



AGM '95: Alberta Greens Select New Leader

The Alberta Greens selected David Parker of Edmonton as their new leader at their 1995 Annual General Meeting held in Red Deer on April 29th. The election was held after Betty Paschen resigned this position that she had held for about four years. She stated that her main reason for stepping down was to give someone "younger and with more energy" the opportunity. Needless to say, those present at the meeting did not agree with her self-assessment.

David Parker was born in 1947 in Britain, where he spent the first 25 years of his life. He was educated there as an Electronics Engineer, and has been employed for the last 17 years at NAIT, teaching instrumentation. Married for 12 years to Margaret, a psychologist, they are parents of 2 daughters.

David has been concerned about environmental issues for over 20 years, and has been a vegetarian for the past seven. He ran as a candidate for the Alberta Greens in the 1993 provincial election.

The remainder of the Alberta Greens executive are unchanged:

- Pamela Munroe, Treasurer
- David Crowe, President
- Madeleine Oldershaw, Secretary

The AGM was an informal affair but proved to be an exciting exchange of ideas between Greens from several parts of Alberta.

Greens Protest Gas Exports Again

Almost 100 ordinary citizens, environmental, social action and consumer groups are intervening to oppose two natural gas export proposals. This will be the second time that a wall of concerned Canadians have appeared at National Energy Board (NEB) hearings. The last time their focus was on the environmental impact of gas exports. These concerns were skirted by the specious argument used by the NEB that, because gas is pooled before being shipped across the border, there was no direct connection between the export and any specific environmental effect. The NEB and corporations do not deny that there are environmental effects they just argue that gas can be laundered by the technique of corporate pooling. One wonders whether drug dealers could get together and pool their illegal profits in this way!

During the upcoming hearings, the focus will be on supply. At issue will be statements like this from Renaissance Energy: "the proposed export gas in this application will not have any impact on Canadian market requirements". Interveners will still try to address environmental issues, but may be stopped by gas company and NEB lawyers.

It is apparent to anyone involved in the previous hearings, that the purpose of the NEB is to falsely reassure Canadians that exports of fossil fuel resources are being monitored, while assuring companies exploiting these resources that they will never be denied an export opportunity.

LETS Trade

Many Greens are discovering the power of LETS (Local Employment and Trade Systems) and exchanging goods and services instead of purchasing and selling them. LETS is not just bartering and, even though it involves a local currency, it is not capitalism. To facilitate trading, goods and services are not bartered directly, but the seller receives a LETS credit that can be redeemed for another product or service from another member. Shopping is made easier by a catalogue of members, listing what they have to offer.

LETS trading is controlled by a small credit limit and a simple computer program to track each member's account. Revenue Canada considers LETS trading taxable if it is part of the seller's usual profession. A dentist examining teeth would be taxed on the usual cash value of the service, but if the dentist also made pottery, no tax would be paid on those sales. Interest is not applicable to LETS credits, providing an incentive to trade and not hoard.

The LETS concept flies in the face of the trend towards globalization. LETS encourages trade within a local area, rather than internationally, reducing the environmental impact of transportation and the ability for large corporations to shift production around to areas that will accept the lowest wages, most dangerous working conditions and with the weakest environmental laws.

LETS was invented by Michael Wade Linton from British Columbia, but the concept has spread around the world.

Greens in Ontario General Election

Frank de Jong, leader of the Green Party of Ontario has listed some of the major principles that candidates will be presenting during the provincial election campaign.

- Taxes on non-renewable resources, *not* income taxes.
- Sustainable forestry *not* clearcutting and wilderness destruction.
- Ecosystem based land-use planning *not* habitat destruction.
- Sustainable agriculture *not* soils, water and food polluted by pesticides.
- Renewable energy and conservation *not* nuclear energy and fossil fuels.
- Life-cycle product stewardship and zero discharge of toxins *not* overflowing dumps and contaminated air, soil and water.
- Community economic development *not* transnational corporate control.
- Guaranteed income supplement, job sharing and reduced work Week *not* welfare and unemployment.
- Preventive and alternative health care *not* high OHIP [Ontario Health Insurance Plan] costs.
- Full funding for alternative schooling *not* educational monopolies.
- Pedestrian communities interconnected by public transportation *not* car centered urban sprawl.
- Participatory democracy through proportional representation *not* under-representation of minority views.
- An end to deficit budgeting *not* unpayable debts.

