

Halton Hills Outlook

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Their Outlook

Quebec to be battle zone

Ottawa

Stewart MacLeod
Thomson News Service

When the federal election campaign officially gets under way - it's already off to an unofficial start - Quebecers can expect to see a great deal of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. They might see a fair amount of the other leaders as well.

The consensus among those influential within the Conservative Party seems to be that the prime minister will make Quebec his primary battle zone. Naturally, this will serve to attract the other leaders into the province, but probably not to the same degree.

There are several reasons why Mr. Mulroney is expected to spend an unusual amount of time there. For starters, Quebec is probably the most politically volatile area of Canada and therefore the place where the most seats are up for grabs.

It's also the province where Mr. Mulroney's personal popularity is highest and where his campaigning is likely to be most effective. For this reason, Quebec candidates are more eager for the prime minister to campaign on their behalf than those in most other regions.

One senior Tory said it would not be surprising if Mr. Mulroney spent up to 40 per cent of the campaign in Quebec, working on behalf of the 75 party candidates. The Conservatives now hold 57 of the seats.

And while opinion polls over the last couple of years didn't give the Tories much cause for encouragement in Quebec, there seems to have been a recent turnaround. In the latest Angus Reid poll, 44 per cent of Quebecers supported the Tories, a rise of four percentage points from a month earlier. At the same time, the Liberals dropped a startling 11 points, to 26.

The New Democrats were at 27, up seven points from July.

NOT FACTOR

Despite the fact the NDP was ahead of the Liberals, few Tories expect that party to make any major breakthroughs. In two byelections this year - one federal, the other provincial - NDP candidates didn't come close to the party's standing in the polls.

What gives the Tories further encouragement in Quebec are com-

parisons with a June poll conducted by another organization. That survey indicated the Liberals enjoyed the support of 45 per cent of respondents, compared with only 31 per cent for the Conservatives.

Although there have been some major inconsistencies among polling organizations, there seems little doubt that Tory fortunes are improving in Quebec. And there are probably very good reasons for this.

Not only has the federal government been very good to the province in terms of economic benefits, but it's no small matter that Premier Robert Bourassa, despite being a Liberal, seems to be so sympathetic to the federal Tory cause. His uncompromising support for the free-trade deal is no doubt a factor.

While Mr. Bourassa has taken the customary stance of remaining officially neutral in the federal campaign, the prime minister can regard his silence as golden. It greatly helped the Conservatives in 1984.

One recent survey - there seems to be a new one every day - found that 54 per cent of Canadians regarded Mr. Mulroney as an average leader while 28 per cent rated him below average. Three per cent thought he was one of the best leaders this country ever produced.

This rather unspecific sampling, with a generalized rating system, didn't provide for easy regional interpretations. But it strongly suggested that the prime minister received his most favorable ratings in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Still another poll indicated that 61 per cent of Canadians think Mr. Mulroney's Conservatives are trying to buy votes with their spending projects. But it also showed, for instance, that while 85 per cent of British Columbians opposed this, only 68 per cent of Quebecers said they were against it.

Virtually all polls, in one way or another, would suggest that Mr. Mulroney's time might be well spent in Quebec - particularly when he's in such high demand.

This is not the case in all parts of Canada. The prime minister's personal credibility remains a question mark, and despite the recent improvement in Tory standings across Canada, there is a good number of Conservative candidates who haven't issued speaking invitations to the prime minister.

"I had my signs printed months ago," says a northern Ontario MP. "And just to be on the safe side, I used only my own name against a background of Tory blue."

"You can't be too careful."

Berry's World



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Greed falls in with 3 R's



Your Business
Diane Maloy
Thomson News Service

Lately, there's been a lot of talk about how to keep the kids in school. Some people even are insisting that they learn something while they're there; how to read and write, for example.

The problem is that in Ontario, at least, a third of our students drop out of high school. So the government has hatched a plan to turn them into entrepreneurs. That way, if they leave school, they at least will be able to support themselves.

With luck, students with no natural aptitude for the academy will stay in school simply to learn how to make money.

The idea of instilling greed in high-school children has met with some resistance from people who believe they should be spending more time on reading, writing and rhythmic. This narrow point of view presumes that children have only so much room in their heads; you can fill it with basic skills or business skills, but not both.

