

Halton Hills Outlook

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Their Outlook

Turner gets no break



Ottawa
 Stewart MacLeod
 Thomson News Service

You would think that John Turner, who slumped the country tirelessly with a painful back and more than doubled Liberal strength in Parliament, would have been given a few days to relax after the election.

I don't mean he should have celebrated - that's only for winners. But the guy certainly deserved a pat on the back - gently please - from his followers for his gritty campaign. Above all, he needed and deserved a few hassle-free days to regain his breath.

But, no, he wasn't even given a few hours. The ballots had scarcely been counted when the proverbial knives were being unsheathed and pointed in the general direction of his head-or-back.

And we used to think the Tories were the only ones who knew how to play that game! By comparison to some present-day Grits, they were rank amateurs in the art of leader-stabbing. Furthermore, they always waited a few weeks after each election defeat before pouncing.

But here we have Senator Pietro Rizzuto saying Mr. Turner must quit the Liberal leadership before next April's convention, or risk being turfed out.

"We don't ask him to leave tomorrow morning," said the chatty Quebec Liberal, with senatorial compassion. He has to leave before the next meeting.

"The majority of Liberals I spoke to agree with that."

It would appear the senator took an unusual interest in the party leadership in the immediate aftermath of the vote. But then, he was credited with having that same interest earlier this year when a group of 22 Liberal MPs made a clumsy attempt to force Mr. Turner's resignation.

WON'T QUIT

Mr. Turner knows better than anyone else that doubling the number of seats is not good enough. It might be a spectacular success for a third party, but for Liberals and Tories, there are only winners and losers. And Mr. Turner now has lost two in a row - a no-no.

It's a virtual certainty that he will want to step down before the next election and return to the comforts of his Bay Street law practice. After what the poor guy went through in

the last four years, who could blame him?

But one would think that, after his campaign efforts, he would be allowed to plan his departure at his own speed. But it's not going to happen that way. The timing of a Liberal leadership change has assumed crucial proportions.

This is because of the perceived heir apparents. And the names most prominently mentioned, miles ahead of others, are Jean Chretien, who ran second to Mr. Turner in 1984, and Paul Martin Jr., who has just been elected to Parliament for the first time.

If a leadership convention were held in the near future, it's conventional wisdom that Mr. Chretien would win in a walk. Opinion polls have elevated him to a pedestal exceeded only by Mr. Turner before he re-entered politics four years ago.

But two years down the road, it could be a far different game. By then, Mr. Martin may have become a major parliamentarian, a household name, a good-looking face on our daily television newscast.

And Mr. Chretien, without a political base, will probably be sinking further into that overstuffed leather chair in his Ottawa law office. It doesn't take long to become a political has-been, regardless of personal popularity or populous appeal.

Political parties, as a collectivity, are also good at asking, "But what have you done for us lately?"

Mr. Chretien did campaign, on his terms, in this election. But he won't be doing as much as Mr. Martin over the next couple of years.

NOT INVOLVED

We're not suggesting that any aspiring leader is actually in the knife-throwing, or even knife-sharpening, business. But one can't disassociate their supporters from the marathon shenanigans we've been watching in the Liberal Party.

