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The federal power vacuum and Quebec

When a weakness appears (real or perceived) in what was once powerful other energies will rush in to fill the void. This is a basic theory of politics.

In Canada, weak leadership in constitutional affairs on the part of the Conservative Party has created such a void and Quebec politicians are ready to rush in and gather as much power as they can.

The proposals in the Quebec Liberals Allaire report on constitutional options for the province of Quebec have the potential to reduce the federal government to nothing more than command central for border guards.

Equalization payments would no longer go towards helping poorer provinces maintain the national standard of social services. Inside Quebec, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms would have no effect. The legislatures of Quebec and the other provinces would have to ratify all federal decisions on foreign policy while Quebec would be able to conduct its own unilateral international diplomacy.

These proposals put the needs of provinces ahead of the needs of a nation. If they are even considered by the Conservative government other provincial governments will soon join the rush to acquire power at the expense of the federal government and the fragmentation of the country will begin in earnest.

In two years, if no agreement is reached between Quebec and the rest of Canada on these proposals, Bourassa has said Quebec will hold a referendum on independence and seek its own distinct destiny.

So, those of us who live in the 'less distinct' parts of this sprawling country, have been allowed only two choices.

We can give in to the demands of the provincial politicians of Quebec and give up the institutions that make us a nation or we can give up Quebec and, finally, give in to our desire to get on with becoming distinctly Canadian.

Which is more important - the French Canadian aspect of our heritage or the principles of Confédération that built the country?

Robert A. Cotton

Feds should promote voluntary bilingualism

The following is copy of letter sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, by the author.

Dear Sir:

We are at a crucial point in the history of Canada. As a great Grand-mother of Ukrainian ethnic origin, having strong national feelings, I am concerned that we will lose Quebec to the Separatists. The last referendum showed that the average citizen in Quebec voted for Confederation.

If the Conservative Government has the courage to propose a Private Members bill, sponsored by an individual of English descent from the West, changing our "Oath of Allegiance" to read "Our Country Canada", it

unification.

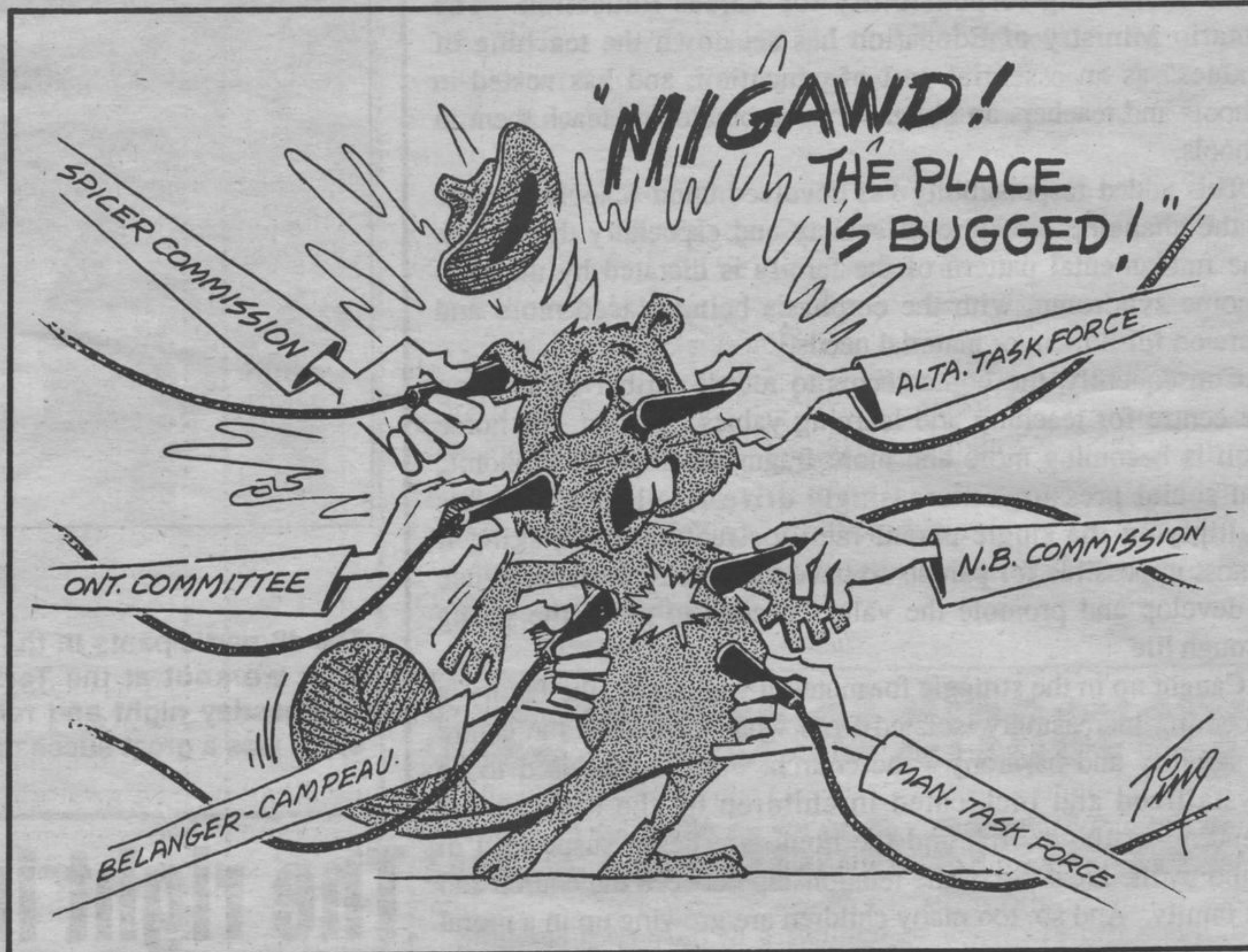
Britain and the Royal Family should always have the respect they deserve, but it is time to go forward and grow as a nation.

