

Rain in the leader's office

Question: What would you do if you were John Turner?

Answer: a) flee the country quickly, b) learn to box, c) do b) first, then do c), d) cry.

All of these options could be the right answer. In fact, it's likely that all of these look awfully good right now to John. The problem is that he has to choose one of the options very soon.

In November, just two short months away, Turner is going to have to face his badly divided party. When he does, he will ask them how they think he has been doing lately. It's called a leadership review. The answer may not be what he is looking for. Herein lies the problem. We're not so certain where the solution lies.

Just three short years ago, the sun shone brightly on Turner's white shock of hair. He had his own table at Winston's. He was raking in enough yearly income to pay the federal debt, and his evenings were spent basking in a successful career.

He had been the finance minister of this nation just 10 years earlier. He had bowed out of politics fairly respectively in 1976, and had been enjoying long sunny vacations bi-annually ever since.

The clouds of Parliament have settled over John Turner's sky since then, and a torrential downpour could very well occur come November.

After the 1984 election, Turner had nowhere to go but up. His party has climbed back out of the rubble, or at least has let the dust clear, but Turner is still having trouble convincing his party that he is responsible for their recent revival. However, to make matters worse, many Liberals and political observers do not consider the Liberal party to be revived.

Their recent surge in the polls can easily be attributed to one thing: Brian Mulroney. It's only natural that when a prime minister does poorly, somebody has to benefit. Right now, the Liberal party is benefiting from Mulroney's ridiculousness, but Turner still trails Ed Broadbent and Mulroney in personal ranking, according to the cursed pollsters.

That leaves John in a very unhealthy position. Most party members feel Turner is still not a very prime-ministerial leader. He still has the voice of a rusty Studebaker, and a speaking style as smooth as the contours of

a quarry. The man is simply not polished.

Turner's personal style has been a problem since day one, and while he has managed to quiet some of the rucrus over it, other problems are beginning to further complicate his life.

The Jean Chretien question looms darkly over Turner's record. He is about as uncertain over Chretien's status as the public at large, creating the impression of a leader who cannot lead.

Furthermore, Turner has still not come out with cohesive policy stands on the major issues. His position on free trade was released two weeks ago, but it is still foggy. Party officials criticize it as being too vague and not constructive enough. It criticizes, but cannot provide a suitable alternative to free trade.

The dilemma regarding policy is simple. Turner wants his party members to have input into the policy making process, and that will happen this November at the leadership review. If Turner survives the leadership, it will be at least a half year before policy statements are drawn up. That gives Turner just over a year to sell them before an election is called.

Carey Nieuwhof

If Turner is forced to call a leadership convention, then the party will be without an overall policy platform for yet another year. That is far too long for a party to be without direction, and far too close to the next election for a new direction to catch on.

Turner also has what's known as the Joe Clark syndrome facing him. He enters the leadership review technically needing only 50 per cent of delegate support, to remain as party leader. But like Joe Clark, his leadership will be highly questionable if he receives less than 70 per cent of the vote.

If he gets less than 70 per cent confidence at the leadership review and calls a leadership convention, he will likely lose it. If he stays as leader, it's debatable as to whether the party will unite behind him.

And finally, it looks like Pierre Trudeau is going to challenge Turner on his constitutional stand on Quebec at the leadership review. You can bet your money that Keith Davey, old Liberal warchief, may be standing next to Trudeau questioning Turner on everything under the sun.

So what would you do if you were John Turner? You're right. The answer is not that easy.

Ray Baker

faze us. Until we found out later that what we had assumed to be religious monuments at every breathtaking curve were in fact crosses to commemorate people who had driven down the mountain the hard way, like straight down.

The only sign of banditos in the mountains was an isolated bend with enough broken glass to cover the Great Wall of China on the road. Luckily, enough traffic had been through to powder it. Or maybe the sale of used tires in the next village had something to do with it.

And so it went, swimming and sun by day, night clubs by night. Mom wouldn't let me dive off the cliffs in Acapulco, saying something about years of practice, so I climbed down. The following day I had the adventure of a lifetime. To be continued.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE. "Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun."

This column is for Bill

Reading about somebody's vacation is worse than watching home movies, so stop now while you're ahead. Bill Pumputis is a corporal in the OPP who confessed, "I read your columns faithfully," so for my one remaining reader, this one's for you, Bill.

