

Clark takes it

Joe Clark, a 36-year-old dark horse candidate from Rocky Mountain, Alberta, pole vaulted from oblivion to the leader of the National Progressive Conservative Party Sunday. He squeaked by Claude Wagner to victory with a 65 vote margin on the fourth ballot.

The election of a new leader breathes hope into the Conservative's dreams of a united party and success in their quest for power. Photographer Steve Dills and Reporter Bob Burt were there to capture the excitement and local involvement of the convention for readers.

Reporter Bob Burt and photographer Steven Dills attended the Progressive Conservative leadership convention in Ottawa on the weekend and brought back special reports and pictures for North Halton readers on the campaign, the convention, the victory and the Halton voting delegates' reactions.

Several Halton Tories sat around 44-year-old British Columbia lawyer John Fraser. They waited for the first ballot results but when the result came, dismay swept through their forces. Fraser had run eighth with 127 first ballot votes. Both he and his people had hoped for better things.

They were dismayed and tired. Disenchantment on their faces revealed the hurt they were suffering inside. Their man had polled eighth out of the 11 in the race. He had promised of strong support on a second ballot.



NEW LEADER of the Federal Conservative party is Joe Clark, 36, from Alberta.

It away to the wrong guy," Mr. Thomson explained. Fraser's withdrawal from the race came too late to have his name stricken from the ballot. Bob Jones and Fran Baines were discussing the outcome of the third ballot.

Mr. Jones, appearing tired and worn, looked at cohort Fran Baines and confided, "I had to cast a second Fraser ballot."

at Fraser's early drop out. Fraser threw his support behind Joe Clark, the Rocky Mountain boy who finally won out over Claude Wagner. Clark represented the same moderate positions at the centre or left of the party as Fraser does.

Fran Baines had been one of those intensely involved with the Fraser campaign for months, and during the convention itself she went 40 hours at one point with no sleep.

The word that kept coming back to the Fraser camp indicated strong support on the second ballot. To throw in the towel after the first ballot hurt, and one had only to look at his supporters to see the suffering they were experiencing with him.

Fiercely loyal Fran Baines, like several others in Fraser's camp, was fiercely loyal to the British Columbia lawyer and what they had come to understand he stood for. Throwing in the towel didn't come easy.

Twenty-two-year-old youth delegate Louise Drowley described how she felt about being a part of it all.

"I've watched conventions on TV in the past and I knew feelings ran high, but I had no idea how high and how you feel when your candidate speaks or does something well," she said.

Mrs. Baines expressed her dissatisfaction with the national media and the coverage of the pre-convention events.

"The media decides who they'll take seriously and who they won't. We had to fight for every inch of print and every bit of coverage we got. They didn't take John seriously."

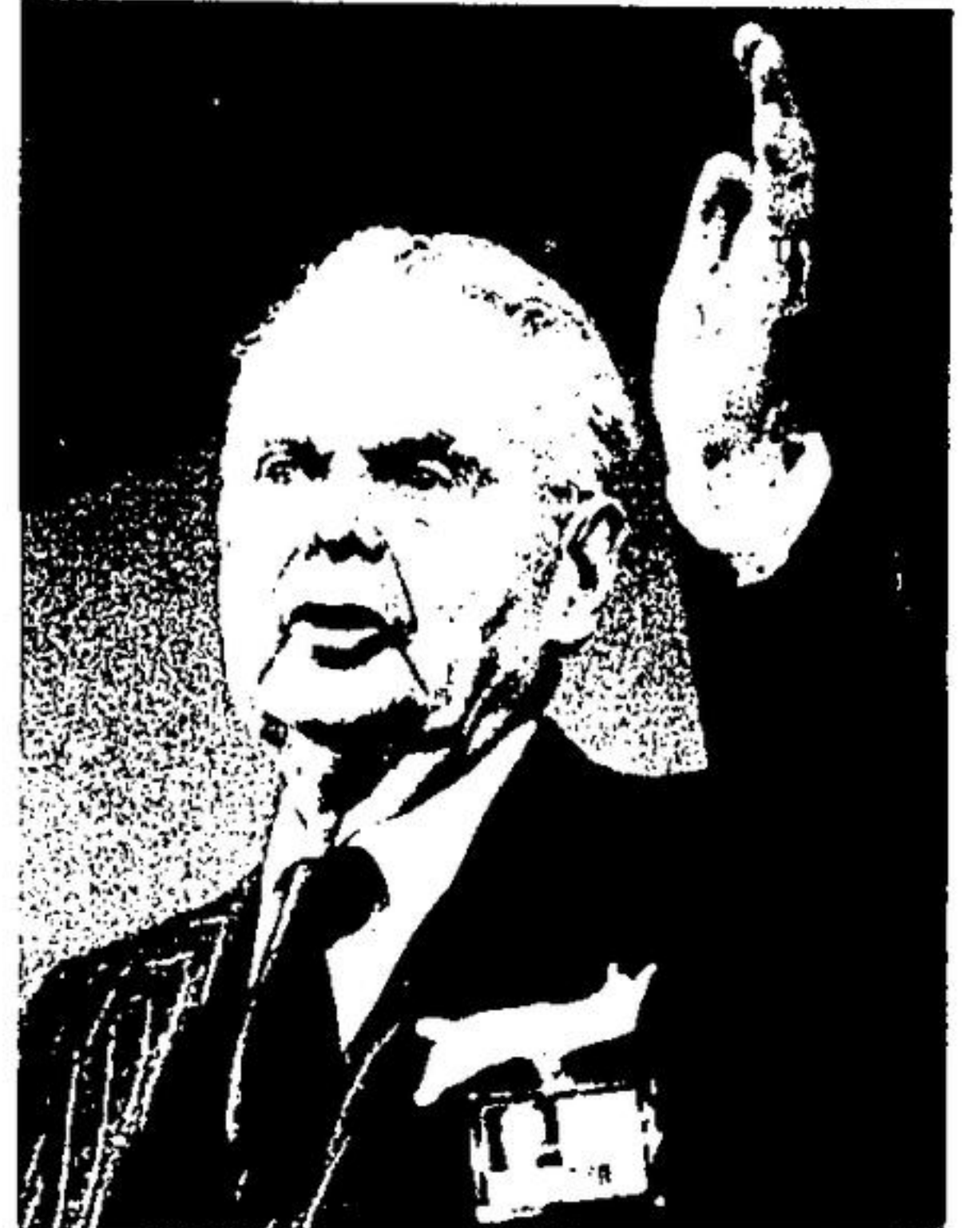
Fran pointed out that even with what she felt was unfair treatment, John isn't bitter. His first concern has always been the party and it always will be. That's one of the things that attracted me to him. Being bitter won't help the party. Sure, he's disappointed.

