

By Bill Kempling, MP

Reviewing election issues

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Halton-Wentworth MP Bill Kempling submits the following report from the House of Commons, Ottawa:

When one looks at the numerous political subjects that could turn into "issues" or become "Planks in a platform", one tends to become a bit cynical. I have said many times since coming to Ottawa that the great debates here revolve around oil, wheat, fish or Indians. If you catalogue words or speeches or questions or notices of motions, those four subjects would lead all others.

Some will say people can identify with those subjects. Perhaps this is so, but I feel there are other subjects of vital importance to Canada. We are three months into what has been designated as The Man and Resources Year. Our resources and their future could be an election issue.

An issue? We are involved in a peace-keeping-observer role that, should we withdraw, and in the view of some, precipitate a collapse of the truce, it could be blown into an election issue. Our trade negotiations with the United States are at such a delicate stage that a few adverse decisions by some key people and our economic fortunes would lose much of their value. It could be an election issue, although few people in public office relish trying to explain bilateral and multilateral trading philosophy, or balance of payment and the international monetary fund.

We have several ecological issues, such as the MacKenzie Valley Pipe Line or the James Bay Power Project, or perhaps the rate of clean up of the Great Lakes. Those persons who raised the question of the ecology have succeeded generally in getting something done about it. Now practical steps are being taken and we will see the results of their efforts in years to come. Problems of the ecology could become an election issue but it appears for the moment to have passed its peak as an election issue.

"Gamesmanship"

On some local scenes an airport may heat up the area but it hardly constitutes a national issue. To many the same feeling is held for bilingualism or national unity. Most people feel Quebec is making a slow and laborious recovery. As that recovery becomes a fact and the level of unemployment decreases in Quebec, the fires of separatism will subside, but they will never be extinguished. It was with some amazement that I read recently that Prime Minister Trudeau had advocated to the people of Manitoba the same course of action as taken by Quebec in the last decade. Playing one part of the country against the other is dangerous political gamesmanship.

If an election is called this year, one of the issues surely will be energy. There will be talk of a national energy policy, known reserves, consumption, projected usage in the immediate future, near future and to the year 2000. Now there is a perfect issue on which to build a political platform. Add a dash of nationalism, a portion of anti-

Americanism, throw in the suggestion that we are in an energy crisis and you have an issue that will frighten people. While in a frightened state, accuse your opponent of "selling out" our resources, or, if you want to be really melodramatic, accuse him of raping the country so that a few money-hungry oil barons can make a few more millions, and you will no doubt win the votes of those persons who are confused.

Is there an energy crisis? Well most certainly there is a crisis in the United States but not in Canada. Regardless of everything else, the main issues in the next election, whenever it is called, will centre around economic affairs. There will be an element of nationalism in this issue but there is going to be a cool

awakening by the Canadian public in the near future and some facts of life will have to be faced. There is a growing cynicism about our economic affairs... a feeling that somewhere along the line those who work and carry the heavy tax load in Canada have been had. The thought of another give-away program like LIP or OFY sends shudders through me, but be assured another one will be given birth in the near future. It will be the abuses in these

programs, plus some down-to-earth realities about our world trading position that will bring all Canadians up short. The lack of any development plan will be the cruncher for the present government. Many people here feel we are pinning ourselves into a corner. We are doing little or nothing to develop secondary industry in Canada. Our foreign trade is centred almost entirely on the United States. Almost 70 per cent of our exports in 1972 went to the USA.

We had opened a market in Africa amongst some of the emerging nations, but now we are experiencing some difficulties in this market because of competition from the European Common Market. It's a hard one for us to swallow because we extended credit to some of these nations when no one else would. Now that they have a semblance of stability, the ECM nations—principally France—are under-bidding us. So whenever an election is called, watch for economics and trade policies to be a major issue. One thing is sure, you will be deluged by statistics. To be forewarned is to be prepared.



COMPETITIVE CURLERS in the ladies' division at Milton Curling Club received awards Monday. In front are Ede Cryderman, Dorothy Walker, Wynne Jackson and Ev Johnstone with the Canadian Meter trophy. In the second row are Dorothy Harding, Carol Chudleigh and Adele Leslie with the Millson trophy; Anne Ptolemy, Donna Amon, Ruth Wilson and Joan Woodall with the President's trophy.



BUSINESS GIRLS' trophies awarded Monday at the curling awards night went to Nancy McKenzie, Elva Ezeard, Sue Carruthers and Leota Houston, winners of the Ontario Steel trophy. In the second row from left are Gene Barr, Donna Grenke and Elsie Murphy whose rink won the Canadian Tire trophy; and Kay Millson with the Early Bird trophy. Leota Houston was also a member of the Early Bird rink.



EIGHT HAPPY CURLERS who were among the trophy winners at the ladies' awards night were, front row, Lynn Fraser, Liz Urquhart, Margot Johnson and Sadie Higgins with the Trafalgar Motors trophy for top leads and seconds rink; second row, Grace Duncan, Jane Hughes, Bev Gibson and Berva Buttery with the King Refrigeration trophy for ladies' competitive curling. (Photos by R. Downs)

The Salvation Army is lining up a fund-raising campaign for the month of May.

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