

Leadership Battle

By Jim Revell

With the winter winds coming ever closer in the horizon; and my bank account becoming even smaller, I have finally found the time to write my first column. While the national scene is preoccupied with matters on the constitution and the economy, we, here on P.E.I. are in the midst of two provincial political party leadership campaigns.

The leadership contests were brought on by the expected resignation of Premier Angus MacLean.

Our present premier served faithfully for many years as a member of the House of Commons and for a short span in the Rt. Honourable John Diefenbaker's Cabinet before entering politics here on P.E.I. In the spring of 1979 he was elected Premier on a platform of rural renaissance and a return to traditional values. Though the province has stumbled somewhat since that last provincial election, it has not been because of a lack of effort on our premier's part. Politics and politicians sometimes are looked upon unfavourably but an examination of the Hon. Angus MacLean's record for the past 30 years is anything but that.

What about the premiers replacement? And who is going to lead the Liberal party into the next provincial election? Both leadership conventions are planned for the next month and students would be well advised to get involved. Therefore an introduction and analysis of those who are attempting to win I feel is appropriate.

There are four candidates in the Progressive Conservative race but only three are given any serious chances to win.

Jim Lee from 5th Queens, P.E.I.'s Minister of Health and Social Affairs was the first to announce his intention to run for the leadership. Mr. Lee lost to Premier MacLean in his last try for the top job and he is rumoured to have the best "grass roots"

connections of all the Tory contestants. His only distinguishing characteristic in government has been that he has avoided all the difficult issues of the day, a problem when trying to develop yourself as a leader and decision maker.

Barry Clark is a young cabinet minister from Charlottetown. Closely associated with Horace Carver and David Weale at one time, he is a refreshing alternative to some of the more traditional aspects of P.E.I. politics. Being a Protestant, his chances are enhanced if the delegates to the convention decide to vote on religious backgrounds. His liabilities are his inexperience, and lack of contacts in the party hierarchy.

Fred Driscoll, the man everybody loves to hate: students, doctors, and parents. The only good factor is that he has been the person in the P.C. cabinet to take a stand on matters of importance. It was Mr. Driscoll who fought balance billing from doctors and won, and he has handled with equal skill the difficult position of Minister Responsible for Federal-Provincial Affairs. With the support of most of the elected Tory MLA's and cabinet, if he is able to overcome the past, he is indeed a formidable candidate.

Patrick Binns is the final cabinet minister looking to be leader. A late entry into the race, he is not given a serious chance by any insiders. In other days he may have been given an opportunity to win with so many candidates from Charlottetown, but not this time.

What about the Liberals? Their convention is only two weeks away, and it now appears as if there is going to be a real fight for that party's leadership. The battle was brought upon by Joe Ghiz's decision to run against 3rd King's MLA Gilbert Clements.

Interim leader of the Opposition Gilbert Clements has delivered himself well in the past eight months since

taking over from the now Minister of Veteran's Affairs Bennett Campbell. He has been in the public eye, speaking out on issues of the day and on faulty government policies. His most recent suggestion on the Cavendish Farms problem illustrates he has a good understanding and ability to solve potential difficulties in the future. His liabilities are his programs while a member of Alex Campbell's cabinet as Minister of Tourism and the Environment and his somewhat abrupt confrontationalist public appearance.

Joe Ghiz is a former president of the party and has lined up impressive support from within caucus. He is perceived as being both intellectually capable

and politically aware of any problems which face him. While he is young and offers a new direction for the party he must contend with the fact that he hasn't tried the public before. Many people, however, believe he rates an excellent opportunity to knock off the present leader.

What does all this mean? Well it all adds up to an excellent opportunity for all of us to become involved in the decision making process on P.E.I. When we see the events happen that we feel are unjust we complain, "What can we do?" So here is a chance to become involved in picking your next premier. Political parties are always looking for young people to become involved.



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