

Quebec

Seventy-five seats are up for grabs in Quebec, and Trudeau's Liberals say they have a good chance of getting at least twenty of them. To observers in Quebec, however, that does not seem to be a foregone conclusion. This could be the year of the dark horse.

Five parties are officially in the running, four of which say they will field a full slate of candidates. The Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and NDP hope to have candidates in every constituency, while the Social Credit Party is expected to defend its nine-member stronghold and not much more. A recent arrival, the pro-separatist Union Populaire, says it will have candidates in all 75 constituencies.

The latter could be the monkey wrench in a well-oiled Liberal machine. To Quebec voters who have had enough of Trudeau, think Joe Clark is as superficial as he is thin, and consider the NDP a wasted ballot, the UP may be a reasonable alternative. A poll published

in *La Presse* last November lends credence to this view. Respondents were asked if they would support an independent party in a federal election, and, curiously enough, 25% said yes and 21% said maybe, thus, the UP.

Liberal Party Communications director Mark Parson said the Liberal "inside slogan" is 75 for 75, and the party "stands a very good chance of getting 70 seats". In the 1974 election, the Liberals were successful in 67 ridings, although that figure has since been whittled down to 63.

It is assumed that the Liberals will campaign in Quebec on the national unity issue.

The PCs received 22 per cent of the popular vote in Quebec in the last election. This time around, said PC general secretary Jean Dugre, "we expect at least 10 per cent more".

That 22 per cent translated into only three seats, one of which has since been lost.

In the last election, the NDP received 11 per cent of the popular vote. The NDP's chief organizer in

Quebec, Denis Faubert, said his party is also receiving support from the Teachers Union and the United Auto Workers. In fact, a UAW local president will be running against Francis Fox in Blainville-Deux Montagnes, who Faubert said will give Fox a run for his money.

This year's campaign strategy, Faubert said, is to "put a lot of time in selective ridings". He said the party will concentrate on "less than ten" constituencies.

The Union Populaire, formed last June, is the unknown quantity in the upcoming election. Party president Henri Laberge said 45 UP candidates have already been selected, and they intend to run a full slate. The candidates, he said, are a melange of political and non-political ties with the PQ party or government.

Ontario

Were last October's by-elections a forecast of May '22? That's the question occupying organizers for all three major parties in Ontario.

With redistribution, Metro Toronto now has 23 seats, and all three parties agree that Metro will be the main battleground in Ontario during this spring's federal election.

At present, the Liberals have 13 seats in Metro, while the Tories hold six and the NDP two. The Conservatives are optimistic about their chances in Toronto after the Oct. 16 by-elections, when, under the leadership of former Toronto Mayor David Crombie, they took five seats from the Liberals. Moreover, according to the most recent Gallup Poll, the PCs are ahead of the Liberals in Ontario overall.

In the by-elections, the PCs eliminated such Liberal competition as former Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove and former University of Toronto President John Evans. Now they have their eyes set on the seats of several cabinet ministers, including Energy Minister Alastair Gillespie and Secretary of State John Roberts.

The NDP is also hoping to improve on the two ridings it now holds in Metro. Toronto and southern Ontario have been traditional centres of strength for the party, and York Centre, York South, York West, and Etobicoke-Lakeshore are considered potential gains by the party. To help them in their campaign, the NDP has now a bigger campaign budget than ever. More than a half million dollars will be spent on advertising alone, and, for the first time, the party will be advertising on television.

have swept most of the Saskatchewan seats since the long march of John Diefenbaker in 1958. This is, of course, a tough trend to buck since the Tories will use many of the same issues the NDP were able to use with success in the last provincial election. Last fall, Allen Blakeney ran as much against Pierre Trudeau's federal government as against the clownish provincial Conservatives. The NDP sweep was a way for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly those who had been Liberal in the past, to send a message to the government in Ottawa.

This time around, they may send it with Tories instead of New Democrats.

Manitoba

One of the roughest fights of the federal election is shaping up for Winnipeg-Fort Garry. The riding is currently held by James Richardson—the independent who bolted the Liberal Party last year. Outside of that riding, it looks as though Manitoba will be returning the same old Tories and its two North Winnipeg New Democrats.

The Fort Garry election will be the acid test for the Liberal Party in Manitoba. Lloyd Axworthy, the sole provincial MLC for the Grits, recently threw his hat into the contest. Axworthy has been a strong supporter of the Prime Minister's bilingualism policies, and has been critical of Richardson in recent months.

Atlantic

New Brunswick

Unemployment and inflation will be the number 1 issues in all four Atlantic provinces. With the highest unemployment rate in the country, and prices continually soaring, the economy will predominate in voters' minds in the upcoming election.

The French vote in northern New Brunswick is traditionally Liberal and is expected to stay that way. The Conservatives will have a challenge providing reasons for people to change their votes, especially considering the large number of federal assistance grants given to the area.

