

Coalition humiliates Mayor Drapeau's Civic Party

MONTREAL (CUP) -- Once considered Canada's most formidable political machine, Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau's Civic Party was humbled Nov. 10 by a coalition of poor people, trade unionists, and intellectuals.

The Montreal Citizens' Movement (MCM) won 17 seats on the 55-member city council. Drapeau's party which won all the seats in 1970, took only 37, and a small third party took one.

Drapeau scored only 55 per cent of the vote in the mayoralty race, compared to the more than 90 per cent he won in the 1966 and 1970 elections. MCM candidate Jesuit priest and community worker Jacques Couture, took more than 39 per cent of the vote.

Only about 37 per cent of the eligible voters cast ballots, slightly below average for previous Montreal elections. But voters who participated made their opinion clear: They've had enough of Drapeau's politics of grand massive expenditures on expressways, spectator sports and man and his world deficits, while Montrealers starve for adequate housing, parkland, and public transit.

Voting figures for council races show MCM candidates closely challenging Drapeau supporters in almost every seat the Civic Party won. Drapeau's prospects for the next election look dim, especially with the psychological dent Nov. 10 created in his invincible image.

"We took on a political machine more entrenched than even Richard Daley's in Chicago," MCM's English-speaking lieutenant John Lynch-Staunton in Cote-des-Neiges district. Auf der Maur is a CBC producer and writer for the leftist newsmagazine Last Post.

Ironically, Auf der Maur was released from jail days before the 1970 election, when Quebec's leftists were rounded up under the War Measures Act. He was never charged.

Drapeau used the crisis to link his then principle opponents Front D'Action Politique (FRAP) with the FLQ. FRAP was crushed in that election and many observers credit Drapeau's overwhelming victory to the kidnap hysteria.

This time FRAP's former leader, Paul Cliche, was elected to a council seat from east-central St. Jacques district for the MCM.

The Movement's victorious councillors included three women. Also elected was Arnold Bennett, an editor of the McGill Daily, the student newspaper at McGill University.

The new party scored heaviest in the English-speaking districts and many areas held provincially by the independentist Parti Quebecois.

English voters were not afraid to back a group supported by the PQ and the militant trade unions, while people who are strongly nationalist in Quebec politics, worked easily with English Montrealers who tend toward federalism.

The MCM was formed only last spring by leftists in the PQ, the Montreal section of the Labour Unions' common front, The New Democratic Party and the English Progressive Urban Movement, But

the party is primarily based on neighborhood and issue-oriented community groups.

The MCM supporters were united by a desire to make Montreal civic government responsive to neighborhood groups. Running on an unabashedly anti-developers platform, the MCM called for an end to widespread demolition demanded a stop to proliferating expressways and instead called for a decrease in public transit fares, especially for senior citizens. They also attacked Drapeau's secretive conduct of city business.

The MCM demanded drastic cuts in proposed expenditures for the 1976 Olympic Games, Drapeau's pet project, with money saved redirected toward neighborhood recreation facilities.

Drapeau did not plan to campaign. He thought he would remain aloof and be re-elected with a few media ads. In fact, tradition in Montreal politics over the past 14 years had been simply to have no city election campaign.

But when the MCM finally found a mayoralty candidate in Couture in early October, its campaign caught fire.

Drapeau, mayor from 1960 after serving as mayor from 1954 to 1957, was forced to respond.

He tried to coopt his opponents' policies, promising to finance the renovation of 10,000 old houses every year for 10 years. He said the massive Olympic complex would be available for community recreation after the 1976 games.

Major sections of the Montreal press embarrassed Drapeau during the campaign by discussing his record.

A CBC-Montreal documentary pointed out that of \$1,000,000 allocated this year for housing renovation -- thousand of houses have been demolished for expressways and high rise development, but few have been replaced. Available park space in Montreal has actually decreased over the past ten years, and the number of staff supervising neighborhood playgrounds has drastically declined.

