

News of the arts

Federal parties' stand on seven main issues in the 1979 general election campaign

Each of the main parties in the general federal election campaign tried to concentrate on issues that would give it a tactical advantage over the opposition. John Hay, writing in the *Ottawa Citizen* May 14, chose seven key issues and described the stands of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Parties as follows:

	Liberal	Conservative	New Democrat
Economic growth	Prime Minister Trudeau defends his record in creating jobs and holding down unemployment (now about 8 per cent). Proposed in the campaign to grant tax deductions to employees buying shares in the company they work for.	Joe Clark says he can bring unemployment down to 5.5 per cent by 1985; promises income tax cuts, tax credit for investment in Canadian small businesses, abolition of capital gains tax on Canadian stocks and mortgage deduction scheme.	Ed Broadbent calls for a Government capital works program, cuts in the federal sales tax and other measures to stimulate job-rich manufacturing activity, and a mortgage tax credit.
Inflation	Restraint in government spending, and a defence of the Trudeau record as among the best in the industrial world.	Government-spending restraint combined, however, with a "stimulative deficit" to promote growth. A promise to bring inflation down to 5 per cent by 1985.	Set up a fair prices commission to roll back rip-off prices and keep corporate profits in check; subsidize milk and bread; a personal tax credit to offset inflation.
Housing	No promises, but an attack on the Conservative mortgage plan as an overpriced campaign gimmick that would be unfair to tenants.	Deduct from taxable income up to \$5,000 in mortgage interest yearly and \$1,000 in property taxes.	Use tax credits to cut the effective interest rate on mortgages to 8 per cent for families earning up to \$25,000 and 9 per cent up to \$30,000.
Energy	Retain Petro Canada; push a gas pipeline through to the Maritimes to displace unreliable, high-cost oil imports; promote heavy oil developments in the West and frontier exploration.	Policy papers say sell off Petrocan shares to Canadian citizens, but Mr. Clark has lately been promising to set up a committee to study the future of Petrocan.	Expand Petrocan's activities, making it the sole importer of oil; keep domestic oil prices down; save natural gas in the ground until it can be used by eastern Canada, rather than export it to the United States.
Pensions	No mandatory retirement age; make housewives eligible for Canada Pension Plan benefits (if they contribute).	No mandatory retirement age; help finance provincial programs for the aged.	Index the Canada Pension Plan to inflation, make benefits available at 60 to free jobs for younger unemployed, provide guaranteed annual income to the poor.
Unity	Mr. Trudeau calls this the most important election issue. Favours entrenchment of minority language rights in the Constitution, which would protect francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec.	Mr. Clark stresses conciliation with the premiers, avoids specific commitments to constitutional change. Opposes entrenchment of minority language rights in the Constitution, leaving that up to the provinces.	Mr. Broadbent calls this a non-issue because all three party leaders are federalists with no great differences in approach. Favours entrenchment of language rights.
Medicare	Blame provincial governments for driving doctors out of the plan with insufficient financing. Threaten to reassert federal authority over provincial health-care spending.	Mr. Clark has reversed the stand he took three years ago in the Tory leadership race; now says he does not support deterrent fees to discourage use of health services.	Compel provinces to give adequate funds for medical insurance, if necessary by reverting to the old financing law which gave the Federal Government power to oversee provincial programs.