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K. ROBERT MALCOLMSON
Publisher and General Manager

EDITORIAL — COLIN GIBSON
Managing Editor
Staff Writers: Ben Dummett and Lisa Rutledge

ADVERTISING — DAN TAYLOR, MANAGER
Jeannine Valois, Stacie Roberts, Craig Teeter, Kim Hartyott

PRODUCTION — DAVE HASTINGS, MANAGER
Myles Gilson, Susanne Wilson, Stu Robertson

CLASSIFIED — Joen Mennall

CIRCULATION — Marie Shadbolt

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Get out and vote

The rhetoric, for the most part, is over. To coin a well-worn cliché, the die is cast and now the people must decide.

Tomorrow (Thursday) is provincial election day in Ontario with approximately six million Ontarians eligible to cast ballots.

The much-maligned Sept. 6 call to the provincial polls started out not so much with a bang as with an extended whimper that could be heard throughout the province as the majority of Ontario residents asked - 'Why an election call.'

The race for political offices in the province has heated up considerably over the past few weeks, helped in no small part by the fact that the voting public became much more involved in the campaign and confronted the various would-be politicians with issues which people considered affected everyday life and which people demanded must be addressed.

A highlight of the 1990 provincial election campaign - and it was a phenomenon that occurred time and again throughout the province - was the heated give-and-takes which erupted between the public and the political candidates at countless all-candidates meetings.

Not content to be spoon-fed unpalatable boring political party borsch, those who attended all-candidates debates were demanding, 'Where's the beef?' and were more than willing to wait until the cows came home for satisfactory answers.

Concerned Ontarians became involved in this provincial election campaign and turned what had been expected to be a cakewalk for Ontario Premier David Peterson and his ruling Liberal party into a veritable dash over hot coals and there is no doubt Mr. Peterson and his cohorts got their feet singed.

All that remains now is voting day and the caring Ontario population must take the final step into the polling booth and cast their ballots.

Post-election grumblings about politics and politicians by those who don't vote should be discarded like yesterday's garbage.

The blame for what could have been, might have been, perhaps should have been will rest solely on the shoulders of those people who were eligible to vote but for whatever reason, chose not to exercise that right.

It's your province, have a say in its' future and get out and vote.



South Africa to remain in turmoil

TORONTO - Why is the African National Congress's (ANC) Nelson Mandela fiddling at a conference in Norway while the black townships of South Africa burn?


Why does he have this Nero-like attitude to a society accelerating toward chaos on an almost daily basis?

Is it, perhaps, that a few thousand deaths of ordinary people are irrelevant to the grand scheme of things now unfolding?

South African Andrew Kenny supplies a shrewd guess or two in a recent issue of the British newsmagazine, The Spectator.

In an extremely pessimistic vision of the future, Kenny argued that the outlines of a three-party deal already exist between the ruling Afrikaner-based National Party (NP) of President F.W. de

Derek Nelson
World Affairs Analyst
Thomson News Service



Klerk, Mandela's ANC, and big business.

"All three, despite their different origins, are now collectivist and authoritarian," he wrote. Each wants a South Africa in which it can have power, privilege, and security.

"The NP," wrote Kenny, "can provide physical security through the white security forces and administrative control through the bureaucracy of the state; big business can provide financial and industrial expertise and capital; the ANC can provide a path to international legitimacy and the means of controlling black labor."

This new South Africa will have Mandela as head of state and the ANC as the principal party of government, since this is what the world wants, and, if necessary, any elections will be fixed to ensure such a result.

VEHICLE FOR POWER

Kenny doesn't have any time for the mindless western adulation of the ANC as a force for democracy and justice. He accepts that it is simply a vehicle for power, whose leaders share attitudes along the lines of a "traditional African intolerance of dissent and variety."

Nor does he think much of the once-proud NP, the means the Afrikaners have used to rule South Africa since 1948. It "now consists of obedient party hacks and servile state functionaries," wrote Kenny.