JOB SKILLS OR 3Rs

Toronto residents believe that the three Rs are more important for students than career and job skills, a survey shows. Seems to me, they're the same thing.

Ignoring the critics, the Ontario Ministry of Education plans to plow ahead with its new program, offering a course in entrepreneurship next January to Grade 11 and 12 students. The students will meet entrepreneurs and spend time working with them. This will spur their self-confidence, curiosity and creativity, the ministry hopes.

One Toronto high school has gone a step further, allowing itself to be "adopted" by Olympia and York Developments Ltd., the Reichmann family company. Where better to learn the secrets of business success?

Key to the school's innovative pro-

gram is the fact that its students already have the basic skills down pat. Most of them are bound for university and some of them are considered gifted. With its exceptional student population, William Lyon Mackenzie Secondary School hopes to work wonders.

This fall, it will open its Creative Inquiry Centre, which it hopes O and Y will help finance. It is also applying to the federal government for financial assistance. Mae Waese, North York trustee, says the partnership between school and business will help both of them.

SELF STARTERS

"The world of business needs to know we are trying to develop our young people as creative thinkers, self-starters," she explains. In the school's job-shadowing program, students may spend one day a month with a company executive, or work at the company over the summer. Students will learn to relate what they are learning in school to their future careers.

When it comes to the new centre, Lynn Hindle, principal, can scarcely contain her enthusiasm. The centre will be a resource, like a library, available to all the school's students. The idea is to allow the children to express themselves creatively using the latest technology.

The centre will have five components: media, the arts, communications, computers and robotics. A youngster given an assignment can go to the centre and develop a video instead of simply writing an essay. Or he can write a short story and prepare it for printing on the desk-top publisher.

"This adds a creative element, so kids are not just giving us back information we have given them," Ms. Hindle says. "They are taking it and processing it through their own minds and expressing it in a variety of up-to-date ways."

To create a video requires organization, decision-making, planning, analysing, synthesizing, she points out. It makes you wish high school had been like that when we passed through. Instead, it was coercive, stultifying. Our one-third drop-out rate is testimony to the failure of our high schools. It is a comment on our values as well.

Big pitch



Staff Comment
By BRIAN MACLEOD

What a motivator the almighty buck is these days.

While taking a whirlwind tour of the CNE Monday I subjected myself to a pitch by a wayward encyclopedia salesman.

I just wanted to see how he would go about trying to sell a \$2,000 set of encyclopedia to someone whose budget placed that kind of money hopelessly out of reach.

You know, just to satisfy my own curiosity.

After listening to a 30-minute dissertation by the smiling, incredibly friendly salesman, I'm surprised he's not recruiting unsuspecting students into cults.

The lure was to ask myself and my fiancée to enter a free draw.

We did. And the bait was set. But who was baiting who?

I knew going into the discussion that even if this man were to hypnotize me, I couldn't afford that set of encyclopedia.

So I figured I was safe. He started out by showing us a nice set of leather bound books for a casual seven grand.

"Nope."

"How about this \$2,500 set?"

"Nope." He then flipped the pages of his neat, glossy picture book to reveal a bargain basement price of just \$1,900.

"I can see you're breathing a little easier now," he said with a smile.

I was just laughing less. Honest.

"Wait a minute," he said.

He dashed out of his chair, \$500 suit and all, only to return with a neatly bound three volume set of philosophers' and writers' works.

"All the writers are contemporary. After Freud," he said. "No charge."

"Nope."

He figured it was time to change tactics. He glanced at my better half. "Do you like him?" he asked Karen.

"I suppose so."

She was playing it cool, I guessed.

The smiling man in the expensive suit disappeared once more. He returned with a pile of cookbooks valued at almost \$400. "No charge," he said still smiling.

This man must own a muffler repair shop, I thought.

He then showed me a set of encyclopedia for \$1,798.

"But I couldn't even afford my weekly ration of beer this week," I said figuring that would drive the proverbial knife into his heart.

"That's okay," he said - still smiling.

"No it's not," I retorted.

"A paperboy could afford the budget I can put you on," he said, smiling.

I wondered if he meant the kind who delivers them.

He offered me a deal to put \$75 down and then pay \$68 for 36 months. (Let's see, what's \$68 times 36 plus \$75? \$2,451. What happened to \$1,798?)

"I don't have the \$75 and I'm not going to have the \$68."

