

Halton Hills Outlook

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Their Outlook

By-election results not just PM's worry



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ever since Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that three byelections would be held on July 20 - delaying them as long as he could - just about all the attention has been focused on Tory chances in the three ridings.

With the opinion polls placing the Conservatives at an historic low, just two years after they won the biggest majority in Canadian history, it's perhaps understandable that we have a compelling interest in their fortunes.

But the results of the July 20 votes are rather important to the two other parties. In fact, it could be argued the byelections are far more critical to the Liberals and New Democrats than to the governing Conservatives.

Of course, anything can happen in the five months before the byelections are held in St. John's East, Hamilton Mountain and the Yukon; in that period it's probable Tory popularity will rise. It would be unheard of for a governing party to continue wallowing around 22 per cent in the opinion polls for that length of time.

NONE SAFE

In the opinion of assorted party officials in Ottawa, all of the seats are up for grabs, even St. John's East, which was won in 1984 by Conser-

POETS CORNER

Dear Sir:
Hard succeeds,
Is more intelligible
In English, in rebuttal,
Than as hallowed-ise dialectician.

Hard handles names,
Creates a critical wasp message,
A parochial literary who's who.

Hard is erudite,
His forte esotericism,
Fachews the mundane.

Hard reels off names, personages,
personae
With élan, authority, presumption,
Resorts to familiarity for
self-adulation, gratification.

If hard takes liberties with
language,
Is wont to employ nonce words,
coinages,
Bastardizes some poor defenseless
highland dialect,
Tries to foist it onto others,
He shall be duly censured.

Acton's quasi bard,
Enamored of, exuding
Culture, gentility, Egocentricity,
Can be seen as nostalgic pilgrim,
Dawning tweeds, McIntosh, Tam-o'-
shanter,
Treading desolate moors, rugged
highlands, medieval burghs,
Seeking apparitions of yore,
The incomparable bard,
A brooding dispirited Heathcliffe,
Celebrated Canterbury Tales.

JOE HURST

vative James McGrath with a margin of no less than 25,000 votes.

Since then, the popular Mr. McGrath has become the Newfoundland's Lieutenant-governor, the popularity of the Mulroney government has dropped nearly 30 percentage points, and the NDP has made impressive inroads, provincially, in that area.

And the way people are talking around Ottawa these days, it would be almost an upset if the Conservatives were to win the riding. Imagine winning a seat by 25,000 votes and then two years later considering its retention an upset. It boggles the mind.

But that's the type of thinking which is putting so much pressure on the two opposition parties. It's something called Great Expectations. And the Conservatives, according to all the polls, don't have many.

But the Liberals and New Democrats certainly do. The polls put the Liberals far out in front at 44 per cent, and the NDP 10 points ahead of the Tories at 32 per cent. And while these standings suggest the Grits should have, by far, the highest expectations, other polls place NDP Leader Ed Broadbent in a unique situation.

He is, again by far, the most popular leader in the country.

OPPOSITION FIGHT

Ever since the Liberals emerged from the 1984 election with 40 seats, and the NDP captured 30, there has been an ongoing struggle to establish which party is the "real opposition."

The July byelections will undoubtedly be the most crucial confrontation in this respect. And, as things stand, the NDP seems to enjoy some advantages.

The Hamilton Mountain seat was won by the NDP in 1984 and although an outsider, former Ottawa mayor Marion Dewar seems to be a popular candidate. You can bet your mortgage that Mr. Broadbent will find many reasons to visit the area between now and July 20.

While Erik Nielson was a fixture in the Yukon for as long as most of us remember, the former Tory MP didn't always have an easy time. There were several occasions, including the 1980 election, when he barely squeezed in.

Should disaster strike the Tories and all three byelections were lost, not that much would change for the party. Given the polls, and the fact that governing parties don't usually do well in byelections, life would continue for Brian Mulroney.

But should they pull off major upsets and do better than expected, imagine the effect on the Liberals and New Democrats. It would almost certainly revive questions about Mr. Turner's leadership. And the spectacular gains now being recorded by the NDP would probably be reclassified as another aberration.

The Liberals will go through the same agonies should the NDP emerge as the big winner. And if the Grits make the gains, the long-term credibility of the NDP's popularity will still be called into question.

