

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

With RICHARD HUTCHINS

Well, it is now election time in New Brunswick, a time when promises are made and candidates jockey for public support by presenting themselves as Messiah's, Saviours of the people and modern day super-heroes, fighting injustice, Lex Luthor and his villainous gang in Ottawa.

We have Richard Hatfield, the incumbent premier promising to maintain good relations with the Irvings and McCains. Hatfield's undisguised conflicts of interest abound. During his reign as King of New Brunswick, he has succeeded in implementing policies that are not fundamentally threatening to the economic elite, his party leadership at the same time portraying these policies to the masses as important and egalitarian.

On the other side of the coin we have Doug Young. A rookie Clark Kent, hoping to cash in on the downfalls of Hatfield's monarchy. His Liberal Party has been out of power so long, many of its politicians and supporters recall with fondness the days when the Bluenose ruled the seas. Times have been so bad for the liberals in recent years, that they have attempted to recruit Tommy Hunter as their symbolic leader.

Political back-biting aside, both parties have geared up their campaigns to full swing and come October 12th the voters of New Brunswick will swarm to the polls to elect a New Government.

The people of New Brunswick, infamous for their conservatism and political apathy, have come to accept provincial politics as another form of transfer payments from Ottawa.

The depressed economy of New Brunswick and its strong need for government aid, has led to a form of political realism reliant on the whims of Ottawa for survival.

Let us hope that the new government of New Brunswick, be it King Hatfield or Clark Kent Young, has the integrity and leadership ability to reinstate New Brunswickers pride in provincial politics.

Chimo means 'Friendship'

October 1982 marks the 11th year in operation of Chimo Help Centre, an information, befriending and crisis response service, making it one of the longest-standing centres of its kind in the country. To date, 80,000 callers have heard the familiar words "Chimo, may I help you?"

Unfortunately, due to unstable funding, the lifespan of the average telephone help centre is 18 months. Thanks to ongoing financial support from the United Ways of Fredericton and Oromocto, and the Department of Social Services, Chimo has been able to establish itself as an integral part of the community.

The name Chimo is an Inuit word meaning friendship and neighbourliness. From the outset Chimo has been a sparkling example of friendship and community volunteer effort.

The telephones are manned by trained volunteers 16 hours a day, 365 days a year. More than 100 people donate eight hours of their time a month to make Chimo a reality. The phone volunteers are well informed members of the community who, by consulting Chimo's directory of services, can provide most requested information.

The phone volunteer also provides a "listening ear" to callers with personal pro-

blems. The volunteer does not give advice but, rather, helps the caller explore the options open to him. Volunteers attempt to be non-judgemental friends who respect the callers' values even if they differ from their own. Both caller and volunteer are assured of complete confidentiality.

In addition to the front line telephone workers, Chimo has over 200 resource volunteers who provide back-up support and professional expertise. These include psychologists, financial counsellors, grief counsellors, interpreters, and emergency drivers, to name a few.

For information or just someone friendly to talk to, call Chimo. 455-9464, 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. daily.

Environmental ratings issued

Both the Liberal Party and the NDP have received a "very good" rating on environmental issues by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick. The Progressive Conservative Party has been rated as "very poor". The ratings are based on answers to a twelve question survey sent to all three major parties earlier in the campaign by the Council, a private environmental organization.

Leaders of both the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals responded on behalf of most of their candidates and there were virtually no differences among the many NDP candidates, including Leader George Little, who answered the survey. Neither Parti Acadien nor Independent candidates were included although Fredericton South Independent Harry Marshall submitted a pro-environment response.

According to Premier Hatfield, a Progressive Conservative government would not initiate stronger environmental policies except for increasing its work on acid rain. In a comprehensive response to the survey, Premier Hatfield defended existing environmental policies in New Brunswick but answered only three out of twelve questions in a pro-environment manner.

In contrast, both Liberals and NDP scored eleven out of twelve differing only on their positions on a second nuclear power plant and toxic waste treatment facilities. While the NDP rejects the construction of a second reactor, the Liberals give it conditional approval. On the other hand, the Liberal Party has already developed a positive policy on toxic waste management while some NDP candidates reject such facilities in their ridings, especially urban ones.

Liberal candidates Stephen Patterson (Fredericton South) and Mike McKee (Moncton North) went beyond party policy in firmly stating their opposition to a second unit at Point Lepreau. The party line

would see another reactor built only if the first one has a "satisfactory safety and efficiency record". Both the Liberals and PCs would also insist on "no-risk" financing and guaranteed export sales. The PCs make no mention of safety or efficiency but would want "much improved labour rela-

tions" to build it. On another controversial issue, both the NDP and Liberals commit themselves to "spending most of the 1983 forest protection program budget on a combination of biological controls and drastically improved forest

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Candidate speaks out

As finance critic and candidate in Fredericton South, the largest university constituency in the province, it is a pleasure for me to release today the NDP position paper on higher education and research for the 1982 election.

The NDP is very concerned about the lower and lower priority that the Hatfield government has been giving to university education. In 1970 when Hatfield took power universities received 5.1 percent of provincial spending. By this year, that amount had shrunk to 4 percent. The result has been library cutbacks, overcrowded classrooms, and a shortage of money for new equipment needed for teaching and research.

In this age of high technology, it is important that our universities keep up with the times. To do this, NDP knows that we must invest adequate funds for university teaching and research. If we neglect this sector our people and our province will pay the price in lost opportunities.

The NDP is committed to a six point programme to turn around the decline in our universities:

- * formation of a New Brunswick Research Directorate to promote and encourage research activities in the province. The Research Directorate will improve the funding of research, promote the efficient transfer of knowledge to the industrial sector, and help businesses to make use of the research expertise and facilities of the universities.

- * a freeze on tuition fees and a restructuring of student aid so that no student will be prevented from attending university because of financial circumstances.

- * expansion of adult education and extension courses so that people in all parts of the province will have access to higher education.

- * an increase in base funding to universities of 3% a year in real terms, to help them move toward national standards, over the next five years.

- * removal of the provincial sales tax on research equipment purchased by universities.

- * capital grants to universities to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and undertake needed repairs and renovations.



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