

On Mother and the Motherland

We – editorial ‘we’ – had thought of resorting to poetry to end the month.

“What was so rare as a June day this June? Then, if ever, used to be perfect days”. Unhappily, the poetic Muse failed us. Are both Calliope and Environment Canada as unreliable nowadays as are our political parties? According to John Ibbitson’s new “pamphlet”, *Open & Shut*, the parties are dysfunctional.

“We’ve been reading it in this week before our Motherland celebrates the 142nd anniversary of Confederation on Canada Day and before this 25 June birthday of our (i.e. my) own mother. Anne Campbell, the girl who gave me birth, is no longer with us but in the family in which I grew up this night was party night. Mum’s two brothers, their wives, her three sisters and their husbands plus assorted relatives stopped by with presents. One uncle had always begun his celebration somewhat earlier and was encouraged to leave betimes. It was the post-trauma syndrome after long service overseas everyone agreed..

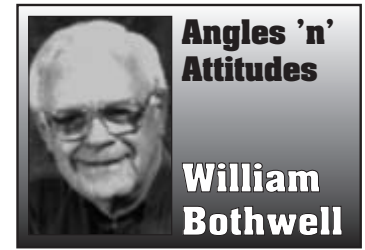
The Campbells had arrived in Upper Canada as Loyalist soldiers from the Highlands where ancestral rivalry with the Macdonalds was endemic. The Bothwells were from Aberdeen but, my middle name being Campbell, I have a lingering reticence to being seen easting in Macdonald’s even though one knows that those venues have scant kinship with auld Scotland. Nonetheless, “mazel tov” to “Macdonald’s”.

And so, back to Ibbitson and our native – or chosen – land. Miss Canada, the 19th Century cartoonists called her. They usually showed a lecherous old Uncle Sam leering over the fence at her. John Ibbitson, has reported from Washington for the *Globe and Mail* since 1991. His previous beat was Ottawa. He thinks it is time that Miss Canada became more of an assertive, even aggressive, 21st Century woman.

His recently published “pamphlet” (166 pages, paper back, \$18.99) *Open & Shut* warns that Canada is ruled by a tightly controlled, not very representative, elite in both of its potential government-forming parties. Forget for a moment the Ottawa Kremlin, the tense, unsmiling P.M., his obedient henchmen and bondwomen who slave away, muzzled, there,

Disregard, too, the nervous, self-congratulatory advertisements, updates and newsletters with which the current Conservative cabal is showering us. The federal party currently in power may have proven that it only listens to anyone else’s opinions if there is no other way to save its skin but Ottawa, as a whole, Parliament and civil service, is out of touch with what Canadians are thinking and what they need, says the author.

The pamphlet’s subtitle is “Why America has Barack Obama and Canada has Stephen Harper”.



Angles ‘n’ Attitudes

William Bothwell

Like his newspaper, Ibbitson insists on calling the United States “America” as though it were the only country in two continents. If Canada is not an American nation, where is it? That question may be fundamental.

To begin with, the people who choose our national leaders, says “Ibb” (good nickname for a pamphleteer), are not, as in the neighbouring republic, “we the people”. Rather, they are “we an inner circle”. Below the border, the government provides information to the public unless (increasingly) there is a security risk. Up here we face tight lips and closed doors that always ask, “Why do you want to know?”.

At the same time, says *Open & Shut*, the old political parties are both weak and weakening, progressively remote from the mind of the average Canadian. In successive elections fewer people bother to vote. The confusion or rejection is reflected in successive minority governments. Plus, power ebbs and flows between federal and provincial levels. That raises the question of who, if anyone, speaks for the interests of the whole nation.

A major problem is the disruptive Bloc Québécois, confident that independence can be achieved step by step and that secession could take with it Northern Québec, the onetime federal territory of Ungava, which was never part of pre-Confederation Québec. Federal politicians are reluctant to

be honest about the deals they have made in that regard. Ask Mr Tilson for the specifics.

Could such a claim to territory that the federal government purchased from the old fur trading Hudson’s Bay Company ignite a Canadian civil war? Ibbitson says that the U.S.A. was solidified by its 1862-5 war between the states. It ceased to be “these” United States” and became “the” United States. The next step was to become “America”, period. Will Canada America remain unified?

Barack Obama has forged a new alliance between formerly disinterested and alienated potential voters. African Americans, Latinos and blue collar workers sense that they wield new power. Almost 60% of Canadians see no point in voting. Open and Shut says that there is a Canadian “Obama” out there somewhere., although she may still be a university student. Her name may be Valerie Chu.

