



CANADA WATCH

Practical Analysis of Constitutional and Other Key National Issues

TIMING OF MULRONEY RESIGNATION PUTS SUCCESSOR IN BOX

Delay in announcement means that new PM's tenure at 24 Sussex likely to be short-lived

by Patrick J. Monahan

In the days immediately following Brian Mulroney's resignation announcement on February 24, many commentators hailed the timing as a stroke of political genius.

According to this reasoning, Mulroney had waited long enough that neither the Liberals nor the NDP would have time to change leaders before the election, which must be called by December of this year. The Tories, on the other hand, would have a fresh (and presumably younger) face at the helm and thus be able to argue that they, rather than the opposition, represented the true forces of change.

But this interpretation of the timing of Mulroney's departure is no more convincing than the PM's claim that he had originally intended to resign back in the fall of 1990.

The reality is that Mulroney appears to have waited too long to announce his intentions, leaving his successor with insufficient time to rebuild the party's popularity in advance of the expected fall election.

TWO PRINCIPLES

There are two overriding principles that must be kept in mind by a governing party seeking to successfully pass the baton of political

power from one prime minister to another.

The first is that such transitions are rarely successful. On the national scene, there are only two examples of a governing party changing leaders and going on to win the next general election. The first was the transition from Mackenzie King to Louis St. Laurent in 1948 (followed by the Liberal majority in the 1949 elections); the second was the transition from Lester Pearson to Pierre Trudeau in 1968 (followed by the Liberal majority in the elections held later that year). So successful transitions are the exception rather than the rule.

The second overriding principle is that the transition must be accomplished early enough in the mandate to give the successor sufficient flexibility in choosing the date of the next election. In both the King-St. Laurent and Pearson-Trudeau precedents, the successors were in place before the end of the fourth year of the government's mandate.

This "four-year rule" was also followed by the Tories in Ontario, who accomplished the rare feat of passing on power from one premier to another and winning the next election on three successive occasions

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ARTICLES

Timing of Mulroney Resignation Puts Successor in Box
by Patrick J. Monahan 77

What's Really at Stake in the PC Leadership Race?
by Kenneth McRoberts 79

Remembering Brian Mulroney
by Harry Arthurs 80

The Mulroney Legacy
by James Gillies 82

The Demise of Anglo-American Neoconservatism
by Mel Watkins 83

Mulroney Foreign and Defence Policy
by J.L. Granatstein 84

Resolving Trade Disputes under FTA: Who Are the Winners?
by David Johnson 86

REGULAR FEATURES

Western Report
by Roger Gibbins 87

Quebec Report
by Guy Laforest 88

Legal Report
by Jamie Cameron 89

CW Update
The Month in Review 91
Canada Watch Calendar 92

during their 42-year hold on power that ended in 1985.

Mulroney falls well outside the "four-year rule"; his successor will not be in place until June 1993, some four years and eight months after the last federal election.

This gives the new PM precious little time to distance his or her gov-

"On the national scene, there are only two examples of a governing party changing leaders and going on to win the next general election."

ernment from the unpopular legacy of the old. It also means that one of the most powerful prerogatives of a sitting prime minister — the right to determine the timing of an election — is effectively denied to Mulroney's successor.

KIM CAMPBELL'S PROSPECTS

Many Tories have already begun to convince themselves that Kim Campbell will be able to overcome these obstacles and lead the party to a third majority government in this fall's elections. Her youth and gender, combined with the fact that she is not personally identified with the most unpopular policies of the Mulroney years, are seen as making her a formidable opponent for either Jean Chrétien or Audrey McLaughlin.

Indeed, the belief that Campbell can lead the party to electoral victory in the fall has established the defence minister as the early and prohibitive favourite in the leadership race, just as a similar belief propelled John Turner to victory in the Liberal leadership contest in June 1984.

Hopeful Tories also point to the fact that John Turner came out of the June 1984 convention with an eight point lead in the polls. They argue

that he turned a possible victory into massive defeat only through his complicity in the final wave of Trudeau patronage appointments, and that Kim Campbell will make no such mistake.

But Kim Campbell, along with all the other Tory hopefuls in the race to succeed Brian Mulroney, has political problems that are far more serious than the patronage issue.

The major problem facing Mulroney's successor will be his or her connection with the unpopular initiatives of the existing government, including free trade, the GST, and deficit reduction. The new PM will be unable to distance himself or herself from these policies for the simple reason that, although they are massively unpopular, they are also unavoidable.

The simple reality is that the Canadian government lacks the fiscal flexibility to significantly alter course from that charted by Brian Mulroney. The necessity to carry on with Mulroney's economic program will be the millstone around the neck of the new Tory PM.

THE NEW ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE

The critical question is how Mulroney's departure will alter the electoral prospects of the major parties this fall.

The major impact of Mulroney's departure is to increase the likelihood of a minority or coalition government coming out of the next election.

Had Mulroney stayed on, the Liberals under Jean Chrétien appeared poised to sweep to a majority government. With Mulroney gone, Liberal support is likely to soften, putting a Liberal majority out of reach.


By the same token, the new Tory leader will certainly make the Conservatives more viable, but without

giving them the support necessary to form a third majority government.

This means that negotiations among the party leaders following the elections this fall may well prove

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to be the critical factor in determining who will be prime minister a year from now.

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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 April issue is Friday, April 2. Write or fax us at:

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WHAT'S REALLY AT STAKE IN THE PC LEADERSHIP RACE?

by Kenneth McRoberts

For the next few months, Canadian politics will be dominated by the Progressive Conservative leadership race. The contest promises to provide great publicity to the PCs, if they can overcome past habits and hang together through the process. Beyond that, the race will provide fine entertainment for the nation.

LEADERS AND THEIR PARTIES

However, do leadership races really make a difference? Do leaders take a party, and a government, in a different direction from the one it would have followed otherwise? Typically, they do not. In Canada, most successful leaders have simply reflected dominant forces within their party, carefully balancing off different factions while cultivating the party's established electoral base and funding sources. In these terms, Mackenzie King was of course the quintessential party leader—and was rewarded for this with a singularly long tenure in office. The recipe has worked no less well for Robert Bourassa, his modern incarnation.

One might even say as much of Mulroney's tenure. Over the last nine years, would government policies have been fundamentally different if the government had been in the hands of one of Mulroney's primary leadership opponents: Michael Wilson, John Crosbie—or even Joe Clark? The social and economic policies were precisely what one would have expected of a Tory government in the 1980s: downscaling the state, cutting back social spending, free trade. To be sure, Mulroney did put more energy than the others might have in trying to secure Quebec's place in the constitution. But, by and large, he stayed within the established approaches to the question—as would have the others.

