

**A CANDIDATE'S JOURNEY**

The Personal Account of Two Political Campaigns and a Scandal

By

David F.H. Marler

## **A Candidate's Tale**

---

### **Contents**

Dedication		4
Acknowledgements		5
Introduction		6
Chapter I	The Raid	10
Chapter II	The Decision To Run	13
Chapter III	Winning The Nomination	16
Chapter IV	Preparing For An Election	20
Chapter V	What To Do?	23
Chapter VI	Support	26
Chapter VII	The Writ Is Dropped	28
Chapter VIII	Voting Day	39
Chapter IX	Post Mortem	40
Chapter X	Continuing To Carry The Flag	45
Chapter XI	Financials And Filing For The Refund	48
Chapter XII	Enter Madame Perle Bouchard	51
Chapter XIII	2007: The Wind In Our Sails	54
Chapter XIV	The Speech from the Throne	58
Chapter XV	The Liberals	61
Chapter XVI	Nomination Convention At Last	64
Chapter XVII	Rejected	66
Chapter XVIII	The Revelation	71

Chapter XIX	Why Did The Sixty-Six Say Yes?	72
Chapter XX	Power And Democracy	73
Chapter XXI	What Can We Do?	75
Chapter XXII	The Ethics Committee	78
Chapter XXIII	The Illegal and Unnecessary \$350 Million Election	83
Chapter XXIV	Campaigning Again	85
Appendices		
Appendix I:	The Sixty-Six Who Said Yes	92
Appendix II:	Other Rejected Candidates	93

## DEDICATION

This story is dedicated to all those who consider that Canada's Parliament no longer serves the country as it should and who believe that reform is desperately needed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Nicole Bélanger and Jean-François Doré for their unwavering encouragement and guidance; to my proof readers, Marna Tucker, Marnie Reid Marler and John Downs; to Frank Nixon for his research and promotion and to Jean-Claude Lefebvre for his translation.

To Dr. Donald J. Savoie, Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance, University of Moncton, for giving me confidence in the authenticity of the political themes of this book.

To all those who supported me in my political quest, especially Jacques Dubuc.

Without the constant and tireless support of my wife Jeanne, I never would have run for parliament and thus would never have been able to tell my story.

## INTRODUCTION

This book recounts the story of my quest to become the federal Member of Parliament for the riding of Brome-Missisquoi. As the story unfolds, I will discuss the reasons why I decided to run, why I chose the Conservative Party of Canada, notwithstanding that my forebears were prominent in the Liberal Party of Canada, how I became the Conservative candidate for the riding in the 2005/2006 election and why in the 2008 election I ran as an Independent. We shall see that my motivation arose out of a despair with the prevailing political culture in Ottawa and a desire, perhaps quixotic, to try to do something about it.

However, before I go into the details of my political quest, I ask you to bear with me as I describe where this all took place. I think it important so as to understand the geographical, sociological, linguistic and somewhat psychological context where these events occurred.

Brome-Missisquoi is the name given variously to the territory of the jurisdiction of the Regional Municipal Council of the same name, and the federal and provincial electoral districts. This being Canada, the exact location and size of Brome-Missisquoi depends upon which of the governmental jurisdictions is relevant to one's context. As this is a story pertaining to federal politics, the region to which I will refer is the federal electoral district.

An electoral district is still popularly referred to in many parts of Canada as a "riding". Its use derives from the formation of the English electoral districts which were originally of a size that a person could ride around on a horse in one day. Brome-Missisquoi holds true to this definition so long as one substitutes one's automobile for one's horse. It contains 3045 square kilometres with some 92,000 residents and extends just over 140 kilometres along the Quebec-Vermont border between and including the shores of Lake Memphremagog, to the east, and Missisquoi Bay, the northerly extremity of Lake Champlain, to the west. It runs north, approximately 30 and 40 kilometres respectively on its east and west boundaries to the Eastern Townships Autoroute which serves as its northerly boundary, with the exception of parts of the municipalities of South Stukely and Eastman, which lie to the north of that highway. Its name derives from its central area, the old County of Brome, and its western region of which Missisquoi Bay is the dominant natural feature.

Brome-Missisquoi is an outstanding example of a region in which Quebecers, of whatever origin, coexist compatibly. Originally settled by the Loyalists who preferred the British crown to the American adventure of the 1770s, they were joined shortly thereafter by the British settlers who descended from the St. Lawrence Valley. In the middle/late nineteenth century French Canadians left their St. Lawrence and Ottawa River farms in search of the jobs created by industry, thus populating and expanding the principal towns of the region:

Bedford, Farnham, Cowansville and Magog. It also includes significant populations of people who have emigrated over time from various European countries.

Magog, which numbers almost 25% of the voters of the riding, is 98% French speaking, whereas in the rest of Brome-Missisquoi there is a considerably larger English speaking population. The attempt to tidily create electoral districts of equal size by reference to population has, in some instances as in Brome-Missisquoi, made for strange bedfellows. Magog has little in common with the rest of the riding either by reference to topography, demographics, culture or economic considerations. The Member of Parliament for Brome-Missisquoi has, as a result, two distinct communities, one might say two sub-ridings, to represent and the priorities are only in the broadest sense common.

The electoral effect of the inclusion in 1966 of Magog within Brome-Missisquoi is, by reason of Magog's demographics, to favour the Bloc Québécois, the party which espouses the independence of Quebec and which starts off virtually anywhere in Quebec with approximately 30% of the vote as a given. Thus if both major federalist parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, have a reasonable following, they split the federalist vote allowing the Bloc to win the riding. In the 2006 election, for example, the federalist parties (Conservative, Liberal, Progressive Canadian, and NDP) split 58.12 % of the vote. The Bloc won with 38.3%. (I have not, for these purposes, allocated the remaining 3.58% which was taken by the Green Party as a Green might be a federalist or an *indépendantiste*).

It can be demonstrated, as a result, that Magog with 25% of the vote, determines the result in favour of the Bloc unless one of the federal parties is weak. The impact of this reality is such that Denis Paradis, the twelve year (1994-2006) Liberal federal incumbent of the riding, campaigned, in part, on the premise that a vote for the Conservatives was, effectively, a vote for the Bloc. This did not endear him to Magog but, in the absence of any serious Conservative competition, it assisted in his continual re-election until 2006 when the Conservatives re-established themselves under Stephen Harper.

Both Magog and Brome-Missisquoi proper are composed of the most special communities that one could ever hope to live in, visit, or, indeed, aspire to represent. The topography is stunning. Magog is a Shangri-La sitting at the north end of Lake Memphremagog which is the central physical feature of that region. Whether viewed from Magog itself, looking south, or from the Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-Lac looking across the Lake to its eastern shore, or from its eastern shore to the mountain ranges on the opposite side, breathtaking is not an exaggeration. A four-season playground of boundless possibilities is only one of its many attractions.

Economically, on the other hand, Magog, as is common to many small cities across the country, needs assistance as it seeks to transform itself from a factory town to one of more diverse economic and commercial activity.

If the Magog region is topographically stunning, Brome-Missisquoi proper loses no points in providing to the resident and visitor alike, the ancient fertile valley of the Champlain Sea, the border land of mountain ranges, lakes, rushing streams and rivers, traditional villages set in the hill or agricultural areas, each retaining the cultural characteristics of its founders. Its natural beauty attracts the largest colony of artists of any equivalent region of Canada, plus seasonal residents from Montreal and elsewhere for the enjoyment of the summer and fall climates and its winter sports, as well as those who come back from wherever life may have taken them to retire in peace and paradise.

Having dealt with these considerations, I feel I must now tell you a bit about myself and my family history, so you can have a better picture of the deeply rooted reasons behind my political interest and involvement. My own association with the region, although not having been a full time resident until 2002, is at the same time historical, educational and spiritual. In that respect I think that it sheds an important light on the context and background in which these events unfold. So allow me to indulge in a little genealogical voyage, and rest assured, it will take but a page.

In the mid-nineteenth century, my ancestors, the Allans of Greenock, Scotland and subsequently Montreal, discovered for themselves the eastern shore of Lake Memphremagog and one can easily see why the Scottish spirit would be fulfilled by gazing upon the highlands of the western shore. They built the first passenger boat, the "Mountain Maid", a paddle wheeler, to operate out of Magog, a model of which resides in a glass case in Magog's city hall. In the 1860s a Marler ancestor, with the delightful first names of Waterford Lake, married into a local family, the Fosters after whom one of the original villages in the riding is named. There are fifteen Foster households listed in the Brome-Missisquoi telephone book. Some of them are cousins. Perhaps they all are.

My grandfather, Herbert Marler, was the Liberal candidate in 1927 for the County of Stanstead, which then included Magog, and he would undoubtedly have been elected had he not been named Canada's first Ambassador to Japan in 1929 where he served until 1936, before becoming Canada's Ambassador to Washington, 1936-1939. Herbert's half-brother, John de Montmollin Marler, was a long time summer resident of Knowlton. Herbert's eldest son, my uncle Leonard, was a farmer in North Hatley.

