

# Booze and money flow in nation's capital when the Liberals meet to party and politic

When 3,000 delegates get together in three of Ottawa's poshest hotels, they consider a leadership convention, the death penalty and abortion, but mostly, they have a ball

Photos and story by  
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On November 7, 8, and 9th, 3,000 Liberal delegates and officials flocked to the nation's capital for their bi-annual policy convention of the Liberal Party of Canada.

The policy convention has been the traditional occasion for liberal patriots to meet and discuss problems facing Canadians and to develop statements and resolutions which represent the policy posture of the Liberal party. Excalibur reporter Anna Vaitiekunas was there to report on the event.

"... the king was in the counting house counting all his money, the knave was in the pantry eating bread and honey"... while three thousand Liberal members ran up a six-digit tab at the Chateau Laurier for their policy convention last weekend.

## THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS

The king won't have much money to count however, when he sees how much the three-day affair has cost Canadian taxpayers. Not including security, advertising and salaries, it's expected that \$300,000 was spent for the rental of three of Ottawa's largest hotels plus entertainment, food and booze. And not necessarily in that order. As national Liberal Party treasurer Gordon Dryden told reporters, the convention will cost "thousands, hundreds of thousands," as he capriciously delved his fork into a side a roast beef at a hospitality party.

## QUESTIONABLE TACT

Rather a questionable statement at a time when inflationary trends are forcing Canadians to tighten their money belts and sit tight while leading politicians are telling people to 'live within their means'.

## MADDER AND MADDER

Even madder are the comments from delegates who said that the convention wasn't necessary "but who cares, we're having a great time".

At any cost, the convention provided the opportunity for party members to meet with Prime Minister Trudeau and chit-chat with cabinet ministers over national issues.

## DIVISIONS

The convention was divided into four major areas of discussion; the Individual in Society; Canada and Global Problems; Balancing Growth, and Political Reform.

If an issue was pertinent and if enough delegates felt it warranted immediate attention, a resolution was developed, voted on and later presented before the entire convention for adoption. One hundred and eight resolutions ranging from significant to the trite were submitted to the policy plenary session for evaluation.

## MUNDANE RESOLUTION

One such mundane resolution was approved as follows; "Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada increase its commitments of financial and human resources to develop and encourage the development of local organizations which will provide effective mechanisms for participation by all citizens in our political processes."

More notable resolutions included a motion to increase public pension plan payments to 40 per cent of pre-retirement earnings over the next 10 years; a call for the creation of a Canadian deep-sea merchant marine and the removal of Canada's tariff barriers.

## LOUD OUTCRY

The resolution to abolish capital punishment was quickly approved by delegates despite a loud cry of dissidence from several liberal officials.

Another resolution presented in a preliminary session calling for the free rights of women to abortion was approved but later defeated by a schizoid vote to reaffirm abortion as a criminal act under the Criminal Code of Canada.

## PARLEZ VOUS FRANÇAIS?

Other resolutions focussed on increasing the party's policy on bilingualism, including the move to publish task force reports and all university research studies in both English and French. When the resolutions were presented before the plenary session, however, they were delayed because the French translation of the resolution was incorrect. One delegate shook her head and looked heavenward and said, "How do they expect us to print the reports in English and French when we can't even get two sentences straight?"

## PEACE AND SECURITY

Delegates fell into line behind



Cabinet Minister Bryce Mackasey chit-chats with female patriots in a workshop session at the convention.



Over 3,000 party delegates attended the Liberal Party convention last weekend in Ottawa. Seen here are members of the Women's Commission who discussed pertinent issues facing women in

Canada and what action the Liberal party could take to deal with the problems. "The Canada I want to Build" sign seen in the background was the theme of the policy convention.

Solicitor-General Warren Allmand's "peace and social security commitments" of the Liberal party's policy on penal reform and gun control.

"Our past experience and observations have shown us that harsh laws and capital punishment don't do much to control crime," he told an attentive audience in a ministerial session. "It is my belief," he added, "that the people who want capital punishment really want protection from the law."

## BACKWARD APPROACH

Allmand told his audience that they must accept the challenge of crime and not take a "backward approach" to law reform by executing people for criminal offences.

The convention ran smoothly ac-

ording to schedule despite the lengthy debating sessions during the day and equally long parties during the night. One puffy-eyed delegate said after a night of frolic, "Thank God these conventions are every two years. It took me a year to recuperate from the last one we had."

Apart from adopting resolutions, the convention marked the occasion for the election of various party officials and the re-instatement of the Youth and Women's Commissions.

## WOMEN EQUAL MEN

Michele Code, the newly elected president of the Federal Women's Commission, told reporters that "she'd sooner see the dissolution of the commission" as a more positive step towards equality for women and men. She admitted that the problems concerning women have remained the same since the UN conference that established 1975 as an International Women's Year, but "equality for women can only be achieved by the involvement of both men and women in a personal commitment to that equality."

## NO SPECIAL STATUS

"There is little point for the commission to isolate and give women special status from men," she said.

The traditional Liberal leadership vote was called on Saturday night to determine whether or not party members wanted to review Pierre Trudeau's stewardship.

Four hundred and eighteen members, or 19.2 per cent of the delegates favoured a leadership convention, almost double the percentage of delegates who wanted to review Trudeau's leadership in 1973, when the Liberals held a minority position in Parliament. Party sources said that disaffection over abortion, the anti-inflation programme and capital punishment issues were the likely cause for the increasing discord in the party.

## MORE MONEY, PLEASE

Another sweat-on-the-brow problem that had senior party of-

ficials worried was the declining amount of contributions from corporations in the past two years. According to one party official, "The party is in for a rocky financial time if we lose more financial support." It was later learned that corporations might further reduce their contributions in response to the anti-inflation programme.

## 93 RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions, 93 in all, approved by the delegates will be presented to a policy review committee and further forwarded to the respective ministries and departments for consideration. There is no guarantee that the Liberal cabinet ministers will endorse the resolutions passed at the convention, although many delegates felt certain that they would.

## ELECTION PRIMER

Courtesy of the Southwark Diocesan Gazette, this short primer should unveil the mysteries of politics which have, in these troubled times, become somewhat shrouded:

**Socialism:** You have two cows. Give one to your neighbour.

**Communism:** You have two cows. Give both to Gov't. The Gov't gives you milk.

**Capitalism:** You sell one cow and buy a bull. Chop up other cow and sell shares.

**Fascism:** You have two cows. Give milk to Gov't. Gov't sells it.

**Nazi-ism:** Gov't shoots you and takes cow.

**New Dealism:** Gov't shoots one cow, milks the other, and pours milk down the sink.

**Anarchism:** Keep cows. Shoot Gov't. Steal another cow.

**Conservatism:** Embalm the cows. Freeze milk.