Green Parties in Canada: A History

This history of the development of Green parties in Canada was written by Jeff Culbert, of the London Greens

About a month before the 1980 federal election in Canada, 11 candidates, mostly in ridings in the Maritime provinces, issued a joint press release describing a common platform which called for a transition to a non-nuclear, conservator society. Although they ran as independents, they unofficially used the name "Small Party" as part of their declaration of unity, presumably a reference to the "small is beautiful" theme in Green politics. This appears to be the most substantial early attempt to answer the call for an ecologically-oriented Canadian political party. In January of 1983, North America's first Green Party was born in British Columbia. Later that same year, the Ontario Greens were formed. The BC Greens leaped right into an election, running Betty Nicksen, Canada's first Green candidate, in a by-election, and then four more candidates in the provincial election in May.

On a weekend in November 1983, the founding conference of the Canadian Greens was held at Carleton University in Ottawa. Nearly 200 people from 55 communities attended, from every province except Newfoundland and PEI.

The Green Party of Canada contested its first federal election in September 1984, with 60 candidates; 27 in Ontario, 19 in BC, 7 in Alberta, 4 in Quebec, 2 in Saskatchewan, and 1 in PEI. 26,543 Canadians voted Green.

Greens are committed to the idea of participatory democracy, but opinions varied widely on what this meant, especially in terms of their organizational structure. The ensuing struggle proved to drain so much energy from the Ontario Greens that it came near collapse. As a result, in the May, 1985 provincial election, they managed to contest only 9 of the 125 seats. With the Ontario

Greens in disarray, Andrew Scorer of Toronto attended the 1985 annual general meeting of the Green Party Association of BC to ask this group to take over the maintenance of the Green Party of Canada. "He left the baby on our doorstep", as one B.C. Green put it. There the "Hub" of the Canadian Greens remained for almost a decade, until it was moved to London, Ontario in 1995.

That same month in 1985, the Parti Vert du Quebec became the third provincial Green party to field candidates. 1986 and 1987 saw the BC Greens and the Ontario Greens, respectively, participate in their second provincial elections. These early provincial attempts constitute the "first wave" of Green electoralism. During this wave, the presence of three provincial Green Parties was established, but the number of candidates running was never more than 10, and voting returns were uniformly low.

Then, at the federal level, the B.C. Greens began to put together a major effort to get the Green Party of Canada onto its feet. In August of 1988, they hosted a conference at White Rock, BC, the first federal gathering since the founding meeting in 1983. The main accomplishment of the White Rock conference was the acceptance, after five years as a registered party, of a constitution.

By the 1988 federal election, Ontario Greens had still not regained their electoral momentum, and they ran only 15 candidates, down from the 27 in the '84 election. Alberta had dropped from 7 to 3, and BC rose from 19 to 20. But the real story was Quebec, which not only ran 29 candidates (up from 4 in 1984), but showed consistently higher results for the Greens than anywhere else in Canada, polling an average of 2.4% in ridings contested by Greens. The total number of federal candidates had risen to 68.

The results in Quebec were also the first sign that Quebec may be the best bet for a Green Party in Canada to make it onto

the political stage to an extent that shifts the political spectrum towards the green. Further evidence of this came in the Quebec provincial election in the following year, when 45 Parti Vert candidates were on the ballot, by far the most to run in a single province at either the federal or the provincial level. Their percentage support increased as well; in the ridings where Les Verts were running, they got 5.7% of the vote. Overall, the Quebec Greens received 66,358 votes, well over the return for all of Canada in 1988.

The Quebec wing of the Green Party of Canada carried the momentum of the 1988 election through and hosted the 1990 Canadian Greens conference in Montreal. But after that, the federal Greens in Quebec faltered, running only 6 candidates in the '93 election.

The 1989 provincial election in Quebec brought Greens to a new plateau in electoral activity, the beginning of the "second wave" of results. The 45 candidates in Quebec were followed by 40 in the 1990 Ontario election, and 42 in the 1991 BC election. There was also a fourth provincial party formed during this wave - the Alberta Greens. They were born in 1990, hosted the 4th Gathering of the Canadian Greens at Pigeon Lake, near Edmonton, in 1992, and ran 11 candidates in the 1993 provincial election.

Greens in Ontario managed to field 34 candidates in the 1993 federal election. Quebec all but abandoned the federal Greens, running only six. BC continued to improve their federal performance, running in 24 of 36 ridings, and Alberta ran its highest number yet, with 12. The total had jumped to 79.