I attended a boy's summer camp, Camp Arrowhead, on Lake Memphremagog and, many years later, attended Bishop's University where I met Jeanne McAlpine, to whom I have been married for forty-four years. My eldest brother

Michael spent his weekends and holidays in Philipsburg where, in the Anglican Church, his untimely death is commemorated by a plaque upon the wall. Our daughter, Stephanie, also graduated from Bishop's. Our son, Michael, attended Champlain College in Lennoxville where he met his wife to be Véronique Hupin. They are vintners in Farnham. The Eastern Townships is where I have always known I would someday live and, after thirty-seven years of an international law practice in Montreal, the time and opportunity presented itself.

Politics has always been in my family's history and in my blood, both naturally and by inclination. In addition to Herbert Marler's long career as a politician and statesman, his half-brother George Carlyle Marler was, arguably, the most distinguished English Quebecer to ever represent a constituency in the Legislature of Quebec, as the effective leader of the Quebec Liberal Party during most of the Duplessis era. Subsequently he was the Minister of Transport in Louis St-Laurent's federal Liberal government. You will, perhaps, understand a degree of familial expectation that I run for election. I resisted until 2005 when I had become distraught by the power holding politics of the Chrétien era Liberals and the inability of Paul Martin, upon his inheritance of that party, to save it from the disaccord and corruption with which it had become beset.

It was the timing of my decision, as will be explained in the course of the story that caused me to turn from my Liberal heritage to a new option, Stephen Harper's Conservatives. I must admit to having had visions of my grandfather and great-uncle turning in their graves but I also knew that there was nothing to be done at that time as a Liberal. That party needed to cleanse and renew itself before it could again claim any legitimate right to form the government. It was the corruption in the federal party system of Ottawa which motivated me to run and, ironically as will be revealed, it was that same corruption which three years later prevented me from achieving my goal.

## Chapter I - The Raid

The front page news of Canada's newspapers for Tuesday, April 22, 2008 was the story of a raid by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) upon the National Headquarters of the Conservative Party of Canada which had occurred the previous Friday. The fact of the raid, based upon a search warrant obtained by Elections Canada, was known as early as the day of the raid itself. What was not known until the following Tuesday was what the raid was about. The media had been reporting, from time to time, some suspicion of spending irregularities by the Conservative Party during its successful 2005/2006 federal election campaign and the thinking was that the raid had to do with that. What the press discovered, from releases given to it following the raid, was that in December 2005 the Conservative Party embarked upon what can only be basically described as a "money laundering" scheme.

To explain, without becoming too technical, the Canada Elections Act prescribes (section 422) a limit on the amount that any political party may spend at the national level in a general election campaign. It also prescribes (section 409) the amount that any candidate may spend at the local riding level. Both levels of spending, the national and the local, are independent of one another and should not be confused or combined and that is why they are dealt with by two different articles of the electoral law.

Now it seems, time will tell once the legal process has run its course that by mid-December 2005 the party had spent its national legal limit but wished to find ways to spend more. What its brain trust, after much scratching of heads, cooked up was that the party at the national level would transfer sums of money into various local riding accounts, draw it right back and then spend it. This led to the arrangement being dubbed the "in-and-out". The national office then intended to claim, in order to circumvent the national level spending limit, that the expenditure was made by the ridings not by itself. The ridings selected were ones where it was suspected that the deposit would not cause the candidate to exceed the applicable riding spending limit.

Another detail of the Elections Act, which made the scheme even more devious, is that where a candidate receives 10% of the vote in a riding, the riding Association will be entitled to a 60% refund of the candidate's election expenses, the refund coming from the general tax purse (Section 465). One of the come-ons used by the party in attempting to persuade the candidates to go along with the scheme, was to tell them that they would be entitled to the 60% refund on the in-and-out money if they qualified by getting 10% of the vote.

Of the sixty-seven riding organizations identified and approached to participate in the scheme only one refused. The other sixty-six all agreed to participate,

including those of a number of future cabinet ministers and others who were subsequently elected (see Appendix I).

However, when the time came for those sixty-six candidates to submit their election expenses to Elections Canada, they had no bill, receipt or other document to justify the expenditure of the in-and-out money. Apparently, the party, again time will tell, supplied dummy invoices.

It seems, according to the media reports of the proceedings of the House of Commons ethics committee in July and August 2008, that some of the in-and-out candidates' reports to Elections Canada were approved before Elections Canada got wind of the scheme. Elections Canada then refused to approve the reports of the others, thirty-four of whom submitted an application for judicial review to the Federal Court of Canada requesting that Elections Canada be ordered to process their 60% refunds.

So, we have a nice list of potential offences, whether under the Elections Act and/or the Criminal Code of Canada:

1. The party exceeded its spending limit;
2. The party created false documents (the invoices);
3. The party was complicit in inducing the candidates to break the law.

Now, to come back to the story, this scheme was conceived by a party which was campaigning in December 2005 and January 2006 on eliminating the corruption in Ottawa which, it said, had permeated the previous Liberal governments. I invite anyone to try to find a speech before or during the campaign itself in which Mr. Stephen Harper, the leader of the Conservatives and now the Prime Minister of the country, did not repeat the mantra of the corruption of the Liberals and promise, in the same breath, ethical, transparent and accountable government.

To say that the Liberals were at the time corrupt is beyond question, there having been a succession of scandals relating to the use of government money. However most, from the vantage point of today, only remember "AdScam", variously called the "sponsorship scandal" or "sponsorgate", which made Judge Gomery, who was appointed to head the Commission of Inquiry, a household name and television star. What AdScam achieved, precisely because of Judge Gomery's television show, was to block from our memories the succession of scandals that had preceded it (see:<http://scandal.coldwave.net/>).

AdScam (the sponsorship scandal) is the name that was given to the criminal acts perpetrated by one civil servant, a few Liberal Party operatives and a handful of advertising executives in connection with the issuance of false or inflated invoices to the government in relation to advertising contracts.

The contracts had been awarded following a government policy decision to spend money on Quebec cultural and sports events as a means of persuading Quebec that staying in Canada was a good thing. Some of the money was diverted into the pockets of the ad agents, some to the Liberal Party operatives, and some to the coffers of the Liberal Party.

The government policy was not illegal as such. The ad agents were not government employees and thus broke no law to which the civil service is subject and there is no evidence that AdScam was conceived or approved by the Liberal Party organization. Nor was there evidence that the then Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, and his chief of staff, Jean Pelletier, were involved or had any knowledge of the scam. Any implied suggestion of impropriety by Messrs. Chrétien and Pelletier was rejected without qualification by Judge Teitelbaum of the Federal Court in his judgment reviewing the Gomery report. AdScam was the work of individuals, not of a political organization.

In contrast, the RCMP raid appears to have revealed that in-and-out was a scheme organized, discussed and approved at the highest levels of the Conservative Party, with the knowledge and complicity of future cabinet ministers and others who wished to be elected, some of whom were. However, at least it can be said that it conformed to the Conservative Party platform. It was so “transparent” that one could see right through it and, no doubt, the party will be happy to be held “accountable” whether by the courts or by the public.

Although I am the raconteur of this tale, it is not essentially about me. Rather it is about the high-jacking of our precious democracy by unscrupulous elements in the current political class. I could perhaps be criticized for having an idealistic notion of the way things should be but I had the good fortune to have learned my law and political philosophy from some of the great idealists and, indeed, activists of a previous generation, including the likes of Frank Scott, Maxwell Cohen and Gerald LeDain. Old school, some might say. A good old school, I like to think.

And now to the tale.

## Chapter II - The Decision To Run

On April 27, 2005 I was asked by Peter Stastny, no, not the famous hockey player turned European politician but a local business man, sometime Mayor of the Township of Sutton and the Conservative Party candidate for Brome-Missisquoi in the 2004 federal election, if I would consider submitting my name as a nominee for the same position, he having decided that a secure day job was preferable to another run for political office. His question, he told me, arose out of a suggestion made to him by Peter White, the President of the local Conservative Riding Association.

Since the collapse of the Progressive Conservative Government in 1993, a conservative party under any name had gained no traction in Quebec. Canada had had in a space of a decade the Progressive Conservatives, the Reform Party, the Canadian Alliance Party, the Progressive Canadian Party and now the Conservative Party of Canada. None of these had been able to elect a candidate from Quebec with the exception of Jean Charest in 1997, who, prior to his becoming the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party in 1998, had been a bright future star in the cabinet of Brian Mulroney and, eventually, the leader of the Progressive Conservatives.

Peter White had asked me to run in the 2004 campaign but I had demurred on the basis that I had only lived in the riding for two years, insufficient time, I thought, to presume that I could present myself as an appropriate representative. However, in the subsequent two years, an already abysmal situation in Ottawa, key-noted by AdScam, had deteriorated. The new Prime Minister, Paul Martin, proved incapable of coping with what he had inherited when Jean Chrétien finally decided to relinquish the reins of power. At the time, the Canadian government was, to all intents and purposes, paralyzed and had lost the confidence of the House of Commons and, indeed, the nation. So when I was re-approached, it was not so much an additional two years of residence in the riding that made the difference but that I was distraught, as were most, over the situation. I decided that I would try to do something about it.

