**The American Civil War:**

A Comparison

“Our new government was founded on slavery. Its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, submission to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition.”

* Alexander Stephens

Confederate Vice President

**Causes of the Civil War**

**Social differences**

**Elitism**

**Federal control**

**Slavery**

**States’ rights**

**Economic differences**

**Dred Scott decision**

**The case for western independence**

**Calgary Herald July 21, 2018**

As I’ve interacted with countless folks over this summer, many here in Canada’s heartland of the Prairies have voiced their belief that a strong case can be made that Confederation is no longer working in the best interests of the West, particularly Alberta and Saskatchewan.

I’ve been encouraged by several to rationally consider the case for western independence. Some, but certainly far from all, of the issues that should be considered, are:

**Equalization formula:**$19 billion a year is currently distributed from the so-called have provinces to the have-not under the equalization formula.

This year, the existing formula will result in nearly $12 billion of that figure flowing to Quebec. Since the program’s inception in 1957, Quebec has received almost $300 billion.

In 1982, former prime minister Pierre Trudeau amended the Constitution to include equalization payments for have-not provinces, making the program almost impossible to undo.

Despite Alberta and Saskatchewan expressing their desire to renegotiate the formula, in June, our current prime minister, Justin Trudeau, quietly extended it for another five years.

**Federal**[**carbon tax**](https://calgaryherald.com/tag/carbon-tax): The Trudeau Liberals are now threatening to impose a massive carbon tax of up to $50 per tonne on provinces unwilling to go along with their climate change policy.

Despite relentless pressure from Conservative MPs in Parliament, Trudeau refuses to disclose what his carbon tax grab will cost Canadians, although one expert opinion has pegged it at $35 billion a year.

A just-released Saskatchewan study estimates the cost at $1,000 per household in that province.

Unlike most other businesses, for farmers, it’s even worse, as any increase in taxes cuts into thin margins because they’re held hostage to world prices and cannot pass higher input costs onto a customer.

By far the biggest fear when it comes to the net cost of this federal Liberal imposed tax is the fear of the unknown. Obviously, Trudeau’s 2015 election promise of transparency was just more empty rhetoric.

**Pipelines**: Justin Trudeau has also recently added to historic grievances such as the National Energy Program of the early 1980s levied by his father, which saw more than $100 billion transferred to Ottawa, primarily from Alberta.

He’s now made changes to the way the National Energy Board investigates major energy developments, such as pipelines — changes that give the NEB even more power to decide whether to approve them or merely unnecessarily delay them.

Disappointingly, prior to these latest Liberal additions to the regulatory burden, Canada had a majority Conservative government with a prime minister from Calgary for nearly 4.5 years. If the system is so dysfunctional that we couldn’t get a pipeline to either coast built then, or even started, is there really much hope now?

Ever since May 29,when the federal Liberals announced they would be buying Kinder Morgan, I’ve wanted an answer to one question: How does having Canadian taxpayers own the company get the Trans Mountain pipeline expanded, when the Liberals refused to override the illegal protests, B.C. government opposition and bogus court challenges when it was privately owned?

If Trudeau was unwilling to expend the political capital in the national interest and use the Declaratory Power Clause contained in the British North American Act of 1867, and the potential reading of the Criminal Code’s Riot Act, then why should we believe he will now?

If the police are unable to protect construction workers and remove illegal protesters, would he be prepared to call out the army to do so?

With B.C. blocking pipelines to the west (Northern Gateway and Trans Mountain), Quebec blocking them to the east (Energy East), and to some extent, the U.S.A.blocking them to the south ([Keystone XL](https://calgaryherald.com/tag/keystone-xl)), the only option remaining is the north — across the southern Yukon to tie into Alaska’s pipeline from Prudhoe Bay, and then through the port of Valdez to access Asia, and across northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba to the port of Churchill to access Europe.

We must obtain a global price for our resources (especially oil and liquefied natural gas) if we are to maintain our standard of living. Yet the federal Liberals have united with the B.C. and federal NDP in support of a tanker ban off the West Coast — unlike our East Coast, the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes, which have millions of barrels of foreign oil transit them every year.

Perhaps if the Prairie provinces were an independent nation, we could transport our oil via tanker from Churchill, around Quebec to Montreal and St. John, N.B., and thereby access the markets of Eastern Canada, Quebec and Ontario, just like other foreign countries?

**First Nations:**As a new country, the West could negotiate a completely modernized new deal with the First Nations of the Prairies and territories, built around future shared economic well-being, rather than continuing to dwell on past grievances.

**Property rights:**The West could enshrine a precise reference to property rights in our new constitution so law-abiding citizens could better protect themselves and their property from criminals with some assurance that they themselves wouldn’t face criminal charges for doing so.

**Charter of Rights and Freedoms:**The West would no longer be beholden to our existing Constitution and  Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which some argue have been poorly interpreted and abused by our courts; but rather, start over and perhaps rebalance rights with the responsibilities of all citizens.