To promote Bilingualism, on a voluntary basis, the money that is being wasted in enforcing the concept would be better used in the educational system.

A Federal program, based on capita per pupil, to teach English in Quebec, and French in the rest of Canada, starting at the elementary level would be worthwhile.

We have the best country in the world, but we must nurture a national pride in our young people.

Yours truly,
 Mrs. Stella Pleson



Criminally absent minded

Ladies and gentlemen it is my very great privilege to have the honour of introducing you to His Royal Highness Prince Bandra Faisal of Saudi Arabia.

That's His Highness over there, on the steps of the Knightsbridge Court, sandwiched somewhat indelicately between two unsmiling members of the British Constabulary.

What's that? Ah, no, those are not matching silver bracelets Prince Faisal is wearing. They are handcuffs. In addition to being a country squire, an international entrepreneur and a blue-blooded member of the Arab aristocracy, Prince Faisal is one other thing.

A crook.

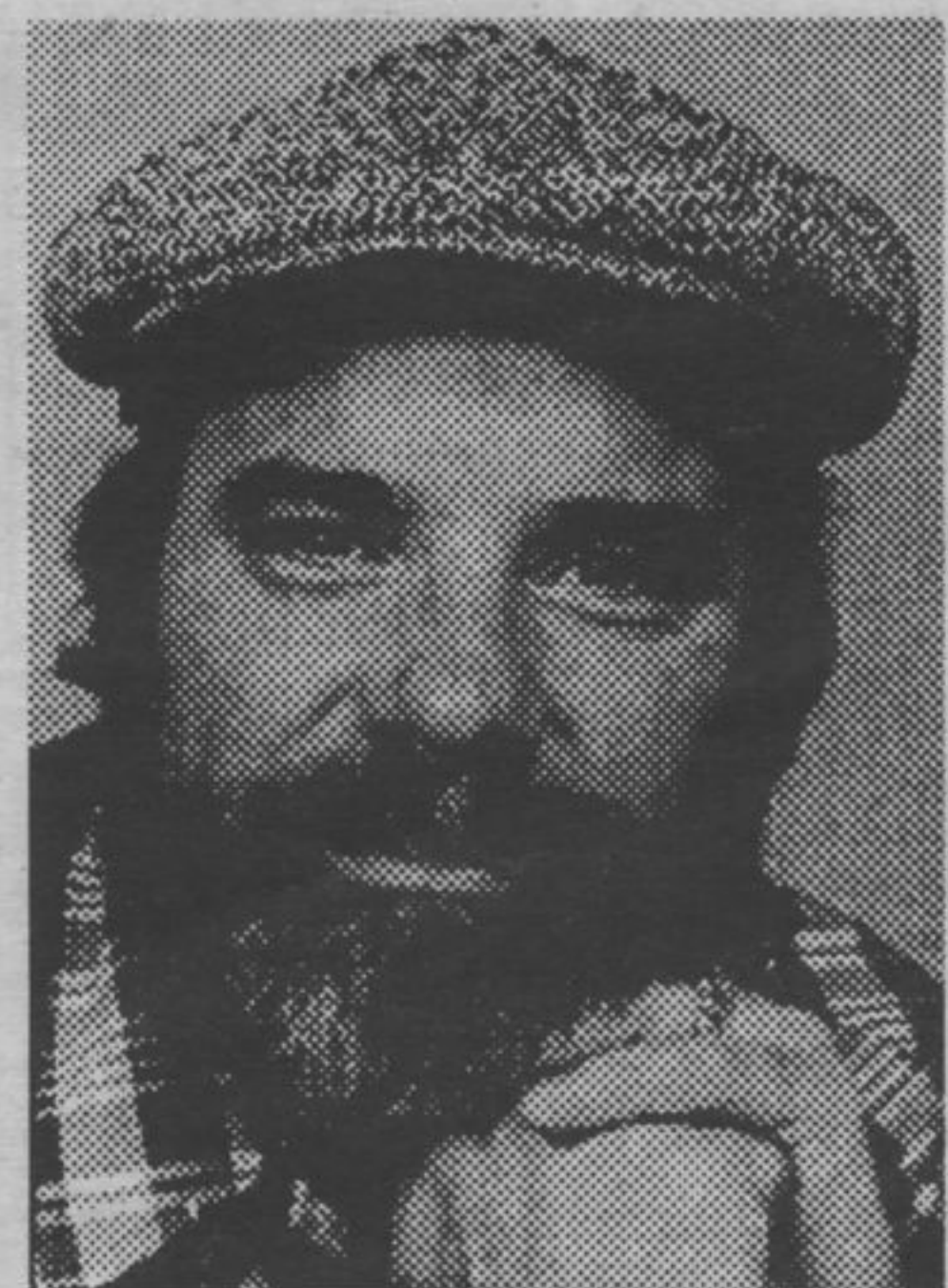
But an uncommonly audacious one. Actually he isn't Prince Faisal at all. He's really Kirpal Singh Johl, a 58-year-old Kenyan rent clerk who emigrated to Britain 19 years ago. Mister Johl scuffled around in marginal jobs for a few years until he decided he'd had enough of life as an underdog. In 1986, he quit his job collecting rents and disappeared. Some weeks later, he surfaced as Prince Faisal, tycoon, dandy and man about town.