The Liberal rule of a dozen or so years was winding down through the corruption that inevitably sets in after too many years in office, and by corruption I do not necessarily mean illegal and dishonest acts but rather the rot of having been in power for too long. Meanwhile, the new Conservative Party, lead by Stephen Harper, presented what might be a refreshing option. Little was known about this party as it had never, in its new make-up, performed as the government of the country and it had only been in existence for a scant two and one half years. It had come into existence as a merger, in December 2003, of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance Party.

The new party had the disadvantage of not only being untried but in having as its leader someone about whom the country knew very little, Stephen Harper, and about whom little could be found. It was impossible to penetrate the mind or soul of the man as he never spoke to the press or the people about himself and his aspirations and Google provided no answers. It almost seemed as if he was a robot programmed to deliver, and very effectively one must add, political policy utterances. Even William Johnson, in his excellent book "Stephen Harper", did not succeed in allowing us to come closer to an understanding of the man himself. The party was also plagued by the disaffection of many of the Progressive Conservatives, in part because its last leader, Peter MacKay, during that party's leadership convention, had promised David Orchard, his leadership rival in order to obtain his support, not to discuss merger with the Alliance, a promise upon which he subsequently reneged.

However, in March 2005 the new Conservative Party issued its Policy Statement in the form of a booklet which described its policy objectives and the principles upon which they were based. This was refreshing in and of itself. How often do political parties, not to mention candidates, actually publish their policy intentions in a readable and digestible form? Further, the policies and related principles were ones to which I could relate, including a respect for the constitutional rights of the provinces, paying down the national debt, a commitment to regional development, an entire section devoted to the environment, including a practical plan to deal with it, restoring respect for parliamentary democracy, initiating parliamentary reforms and permitting free votes in the House of Commons except in respect of fiscal bills, to mention but a few.

Of the many definitions of conservatism, that of George Grant (1918-1988) in his "Philosophy in the Mass Age" is, in my opinion, as good as any:

*"There can be no doubt that we all have need of a proper conservatism, an order which gives form to persons, to families, to education, to worship, to politics, and to the economic system".*

These are the prudent and positive elements of the conservatism that we all, whether privately or politically, seek from time to time as a counter-balance to the generally less grounded policies of liberals. Both political philosophies serve our purposes at appropriate periods of time. That, to me, is the essence of the two party system. It is not that we need to indelibly type ourselves as being Conservatives or Liberals for conservative elements mixed with liberal tendencies surely make the well-rounded person.

I thought, I could not run for the tired Liberals, even though I am more generally inclined to liberal trends of thinking, but this new party, based upon what it had published, was worth a chance. If it provided the type of planned moderate conservatism as enunciated by George Grant, we might be able to get the

country back on track. Indeed, what was the alternative? I had, in fact, been the Green Party candidate from November 2004 until March 2005 but had no choice other than to resign when I realized that the party had no organizational ability and was nothing more than an idea without political structure, which, I am afraid, still seems to be the case. My plan was to try to get elected and then see what I could do once I got to Ottawa. So, having discussed the matter at length but in a space of only three days with my wife, Jeanne, I made an appointment to see Mr. White to tell him that I would accept his invitation, assuming that he, with all his experience would be my mentor and tell me how to proceed.

Peter White welcomed me on an April Saturday morning into the country kitchen, which serves also as an office and general meeting room, of his home in Knowlton on the eastern shore of Lac Brome. Peter, born in 1938, is one of the best read and educated people I have ever met. He has had a life of high level politics, interspersed with periods as an international and domestic newspaper owner and other business pursuits all over the world.

On the political side of his ledger, and following graduation from the Faculty of Law of Laval University, where he was active in student political affairs with his contemporary Brian Mulroney, he commenced his political career in 1963 as special assistant to the Hon. Maurice Sauvé, federal minister of forestry and rural development, moving then to an equivalent position with the Hon. Daniel Johnson (senior), Premier of Quebec. From 1983 to 1986 he worked in Ottawa for the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, the Prime Minister of Canada, as a member of his transition team and later as Special Assistant for Appointments.

From July 1988 to September 1989 he was Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and in 1996 and 1997, he was Chairman of the P.C. Canada Fund. He has for the last number of years been the President of the Brome-Missisquoi Conservative Party Riding Association and since 2007 also holds the position of President of the local riding association of the Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ).

On the newspaper front he is best known as being Conrad Black's first employer, having given Mr. Black the position of general factotum of the Knowlton Advertiser. More famously the two of them then purchased the Sherbrooke Daily Record from which Mr. Black launched his well publicized career.

### Chapter III - Winning The Nomination

At my meeting with Peter White I was a little set back to learn that there was another person, Jacques Dalton, about whom Peter White could tell me very little, who had already entered his name as a candidate and that, therefore, there would need to be a nomination contest. I further learned from Peter that one wins a nomination not on the basis of one's curriculum vitae and general reputation but by getting into the room on the nomination day more "friends" than the other guy: *your sisters and your cousins and your aunts* and anyone else who one might persuade to sign on and show up. I vaguely remembered reading of candidates, whether for nominations or general elections, who had reputedly won their positions by gathering the wayfarers from the highways and byways with promises of an unlimited flow of booze for the necessary period or by palming whatever it might take to buy a vote.

I felt my feet becoming cold but, perhaps unfortunately, my brain kicked in to remind me that I had decided to run because of the corruption in the system and that I could not turn and flee just because I had now, perhaps, encountered it. Peter then informed me that I was a little late getting into the race and that there was only one week left within which to sign up new members to the party. Well, that's easy, I thought, for I'll be all done and out of this in short order. I was not about to hit the streets for the next seven days in a futile attempt to find people, if any, who would sign up for such a foolish venture as supporting a person who wanted to be a candidate for "did you say the Conservatives? You must be nuts. Whatever has possessed you?"

So, what I decided to do was to send to everyone of the thirty-five registered members of the local Association a copy of my C.V. covered by a note saying that I was running for the position and asking them, if they felt so inclined, to attend the nomination. I was far from having the seasoned politician's approach of actually asking strangers to vote for me.

A little closer to the event I decided that I should phone the thirty-five, of whom at the time I only knew two, to introduce myself and ask them if they had any questions. They seemed pleased to hear from me and I had a number of pleasant chats but only one which could be classified as in depth. That was with a person who wanted to know my position on battered women, in respect of which I learned my first campaigning lesson. When one is asked a question it is often because the questioner wants to tell you all about it. Let him. While he is doing it you have time, perhaps, to formulate something intelligent to say. If you do not, say that you would like to meet him to discuss it further "when time allows". At a later date I was taught by my handler, Jacques Dubuc, to smile, shake hands and move on. That might get you a vote. Discussion could turn into a debate and then into a disagreement and thus into a vote lost.

I also discovered from my conversations with the local party members that they did not know Jacques Dalton. This would be peculiar in a small town, rural environment, unless Mr. Dalton was, perhaps, as much of a newcomer as I. He told me, in due course, that his father had been born in the riding but that he, Jacques, had spent most of his formative life on Canadian Forces bases in Canada and NATO bases in Europe. Jacques had quite recently returned to Brome-Missisquoi and was now a college teacher. At our first meeting I discovered him to be a very pleasant thirty to forty year old person. However, I was unable to determine what motivated his decision to enter politics. I was later to learn that aspiring politicians generally promote themselves with reference to political issues and what they would attempt to do if elected, rather than by publicizing their credentials as one would if one were looking for any other type of job.

The day arrived. I sat nervously waiting for the room to fill and the contest to start. Initially there were only about twenty people in the room but one minute before the appointed time of 2 pm, in marched about twenty people of approximately the same age as Jacques. They all sat together and smiled at Jacques with occasional thumbs up and other signs of support. I did a rough mental count from where I sat at the front. I figured that his group outnumbered mine but I couldn't be certain because I did not know who all the people were and I had no way of knowing who I had counted and who I had not in my most unscientific survey.

Peter having dispensed the introductory formalities then called upon me to speak first, I having lost the coin toss, Jacques having elected to go second. If I may say so, I am not shy on my feet. I debated at school, was a member of the Bishop's University debating team that won the national title in 1961 and had spent nigh on forty years as a lawyer pleading in court. I would have preferred to go second but what did it matter. According to Peter White's theory, it didn't. All that counted, as he had counselled me, was who had the larger number of friends in the room.

I had set the broad outlines of what I would say in my allotted ten minutes which, in Quebec, is less because one must, if one is capable, spend time in both languages, particularly in a place such as Brome-Missisquoi. It is a myth that all Quebecers are bilingual. The majority are not. The two solitudes live as comfortable co-inhabitants. I had decided that I should start in French, not only because that is the protocol in Quebec but because French is not my primary language and I thought that I had better prove my ability to speak the language, however imperfectly.

After breaking the ice with a story in French which, happily, the audience thought to be funny, because it was intended to be, I touched on two platform items. The first was the need for Canada to recognize that its existence is not confined to the large cities and that its potential must, for many reasons, lie in the rural

areas, thus requiring more concentration by the federal government on non-urban issues. The second was the age-old issue of the place of Quebec within Canada, my thesis being that Canada has consistently refused, particularly with Liberal governments, to respect the constitution's division of legislative powers between the Federal Parliament and the Legislatures of the Provinces and that until this is resolved neither the Province of Quebec nor Canada will reach their potential. I could sense the emotion rising in the room and the interest in my thesis was not just with the French Quebecers. Most Quebecers, irrespective of their origins, are now committed to the French fact of Quebec. I sat down knowing, at least in terms of public speaking, that Jacques had a tough act to follow.