In 1994, the 5th Gathering of the Canadian Greens was held at Huron College in London, Ontario. Later that year, Greens were hoping that the Quebec election would kick off the third wave of Green electoralism in Canada, but a major setback for the Parti Vert du Quebec occurred in 1993-94, when several organizers bolted to the Parti Quebecois, and the Greens were lucky to survive as a party. They managed to eliminate some substantial debts, and to run 11 candidates, which kept the party registered, but there was no "third wave" of Green electoralism in the 1994 Quebec election.

The prospects of the Ontario Greens breaking new ground during the 1995 provincial election are looking excellent, they may become the fourth largest party, with candidates in about half of the 130 Ontario ridings. With a BC election to follow close on its heels, 1995 appears to be the year for kicking off the 3rd wave of Green electoralism in Canada.

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Meetings

For information on meeting dates, times and locations, call Madeleine Oldershaw in Calgary or David Parker in Edmonton.

Comment

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to the editor, Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6 or by fax to (403) 289-6609.



International Green News

Europe: Greens stood almost alone against the wave of Euro-chauvinism that seized the European Parliament in reaction to the Canadian seizure of the Spanish fishing vessel *Estai* in the North Atlantic. While criticizing the Canadian government for ignoring the over-fishing crisis for so long, they praised the belated recognition of the need for conservation.

Germany: Greens in Germany's most populous state, Nordrhein-Westfalen, won 10% of the popular vote in recent state elections. This allows the party to claim 14 of the 221 total seats. Their popular vote has doubled from the 1990 election. The majority Social Democrat party will be forced to choose between the Greens or the Conservatives as a coalition partner, following the virtual collapse of support for their normal coalition partner, the FDP.

Greens in the state of Bremen won 13% of the vote, to claim 14 out of 100 seats. The increase in support here was not as dramatic, but the collapse of the FDP was also felt here.

These elections increase speculation that other parties will be forced to accept Greens as coalition partners. The price of this, of course, will be adoption of some Green policies.

Italy: Messimo Scalia, a Green Party deputy in the Italian parliament claims that many mafia families have moved from the drug trade to the toxic waste trade. Their scams involve falsification of paperwork and corruption of officials to allow toxic wastes from Italy's rich industrial north to be illegally dumped in the impoverished south.

Australia: In the New South Wales state election, Ian Cohen looks certain to become the first Green elected to the Upper House, where he may hold the balance of power. In the federal by-election for the seat of Canberra, the Greens received 13% of the popular vote, their highest on record in that riding.

Mexico: Donations for humanitarian aid to Chiapas may be sent to Mexican Exiles for Democracy, La Jolla, California 92039-3665, USA.

Greens in Federal By-Elections

The Green Party of Canada had candidates in all three recent federal by-elections, in Ottawa, Montreal and Brome-Missisquoi. Their share of the popular vote was in the same range as in the 1993 general election. Congratulations should be extended to Eric Ferland, Gerald Glass and Frank de Jong who stood for the Green cause.

Alberta Greens against Ty 'Forest Stump' Lund

The Alberta Greens, along with many other organizations, are fed up with Ty Lund, known by some as "Forest Stump" and by others as "Minister of Environmental Destruction".

Environmentalists, even the most conservative groups such as the AWA, have given up on Special Places 2000 due to his subversion of this initiative. A wilderness preserve near Pincher Creek mandated by the NRCB as approval of a vacation resort development was scuttled by Ty Lund. And, despite protests, he has done virtually nothing

to protect private lands in Alberta from the ravages of clearcut logging.

Many who were aghast at the antics of Ken Kowalski, are now finding out that indeed stupidity, arrogance and immorality have no limits.

If you are yourself frustrated at the blatant anti-environmental stance of Alberta's Minister of Environmental Protection, phone or write Premier Klein and your local MLA and demand the resignation of Ty Lund.

Alberta Greens Membership Application

(Mail to: Box 133, Stn. M, Calgary, T2P 2H6)

Name _____ Phone(H) _____ (W) _____

Address _____ City _____ Code _____

Interests & Skills _____

Areas I can Help-Elections _ Phoning _ Policy _ Speaking _ Fund Raising _

Membership (\$10) ... \$ _____ (includes newsletter)

T-Shirts (\$15) \$ _____

Donation \$ _____ (75% tax rebate on first \$150)

Total \$ _____