

Halton Hills Outlook

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Their Outlook

The guessing game



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod
 Thomson News Service

Since none of us can read the mind of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney - and are unaware of any secret political intelligence he may possess - it's probably somewhat stupid to venture into the election-prediction business.

Anyway, for every political strategist who feels there will be an early fall vote, particularly now that the Tories seem to be moving up in the opinion polls, you can find another expert who feels just as strongly about a spring election. It was ever thus.

But, having thrown in these qualifiers, there is nothing to prevent us from saying it's beginning to look more and more as though the next vote will be later, rather than sooner. Whether an election can be squeezed in before the end of 1988 is beginning to seem doubtful.

This, of course, is based on the assumption that Mr. Mulroney wants to see the free-trade legislation enacted before going to the people. Should he decide to take free trade to the voters before it becomes law next Jan. 1, then the predictions become a free-for-all. And that's an understatement.

Considering the time, effort and money that's gone into free trade during the last three years, along with the state of the opinion polls, an early election would require an act of bravery on the prime minister's part. The possibility of the free-trade initiative going down the drain must be almost unbearable for him.

But, unless he has polling information not available to the rest of us, it would appear that an early election could easily result in this happening. Despite Tory gains that suggest the party now is in second place behind the Liberals, the opinion polls indicate the three federal parties remain fairly closely bunched in the 30-per-cent range. That points to a minority government. And this

would be tantamount to a defeat for free trade, since both the Liberals and New Democrats are fighting it tooth and nail.
 Final parliamentary approval for the free-trade deal seems to be a fair way off.

SLOW PROGRESS

So far, even with the use of closure, the government has been making slow progress with the enabling legislation. It has finally cleared second reading in the Commons - approval in principle - but it still must be examined by a Commons committee, go through two more stages in the House itself, and then go to the Senate.

What happens in the Liberal-dominated Senate is anyone's guess.

One school of thought is that, if the upper house holds up the legislation, the prime minister will call an election and campaign both on Senate obstruction and free trade. On the surface, it might appear to be a rather neat package.

But the dangers are great. Not only must Mr. Mulroney fend off opposition attacks that he had no mandate to negotiate a free-trade deal - in fact, he said he would not - but Senate obstruction would have to be real and apparent.

If the complex legislation took nearly two months to clear one stage in the Commons - and required closure at that - the senators seem entitled to their fair kick at the can. And they probably won't even get their hands on the bill until sometime in September.