Despite his popularity here, Obama is Uncle Sam’s boy. He has called the Loyalist forebears of many Canadians “the enemy”. Coming problems cast their shadow before them – a thickening border, ‘Buy American’ campaigns, threats of future punitive tariffs, different approaches to environmental decisions. John Ibbitson says that Canada should press for a customs union with the United States. “That would be the biggest, boldest move Canada could make”. A joint tariff policy, the dropping of all protective measures and, probably, a common immigration policy would be the basis of it. ‘Ibb’ says that all that need pose no threat to our identity or sovereignty. Maybe not.

Michael Kergis, a former Canadian ambassador to Washington, has said that Canada and the United States do not really trade with one another; they make things together. But while international trade is diminishing, partly because under NAFTA what the U.S. does with Canada it must also do with Mexico, the Canadian economy depends upon the ten times larger U.S. market.

Open & Shut advocates an urgent Canadian re-assessment of who we are and what we really want. There is need for a new national dialogue before international talks take us head to head. Are we up to that? John Ibbitson thinks so. Read his ‘pamphlet’. Then, as invited talk back.

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Sounds like an NDP argument to Hoy

To hear Ontario Tory leadership hopeful Christine Elliott tell it, being a red Tory, i.e. a Liberal lite, means you really care about people, while being a blue Tory, i.e. right-of-centre, apparently makes you a grouchy old coot who doesn’t give two hoots about people.

Mind you, that’s not exactly the way she put it in a recent friendly profile in the *Globe and Mail*, but it’s pretty much the message that Elliott, one of four Tory MPPs hoping to take over the party on Saturday, is trying to sell.

That’s because of the five, she’s not only the only woman, she’s also the only Tory who is following the soft-soap conservatism of her predecessor John Tory (and we all know what a big hit he was with the electorate) and further back to former long-time premier Bill Davis.

The other three – Tim Hudak, Frank Klees and Frank Hillier – are from the Mike Harris, right-of-centre Conservative school, an ideology – so the media and Elliott are trying to tell us – which had its day with Harris but Ontarians have since moved on.

Have they, really? Seems to this observer – admittedly a right-of-centre small “c” conservative myself – that Harris, despite outraging the usual left-leaning suspects who worship at the altar of big and bigger government, managed to win two consecutive majorities. Indeed, after four years of orchestrated outrage from the unions and their NDP and media surrogates, Harris won a larger majority the second time around.

And how well did John Tory do with his “compassionate Conservatism” (as Elliott, wife of federal Finance Minister John Flaherty, definitely not a red Tory, labels it)?

He was a complete bust. Not only did he fail to cash in on widespread disenchantment over Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty, he left his safe seat in Georgetown to run in Toronto. He lost. Then, rather than leave, and allow the party time to rebuild properly, he hung on and hung on, finally convincing a colleague to step aside in a “safe” Tory seat so he could run in a by-election.

He lost there too. But here’s how Elliott smeared her male candidates in her quest for the job. “Women in particular hear all Conservatives want is to cut taxes. That means they want to slash programs, that means that they don’t care about people, and that just really bothers me.”

Not enough, apparently, to stop her from repeating a myth about true Conservatives which they’ve come to expect from Liberals and New Democrats, but shouldn’t have to endure from one of their own, especially one who wants to be the leader of the pack.

Notice that Elliott used the “women in particular” card – if a male candidate openly catered to men that way it would be an outrage – but beyond that, since when is giving people lower taxes a sign that you don’t care? She’s married to a guy who has made a career out of advocating lower taxes. Does she really believe he doesn’t care?

And since when does somebody claiming to be a Conservative argue that government programs are so sacrosanct that they can never be cut, and if they are cut, that means the people doing the cutting don’t care about people?

Does Elliott really measure the depth of a person’s caring by the size of the government cheque they’re prepared to cut? Is that how she quantifies her own so-called “compassionate Conservatism”?

More government spending equals more caring and compassion.

Sounds like an NDP argument to me. Maybe she’s running for the wrong job.

What’s more – even though it may seem contradictory – cutting taxes has shown time and time again that when people and/or companies have more cash to spend, they tend to spend more, which then means more taxes, not less, flowing into the government coffers.

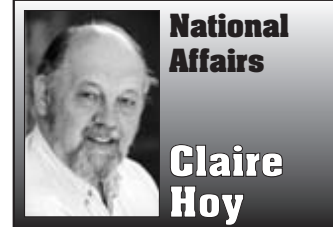
To those who blame the federal cut in the GST for the drop in federal revenues, they should look at the reality of the situation.