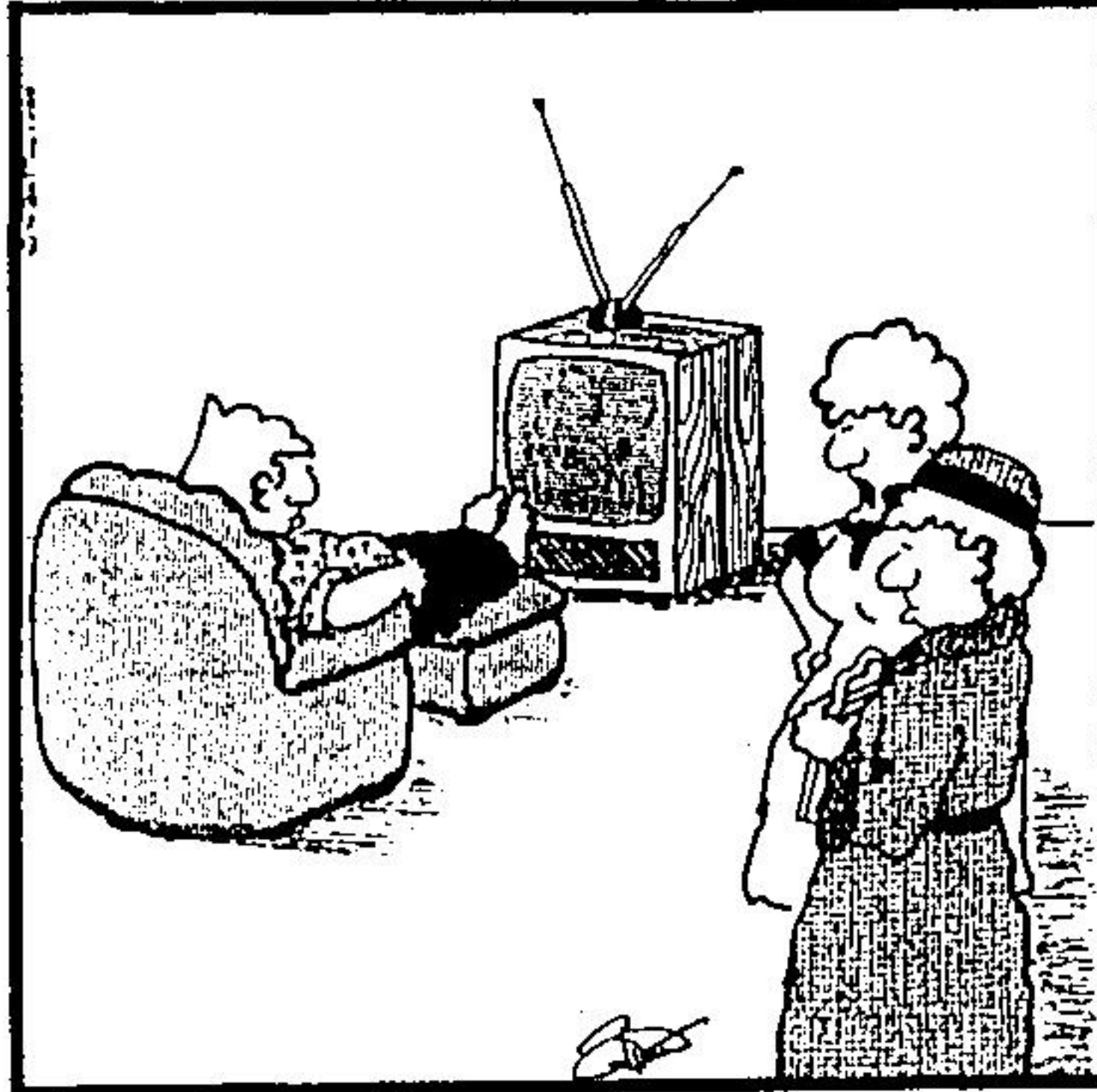
Incidentally, one of Mr. Chretien's greatest fans is Senator Rizzuto.

Most of the behind-the-scenes activity involving the party leadership will be centred in Quebec, where the Liberals won only 13 of the 75 seats. The greatest Liberal unrest is in that province. And, under the party's traditional rotation system, the next leader is likely to be Quebecer.

Besides Mr. Chretien and Mr. Martin, some Liberals think that Raymond Garneau, despite his defeat in this election, could be a contender. However, he was Mr. Turner's Quebec lieutenant in the last Parliament and shoulders much of the blame for the party's poor showing in the province. But then, some of the candidates for whom Mr. Chretien campaigned were also defeated, some rather resoundingly.

Two's a Crowd

By BILL BUTTLE



I just hope that he appreciates in value as an antique.

Tearing down bridges?



Your Business
 Diane Maley
 Thomson News Service

Now that we've hitched our wagon to the Stars and Stripes, people are still wondering whether we're good enough to compete with the Americans.

Some fear the folks down south will slip away with our jobs, our factories and our social programs. Well, I'm all for free trade, but we'd better watch out for our bridges.

You see, if there's one thing at least some Americans can do better than us it's steal-things, and lately some of them have taken to stealing bridges.

I don't mean to suggest that Americans are thieves; they are no more so than Canadians, I'm sure. But among those who are, some real artists stand out. Remember that legendary scam, the plan to sell the Brooklyn Bridge? Well, a couple of New Yorkers have done better, or worse.

