

Election '93

Attewell, supporters
stunned by landslideROGER BELGRAVE
Staff Reporter

There was lots of applause and some tears Monday night as incumbent Markham Whitchurch-Stouffville MP Bill Attewell bowed out of the political arena.

As were many Tories on this night, Attewell was caught under a Liberal landslide that has changed the face of federal politics.

About 300 party supporters gathered in a boardroom at the Valhalla Inn to watch the election results being tallied. A stunned crowd watched as Canada's political landscape was dramatically changed, leaving little room for the Progressive Conservatives.

Before the tote boards in the room were even half full, the outcome for Attewell and his party became quite clear.

"It's very disappointing," Attewell said of the early returns. "It's turning out to be an incredibly unique election with the rise of the Bloc (Quebecois) in Quebec and the strength of Reform."

Attewell was reluctant to blame defeat on the miscues of the Conservative Party's national campaign. Although he did concede it made the local battle an uphill one.

Attewell met the end gracefully — surrounded by family, friends and supporters. He ventured into the Liberal camp to offer congratulations before addressing his own supporters.

"It's just been great. We've met people and formed friendships." He also found time to joke while saying goodbye to



the position he has held for the last eight years.

In the beginning, Attewell took office as part of the Brian Mulroney sweep in 1984. In the end, his departure was propelled by Mulroney's legacy. "What we're going through tonight is the ebb and flow of political life," Attewell told everyone.

Attewell hasn't decided what he will do now. Prior to his election, he was vice-president with a large trust company. Right now, he plans to spend some more time with his family.

Attewell is among those inside and outside the party who see Monday's results as a protest vote.

For the last three years the country has been mired in economic recession and unemployment. The Conservatives have generated a great deal of anger and concern among Canadians. "People understandably get emotional and lash out," Attewell remarked.

Markham Progressive Conservative MPP Don Cousens said the party must learn from the statement voters made Monday. The party has to understand they have made some major mistakes and begin a return to basic principles, he added.

"Governments aren't voted in, they're voted out," Cousens concluded.



Above, Progressive Conservative incumbent Bill Attewell arrived at the Liberal campaign headquarters in Markham to congratulate Jag Bhaduria with two of his supporters, from left,

Marjorie Nielsen and Randy Barber. Bhaduria hadn't arrived yet to accept Attewell's good wishes. Below, Jag Bhaduria speaks to his supporters at the Moghul Restaurant in Markham.

PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN



Local, national results make Sherren concerned for Canada

JULIE CASPERSEN
Staff Reporter

Reform candidate Joe Sherren forecasts tough times ahead for Canadians following the Liberal landslide.

"I feel bad for you, for this riding and for Canada," Sherren

told his supporters at 10 p.m. Monday.

From the start, Liberal candidate Jag Bhaduria took the lead with Progressive Conservative incumbent Bill Attewell and Sherren neck and neck for second place.

Sherren, a political newcomer

who led the Reform party's debut in the riding managed to garner 23 per cent of the local vote. The Reform rally at the 16th Ave Eatery started out with the crowd "cautiously optimistic," according to Sherren's campaign manager Ralph Moore. The large number of undecided voters didn't impact on campaign strategy as much as with seasoned parties.

"We didn't attack it differently because of the vote split," Moore said early in the evening. The first priority was exposing Sherren to a riding already familiar with Attewell and Bhaduria, who were opponents in the 1988 race when Bhaduria lost by 14,000 votes.

"We were rising out of nowhere," said Moore who has worked with Sherren since he was nominated more than two years ago.

As the first poll results rolled in, Sherren said he was hoping for national opposition placement for his party. "We want to be in a watchdog position." But by 9:30 p.m. when the Liberal edge signalled a clear cut victory, Sherren seems to realize his battle was over. "What I'm seeing is not making me happy."

Residents talked of leaving the country instead of facing the consequences of a Liberal majority government. There was talk of the "short memo-

ries" of Canadians, referring to the almost unbroken 21-year reign of the national Liberals who were booted out of office in 1984 in favor of the Conservatives.

Sherren predicts Canadians "will wake up in six months and wonder what happened" after signing over a blank check to Liberal leader Jean Chretien.

"The constituents of this riding are not going to be very well served by Bhaduria," said resident Chris Van-Lane. He

said Bhaduria was elected by riding the Liberal wave and not on his strength as a politician.

It's not very optimistic for small business," according to dejected Reform supporter Cam Amos.

Even Sherren said losing to Bhaduria is a bitter pill to swallow, and admitted that if the Reform lost he would have preferred it was to Attewell.

Sherren would not publicly commit to carrying on as Reform candidate, even in the face of encouragement.



PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Reform Party candidate Joe Sherren, right, watches results with his wife PJ at a gathering of Reformers at the 16th Ave. Eatery in Markham.

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