

X MARKS THE SPOT

a report on off-campus news

by Andrew MacPherson

BORIS'S EMBATTLEMENT

News this week from Russia smacks of *deja vu*. The current leader of the world's largest country is facing problems from hardline communists as he tries to implement economic reform in his country and faces the possibility of losing his grip on power. It sounds very similar to the story which came from the Soviet Union in late summer of 1991; however, the same story came from Moscow again last week. Russian President Boris Yeltsin faced backlash from the Congress of People's Deputies and has had the power of his position weakened considerably. The non-elected congress has taken away Yeltsin's power to rule by decree and has cancelled the referendum on power sharing which was to be held in April. President Clinton and other world leaders, in an effort to prevent Yeltsin's demise, are scrambling to come up with plans to aid the Russian economy. Perhaps the west can take more of a leadership role than in the past and direct this former super power more firmly in the proper direction.

PREVENTING A CORONATION

It would appear that the federal Progressive Conservative party is facing a problem similar to that faced by the Prince Edward Island Liberal party in its recent leadership campaign, a lack of strong candidates to oppose the front runner. It seems that many members of the government caucus have conceded the leadership to Kim Campbell. There are several forces which have caused this result, including the tendency of people to line up behind the probable winner and the glowing reports that Campbell has received from the media, especially the CBC; however, Brian Mulroney has a little too much political savvy to allow this to happen. It would be a shame for the Tories if they chose to waste this great opportunity for media coverage without a climactical convention. Mr. Mulroney has been making an effort to induce other familiar faces in his cabinet to put a strong campaign together. Finance minister Don Mazankowski has said that he will re-examine his previous decision not to run for the leadership. There is work underway to get

Bernard Valcourt's campaign off to a strong start. Perrin Beatty and Barbara MacDougall are said to be on the verge of announcing their candidacy. This is not to say that Mulroney does not support Campbell; in fact, his reaction is more fatherly. He wants his successor to go through the joy of winning a hard fought campaign. Something that he may not be taking into account is that a difficult leadership campaign this close to a federal election may divide his party instead of binding it together.

LEADERS GO PUBLIC

As the provincial election approaches its midway point more and more public appearances are taking place. Finally, the first public forum with all three leaders present has been announced. It will be held in the Prince Edward Hotel this coming Monday at 7:00PM. The forum has been organized by the PEI Teacher's Federation and will center on education. On Wednesday of the same week the three leaders will again be present at lunch time in "The Pit." Students are strongly encouraged to go to both of these events and be vocal. The plight of students must be raised in the consciousness of these leaders and they must be reminded that we have votes that are worth just as much as anyone else's.

KING BEATING TRIAL II

The second trial for the police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King is underway in U.S. Federal court. Last week King himself was on the witness stand. It was his first testimony since the incident which occurred on March 3, 1991. The four defendants -Sgt. Stacey Koon, officers Lawrence Powell and Theodore Briseno and former officer Timothy Wind - were acquitted in their first trial last spring. The jury's decision was followed by an outbreak of violence in Los Angeles. In this trial they are accused of willfully violating King's civil rights. What this means is that the prosecutors must show that the officers not only used excessive force, but also did so intentionally. In the previous trial excessive force was the only issue in question. King's testimony is positioned halfway through the prosecution's case; hence, a verdict is not expected for about another

month. Legal experts believe that Mr. King's testimony will be the deciding factor either way. The defence will be trying to establish that the victim is not a good person and deserved what happened to him. A decision is going to be infinitely harder for the jury to come to, especially the three African-American members. There is a strong possibility of a hung jury and it is unclear what kind of public reaction that type of decision would provoke.

GOLD ON ICE



To say it was a very successful week for Canadians participating in winter sports would be a great understatement. In figure skating and downhill skiing, World Championships went to Canadians

in numerous categories. In men's figure skating Kurt Browning won his fourth gold medal in the past five years. The only real blemish on his record was his sixth place finish at last year's Winter Olympics. Another Canadian, Elvis Stojko took home the silver in this same event. Stojko came from fifth place to win the silver on the final day of competition. Earlier in the week Lloyd Isler and Elizabeth Brasseur won the gold for the couples dance competition; it was only the fourth time in the past thirty-five years that a non-Russian couple has won this medal. This success helps to show the world that Canadians are more than a bunch of rough hoodlums who play hockey...some of us a graceful as well.

THE PICTURE

Last week I wrote about the picture of Kim Campbell which appeared in British tabloids several weeks back. I have obtained a copy of the picture and have run it in this week's edition. Pretty scandalous, eh! ●

