

Muzzling the murmurs

by
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When the carpetman came to pull the rug out from beneath the feet of the once beloved Liberal Party of Canada on September 4, most people assumed (and quite correctly so) that a certain Conservative leader was glowing from ear to shining ear. But maybe, just maybe, as the returns continued to pour in from all over, a dark cloud began to form in the mind of that Prime Minister-elect.

There is no doubt that the cloud, in the form of a small storm by now, was evident last week as our man Tuesday tried to form his cabinet in some back room in Ottawa. As our Prime Minister-to-be interviewed many Tory M.P.'s, that large low pressure system spread into the hearts and minds of 210 other Conservative Members of Parliament. The message those clouds brought? It was none other than that no matter how hard you tried, no matter how long you worked at it, there was absolutely no possible way that a Prime Minister can work 210 eager members of his party into his cabinet. One week ago today, after all the people had been talked to, reasoned with, and the bargaining had been complete, there still were many broken hearts on and around Parliament Hill.

The cabinet juggle is a delicate one in which a small move can have big repercussions. Old John Crosbie is bitter

about being shoved out of his former post of Finance Minister (even though his last budget a la '79 blew up in his face). It would be nice for John C. to know that he is not alone though, but it would take too long to list all the other grievances of both cabinet members and former prospective members. There is only so much paper in the world.

The political reality is, unfortunately, that when you have your cake and are about to begin eating, the bigger guy from down the block gets hungry. But as much as the MP's fighting for the senior portfolios can take their appointments somewhat personally, the folks bidding for the more junior portfolios can find some comfort in geography.

You see, when you are shooting for the top jobs in the government, the Prime Minister is going to include you in the cabinet anyway, and bases your appointment on competence, political beliefs, personality and affability. Those who were in contention for the more junior portfolios (such as Ministers of State, Minister of Sport etc.) had geography working either for them or against them. If you were from Ontario, it was working against you. If you were from P.E.I., the almighty geography was on your side. Chances are, and were for that matter, that there was going to be a lot of cabinet material from Ontario

in the major portfolio positions. Therefore, prospective Ontario members were more likely to be shut out than those from more remote areas of the country for the sake of national unity. One only has to ask Pierre Trudeau what can happen if some sections of the country are left out.

Who's going to sit in the cabinet has been sorted out and wounds are healing quickly, for the most part. But there are still 210 and an independent who wants to make a dash to the blue front plus a Prime Minister that comprise the people under the Tory Banner in this 33rd Session of Parliament. Gasp! Not everyone fits on the government side of the House. The solution to the problem of overcrowding isn't easily solved. One of

two routes has been proposed. A. Crash diets. B. Stick them on the other side. Who gets stuck on the other side of the House where all too much time has been already spent. It seems as though an alphabetical system of sorts has been or will be devised. Will John Wise be happy sitting next to some NDP and Liberals (although the latter are a rare breed these days)? Which side does Ron Stewart end up on? Stay tuned.

It looks as though Little Bo Brian could have some angry mutton on his hands in the near future. If things get bad, there could be a possible solution to the whole situation. He could give the government to John Turner. He has about 40 members to deal with. A perfect cabinet size.