Mexico was about what we expected, only more. More sunshine, 360 days a year. More waves. Some big enough to pick you up, throw you on the rocks, pick you up again and throw you back on the beach. Which happened to a couple after they had been in Acapulco for only two hours. "Welcome to Mehico amigos."

More food. Sea food, fruit, veggies, more varieties of cheese and bread and beverages than you can shake a tequila at, and by the end of the second week even some food that we could eat.

Needless to say, in a land surrounded by food of every description, good old

Montezuma reached out from the grave and extracted his revenge.

Luckily we are adaptable. By day 14 we were far from the madding crowd. With the Mexicans on their beaches eating their food, drink their drinks and making our own cabana out of palm fronds on the sand against the 110 degree sunshine of noon hour. No siesta, just sun, sand and the Oceano Pacifico.

Exchange rates on the Canadian and U.S. dollar were excellent so after spending what we felt like, we still came in under our daily allowance.

Of course some of this, the first week, was due to the fact that we dare not eat.

I finally found, on Day 6, the ideal Mexican three course meal: two soup crackers in sealed plastic, three Pepto-Bismol, and four Alka seltzers, and that's cheap for the whole day.

VIVA ZAPATA

Banditos, warned our CP representative, were active after 7 p.m. on the beaches, so stay away. Banditos, she warned, were active in the mountains.

We were 160 miles into the mountains and jungles in a rented jeep when the road block appeared.

I had my money where only a great white shark could find the pocket, and Mom's purse was replaceable.

On being asked if we spoke Spanish I said "No." After all, pina colada, margarita, tequila, buenas dias and buenas tardis don't count. The men with Uzi machine guns went through Mom's bag, the jeep, and myself and waved us on. They were a SWAT tactical unit of drug-enforcement doing a spot check. Whew!

The torrential rains in the mountains, the switchback curves, the lack of a windshield wiper motor and the suicidal driving didn't

Letters

The other side of the fire protection dispute

Dear Editor,

In the Friday Sept. 12 issue of the Free Press was an article stating that the council of the Town of Midland had unanimously approved the terminating of fire protection for the Midland Point area of the Township of Tay. I feel it is necessary to make a few facts known so as to give a clearer picture of the matter.

1) I think using the word dispute somewhat overemphasizes the matter from Tay's point of view.

2) For the Township of Tay to pay the same rate per home as Midland residents would mean Tay residents paying for such things as the aerial ladder truck, for which we have no need, also the costs of housing this unit and all the other costs that would apply such as insurance, etc.

3) Tay residents would be paying for a first response service when in fact it is written in the agreement and understandably so that Midland residents and property is their first priority. Therefore, Tay would be receiving

a somewhat lesser degree of protection.

4) I am sure Midland has not suffered any financial loss or would it by providing protection to Tay residents on Midland Point at a fair cost. Midland has had and will have

Riding requires a full-time MP

Dear Editor,

Orillia lawyer and local MP Douglas Lewis' announcement that he is lobbying and politicking to secure the political "plum" known as Speaker of the House of Commons, is not in keeping with his pre-election promise to the electors of Simcoe North that he would represent them on a full-time basis.

Unlike many small and sparsely populated constituencies, Simcoe North is a large and diversified riding which requires the undivided attention of a full-time member of Parliament. The affairs of area should not be relegated to a vague and amorphous-type collection of "staffers." These people are

certain costs to equip and operate its fire department regardless of Tay's involvement and therefore any fair contribution into their coffers from Tay has to be a plus to them and of mutual benefit to both municipalities.

unelected and unaccountable.

If Mr. Lewis has grown bored and jaded with his lot in life as an ordinary MP, then he should do what most folks do under similar circumstances - resign. Assuming Mr. Lewis does resign his comfortable and lucrative federal post, perhaps Brian Mulroney will give him a respectable internment in the Canadian Senate, as he has in the case of a number of other depleted Tory politicians.

Sincerely yours,
William J. Ogilvie,
P.O. Box 132,
Midland, Ontario.

5) Five or six years ago, I did a survey of the Midland Point area as to what people thought of the idea of Tay establishing a station on Midland Point and also to determine who would be interested in being a volunteer. The response then was positive and I feel would be now and in view of the situation as it now exists it is my intention to do my best to bring about the establishing of a fire station for the Midland Point area.

We invite our readers to express their views on subjects of personal interest.

This newspaper reserves the right to edit all material submitted for space, grammar and legal restrictions.

Please include name, address and phone number of writer with article.

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