

Convention memories of six Liberals

"Very tiring, hectic, very hot and very exciting"

by
MURRAY MOORE
Simcoe North Liberal Riding Association delegates to the Liberal leadership convention, a majority of whom supported the man who placed second, Jean Chretien, have returned from Ottawa.

Six of the delegates told this newspaper what it was like to be a delegate on the convention floor, and their thoughts about the elected leader, John Turner, and about Jean Chretien.

DAVID HAIG
Youth delegate David Haig, a student at Midland Secondary School, described the atmosphere of the convention as very intense. Most of the Liberals in Ottawa for the leadership convention were there for their first convention, he said. "It was hard to keep on top of things," especially during a vote. The Jean Chretien supporter said that he had heard better speeches by his choice for leader. The speech by John Roberts was the best Haig had heard him make.

John Turner during his speech on Friday was confident, Haig said. Turner did not make a mistake. His speech could have used more emotion.

Haig thinks that Liberals will pull behind their new leader, whether they voted for him or not.

ALLAN MARTIN
Former Toronto area MP Allan Martin, an active Chretien supporter, believes Jean Chretien emerged "a winner of a sort." Martin expects that Chretien will have to be offered a "very senior" position, because of his high profile, and his "tremendous" following within the party. "I expect he will be deputy prime minister or something."

Martin thinks the non-elected delegates preferred Turner because he was the "safer quantity." The accountant predicts the Liberal Party will win the next election with Turner, and would have done so with Chretien. The voters, Martin said, will choose the Liberals after they "look at the potential things they will run into if they elect Mr. (Brian) Mulroney, Mr. (Sinclair) Stevens" and the Conservatives.

Chretien and the other losing leadership candidates had to battle five years of image building around John Turner. "The odds were against anyone but Turner in so many ways."

The race was between "two horses," Turner and Chretien. "That was one of the difficulties," Martin said he is "quite comfortable" with Turner as Liberal leader.

JOE BLAKE
Joe Blake, a lawyer in Midland, was one of the two delegates from

North Simcoe who reportedly voted for John Turner. Blake went to the convention without having made his choice. Turner, who he favoured, won Blake's vote with his speech on Friday.

Blake says he knew what both Turner and Chretien would say. But he wanted to hear the platforms of the five other candidates.

The Liberal gathering was not as dramatic as the last Progressive Conservative leadership convention, Blake said, but he still found attending the convention to be impressive.

"Can Chretien do it? We didn't really know until the results of the first ballot were released."

The biggest surprise, Blake said, was how poorly Don Johnston, John Roberts, Mark MacGuigan, John Munro and Eugene Whelan did in attracting votes. Chretien's chances would have increased in proportion to the number of votes the five minor candidates attracted, Blake said.

"Turner will help us get our economic legs underneath us," Blake said. Liberals are socialists, but social programs such as medicare and mother's allowance have to be paid for before they are introduced, he said.

BARBARA MARTIN
Barbara Martin, a working housewife, found the "whole process" of electing a party leader "just fascinating."

"By Saturday afternoon I think nobody knew how close things were, until after the first ballot." "Excitement was a high pitch with both Turner and Chretien partisans thinking their candidate was close to victory, she said.

Barbara Martin worked in the Turner camp at the convention on computer printouts. Several hours before the first vote, the results of Turner group research indicated Chretien receiving more votes than he in fact did, Turner fewer votes than he did, and Don Johnston fewer votes than he received.

Martin is positive that Turner will be able to make a favourable impression on the Canadian public, despite the impression given by the press, she says, that Turner is conservative, and unemotional.

CAROL BAKER
Carol Baker, an office administrator with the Midland Chamber of Commerce, and a Chretien supporter, is reserving her opinion on how effective a leader John Turner will be.

Baker believes that the majority of delegates voted for Turner because they believed that, with Turner, the Liberals could win in the West, and that it is time for an

English speaking prime minister.

Chretien's speech on Friday was the best of the seven speeches, she thought. Baker has heard Chretien make superior speeches, but on Friday "he did well."

John Roberts' spoke well also, she said.

CARL MANSHART
Carl Manshart, a high school teacher, described being a

delegate to the leadership convention as "very tiring, very hectic, very hot, and very exciting."

Manshart, the Simcoe North Liberal Riding Association president, expects that his candidate, Jean Chretien, will be offered a very prominent position in the next Liberal government, "hopefully deputy prime

minister." Chretien placed a strong second, and because he is so respected and liked, while he won't be prime minister, he will have considerable influence, Manshart said.

The exciting part of the convention for Manshart was the move by four of the five candidates after the first ballot to one of the

two remaining leaders, Turner and Chretien. (Don Johnston also stayed on the ballot.)

A delegate in the crowd didn't have the advantage of watching television and benefiting from the information given by reporters and experts, Manshart said, but the distant observer did not get the same feeling of excitement as did the

delegate standing on the convention floor.

Chretien would have done better to speak in his usual style, instead of reading from a prepared text, as he did during his speech on Friday evening, Manshart said. The speeches of John Roberts and John Turner were also rated good by Manshart.



Impressions from Leadership '84

by
FRAN FERGUSON
Jean Chretien - 1365, Don Johnston - 192, John Turner - 1862.
"Jean Chretien - 1365, Don Johnston - 192, John Turner 1862."

Iona Campanola, president of the Canadian Liberal Party announced to bring to a close Leadership 84, the Liberal leadership convention. A huge cheer went up to greet the new Prime Minister, John Turner.

As well, tears were shed by many delegates who supported the other six candidates. The long hours of work had not elected their candidate. All that was left to do was to shift their support to Mr. Turner in the tradition of the Liberal Party. No matter how hard the battle during the campaign, once the numbers are announced they have traditionally moved into line behind their new leader, as a democracy dictates. The battle is over, its time to work together.

The convention evoked strong emotions. It marked the retirement of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a man who had ruled this great land for 16 years. This exceptional person evoked a strong love-hate relationship in all

rich and poor, people of every walk of life, every religion, creed and colour come together to choose a leader for their party. It was exciting to watch the workings of our system of government.

After watching so many young Liberals work so hard for what they believe in, I felt there is great hope for this country's future. It was over, the signs lay in disarray on the floor, and the chanting had stopped as the people present left to head home to plan for the national campaign that probably will come late this summer.

reform was one of the main platforms of all the candidates. Mr. Turner was elected on this issue and hopefully he will be able to bring new ideas and people into the party to bring renewed enthusiasm and zest as they approach the very difficult problems of our age.

A leadership convention is a microcosm of our whole democratic process. Young and old,

rich and poor, people of every walk of life, every religion, creed and colour come together to choose a leader for their party. It was exciting to watch the workings of our system of government.

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