

Reform from the Right

When Brian Mulroney's government was thrown into office with a rather violent electoral shove, it had sort of made a promise about reform and ethics in government. Mulroney cried about Liberal corruption and arrogance. He waved fingers at the men who allowed Grits to wallow up to the federal trough and take a good long slurp.

As we now know, Mulroney raved on about his new team's impeccability, its pledges to root out corruption and to bring a new era of trust to Ottawa. As with many of Mulroney's promises, he seems to have chucked that one off the continent, never to be dealt with again.

It's true that Mulroney has broken a string of promises longer than the Trans-Canada Highway. But perhaps the most disturbing thing about Brian's great betrayals has been his breach of trust with the public over his promised reforms of patronage and fair play. Mulroney often talked about generations of Liberals being fattened on the public trough, but in the short two years of his administration, Mulroney has managed to fatten more of his colleagues than Pierre Trudeau ever would have dreamed possible.

Not only has Mulroney been handing out patronage left, right and centre, but he has in many ways breached the trust of Canadians. If he didn't lie about the Tuna affair

and the Stevens' scandal, he at least left a bad taste in our collective mouths. He seems intent on keeping a smoke and mirrors campaign going. He wants us to believe that his government is honourable, fair and just, but at the same time wants to enjoy all the pleasures and powers of Ottawa and share them with his buddies.

Perhaps the media and the public should not hound Mulroney on the topic of credibility like we/they have been over the past year.

After all, past prime ministers and governments have set the pattern for this kind of thing, and all Mulroney has done is built upon a solid foundation. But Brian came to power claiming reform and honesty, and I suppose we have a right to expect that.

The Trudeau Liberals had a glory day in their last moments in power. They went hog wild on patronage as well. The current mood of the Liberal party (if it has a coherent current mood) seems to be that they enjoy catching Mulroney dipping into the pot, but if put back in office, would only modify their activities from past experiences. So while it is fine and dandy to sit in opposition and cry about corruption in government, it may be a little more difficult to resist the temptation when it all becomes available to you. What would be truly refreshing is to see the

Liberals come right out and pledge to not only treat the privileges of government with respect, but to reform and clean up some of the corruption that seems built into the system.

If the Mulroney government continues on the course it's on now, such a claim would be next to impossible to make. It's very difficult to convince people that you're going on a diet when you are stuffing your face with chocolate cake. For the sake of the party and for the sake of our political system, Mulroney, or his successor, must commit his administration to honesty, efficiency and competence in office.

Right now, the only party with a credible record on the subject is Ed Broadbent's New Democrats. Of course they've never been put to the test by being placed in power. It seems as though Broadbent is truly committed to cleaning up government. Right now, he has a monopoly on that theme.

I think it's fair to say that corruption, patronage, efficiency and trust will be a big theme in the next election. Mulroney got the ball steamrolling last election and it seems that the media and opposition will carry the crusade onward. The big danger for the Liberals and the Tories is that they could never win an election on that issue alone. The NDP are the clear victors in that race, and

Carey Nieuwhof

if the issue does become more and more a factor in elections, they will score big because of it.

It's time for Mulroney, or his party if he won't do it, to take a stand on patronage, and what must be called corruption in government. It would be wise for the Liberals to follow suit. There is nothing wrong with reform from the right on that issue. Being honest should not interfere with economic policies, unless you're talking about stuffing party coffers at election time. It would be refreshing to be able to get honest answers from a government that isn't always attempting to hide its wrongdoings. Honesty will not interfere with international relations, with defence policy, with provincial relations, or any other topic you can think of. If anything, it should enhance the government's credibility in dealing with all issues. And moreover, it will help them stand as a credible party at election time.

Mulroney can continue to gorge himself until 1988, but at that time he will stand accountable. The Liberals will also have to take a stand on the issue at that time. If neither of them come clean on it, then there is only one alternative - A NDP government. To Brian, John Turner and their parties, that alternative is not welcome. But that's the price of power.

Letters

Cost cutting measure costs taxpayers

Dear Editor:

I read the reports of the October 6 meeting of the Public Works Committee at which Ainley and Associates were questioned regarding cost overruns on Contract 86-R-39 and I feel the taxpayers of Midland require further explanation.