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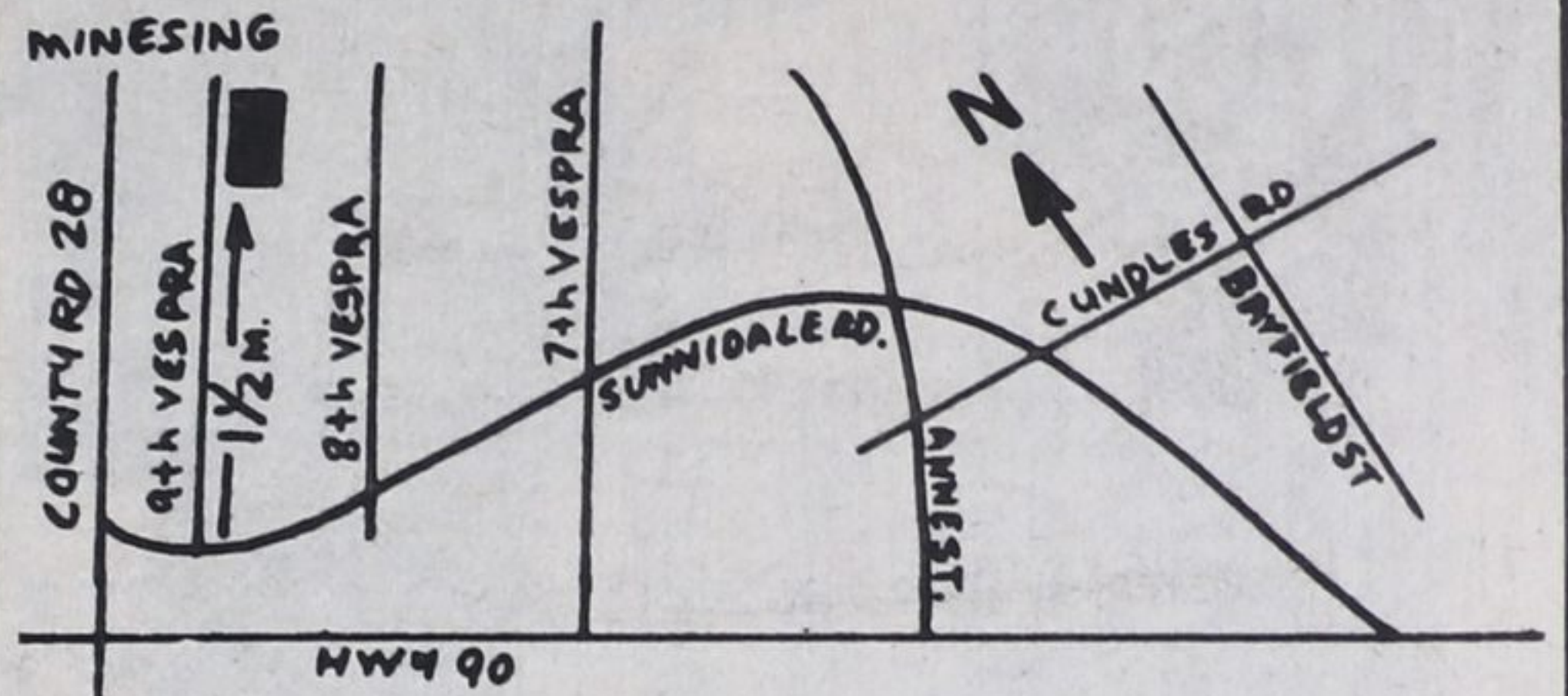
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Drafts increase fuel bills

With a hint of fall in the air, homeowners should do more than just think about winterproofing their houses.

Money--and not as much as you might think--spent on draftproofing a house can cut 10 to 15 percent from heating bills.

A \$200 investment in high quality caulking and weatherstripping materials can pay for itself in two years, based on annual heating costs of \$1,000 for an average Ontario house.

To draftproof your home, first track down places where warm air leaks out of the house, or where cold winds whistle in. On a windy day, the back of your hand or a strip of tissue paper will detect air leaks around doors and windows, the top of the basement wall, milk or mail chutes, electrical outlets or switches, and from the fireplace.

Ontario Ministry of Energy experts point out that these openings account for 30 to 40 percent of the heat loss in the average home.

Uninsulated attics and basements can also be a major culprit in heat loss.

Next, visit your building supply dealer or hardware store for the materials you need. Silicone or acrylic caulking materials

(which do not dry out or crack) are recommended, and weatherstripping for doors and windows should be rugged enough to stand up to opening and closing. While you are buying the materials, you might want to ask the store staff for tips on both selecting and installing the materials.

The basement is a good place to start. The sill area--where the house sits on top of the basement wall--deserves special attention. Plumbing vents and electrical boxes which penetrate the air/vapour barrier should be caulked and sealed to the barrier.

Door sweeps on exterior doors--strips of pliable material to block the space between the door and the floor--close off a major heat loss area, and weatherstripping around the edges also helps.

Don't forget the attic hatch, either. Install a latch which pulls the hatch tight against its seal.

Windows can be particularly drafty, especially the double-hung type. Weatherstripping, and caulking where the window frame joins the wall, can help here. And remember, do all your caulking from the inside.

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