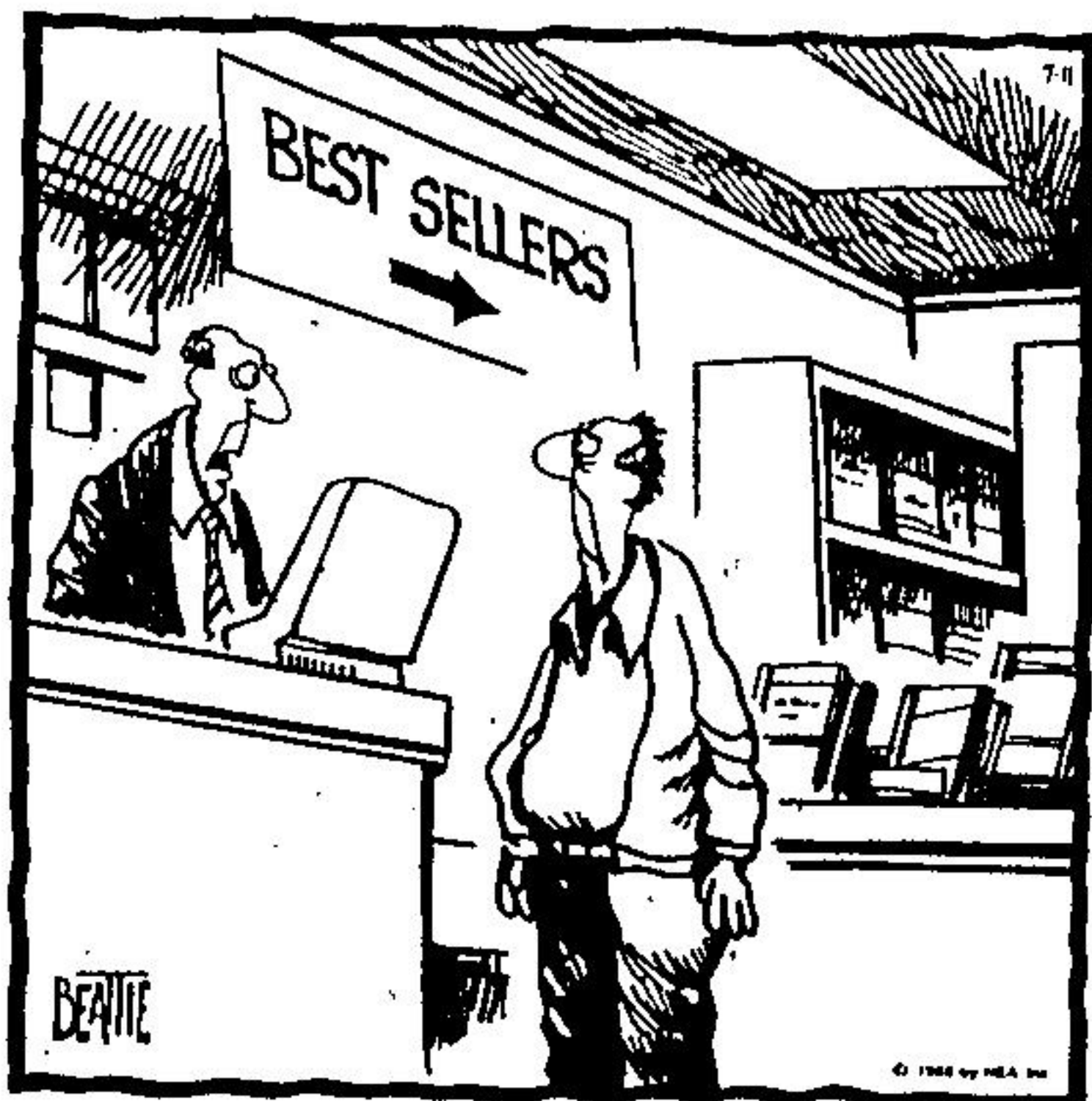
Then, they can do what they want, including establishing a committee that will travel coast-to-coast and hear witnesses that can't be accommodated by the Commons committee.

Sure, the prime minister can cry obstruction, but not for a couple of months.

OTHER STRATEGY

Anyway, long before obstruction becomes apparent, the Senate could adopt other tactics, including the insertion of minor amendments to the bill. This would require it to be sent back to the Commons for approval in its altered form.

SNAFU© by Bruce Beattie



"We sold our last copy of How to Avoid Frustration in Your Daily Life five minutes ago."

Two's a Crowd

By BILL BUTTLE



If we just saved these, we wouldn't have to buy any more briquettes!

Samurai makes cuts but only in the US



Your Business

By DIANNE MALEY
 Business Analyst
 Thomson News Service

Stand for a second at any major intersection in Toronto and you'll see half a dozen Jeeps without even turning your head. There'll be Cherokee wagons and white convertibles with poodles in the back, ears flapping in the wind.

So intense is Jeep-fever that sales of Jeep-like vehicles, such as the Suzuki Samurai, have been carried along in the heat of it.

Even a recent report by an American consumers group that the Samurai tended to roll over in road tests does not appear to have quelled Canadians' enthusiasm for the small Jeep-like vehicle. Suzuki Motor Co. has denied charges that the Samurai is unsafe.

Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, said Suzuki should give Samurai owners their money back. Some American Samurai owners plan to launch a class-action suit against the company.

The market response was swift and deadly in the U.S. In June, Samurai sales plunged a thumping 70.6 per cent there.

BIG REBATE

To relieve alarmed dealers south of the border, Suzuki Motor Co. has cut \$2,000 (U.S.) from the \$7,995 purchase price for the basic Samurai, letting dealers use the money as they please. That's a 25 per cent price cut, one of the most generous in recent history.