During the meeting, the letter of August 18, 1986 from Ainley and Associates to Mr. Dan Whitfield was brought to the attention of all persons present because of two (2) items of information that Ainley and Associates admitted were not accurate.

First Item: The letter states \$90,000, the amount of overrun while the actual will be \$71,000 plus utility costs that are incomplete.

Second Item: The letter states "In all cases

we attribute the overruns to errors in the original quantity estimates."

Mr. C. Tatham, of Ainley and Associates, admitted that this statement by an employee, Mr. Prokopec, was not appropriate.

Ainley and Associates then agreed that the following design changes also influenced the cost overrun:

- Manholes instead of catch-basins.
- Re-location of sewers due to watermain.
- Changes due to video-tape evidence.
- Additional manholes.
- Addition to contract on July 1, 1986.

Upon examining the file on Contract 86-R-39 (Hugel-Lindsay) it would appear that the major portion of the \$71,000 (plus) overrun is due to decisions on design changes in

which Ainley and Associates participated, after having approved the original design, by placing their stamp of approval on the project drawings. It would appear that the approval of the drawings might not have been thorough enough to prevent the costly overrun.

We, the Council, must be certain that all Council decisions are based on proper information being presented to all Council members.

It is the responsibility of this Council, and especially of the Public Works Committee, to see that all future projects undertaken are properly handled by all persons involved. We, the Council, have assured the taxpayers of Midland that the method of operating with

outside consultants (engineers) will be a 'cost cutting measure'. Up to the present time, with lawsuits and overruns, we have missed this most acceptable 'goal' by many, many thousands of dollars.

I hope I have expressed the above information fairly and accurately for all parties involved. It is my duty, as a councillor, to see that the media and the taxpayers receive proper information so that they can form their own opinions.

Yours sincerely,
W.F. (Buzz) Brown
(Councillor)
306-5th Street
Midland, Ontario

Teenager supports suspended teacher

Dear Editor,

This letter is to inform you about the news story about the school teacher who lost his job, due to striking a student at the school for the conduct and language of the student and that student who in turn was sticking up for his buddy.

This particular teacher lost his job for six months on account of striking the student. I say that this is unfair and unjust. I know what teachers take off of immature infants

nowadays.

As a student myself, age 16, Grade 11, if I were to mouth and curse at the teacher and I got struck by the teacher, I certainly would deserve it, and wouldn't do nothing about it.

I was talking to a man who remains anonymous and I quote, "teachers are too lenient with the students."

Also I talked to a lady who also remains anonymous and I quote, "Teachers take too

much off of kids today."

One man said "the teacher should have hit him harder, we didn't get it off as easy as the kids today do." This is all true. Teachers are too lenient because it is the law and they do get mad too and have feelings too. It is also true that teachers take too much off of kids today.

Thirdly, I do think if I were the teacher I really would have made the six months worth

the while. Honest to God I would have hit him so hard his grandmother would fall off her chair. The reason for this letter is to show you the public view of the attitude of the kids today.

Yours sincerely,
Robert J. Dalton
Student at St. T's High School

P.S. He didn't lose his job, he was suspended for six months without pay.

Georgian Manor auxiliary stages sale

Dear Editor:

The Georgian Manor Auxiliary will be holding their Christmas tea, bazaar, bake and craft sale on Nov. 15 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Manor, Harriett Street, Penetanguishene.

As in the past years all the monies realiz-

ed from this event is to be used for the benefit of the Manor residents. Our recent project of assisting with the purchase of a large screen TV for the auditorium was well received. This equipment was purchased about a year ago and has proven to be most enjoyable to the residents.

In the near future an extensive renovation

and modernization program is planned for Georgian Manor and it is felt that a therapeutic bath facility would be beneficial to the residents as well as being available to area citizens requiring this type of treatment.

This undertaking will be quite costly but the Manor Auxiliary feel that it will be a very worthwhile goal to work toward. Therefore

any publicity you could give us in promoting our Christmas Bazaar would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you, I am,

Yours very truly,
Georgian Manor Auxiliary
Norma Roberts

Letters

The Penetanguishene Citizen welcomes Letters to the Editor. They must be legible, signed (by hand), and carry the writer's address and telephone number for verification. Pen names are not allowed and anonymous letters will not be published. Letters published by this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper, its publisher or editor.