

enjoy the same privileges as members. If it is permissible for a majority of committee members to vote to strike testimony, it would be equally permissible for a majority in the House to strike unwelcome debate from *Hansard*. To them, the incident raised larger issues about the integrity of parliamentary debate.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Last month, this column commented on the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, in rejecting camera access to the legislatures, that the *Charter* does not apply to Nova Scotia's Legislative Assembly (see "Cameras in the Legislature: Stran-

"... more was at stake than a partisan dispute about the work and operation of a committee. ... If it is permissible for a majority of committee members to vote to strike testimony, it would be equally permissible for a majority in the House to strike unwelcome debate from Hansard."

gers or Watchdogs?" (March 1993) 1 *Canada Watch* 89). There, McLachlin J. stated that the legislative branch must enjoy a certain autonomy, "absolutely and unconditionally," which even the Crown and courts cannot touch.

Neither the legislatures nor the courts have shown a willingness to protect expressive freedom in our representative institutions. Were it not for Stevie Cameron and *The Globe and Mail*, the public might still be unaware that a parliamentary committee succeeded in purging testimony from the public record.

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CW UPDATE

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

by Jonathan Batty

CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Defence Minister Kim Campbell announced her candidacy in the race to succeed Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on March 26. Widely believed to be the front-runner, she was the fifth entry into the field. Jean Charest, the federal minister of the environment and only other Cabinet contender, announced his candidacy on March 16. MP Patrick Boyer was first to declare his candidacy on March 9. Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner declared on March 17 and Tory whip James Edwards declared on March 22. No other Cabinet ministers are expected to join the race.

Several ministers ruled out joining the race after exploring their chances, and concluding that Campbell was likely to win. These included Perrin Beatty, Thomas Hockin, Barbara McDougall, Otto Jelinek, Michael Wilson, Benoit Bouchard, Bernard Valcourt, and Don Mazankowski.

The decision of so many prominent Cabinet ministers not to run reflects a general assumption within the Conservative party that Campbell is the most likely to lead the party to re-election. A *Maclean's*/Compass survey conducted from March 1 to 4, of 450 delegates from the 1991 Conservative policy convention, revealed that Campbell was considered to have the best chances for electoral success by a very wide margin.

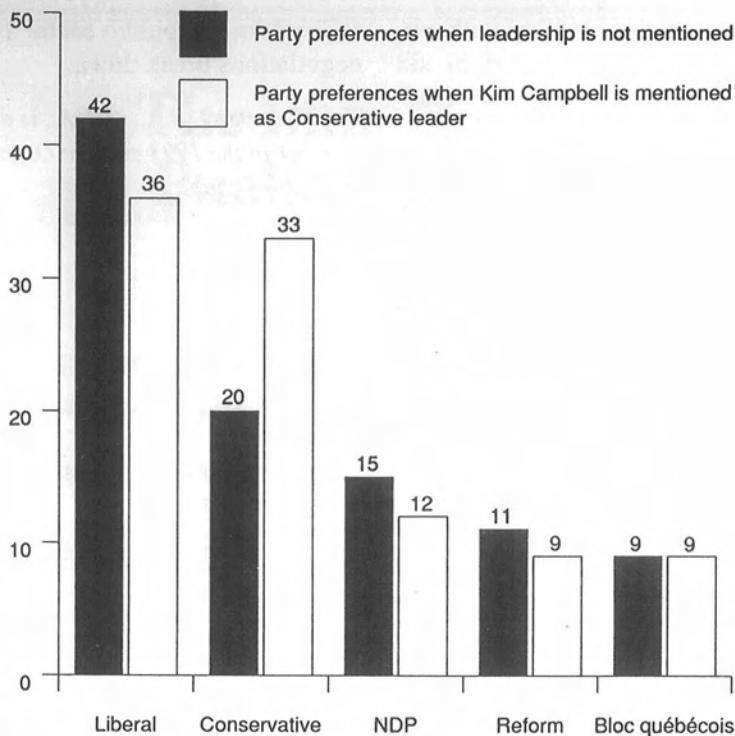
CONFLICTING NATIONAL OPINION POLL RESULTS

Recent opinion polls have suggested the Conservative party under Kim Campbell would challenge the Liberals in voter popularity and would stand an excellent chance of being re-elected. A *Globe and Mail* telephone survey of 1,439 voters, conducted by ComQuest from March 8 to 15, found that 45 percent of decided voters said they would vote for the Conservatives led by Campbell, compared with only 32 percent who would vote Liberal. The NDP received 9 percent, Reform 10 percent, and Bloc québécois 4 percent.

An Angus Reid/Southam News poll of 1,500 voters, from March 15 to 18, gave a Campbell-led Conservative party 43 percent support, with the Liberals trailing at 25 percent, the NDP at 11 percent, and Reform at 10 percent. In comparison, the Tories under Jean Charest garnered only 25 percent, compared with 35 percent for the Liberals and 15 percent for the NDP.

