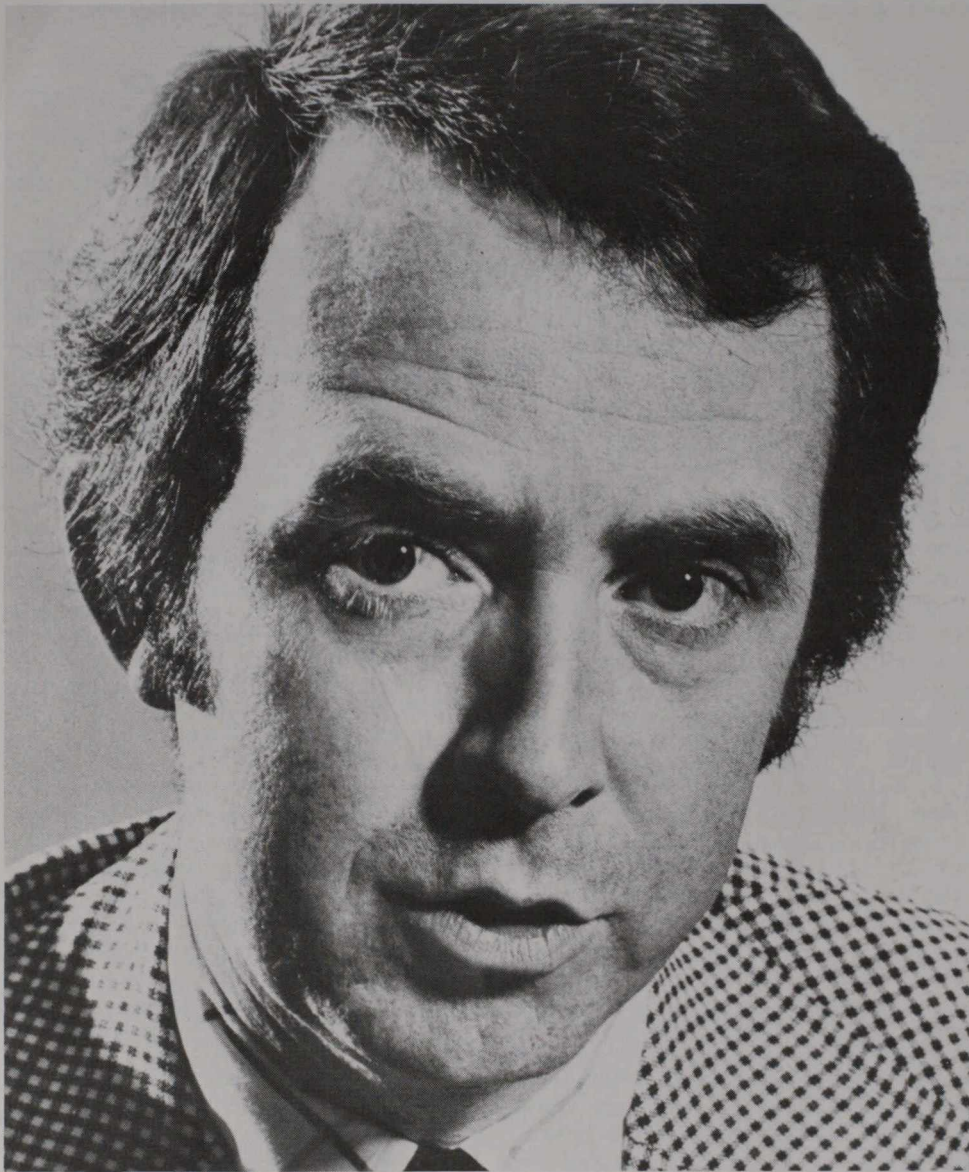


# 'Young Lochinvar' prepares to challenge Trudeau

By Roy Turman



Joe Clark.

*O, young Lochinvar is come out of the West,  
Through all the wide Border his steed  
was the best.*

... Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)

Except for that bit about the steed, Scott's words snugly fit a rising young man who is making political headlines across Canada. His name is Joe Clark, he's an ex-newspaper copyboy just 36 years-old, and he's come flashing out of the West hoping to take over as Canada's Prime Minister within two years.

Which is remarkable. Not long ago this clean-cut, boyish-looking politician was virtually unknown. He had only a few years of parliamentary experience and had never held a Ministerial post.

Now he is being taken seriously as the

kind of dedicated, diamond-hard ring-master, who might just succeed in the difficult task of uniting a sorely divided Progressive Conservative party and girding them for battle against Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's ruling Liberals in the general election expected in 1978.

The prospect sends a thrill of excitement through the Conservatives, long inured to Opposition, and injects new interest into Canadian federal politics, so often seen by people outside Canada as conventional and lacking in the stuff of drama.

Clark's youth and freshness of style, Conservatives hope, may give new impetus to a party that has held power in only five of the past 40 years and has lost the last five federal elections. His advent on the scene has been dramatic. He came

swooping down from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Western Canada, capturing the national leadership of the Conservatives with an electrifying fourth-ballot victory at a party convention in Ottawa, the nation's capital.

After hours of balloting and politicking cheers erupted in Ottawa's floodlit Civic Theatre when Clark was declared the winner on February 22. His margin was the narrowest ever in national politics — 1,185 for Clark against 1,122 for Claude Wagner, hope of French-speaking Quebec province. The result stunned spectators. Some of Wagner's supporters wept.

Party passions ran high during the convention. Tears glistened in the eyes of the beaten candidate Jack Horner, like Clark from the Western Canada province of Alberta. His brother Norval Horner also was weeping as he berated radio, television and newspapers for "never giving us a chance."

## Next election

Clark leaped to his feet in triumph and promised to make party unity his first priority. He proclaimed to cheering supporters next day: "We are now well into Day One of the next election campaign."

The leadership ballot came after the retirement of Robert Stanfield, a man of unquestioned integrity and esteemed character who had led the party in three unsuccessful elections over the past eight years.

Canadian politics have long been dominated by the Liberals. The Conservatives broke through to victory in 1957 under that prairie lawyer John Diefenbaker, a plain man's politician with a taste for passionate oratory. But his leadership style was controversial and he was ousted at a party convention eight years ago. Loyal supporters of "Dief the Chief," as the 80-year-old Diefenbaker was called, were often at odds with the new leadership, damaging party morale. Observers felt Clark's sensational victory might create a psychological mood conducive to healing old wounds.

## Growing belief

Recriminations could lose force as conviction grows among Conservatives that in their energetic and ambitious young leader they have found at last an answer to the political drawing power of Premier Trudeau, the magnetic French-Canadian leader who in 1968 gave birth to the phenomenon known as "Trudeaumania." He created such a furore that women offered money for a lock of his hair. Today he still enjoys personal popularity despite moments of unconventional behaviour and some policy criticisms. Like many western industrial nations, Canada is experiencing inflation, unemployment and recession.

An intriguing aspect of the duel now opening between Clark and Trudeau is that