

CAMPUS CANADA

Newfoundland : Joeyland no more

By IAN WISEMAN CUP

ST. JOHN'S - Considering Newfoundland's Liberal-dominated electoral history, it was a rout.

The Progressive Conservatives, who took only three out of 42 seats in the past provincial election, stunned the Liberals by winning enough seats to form a minority government. With all the votes counted, it stood at PCs 21 seats, Liberals 20, and New Labrador Party 1.

However, the margin in several constituencies was close enough so that recounts were inevitable. Reported irregularities in Labrador South could invalidate the narrow Liberal victory there, and the rejected Premier Joey Smallwood was threatening court action in a few of the constituencies that had gone to the PCs.

Smallwood seemed determined to hold onto power, and the change of government might have to await his defeat in the House of Assembly; "I think it's going to take a charge of dynamite to shake him out of there," John Crosbie, the successful Conservative candidate in St. John's West, said Friday.

But there was no mistaking the magnitude of the PC victory. Smallwood took his own constituency of Placentia East by only 190 votes. Seven cabinet ministers and the Speaker of the House were defeated. The Conservatives took 52 per cent of the popular vote as compared to 45 per cent for the Liberals. And the turnout was 87 per cent of eligible voters,

unprecedented in Newfoundland (where normal turnouts are around 65 per cent) or anywhere else -- Newfoundlanders had gone out in record numbers to oust the Smallwood government.

The PCs suffered only one casualty election night: former Liberal finance minister Val Earle, who crossed the floor of the House two years ago during the debates over the Shaheen oil refinery deal, was defeated in Fortune Bay, which he had won as a Liberal in 1966 (although he managed to cut the overwhelming Liberal majority of 1966, in an area that has always been a bulwark of Smallwood strength, to 248 votes.)

The only other major Conservative figure to go down to defeat was Robert Wells, a prominent St. John's lawyer, who failed in his attempt to win a Bonavista seat.

The man who holds the balance of power (at this writing) is Tom Burgess, leader of the New Labrador Party, like Crosbie and Earle an ex-Liberal. He too quit the Liberals in disgust over Joey's big industrial giveaways, and formed the NLP for this election as an outlet for the feeling among people in Labrador that they have been ignored by the St. John's government. Not only did Burgess win his own seat of Labrador West, defeating Labor Minister Roy Legge, but the NLP made substantial showings in the other two Labrador seats as well, and took an overall plurality of Labrador votes.

Although Burgess indicated on election night that he was leaning toward supporting the PCs, he said the next day that he would bargain with either party. It is extremely unlikely, however, that he would make a deal with a Liberal party led by Joe Smallwood.

And even in the improbable event that they do not get Burgess's supports, the PCs might still be able to govern. Two of the Liberal members elected were supporters of John Crosbie when he ran for the Liberal leadership against Smallwood in 1969 before crossing the floor, and would probably not vote to defeat a government in which Crosbie was a major figure.

There was a definite pattern to the results. Smallwood's influence in urban centres was eroded completely. Every seat in St. John's, Corner Brook, Grand Falls, and Gander went overwhelmingly Conservative. Even outside the cities, Conservative strength varied directly as the extent of urbanization and industrialization. The coastal districts, where there is little, and few young voters because the young people have all gone elsewhere, where people remember the days before 1949 and the social-welfare benefits conferred by Confederation, remained in the Liberal column.

One exception is Burgeo-Lapointe, which contains the town of Burgeo where fishplant workers have been on strike since early summer. The result in that riding, which

went Conservative by a small margin, reflects the growth as a force in Newfoundland politics of the strongly anti-Smallwood Newfoundland Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers union. Other constituencies that have been the scene of strikes this past summer, like Grand Falls and Burin, also went PC.

Shrewd politician that he was, Joey saw the possibility of a decisive urban swing to the PCs years ago and rigged the electoral map solidly in favor of the rural vote. Urban ridings tend to be large (one St. John's constituency has 18,000 registered voters) while outport districts have as few as 3,000 voters. This means that although nearly one quarter of the province's population voted in St. John's, they could elect only six PC members there.