His own mother wouldn't have recognized him. Prince Faisal wore Saville Row suits, gold rings and enough diamonds to bring out the green in Liz Taylor's eyes.

He bought himself a million dollar country mansion, complete with swimming pool -- on credit of course -- who'd refuse a Prince? When the rent was a few months overdue "Prince Faisal" simply applied to

the Kreditforeningen Bank of Denmark for a \$1.8 million dollar mortgage. He got it, paid his back rent, made one payment to the Danes and spent the rest of the cash on champagne, clothes, chauffeur-driven limos and of course renos on his mansion, which he dubbed Faisal House.

Actually the prince's whole



Arthur Black

existence was a spectacular house of cards -- by definition, a rickety one. Eventually it came tumbling down, but not before Prince Faisal had himself one jolly merry-go-round.

Most crooks don't fare nearly as well. In fact, if there's one characteristic that distinguishes most crooks it's not bravery or ingenuity or luck or skill -- it's stupidity.

Most crooks are breathtakingly dumb. For every "Prince Faisal" there are a hundred foolish felons like...well, like Joseph Hill of Longwood, Florida, who was recently convicted of counterfeiting more than 3,000,000 Polish zlotys.

Sounds impressive until you find out that 3,000,000 zlotys are

worth a little over \$300. As one of the arresting officers said "The guy could have printed a boxcar full of them and still not had enough to buy a good suit."

Or there's the case of Earl Latham, a petty con who broke out of the Baltimore House of Correction and holed up at his mother's house. When the cops knocked on the door, Earl answered. The conversation went something like this:

COP: "Are you Earl?"

EARL: "yo."

COP: "Earl Latham?"

EARL: "Uhhhh, no. My name's Earl Smith."

COP: "Oh yeah? Can you spell Smith for me?"

He couldn't.

We have our own made-in-Canada thugs, of course. Last spring, Danny Simpson knocked over an Ottawa bank totting an old Colt.45. He got \$6,000. Unbeknownst to dim Dan, his gun was a rare antique worth almost twenty times that.

"It's one of life's ironies" said Simpson's lawyer "that, at auction, that gun could fetch \$100,000."

An academic irony at best. Danny Simpson is currently residing in a one-room coldwater flat with no conveniences, surly neighbours and an extremely lousy view.

Swell security system 'though.

Prince Faisal isn't faring any better. He's doing four and a half years in similar British accommodations as an involuntary guest of Her Majesty.

Which I guess improves on the old adage. Crime not only doesn't pay -- it costs.