



## Elliot goes down to defeat with fallen Liberals

By ROB KELLY

After 35 years in politics and only three fulfilling his lifelong dream of holding high elected office, Liberal Walt Elliot was swept from the corridors of power.

The Halton North incumbent was defeated Thursday night along with his party and Premier as the New Democrats vaulted to a majority government in the provincial election.

The former high school principal, undoubtedly reeling along with his colleagues across Ontario at the magnitude of the New Democratic Party mandate, didn't make his appearance at a 'victory party' in a rural Halton Hills motel until well after 10 p.m. When he finally arrived with campaign manager Dave Blaney, he was composed, even philosophical, about defeat.

"I thought we would win the riding and I

thought it would be a minority Liberal government," Mr. Elliot told the reporters who clamored around his modest pickup truck as soon as he and Mr. Blaney pulled into the parking lot. "I'm disappointed. I thought we had a lot of good initiatives going."

Political observers second-guessed Liberal strategy almost all evening, from the painfully early moment the collapse became apparent on. But Mr. Elliot couldn't, or wouldn't fault the local effort. "I don't know what we could have done locally that we did not do."

When the ousted Halton North member entered the crowded, hot motel lounge the throng of subdued supporters, beaten down by the barrage of bad news blaring out of strategically situated televisions, burst into spontaneous applause and chanted, "Walt, Walt."

Mr. Elliot stood facing his people with wife

Anne and told them "we have been turfed out as the government in Ontario."

"The people were ready for a change and when the people vote like that, you've got to be very reflective about it."

He announced his retirement from politics but vowed to carry on working in some capacity for the party he has served all his adult life.

"I'll be in there fighting again very quickly. I don't want you to be disappointed beyond a certain point. Get a smile back on your face."

The soft-spoken Mrs. Elliot, an artist, was obviously saddened by her husband's setback, but it was not without consolation for her. "I'm sort of glad," she admitted. For the last three years Mr. Elliot's hectic schedule has meant "he has hardly been at home at all."

She joked that his newfound free time will mean she can do "a little painting," while "he can do all the chores I've been doing."

The NDP candidate, an expatriate Irishman from Dublin named Noel Duignan, beat Mr. Elliot by 539 votes. Progressive Conservative Dave Whiting was only 485 votes behind Mr. Elliot. "Somebody won with what amounts to a third of the vote and two lost with a little less than a third of the vote," Mr. Blaney remarked.

Everywhere around Toronto Liberal candidates knew they "were in trouble" as the race went down to the wire, Mr. Blaney said. "The fact it was close (in Halton North) was a tribute to what Walt did in the last three years."



Liberal candidate Walt Elliot, who until last night was Halton North MPP, was cheered as he entered the victory party for NDP Noel Duignan. Mr. Elliot congratulated his opponent.



At left, MPP Duignan shares his joy with his wife Hilary who was at his side as election results rolled in last night. This will be his first stint in public office.



Photo by JOHN WARREN

After three years as Halton North's representative at Queen's Park, Walt Elliot went down to defeat, losing to NDP Noel Duignan by more than 500 votes. The long-time Liberal (left) met with supporters at what was to have been a victory celebration in Halton Hills Thursday night.

## Whiting would rather have lost to Liberal than NDP

By NORMAN NELSON

Third Place Halton North candidate David Whiting promised the gathered faithful at the Acton Curling Club that his election campaign was just beginning.

A socialist government, he predicted, has "got to collapse" and he told his supporters that he would like to make a third attempt to



Third runner Dave Whiting, PC candidate in Halton North, embraces a campaign worker.

get the Tory message across to Halton North voters.

Looking at the tote board, with all almost all of the results in, he told *The Champion* that a margin of less than 9,000 was going to win it. He said he expected the winner would need more than 12,000 votes.

Final results for the top three contenders were Noel Duignan (NDP) 8,510; Walt Elliot (Liberal) 7,971 and Dave Whiting (Progressive Conservative) 7,486.

The reason for his loss this time, he said, was similar to his last defeat in 1987 — a sweeping tide across the province. Only this time it was NDP instead of Liberal.

That tide, he said, swept the all important undecided vote. "I knew there was a large undecided vote out there and I didn't know where it was going to go."

Obviously, he added, it went with the provincial tide. "I thought we could have finished anywhere from first to third ... obviously we finished third."

He said he thought the campaign was fairly fought by all six candidates in Halton North, and, in fact, he made it a point to drop in at the headquarters of both Mr. Duignan and Mr. Elliot.

In an interview with *The Champion*, however, he didn't hide his displeasure at the NDP victory both provincially and locally. "I think we'll be sorry. Bob Rae cannot do what he says he's going to do."

With socialism being turfed out all across Eastern Europe, he said it's "not the way to go in Ontario."

And he questioned whether Mr. Duignan, a rookie politician, could provide a strong enough voice for Halton.

Mr. Whiting conceded that if he had to lose he would rather "it would have been to Walt."

Mr. Whiting said he failed to get his message across, and he expressed frustration with some of the media. It's hard, he said, to raise concerns when the big Toronto newspaper and television stations are shaping the news.

For instance, he said a local newspaper ran an article criticizing the lack of press releases when the Michael Harris campaign bus rolled through town.

On the other hand, he said he released

about three a week "and they never got reported."

"The press controls what you watch and what you read at night. It's a sad situation. It's no longer unbiased reporting."

The feeling at the Acton election night headquarters was one of disbelief.

Right after campaign worker Vince Whelan posted the first return, he told *The Champion*, "I don't think we're going to buck the trend. They (the NDP) are looking good. I hate to be pessimistic."

Those first returns, with 20 of 131 polls reporting, put Mr. Duignan on top with 1,448 votes compared with 1,022 for Mr. Elliot and 1,012 for Mr. Whiting.

## Green party candidate got point across despite second to last finish

Green Party candidate Patricia Kammerer would probably be satisfied that her campaign at least seemed to bring attention to local environmental issues.

Like the other candidates in Halton North, the 36-year-old Campbellville resident was unsuccessful in catching the New Democratic Party in yesterday's provincial election.

But winning the election, she has claimed, wasn't her ultimate purpose.

She represented the Green Party to take a stance on environmental concerns. Finishing fifth of six candidates, Ms Kammerer received

612 votes. At press time, she couldn't be reached for comment.

Her next closest rival was the Libertarian candidate John Shadbolt with 460 votes.

The political world was a new experience for the single mother who was also the fifth candidate to enter the race in the riding.

She runs a goldsmith shop in Campbellville.

The growing Green Party, known chiefly for its environmental stance, had as many as 38 candidates in the province's 130 ridings in the election.

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