

And the band played on

Kim Campbell's visit to P.E.I.

On Wednesday, October 6, 1993, I went along with a couple of hundred of my closest friends to the Kim Campbell rally at East Wiltshire School in North River. The crowd was even more partisan than I had expected. The Prime Minister herself looked down at the crowd and said that she "didn't have to convince anybody here". I felt alone as an objective observer in this sea of blue and white posters, buttons, balloons, and T-shirts. The Prime Minister was an hour late, so I had plenty of time to flip through PC pamphlets and reflect on the first month or so of the campaign. One of the pamphlets sitting on the seat was "A Taxpayer's Agenda".

It was interesting to note that education was not one of the major concepts featured in the Progressive Conservative agenda. The jazz trio in the corner of the gym kept those of us who weren't discussing politics awake during the wait.

I overheard one person commenting on the apparent lack of Friends of the Island who might have come in black to mourn the signing of the fixed link. I was more concerned with the lack of mikes in the aisles for questions from the audience. Perhaps that phase of the campaign has passed, but personally, I am just now getting informed enough to ask a sensible question.

When the Prime Minister's party did arrive there was shouting to match that heard when Ricky Henderson scores a home run for the Jays. Kim Campbell was accompanied by the four Prince Edward Island federal Conservative candidates and Leone Bagnall, former MLA. The Prime Minister was introduced by Garth Staples (Malpeque).

The first few minutes of the Prime Minister's speech sounded to me like a victory address. The greatness of Canada and the hope that after she gains power Canadians will brag about the greatness of their government was the theme. She spoke of the ease of cutting services and how she wished to "do politics differently" by cutting the expenses of government. The PC's also want to run their government like a business where "the customer is always right". Kim Campbell mentioned PEI specifically by referring to the fixed link deal and referring to Summerside and the GST processing centre there. Kim Campbell admitted she was not computer literate and told us that education was useless unless people were getting the skills



Kim Campbell meets the press

they need in today's world. Many of the older generation do not understand what these skills are and what it takes to implement them into the

school system. The Prime minister mentioned a high school in Ontario where students get to play with CAD. Interesting, but I was disappointed that she didn't emphasize post secondary education when so many jobs now require at least 16 years of schooling.

The speech then became a more typical PC speech with the emphasis on business concerns. Kim Campbell's party is committed to preserving social programs because they are good for the economy. She explained a four point plan to create jobs. This includes:

1. life-long education and training
2. better exploitation of export markets (for example through NAFTA)
3. increasing money available to small business

(This is where 85% of new jobs are created)
4. science and technology.

Explaining that there are opportunities for

Maritime businesses in Mexico led directly into criticism of Jean Chretien and the Liberal party's indecisive stand on the NAFTA and his repeated statement that Canada's deficit is not a problem. Discussing the deficit also led into condemnation of Preston Manning and the

Reform Party for their plan to eliminate the deficit in three years through cutting money to seniors.

The meeting was interesting because this is the Prime Minister, regardless of whether she is leading a party of decreasing popularity through an election campaign, and Canadians should get to know what she is saying.

SHANNON YOUNKER

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