I do not want to disparage Jacques' speech in any way. However, all anyone can remember of it was that every point was either preceded or concluded with the words "as Mr. Marler has just said" and that did make an impression on the delegates. After Jacques' delivery, the members were called upon to vote by depositing their ballots into a cardboard box. Then suddenly the moment had arrived; the counting of the ballots in my first ever political endeavour. I was as nervous as I have ever been.

As a lawyer, I am used to setbacks with judgments and have become somewhat inured to the inevitability of things over which one ultimately has no control. In court it is only the judge or jury that decides. All that the lawyers can do is their best and then hope. But now I had to win. I had things to say and do. I did not want to lose. Maybe, I thought, this is what I was born to do. Peter White intoned as he counted the ballots: "Dalton, Marler, Dalton, Marler, Dalton, Marler, Marler, Dalton, Dalton, Dalton, Marler, Dalton, Marler, Marler". Holy smokes, I thought, this is close. The tension mounted. Then at one point the sequence became less even and "Marler" seemed to come more often than "Dalton". In the end it was 24-14 or something like that.

And then I was really nervous because I was now committed to a course and I became acutely aware that I really did not know how to begin or what to do and that these days leading up to the nomination were nothing compared to what lay ahead. Forty odd people, most complete strangers to me, had suddenly changed my life and set me on a course which I had thought about but never thought out. I knew nothing about political campaigning except what I had observed from the cheap seats. Now it was as if one finds oneself on the stage facing the seats. Previous musings suddenly are a reality and then, as in a dream, one forgets one's lines.

Peter White awoke me from my daze suggesting that it would be appropriate for me to say something. I mumbled the usual sort of routine thanks for the support that the members had given me which, I said, inspired me with the confidence to go forward, (a confidence which, I can assure you, was tinged with fright). I was then rescued by a young man, Mark Quinlan, an organizer from the party, who

started a chant “MARLER, MARLER, MARLER, MARLER”, for which I silently thanked him but which embarrassed me as I do not think that winning an electoral contest is the equivalent of becoming a rock star. It is, as I have suggested, a humbling moment. It confronts one with one’s future responsibilities as opposed to being an acknowledgment of things accomplished. Maybe that is what such chants are intended to do, spur one on into an undertaking which is costly, disruptive of one’s life, depriving of one’s freedom and any possibility of anonymity, and always uncertain as to result, all of which I was yet to personally experience.

## Chapter IV - Preparing For An Election

At the time it was being strongly predicted that the Liberal minority government would be defeated on its up-coming budget. Remember Belinda Stronach? She had run to be the leader of the Conservative Party, losing to Stephen Harper, but remained in the party, considerably adding to its appeal and profile. On the eve of the vote on the budget, which could have resulted in the defeat of the government and therefore in a general election, she abandoned the party, as well as her Conservative Party boyfriend Peter MacKay, to cross the floor to the Liberals, an opportunist's betrayal if ever there was one. This same period was the one in which most people heard for the first time the name Chuck Cadman, an Independent from British Columbia, whose vote on the budget was also a crucial element in the contest and who, it was subsequently alleged, Conservative Party operatives may have attempted to influence with monetary incentives. In the event, the Liberals survived but were mortally wounded.

However, their survival bought me time. I had no organization. I had no money. So, what to do? Go and see Peter White, of course; he would tell me what to do and how to do it. He was as old a hand at the game as ever there was.

I broached the topic in the early part of the summer when the two of us were driving back from my first ever real meeting with Stephen Harper. I had seen Mr. Harper, in fact shaken his hand, on a couple of occasions but these had been at typical glad-handing, meet the leader parties. On this occasion, he had come to our part of the world, the Eastern Townships, to meet the region's candidates. As I eventually became accustomed, "we" all got there on time and Mr. Harper arrived late. I guess this is thought to be good political management, if not the manners our parents taught us. We were the guests. We had been invited by him. No big deal. Don't stress the small stuff.

However, when he did arrive there was no introduction. In fact there was no mingling with our boss. He seemed to be nervously standing off. A sense of unease started to pervade the room. It was the type of situation where I might have tried to set people at ease by making the introductions myself. Something like, in a voice sufficient to be heard: "Welcome to Sherbrooke Mr. Harper. Let me introduce you around." But it certainly was not my place to do so. And anyway the only person I knew in the room was Peter. So I remained silent and progressively felt more uncomfortable. Eventually, a waiter told us all to sit down so that we could be served lunch. Mr. Harper, with his Ottawa clique, sat in a corner by themselves. "We" shifted for ourselves. It was all rather disappointing and awkward.

After our sandwiches (had I been sixty years younger I would have said "Mummy, can we go home now") one of the guys in suits said that Mr. Harper wanted to meet the candidates only. We, all six of us, would go to another room.

The rest, organizers and general political groupies should stay where they were and perhaps Mr. Harper would have time to come back briefly to say goodbye. However, no one had arranged for another room. So we milled about, the now important candidates with "*les autres*", Mr. Harper standing apart, while the organizers, who I was to learn generally had no experience in organizing anything, scurried about in a fruitless search for a private place.

Eventually we went outside onto an adjacent shopping plaza. It was certainly private enough because it had started to rain. We huddled under two large umbrellas and tried not to get too wet as we discussed the future of the nation with the future Prime Minister. I correct myself. There was no discussion. We were told by Mr. Harper's aide, Ms. Josée Verner, a future cabinet minister, that he wanted to hear from each of us in turn what we considered to be the primary political issues of our region. Well, for an unrehearsed question put to a group of aspiring politicians, none having ever been one, Mr. Harper got precisely what I expected he would. Gobbledy-gook. One person said "jobs, jobs, jobs". Another said something about his local school commission, a provincial jurisdiction if ever there was one.

For my part, I congratulated Mr. Harper on the clarity of his speeches but suggested that he should lay-off disparaging the Bloc as being an "impotent cul-de-sac", to use his words. I said that Quebecers know their politics and why they vote for whom they vote. It was, I suggested, counter-productive to instruct them for whom they should not vote and particularly not the Bloc which is many Quebecers' default party when the federalist option is, for whatever reason, considered unattractive. I suggested he should rather accentuate the positive aspects of the party's platform. Mr. Harper offered no comment to any one of us and if he thanked us for our time I don't recall. It was time for him to go and he left without having time to go back to see "*les autres*" who by that time had left anyway. In subsequent weeks and months Mr. Harper continued to slam the Bloc with ever increasing vigour and vitriol.

This has been a digression from my saying that I took the opportunity of being with Peter White that day to find out how I should proceed in going about running an electoral campaign. Before you, perhaps, become as stunned as I was by what he had to say, let me tell you that I came to learn over the course of time that Peter has all the wisdom of an experienced politician and that what he says bears close attention. He said that the local association manages the local administrative affairs of the party but has nothing to do with an election campaign.

Once the writ is dropped, meaning once a formal campaign period is launched by Elections Canada, the candidate is on his own. If the Association has funds in its bank account, it might or might not decide to make a donation to the candidate. But that, he said, was academic for the reason that the Association had no funds in its account beyond the few dollars necessary to send out its notices and rent a

room for its annual general meeting. Thus, he concluded, the Association would be playing no part in my campaign, either from an organizational or financial point of view.

That led to the first stall in our conversation. Maybe I can now understand the impact of a taser gun and the moment of panic that it induces. A few minutes later I hesitantly asked him what advice he might give me, hoping that he might at least offer personal financial support or, even better, offer to raise the funds that I would need, he moving in financial circles far beyond my realm. However, his answer was that I should do nothing and certainly not spend any of my own money. He explained that the candidate is irrelevant in an election campaign. The electors vote for a party irrespective of the identity of the candidate. It is the leaders that make the difference. In any event, he continued, you are not going to win. No Conservative will in Quebec except by some fluke. So no one is going to give you money. Get your face in front of a camera and maybe you will accidentally find yourself in a newspaper. Maybe some public debates will be organized. Otherwise, stick to your day job.

That led to the second stall in our conversation. One reads that the custom is to taser frequently. I eventually delivered him to his home after many minutes of silence and contemplation. I felt very alone.

## Chapter V - What To Do

The summer rolled along. I decided that I should join in any public event that was offered. I went to a Canada Day celebration and ran into Heward Grafftey. He was one of the disaffected Progressive Conservatives who did not go along with the merger and who had nothing good to say about the new party or its leader. I knew that he intended to run in the next election but was not taking him seriously. He was seventy-eight years old, not in good health and going through a routine which, I thought, would gain him little support. How wrong I was, not in my observations but in my lack of appreciation of what Heward meant to the people of the riding.

Popularly referred to as the Gnome from Brome because of his physical shortness of stature and the twinkle in his eye, Heward Grafftey, born in 1928, was first elected to Canada's Parliament as the Member for Brome-Missisquoi in 1958, under the banner of the Progressive Conservative Party (a party which in 2003, following its merger with the Canadian Alliance Party, became the Conservative Party of Canada). He held his seat until the Trudeau (Liberal) sweep of 1968 but regained it in the following election in 1972 and continued to hold it until the defeat of the Joe Clark Progressive Conservative government in 1980.

