

Editorial

The Terrace Bay - Schreiber News is published every Tuesday by Laurentian Publishing Limited, Box 579, 13 Simcoe Plaza, Terrace Bay, Ont., P0T-2W0 Tel.: 807-825-3747. Second class mailing permit 2264. Member of the Ontario Community Newspaper Association and the Canadian Community Newspaper Association.

Single copies 50 cents incl. GST. Subscription rates: \$18 per year / seniors \$12 (local); \$29 per year (out of 40 mile radius); \$38 in U.S. Add GST to yearly subs.

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Canada's next Prime Minister

Pity Joe Clark.

Not only is he trying to sell a constitutional package to a motley bunch of whiners across Canada, from Clyde Wells in Newfoundland to Rita Johnston in B.C., but if he is successful, the person who benefit most is his political nemesis, Brian Mulroney.

As you may remember, it was Mulroney who took the Tory leadership from Clark in 1983. Mulroney walked a tightrope between publically supporting Clark, and privately working to undermine him and become Tory leader. The Prime Minister's skills as a backroom dealer have since gotten him into a great amount of trouble.

After snatching defeat from the claws of victory in his now infamous "roll of the dice" interview with *The Globe and Mail*, Mulroney turned to Clark, the last high profile minister in his cabinet with any national credibility, to save his political assets.

With this week's unveiling of the so called "Unity Cabinet's" proposals, it seems Clark has made lemonade with Mulroney's lemons.

The most imaginative part of the proposal is the way it gets around the seemingly irreconcilable contradiction of satisfying Quebec's demands for greater powers with the desire of the rest of the country to stay together.

According to the proposal, provinces who want jurisdiction over immigration, for example, could negotiate with the Federal government for control in that area. Provinces who want to leave those areas under federal jurisdiction are free to do so.

Many people forget that Quebec is not the only province that wants a weaker central government. The west, Alberta in particular, has argued for years that Ottawa looks after Central Ontario and Southern Quebec, moulding policy according to the needs of those areas. The National Energy Program, which almost devastated the Alberta oil industry, is a good example of what Alberta means.

This constitutional proposal lets every province decide how involved in confederation they want to be. Every province would have an equal right to participate in confederation as fully as they wish.

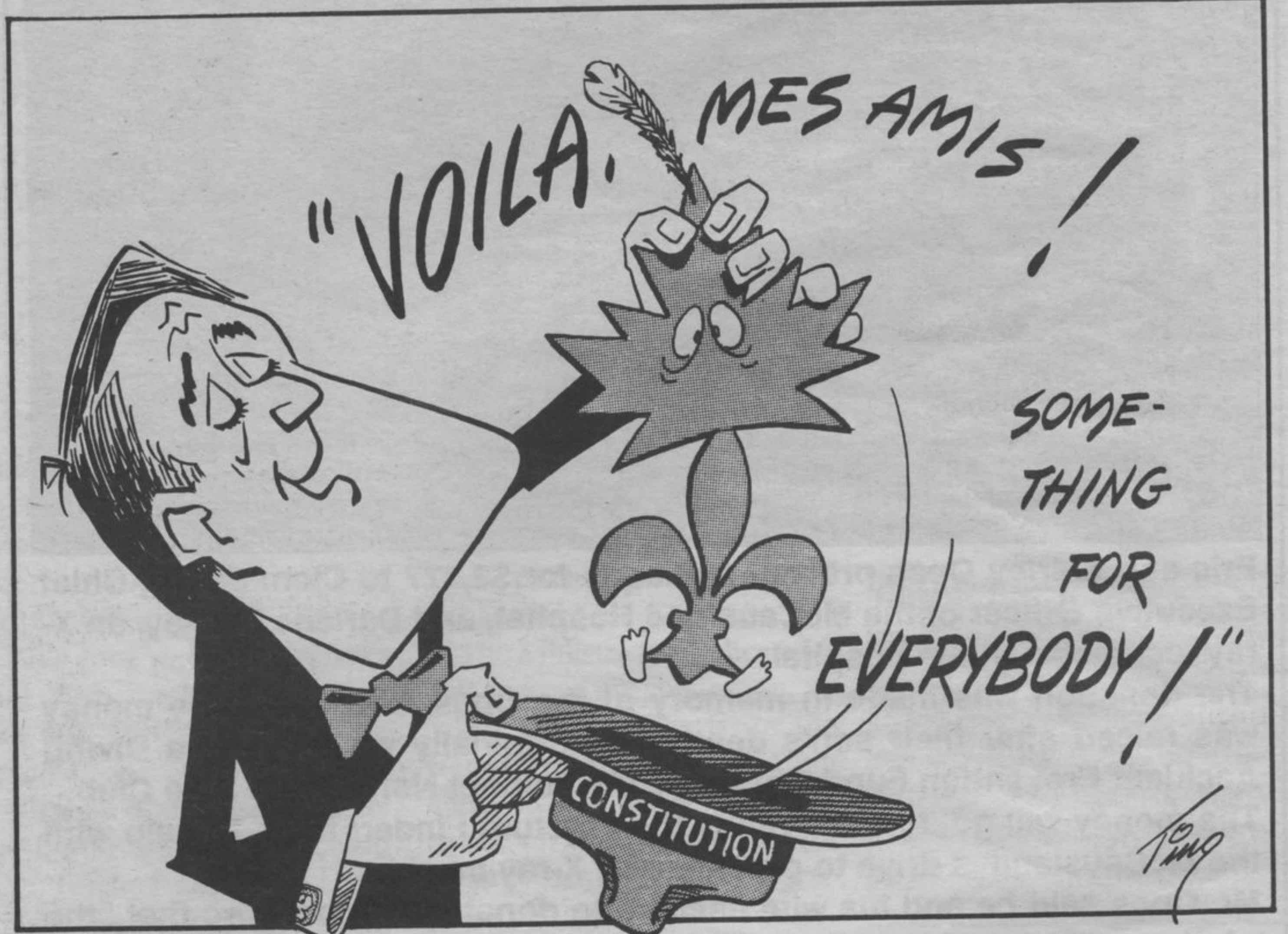
What may torpedo the Clark-led initiative is the almost total absence of that great Canadian quality, compromise. I don't know if everyone is compromised-out after the Meech negotiations, or if everyone has caught Bourssaitis, a disease which eliminates a person's ability to negotiate.

