

Election too close to call in Simcoe East, Centre

by Doug Reed
With less than a week to go before the March 19 provincial election, races in both the ridings of Simcoe East and Simcoe Centre are too close to pick eventual winners.

While some provincial leaders bicker about the presence or lack of election coverage by the media, closer to home the battle appears to centre around which party can place the most election campaign

signs on trees, cars and yes in one case on an old red-colored school bus. To say the election has been low-keyed in most of both ridings is to hit the nail on the head.

It might well be after recent back to back federal elections during the past year or so that both campaigners and their supporters just can't muster up enough zip for another "last hurrah."

Whatever the reason most voters we have

talked to are weary of the whole exercise which will in the end cost millions of dollars to hold.

In Simcoe East the battle will be won or lost not in Orillia or Midland

but in a section of "no-man's land" between Orillia and Midland.

Balance of power
It would seem to us the real balance of power will come from Warminster, Fesserton,

Matchedash, Tay, Victoria Harbour, Waubaushe and Port McNicoll.

And odds are throughout that section of the riding Grits have a bit of an edge...but it

could all change March 19 if inclement weather keeps vast numbers away from the polls.

Tories you see have a knack of getting the vote out in good weather or foul so don't count them out, nor for that matter don't count out the NDP either.

In Simcoe Centre the race is going to be equally close with Bruce Owen (Lib.) hot on incumbent MPP George Taylor's heels.

Owen has been running a slick newspaper campaign in particular and may very well grab some of the disenchanted votes from both the Tories and NDPs in the riding.

But again it is too close to call.

In the meantime you'll have a chance to meet Dr. Stuart Smith, head of the provincial Liberals when he comes

to Midland tomorrow night, if you are of that persuasion.

Both Jack Harber (Lib.-Simcoe East) and Bruce Owen (Lib. Simcoe Centre) are hoping for a good turnout at the joint meeting to be staged at the Budd Watson Gallery when Smith comes to town at 6:30 p.m.

Although Premier William Davis reached into the riding last week in visits to both Barrie and Orillia, Smith will be the first party leader from the province who will actually be making an appearance in Midland to woo voters.

Mike Cassidy, NDP leader, was to have been here yesterday but his visit was shelved.

So to recap, it is going to be close in Simcoe East and Simcoe Centre, but then you knew it all along, right?

Place of strap in schools warms SCBE meeting

A motion to inform the Minister of Education that the Simcoe County Board of Education favours the retention of the strap in the public schools provoked nearly every trustee at Wednesday's meeting to speak for or against the strap.

The mover of the motion, Tottenham trustee Frank Prothero, suggested that those people who think better means of maintaining discipline exist today "should look at the crime rate and the number of misdemeanours being committed. It isn't even a close argument. Our society is in a great decline."

Barrie trustee Dr. Allen Fisher, who spoke at least three times against the retention of the strap, said that he "never thought that beating my children would discipline them."



John McCullough

Fisher drew on his 40 years experience as a teacher to comment that he found it astonishing how many good teachers did not use the strap and how many weak teachers did.

Blame should be laid not on the schools for not beating children but on any private enterprise that preys on children, he said. "Until the churches regain the grip that they (once) had on children," progress is impossible, he said.

Midland trustee John McCullough took offense at the remarks of Barrie trustee Paul Tremblay and Orillia trustee Janet Kiff that young people were not animals to be whipped, and that strapping was an act of violence.

McCullough added that the strap had never been used in that extreme manner in Simcoe County because the board would certainly have heard of it.

The motion in part declared that the banning of the strap would severely weaken the remaining authority of the teacher, and that banning of the strap by the Ministry would be an infringement of the authority of the province's school boards.

Prothero asked for a unanimous vote for the motion, but the motion did not come to a vote. It was instead referred to committee.

Harber to offer his formula

A meet the candidates night was held in Orillia last night for those seeking to become Simcoe East's representative at Queen's Park after March 19.

Jack Harber, the Liberal candidate, presented this newspaper with a copy of his address late

yesterday afternoon.

Because of limited space in today's newspaper we were unable to reproduce Harber's entire address.

Harber and Bruce Owen (Lib. Simcoe Centre) will be hosting a meeting tomorrow night in Midland when Dr. Stuart Smith, provincial

leader of the Liberal Party, will be attending.

The joint riding(s) meeting will be held at the Budd Watson Gallery.

Midland Jaycees will be hosting that Sunday night event. During his address last night Harber was to touch on such subjects as unemployment in the riding, aging, the elderly, mandatory retirement, inadequate pensions, limited access to home support services and the government freeze on new homes for the aged.

At the outset of his remarks he intended to say that the people of Simcoe East "want to hear specifically what an individual would do to correct some of the problems that our area is experiencing."

With that Harber planned to zero in on local problems and offer his formula and that of his party to correcting them.



Dr. Stuart Smith

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