

CANADA

Ontario elects Tories, deals blow to New Democrats

TORONTO—The voters of Ontario, Canada's wealthiest and most populous province, went to the polls on June 9 and returned Premier William Davis' minority Progressive Conservative government to power. At the same time the electorate denied the New Democratic party, Canada's social-democratic movement, its former role as the provincial legislature's official opposition. The NDP's caucus dropped to third behind the resurgent Liberals.

The defeat has left the Ontario NDP in disarray and will undoubtedly prompt a reconsideration of its post-1971 election strategy, which stressed moderation rather than militancy and piecemeal reforms rather than structural changes.

Quebec fuels fears.

The Progressive Conservatives had chaffed under the fetters of their minority government status since the last election in 1975 when, for the first time in over three decades, they were unable to win enough seats to guarantee them a free hand. Needing the support of at least one of the other two parties to govern, they had to modify their policies accordingly.

The Conservative government waited impatiently for the right moment to again summon the voters to the polls. With the election last November of a separatist Parti Quebecois government in Quebec and fears for national unity being widely expressed in English Canada in the months following, that moment evidently seemed to have arrived, and the Conservatives exploited the first convenient pretext for an election.

The PCs entered the contest with definite advantages. As usual, they were able to rely on the generous financial backing of the province's corporate elite, whose interests have always been well served by Tory rule. In addition, they could draw on a substantial amount of habitual voter identification in this traditionally conservative province, which has been reinforced over the years by the timely and pragmatic responsiveness of PC governments to the need for action in such areas as public medical insurance, expressway-born urban sprawl, and access to higher education. And as a long-standing force for stability in Ontario, they were in the best position to capitalize on the insecurity spawned by the course of events in Quebec.

The Tory campaign was a media-intensive effort glossing over specific issues and stressing instead Premier Davis' leadership

qualities. The Conservative answer to the more tangible issue of unemployment, running at about eight percent in Ontario was predictable—\$280 million in corporate tax credits. Earlier in the race, PC advertising also took a more aggressive tack, recalling the party's successful 1971 election strategy of "socialist-bashing." An oft-repeated television ad rather clumsily linked the Ontario NDP to its more radical and controversial counterpart in British Columbia, and one Tory Cabinet minister even went so far as to tie the New Democrats to Quebec separatism.

The Jimmy Carter purity.

As the Tory game-plan unfolded, the Liberal party sought to improve on its poor 1975 showing. The Liberals, the party of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau at the federal level, had for years maintained an anemic presence in Ontario politics, never having been able to break the Tory hold on the electorate. Taking the field for the first time under Stuart Smith, a political novice, and claiming bedrock support only regionally and among farmers and small businessmen, the party did not appear promising.

Nonetheless, in the manner of Jimmy Carter, Smith tried to turn his weakness into a strength—arguing that his party was beholden neither to big business nor organized labor and would, if given power, exercise it disinterestedly. He assailed high government spending and promised to hold expenditures and taxes down. He blamed Tory education policies for a decline in the quality of public education and in his own way toyed with the national unity issue, strongly advocating the expansion of language rights for Ontario's small French-speaking community and letting it be known that he alone among the three party leaders was fluent in Canada's other official language. On the key unemployment question, Smith advanced a plan of direct government subsidies to the private sector to hire the jobless.

Left dissolved.

Determined to repel the Liberal attempt to supplant them, the New Democrats again pursued the electoral strategy that had made them a surprising runnerup to the Tories in 1975. The origins of that approach could be traced back to the 1971 campaign, when a young, aggressive Stephen Lewis led the party to a humiliating defeat. Thereafter, the notion that the NDP projected too radical an image came to prevail in the minds of Lewis and those around him, particularly the union offi-



Progressive Conservative Premier William Davis campaigns in Toronto, accompanied by his wife (right) and candidate Maria Sgro (left).

Canadian Press

The New Democratic party's strategy was to minimize their anticorporate stance and emphasize common sense reforms. The new moderation didn't work. The NDP dropped to 3rd behind the Tories and the resurgent liberals.

cials whose organizations provided the lion's share of the party's funds. This ultimately resulted in a showdown in 1974 between the leadership and the "Waffle" faction, the party's left-wing caucus, which ended in the latter's dissolution.