Ovide Mecredi, despite his conciliatory-sounding rhetoric after his election, has termed the constitutional proposal a "betrayal." Bob Rae is insisting on his "constituent assembly." Rita Johnston says she can't accept a distinct society clause, and Robert Bourassa, true to form, says Quebec must have its constitutional veto.

But if Clark can pull these disparate groups together, and hammer-out a proposal everybody can live with, his political star will rise, and certainly eclipse any of the current party leaders.

If he's successful with his constitutional package, Joe Clark will be the next prime minister of our country.

You heard it here first.



Two-way literature

I snagged the jangling telephone on the third ring and stuck it next to my good ear. The voice inside claimed to be calling from a magazine called *Prairie Fire*, in Winnipeg. The voice wanted to know if I would be willing to judge palindromes. I laughed harshly, "I'm sorry" I snapped, "I admit I've done a lot of damn fool things in my life - I've kayaked on whitewater, accepted a blind date in Moose Jaw, eaten dinner in a place called Mom's - even delivered an after dinner speech unarmed to a roomful of B.C. lawyers. I may be reckless but I'm not an out and out fool. I do not get involved in exotic animal contests!"

The voice on the phone was patient, cajoling. It explained that a palindrome is not a critter, it's a literary construction. What makes a palindrome a palindrome is the fact that it reads the same no matter which end you start at.

'Mom' is a very simple palindrome. So is 'dad'. And 'Otto' and 'Anna'. Slightly more complex palindromes include 'radar' and 'level'.

Then you get to the real beauties, such as Adam's introductory come-on to Eve:

Madam, I'm Adam.

And Napoleon's purported lament as he stared out to sea from his island exile at the end of his career:

Able was I ere I saw Elba.

Not to mention what could have been the advertising slogan for the construction of the most famous canal on the planet"