LEADERS WITH AN AGENDA

Nonetheless, there have been occasions when leadership choice has had profound consequences, when a leader imposes a personal agenda, taking the party, and the country, in quite a new direction. One thinks of Margaret Thatcher's impact on the British Conservative party. One also thinks of Pierre Trudeau. Would the last 25 years of Canadian political life have been the same if Robert Winters, rather than Trudeau, had won the 1968 Liberal race?

Fixated on the Quebec question, Trudeau relentlessly pursued a whole set of policies designed to incorporate Quebec within Canada.

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Such measures as the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, whose real purpose was to entrench language rights so as to make Quebecers feel at home throughout Canada, have profoundly affected politics and society throughout Canada. In pursuing these policies, Trudeau was not simply responding to pressures from within his party. In fact, during his tenure in office, Trudeau virtually destroyed the Liberal party, as an organization. And through such nationalist economic policies as Petro-Canada and the national

energy program, he drove a deep wedge between the party and its base of corporate support.

In the upcoming Conservative leadership race, only Kim Campbell seems to offer the potential of change in the party's direction. The similarities with Trudeau have been widely remarked upon: freshness, independence, high intelligence, arrogance, a certain trendiness, etc. She might, indeed, have the capacity and inclination to pursue an agenda that differs somewhat from her party's. But does she in fact have such a personal agenda? Unlike the case with Trudeau, there is no body of writings to guide us. And if whatever agenda she does possess has not been carefully defined over many years, will she have the moral authority and personal determination to pursue it in the face of opposition within the party, and the country?

It is difficult to see even the potential of a major shift in policy with the other leading candidates. In the case of Perrin Beatty, Barbara McDougall, or Jean Charest (let alone Don Mazankowski), the idea that they might have a personal agenda of change, striking a new course from the Mulroney years, seems almost laughable.

Yet, if the stakes in a leadership race rarely extend to basic areas of policy, they clearly do entail the electoral fortunes of a party. Often, as in the present case, the very reason for the leadership change is to improve a party's dismal electoral prospects. Sometimes, it can work—even for a government party. In 1968, by replacing Lester Pearson with Pierre Trudeau, the Liberals were able to go from minority government to majority government.

Nonetheless, even if leadership can affect the likelihood that one party rather than another wins control of the government, how significant is that, in the last analysis?

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Some political scientists would argue that government policies are not determined by whatever party occupies power. The basic forces that shape policy lie elsewhere than the set of politicians who form a government, whether in bureaucrats, social groups, the international economic order, or the basic "spirit of the times." Indeed, would federal policy be significantly different under the Liberal leadership of Jean

Chrétien? The present experience of the Bob Rae government in Ontario offers graphic evidence of the constraints that governments face. Even a party committed to a major restructuring of public policy may be led to forgo many of its objectives.

LEADERSHIP AND REGIONAL POLITICS

There is, however, one sense in which the leadership race clearly will have a major impact: how it affects Canada's deeply rooted regional politics. The PC's recently won and still fragile Quebec base could be endangered if the party chose a leader who appeared unsympathetic to Quebec's concerns. If this were to happen, and Jean Chrétien were to remain unpopular in Quebec, the Bloc québécois might, indeed, make a major breakthrough. Conversely, if the PCs were to pick a leader closely identified with Quebec and the Liberals were to keep Jean Chrétien as leader, then west-

ern Canadians surely would move to the Reform party (despite the party's present difficulties, which Roger Gibbins describes elsewhere).

A strong presence of the Bloc québécois, or the Reform party, in the House could have a major impact on the discourse of Canadian politics. We might even find that the Quebec question or Senate reform has been put back on the table by a government anxious to shore up its regional base.

In short, in the time-honoured tradition of Canadian politics, the significance of the present leadership race may lie less in the candidates' policy positions, let alone ideas, than in the parts of the country they come from — or can credibly claim to understand.

Kenneth McRoberts is Director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies and Professor of Political Science at York University.



REMEMBERING BRIAN MULRONEY

by H.W. Arthurs

The past decade has seen profound and probably lasting changes in Canada's political culture, economic life, and institutional structures. These changes were not all wrought by Brian Mulroney's Conservative government: the world economy, chronic regional alienation, and Pierre Trudeau all played their part. But many were. Brian Mulroney was an activist prime minister. He defined some major priorities, worked hard to accomplish them, and leaves his successors a landscape considerably reshaped by the successes and failures of his policies.

The irony is, however, that we will not remember Prime Minister Mulroney as an activist. He will be recalled as the man who chose to interpret public disillusionment with

federal politics as a mandate to permanently disempower the national government.

He pried Ottawa's hand from the levers of national economic policy

"... we will think it very odd that someone so patently driven by a desire to wield national political power could over 10 years of crises and opportunities think of nothing better to do with that power than to denigrate and permanently dismantle it."

by committing us, pretty much irrevocably, to free trade. He offered constitutional hostages to political fortune not once but twice, as he sought to permanently restore to the

provinces powers that had adhered to Ottawa largely by default. He deregulated and downsized government to encourage enterprise and fiscal responsibility. He disbanded research units and advisory bodies and marginalized the civil service, thus diminishing the intellectual capacity of the national government to shape public policy, and of the mainstream parties to negotiate a national political agenda.

Perhaps free trade was neither good nor bad, but merely inevitable. Perhaps all governments today must write public policy on recycled paper made from old printouts of currency traders and bond salesmen. Perhaps the attempted devolution of power and influence to the prov-

inces was not an act of self-abnegation, but was decreed by a worldwide trend to regionalism or driven by generosity and patriotism. Perhaps public discontent with "Ottawa" — and with government more generally — was bound to throw up new parties of backlash and regional discontent, humble the federal mandarin, and reveal the precarious nature of our claim to be a liberal and compassionate society.

Perhaps, in other words, the prime minister should be blamed for none of the above. I am prepared to suspend disbelief on this key point. After all, globalization of the economy, the downsizing of government, the dissolution of consensus politics, and disaffection with the nation state all occurred in other western democracies, with support — enthusiastic or reluctant — left, right, and centre across the political spectrum. Furthermore, I accept that although Mr. Mulroney was less than visionary, he knew where he wanted to go and how to get there, even under adverse circumstances. And yes, even though I did not much admire his rhetorical style, I appreciate his having pretty much spared us dramatic renditions along the lines of Mrs. Thatcher's party piece Attila the Hun or Mr. Reagan's Marie Antoinette.