The residents of Brome-Missisquoi would not have disagreed with my assessment of the old man but neither were they about to forget what he had done for them over the years. I first ran into the Heward phenomenon at a golf tournament, my attendance at which I thought would be good for my profile. In my haste, nervousness and general confusion I had, on arrival at the golf club, managed to lock my car keys in my car. Fortunately I had extracted my golf clothes and decided that I would phone the CAA after the tournament, which I did.

I waited a few minutes for the fellow to show up and sure enough he jimmed the lock. When he had finished I gave him a tip with my Conservative Party campaign card and said "*je suis David Marler le candidat pour le Parti Conservateur*". He replied "*mais ça ce n'est pas possible, c'est M. Grafftey qui est le Conservateur*." He said it as if Heward had a lifetime hold on the position. I was to come across the Grafftey phenomenon many times in the next few months. I continued to attend public events but few knew who I was or were very much interested. However, the more events I went to, the more people started to recognize me.

You may by now be realizing that I did not take Peter White's advice. I was determined to become known and to make a mark, if only as a prelude to a second run after failing in the first. But what could I do to advance my cause? Parliament was in its summer recess, the press had nothing to chew on, and

Messrs. Martin and Harper were doing the summer fair routine. I could not attract any serious attention; sympathy for my naiveté was as close as I got to any interest. We invited friends to dinner. I thought they might ask me how I was doing and that this would turn the conversation towards my political aspirations. But they didn't. Perhaps they were too polite to launch such an embarrassing topic.

I decided to go to the fall fairs and Jeanne agreed to come with me for the first outing. We selected the Arts and Crafts Fair of the Anglican Church of Bedford. Into the lion's den. This was Paradis (read Liberal) country. But I doubted that Denis Paradis was an Anglican and at least my first such venture would be in my own language. We found our way to Bedford and to the church. A man was helping park the cars. So upon alighting from my vehicle I decided that I would start with him. I approached him with my card in my hand and said "Bonjour". He immediately retorted "Speak English?" in a tone which made it more a challenge than a question. I switched into that language and said "My name is David Marler and I am the candidate for the Conservative Party" to which he replied "Well, you're not welcome here then but I guess I can't stop you from going in".

Jeanne and I proceeded, somewhat taken aback. The reception ranged from cool to hostile. A person at one of the luncheon tables asked me how many agricultural fairs there are annually in Brome-Missisquoi. I said that I was not absolutely sure but would guess four. She responded that if I could not answer that question correctly why should I suppose that anyone would vote for me. Chastened, I made a mental note to find out the answer to the question, which I did (it is two, depending on what is included within the definition, Brome County and Bedford County) but I have yet to be asked it again.

Another person delivered to me an extensive diatribe on the failure of our politicians to support the position of farmers. I agreed that this was so having very specific views on the subject, particularly that we are losing our ability to feed ourselves due to the concentration of our agricultural production in the mega-agro industry, leading to the demise of small farms and therefore to the decline of the rural communities to the point where they are not sustainable. When I asked him in what respect, he gave me the same sort of answer as the person who asked the question about the fairs, implying that if I was not an expert in his particular area of concern, what business did I have in pretending that I should be the county's representative.

However, as we were leaving the Rev. Mr. Sparling and his wife arrived and before I could dissuade him, he took me over to meet the parking attendant saying to him that he must meet the new political hope of the riding. So at least there were some people on my side and I by no means objected to being promoted by a well loved and respected member of the local clergy. I have not reached the point of cynicism where I deny the possibility of divine intervention.

Jeanne and I left the event with mixed feelings but with enough energy to drop in, on our way home, at a similar craft fair in Sutton where, again, some were interested and some were not. But on each such occasion I realized that I was advancing my cause, however slowly and incrementally. I was also beginning to learn that to have a chance one must campaign as Heward Grafftey did, meeting as many voters as one could, ignoring no one and no place, however remote or sparsely populated. The old farm community knows everyone of their kind in the county. In Stanbridge East I met cousins of people who lived in Abercorn and in Bedford I met relatives of people who lived in Farnham and so on and so forth. Let the network work. However, I knew that I would need a decade to get me and my message to the voters by such a method. It needed to be supplemented.

A few days later I had an inspiration. I decided to write down why I was doing this. Perhaps it would sober me up. It had exactly the reverse effect and made me all the more committed towards my goal. I circulated my essay "Where I Stand and Why" to anyone who would take a copy. It obviously struck a cord. People started to phone me for a copy. I decided that I had better get it translated into French. Jean-Claude Lefebvre, a professional translator and keen observer of the political scene, became intrigued and proposed to me a translation fee that was only a fraction of what his efforts were worth.

The essay, initially a simply bound, photocopied affair, gradually morphed into a plastic cover with binder and a professionally taken mug shot of yours truly, courtesy of Jacques Laurent who took and processed it for another ridiculously low fee. Yes, I was breaking Peter's number one rule: don't spend your own money. And there is no doubt that I was starting to dig a hole, the type that only gets bigger and deeper. Additionally, I was being distracted from my law practice and, to compound the problem, had decided that I should not take cases which involved one Brome-Missisquoi resident against another, thus decreasing my portfolio of files and, as a result, my income.

I kept on telling Jeanne that the outlay would stop eventually, that there were only so many people who would want to read my essay, so the printing of copies at \$9.00 a pop would cease, that the charity golf season was coming to an end and with it the other seasonal activities, all with their attendant costs; that the election would come soon and I would not be elected and within a few months I could get back to my real life of lawyering and look forward to vacations with family, not cancelling them because we did not know what we would be doing or when.

However, in the late fall I received two telephone calls that changed the picture.

## Chapter VI - Support

The first phone call was in October while Jeanne and I were driving to Quebec City for a weekend to get away from it all. The cell phone rang. The voice said “are you the David Marler who is running as the Conservative Party candidate in Brome-Missisquoi?” I said that was so. He said, “well if you want to be elected you had better come and see me because I control the vote in Magog and that’s where you win or lose the riding”. I said that I would go and see him the next week. Jeanne asked me what he sounded like. I replied that he sounded like a real character but that I had better find out because it was the only offer I had and time was running out. Paul Martin had said that he would dissolve Parliament and put the country into an election following the publication of the Gomery Report which was due out in November.

The following week I went to Magog to find the caller, Joel Bonn, and met one of life’s characters. He had a series of campaign models which one could follow, all based upon his previous experience, which he recounted at length. The gold plan, which was foolproof at a cost of \$50,000 would be to rent from him one of his planes (I asked him if he had planes; he told me not to worry about that) and he would fly over every road in the county trailing a banner which would say “VOTEZ MARLER”. I said I could not afford that. He said that I should borrow the money (certainly not Peter White’s counsel). No one ever got elected, he advised me, without personally investing into the campaign his first year’s salary as a Member of Parliament.

“What if I do not win”, I asked him. “I told you, it’s foolproof”, he said. “If you want me to handle your campaign you better learn to listen”. In the almost two hours of this initial meeting, I had barely spoken. I couldn’t get a word in edgewise as he unfolded the world according to Bonn which would lead to that seat waiting with my name already on it in the House of Commons. I said that I would go home and reflect on what he had said and would get back to him. His parting comment was that had better be tomorrow because otherwise it would be too late. Too late for what, he did not say. Nor did I really think that I wanted to know.

I didn’t call him back immediately and in the interim I received the second call.

The voice was of an obviously civilized senior gentleman. He said that he wanted to meet me to discuss my political plans and asked me whether I would have lunch with him in Cowansville the following day. His name, he told me, was Guy Champagne. We introduced ourselves at the restaurant Il Castillo. He did not waste time in getting to the subject and asked me how I was progressing. I replied as optimistically as possible, not wishing to reveal my lack of knowledge, organization or money, and concentrated on explaining my motivations, a task

which was not difficult given the recent writing of my essay. He listened, saying nothing.

When I had finished, he said “and what are you doing for money?” I acknowledged that was a problem and that my appeal to the thirty-five members had yet to bring a response. He replied that he had received his copy of that appeal and had read my c.v. He said “you know David, we don’t get people with your type of experience offering to run. Maybe in the cities but not down here. You are instant cabinet material. I am going to support you as fully as the rules allow. Here is a cheque to get you going.” I glanced at it. It was for a considerable, but I hasten to add, legal sum. He continued “as the election will not happen until next year there will be a further sum then. I go to Florida in January. Make sure you get back to me before I leave.” I thanked him, trying to hold back signs of the emotion with which I was flooded, and drove home in a daze.

Funny thing life is. The kinder the gesture, the greater the obligation it imposes on the beneficiary. Now I could not give up. I had an obligation to Mr. Champagne and I could not let him down. I had to find the way to build on his conviction and generosity. Once home, I composed a letter I would send to everyone I knew in the country who I thought might wish to help. By the time the election was called in early December 2005 money was no longer a critical factor. I had proved to myself that what people saw in me and read in my essay created a combination that worked. Above all it imbued me with a confidence which to that point had eluded me.