As for the grey-faced organization men who operate big business, who "love agreements and cartels and hate argument and competition," - in short, they long ago ceased to be capitalists - they want stability above all else. An ANC monopoly on black labor is as welcome to them as the Labor Government's closed shop legislation was in England.

Kenny sees two obstacles to this deal.

One is black nationalism or black racism, as exemplified by the slogan "one settler, one bullet" that is the main political platform of the ANC's long-time rival, the Pan-African Congress or PAC. The PAC is strong among the nominally ANC youth currently rampaging through the townships.

The second is white nationalism or white racism, which essentially amounts to some version of the old apartheid scheme, without the fig leaf of white democracy and black self-rule in homelands. It would be a pure and simple tyranny.

THIRD FORCES

Kenny discounts third forces such as Chief Mangosutha Buthelezi's Zulu-based Inkatha organization. The current war in the townships of between ANC and Inkatha forces, the ANC claiming a monopoly on representing blacks, while Inkatha insists on a seat at the negotiating table.

Kenny thinks in the end the triumvirate will cut a deal with Buthelezi.

Nor does Kenny take seriously the ANC's current Marxist economic policies, considering them simply political rhetoric. They will be discarded once power is in hand.

The resulting South Africa, he says, "will not be free, (but) corporatist and authoritarian, which for me would be sheer purgatory."

But purgatory, he adds, beats hell, the likely result of either a black or white racist state.

Politicians drinking at public trough

Tuesday past was just like any other day for most Canadians.

Wake up, put out the wife, make breakfast for the dog and take the goldfish for a walk in the shower. Nothing special.

Aha, but not so for 75 federal members of parliament, elected in 1984, who rhapsodized to the tune of "I got the money" as they joined an exclusive club that continues to wallow and drink at the public trough.

For those MPs elected in 1984, Sept. 4 marked their sixth anniversary in office and therefore made them eligible for a lifetime pension that could cost taxpayers anywhere from \$250,000 to more than \$5 million dollars depending on the Member of Parliament's age, years of service, and parliamentary responsibilities.


It is to weep tears of angst at these politicians who are constantly imploring and in turn berating the Canadian public about the sad state of our country's finances and asking that we make sacrifices and accept hardships for the good of the country.

If I was travelling by air at this moment, I would ask for a bag.

Federal MP's pensions differ from the ordinary citizen's pensions in a number of ways.

The pensions are fully indexed to

Colin Gibson
Editor's Notebook



the cost of living and when the MP turns 60, the value of the pension is adjusted on the accumulated impact of inflation from the time the member leaves parliament.

The MP's pension starts immediately, regardless of his or her age, upon retirement from parliament, and is payable regardless of the type of job or other honorariums the former MP accepts.

The MP's pension only stops if he, or she, is appointed to the Senate.

With senior citizens struggling simply to survive on their meagre pensions and the constant inflation spiral cutting deep gouges in the value of the ordinary working man's pension, how can federally-elected politicians be so callous.

Carol Goar, National Affairs

writer with the Toronto Star, used the example of Conservative backbencher, Jean Charest, 31-years-of-age, in pointing out the s me of the system.

Charest reached six years of elected office Tuesday. Had he retired immediately, he would be eligible to begin receiving a government pension of \$23,390 a year.

Goar pointed out that if Charest reached the age of 75, he would collect \$2,812,639 in pension money. Charest, a lawyer, would similarly not see his pension affected by whatever money he made from his law practice.

We all hear about political patronage positions and should a retired or defeated politician receive a government job or be appointed to a federal board or agency, according to Goar, that politician could receive both a government salary and a parliamentary pension.

It is estimated that last year taxpayers paid out \$7.6 million to 315 former MP's in pension money.

Something smells here and it is the stench of avarice on the part of politicians who would deny senior citizens the right to live out their lives in relative comfort while laughing all the way to the bank themselves - at the taxpayers expense.