All of these personal qualities, good and bad, are not the ultimate foundation for historical judgments. But the decline of Canada's will and capacity to function as a nation state is another

matter altogether. For having presided over the decline, whether as its author or as the mere agent of inexorable forces, Mr. Mulroney can fairly be judged. In the long term, I expect, we will think it very odd that someone so patently driven by a desire to wield national political power could over 10 years of crises and opportunities think

"In our half-dozen political parties, in a hundred assertive communities, in a thousand advocacy groups, we find spin doctors and polling experts, fundraisers and networkers, media people and tacticians. But in few of these, alas, do we find a coherent and plausible vision of Canada as a national political community."

of nothing better to do with that power than to denigrate and permanently dismantle it.

This crucial failing of Mr. Mulroney, this legacy of his decade in office, defines the challenge of Canadian politics for the 1990s. We have to discover whether we can reinvent ourselves as a national political community with a sense of purpose and the means of being purposeful.

This will not be easy. We do not have a plethora of political leaders with national vision. If we were suddenly to acquire them, they would be hard pressed to achieve broad support across the widening fault

lines of region, class, language, ethnicity, gender, and special interest. And if an able and visionary prime minister were somehow to arrive in Ottawa, with a strong majority, she or he would be taking office, not power. Power, post-Mulroney, is not what it used to be.

The power of the purse is spent. Deficit reduction trumps all; prospects of new revenue are meagre; the spending power is no longer considered a legitimate basis for new federal initiatives; and the federal leverage gained in past decades through shared-cost programs diminishes daily as transfer payments shrink in size and as a proportion of provincial revenue.

The power of legislation is dilute and dubious. On the one hand, the Charter is being used not just to challenge statutes and administrative practices, but to make even quite determined governments more risk-averse. On the other, a half-century of disappointments with the interventionist state has undermined confidence that we can accomplish social transformation by enacting statutes.

The power of ideas still has a certain allure, especially to an academic, but without the power of persuasion, ideas do not count for much in electoral politics. However, though persuasion has great potency, these days it has a short shelf life as well. Governments come to office with careful plans and sincere promises only to find their election mani-

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festos vetoed by sudden shifts in the economy. Then they stand accused not of bad timing or inadequate research, but of hypocrisy and deception. Good people run for public office, only to find that we are ready to think the worst of them if they run afoul of irate interest groups, are found to have committed youthful indiscretions, or experience domestic discord. Life is long, but credibility is fleeting.

Power, then, seems to rest on not much more than mastery of the technology of politics: media relations, sophisticated polling, patronage, the ability to excite or mollify important constituencies, fundraising, dirty tricks. And Mr. Mulroney survived for 10 years against sometimes fearsome odds precisely because he was a brilliant political technologist. Whoever seeks to succeed him must apparently imitate him. But to what end? With what prospects?

We hear a lot about the new politics today. I hope that indeed we can invent a new politics. But the new politics often look a lot like the old politics played by new people, adept at the new political technology. In our half-dozen political parties, in a hundred assertive communities, in a thousand advocacy groups, we find spin doctors and polling experts, fundraisers and networkers, media people and tacticians. But in few of these, alas, do we find a coherent and plausible vision of Canada as a national political community. It is not Mr. Mulroney alone who failed us during the eighties. But it is he alone who was prime minister for almost 10 years, so it will be his failure to propose a national vision that will be remembered longest.

H.W. Arthurs, a former President of York University, is currently Professor of Law and Political Science, York University.



THE MULRONEY LEGACY

by James Gilles

If one is inclined to evaluate the performance of political leaders by their current standings in the polls, one may well conclude that Prime Minister Mulroney is leaving the office as one of the most ineffective and unpopular persons ever to be prime minister. If, however, one believes, as did John Diefenbaker, that polls are for dogs, and that something more than the fickle affection of the public should be considered when evaluating the work of political leaders, one might well conclude

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that history may judge Brian Mulroney as one of the stronger and more effective 20th-century Canadian leaders.

It has been Mulroney's fate to be prime minister during a period of incredible economic and institutional change. Whether we like it or not, during the eight and a half years of his leadership, the technological developments in communications and transportation have in fact made it possible for the world to be a single market for the production and distribution of goods and services. For consumers throughout the world to obtain the benefits of these great technological changes, there has had to be equally dramatic elimination of the institutional barriers to trade and commerce and a lowering of all types of

tariff barriers, which, through GATT and other measures, has been inexorably taking place. Mulroney realized better than most political leaders, who reflected local and regional fears of change, that Canada's future as a trading nation was dependent on the capacity of the country to respond to, not hide from, the consequences of these changes. He knew that the restructuring of the world economy was not going to go away and so he led the country into the bilateral trade agreement with the United States, which although causing painful adjustments, is forcing the changes that will give Canadian firms a fighting chance to trade and prosper in the global markets of the 21st century.

Similarly, he recognized that it would be impossible to maintain the rich and generous social programs in the nation without substantial increases in tax revenues. In a free trade world, a manufacturers' tax made no sense and so its replacement with a value-added tax of some sort — a tax that is used in every western industrial country in the world with the exception of the United States — was inevitable. Enacting any tax makes a leader unpopular; enacting a consumer-oriented tax only makes the unpopularity greater.

Prime Minister Mulroney also knew that the changes in the demographic structure and distribution of income in the nation called for revisions in the social security programs. And he led his government in making these unpopular but essential changes so that more support could be directed to those that needed it most.

Years ago Robert Stanfield constantly made the point that, if governments were to do things efficiently,

they would have to do less—that they were stretched in many respects beyond their capabilities. Mulroney recognized this and was instrumental in moving certain functions from the public to the private sector where they could be operated more efficiently and without a drain on the taxpayer.

When it comes to assessing truly significant actions, it is difficult to arrange them in any order of priority. It is certainly a feasible hypothesis that forcing adjustments in the Canadian economy through moving toward freer trade may be the most important action, in terms of ensuring a high standard of living for most Canadians, taken by any prime minister in the 20th century. At the same time, it cannot be considered more important than the role played by the prime minister in keeping the country together in a period of rising regional nationalism all over the world. Mulroney's deep and abiding faith in, and understanding of, Quebec has been critical in maintaining national unity during very arduous times. Although he failed to gain his constitutional goals during his years in office, the federalists did hold off the attacks of the separatists in every direct encounter.