Until last weekend, when the police nabbed them, several enterprising thieves apparently were selling the Brooklyn Bridge, piece by piece, for scrap. Now, that's a crime.

NOT A JOKE

"People joke about selling the Brooklyn Bridge, but what these guys did is not funny, it's dangerous," says Sam Schwartz, the city's chief engineer.

Last Saturday night, the New York Police Department caught two men dismantling pieces of the aluminum walkway of the 106-year-old bridge. Another thief ran away. Police say thieves had been selling the metal as scrap; the missing bridge parts will cost \$37,000 to replace.

City authorities first noticed the problem earlier in the month, when

they discovered that large pieces of the bridge were missing. They called police, who had been watching the bridge ever since.

The police charged two men with grand larceny, criminal mischief, reckless endangerment, criminal trespass and possession of burglary tools. They are looking for other men involved in the enterprise.

New Yorkers are particularly sensitive to the safety of their bridges, with good reason. Last year, when city workmen went to prepare one of the graceful structures for repainting, they discovered to their horror that all that was left was a metal shell, held together by paint; time and rust had eaten away at the bridge, which was promptly closed for repairs.

WATCH BRIDGES

The free-trade deal has been called a bridge between our two countries; could that be a warning of things to come? Just in case, let's keep the Americans away from our bridges.

Imagine driving home late one night along a dark country road. You've driven the route so many times, the car knows the way.

As you cruise along, your thoughts drift. The car eases its way around the corner; the road rises to meet the bridge. The bridge isn't there. Faster than you can say, Oh my God, New York thieves have dismantled it and sold it for scrap metal, duty-free.

Why not? These thieves are the same people who carry chain saws when they go breaking and entering in the Big Apple. Ripping a hole in the wall is easier than trying to break through all those locks and bolts New Yorkers put on their doors. Strangely, the neighbors never hear the noise.

Canada is a land of rivers, lakes and streams. We have lots of bridges, but none to spare. If, as some people fear, free trade will bring us the best and the worst of America, it would be prudent for us to keep an eye on those bridges we cross driving to and from work each day.

Give it a rest



Staff Comment
 By BRIAN MACLEOD

If ever a country has demonstrated a penchant for shooting itself in the foot, the United States has succeeded.

In fact, the US has carefully loaded the gun, pointed down and pulled the trigger.

Trouble is, it hit both feet and now it doesn't have a leg to stand on.

The decision to stop Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat, now considered a moderate in Arab circles, from addressing the United Nations General Assembly, was foolish, at best.

It's an example of the US overflexing its muscles in this time of renewed nationalism.

US Secretary of State George Schultz said Arafat poses a threat to national security because he condones and encourages terrorism.

Arafat wanted to explain the PLO's new position declaring an independent PLO state. The declaration also verges on the recognition of Israel. The latter part of that resolution is crucial to a settlement in the Middle East. In essence, the PLO is prepared to talk. The US is not only not prepared to listen, it won't let anybody else listen.

That's absurd.

It's highly unlikely that Arafat, branded by the US as a threat to national security, will come swooping into the US with a suitcase full of explosives. Arafat has demonstrated his ability to slowly moderate his stance over the years.

Funny, the US never mentioned anything about terrorism when Israeli leader Menachem Begin, who played a role in a hotel bombing in Israel, killing several people decades ago, came to negotiate peace with Egypt's Anwar Sadat.

No one can question the US's hard and fast support of Israel's right to exist. But there is a matter of thousands of people living in mud huts in the middle of nowhere - stateless and homeless - unable even to obtain a passport.

They want a place to call home. They're tired and they're willing to talk as evidenced by the new PLO initiative.

The fighting isn't going to stop until they have a home.

The move by the US to stop Arafat from addressing the United Nations General Assembly is blatant disregard for the 1947 Headquarters Agreement and for the lives of those who live in the Middle East.

The United Nations is thinking about moving the General Assembly to Geneva, Switzerland to hear Arafat.

Perhaps that should be a permanent move.

There are other countries capable of providing security for UN members, yet they keep from trampling on other nations' rights.