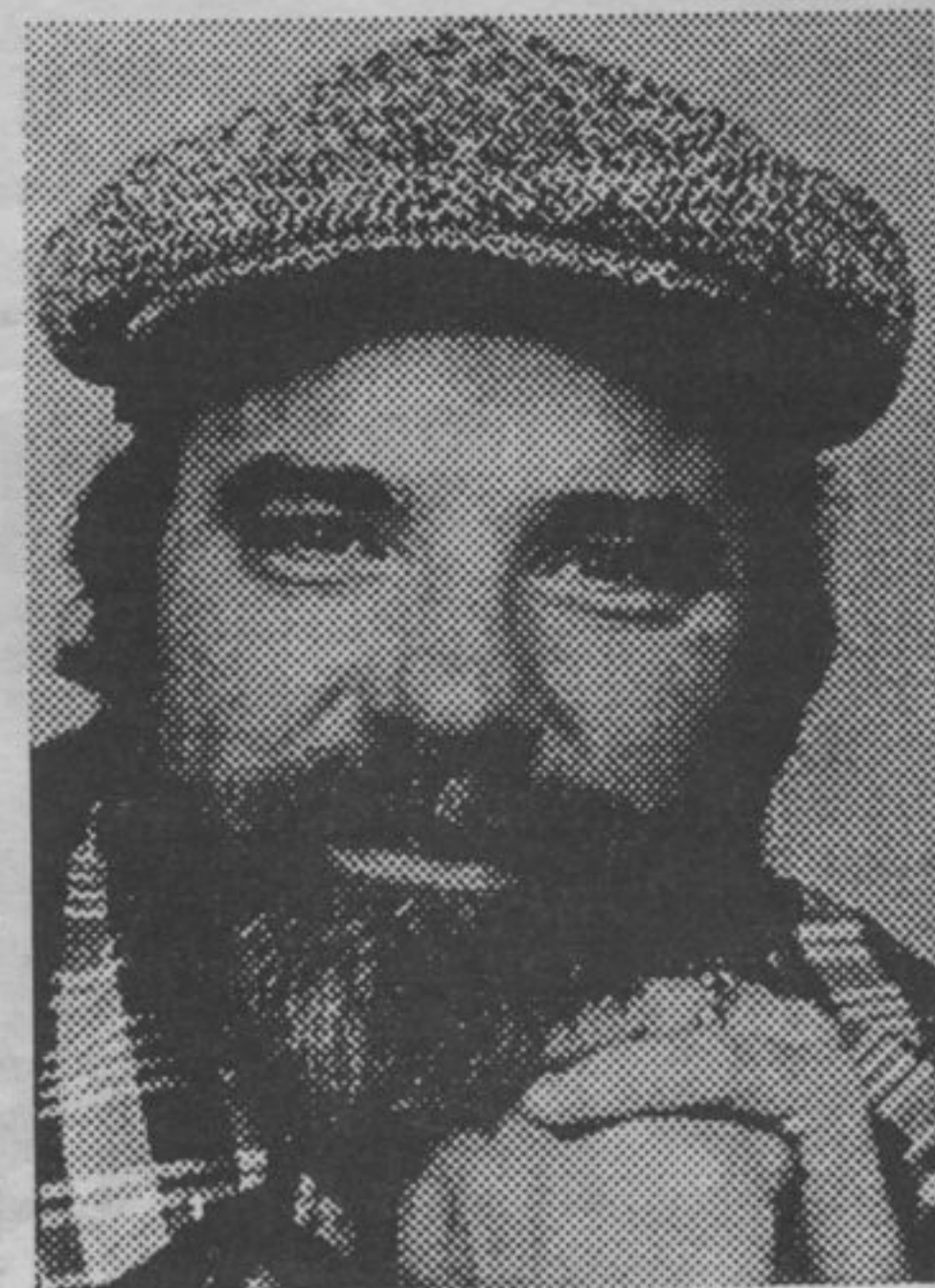
A man, a plan, a canal - Panama!

Actually, the last example - 'though ingenious - is not a true palindrome. There's a dastardly dash in there that mucks up the symmetry. But you get the idea. I got the idea. I told the voice on the phone I would be

delighted to judge *Prairie Fire's* palindrome contest.

Within a few days my faithful *Canada Post* Mailperson was staggering up the front steps to my door, bowed nearly double under the weight of contest entries. I attempted to regale him with the lewdest palindrome I'd come across:

Eros, Sidney, my end is sore!



Arthur Black

He was not amused. I distinctly heard a *sotto voce* snarl in both official languages.

There were some dandy palindromes in the package he left behind. Dave Wright sent in a taunt for the butcher of Baghdad:

Mad dash, eh Saddam?

Myra Stilborn offered: IOU 'n' UOI

-with a footnote that read: "Palindromic licence allows grammatical freedom (me hope).

And this rather magnificent Pete/Glenda Rogers collaboration:

Draw a dahlia, my revered nude man. (named under) Every mail had award.

There, but for a slight vagueness and pair of rogue brackets, would be my prize winner.

In any case, half the Rogers Palindromic tag team won - I awarded first prize to Peter Rogers for his instructions on the boarding of errant wilderness hunters:

Room a nimrod at a dorm in a moor.

How about you - want to try your luck at writing palindromes? Then write 'em down and send them in, care of this newspaper.

But, no rush. I don't want to hurry you, so let's make a palindromic cut-off date. Let's say your palindromes have to reach me in oh, about eleven and a half years.

Or to be precise, by 20/02/2002.

Letters to the Editor

The Terrace Bay Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject.

Letters must be signed and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false libelous or anonymous comments.

Letters to the Editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this very important forum is used responsibly.

Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, P0T 2W0, or dropped off at the News office, 13 Simcoe Plaza in Terrace Bay.