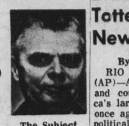
RENEGADE IN POWER:

The Diefenbaker Years

By PETER C. NEWMAN

INSTALMENT 3: THE 1958 ELECTION

The Author



The Subject

(This is the third of a series of twelve excerpts taken from the much longer version contained in RENEGADE IN POWER: THE DIEFENBAKER YEARS, copyright Canada, 1963, Peter C. Newman; published by McClelland & Stewart.)

On Saturday, February 1, 1958, Diefenbaker took a Department of Transport Viscount to Quebec City, where Governor-General Vincent Massey was temporarily in residence to open the city's winter carnival. To put the Opposition off guard, the aircraft's flight plan showed Winnipeg as its destination. But at 12:10 p.m. it touched down at Quebec City, and Diefenbaker was immediately driven to the Citadel for a 33-minute conference with the Governor General. By 3:50 he was back in Ottawa, and at 5:59 he walked into the Commons. Since the Governor General had five hours previously affixed the Great Seal of Canada to the proclamation of dissolution, Parliament no longer had any constitutional life when Diefenbaker made his election announcement. But the niceties of the situation had become irrelevant. As Jimmy Sinclair, the Liberal frontbencher from Vancouver, shouted "All by myself with my little hatchet, I chopped down the cherry tree!", Canada's 23rd Parliament ceased to exist, in fact as well as in law.

That night Diefenbaker addressed a foot-stomping audience at the closing banquet of the National Young Progressive Conservative Association convention at Ottawa's Chateau Laurier Hotel. "The campaign starts tonight!" he shouted, and the young Tories cheered like first-nighters at La Scala.

The official campaign did not actually begin until ten days later, when Diefenbaker left Ottawa by train for his first major speaking engagement in Winnipeg. As the cars jolted out of Union Station, he assured reporters that now he was Prime Minister, his campaign would be different. There would be no undignified whistle-stop electioneering, just one speech a day discussing national issues. Diefenbaker's resolve didn't last more than a few hours. At Capreol, north of Sudbury, when he spied a huddle of voters outside his car on the station platform, the Prime Minister threw on his coat, and bounded out into the 24-below-zero-night to shake their hands. Much later that night, as the train stopped briefly at Nakina, in the Thunder Bay wilderness of northern Ontario, Mrs. Diefenbaker spotted a band of twenty-two shivering children and a dog, out to catch a glimpse of the Prime Minister. She went out to explain that he had long since gone to bed but, just as the train was pulling out,Diefenbaker appeared waving, in a dressing-gown, on the rear platform. He could hear an answering cheer, as the brave little delegation was left behind in the chill darkness.

Diefenbaker spent much of the journey polishing the draft of his Winnipeg speech. By eight o'clock the evening of February 12, the Winnipeg Auditorium was jammed with five thousand supporters; eight hundred others filled the adjacent Concert Hall; hundreds had to be turned away. The evening provided a good preview of the campaign to come: Diefenbaker's fifty-four-minute speech was interrupted forty-six times by laughter and applause.

SWEEPING TIDE IRRATIONAL IN ITS SURGE

After vaguely outlining his intentions to improve the communications, transportation, and hydro facilities of the Canadian north, Diefenbaker abandoned his text and burst out with the rallying cry that he could carry across the nation: "This is the Vision," he proclaimed. "Canadians, realize your opportunities! This is the message I give you my fellow Canadians. Not one of defeatism, Jobs! Jobs for hundreds of thousands of Canadians. A new Vision! A new hope! A new soul for Canada!

During the next 46 days, Diefenbaker journeyed 17,000 miles, delivering 86 variations of his Winnipeg opening speech. His audiences applauded. They cheered almost every time he paused for breath. "The memory of that sweeping tide lingers with all of us who faced it," Douglas Fisher, the CCF/NDP member from Port Arthur recalled later. "It was irrational in its surge."