As in the recent provincial election, the dispute between naturalists and the timber business over spruce budworm spraying will be a subject of debate. The spraying has been a controversial issue for several years and recent reports of the spray causing the death of salmon will only provide more fuel for environmentalists' arguments.

Unemployment will also be a crucial issue in the north, since its rate averages 20 per cent.

Prince Edward Island

Federal government decentralization will help the Grits hang on to one of their two seats in PEI. The offices for Veterans Affairs are moving to Charlottetown, and the Minister for Veterans Affairs is the member for Cardigan, Dan MacDonald. The PCs are not expected to lose the two seats they now have, and could gain the other Liberal riding.

The province is expecting a provincial election soon, but the PCs feel they have it under control. Currently, the Liberals have a one-seat lead in the provincial legislature, but could lose it in a by-election to fill the one vacant seat.

The provincial and federal elections will undoubtedly show the anti-Liberal feeling in the Maritimes.

Religion still plays a major role on the island, but more so provincially than federally because of the smaller ridings.

Newfoundland

When he visited Newfoundland, national NDP leader Ed Broadbent, predicted an NDP sweep. Newfoundlanders seem reluctant to agree.

The economy is the major issue in Newfoundland. The PCs are not making a major issue of the fisheries, appearing to be satisfied with the federal ministers' performances. Oil may not become a major issue this time because the province has not yet set a definite off-shore mineral policy, merely saying it wants more provincial control.

Nova Scotia

The Liberals in Nova Scotia plan to keep the two seats they now have and feel they can get several more.

The most interesting competition is expected to be the riding of Halifax. Both the Liberals, with candidate Brian Fleming, and the Tories, with George Cooper, are putting lots of time and money into the race. Since both are tied to the federal scene—Fleming works in the prime minister's office and Cooper helped organize Clark's leadership campaign—the race will be close.

NDP candidate Alexa MacDonough is a strong advocate of women's rights, and will give that issue some prominence in the election, while Communist Party of Canada candidate Scot Milsome will be the first CP candidate ever in Halifax.

The NDP currently holds only one seat in Nova Scotia—Father Andy Hogan's Cape Breton-East Richmond. Although the Liberals are running the local mayor against him this time, that strategy fared badly for them in recent provincial elections.

PC party president Bob Coates, infamous for his past support of the apartheid regime in South Africa, will be making Fundy tidal power a major issue, criticizing the federal government for dragging its feet. Coates is expected to stay the member for Cumberland and Colchester.

Cross Country Election Round-up

When Pierre Trudeau walked to Government House Mar. 26, his exact timing was unexpected, but his action was not. Canadians had been expecting a federal election for the last 1½ years. The only question was why had it not come sooner?

But, despite the protracted non-campaign, the results of the May 22 election are far from certain. A minority

or majority? Tory or Liberal? That will depend on the next two months of campaigning, as all parties pull out the stops in an effort to gain the confidence of the Canadian voter.

Many seats across Canada will be decided during the campaign. Some of those seats, and the issues they will be fought on, are outlined province-by-province below.



The West

British Columbia

If the upcoming federal election is a close race—and indications are that it will be—the nation's eyes will turn to BC as the last ballots are counted and the election's last results come in.

And, if BC becomes the kingmaker of the election with its 28 seats, the odds are that Pierre Trudeau will be deposed.

Although the Liberals are hoping to hold the eight seats they got in 1974, insiders admit the Grits could lose all but one of the ridings. The Conservatives and NDP smell blood and are aiming for a big kill.

An indication of the trouble the Liberals are in can be seen in an analysis of the 1974 election results, when there were 23 seats before federal redistribution added five more. The Tories took 13, the Liberals eight, and the NDP two.

But BC still remains unpredictable. A bad mistake by either the Tories or the NDP could mean Liberal salvation in the province that gave them Margaret Trudeau. On the other hand, given current trends, the Liberals could end up with just one seat, making BC the next Western wasteland for the increasingly-rare Grit politicians.

Alberta

In all likelihood, it will be a case of *deja vu* for the electorate as they send every Alberta Tory to Ottawa. For the other parties, candidates have grown to accept the fact that recouping their deposits rates with winning.

All parties, except perhaps the Tories, have sought out potentially strong candidates. However, the incentive for running against the PCs in this province is less than enticing.

Still, the "opposition" parties will provide alternatives to the electorate. But you cannot ignore both the voting patterns of the province and the mandate given to Lougheed to "fight" Trudeau on control of natural resources. It is this issue that is foremost in the minds of those Albertans who vote Tory.

Saskatchewan

The major question in Saskatchewan is whether the New Democratic Party will be able to turn its immense provincial support into federal representation. The Tories are hoping for a near-sweep as a part of their Western strategy for forming a minority government, and the Liberal Party, which once ran the nation's smoothest patronage machine in Saskatchewan, is emitting its death rattle as Otto Lang heads for his final unhappy landing.

The Progressive Conservatives