A democratic nation works best when there are strong national political parties with representation from all parts of the country. Although the Liberal party from time to time in the 20th century was less than national because of its inability to elect members from western Canada, the Progressive Conservative party was always less than national because of its lack of support from Quebec. Even

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the most ardent Progressive Conservative never argued that Diefenbaker's success in Quebec represented any deep-rooted development of the party in that province. However, Mulroney, a son of the province, brought people to the party and gave Quebecers a choice when voting in a federal election. While he was prime minister, Canada had two truly national parties—not an insignificant achievement.

Finally, Mulroney was a winner. He led the Progressive Conservative party to two majority governments with representation from all

parts of the nation. And, in politics, being a winner is one of the most important of all considerations—you cannot do much in opposition.

There is a view that Mulroney had no ideas, was too much the pedestrian politician, was too loyal to his friends, was too partisan, was not willing to stay the course of tough policies—in short, that he embodied all the characteristics that make politicians unattractive. And, indeed, Mulroney had many of the well-known characteristics of the traditional political stereotypes—he was loyal to friends long after the time when it might have been to his own personal benefit to drop them; he did believe that you "danced with the girl that brung you"; he did enjoy the perks of office and the friends in high places that came with the office. But to stress these things is to quibble. On the tough issues—free trade, taxation, Quebec—he held the course and history will treat him very well for doing so.

James Gillies is Director of the Public Administration Program in the Faculty of Administrative Studies, York University.



THE DEMISE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN NEOCONSERVATISM

by Mel Watkins

Ronald Reagan is out of office and, say the polls, is remembered by the American public even less fondly than the failed Jimmy Carter, while his successor, George Bush, has joined Carter on the short list of presidents denied a second term. Margaret Thatcher is removed from office by her own party to avoid its defeat in an election; the ploy works, but now John Major looks like a minor leaguer in major trouble. Finally, with too long a lag, to widespread public acclaim and vast relief, Brian Mulroney concedes the

hopelessness of his situation and goes; a Tory defeat at the hands of the electorate, had he chosen to stay, is as certain as anything can ever be in politics. The last pillar in the North Atlantic triangle of neoconservatism has crumbled.

Reagan and Thatcher were, of course, its points of strength. As befits Canada, Mulroney was mostly the sycophant. (Val Sears writes in the *Toronto Star* about how Mulroney rushed off to Washington "as fast as his knees could carry him.") His originality consisted in smuggling

neoconservatism into Canada through the back door via the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement; that, too, is consistent with Canada's dependent status. That agreement, in its turn, wilfully ties the hands of Canadian governments and promotes the integration of the two economies and the harmonization of the two societies to the obvious detriment of the distinctiveness of the smaller. It risks making fatal that fundamental flaw of dependency.

The good news here, however, is that Mulroney's passing marks the

demise of Anglo-American neoconservatism. The damage it has done may never be undone and its legacy of deficits and debt (amazing if you think about it, since the rhetoric was fiscal responsibility) haunts successor governments and has rendered provincial NDP governments impotent in this country (perhaps that handcuffing of the future was the real intent). But its great failing, the cause of its ultimate undoing, is that it has been unable to deliver the economic growth that it so freely predicted (remember all those jobs that free trade was going to create?). The irony of neoconservative governments is that they were elected because of hard times and have managed to make them worse.

New governments, like Clinton's, are trying to repair the damage. If that fails, the best bet is that publics will opt not for another round of neoconservatism, but stronger state interventionism. My guess is that the Mulroneys of this world are truly toast.

The other area of activism for Mulroney (like other neoconservatives, he preached quiescent government while keeping busy in practice) was the constitution. Here he failed in a manner that is not merely a matter of my judgment.

Admittedly, it can be seen, up to a point, as a noble failure. He put together the improbable alliance of Alberta conservatives and Quebec nationalists and gave his party an unprecedented status in Quebec. He negotiated the Meech Lake Accord, which admitted that Quebec was a

"It is uncertain when we shall again have a politician with the credentials to deal with constitutional matters that Mulroney initially had and with a Quebec government amenable to a deal. Should the country break up, Mulroney risks being remembered in the history books not for what he tried to do, but for what he failed to achieve."

distinct society, but he lost his touch when it came to understanding the insistence on inclusion by the rest of us, the others, both in the process and in the final product. That deficiency cost him, and us, the possibility of a better and more inclusive Meech that just might have flown.

For that he might still be forgiven. What is unforgivable is that the second time, with the Charlottetown Accord, it is mostly

the same elitist process that is relied upon. That failure is the final nail in Mulroney's coffin, as it should be, but it is also perhaps a very costly failure for Canada. It is uncertain when we shall again have a politician with the credentials to deal with constitutional matters that Mulroney initially had and with a Quebec government amenable to a deal. Should the country break up, Mulroney risks being remembered in the history books not for what he tried to do, but for what he failed to achieve.

Perhaps this, too, must be judged a consequence of the neoconservative mindset. It is by its nature hopelessly elitist (at the end of the road, big business knows best). Those who buy too fully into it, even if they start with the considerable political talents of a Brian Mulroney, lose their populist touch, their feeling for democracy. Appropriately, they typically find their retirement rewards in corporate directorships and legal retainers, the cosseted sinecures of that corporate world they have long been serving.

Mel Watkins is Professor of Economics and Political Science, University of Toronto.



MULRONEY FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICY

by J.L. Granatstein

One moment remains indelibly in the mind from the first "summit" in Quebec City in 1985: Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan and their wives on the stage singing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." Although he was already in advanced senility, poor Reagan had enough dignity to resent that he was being used. Much younger and more vigorous than his guest, somehow poor added Mulroney thought that his

shared Irishness would help with Reagan and that his electorate would love him for his ability to schmooze in public with the president. No miscalculation was ever so egregious, for that tuneless quartet probably marked the onset of Canadians' abiding mistrust of their leader.

But we ought to have known what to expect. Mulroney had already declared "superb" relations with the United States his goal, he had pro-

nounced Canada "open for business," and he had already given ample indication that his government would follow the Americans almost everywhere their foreign policies took them. And he did. He supported the Americans' bombing of Libya, their invasion of Panama, their war against Iraq, and their intervention in Somalia. Sometimes he was right to do so, sometimes not, but his support was constant. The

only time his government failed to follow the U.S. lead in world events was when the Defence white paper of 1987 remained militantly anti-Soviet at a time when Reagan and Gorbachev had already begun to remove the energy from the Cold War. No Canadian prime minister ever offered greater fealty to the United States than Brian Mulroney.