The high-circulation French daily La Presse hammered away at the massive debt piled up by the Drapeau regime. Montreal spends more on servicing this debt this year than it does on housing or recreation.

While public services "water and service tax" every year, approximately equivalent to one month's rent. Revenue raised by the tax far exceeds water expenditures and is used to defray other expenses, most notably servicing the debt.

Drapeau claims all Olympic costs will be covered by the sale of coins and lottery tickets. But Montreal will be left holding the tab if he's wrong. Montreal is still paying off the cost of Expo '67 and covers the annual deficit of Man and His World which still operates on the Expo site.

Another crucial issue was the Montreal firemen's strike the previous weekend. After a long dispute firement left their jobs, demanding a \$750 cost-of-living adjustment, already recommended by a conciliator, but rejected by Drapeau.

Scores of fires erupted in poor

neighborhoods, and several families were left homeless. Most observers appeared to place equal blame on Drapeau and the firemen.

St. Jacques district, where most of the fires occurred, returned three MCM councillors.

With opposition candidates winning more than one-third of the council seats, Drapeau will not have an easy time steering through his budget, which requires a two-thirds majority.

The breakthrough also gives suburban politicians within the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) a chance to join Drapeau's opponents. Suburban municipalities have long fought with Drapeau, but have been outvoted by the solid block of Drapeau stalwarts representing the city on the MUC.

The press treated the MCM as

credible opposition and constantly depicted the mayoralty contest as a race between Drapeau and Couture. In that respect, the media had a significant effect on the election, enhancing the credibility of the MCM's vigorous door-to-door campaign.

The Civic Party concentrated its campaign through speeches by Drapeau to followers, parts of which were broadcast live as paid-advertising.

Spot radio ads and large newspaper ads rounded out Drapeau's campaign.

"We found their machine was based more on Drapeau's mystique, than on any fine vote-getting apparatus," Nick Auf der Maur said.

This year's election was actually only the second under universal

suffrage. Before 1970 only property owners could vote.

Drapeau treated the results as a great victory, another mandate for the Civic Party, but he warned the existence of opposition at City Hall may be unproductive.

Jubilant MCM supporters vowed they would create the neighborhood councils they promised during the campaign, to provide a grass roots base for MCM councillors and build opposition to Drapeau.

It remains to be seen whether this desperate coalition of citizens, activists, New Democrats, Pequistes, trade unionists, who want a more liveable city, can stick together and build the movement begun during the campaign.

NUS will examine student funding

LETHBRIDGE (CUP) -- Two members of the National Union of Students Central Committee have called for a specific mechanism to examine post-secondary student financing.

Don Thompson, treasurer, and Sidney Shugarman, Alberta representative, were responding to statements made in Ottawa by federal Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner. Faulkner was addressing the annual meeting of the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada and said that student assistance should perhaps be more closely geared to their financial needs.

"We should perhaps begin to examine the financial needs of students in the light of what is being done for other groups in terms of income maintenance," Faulkner said.

"Specific mechanisms for this examination are needed," Shugarman said, "mechanisms that will guarantee students substantial input to this examination."

But Faulkner indicated concern

about financial subsidies at the university level of education when learning difficulties for many students develop in primary and secondary schools.

"That's analogous to saying that before we put any money into welfare we'd better look at the operation of orphanages," said Shugarman.

He and Thompson agreed that a review of the entire educational system is desperately needed. But, they said, post secondary educa-

tion can't be neglected in favour of primary and secondary.

"The fact that learning difficulties develop in primary and secondary schools doesn't negate the fact that students in post secondary institutions need more financial assistance very badly," said Thompson.

"And there are more people who would be able to get post secondary education if proper financing were made available," said Shugarman.

FRANK ZAPPA
200 Motels
SUN., NOV. 24th
T102
7 & 9

Capt. Submarine
579 KING STREET
phone 455-4658 open daily 10:00 - 2:00

