

Conservative convention -- tragedy and triumph

Nobody wins a war. Nobody emerged victorious from the Progressive Conservative Association's National Convention, Nov. 13-16.

Party leader, John Diefenbaker, 71, calling strongly for unity and support, was not buttressed by the majority of his fellow conservatives. It was a sad, an almost tragic defeat.

It was a family conflict—a Conservative family split over leadership style.

"The only people who came away from the family conflict joyous were those who didn't know the

"Many older Conservatives are suspicious of youth, and are unwilling to admit change. They resent youth because the young embody change", said Clark.

"I think the convention saw older people exchange their attitude of suspicion of youth for one of resentment," said Clark. "However, some of the young tended to insensitively dismiss the old."

"There was a feeling that it was a sad occasion because good people, especially of the older generation who fervently support John Diefenbaker, went away as embittered or broken people," said Clark.

There was also a sense of accomplishment among the members of the Dalton Camp group who fought the battle for a new style of leadership energetically but without vindictiveness.

PRESS BAD

"It is the job of those of us the Press is calling the victors, to reinvolve those bitter or broken people who supported Mr. Diefenbaker", said Clark.

Clark outlined two reasons for the inter-party reformation. Some Conservatives were finding it hard to stay in a party which articulates positions they cannot support. Positions like suspicion towards Quebec, a negative attitude in Parliament, and an effective abandonment of policy formation for about three years. The second reason is that the party is relying on a disappearing electorate—old Canadians and rural Canadians.

PC'S DOWN

The fact Conservative party support is waning was clearly indicated by the Gallup Poll conducted a month before the convention.

The Conservatives commanded the support of 26 per cent of the Canadian electorate, compared to the Liberals' approximate 40 per cent and the NDP's 26 per cent.

"In Quebec, the location of dynamic social change, we hold seven federal seats, only one of which is urban," said Clark.

"The young are not attracted to the Conservative party, as embodied in Mr. Diefenbaker. They have no desire to be a part of a political artifact."

Clearly changes will have to be achieved if the Conservative party is to be a force in Canada's political arena.

NEW LEADERS

Clark said, "We are calling for a new style of leadership. Now strategy and policy-making is confined to the caucus and increasingly to Mr. Diefenbaker's friends in the caucus."

In order to have internal democracy the National Association must be allowed to assume new functions and the Conservative caucus must pay more heed to the Association's decisions."

"It is hard for a man who became Prime Minister of Canada only nine years ago with the largest majority in election history, to accept that he is no longer wanted as leader of his party," said Clark.

Diefenbaker will not relinquish leadership voluntarily. This move would enable him to step down with grace and the gratitude and respect of party members and Canadians at large for the service he has given to Canada.

THE OLD MAN

Rather, the aging politician is tenaciously clutching the party's leadership. He must be painfully removed in the hot glare of publicity's spotlight because, as Michael Vineberg, student PC leader, puts it, "A leader can't be a leader forever. Mr. Diefenbaker was valid in 1957—but he isn't today."

Clark said that during the convention bitterness was directed towards both Diefenbaker and Camp. A fighting speech of Diefenbaker's drew heckling and cat-calls.

"He won votes that night because people were alarmed that gentlemanly conduct was gone," said Clark. "We in the Camp group used the tactic of sitting silent. The news media served to sensationalize the proceedings by exaggerating the anti-Diefenbaker sentiments."

FOR CHANGE

The Conservative party delegates did opt for change.

Dalton Camp was re-elected president of the national PC Association over Arthur Maloney, a Diefenbaker supporter.

It was decided by secret ballot that a leadership convention be held before Jan. 1, 1968.

The over-all implications of the convention are not yet clear. Issues are still being fought out. But the old generation, old style politicians have been rejected by most Canadians. They are being replaced by a vibrant, tuned-in group which is concerned not with scandal, investive, or killing Grits, but with creating a new style of politics within the Conservative party.

background

Teri Turner, a first-year political science student and Gateway staffer, talks to Joe Clark, ex-Gateway editor-in-chief, past-president of the Progressive Conservative Student Federation, vice-president of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Association and Dalton Camp supporter about the PC Convention in Ottawa. Incidentally, Clark is also a graduate student in political science, but we didn't think we could fit it all in one sentence. He talks about the call for leadership and says the implications of the Ottawa wrangle aren't yet clear.

family very well," says Joe Clark, vice-president of Alberta's PC Association and lecturer in political science at the U of A.

Only the young, those with no personal experience of the 1957-60 era of Diefenbaker ascendancy, those who knew only a part of the family, only those new members, were elated when the Dalton Camp group scored in the battle for a new style in Conservative politics.

The convention, in pitting an old style, Old Guard, against a new kind of politics unavoidably set age against youth.

About 200 student Tories with only 90 out of 1,150 votes, concentrated their energies in an attack on the Old Guard.

Academic

from C-2

facilities, Dr. Smith says.

To accommodate even 19 or 20,000, we will have to expand into the Garneau regions to the east or build some sort of adjacent campus, he said.

"If there is no change or expansion restrictions will have to be imposed and quotas set—I am not in favor of quotas in principle."

Dr. Smith said he would like to see a semester system at U of A and a four-year undergraduate program for everybody.

He stressed the need for greater use of electronic aids and automated instructional devices.

"What should be accomplished is greater contact between students and Faculty."

"While the lecture system is the best system for some material, it is not the best for all," Dr. Smith said.

"Today we tend to neglect discussion groups and use the lecture as an easy way out—then we sit back and think we have done

a good job," he added.

He suggested the university be broken down into college units like those in Santa Cruz, California.

The students and faculty are in small, live-in colleges with such things as the library centrally located. This idea has been implemented to some extent at York University.

And then there's the problem of staff.

"Last year a whole raft of positions went unfilled," he said.

"The solution is not money—the graduate needs research, and he can't get it at a small undergraduate college such as the interdenominational university proposed by the government," he said.

"Here we have all the advantages of a liberal arts college plus money, what we need is the machinery to translate money into space. I think this new board of governors is that machinery, and I think we're going to make it."



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