More directly yet, Mulroney's free trade agreement and the NAFTA tied us — inextricably — to the American continental economy. The results of the FTA thus far have been mixed at best, the increase in trade matched by the increase in joblessness and closed factories. It will probably take another decade before we can truly judge whether, and how badly, the Yanks snookered us. But it is already clear that however much the Liberals might want to renegotiate and the NDP to scrap the FTA, neither party is remotely credible in their policies. The difficult economic restructuring through which Canadians have been forced since 1989 (and which is far from over) is nothing compared with the dislocation that a withdrawal from the FTA would entail. Mulroney has got his way — like it or lump it, Canada is open for American business forevermore. His failure was to secure a less than perfect deal from the Yanks and to fail completely to understand the genuine concern that Canadians felt about the psychological impact of the FTA on them and their country's ability to survive. On this issue, Mulroney was a true Québécois.

Of course, the FTA may have been inevitable, for economic policies since at least 1917 have forced Canada and the United States together. There was no success under Trudeau in making the "contractual links" with Europe and Japan into viable relationships, and the world's total failure at renegotiating the GATT agreements has only

made manifest the absolute necessity of the American market to us. Europe has little interest in our manufacturers, and decreasing need for our raw materials — especially now when Russian metals, minerals, and petroleum are available at fire sale prices.

Nonetheless, Mulroney's decision to withdraw troops from Europe, one made without consultation with our NATO allies, only reinforced Canada's unimportance to the Europeans. It was curious that this prime minister

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who had increased Canadian military commitments in Europe and who had tried to be a good ally (in contrast to Trudeau's early contempt for NATO) would act in such a cavalier fashion.

Mulroney and Co. tried to argue that the commitment of more than 2,000 troops to the Croatia-Bosnian morass proved Canada's continuing devotion to Europe. The Europeans were unimpressed and they were right to be. This was less commitment to Europe than to peacekeeping, the great Canadian passion. Ever since Mike Pearson's Nobel peace prize, our prime ministers and foreign ministers have chased after their own "good world citizen award," usually by plunging Canadian troops into every global crisis. Too often, and most notably in the Mulroney years, they have paid scant attention to the risks. Peacekeeping used to be undertaken only when the warring parties had agreed to a truce; now, the current UN variant is to send

peacekeepers into wars, civil wars, and chaos.

This is very dangerous. With further cuts to come, the government has already reduced the Canadian forces to the point that there are insufficient regulars to carry out our present peacekeeping commitments for very long. That means that reservists, less well trained and lacking the unit cohesion that regular units develop, have been thrown into Bosnia. If they escape attack, no problem; but if they come under fire and if they take heavy casualties, then the trouble will start. You can imagine the questions in press and Parliament: How much training did the reservists have? Was their equipment up to scratch? Should any Canadians have been there at all? (The answers are 10 weeks, no, and no). The impact of a debacle may very well entail the end of Canadian peacekeeping efforts, the only military role with public support. The net result might well be the effective disbandment of the Canadian Forces.

Not all of this was Mulroney's doing, but it all took place on his watch. Certainly he was eager to take credit for successes whenever there was any to be seized. Ultimately, his desire to be his own foreign minister coupled with his insatiable craving for the adulation and attention he received abroad as a senior statesman means that he must carry the burden for his government's policies. The record is not all bad, to be sure, but neither is it yet concluded. In the short term if there is a military disaster in Bosnia, Mulroney's name will be mud. If the FTA proves a long-term failure, his name will be damned by those few Americans who will still remember that there once was a separate nation in the northern reaches of the continent.

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RESOLVING TRADE DISPUTES UNDER FTA: WHO ARE THE WINNERS?

by David Johnson

In all likelihood this country will soon be engaged in another acrimonious debate about free trade. The federal government has recently placed NAFTA implementing legislation before Parliament for approval prior to calling the next election. That campaign, in turn, will be one in which the worth of free trade will figure prominently.

For all the tension that the issue of free trade has engendered in this country, it is curious to note that there has been little academic or journalistic attention devoted to an assessment of how the dispute resolution process established by the FTA has been working over the past four years. What types of cases have been resolved by the bi-national panels? What is the nature of the jurisprudence of these bodies? To what degree have Canadian interests been helped or harmed by this jurisprudence?

THE CASES

A review of cases decided and pending reveals some interesting dynamics. In general, the dispute resolution process has been neither as good as expected by supporters of the FTA nor as bad as prognosticated by those opposed to the agreement.

To date, 35 cases have entered the process — 22 have been completed and 13 are still active. Of total cases, 26 have been initiated by the United States. In contrast, between 1980 and 1988, a total of 41 trade disputes against Canada were initiated and resolved by U.S. authorities. Thus, contrary to some supporters of the agreement, it is questionable whether the FTA has secured easier access of Canadian goods and services into the American market through a reduction of American trade remedy actions. The extent of U.S. resort to such measures under the agreement has led Gordon Ritchie, former Ca-

nadian trade negotiator, to refer to American behaviour as "harassment" that is "getting dangerously close to systematic abuse of the letter and spirit of the agreement."

The vast majority of all cases resolved and pending have dealt with anti-dumping and countervailing duty policy. Only three cases have addressed the general application of trade law between the parties. The issues in dispute in all these cases

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have been quite diverse ranging from whether U.S. lobster size regulations constituted a restrictive border measure, through whether Canadian raspberries or American beer were being dumped in the other nation's markets, to whether various Canadian industrial support programs constituted illegitimate subsidies under American trade law.

THE JURISPRUDENCE

Of the 22 completed cases, the American position has been substantially affirmed in 8, the Canadian position substantially affirmed in 7, while a further 7 cases resulted either in split decisions or no decisions due to withdrawals. Although these general results suggest a rough state of equilibrium existing between the two parties with respect to how their interests are being treated by the panels, a closer analysis reveals that Canadian victories have tended to arise in anti-dumping cases whereas significant American victories have been recorded in countervailing duty cases. The American victories thus have the

effect of being much more politically important in that they affirm restrictions on the ability of Canadian governments to establish a wide range of industrial support programs.

The major American victories to date have been recorded in the *New Steel Rails* case with respect to Canadian steel exports, with various panels affirming that Canadian governmental loan guarantees and regional development grants specifically targeted to steel producers constitute countervailable subsidies. In certain ongoing cases respecting Canadian pork, magnesium, and softwood lumber exports, panels have similarly held other Canadian agricultural support programs, energy pricing agreements, and stumpage fee policies as constituting unfair subsidization of goods in trade.