Revenues have dropped because there are so many fewer people with jobs and so many fewer companies managing to stay afloat. It’s because the tax base has shrunk, not because certain specific taxes were cut.

If I were a voting delegate – which I’m not, and have never been a member of any political party – my vote would go to Hudak as the candidate with the best chance to rebuild the party, with Hillier and Klees close behind.

As for Elliott, well, it wasn’t John Tory’s gender that did him in. It was his ideology. Been there. Done that. Nobody’s buying.

Although one suspects McGuinty is cheering for her.



National Affairs

Claire Hoy

Sitting on a Gold Mine

Society, in fact global society, is addicted to high technology. As we strive for improvement we move from one plateau to the next. At one time blood letting was an accepted means of coping with high blood pressure, an example of a system which had to be changed. Medical science has evolved to ever higher plains of learning. One lesson we must take to heart is questioning whatever confidence we have placed in various fields of technology. It is through questioning that we learn and evolve. There is always a better way.

An outstanding current example has been the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, a social system that we have quoted before. A highly educated economist was frustrated by a system which promoted prosperity to the commercial world while worth while entrepreneurs, especially illiterate village women in his neighbourhood lacking collateral or a credit rating, were denied access to capital. His project became development of community banking which opened the door of opportunity to literally thousands of poor women. This has not only facilitated the availability of billions of dollars for local women but in the process enhanced national development. A highly developed social system had to be revised to deal with poverty.

Reduction of poverty is only one of many social ills in need of evolving. A current one facing the world is global warming for which Canada has a potentially valuable solution. The burning of fossil fuels is resulting in creation of severe emissions of CO2. The end of fossil fuels, the basic energy source of our quality of life, is in sight. Alternative energy is

being sought throughout the world. Canada is a forest nation and has vast resources of biomass. More importantly we are endowed with space, land currently supporting a sparse population and capable of supplying many forms of energy, not the least being biomass.

A recent article in the *Globe and Mail*, “Power to the people – with Pellets” (Neil Reynolds, Mar. 12, 2009) notes the use of waste wood, sawdust and shavings in particular, as an energy source. Canada produces 1.4 million tons per year but only uses .3 million domestically. Sweden produces 1.6 million but utilizes slightly more (some imported from Canada).

We have been in the business of sawing lumber for many years leaving an untold number of piles of waste fibre in the forest or adjacent to sawmills. Pellets of waste wood are “one of the cleanest-burning, most renewable energy sources in the world”, leaving very little in the form of ashes.

What we waste in the form of sawdust piles etc. is a drop in the bucket compared to the potential supply of underutilized wood. Our economy has benefited greatly from production of paper and lumber. However there is a considerably greater potential to augment the productivity of forest lands through production of alternate energy. Efforts have been made to introduce wood chips as biomass in Canada similar to Finnish heating and co-generation systems. As yet there are no examples of the latter here though the development of central hot water systems has proven successful in various centres.

Even more promising is the potential economic tool of grow-



From the Global Classroom

Doug Skeates

ing energy plantations. Rural Canada is only marginal in its usage of land while the farming community is marginally prosperous with the crops currently being produced. Production of energy has considerable economic potential as a farm crop. Canadian companies are working toward the use of wood in the production of cellulosic bio-diesel fuel. Many countries are reliant on imported energy. Replacement of fossil fuel for transportation purposes has great possibilities in solving a major global problem.

Canada, the world’s second largest country with a relatively low population pressure, has a brilliant potential future in the field of alternate energy supply. We are moving ahead on the production of electricity from wind energy. The use of solar power could well reduce our dependence on fossil fuels for heating and as yet we have not tapped hydro power from many of the rivers flowing from the boreal forest. Canada’s future prosperity lies in part in alternative forms of fuel, of even greater value than gold.

Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER

DAD: There’s something wrong with my toothbrush.
SON: That’s funny. It was all right when I used it to oil my bike chain.

Dipping Into the Past

‘Gypsy’ encamped near Shelburne on trial for being cruel to his wife

credential that would open positions for them everywhere. He spoke in highly complimentary terms of Shelburne’s school and its equipment.

• Writing from the military camp at Niagara-on-the-Lake, 36 Regt. bandmaster T. F. E. Claridge said that because of a reduction in the number of regiments being trained “it somehow doesn’t seem like the old place at all. The general opinion in camp seems to be that it would have been better for the militia if the annual camp had been dropped for this year if it was really thought that the expense of a full-strength drill was too heavy for the country’s reduced

finances.”

