

We stand on guard for thee

Our nation celebrated its birthday on Sunday - its 123rd birthday to be exact.

The year 1990 also provides Canadians another historic anniversary to observe, as our flag, waved so patriotically at numerous Canada Day celebrations, has been with us now 25 years.

Our Maple Leaf flag was adopted by the Commons on Dec. 15, 1964 - by a vote of 163-78 - and two months later it flew on Parliament Hill for the first time.

With so much to celebrate, Canada's 123rd birthday party should have been a joyous affair.

Instead, an interloper - in the form of the Meech Lake Accord - crashed the party and as is usually the case when an uninvited guest forces himself on party-goers, the mood of revelry was altered to one of uncertainty.

The interloper had been prowling the outskirts of the Canadian encampment for roughly three years and although rumours abounded about his purported importance to the community as a whole, his friends within the community chose not to have him formally introduced.

In fact, the interloper should not bear the blame for spoiling the party. Rather, his friends who chose to leave him lurking in the shadows should accept responsibility for the fiasco.

Canada, as a nation has survived internal turmoil and external threats. Canada will continue to survive and yes - even thrive.

But with party-wreckers like those mentioned above, we don't need enemies from without to threaten our existence, it seems the threat is from within.

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. The nation will save itself from the self-serving fools who appear willing to sacrifice the country for personal glory.

Happy Birthday Canada.

The sky didn't fall

Colin Gibson

Editor's Notebook



I was on my way to Canada's wake last weekend - the death having been so ominously predicted by our steamed Prime Minister Brian Mulroney just prior to the Meech Lake Accord being deep-sixed - when wonder of wonders, I chanced upon the Canada Day celebrations in Glen Williams.

Were these revelers not aware, I pondered, that our nation was no more, according to the doom-sayers and nearly apoplectic prophets.

I checked to make sure the sky hadn't fallen before getting out of my car to join in the festivities celebrating Canada's birthday, and lo and behold, our roof to the heavens was still in place.

Appropriately, the clouds and the rain gave way to a lovely blue sky-topped day and I could hear shouts of "Happy Birthday Canada" being used as greetings when, Maple Leaf flag-waving friends chanced to meet.

I can honestly state that

throughout the splendid day, never was heard a discouraging word on the fate of Canada.

Quite the opposite was true. People of all ages seemed to have found renewed belief in our country - the most appropriate slap in the face that could have been delivered to the politicians who attempted to bring Canada to its knees with scare tactics.

A curse on their respective houses.

The Meech Lake Accord fiasco brought out the political hounds baying hysterically and smelling blood, ready to move in for the kill over the country's prone body as soon as the backroom 'masters of the hunt' gave the word.

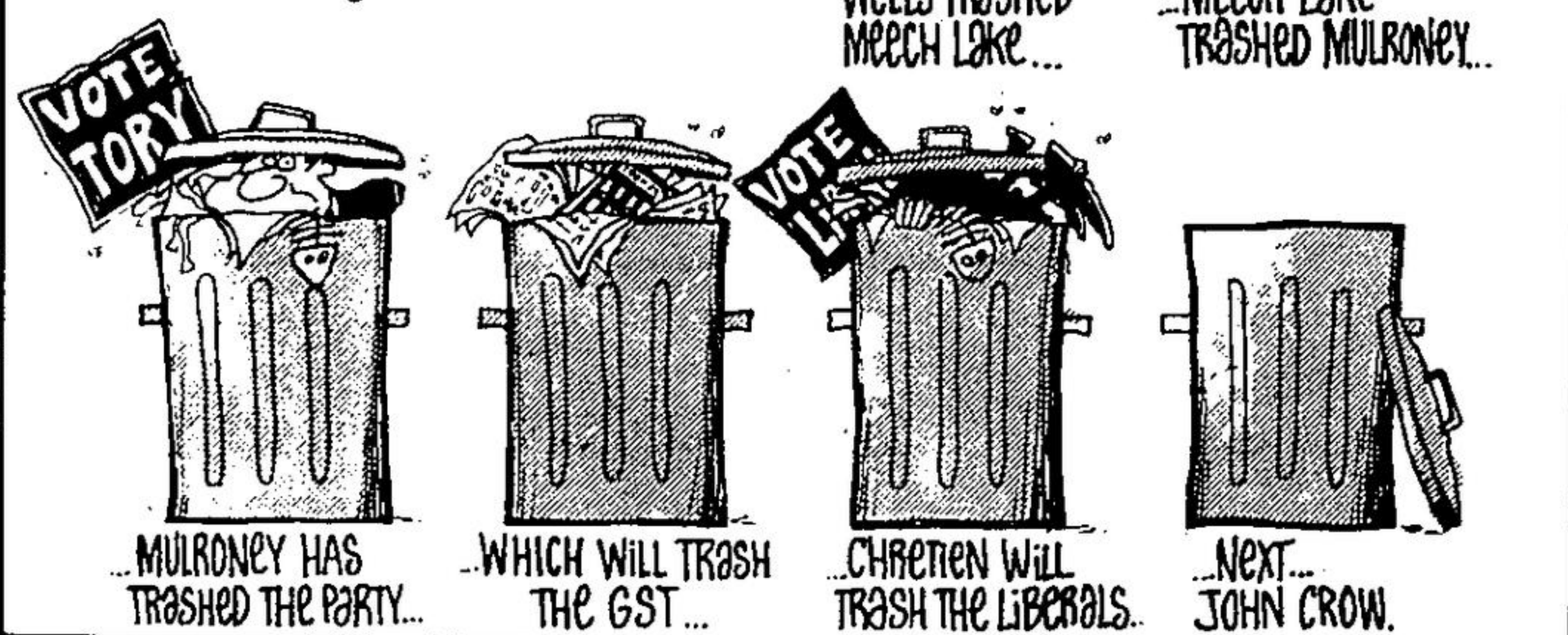
What a farce! What a total denigration of the Canadian political system that peeked tentatively out of the British womb way back in 1867.