SUBSIDIES AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

Although these conclusions are cause for concern for all those interested in the ability of Canadian governments to develop state-directed policies of industrial strategy, this jurisprudence does not negate the ability of Canadian governments to establish such strategies. Contrary to the dire predictions of many opponents of the FTA, the capacity of Canadian governments to promote Canadian economic development within the structure of the agreement remains significant.

American trade law brands as illegitimate and countervailable foreign government grants, benefits, and uncommercial loans that are specifically targeted to particular industries, groups of industries, or regions within the state. Government support programs of general availability, however, such as health, education, and welfare programs, do not constitute countervailable subsidies. Likewise, the establish-

ment of financial support programs generally available to all producers in a particular economic sector will escape countervail action, hence certain Canadian victories in the pork export cases in which agricultural support programs such as the national tripartite stabilization plan and Quebec's farm income stabilization insurance program were upheld as legitimate subsidization policies.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Given the existence of the concept of legitimate subsidization under American law and free trade jurisprudence, those concerned with the ability of Canadian governments to deal with the new economic order established by the FTA should devote attention to the ways and means by which governments can operate within the agreement.

Clearly, there is much scope for governments to develop creative industrial policies, such as: promoting educational and skills training; developing a high-tech communications infrastructure for the Canadian economy; establishing research and development centres capable of innovative educational work in the technologies of value-added manufacturing and services; establishing investment capital pools for use by Canadian-based firms; promoting joint public-private ventures in manufacturing and services; and recognizing the role to be played by Crown corporations in the development and sale of specialized R & D and managerial services to private sector firms.

As we enter another free trade debate, this time involving NAFTA, it is hoped that this debate will be more refined, intelligent, and progressive. But given the experience of the rhetoric coming from all sides over the past few years, such hope may well be misplaced.

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WESTERN REPORT

THE REFORM PARTY AS A REGIONAL WEATHER VANE

by Roger Gibbins

A recent poll by Angus Reid shows a precipitous drop in support for the Reform party. National support has fallen to 7 from 13 percent a year ago and support in the Alberta heartland has fallen from 44 to 21 percent. In British Columbia, support stands at only 14 percent and in Saskatchewan and Manitoba it is a negligible 4 percent.

How do we explain this drop in support? Can RPC support rebound in time for the federal election and what does the current drop suggest about the more general political temper in western Canada?

THE RPC COALITION

Support for the RPC is an amalgam of at least four different elements. The first and core element is regional discontent or western alienation. The second stems from the RPC's perceived role as an English Canadian counterweight to the influence of Quebec within the national government and political parties. Third, the RPC provides an expressive vehicle for generalized discontent with the "system," broadly defined. Fourth, the RPC offers an ideological vehicle for those on the conservative right.

Only the first element confines the party's appeal to the west; the other three have potential appeal across English Canada and have been emphasized by Preston Manning in attempts to establish a beachhead in Ontario and Atlantic Canada. (Manning's more recent attempt to establish a beachhead in Quebec

defies explanation.) However, support for the party has waned across all four elements.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

The winds of change are currently working against the RPC. Western alienation is at a low ebb across the region, perhaps because regional frustration was vented during the referendum debate. In the two provinces most critical to RPC success, voters are preoccupied with political debates closer to home. In Alberta, Premier Ralph Klein's efforts to rebuild the Progressive Conservatives in the run up to a provincial election dominate the political stage, while in British Columbia the domestic relationships among Liberal caucus members and the driving records of NDP ministers and appointees provide an all-engrossing political soap opera.

The need for an English Canadian counterweight to Quebec has been reduced in the short term by the quiescence of the nationalist movement in Quebec and by the end of the constitutional debate. Although it is unlikely that general-

"... the basic problem facing the RPC may be too many rats fighting over a shrinking piece of ideological cheese."

ized discontent with the political system has evaporated, it, too, may have been vented by the referendum experience. Voters who want to lash out at the incumbent government, but who are also guided by rational calculus, will be directed by public opinion polls to vote Liberal. For those who might be inclined to vote Liberal but cannot stomach Jean Chrétien's policy vacillation, Mel Hurtig's National party may provide a more ideologically hospitable protest vehicle.

Support for a neoconservative social and economic platform has not disappeared, but it has suffered a major setback with the re-emergence of Clinton liberalism south of the border. To the extent that support remains in Canada, it is also being courted by the Conservatives and Liberals. Hence, the basic problem facing the RPC may be too many rats fighting over a shrinking piece of ideological cheese.

THE PROSPECT FOR A SHIFT IN THE WEATHER

It is, therefore, by no means surprising that the air has gone out of the RPC balloon. But what are the prospects that conditions might change in time for the upcoming federal election?

At best, the forecast is mixed. The ideological agenda is likely to be dominated by events in the United

"... Quebec provides the most likely source of change for RPC fortunes."

States and it is unlikely that Clinton's liberal agenda will disintegrate before the Canadian election. It is also unlikely that there will be any dramatic resurgence of western alienation or at least that there will be so without some major precipitating event taking place from outside the region. The most likely event would be a resurgence of Quebec nationalism and the reopening of the constitutional debate. This in turn could heighten more generalized discontent with the political system.

Thus, Quebec provides the most likely source of change for RPC fortunes. If Bourassa's cancer treatment is unsuccessful, if his retirement were to touch off a resurgence of nationalism, and if the federal election campaign were to feature two Quebec party leaders, Jean Charest and Jean Chrétien, battling

for the hearts and minds of Quebecers, then the stage could well be set for an RPC resurgence in English Canada. The currency of the counterweight argument could be quickly restored. This is the ideal RPC scenario, but it is also one that the party itself cannot bring into play. Conversely, the worst scenario is Bourassa's survival, continued quiescence among Quebec nationalists, and a change of leadership in the federal Progressive Conservative party that would bring a non-Quebecker to lead the party.

At present, the RPC is becalmed. If its sails are to fill again, the fresh winds are more likely to come from Quebec than from the west.