There was little doubt that the Vision had struck a response in the national subconsciousness. Having inadvertently elected John Diefenbaker as their prime minister eight months before, most of the voters now seemed determined to commit themselves to him.

It was as if the people had come to identify John Diefenbaker with their own individual desires for a trouble-free future. At times, the election seemed somehow to move beyond politics. Diefenbaker transformed it into a secular passion play, with himself as its quasi-divine hero.

John Diefenbaker's charisma established an empathy with his audiences. His listeners came away lost in a cause they did not fully comprehend. When he stood bare-headed in the rain, addressing a small crowd at Penticton, British Columbia, some of his listeners were seen closing their umbrellas. In Fredericton, New Brunswick, a crush of swooning women held up their children to touch the hem of his coat. At Grand Falls, Newfoundland, he brought an audience of rough loggers to their feet with the appeal: "We'll build a nation of fifty million people within the lifetime of many of you here. I'm asking you to catch a Vision of the greatness and the potential of this nation."

OYSTERS WONDERFUL; TV SHOW NOT SO GOOD

On Election Day—March 31—Lester Pearson, a wilted carnation in his buttonhole, went to the Chateau Laurier Hotel to eat oyster stew and watch the results on television. "The oysters were wonderful," he told a friend later. "The television show was about the worst I ever saw." By the end of the evening, he announced that his immediate plans went no further than a brief vacation in Florida, looking for sea shells.

Diefenbaker spent most of election day relaxing in a room at Prince Albert's Avenue Hotel. He was, once again, trying to read the Abraham Lincoln biography, but still couldn't summon much interest in it. By three - fifteen Prince Albert time, the Maritime results began stuttering across the teletype machine at Diefenbaker's committee rooms. In Nova Scotia the Tories were leading in all seats. Senator Bill Brunt, a close associate of Diefenbaker's, leaning over the shoulders of Allister Grosart who was sitting behind the teletype, whispered "It's on. We're going to roll." By six - fifty, Prince Albert time, Liberal Quebec had crumbled. Twelve minutes later, with polls still open in the West, the Canadian Press flashed that a Conservative victory was indicated. "The results must be gratifying to you," Grosart remarked when he phoned the news to Diefenbaker. "Gratifying?" the Prime Minister replied. "They're stupefying."

SENSE OF LONELINESS"

After returning from Saskatoon, where he delivered a brief television message, Diefenbaker was driven to the Prince Albert armouries. A thousand people had gathered to celebrate his victory. "For an average Canadian," he said gently, "being chosen as leader of a nation gives one a feeling impossible to describe. You feel a sense of loneliness." The victory, he said, was not one of person or of party. It was a victory for the democratic process.

The final tabulations showed that Diefenbaker had achieved an unprecedented political victory. No Canadian parliament had ever been so one-sided. With the exception of Newfoundland, where he came within 1 per cent, Diefenbaker had been accorded the majority vote in every province. The Conservative party not only won 208 of the 265 commons seats, but it wiped out Liberal representation in six of the ten provinces. The Liberals, with just 36 per cent of the vote, were reduced to forty-eight M.P.'s, their smallest contingent since Confederation. Three more Liberal cabinet ministers — Jimmy Sinclair, James Gardiner, and George Marler — were defeated. The Social Credit Party, which had held nineteen seats in the 1957 House, was completely wiped out. The CCF membership in the Commons was reduced from twenty-five to eight. The leaders of both minor parties, M.J. Coldwell and Solon Low, went down to defeat.

ASTONISHING RESULT

Probably the most astonishing result was the Tory sweep of Quebec, which elected twice as many Conservatives as Liberals — something that hadn't happened since the days of Sir John A. Macdonald. Diefenbaker skyrocketed the popularity of his party in French Canada to 62 per cent of the vote — just one percentage point behind the Tory vote in "true-blue" Ontario. The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion showed Conservative popularity at 60 per cent — a higher standing than any party had achieved since its surveys began.