At the end of that week Joel phoned. “I told you to phone me” he said. “I can’t be forever chasing my candidate around. Now get your tail down here right now and we’ll lay a plan which you can afford.” I agreed that I would go to see him. He was undoubtedly a man of energy, even though his personal objective was difficult to ascertain. In any event he was still the only person I had met in Magog. But I made a careful mental note not to tell him of my new found funding. I would see of what use he could be introducing me around Magog. No fancy schemes. I had also decided that having no organization, I would concentrate on a media and web-based campaign and the circulation of my essay. I did not have time to do the door-to-door routine which is particularly difficult in a large rural riding, and, anyway, “Conservative” was still a word which caused at best a quizzical raising of the eyebrows.

## Chapter VII - The Writ Is Dropped

### Part one: pre-Christmas

The writ was dropped in early December for an election date of January 26. This meant that there would almost certainly be a hiatus over the Christmas/New Year holidays and I decided to use the pre-Christmas segment to prepare our media and web-campaign and to do the rounds of the shopping centres.

Joel Bonn was key to the Magog sector and he was dynamite. He marched me into stores, office buildings, the curling club, the Mayor's office, the Chamber of Commerce, to mention but a few of the locations. His focus was to introduce me to the players and the influential. Standing in front of stores was not his gig, at least not in December or January for rather obvious reasons.

For one reason or another there was a general rejection in Magog of the Liberal candidate Denis Paradis, not the least of which reasons was that he had decided not to campaign. He had deduced and correctly that because of AdScam he would have no chance. The writing was already on the wall from the 2004 election when the Bloc candidate, Christian Ouellet, had given him a close run (a mere 1072 votes separating them). Further, Magog is Bloc territory when it suits it to be. However, the Bloc, while generally starting with 30% of the francophone vote as a given, is not every French Quebecker's panacea. More, at least in Brome-Missisquoi, will vote for one of the federalist parties. In this election they were not going to vote Liberal, at least not in sufficient numbers for it to win. This opened the door for a Conservative candidate even if only by default.

To my surprise and delight the reception in Magog was fantastic. I was made to feel very comfortable and welcome. Fairly quickly others picked up the enthusiasm. Mayor Marc Poulin let me know what was going on in the town. The directors of the Chamber of Commerce discussed their concerns and invited me to various gatherings. Michel Lapierre, the president and owner of a chain of vegetable stores, having read my essay, told me that he would give the federalists one last chance and became an enthusiastic supporter and generous donor to my campaign.

Ultimately, however, it is the people that count and here Yves Grandmaison and Gilles Émond, two long time Conservatives, took me on as their special project. Gilles would accompany me campaigning. Yves used his Main Street barber shop as the unofficial but very effective headquarters of my Magog campaign. At an annual youth hockey convention he introduced me to every single one of the two to three hundred people present. Old friend and fishing buddy, Paul Amos, who had retired with his wife Nancy to Georgeville, just down the road from Magog, campaigned with me in the streets.

In Cowansville, Pierre Beaudry, the best known of the local notaries, and Bob Marquis, the retired owner of a significant factory, would stand with me outside Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, IGA, Loblaws and wander the local mall. They knew everyone in town. Good words were circulated to City Hall. The lunch time crowd in the local brasserie, where we repaired to keep warm, started to recognize me. Closer to home my wife, Jeanne, and Rhett Lawson of Lawson Communications designed my campaign brochure, which was to be mailed to every household in the riding, and prepared a weekly series of ads for the local newspapers. The graphics were repetitive and each week the caption was changed to such things as "David Marler supports a green, sustainable economy". "David Marler stands for Provincial rights", and so on and so forth. Things were starting to tick.

An element that remained totally lacking was any basic organizational team. As previously discussed, Peter White and the local riding Association played no role. And as to the party itself, it was never heard from unless it wanted bodies at a Harper appearance in Montreal. After a couple of those I decided not to attend. The candidates were never introduced. The whole focus was on Mr. Harper. I did not object to that but another face in the crowd could have been hired, an extra as it were to use cinema terminology, at less than it cost me to drive in and out of Montreal and stand about for four or five hours. I had work to do on the ground in Brome-Missisquoi.

The lack of a team and of any knowledgeable organizer was certainly a serious deficiency. The first problem was how to get up the 500 signs that the party had sent. Once that was taken care of, courtesy of Tom McGovern and John Stone in their pickups, we discovered that 500 signs melted into the background to the point of invisibility in a riding the size of Brome-Missisquoi where Denis Paradis had 900 signs up. We needed to buy 200 more as a minimum. Sylvie Messier, a temporarily out of work administrative secretary, joined the team. Margot Allen, who knows everyone, filled in part-time. I spent every spare moment hustling for more money to keep everything going.

Then the boys from Bishop's came on board to keep me guessing, wondering, despairing, laughing and enthused. It was now well into December. The phone rang. It was a student from the University who asked if he and six of his fellow political science students could be of assistance. They had been turned down by the candidates of Sherbrooke and Compton-Stanstead. I invited them to get over to Knowlton, saying that I would feed them. That evening we interviewed each other at a local restaurant.

Only one of them, David Petroziello, had any previous experience and when they reported for duty in the New Year, there were only four of them, all with the exception of David, who was from Quebec City, being unilingual Torontonians. David knew how to run a campaign, having been involved in the 1995 Quebec

referendum campaign, and was a little older than the rest who, while very enthusiastic, had ideas which were more theoretical than practical.

I realized that they would lose their enthusiasm if I became too much of a sergeant major distributing routine tasks, such as putting up and tending the signs, which kept on coming down due to the winter storms. In any event they did not know their way around. What they wanted was to write my political platform, coach me on political theory and design a new website, they considering mine to have been quite outdated in style. Well, the platform never got written and the website never came to fruition. They couldn't phone anyone because they couldn't speak French and they kept on having to go back to the University for one reason or another, rendering them unreliable. David was excellent, but it was more than a one man job.

Tony Rotherham's truck was put into a ditch by the boys. (Tony, an arch Conservative, would regale me with conservative political theory in our drives around the county. Tony had said that I was not to drive myself anywhere in the winter storms. It was his undertaken duty to keep me alive until January 26.) Our four teak garden chairs which I lent to them for the office I had rented for them, were left outside one night to never be seen again. I needed to spend time counselling one of them in respect of his girlfriend problems and it took me days to clean up the debris of dozens of pizzas which were left behind in their office after the election. However, they were great fun to have around and were visibly spectacular, David having ordered "Vote Marler/Conservative Party" T-shirts and Conservative blue tuques. They made quite an impression and made everyone think we were much more organized than we were.

As to political thought and so as to balance Tony Rotherham, Dale Skinner, the minister of our church but also a onetime president of the Nova Scotia Young Liberals, would spend time with me on the topic of the day as it emerged from the national campaign. All of which was very educational and useful for the occasions upon which I was asked, formally or informally, to discuss current political topics, particularly, as I shall come to, on the weekly radio show.

One of the first consequences of the lack of organization and electoral experience occurred when a staunch Conservative went to vote in the advance poll before heading to Florida for the winter. He phoned from the polling booth in considerable distress to tell me that my name was not on the ballot. I had relied on David Petroziello who went to the organizers' meeting with the regional Elections Canada official to make sure that all was in order. When he returned from the meeting he gave me an Elections Canada file but did not alert me that there was something in it which needed my immediate attention. That something was Elections Canada form EC 20010. It required one hundred signatures of Canadian citizens resident in Brome-Missisquoi as a pre-requisite to me having my name on the ballot. I thought that having been publicly nominated as the party's candidate, my listing on the ballot would be automatic. Not so. One of a

“million” little lessons learned by a neophyte politician with no mentor. Imagine my despair. And the Bishop’s gang had gone home for the Christmas vacation.

Margot Allen volunteered to attempt to obtain the necessary one hundred signatures. Two days later she reported back with about thirty saying that almost all the people she ran into were Liberals. That was not surprising this being anglo Knowlton. So I took the list and stood in the Knowlton Post Office and accosted everyone who came in, pleading with them, irrespective of their political stripe, to sign for the sake of democracy. Most did. Two days later and fourteen into the campaign I was finally official. Another lesson learned. In politics the human aspect must be undertaken by the candidate. Anything to do with asking the public for anything, especially money and votes, must be done personally and preferably face to face.

The expenses were mounting. I kept writing and phoning. I kept receiving. I was staying alive but I had no illusions about winning. The English were reluctant to vote Liberal but were not yet ready to vote Conservative. An added factor was that Paul Martin lived, as he still does, in the riding and people were not going to let him down. The French were going to vote Bloc. Grafftey was taking votes from me. Perhaps more correctly put, I wasn’t taking any votes from him.

Then I had a couple of huge breaks. Up until about the twentieth of December I had no coverage to speak of by the newspapers and my ads had not begun to run. Another advance poll voter went with his wife to vote. After exiting, the wife asked the husband whether he had voted for Mr. Marler. He said no because when reading the ballot he found a name above what he thought was the Conservative Party listing, he voted for that person whose name was Heward Grafftey. Heward had formed the Progressive Canadian Party but he never used its full name. In print, on his signs and in registering with Elections Canada, he used “P.C. Party” which, in English, is the abbreviation of Progressive Conservative Party. Not everyone, of course, follows politics enough to have known that the Progressive Conservative Party no longer existed. Whatever the interpretation of “P.C. Party”, it certainly was confusing. The voter considered that he had been duped, went back into the polling station and demanded to have the right to vote again.