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QUEBEC REPORT

BEYOND HONOUR AND ENTHUSIASM

by Guy Laforest

The Mulroney era in Canadian politics will soon be over. Joe Clark and Brian Mulroney announced almost simultaneously their respective intention to leave to others the direction of the ship of state. Beyond the pettinesses of personal feuding, I see in this no mere coincidence. Clark and Mulroney had come to represent the Old Canada, the country steeped in the political culture of 1867: a pragmatic approach to constitution making, elite accommodation, the value of ambiguity, and compromise over matters such as the definition of the political community. The

word "nation" is nowhere to be found in the 1867 *British North America Act*. Had they insisted on the necessity of a consensus on this symbolically central issue, the founders would probably have miserably failed. Their successors in the 20th century were not as wise.

I take it that Clark and Mulroney never really understood what occurred in 1982. In retrospect, we are beginning to realize that Pierre Trudeau achieved something of greater magnitude than Lincoln's realizations in the United States. Lincoln, for the United States, is the last founder. He modernized the work of his predecessors, but I would argue that he worked in continuation with them.

Trudeau did much more than that. He gave us a radically different political culture from the one we inherited from the founders in 1867. The new political culture feeds on popular sovereignty (although it was never ratified by the "people"), on individual advocacy of rights and group status. It seeks to establish a pan-Canadian code of values. Trudeau, like Rousseau's great lawgiver, sought to foster a new civil religion for the nation. For it should have become clear to all of us by now, after Meech Lake and Charlottetown, that Canadian nationalism, rather than liberalism, was the overarching principle behind the 1981-82 patriation efforts.

Although not inimical to Canadian nationalism, Clark and Mulroney were first and foremost federalists. The two of them understood, more or less explicitly, that the one-nation dream of Canada would never sell in Quebec. Thus, in their constitutional efforts, they strove to restore the spirit of the federation, the principles of 1867. But if my intuitions concerning the meaning of 1982 are correct, this was an impossible task. Charles Taylor sent exactly the same mes-

sage to a stunned group of federalist liberals in his brief to the Bélanger-Campeau commission, light-years ago, in December 1990. He argued that to save the federal system, we would have to start anew.

Clark and Mulroney valiantly tried to repair the ship, but what we need is a new boat. Is there still time? What about the aspiring Tory captains? I shall turn to these questions in a future article. I wish to conclude this one with a matter that must be cleared once and for all.

It is often proclaimed in the English-Canadian media that Lucien Bouchard was a traitor to Mulroney, that he was ungrateful to the man

"Clark and Mulroney ... were honourable men who attempted to construct a generous definition of the Canadian federal community. The famous motto 'My Canada includes Quebec' would never have been claimed by them in a way similar to the infamous motto we hear these days, 'My Serbia includes Bosnia.'"

who had opened all kinds of political doors for him. First, it must be recalled that Bouchard and his friends provided Mulroney with a platform, and with key allies, at a crucial time. It was Bouchard who wrote the Sept-Îles speech in 1984, when Mulroney pledged that Quebec would be brought back into the Canadian constitutional family, "dans l'honneur et l'enthousiasme." This was the spirit of René Lévesque's "beau risque" with the Tories. This platform brought Mulroney the broad Quebec nationalist-federalist vote.

Bouchard stayed with Mulroney until May 1990. Bouchard abandoned his friend on a matter of principle. He had become convinced, largely through the Charest report

affair, that Mulroney had been recaptured by the Canadian nationalists intellectually closer to Trudeau than to the alliance of MacDonald and Cartier. Bouchard left Mulroney politically, after the latter had abandoned the former intellectually.

It can reasonably be argued that Mulroney had no other choice during the last months of the Meech Lake saga, that as the prime minister of Canada he had to make compromises likely to bring onside New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Newfoundland. However, it can also be argued that what these provinces wanted was the predominance of the 1982 political culture over its 1867 counterpart. They wanted Canada to be a nation first and foremost, rather than a federation. The Report of the Manitoba Task Force is particularly instructive on this score. Meech Lake would have refashioned a fragile equilibrium between 1982 and 1867. When Mulroney altered the equilibrium in May 1990, Bouchard made his move. Not before.

The departure of Clark and Mulroney is received with a certain sadness in Quebec. These were honourable men who attempted to construct a generous definition of the Canadian federal community. The famous motto "My Canada includes Quebec" would never have been claimed by them in a way similar to the infamous motto we hear these days, "My Serbia includes Bosnia." Clark and Mulroney used all the tricks in their political struggles, but they were on the side of civility. Can this be said about all political leaders and opinion makers in contemporary Canada? Readers should ponder the question and answer for themselves.

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LEGAL REPORT

CAMERAS IN THE LEGISLATURE: STRANGERS OR WATCHDOGS?

by Jamie Cameron

In *Donahoe v. CBC*, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* does not protect the CBC's right to televise proceedings in a provincial legislature. Given a jurisprudence that is reluctant to acknowledge a distinctive role for the press, the court's unwillingness to endorse a right of television access under s. 2(b) of the Charter was less of a surprise than the conclusion that parliamentary privileges, including the right to eject strangers, are immune from the Charter. Citing "curial deference," the court held that our representatives are not legally accountable when exercising those privileges.

CAMERAS IN THE LEGISLATURE

Arthur Donahoe, speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, refused the CBC's request to film its proceedings from the public gallery. In Nova Scotia, the Trial Court and Appeal Divisions both found that s. 2(b) prohibited the speaker from denying television access to the legislature's public proceedings.

The Supreme Court of Canada allowed the appeal and dismissed the CBC's claim. Of the eight judges who decided the case, only two found that the Charter applies. Although Sopinka J. upheld the speaker's restrictions under s. 1, Cory J. alone would have protected a right to televise legislative proceedings under s. 2(b)'s guarantee of press freedom.

THE CHARTER AND THE LEGISLATURES

Most worrying about *Donahoe* are the contortions of reasoning the court contrived to grant parliamentary privileges near absolute immunity from the Charter. The chief justice's interpretation of s. 32 is symptomatic.

Lamer C.J. contended that, under s. 32, the Charter applies to the "legislature" of each province but not to a legislative assembly. In his view, because the lieutenant governor's signature is necessary to bring legislation into law, "the legislature" under s. 32 of the Charter must be defined as the assembly together with the lieutenant governor. By acting on its own in these circumstances, the legislature was not bound by the Charter.

Describing the chief justice's interpretation of s. 32 as "technical," McLachlin J. offered alternative reasons for her conclusion that parliamentary privileges are absolutely immune from the Charter. She held that rights that enjoy "constitutional status" cannot be abrogated by the Charter. A history of curial deference, originating in British tradition and imported to Canada, convinced her that parliamentary privileges have constitutional status under our constitution and must, of necessity, be absolutely and unconditionally immune from review.