When he flew back to Ottawa from Prince Albert the day after the election, John Diefenbaker was not only the most successful federal politician in Canadian history, but he had more support in his own country than the leader of any other democratic government in the world.

The man from Prince Albert had promised that if the people gave him a mandate, he would ensure their well-being. The voters certainly had honoured their end of the unwritten compact. Now they confidently expected the Prime Minister to keep his.

NEXT: The Philosophy of John Diefenbaker.

Rags To Riches In Two Years

VANCOUVER (CP) — Maximillian has done all right for himself.

In two years he's made the rise from the rags of Edmonton back alleys to the riches of championship shows.

Maximillian is a cat, but far from an ordinary one. Besides 64 ribbons he's collected in Canadian events, he holds the North American title for the best neuter cat.

Owner Derek Rhind, a Victoria photographer, says Max's climb to prominence in cat show circles came as a complete surprise to him.

He said he rescued the orange and white cat from the Edmonton SPCA shelter for a $1 fee.

He had no intention of entering him in a cat show but pressure from friends, who saw Max was meant for better things than mouse-catching in the Rhind household, persuaded him to take his pet to a show in Edmonton.

Max won four championships in the show.

Mr. Rhind entered Max in more contests and picked up more ribbons.

At one competition, Max did a little self - promotion. He sipped water from a judge's glass, then put his paws lovingly around the judge's neck.

And he kept on winning.

Mr. Rhind decided to retire Max after he won the North American championship.

"I missed him when he was away at a show," he explained.

Since his retirement Max has taken renewed interest in the household mouse situation and, says Mr. Rhind, he's become a close friend of the photographer's two other pets, a German shepherd and a Scots terrier.

Drinking Water Scarce In Paris

PARIS (Reuters) — Professor Jean Boyer has one word of advice to anyone thinking of drinking a glass of cold water in Paris: "Don't."

Boyer, professor of hygiene at the Paris Faculty of Medicine, says there is no such thing as "drinking water" here.

Almost the whole of the Paris water supply is unfit to drink, he told a meeting of the Hygiene Congress.

River water, the source of nearly all Paris drinking water, he declared, may be filtered and treated with disinfectant, but it generally remains unfit to drink in modern France.

What is more serious, the water contains numerous pathogenic organisms such as the virus of poliomyelitis and hepatitus, which slip through the filters and survive the disinfectants.

The public water supply is polluted by organic matter of various kinds, Professor Boyer continued, as well as by many chemical products, such as household detergents, hydrocarbons generally of petroleum origin, insecticides, weed-killers and fertilizers.

Finally, public drinking water supplies contain cancerogenic substances. While the potency of these is weak, "regular absorption is worrying," the professor said.

TRYGVE LIE MOVED

OSLO AP) —A reshuffle in the four-months-old Norwegian cabinet was announced Sunday by Premier Einar Gerhardsen. The changes include the movement of Trygve Lie, former United Nations secretary-general, from the ministry of industries to the ministry of commerce.

Brazil Appears Tottering Near New, Grave Crisis

By EDGAR MILLER

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP)—Amid talk of revolution and coup d'etat, Latin America's largest country is tottering once again on the edge of deep political and economic crisis.

Widespread strikes, rampant inflation, unrest in the armed forces and mounting leftist pressure on President Joao Goulart's government underline the troubles.

More political trouble looms with the expected signing this month of a decree authorizing the government to expropriate up to 5.25 miles of land on either side of federal highways and railways. The measure is designed to get the government's long-planned agrarian reform program under way.

Goulart is reported considering a major revamping of his cabinet to give it a more leftist stant.

And despite official denials, rumors persist in financial circles that the government is considering a new devaluation of the official exchange rate of the cruzeiro.

Super-Bomber May Be Tested In This Country

LONDON (CP) — Britain's new super-bomber, the TSR-2, will present extremely difficult testing problems and one newspaper suggests Canada may be asked to help.

The controversial bomber, nearing completion is designed to hedge - hop at tremendous speed and thus elude detection by radar and anti-aircraft missiles.

