



ORANGE CHINOOK: Politics in the New Alberta

Edited by Duane Bratt, Keith Brownsey,
Richard Sutherland, and David Taras

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Press

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of
Philip A. L. Brownsey,
a true son of Mount Royal and Alberta.*

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PREFACE

The term “Orange Chinook” describes the changes that have consumed Alberta politics during one of the most tumultuous periods in the province’s history. Indeed, if a group of Albertans living in 1990 were to be suddenly transported to 2019, much of what they would see would be unrecognizable. They would likely be surprised to learn that the Progressive Conservative Party that governed Alberta with almost no opposition in 1990 no longer exists in 2019; that the New Democrats, who had barely survived at the margins of Alberta politics, are now in power, led by a woman premier, Rachel Notley; that the province, after many years of unbridled prosperity, is barely emerging from a devastating economic downturn caused by a crash in global energy prices and a dearth of pipelines; and that environmental politics, long ignored or considered a sideshow, is now front and centre in Alberta politics. They would see a carbon tax, bitter clashes with British Columbia over pipelines, consistent increases in the minimum wage, massive government deficits, and that what was left of the old Progressive Conservative Party has merged with what was left of the Wildrose Party—which was not even in existence in 1990—to form the United Conservative Party. In short, much of the political and economic ground has shifted in Alberta, and what many would have thought to be the unimaginable has in fact taken place.

This book’s goal is to chronicle these changes and describe the forces and events that led to the New Democrats’ victory in the 2015 provincial election, and to examine how the Notley government has governed the province since. In assembling the book, the editors were careful to include a variety of perspectives and ensure that a wide expanse of issues was covered. Those seeking to find a single point of view with which to agree will be disappointed. The book covers a broad policy canvas, from the perils and shocks of transition, the politics of pipelines, the oil sands and the carbon tax, the provincial government’s relationships with cities and big-city mayors, the precarious nature of government finances, the changing contours of rural Alberta, and the passions that shape the province’s Indigenous politics, among a host of other topics. Unfortunately, not all policies or events could be covered with the same depth in a single volume. Nonetheless, *Orange*

Chinook provides what we believe will be the essential guide to Alberta politics and to the NDP government for some time to come.

While the book features a distinguished roster of contributors from across the province and beyond, much of the expertise and indeed the financial support for this enterprise came from Mount Royal University. We are grateful to Jeff Keshen, the former dean of arts, Jeffrey Goldberg, the former provost and vice-president, and David Docherty, the current president of Mount Royal University, for their enthusiasm and unwavering support. Kim Halvorson and Sue Torres of the Faculty of Arts went beyond the call of duty in helping us with this project. David Taras would like to thank Elizabeth Evans, dean of the Faculty of Business and Communication Studies, for her encouragement and guidance.

The book benefited from an intensive workshop held at the Banff Centre in October 2016. We are grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and to the Department of Economics, Justice and Policy Studies Innovation Fund at Mount Royal University for their generous support. Special thanks go to Don Braid, David Docherty, Sydney Sharpe, and Christopher Waddell for their contributions. Carolina Serrano Andres, Philip Brownsey, Kent Clayton, Sam Green, Demi Okuboejo, Cordelia Snowden, and Henry Wearmouth, who were public policy students at Mount Royal University at the time, attended and helped with the preparation of materials for the workshop.

We are also grateful to Brian Scrivener and Helen Hajnoczky at the University of Calgary Press for their professionalism, encouragement, and advice, and Ryan Perks, our copyeditor, whom we would like to thank for his outstanding work. We also owe a great debt to Kathryn Brownsey and Kenzie Webber, who helped organize and prepare the volume. Lastly, we are indebted to our contributors for their wisdom and enthusiasm and to the outside readers who offered both a critical eye and sound advice.

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Keith Brownsey
Richard Sutherland
David Taras