

Fight It Out At OK Corral

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which seemed to have free booze openly available. On Friday afternoon Jack McPartlin, a well-known Ottawa entertainer who plays organ at the Chateau Laurier, threw a party for Horner. The two had been friends a long time and McPartlin entertained in a hotel lounge for free. He also bought anyone who wandered into the room five drink tickets at a \$1.60 each. The room was full.

Later Horner offered Ian Tyson and the Great Speckled Bird at one hotel and country and western singer Tommy Common at another simultaneously. Horner's supporters were those most obviously displaying their politics at the convention.

A Canadian University Press reporter was asked by one Horner man, "Canadian University Press? Is that one of those commie, pinko faggot organizations? Or is that one of those NDP organizations where they're too chicken to admit they're

commies?"

The questioner, an Ottawa man, later observed that if only salaries were cut by 30 percent, there would be jobs for all.

The abrasiveness of the Hornerites on issues such as capital punishment and social services was partially overcome by their willingness to invite people into their rooms for a drink.

Horner was not the only one pouring free drinks. Lincoln Alexander, the Hamilton Conservative MP responsible for ensuring the convention rule that no candidate was buying free liquor for delegates said that at least two people had to be warned.

But it is said by some that the convention hoopla does not decide a convention delegates ballot. A delegate, it is argued, would not necessarily vote to someone who provides the best entertainment. But they won't vote for someone who doesn't look like a winner. If the candidates hospitality suites are empty, chances are they won't get many votes either.

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shape this country. If the Party itself is of little consequence, then who they call leader is equally unimportant, and the process by which that leader is selected more unimportant still.

And yet, Canadians coast to coast have just suffered through months of news coverage about this process, culminating in a four-day media binge the weekend of the leadership convention. The coverage given the campaign never evaluated or questioned the significance of the event itself, but its extent created the impression that it ranked second in importance only to the building of the CPR. When the content of that campaign and the coverage is considered, however, it only confirmed that there was very little at stake for anyone other than the candidates and their friends.

Consider the absence of substantive issues in the campaign. While Canada is being ripped apart by a program of income controls and the suspension of collective bargaining, the biggest single economic issue for the PC's was people without jobs receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Although nothing of substance was said about creating employment, there was plenty of talk about making things tough for the unemployed.

What about corporate power, foreign ownership, control of resource development? Nothing memorable, nothing significant, nothing really worth reporting. The candidates dealt with these matters under the general banner of opposing "Trudeau Socialism", which gives some idea of the silly rhetorical level of debate as well as the candidates basic avoidance of facing up to what is actually happening in this country.

What was reported? Basically, the Diefenbaker-Stanfield, "Blue Tory - Red Tory" split within the party; speculation on

which candidate would be the best speaker, legislator, vote-getter; what influential Tories were supporting which candidate; the financing of the campaign; and speculation on the possible mood of the delegates to the convention.

The absence of any content in the campaign thus resulted in the media focussing on the process of the campaign. By the time of the convention so little of significance was occurring that the process of the convention, the number of banners, buttons and bands, the free-booze prohibition, and other incidentals became the main news items.

The crowning achievement was reached when media coverage of the convention became a major item of media coverage. How many reporters were to be on the floor, how they were to cover the story, how many miles of wire were to be strung, all became news items as the "big day" approached. The day before the convention opened the *Ottawa Citizen* outdid all others by running as its main story a huge front-page photo of Lloyd Robertson and Don McNeil sitting in the CBC's polygonic plexiglass studio (take that, Walter Cronkite) which towered over one end of the convention floor. So hard-up were the media for anything of any significance to report that they were finally reduced to reporting about reporting.

All of this came together to create the unavoidable impression that, indeed, something important was going on, unless you asked yourself the question "What difference does it make who is leader of the Progressive Conservative Party?"

WAGNER
\$30.90



ORATORY IMPORTANT

The candidates' main election speeches Saturday had a significant effect on the vote. Hellyer and Mulroney were obviously the big losers while the big winner was Wagner. Mulroney, the charisma candidate, gave a very weak speech saying little and saying it poorly. Hellyer said too much. "I would not want to see a red tory tail swinging a true blue conservative dog," he said to a mixture of cheers and boos as he attempted to explain why it had taken him so long to switch from the Liberals to the Tory party.

Wagner also explained why and how he had switched from the Grits. But he did it so smoothly it was almost unnoticeable. He also called for unity in the party as he tried to present a more acceptable image to those to the left of him in the party.

"The future of the party is not to the extremes," he told delegates who were obviously more interested in this than Hellyer's seeming call for disunity.