When that did not work, he phoned the local newspaper, La Voix de l’Est, which phoned me and half-an-hour later Hugo de Grandpré interviewed me in front of the polling station as I held a copy of a ballot slip pointing to the misleading entry. The next day I was front page, big photo. Now people knew, at least those that read the newspapers, that I was the Conservative Party candidate, that there were not, as some thought, two of us, and that Heward, that sly old fox, was pulling a typical political fast one. But how many other people had voted for him by error before the game was exposed? And how many people who might have voted for me did not for the first number of days when my name was not on the

ballot? However, I told myself, “get a grip. You’re not going to win this thing. You never were going to win it. If anything you are setting yourself up for next time.”

The other break was a call from the CBC English Quebec regional network which was seeking to find a candidate from each of the four main parties (Bloc, Conservative, Liberal and NDP) to participate in a weekly morning political panel discussion. I readily agreed. I had a distinct advantage over my co-panelists. Firstly, this was in English and I was the only anglo on the panel. Secondly, I went armed with the Conservative Party Policy Declaration booklet. So when the host, Tim Belford, asked a question on a policy issue and the others floundered about, I simply flipped to the applicable section of the Conservative Party booklet and read it. As a result, my deliveries were crisp and to the point and the kudos started to come in. The only problem was that the national campaign was not turning any lights on. People were concentrated on the holidays.

Before leaving the pre-Christmas break segment of the campaign, there was a phone call, two in fact, to which I paid no attention at the time. About December 15 I was told that Mr. Nelson Bouffard, Conservative Party organizer from the Quebec regional office, situated in Montreal, was on the line and wanted to speak to me. At the time I could not have put a face to the name. There were two such organizers of which I was aware, Nelson Bouffard and his superior Pierre Coulombe. I may have seen them at one function or another and had probably been introduced but had never had a conversation with either of them before. Mr. Bouffard explained that he was telephoning to tell me that the party was about to deposit \$30,000 into my campaign account but that I did not need to concern myself because it would be immediately withdrawn.

A little startled, I asked him what this was about and what it entailed. He told me that it had only to do with the party and had nothing to do with me. I told him, in no uncertain terms, that I could not accept that a transaction go through my campaign account unless I approved of it and that I could not approve of it if I did not know what it was about. He then proceeded to ask me if I was refusing. I said that if he wanted to put it that way, yes, at least until I had the full details and an adequate explanation of the purpose of the financial manoeuvre. He said that the party would not be happy with me and hung up.

A little while later I received a call from a person who identified himself as Michel Rivard, another organizer with the Conservative Party. He referred to my conversation with Nelson Bouffard and asked me why I was refusing. I told him that it was because Mr. Bouffard was either unable or unwilling to tell me the purpose of the transaction. He explained that the party was going to conduct a publicity campaign featuring the ridings of the Eastern Townships and that the party wanted the ridings of the district to pay for it. I told him that I was conducting my own media campaign and wished to keep all of my expenditures

within the riding. I told him that if he could send me proofs of the advertising or whatever it was I would be prepared to look them over and give him a final decision. He didn't seem interested in my suggestion. He asked me how much money I had raised. I told him enough to meet my campaign's requirements. He thanked me for my time.

I watched the newspapers attentively and monitored the television for signs of the ad campaign but never saw or heard of anything that concentrated on the ridings of the Eastern Townships or its candidates.

### Part two: post Christmas.

Jeanne and I spent Christmas with our daughter Stephanie, her husband, Patrick, and our first granddaughter Daphne, in Thunder Bay. Patrick is a Quebec trained doctor and he and Stephanie wanted to pay off his student debts; easier done as a doctor in Ontario. But that's another issue and a provincial one to boot. Upon our return we picked up on the seasonal parties and wow, I had become a celebrity. Everyone, well not quite but you know what I mean, was talking Conservative. Stephen Harper had made a speech in Quebec City just before Christmas stating that a Conservative government would honour the constitution and Quebec's provincial rights. (Maybe he had read my essay). He added a few specific bells and whistles and that speech turned the tide in Quebec all by itself. Now people actually wanted to meet me.

Lloyd and Johanne O'Toole, recent arrivals from the West, opened their house in the village of Foster for a luncheon on a Sunday. Being long time Conservatives, it was a matter of course for them to rally to the support of the local Conservative candidate. After the usual introductions and small talk amongst a group of some thirty, who were by no means long-standing Conservatives, I made an address the central theme of which was that the Harper Conservatives had undertaken to respect provincial rights and let Quebec take its proper and constitutionally recognized place in the federation.

This, one of the central themes of my essay, is something which I have passionately espoused since my very early years when my father taught me the history of Canada and particularly that of Quebec. The consistent denial of these rights by successive Liberal governments, notwithstanding the attempt by the Mulroney Conservatives to resolve the issue with "Meech Lake", is, in my view, an anchor around the neck of the nation, requiring it to constantly concern itself with the issues of one province, issues which would largely disappear were the federal government to simply honour the Quebec Act and the Constitution. This thesis, which I had briefly touched on in my nomination speech, struck a harmonious chord, one which I was again excited to realize registered with everybody in the room, not just the French Canadians.

Paul Goulet and his wife Michelle, who live in Sutton, graciously opened their house for a soirée with about twenty people, equally curious, some perhaps skeptical, of the resurrected phenomenon of a Conservative movement in Brome-Missisquoi and the country. It gave me an opportunity to realize that I was as well received operating entirely in the French language as I was in English, perhaps more so because of the enthusiasm which the French have for politics.

John and Patricia O'Brien invited Knowltonites to their home for cocktails and a short discourse from yours truly. Senator David Angus and his wife Louise Hébert, who have a secondary residence in Magog, hosted an evening. He, you may remember, was the president of the P.C. Canada Fund during the Mulroney era and is a person who has never been shy to say what has to be said. After introducing me and after I had said my thing, he directed the guests to the buffet and the bar but added that no one would be allowed to leave until they had deposited a cheque in the sterling silver bowl placed strategically in the front hall. After the last of the guests had left, David and I eagerly examined the contents of the bowl. Another \$8,000 to assist the cause.

Jim and Cathy Clubb hosted a reception at their residence in Knowlton, inviting two hundred people and giving me carte blanche to add as many as I wanted. I do not want to brag but many said to me subsequently that they would never have voted Conservative if they had not heard me speak that day. What it was precisely that struck them I am not sure. It may have been my concentration on the need to demand better from our federal politicians. It may have been my insistence on having Ottawa respect provincial rights under the constitution. Or it may have been that they saw a person who was not going to be a slave to party politics and who would say what he thought needed to be said as the occasions arose.

I said that I found it irritating to be dismissed by some because, as they put it, I was a Conservative. Yes, I was running as a candidate under the banner of that party but that, I said, did not describe me definitively and absolutely. I would often say, and said on that occasion, that I was not born with skin the colour of any particularly political party, whether blue, red or green, and that all aspects of any situation needed to be considered in a mature political forum, thus requiring a moderate, composite and non-partisan approach to the issues. This, I know, was refreshing to many although anathema to party faithful of whatever stripe.

Jean L'Ecuyer, who a few months later emerged as the ADQ candidate for Brome-Missisquoi, came on board doing the really basic but essential tasks such as making lists and phoning. I did not see, because of our lack of staff, that making lists of voters and then classifying them as pro or con on the basis of telephone surveys was particularly useful. However, it was something that David Petroziello had set up and insisted upon and I did not want to undermine his

position or enthusiasm. And anyway, what did I know about these things? Precious little, if anything.

Jean did exceedingly well in his own election attempt but was up against the much loved provincial Liberal of the county, Pierre Paradis (Denis' big brother and the veteran of all members of the Quebec Legislature). Pierre owns the riding because of the allegiance of its voters, as did Heward Grafftey on the federal ticket in his day. Brome-Missisquoians do not forget those who have served them well, nor should they.

In addition, long-time friend and musician, Donald Patriquin, accompanied me as I sang Christmas carols at old people's homes. The press came calling. The visiting and campaigning continued.

One very snowy day, Tony Rotherham and I visited the monks at the St. Benoit Abbey. They made me so relaxed and we had such a good exchange that I completely forgot where I was when I answered a question from the oldest of the monks on the subject of euthanasia. He gently reminded me, after I had given my honest but dogmatically unacceptable answer, where I was and to whom I was speaking. Tony Rotherham mentioned to me after we had left that the monks had told him how refreshing it was to receive a politician who was capable of thinking about the issues, not just uttering a party line. The Abbey has its own polling booth which I won handily.

One disappointment was the renegeing by the CBC of a planned candidates' debate scheduled out of its Sherbrooke studios for early January. The reason for the cancellation was the refusal of Denis Paradis to participate. As I have previously noted, Denis had decided that he had no chance this time around and consequently made the decision to not campaign. This, "I'm not going to play if I'm not going to win attitude", was not well received by the voters in Brome-Missisquoi. It is surely part of the democratic process that one shows one's flag whatever the predicted outcome of the contest. A failure to do so is nothing more than a denial of the principles for which one stands. It also fails the voters who are believers in the policies of the particular party.