However, an Environics poll conducted between March 10 and 25 that involved in-house interviews with 1,988 voters showed the Liberals slightly ahead. According to Environics, the party standings are: Liberal 36 percent, Conservatives 33 percent, NDP 12 percent, Reform 9 percent, and Bloc québécois 9 percent.

It is noteworthy that the respondents in the polls were all specifically asked about their intentions in the event that Kim Campbell is chosen as prime minister and Conservative leader. When respondents were asked simply about their voting intentions without any reference to leadership, Conservative support was substantially lower. (See chart opposite.)



Source: Environics Research, March 10-25

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ELECTION

On March 29 Catherine Callbeck became the first woman in Canada to be elected premier of a province. The former federal MP succeeded Joe Ghiz as leader of the Liberal party of Prince Edward Island in January. Before the election, the Liberals held 30 of the 32 seats in the legislature. Callbeck's party won another majority by capturing 31 seats; the other seat was won by Conservative party leader Patricia Mella.

NEWFOUNDLAND ELECTION

Premier Clyde Wells announced that a provincial election will be held on May 3. The Wells government is seeking a second mandate. Premier Wells, whose majority government was elected in 1989, called for an election to win a mandate to curb contributions to the province's pension fund for teachers.

P.E.I. CAUSEWAY

On March 19, Madam Justice Barbara Reed of the Federal Court

of Canada handed down a decision that halted the federal Public Works Department's plan to build a causeway across the Northumberland Strait between New Brunswick and P.E.I. Justice Reed ruled that the project had violated federal environmental guidelines and was unconstitutional because it breached the terms under which P.E.I. had joined Confederation in 1873. On April 1, the federal government Public Works Minister Elmer MacKay announced the government would appeal the decision.

HARPER BECOMES LIBERAL CANDIDATE

Elijah Harper, a former Manitoba NDP MLA, will run for the Liberal party in the next federal election. Harper, nominated in the Manitoba riding of Churchill, gained national prominence in June 1990 for blocking the Manitoba Legislature from voting on the Meech Lake Accord before its deadline expired. Some observers argue that the nomination will hurt the chances of the federal

Liberal party, under Jean Chrétien, in Quebec.

NAFTA NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations over so-called side deals to the North American free trade agreement (NAFTA) began in Washington on March 17. President Clinton, who supported the deal in principle during the presidential election campaign, has insisted that three "side deals" be negotiated on labour standards, environmental protection, and import surges. Import surges refer to a rapid increase in imports of goods from one nation to another, and is a matter already dealt with in the main agreement. Labour standards and environmental protection are seen as being more controversial because any harmonization of labour and environmental policies raises concerns, especially in Canada and Mexico, about undue interference in domestic policy. The deals are expected to be concluded by June, before national elections in both Canada and Mexico.

ONTARIO THRONE SPEECH PROMISES HIGHER TAXES AND REDUCED EXPENDITURES

The April 13 Ontario speech from the throne, which opened a new session of the Ontario Legislature, promised higher corporate and personal taxes as well as expenditure cuts. The speech promised immediate action to bring the provincial debt under control, which now stands at about \$60 billion. The government argues that if decisive measures are not taken now, the debt will balloon to \$120 billion by 1996, at which point nearly a quarter of government revenues would be required just to cover interest payments. The throne speech did not specify which expenditures were to be cut or which taxes raised; Treasurer Floyd Laughren's May budget is expected to provide those details.

The throne speech comes just days before the government opens negotiations with over 900,000 public sector workers over a so-called social contract. The social contract talks open on April 19 with govern-

ment negotiators meeting with employer and union groups in six "sectoral negotiations." No deadline has been set for the conclusion of the talks and the premier has refused to rule out a legislated wage

rollback in the public sector if the negotiations break down.

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CANADA WATCH CALENDAR

March 17	NAFTA negotiations on "side agreements" begin in Washington.	April 19	Parliament resumes.
March 18	Newfoundland and Saskatchewan budgets announced.	April 21	Second Conservative leadership debate, Montreal.
March 29	P.E.I. Liberal Premier Catherine Callbeck re-elected with majority government.	April 22	Beginning of delegate selection by Conservative riding associations.
March 30	British Columbia budget.	April 30	Third Conservative leadership debate, Calgary.
March 31	New Brunswick budget.	May 3	Newfoundland election.
April 2	Parliament breaks for Easter.	May 8	Close of delegate selection for Conservative leadership.
April 6	Manitoba budget announced.	May 13	Fourth Conservative leadership debate, Vancouver.
April 12	Beginning of delegate selection for leadership convention by Conservative student organizations.	May 18	Fifth and final Conservative leadership debate, Halifax.
April 13	Ontario Legislature resumes sitting.	June 9-13	Conservative leadership convention, Ottawa. Over 3,800 delegates expected to attend.
April 15	First Conservative leadership debate, Toronto.		

Canada Watch welcomes submissions on issues of current national interest. Submissions should be a maximum of 1,000 words. The deadline for consideration in our May/June issue is Friday, May 14. Write or fax us at:

Canada Watch

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