"Test flights of the revolutionary bomber producing extremely loud sound - barrier bangs are to start soon — in Britain," says The Daily Express.

"They will go on until public reaction becomes so strong that they have to be switched overseas."

The Australian government is being approached about the possibility of carrying out the tests at the Woomera missile range, the newspaper adds. But the range presented problems of repair, cost and terrain.

"The government may have to approach Canada for permission to stage the tests there."

The Canadian government already has agreed to low - level operations by Britain's V-bomber force over unsettled northern areas.

ROLLO BAY

Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Arsenault and son Robert, Charlottetown spent Christmas and New Year's holidays at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Perry.

Miss Elizabeth Chaisson, nurse-in training at the Charlottetown Hospital spent Christmas with her parents at Rollo Bay.

Miss Jeanne Chaisson, Charlottetown spent Christmas with Miss Inez Burke, Rollo Bay.

Mrs. Kenneth Doucette, Mrs. Dolphy Conway and Mrs. John E. Chaisson were business visitors to Charlottetown recently.

Mrs. Andrew MacDonald, Bear River spent some time at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Angus McCormack, Souris.

Mrs. Bernard MacDonald is a patient in the Souris Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Angus L. MacPherson, St. Georges and daughter Claire, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. George Christian on January 6th.

Lemuel Chaisson left on return to Hamilton, Ont., after spending holidays at Rollo Bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Chaisson and family, Lot 65, were recent visitors at Rollo Bay.

STEEL PRODUCTION UP

OTTAWA (CP) — Production of steel ingots in the week ended Jan. 11 rose 10.1 per cent to 161,771 tons from 146,928 the previous week, the bureau of statistics reports. Output in the same 1963 period totalled 145,777 tons.

JET SHOT DOWN

SEOUL (AP)—A South Korean air force F-86 Sabrejet was shot down by North Korean Communist ground fire Tuesday, the South Korean air force announced. The fighter was fired upon while on a routine mission near Panmunjon, the armistice commission headquarters in the demilitarized zone, and crashed in Communist territory, the air force said.

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CHILDREN'S WEAR

Save	Quantity	Item	Reg.	SALE
33⅓%	— 76	Girls Coats, size 7-14X	19.95 to 44.95	13.30 to 29.97
33⅓%	—136	Girls Dresses, size 7-14X	4.98 to 12.95	3.32 to 8.63
50%	— 62	Girls Fall & Winter Hats 7 - 14	2.98 to 3.98	1.49 to 1.99
50%	— 22	Girls Skirts 7 - 14	6.98	3.49
33⅓%	—120	Girls Cotton Pyjamas 7 - 14	1.98	1.33
33⅓%	— 97	Girls Cotton Pyjamas 7 - 14	2.98	1.99
33⅓%	— 30	Girls Cotton Blouses 7 - 14	1.00	.66
33⅓%	— 10	Girls Jackets, pile lining 7 - 14	11.95	7.97
33⅓%	— 76	Girls Laminated Rev. Coat 7 - 14X	18.95	13.99
33⅓%	— 22	Girls Reversible Raincoat 7 - 14	14.98	9.97
33⅓%	— 87	Girls Laminated Jackets 7 - 12	6.98	4.65
33⅓%	—166	Girls Leotards 7 - 14	1.79	1.39
33⅓%	— 62	Mohair Cardigans & Pullovers 7 - 14	7.98	4.99
33⅓%	— 83	Mohair Cardigans & Pullovers 4 - 6X	5.98	3.99