The politicians underestimated the strength and will of the Canadian people, however, but the wounds caused by the Meech Lake blood-letting will take time to heal.

These same politicians who threatened the stability of Canada with their hyperbole are now asking the people to remain calm and once again trust them as they attempt to steer the ship of state.

It is to laugh at these hypocrites. Hopefully, the Canadian public will turn the scolding laughs into jeers the next time elections are called.

THE MAKINGS OF A PERFECT SUMMER....



Battle for second place looms when election called

TORONTO - The truly fascinating fight in the looming provincial election is to see whether the New Democratic Party or the Progressive Conservatives will finish second.

And whether two strong fourth parties, the Family Coalition Party (FCP) and the Confederation of Regions Party (COR), can concentrate enough votes to actually elect candidates.

Or, at the very least, whether they can influence who gets second place between the NDP and PCs.

The FCP is usually identified with anti-abortion, and COR with anti-bilingualism, but both parties have programs much broader than that. The FCP, for example, pursues various pro-family policies, while COR has ideas to democratize the existing political system. The FCP started from nowhere in 1987 and took a surprisingly high 48,000 votes (for comparison, the PCs and NDP each won about 950,000, the Liberals 1.8 million), while COR just recently acquired official party status in Ontario by putting 15,000 signatures on a petition.

Still, there is little doubt who'll actually win the election. Only the margin of the Liberal victory remains in doubt, and that probably depends a lot more on local factors and the fourth parties than anything else.

CENTRAL FACTOR

The 1987 provincial race was the David Peterson barbecue and babies tour, with the premier being the central factor, the Liberals had to sell.

He isn't so popular this time, actually running behind his party in the last couple of polls. But the Liberals still corral about 45 per cent of the vote, which, with the NDP and PCs splitting about 50 per cent and the minor parties taking the remaining five per cent, means an easy walk for the Grits - unless something happens to skew their campaign, as occurred with Tory Frank Miller in the 1985 election.

Still, assuming that doesn't happen, the race will then come down to the opposition parties trying to capitalize on local concerns or general dislike of governing parties in order to pick up a seat there and steal a seat here.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation has an interesting analysis of the current legislature, with its 94 Liberals, 19 NDP and 17 PCs. They found 21 "high risk" Liberal seats, which they defined as those where the plurality of the winning candidate was less than 10 per cent, or where a long-time PC or NDP seat went down in the 1987 Peterson sweep, or which is extremely volatile in general.

Because it is strictly statistical in origin, it isn't a flawless analysis, of course, leaving out a

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park
Thomson News Service



half-dozen Liberal seats in places like Windsor, Toronto and Mississauga where the incumbents may be in more trouble than raw numbers indicate. And a few opposition seats without incumbents aren't quite solid either.

But as a rough gauge, it is worthwhile. However, the OTF didn't attempt to determine which opposition party might benefit from Grit seats at risk.

THE EDGE

A quick calculation shows that in 11, the PCs are the main opposition; in eight, the NDP, and two are wide open. But all the other Liberal seats that could be

threatened are probably partial to the NDP, which would give it the edge.

Cornwall and Sudbury, in particular, will also see strong COR campaigns, with totally unpredictable effects. A broad belt of eastern Ontario communities and a number of Northern Ontario communities are deeply upset over the Liberal government's forced bilingualism policies. This election will perhaps give us some measure of that hostility.

In any case, barring something completely unexpected before voting day, not all those 21 seats will leave the Liberal column. In addition, elections invariably produce a surprise result here and there.

For political junkies, it'll be fun.

Editor's note: After a decade at Queen's Park, this is Derek Nelson's final column on Ontario politics. He succeeds the retired John Harbron as world affairs columnist for Thomson News Service. Following a vacation, he will begin his world affairs column in mid-July.

Money draining out of Third World

Vic Parsons

Ottawa Bureau
Thomson News Service



Bank figures show that from 1980 to 1982, about \$115 billion U.S. drained from the South to the North. It's estimated another \$50 billion went to the rich from the poor last year.

Moreover, by 1988, interest payments for the Third World on its debt was three times the amount of aid it received from the North.

LEADERSHIP URGED

These numbers are included in a recently released report by the Commons sub-committee on international debt, a document that calls upon the Canadian government to take on a leadership role in resolving what it sees as a crisis.

Canada should not be content to be a follower, says the report, unanimously backed by MPs from the three major political parties. It's time for the country to face facts and get serious about reducing debts that poor nations are simply unable to pay, it adds.

There's an element of self-interest in this, according to Walter McLean, the sub-committee chairman and onetime Conservative cabinet minister. It has been estimated that 50,000 Canadian jobs a year since 1982 have been lost because poor countries crushed by debts can't buy our products.

OTTAWA - Here's a comforting image: Devoted citizens of the rich industrial world bundling up piles of cash and generously shipping it off to the needy in poor, developing countries.

Warms the cockles of your heart, right? Unfortunately, it's very misleading.

The sad fact is that, since 1983, money has been draining out of Third World countries - also known as the South in development parlance - and into the wealthy North.

The 1980s, say some in the poorer countries of Africa and Latin America, were a lost decade. The gap between rich and poor has widened.

In the early '80s, billions of dollars flowed from the rich to the poor. United Nations and World