By the time the 1975 election campaign was underway, the province was being treated to a "new" Lewis image—that of an affable, pipe-smoking family man. The character of the party's pronouncements was altered as well, from broad anti-corporation rhetoric and nationalization thunder to limited remedies for current problems of popular concern, such as the skyrocketing cost of rental accommodation in the major urban centers.

Encouraged by the achievement that moderation had wrought, the NDP organized for a similar effort this year. Television advertising was devoted to depicting Lewis as a "humane, compassionate man," while under the slogan, "common sense never made more sense than now," the party emphasized its unemployment program of pump-priming measures and its proposals for combatting pollution and improving safeguards for workers exposed

to hazardous working conditions.

As the campaign progressed, however, it became apparent that Lewis' quest for the vital center had carried him even to the right of some parts of the NDP's "common sense" platform. In a televised debate with the other leaders he essentially repudiated the party's stated objective of public ownership of natural resources and was on several occasions obviously uncomfortable with having to defend his own platform's demand for a \$4 minimum wage.

After the votes were tabulated, none of the parties had much cause for celebration, but the New Democrats were the real losers. Their momentum toward power was reversed by their disappointing finish, and in their anxious drive for popular approval they lost their bearings as well. Disheartened, Stephen Lewis, citing personal reasons, resigned the leadership a few days later. Without a likely successor to Lewis or a clear alternative political direction, the Ontario NDP is now in disarray and faces an uphill struggle to regain lost ground.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Chile's prisoners

WASHINGTON, D.C.—On Friday, June 17, five people occupied the United Nations Office of Technology here and began a hunger strike. The group, which includes a priest, are occupying the office because it corresponds to the one in which 26 people have been staging a hunger strike since June 14 in Santiago, Chile. The 24 women and two men in Chile are protesting the disappearance of relatives detained by the Chilean secret police, the DINA.

According to Amnesty International, over 1,500 Chileans have "disappeared" after having been detained by the DINA, which is under the exclusive control of President August Pinochet. Many thousands more who are missing but were not

seen being arrested are also thought to be inmates of huge concentration camps set up by the Chilean junta on islands off the coast.

The Non-Intervention in Chile Committee (NICH) and the Emergency Committee for Disappeared Chileans hastily called a support demonstration outside the building that houses the UN office on Sunday, June 19. About 200 demonstrators came to support the occupiers and to hear speeches of support. Prayers were heard and an ecumenical celebration of the Eucharist was given by representatives of Washington's Catholic and Protestant communities.

The organizers of the demonstration plan a weekly event, every Sunday, until the Chileans receive information about the disappeared persons and leave the office in Santiago. The occupation of the Washington office will also continue until

the Chilean demands for an investigation into the status of the disappeared are met.

At this moment the hunger strikers in Chile are held incommunicado, and the 26 relatives of the disappeared are approaching their second week of fasting. The drive was touched off last week when the Chilean regime announced to the world that it no longer has any political prisoners.

—John Acher

South Africa loans

A national campaign seeking withdrawal of accounts from banks making loans to South Africa was launched on Friday, June 24, at the New York headquarters of the American Committee on Africa.

The Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa initiated by the ACOA

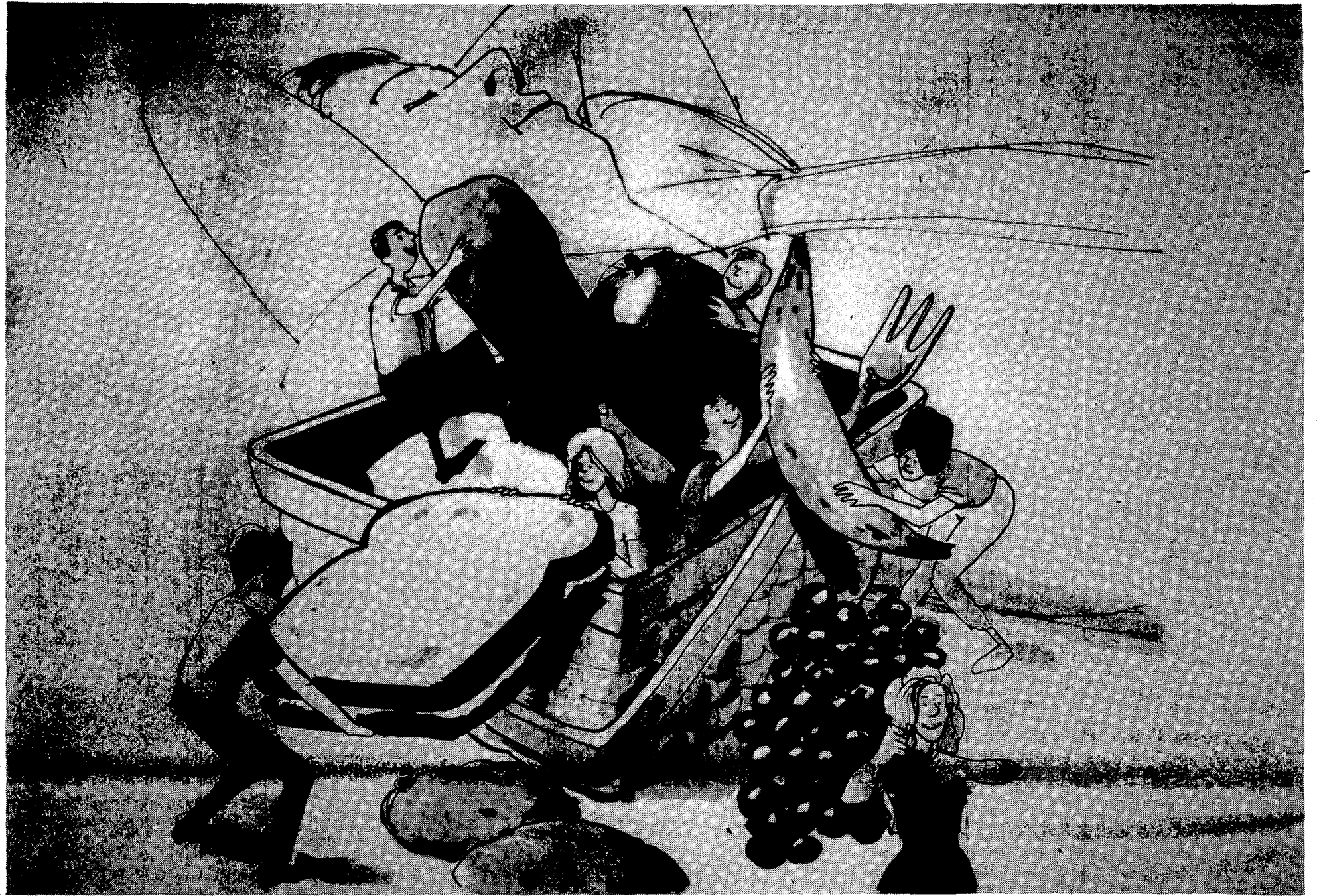
and Clergy and Laity Concerned, an interfaith network with chapters in 40 cities in the U.S., and the national office of the American Friends Service Committee, is spearheading the bank campaign.

Ten years ago ACOA was instrumental in organizing a similar campaign. It ended in 1969 with the termination of a \$40 million revolving credit to South Africa by ten major U.S. banks, among them Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty, and Manufacturers Hanover Trust. Committee records show at least \$25 million in funds was withdrawn from the banks at that time. These same banks are among major targets of the new campaign, which is aimed at ending loans believed to total at least \$2 billion.

The Committee already has indications that major trade union and religious and civic groups will withdraw funds totalling more than those withdrawn in 1969.

THE (SOMETIMES) IRRESIST

Illustration by Rich Kimmel



A DIMINUTIVE, ELDERLY lady presents her weekly selection of groceries to the checkout clerk. The quantity is small, but painstakingly selected; you can tell by the way she carefully inspects each item as she sets it down. The clerk, a short young man, begins to ring it all up and gives the lady a kindly wink. The cash register records the tuna fish, the macaroni, the canned wax beans and the small bag of Oreos (her one treat) but omits the three cans of cat food. "You're *such* a nice young man," says the lady.