As Sopinka J.'s reasons demonstrate, it was possible to balance the interests at stake and uphold the speaker's decision. However, six of eight judges preferred to foreclose the Charter claim and yet to hint, ambiguously, that parliament's immunity could be less absolute in other circumstances.

PRIVILEGE, CURIAL DEFERENCE AND THE CHARTER

Supreme Court of Canada precedent had restricted the Charter's application prior to *Donahoe*. In the

mandatory retirement cases, for example, the court held that the employment relationships of public institutions like universities and hospitals are not subject to the Charter.

Even so, those cases are not quite the same as *Donahoe*; each concerned an attempt to extend the Charter's scope beyond the institutions of parliamentary government, as traditionally defined. In rejecting the attempt to extend the Charter to such "public" actors and institutions, the court has emphasized that the purpose of the Charter is to protect citizens against any unjustified violation of their rights by government. According to doctrine, the Charter

"Donahoe is significant ... for what it says about the court's conception of its responsibilities in interpreting and enforcing the Charter. Some have theorized that the Supreme Court of Canada has become increasingly 'conservative' as Prime Minister Mulroney's influence has been felt in the appointment process."

does not bind non-governmental actors, but does apply to "the apparatus of government."

From a purely doctrinal perspective, the result in *Donahoe* is puzzling. As Cory J. observed in his dissenting opinion, "[t]o the ordinary and reasonable citizen," it is the legislative assembly that is the "essential element of the 'legislature' and a fundamental and integral part of the 'government' of a province." Yet *Donahoe* found that our representative institutions are free to continue exercising privileges that predate the Charter, with impunity.

Donahoe is significant, not so much because the CBC was excluded from the legislative assembly, or even because the Supreme Court of Canada expressed deference to "parliamentary privilege." It is signifi-

cant, in broader terms, for what it says about the court's conception of its responsibilities in interpreting and enforcing the Charter.

Some have theorized that the Supreme Court of Canada has become increasingly "conservative" as Prime Minister Mulroney's influence has been felt in the appointment process. In that regard, *Operation Dismantle*, decided earlier and by a court that was differently constituted, may be instructive.

There, the Supreme Court of Canada held that Cabinet decisions are subject to Charter review. As the executive branch of government, the Cabinet acts under the authority of legislation, but also pursuant to the royal prerogative. Although the claim in *Operation Dismantle* failed, it was not because of curial deference. In commenting on the prerogative, Wilson J. stated that it was not only appropriate for the judiciary to determine whether Cabinet had violated the rights of citizens, but its obligation to do so under the Charter.

In the United States, it is the separation of powers, not curial deference, that restrains judicial review of the executive and legislative branches. However, despite the constraints of separation theory, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in *Powell v. McCormack*, that Congress acted unconstitutionally in expelling one of its duly elected members from the House of Representatives. In reaching that conclusion, the American court held that the judiciary could not use the separation of powers to avoid its responsibility to interpret the constitution.

Which, by invoking curial deference and technical interpretations of s. 32, is exactly what the Supreme Court of Canada has done in *Donahoe*.

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THE MONTH IN REVIEW

by David Johnson

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY RESIGNS

On February 24 Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced his intention to step down from the Conservative leadership and resign the office of prime minister. His announcement, nearly nine years to the day from a similar announcement by then prime minister Pierre Trudeau, caught official Ottawa by surprise. The prime minister had dampened the rumours of his pending resignation by statements over the previous month indicating that he intended to fight a third national election.

In his resignation statement, Mulroney indicated that he had originally intended to resign in the fall of 1990 but that political developments such as the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the battle over the GST had forced him to delay a final decision.

The Conservatives are expected to choose a new leader at a convention that is tentatively scheduled for early June. The early front runner in

the race to succeed Mulroney is Defence Minister Kim Campbell, who is seen as being the candidate who is best able to distance herself from the Mulroney legacy. Other ministers rumoured to be contemplating a run at the leadership include: Environment Minister Jean Charest, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall, International Trade Minister Michael Wilson, Employment and Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt, and Communications Minister Perrin Beatty.

NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

In a historic decision on February 1, the House of Commons voted 219 to 2 to give approval to a bilateral constitutional amendment, co-sponsored by the government of New Brunswick, which recognizes that the English- and French-speaking communities in New Brunswick "have equality of status and equal rights and privileges." Among these rights is "the right to distinct educational institutions and such distinct cultural institutions as are necessary for the preservation and promotion of those communities." The amendment is strongly supported by leaders of the Acadian community, who view the initiative as a means of ensuring the place of the French fact in the development of New Brunswick.

The amendment has already received endorsement by the New Brunswick legislature and the Canadian Senate. Royal assent is expected soon, at which time the amendment may become the subject of constitutional litigation. Deborah Coyne has announced that she will spearhead a constitutional challenge to the amendment on the grounds that it privileges group over individual rights, while giving special legislative status to the province of New Brunswick.

PEI'S NEW PREMIER CALLS ELECTION FOR MARCH 29

PEI Premier Catherine Callbeck has called a provincial election just six weeks after being chosen leader and premier. The former Liberal MP for the federal riding of Malpeque selected March 29 as the date for the general election. Callbeck was selected as premier at the Liberal party convention on January 23, where she secured 79 percent of the vote on the first ballot. In the 1989 election, the Liberals under then premier Joe Ghiz won 30 of the 32 seats in the Legislature. Callbeck will be opposed by the Conservatives, led by former high school teacher Pat Mella, and the NDP, led by former reporter Larry Duchesne.

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CANADA WATCH CALENDAR

January 23	Prince Edward Island Liberals elect Catharine Callbeck as leader and premier of the province.	March 9	Quebec National Assembly resumes sitting.
February 20	Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark announces his decision not to run in the next federal election.	March 9	Parti québécois leader Jacques Parizeau meets with French President François Mitterand in Paris, France.
February 24	Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announces his intention to resign and asks his party to schedule a leadership convention as soon as possible.	March 16	New Brunswick speech from the throne.
February 25	International Trade Minister Michael Wilson introduces the implementing legislation for the North American free trade agreement in the House of Commons.	Late March	Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa expected to announce whether his cancer treatment has been sufficiently successful to permit him to continue as premier.
March 4	Newfoundland speech from the throne.	Late March	Negotiations on NAFTA side agreements on environment, labour, and import surges scheduled to begin.
March 8	House of Commons resumes sitting.	March 29	PEI general election.
		April	Federal budget.