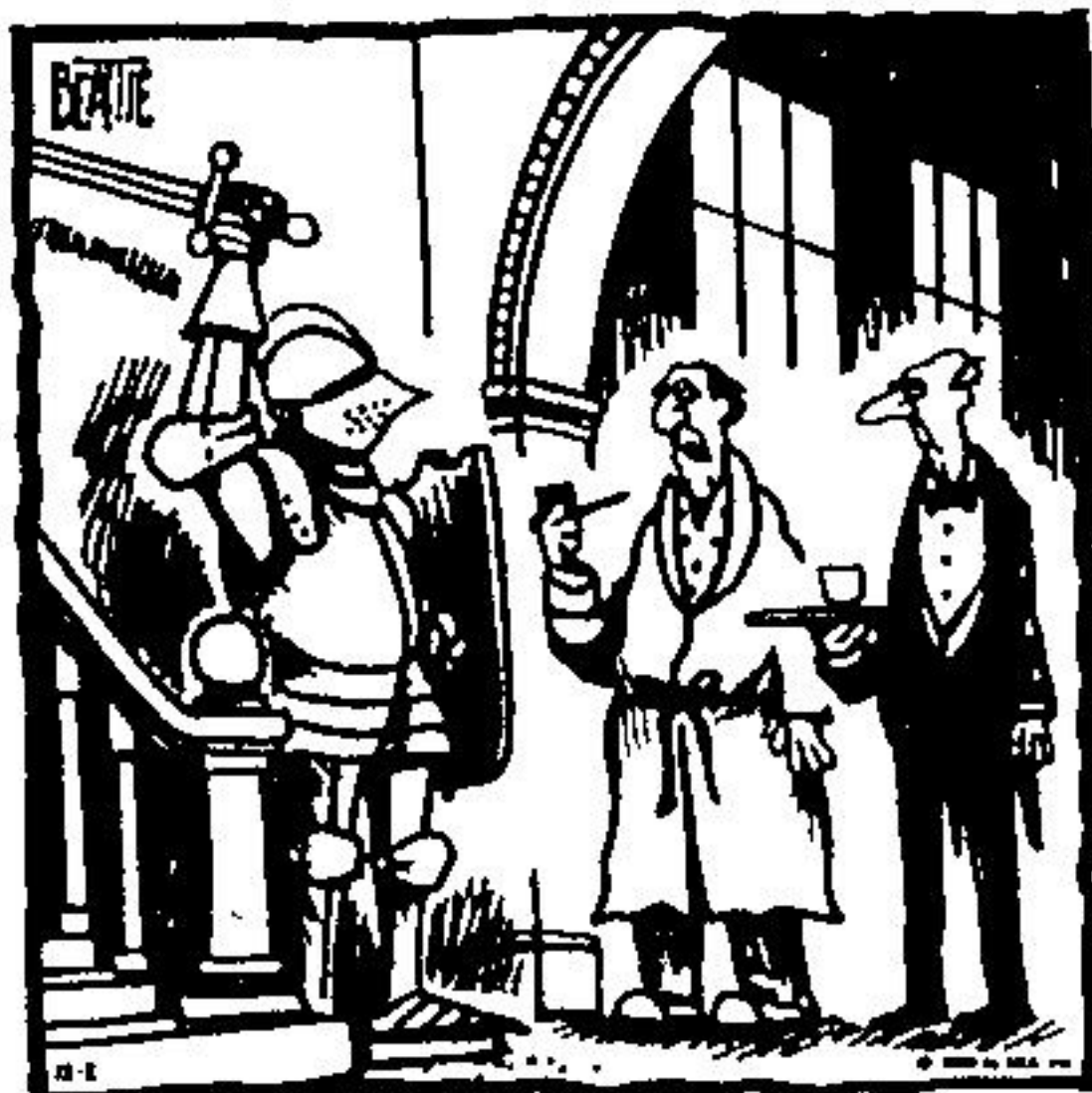
Switzerland is one of them. Canada, which has time and again demonstrated its ability to play a peacekeeping role, is another.

Canada voted in favor of the move to hear Arafat talk. And rightly so.

Never should a possible resolution to a centuries-old conflict, be halted in its tracks because of the irresponsible actions of one country.

If the US wants to resume its leadership role in the world, it's going in the wrong direction, as demonstrated by the 151-2 vote in the UN's General Assembly deploring the US denial of the visa for Arafat.

SNAFU® by Bruce Beattie



"That reminds me, Jenkins. I've got to go Christmas shopping at the mall"