In a nearby checkout aisle a younger woman with a two-year-old girl squirming in the shopping cart seat slowly wheels out the cart and its contents: a full bag of groceries, paid for already, and an unwrapped box of stainless steel flatware, not paid for. Her face moves back and forth from a sad faraway gaze to loving glances at her child. Her hair falls into her eyes out of its semblance of a two-years-out-of-date hairstyle. No one notices her or the silverware, though a few have looked at the child.

In an adjoining discount house two 15-year-old boys with less subtlety stash small handfuls of 45 rpm records inside ketchup-stained nylon windbreakers.

Last but not least, a stockroom clerk in

the back of the discount house dispatches an official slip down to the loading dock. It authorizes the pick-up of one 19-inch Sony color television set with remote control channel selection by a company delivery van. However, the information on the slip—that the item has been paid for—is incorrect. Not a penny has been paid. The young man driving the truck is a friend of the stock clerk and will deliver the set to a third friend. He is pacing around nervously on the dock because he has never done anything like this, but the other loading clerks either don't notice or don't care.

These might all be scenes in an illustrated movie prepared by a creative consulting firm for store managers with the question "How many of the standard

forms of inventory shrinkage can you spot in this picture?"

"Inventory shrinkage" on the rise.

The retail industry is making massive efforts to crack down on "inventory shrinkage." It has hired consulting firms and bared its retaliatory teeth: closed-circuit TV cameras (pretend and real), store detectives (disguised or undisguised), ads in the papers with shoplifters who could be you or me behind bars, crackdowns on employees, salestags that trigger alarm systems if not removed before the attached item reaches the door, salestags that unleash trained dogs....

Yet still inventory shrinkage in America marches on to record-breaking heights.

One study by the National Research Merchants Association in 1973, based on nearly 150,000 apprehensions, indicated that more women than men steal, more people in the suburbs than in the cities, more juveniles than grownups (though by only a few percentage points). The study also indicated that there is considerably more employee theft—from 60 to 75 percent more—than shopper theft.

Theft amounts to two to three percent of total sales. Naturally, storeowners and stockholders do not absorb much of this cost; it is passed on to the customer.

While a lot of attention has been paid to the phenomenon of "inventory shrinkage," there has been relatively little given to the question from the point of view of the perpetrators, those who carry out the "shrinkage," who do the stealing, if you prefer.

I. Shoplifting

Shoplifting is the simplest form of assault on business property. It is usually done on an individual basis, while other forms of shrinkage are often, though not always, group efforts, requiring the coop-

eration of at least two people. A basic place to start in trying to understand why people steal, then, is to examine the motives of individuals who steal "from the outside."

A succinct explanation of why teenagers top all other ages for shoplifting is provided by one 14-year-old boy. "We're too young to earn much money so how else can we get things? We have to depend on our parents for money and everything else and we get sick of it."

A teenage girl says she steals cosmetics and bubble bath preparations "because I don't want to spend what little money I get from babysitting on that stuff—but I like to have it. It makes me feel good, to smell all fancy, you know; it picks me up."

Adults who shoplift often develop systems, especially if they steal over an extended period of time, as well as their own particular rationale. For instance, Mary Ann stole candy bars as a child, then was caught by the local druggist, who made her promise she would never do it again. She did not, for many years—but then she went into it with a vengeance.

Alone and angry.

"It happened after I'd lost the first decent job I'd ever had. I had worked really hard and everybody said I did a good job and then, pfffft! the job was gone, just like that, a whole section of the company was eliminated. It was 1970. I was alone by then, raising my daughter."

"I was realizing how isolated a woman on her own with a child is... I had this boyfriend who I was breaking up with who had a fairly high-paying job; he was always talking about whether such and such was worth his time. I realized how much less my time was worth—all the more so for the work of being a mother. I was paying a babysitter all the while that he was going on about how expensive his time was..."

By Jane Melnick