings on any other government. . . .

"The federal government and all the provinces except Quebec have rejected both the status quo and the separatist option. . . . This intense scrutiny of our federal system and the attempt to arrive at a 'third option' carries with it considerable risks. The future of Canada as a united nation may well hinge on the outcome."

London, Ontario, 5 March 1979

The Alberta Farmers Association and the Farmers Society of Equity united in 1909 to exert political pressure on existing parties. In 1921, as the United Farmers of Alberta, upper left, they entered politics directly and won 39 of 61 provincial seats. The Social Credit supporters in Ogden, Alberta, lower left, were ripe for victory in 1935. The Leduc oil strike in 1947, right, changed the course of Alberta's history.