Save	Quantity	Item	Reg.	SALE
35%	— 74	Snow Suits 1 pc. 2 - 3X	8.98 to 9.98	6.99
33⅓%	— 38	Boy's Turtle neck Jean Set 4 - 6X	3.98	2.66
33⅓%	— 65	Girls & Boys Cotton Pyjamas 4 - 6X	1.98	1.33
33⅓%	— 48	Boy's T. Shirts 4 - 6X	1.79	1.19
33⅓%	— 42	Sno Suits 2 pc. 4 - 6X	13.98	8.38
40%	— 28	Boy's & Girls Lam. Trench Coat 4 - 6X	12.95	7.77
33⅓%	— 86	Boy's & Girls 2 pc. Sno Suits, 4 - 6X	12.95 to 24.95	8.63 to 16.62
33⅓%	— 36	Boy's & Girls 1 pc. Sno Suits 2 - 3X	10.95 to 18.95	7.32 to 12.63
33⅓%	— 90	Assorted Dresses 1 - 2 - 3	2.98 to 8.98	1.99 to 5.99
33⅓%	— 45	Girls Pile Jackets 7 - 14	14.95 to 34.95	9.97 to 23.30

LADIES' WEAR

Save	Quantity	Item	Reg.	Sale
33⅓%	—100	Jersey double knit — 2 pieces	19.95 to 49.95	13.30 to 33.30
50%	—120	Selection of Fall & Winter Dresses	8.98 to 29.95	4.49 to 14.99
33⅓%	—200	Selection of Fall & Winter Dresses	10.95 to 29.95	7.30 to 19.99
50%	— 80	Fall & Winter Coats, Fur trim, etc.	39.95 to 129.95	19.99 to 64.99
50%	—300	Earrings, Necklets, Pins	1.00	.49
50%	—200	Earrings, Necklets, Pins	2.00	.99
33⅓%	— 70	Quilted Dusters	6.98	4.66
60%	—120	House Dresses	6.98	2.99
60%	—200	Hats, Velours, Felts, etc.	3.98 to 14.95	.99 to 6.49
33⅓%	—140	Nylon Suede Gloves	1.98	1.32
33⅓%	—140	Nylon Tricot Scarves	1.59	1.06
40%	—100	Handbags, Marshmallow, etc.	5.00	2.99
25%	— 80	Gift boxes, well known cosmetics	1.25 to 7.95	.94 to 5.97
50%	— 60	Well known perfume	1.50 to 7.00	.75 to 3.50
33⅓%	— 60	Leopard Pile Triangular Scarves	1.98	1.32
25%	— 80	Shetland Tex Long Sleeved Pullovers	11.95	8.97
25%	—100	Shetland Tex Long Sleeved Cardigan	12.95	9.72
33⅓%	— 60	Wool Skirts, all types	5.98 to 14.95	3.99 to 9.97

Save	Quality	Item	Reg.	Sale
33⅓%	— 80	Nylon Slips	3.98	2.66
	up to 60%	—200 Sportwear table of assorted items	1.98 to 19.95	.79 to 8.99
50%	—100	Blouses, various prints	2.98	1.49
27%	— 50	Ski Jackets, quilted	10.95	7.99
33⅓%	— 50	Car Coats, pile lined, etc.	19.95 to 49.95	13.30 to 33.30
33⅓%	— 80	Blouses, white fancy and plain	1.98 to 6.98	1.32 to 4.66
20%	—600	Assorted Panties & Briefs	3/1.00	3/.79
33⅓%	—200	Assortment of Brassieres	1.00 to 3.98	.67 to 2.66
33⅓%	—150	Assortment of Girdles	4.98 to 12.95	3.32 to 8.64
20%	—100	Brassieres	1.00	.79
up to 50%	—200	Lingerie table, assorted items	1.98 to 10.95	.99 to 5.49
33⅓%	—200	English warmly lined gloves, leather	4.98	3.32
33⅓%	—200	English unlined leather gloves	3.98 to 4.98	2.66 to 3.32
33⅓%	—120	Wool Slims, novelty plaids	2.98 to 12.95	1.99 to 8.64
up to 50%	—300	Accessory table, gloves, jewellery and scarves	1.00 to 9.98	.49 to 4.49
43%	—3000	First quality seamless Mesh Hose	.69	3/1.19
33⅓%	—500	Chatelaine Seam Free Hose	2/1.51	2/.99

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