Dealers are using the money to slash prices to consumers and some dealers are offering big life insurance policies or other confidence-building things - although one may well wonder how comforting it is to get a life insurance policy with your new car.

The \$1-million policies, offered in

Ohio, are paid if a Samurai rolls over and the policyholder is killed.

Mark Muller, a Missouri dealer, says the rebate will clean out his Samurai inventory. "This rebate program's the most incredible thing that's ever happened," Mr. Muller said.

"It's 'Katie, bar the door'" he said. "I'm sure I'll zero my inventory out this month."

Here in Canada, though, no such program is anticipated, says Marcel Lambert, Suzuki Canada's national sales manager. "As of right now, there is no plan to offer rebates in Canada," Mr. Muller said.

Sales in Canada have not suffered to the same extent as they have in the United States, he said.

LESS PUBLICITY

One explanation may be that television stations all across the United States carried videotapes prepared by Consumers Union showing the Samurai tipping over in driving tests. The report received less publicity in Canada.

But sales are down in Canada, too, and it may be only a matter of time before Suzuki Canada decides to do something about the price. The Samurai's appeal lies in its being much cheaper than the Jeep, which is made by American Motors. American Motors is now in the Chrysler fold.

A basic Samurai may sell for less than \$10,300 in Canada, while Jeeps range from \$17,000 to more than \$30,000 for the Cherokee wagon. Jeeps and Samurais are not the same.

How reliable is the Consumer Reports test? In the test, in which drivers made sudden, sharp turns with the test vehicles, the Samurai tipped while the Jeeps and other vehicles did not.

As with everything else in this world, you get what you pay for. In the United States, at least, people are now paying less for the Samurai.

Tough time on the TTC



Staff Comment

By BRIAN MACLEOD

For years I have avoided using the GO train and the TTC. After an experience on July 15, I remember why.

Along with my fiancée Karen, I decided to head down to Ontario Place for the 9 p.m. show of the up-and-coming Canadian band Blue Rodeo.

Because the Molson Indy was on that weekend, we decided to spend the \$11.20 on two round-trip tickets to Toronto.

We arrived at the GO station in Clarkson - a mere 20-minute drive by the QEW to Ontario Place - to catch the 6:37 train, which turned into the 6:47 train.

After we entered the station and after we bought our tickets, we were told via an announcement on the loud speaker that the train would not stop at Exhibition Stadium because only Indy passengers could get off there.

So passengers bound for Ontario Place had to go to Union Station, where they would catch a TTC shuttle bus "provided" for us at a cost of 50 cents a passenger each way. The bus, we were told, would come every 15 minutes.

The "four-times-an-hour bus" turned into a "twice-an-hour bus" and we arrived at the steps of Ontario Place at 8:30 p.m., a full two hours after leaving Mississauga.

As we arrived, another loud speaker announcement...

The forum was sold out. So it was back on the shuttle, back on the train and in to file a complaint to the TTC.

Yes, we were foolish enough to put in writing our complaint and ask for a refund of \$11.20.

We aren't holding our breaths.

The point is we could have saved two hours, and more than \$13 by driving 20 minutes, parking for free at the Argonaut Rowing Club (a little known gem for baseball and football fans) and walked 15 minutes to Ontario Place in plenty of time for the show.

The better way? There's still something to be said for the do-it-yourself approach.

Is pushing 27-years-old too old to be a rookie?

I'm finding out the hard way. Having never played an organized game of rugby in my life, I'm giving it a crack - literally - this year with the North Halton Rugby Club.

After two and a half games I've definitely gained more respect for the game and those who play it.

You'd think lifting weights feverishly for two hours a day, five days a week would prepare you for such an endeavor.

Lifting weights is fun. Running is fun. But performing feats of strength in the scrum and running for miles on end trying to keep up with the play is a task only for the very fit.

Nevertheless you gain a new perspective on things when you've run and scrummed for 40 minutes, then suddenly the opposing team greets you with the ball on the kickoff for the second half.

Funny, I've never considered the ground, on a steaming hot sunny day, such an unpleasant place to be.

But the game is fun. The players are patient - especially with mental things like off-sides - and I fully intend to become a sophomore.