The only apparent way to avoid some form of political pain would be for each party to win one seat. It seldom turns out this way.

ONLY THAT WHICH THREATENS SOUTH AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY IS CENSORED!... HEY, WHAT TH...?!!?



Nursing home reform nursing home politics



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

There is nursing home reform. There is also nursing home politics.

What we're getting from the Ontario Health Ministry is a lot of the politics and very little reform.

The big news recently was the province seizing the Country Place nursing home from the owner, John Fedyna.

The conditions in it were, according to the ministry, "appalling."

That led a Press Gallery colleague here, Lorrie Goldstein, to recall the 1983 ministry grab of the Ark Eden home, also for supposed "appalling" conditions - charges that were never substantiated.

In fact, the Ark Eden operator finally went to court and got his licence back.

Fedyna claims the seizure of Country Place is no more valid. He suggests the New Democratic party and some of his Canadian Union of Public Employees' staff are out to make an example of him.

And that's true. Back in 1984 the NDP publicly savaged Country Place in a press release that a labor arbitrator later labelled "defamatory". Goldstein rightly suggests we reserve judgement on the validity of the latest seizure.

There is more than a little suspicion that it is pure politics, with Health Minister Murray Elston trying to make the government look

tough. Not that Country Place is the only political game being played at the moment.

Last December, Elston introduced so-called Grey Power legislation that included a "bill of rights" for nursing homes patients. For instance, residents would gain as "rights" such things as privacy as information. And they'll get councils and committees established that would keep an eye on the homes for the ministry.

To put it another way, residents in nursing homes will legally acquire the right to snatch and scoop on the places.

At the same time, the ministry will also get greater powers with heavier potential penalties.

It is as though nursing home operators are categorized as suspicious characters whose every moment has to be scrutinized or they'll be derelict in their duty.

In essence, one might call the approach punitive. But then, bashing profit-making nursing home owners for being rotten to their clients has always been good politics.

Of course, the trouble with such an attitude is that it doesn't really deal with the main issue. And that is, what a nursing home is supposed to do and be.

For example, a decade ago the average age of a nursing home resident was 75. Today, it is 86.

The common type of infirmity, at age 86 tends to be much different than it would be 10 years earlier.

Increasingly, nursing homes - where patients supposedly require only 1-1 1/2 hours supervisory care a day - are filling in for chronic care hospitals.

Letters

Universal day care not the answer

Dear Sir:

Many people in Canada are concerned about the care of children when both parents are working outside the home. The Katie Cooke commission on day care has proposed that the government set up universal day care, so that all women would have access to free government-run day care institutions at all times. This would mean free day care for everyone - for lawyers and doctors as well as low-income women. The government is now considering this report and other submissions and will soon make a decision.

Child care for mothers who feel they must have a paycheck to make ends meet is a problem that must be faced, but is universal day care the answer? We think not.

As a group who believe in equal rights for women, but not at the expense of other human rights, we feel that the government should consider the needs of children as well as the needs of women, whether working in the home or in paid employment.

Love is a child's birthright. Modern psychology as well as traditional wisdom emphasizes the importance to the small child of the parents - especially the mother. The bonding that takes place between the child and the mother and father is of great importance for its emotional security and mental health.

The child needs a great deal of tender, loving care to be healthy and happy. Some children have even died from lack of cuddling. Day care institutions can never equal good home care in this respect, even though they may sometimes be necessary, if the family is in distress. In case families need day care, we should see that it is provided by people who really love children and will look after them well.

However universal day care is neither necessary nor desirable, and would impose an enormous tax burden on everyone. This, like other taxes, would squeeze the middle income family. It is estimated that this program would cost at least \$11 billion dollars per year - our whole national deficit in three years.

If such a heavy tax load were added to the burden that we already carry, most families would need two incomes just to put bread on the table, and most mothers would be therefore forced into the job market, as has happened in Sweden.

Our organization has made some proposals to the government to help families who are in need of help with caring for their children. These are as follows:

Families should get the benefit of any money spent on day care. Only needy families should be subsidized - these should receive the money directly, so that they could then choose the type of day care most suitable, whether in the home or elsewhere.

Higher child tax credits, and higher credits for spouses caring for children at home.

Yours sincerely,
Lynn Scime, President