It almost worked, Newfoundlanders went to bed election night thinking the Liberals had a minority government. But when the university vote was counted the next morning, one more crucial seat had swung to the PCs -- St. Barbe South at the southern end of the Avalon Peninsula, won by Ed Maynard, a NFFAW organizer, by a handful of votes.

Maynard and Tom Burgess would be NDP in any other province. But the only way to start change in this province is to form a coalition: the PCs are a melting pot for all disenfranchised groups.

The provincial NDP fared very badly, receiving fewer than 600 votes in every riding it contested. This does not reflect on the future chances of the party in any way. People were not taking any chance of splitting the anti-Smallwood vote; even the labor leaders were solidly Tory.

The rationale was to throw out Smallwood, let the people accustom themselves to change, and then try to build a stronger leftist movement here for the next time.

Smallwood has said he will not contest another election, and the Liberals could have leadership problems as several potential leadership candidates -- Finance Minister Fred Rowe, Economic Development Minister John Nolan, and Mines Minister William Callahan -- went down to defeat.

The Conservatives, with no loyal civil servants and no experience running the state machinery, will have problems of their own. Another possible source of tension is that the dominant figure in the party has not been the leader, Frank Moores, but rather John Crosbie. Moores has not built a strong base on the west coast of the island, his majority in Humber West was the largest in any constituency outside St. John's.

But the people of Newfoundland did not vote for Frank Moores: they voted against Joey Smallwood.

Our justice has "corrosive indifference"

TORONTO (CUP) - Canadian justice and its day to day bureaucratic machinery from the cop on the beat to the judge in the courtroom is permeated with "a corrosive indifference" for the welfare of accused persons.

This was the conclusion of a study conducted by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association financed by the counter-insurgency oriented Ford Foundation.

Teams of researchers in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver followed the cases of more than 500 people from the time of arrest to final disposition of the cases through magistrates or provincial courts.

Their statistical findings convey what the report calls "a picture of the daily grinding down of accused human beings, not through the brutal violation of their bodies, but through the piecemeal diminua-

tion of their dignity.

"Our system can be characterized by its plethora of cursory trials, defenceless interrogations, needless detentions and inadequate facilities."

They point out that 43 per cent of those accused went through trial without a lawyer, with only nine per cent of those unrepresented winning acquittal compared to 20 per cent acquittal for those with a lawyer.

According to a CCIA spokesman the study shows that there is a substantial departure from the Bill of Rights guarantee of the right to counsel without delay.

The study also states that 62 per cent of the accused interviewed said they were not advised of their right to remain silent; 55 per cent accused studied made statements to the police and of these, 17 per cent were given voluntarily.

In the study, 293 of the

500 arrested persons answered questions about police brutality and of these 25 per cent claimed injury at the hands of police before reaching trial. The report cited beatings by jail guards and arresting officers.

Few beating victims had any

intention of taking legal action against the police because they are well aware that such action either before the courts or the police commission are seldom successful.

In general, the authors of the report found that people

awaiting trial spent too much time in jail, the bail system was unfair, provincial courts were inefficient and police regularly trampled on the rights of those who ran afoul of the legal system.

Investigation into police brutality

TORONTO (CUP) - A public investigation has been called for into charges of police brutality during last Monday's demonstration here against Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin.

The Ukrainian Canadian Committee of Toronto says that a minority of the hundreds of policemen on duty for the demonstration rode down men, women and children with their horses, and beat demonstrators without provocation.

The incidents occurred among the foremost group of less than half of over 12,000 demonstrators. After the crowd had attempted to press forward against police lines, mounted officers indiscriminately charged the crowd of predominantly middle-aged people. At least four such charges were made.

Committee president, Robert Macsymek said, "We will be asking for a public inquiry and we will be asking to bring to

justice all those police officers who used excessive force. . . . Anybody who was in sight got it over the head, over the back, in any way the police could do it. . . ."

In addition, Toronto city council has formally asked the Metro Police Commission for a "complete and comprehensive report" on the incident which resulted in 20 arrests and at least two women injured by hooves of charging police horses.