Fraser's deputy campaign chairman Bob Jones is a Halton person as well. Mr. Jones explained that Fraser's position in the middle of the spectrum appealed to him.

"I looked at what he stood for and looked at all of the other candidates. His views are close to my own. He is leadership material," Mr. Jones asserted.



FLORA WAVES to supporters. She is shown with her campaign manager, former MP Terry O'Connor of Oakville.



6,000 AT THE convention were treated to words from a living legend, the Rt. Hon. John "Dief" Diefenbaker.

Presentation for "mayor"

Halton delegates were part of a special event Friday morning when the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker joined that delegation to present Bill Sergeant, the unofficial "mayor of Bronte" with a gold watch for long service in the Tory party. Mr. Diefenbaker, easily the most popular man at the convention, spent about 45 minutes with the Halton Tories. Minister of Transportation and Communications Jim Snow went with an old friend on his first ballot. He supported Sinclair Stevens. Stevens was born in Esquesing Township and the two men have known each other for most of their lives.

So close but so far

According to former Halton MP Terry O'Connor, Flora MacDonald could have been leader of the Progressive Conservative Party today had she received about 40 or 50 more first ballot votes than she did. Mr. O'Connor took about five months off from his law practice to serve as Flora's campaign manager and head up her bid for the leadership.

She polled sixth on the first ballot but only 63 votes behind eventual winner Joe Clark. Mr. O'Connor figures that had Flora picked up an extra 40 or 50 votes on the first ballot, she would have drawn some support from Mr. Clark.

Quits after two Had that happened that would have put Flora on top of those candidates to the middle and left of the party and she inevitably would have picked up a lot more support than she did on her second ballot. Flora realized a marginal increase from 214 to 239 before dropping out after the second ballot.

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Interviewed after the final ballot, Mr. O'Connor acknowledged disappointment in the outcome.

"I'm disappointed that Flora didn't win it. She's really an excellent person. I'm still inclined to think that she was the best candidate but I must express my satisfaction and joy with Joe Clark. I know him well and have known him for a few years and he has visited with me several times at my home in Oakville. He has the quality of leadership."

All 2,360 A total of 2,360 delegates registered and voted at the Federal Progressive Conservative Convention on the weekend. They came from all parts of Canada. Ontario had the largest delegation with 793 voting delegates. Even the Northwest Territories and the Yukon were represented, with eight and 15 delegates respectively.

In all, 6,000 people attended the function. Aside from the delegates there were 751 alternate delegates and 2,325 observers as well as 1,400 media representatives from all regions and areas of the nation.

totally bilingual, having worked in Quebec and understanding Quebec can unite the party and the country. He has the ability and the knowledge to do that."

Of the nine Halton people casting ballots, only O'Connor went to Flora on the first ballot. Asked why he wasn't able to drum up Flora support in the riding, he said "I'm not sure. Perhaps it's because I've been here running things in Ottawa and not in Halton."

All the same "I never tried to sell or pressure them. They are intelligent people who can make up their own minds. They picked a fine candidate. We all chose the same candidate in the end," O'Connor explained.

At least seven of the nine Halton delegates supported Clark on the last ballot. The bulk of the support from Halton riding went that way after John Fraser dropped out after the first ballot.

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New PC chief 'peppery': MP Wouldn't miss

Joe Clark, the new leader of the federal Progressive Conservative party, is a "peppery young man," says Halton Liberal MP Dr. Frank Philbrook.

Dr. Philbrook made his remarks at the Ten Days for World Development session at Knox Church in Acton soon after Mr. Clark's election in Ottawa, Sunday.

Prior to delivering his speech on the New International Economic Order, Dr. Philbrook told the 60 people at the church that "we are entering a very new and interesting period in this country."

"I hope they (the PCs) will form a strong opposition," Dr. Philbrook said. When asked if he could see Mr. Clark, whom he knows, leading the Tories to victory, Dr. Philbrook said he would have to see him in action.

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