"But you don't have to pay until November."

"I'm not going to have it then either."

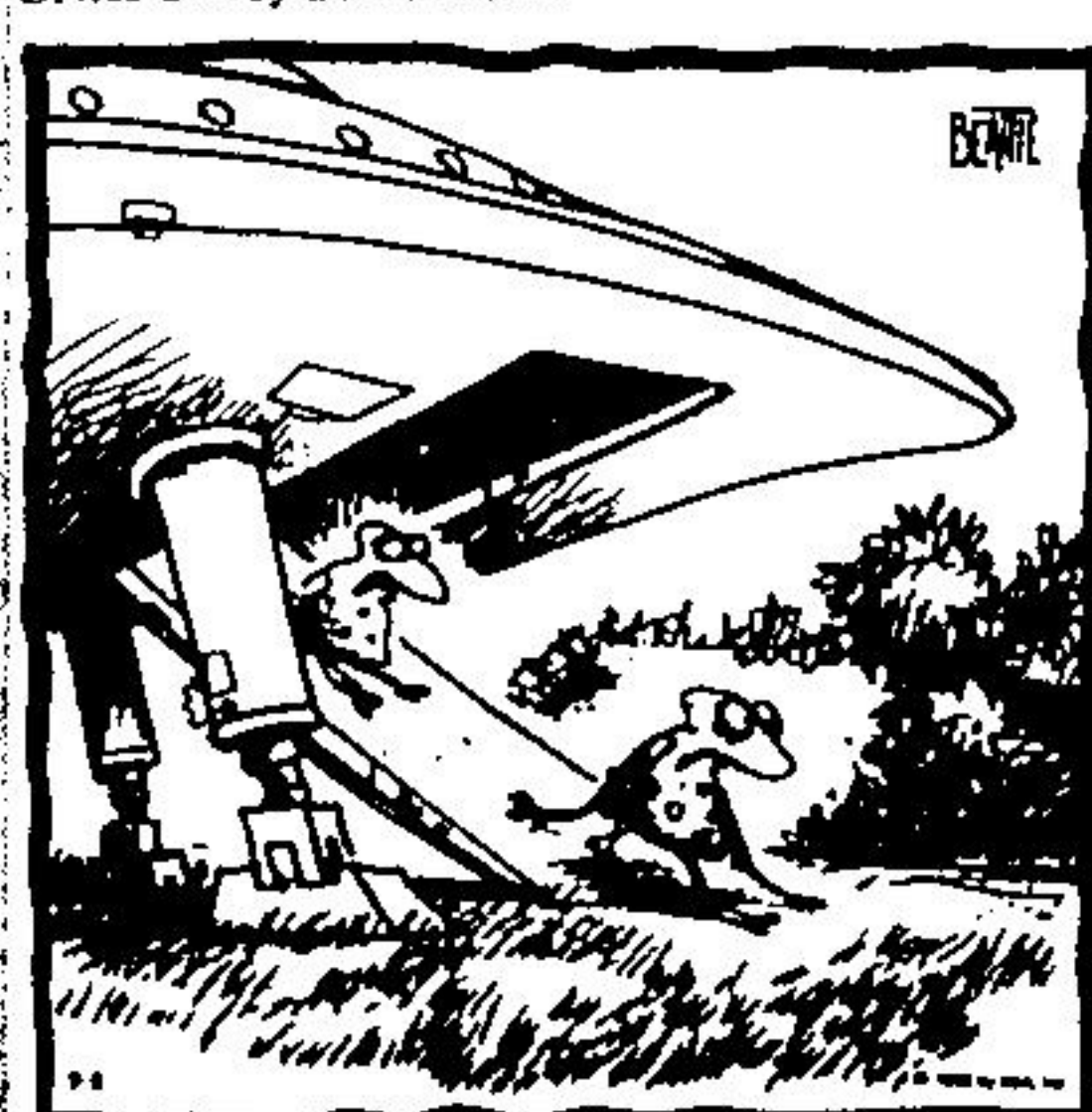
"I've got enough for a column," I whispered to Karen.

We got up from the table.

"But let me have your phone number. We'll call you in 10 days and you can still have this deal. You can have your cake and eat it too."

"Nope."

SNAFU® by Bruce Beattie



"Kidnap a writer from one of those supermarket newspapers so nobody will believe we're here."