

that the prime minister defer Senate appointments until after the next federal election. He argues that the appointments issue is not legal or constitutional but moral: if it was wrong in 1984 for Liberal Prime

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Minister Turner to rubber stamp Trudeau's appointments, then it must be just as wrong in 1992 for Mulroney to make a string of similar patronage appointments.

Chrétien is right that the prime minister is not required by law or constitutional imperative to accede to any of these demands. It is a different question whether he should.

POLITICS, PATRONAGE AND CHOICES

Although his power of appointment is unfettered, Mulroney has no mandate to reform the Senate unilaterally, even on an incremental basis, by conceding the "elected" element of the Triple E proposal. Were he to do so, his actions would confer a measure of democratic legitimacy on the Senate. Thus validated, the institution might be induced to exercise its legal authority, thereby becoming a Double E Senate and an "effective" source of political authority. The constraints the accord would have imposed on the Senate's power would not apply. In the absence of any democratic mandate to do so, it is surely inappropriate for the prime minister to introduce such fundamental change into our democratic institutions.

Nor is a moratorium politically viable. With discussion of constitutional reform on hold indefinitely, why would the prime minister forfeit the right to make these appointments? A federal election must be held no later than November 1993. Should Mulroney agree to defer Senate appointments, there would be nothing to prevent a new governing party from filling those vacancies immediately after the election.

During the leadership debate of the 1984 election, Brian Mulroney pointed a finger at then Prime Minister Turner and shouted, in reference to Trudeau's patronage appointments, that "you had a choice." Turner went down to defeat in that election. Likewise, the people of Canada had a choice in October 1992, and they decided not to endorse the accord.

Now the prime minister has a choice. And it is purely political: a deluge of patronage appointments may compromise his party's chances of re-election. But it would not be illegal, unconstitutional, or even contrary to parliamentary tradition in Canada.

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CW UPDATE

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

by David Johnson

KLEIN WINS ALBERTA PREMIERSHIP

On December 5, Ralph Klein won the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership contest, thus becoming the premier of the province. Klein succeeded to the position vacated by Don Getty by defeating Nancy Betkowski in a hard-fought runoff race in the two-stage contest. With over 77,000 votes cast in the province-wide election open to all party members, Klein won 59.1 percent of the vote to Betkowski's 40.5 percent. It is interesting to note that in the subsequent selection of a cabinet, none of those who had challenged Klein for the leadership were included. This may be an indication that the divisions in the party that the contest exposed have yet to be mended. A general provincial election is expected sometime this year.

NAFTA SIGNED

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was formally signed by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Presidents George Bush and Carlos Salinas on December 17 in separate ceremonies in Ottawa, Washington, and Mexico City. The signing marks official executive approval of the agreement by all three negotiating governments. To become effective, the agreement must now receive legislative ratification in the three countries. Such endorsement is virtually guaranteed in Mexico, while in this country the federal government is expected to introduce implementing legislation before Parliament in February. Approval by the late spring should

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be forthcoming. In the United States, President-Elect Bill Clinton has expressed his general support for the agreement as written, while stipulating that his reservations regarding the need to strengthen environmental protection and job protection provisions can be addressed through "side agreements" with the governments of Mexico and Canada. This approach by the new president should result in the agreement receiving approval in the U.S. Congress before the expiry of the fast-track negotiating authority on June 1.

FEDERAL CABINET SHUFFLE

The new year began with a minor rearrangement in the composition of the federal Cabinet. Having previously indicated that they would not be seeking re-election, the prime minister announced, on January 4, that Jake Epp, minister of energy, Marcel Masse, minister of defence, Robert de Cotret, secretary of state, Gerald Merrithew, minister of veterans' affairs, and William Winegard, minister of science, were retiring from Cabinet. In turn, the prime minister transferred Kim Campbell from Justice to a new Department of Defence and Veter-

ans' Affairs. In other moves, Pierre Blais was shifted from Consumer and Corporate Affairs to Justice, while Pierre Vincent, a newcomer to the front benches, assumed responsibility for the former ministry. Also, William McKnight was moved to Energy, Mines and Resources from Agriculture. Charles Mayer became the new agriculture minister while retaining responsibility as minister of state for grains and oilseeds. Furthermore, Monique Landry became secretary of state, while Thomas Hockin assumed responsibility for science, as well as being minister of state for small businesses and tourism. Mary Collins retained her position as minister responsible for the status of women while gaining responsibility for western economic diversification. Finally, Pauline Browes became minister of state for employment and immigration.

NEW AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON

On January 6, the prime minister appointed General John de Chastelain, the former chief of defence staff, to be the next Canadian ambassador to the United States.

The appointment caught many foreign affairs analysts by surprise, given General de Chastelain's lack of background and experience in the field of trade policy. The general himself, however, was quick to assert that he will immediately devote himself to becoming briefed in the intricacies of the Canadian-U.S. trade relationship, while stressing that his former position provided him with ample experience in managing complex policy fields and engaging in foreign-diplomatic relations. The appointment may also suggest that the federal government is anticipating that international peacekeeping and "peacemaking" initiatives may increase in coming years, with this country thus needing a well-respected military expert closely involved in the Washington diplomatic community. Meanwhile, the vice chief of defence staff, Admiral John Anderson will assume General de Chastelain's responsibilities until a replacement is named by Kim Campbell, the new minister of defence.

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CANADA WATCH CALENDAR

December 5	Ralph Klein chosen as premier of Alberta, defeating Nancy Betkowski in a runoff election.	January 23	Prince Edward Island Liberal party to choose successor to retiring Premier Joe Ghiz.
December 17	North American Free Trade Agreement was signed by Prime Minister Mulroney and by Presidents Bush and Salinas.	February 1	House of Commons resumes sitting.
January 4	Federal Cabinet shuffle announced by Prime Minister Mulroney, featuring retirements of five ministers and the move of Kim Campbell from Justice to Defence.	Late February	Implementing legislation for North American Free Trade Agreement to be tabled in the House of Commons.
			Federal budget
		March 2	Last day for submission of North American Free Trade Agreement (and any associated agreements) to U.S. Congress under "fast-track" negotiating authority.