He said the Shelburne contingent had an excellent trip down compared with those of the previous two years, the journey having been by CPR to Toronto and by the steamer Cayuga to the campgrounds, and an excellent view of the eclipse of the sun Thursday evening was had from the campground.

“An interesting new feature of the camp is the new 18-pounder guns the artillery have. They are not handsome but can fire 20 rods a minute and have an effective range of four miles. You are considerably safer behind them in front of them.”

• CPR trainman Edward French was on top of a box car that was being shunted Thursday last north of Orangeville station. The car was running over the John Street crossing, where a private telephone wire crosses the track, and the wire caught Mr. French under the chin, lifting him clear off his feet. He tumbled off the car head-first, striking the timber of a culvert and breaking several ribs.

• The Owen Sound freight truckers of the CPR, who had been on strike, decided to return to work on Thursday of last week. More than 100 of the men had stood loyal to the company and kept working. Quite a number of the discontented ones will be left out, as freight is light at this time of year.

• At last Wednesday’s session of the Synod of Huron in London, Rev. Canon Hague, a member of the hymnal committee of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, presented the work of that committee and showed the advantages to be derived from the use of the new hymn

whether they should return to Harris’s policies since he retired. Ernie Eves, who succeeded him as premier, never received full support from Harris’s admirers and some labeled him, the worst insult they could think of, a Liberal in disguise.

Tory, who followed Eves as leader and was indisputably more moderate, obtained only half-hearted help from some Harris supporters and even was undermined by others before he stepped down after twice failing to win a seat in the legislature.

The legacies of Harris in the leadership race have included Hudak promising to tear up generous pay raises Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty gave public sector unions before the economic downturn and help employers keep unions out of their workplaces.

Elliott responded that scrapping the wage agreements would provoke confrontations particularly harmful in difficult economic times and will continue to be a leading voice of the anti-Harris faction in the party.

Conservatives must have some doubt that their party would be helped at the polls by returning to Harris’s policies, because the former premier had already lost popularity before he retired and there is no sign the public is lining up behind Hudak to revive him.

McGuinty has even calculated that every mention of Harris helps the Liberals and reminded of Harris’s policies every time he could in the two elections he has won.

Only a few politicians are remembered a long time, one example being Bob Rae. Earlier this month, when Nova Scotia elected its first New Democrat premier, his first statement was he will not pile up massive deficits, as the NDP premier did in Ontario as far back as the early 1990s.

Harris also is remembered. Whatever the outcome when the vote is announced Saturday, the Conservatives will still have two strong factions – one dedicated to bringing back Harris’s policies, and the other much more moderate, and a party this divided is not on track to win an election.

book. It is known as “The Hymn Book,” and will be ready for distribution on September 7.

75 YEARS AGO Wednesday, June 29, 1934

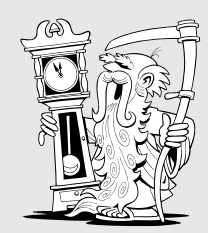
• The principal business at Dufferin County Council Monday was the opening of tenders for \$34,000 debentures. The issue was sold to the Bank of Toronto at \$105.76.

50 YEARS AGO Wednesday, June 24, 1959

• More than 300 Kinsmen, their wives, club executive and guests were entertained in Markdale last week in a celebration that marked the charter night of the newly formed Shelburne Kinsmen Club.

25 YEARS AGO Wednesday, June 27, 1984

• The Ontario Supreme Court has quashed a provincial hearing board’s selection of a route through North Dufferin for a new 500-kilovolt Ontario Hydro transmission line.



the country where he was arrested by Const. Thompson. Considerable excitement was caused for some little while by the gypsy getting away from Const. Laverty when just in front of the lock up. Although handcuffed he went up a back lane at a pretty good clip with the constable and a crowd of men and boys in pursuit and was captured at Berwick’s granary.

100 YEARS AGO Thursday, June 24, 1909

• On information laid by Joshua Leader, a gypsy named Bert Sells, who had been encamped east of Shelburne, was arrested and brought before Police Magistrate George Rutherford on Monday, charged with cruelty to his wife. On hearing the evidence the magistrate gave the man until Tuesday noon to come to some agreement with his wife and settle up. Constable Thompson had taken the gypsy’s horse and rig in charge so that he would not be likely to leave. The latter appealed to the magistrate, who allowed him to have his outfit. Tuesday noon arrived but the gypsy, with the assistance of a young man named Miller, had packed up his camp equipment and “skidoed” south. County Const. Laverty went down to Orangeville and took charge of Sells, who had been arrested there, bringing him back to Shelburne on the evening train, young Miller coming also. On arriving, Miller evidently scented for himself and made for