I was also disappointed in the CBC which I believe has a duty, as part of its mandate, to assist during an election in the dissemination of the parties' policies and the candidates' respective merits. Has it too fallen prey to the notion that politics is simply about power and not about principled thought? As a result there were precious few opportunities for a candidate to discuss and be questioned on his party's positions, his own thoughts and qualifications. We must, I suggest, encourage public speeches and not leave the presentations entirely to the televised leaders' debates, which are so often predictable and in which the public has no opportunity to participate.

I had been lucky enough to receive an offer of assistance from a very special person, Seana Pasic. She had spent her early teenage years in her hometown of Sarajevo trying to stay alive as that town became a shooting gallery during the Balkan Wars in the 1990's. After the war the family decided that her mother, brother and she should immigrate to Canada in the hopes of obtaining an education and finding a future which was almost certainly not attainable in Bosnia. It quickly became apparent that this experiment did not suit her brother and he returned to Sarajevo to live with his father. Seana, however, had received the opportunity of a lifetime and realized it. Her mother, a judge in Bosnia, re-qualified in Montreal to become a member of the Quebec Bar Association. Seana, arriving with no knowledge of either English or French, obtained her leaving certificate from a French language high school, her CEGEP diploma from Dawson College and was accepted into McGill University for studies in political science, at the age of nineteen. During the summer between graduation from CEGEP and registering at McGill, her mother suddenly died from an acute cancer. Seana resolved to carry on but had no place to live and little financial support.

At that time, Jeanne and I lived close to McGill and, with our children grown-up and gone, we had an extra room in our house. We also had two cats, George, named after Georgia O'Keefe, and Emily, named after Emily Carr (Jeanne is an artist), the sitting of which was a perennial problem whenever we wished to be away from home for more than a night. So, we put our names down with the McGill Foreign Student Placement Agency in the hope of finding a cat sitter. Seana was the first to apply. We accepted her immediately and she became an "adopted" daughter, which she remains to this day. To earn what she needed to get through college, she waited on tables and sang Balkan songs at "Café Sarajevo" in Montreal and has become a singing celebrity to the expatriate Balkan community.

In January 2006 Seana was about twenty-four, stunningly beautiful, charming, quadrilingual and enthusiastic to supplement her academic political science studies with some hands on electioneering experience with, as you now well know, one of the most inexperienced mentors available. Our pattern was to simply head out and stop in likely looking locations, wandering about, accosting the locals with my campaign card and banter. Some of the days were bleak enough in results, some were rewarding, some unforgettable, all educational. Three episodes will be illustrative.

The first was in Bar 243 in Mansonville owned and operated by a curling buddy of mine, Karl Kolatschek. Always looking for places to campaign where I might receive a welcome, Seana and I stopped at the bar one afternoon at about 3:00 pm and entered to the usual turning of heads from the patrons, who were clearly less interested in me than in my companion. I asked if Karl was around, to be told that he was not, and then was asked, politely enough but as a point of interrogation, who we were and what we were doing in these parts. So I entered

into my introductory spiel at the termination of which a lady who was sitting at the bar informed me that she was a personal friend of Paul Martin and that she would be voting for him. I told her that Mr. Martin was not running in Brome-Missisquoi. She said she didn't care, she was going to vote for him anyway. I asked her how she knew Mr. Martin. She said she had shaken his hand. I proffered mine, she took it and I said "so now Mr. Martin and I are equal". She said "no you're not. He kissed me once." So I kissed her and asked if that made me equal with Mr. Martin. She said "no. Mr. Martin didn't kiss me like that! You've got my vote."

The second happened on a tour of the towns and villages at the other end of the riding, namely Philipsburg, Venise-en-Québec, Clarenceville, Noyan, St-Sebastien and Henryville where I was very conscious that I had not campaigned at all. My advertisements, mailings and website encouraged all people who might like to meet me to telephone our campaign headquarters so as to make arrangements for me to come to their towns or houses. But I received no such invitations.

As a digression, when continuing to campaign in the summers of 2006 and 2007 in those areas, it was often remarked by the people that I met that I had not come to their part of the riding during the election campaign. I did not remonstrate with them that they could have invited me. That's just the way it is. The popular expectation is that the candidate has something to gain by being elected, so let the candidate work for his reward, eventual and uncertain as it might be. One can hardly blame the electorate for taking this attitude but it is tough on the candidate to have to always be on the asking end.

Seana and I walked around Philipsburg talking to the Sunday strollers, of whom there were few. Venise-en-Québec, which appears to be a summer beach front town, unless perhaps you know your way around it, which I didn't, was sparse hunting ground in January but Clarenceville had a bar in it, so we stopped to try our luck. It was not, from the exterior, the most inviting of places and I might have paid more attention before going in, but some few hundred kilometres of driving dulls one sense of perception. On entering we could at first see nothing, such was the gloom and fog of cigarette smoke, but as our eyes adjusted we became conscious of the nude dancers doing their thing on the stage. We decided that it would be best for us to beat a hasty retreat. The Christian Sabbath no longer gets the respect it once did in la Belle Province. My subconscious was also remembering the Conservative cabinet minister of the Mulroney era whose political career was cut short after he was found in a similar establishment in Germany.

The third episode took place a few hours later at Danny's snack bar on highway 104 where we had stopped for a bite to eat. In the booth next to us four ladies were talking about who they were going to vote for. I overheard one of them ask, what about the new Conservative guy? One of the answers was "I can't vote for

him. I haven't met him". I introduced myself. That phenomenon, which Heward Grafftey understood so well, is something which any aspiring politician in a country riding must appreciate. Country folk, whether here or elsewhere, want to have looked you straight in the eye as a prerequisite to, perhaps, gracing you with their vote. Country folk do not necessarily vote for a party or its leader. This is where Peter White would be mistaken were it not for the increasing tendency of the parties to determine, without reference to the wishes of the local party members, the identity of their candidates.

## Chapter VIII - Voting Day

On voting day my brother Bryan, drove up from Albany, New York, where he lives, to help with the chauffeur brigade organized by Joel Bonn. Tom Gillespie, senior Montreal lawyer, spent the day in my office making phone calls. The Bishop's team was everywhere visible in their "Votez Marler" T-shirts. It was exciting and exhilarating. We repaired to the local restaurant for our "watch the results" party. Stalwarts dropped in for a while but did not stay. I guess they knew. My energy and commitment had clouded my sense of reality. When the dust had settled the Conservatives had won the country with a minority but in Brome-Missisquoi the predictable held true. The Bloc came up the middle to win because the Conservatives and Liberals had split the federalist vote. Bloc: 18956; Liberal: 13569; Conservative: 9874; NDP: 2839; Grafftey: 1921; Green: 1721.

## Chapter IX - Post Mortem

My results were thought to be good for a first timer: some 10,000 votes representing approximately 20% of the votes cast. I will not make too big a point of it, but had I received any respectable portion of the English speaking vote, had I been better organized and more experienced, had I had more time, had Heward not been running interference, it is arguable that I would have done even better, perhaps won. The more French the poll, the better I did. The more English, the worse. In the anglo heartland of Lac Brome and Brome Village, I scarcely registered. The Bloc took the lion's share of the French vote. The English stayed true, if reluctantly, to their tradition of voting Liberal. But I took 25% of Magog. Which is to say, without complaining about what might have been, all things being equal and so long as Stephen Harper lived up to his promises, a Conservative would have a very good chance of winning the riding next time around.

So I determined to carry on, at least to maintain the Conservative Party profile until a suitable successor could be found, whoever he or she might be. I would turn sixty-five in October. The next election might not be for two or three years, maybe even four, by which time I would be approaching three score years and ten. Was that the age to start a political career? For all my enthusiasm and drive, I didn't really think so. The first four years I would be finding my way. By the time I arrived at the possibility of a second term, I would be contemplating my middle seventies, away from home, away from Jeanne, my children and my grandchildren and away from all of the possibilities which open up in retirement from business or professional pursuits.

However, no obvious person came to mind or came forward, notwithstanding that I had let the party know, nationally and locally, of my preparedness to pass the baton. A few spoke to me about it but did not follow up. Obvious parachute candidates, such as Senator Michael Fortier who needed a seat because he was an unelected member of Mr. Harper's cabinet, were not prepared to think in terms of what to them were the boonies, to me paradise. Mark Quinlan, who had become a minister's aide in Ottawa, said that he would be interested but could not leave his job. He was, at the time twenty-seven with a wife and babe-in-arms. Anyway, he said he was not allowed to hold a party job and be seeking office at the same time. So I felt that it was my duty to remain in the field. I could not just say to all those who had supported me knowing, as I did, that it had been a dry run for a second chance, "I'm outta here, too much effort and disruption".

Looking for some assistance in the task, I wrote to Lawrence Cannon, the minister with responsibility for Quebec, and told him of my decision to continue to carry the flag. I asked him if the party would be prepared to provide some funding to defray secretarial and administrative expenses of a party office in the

county. He did not reply then or later to subsequent messages. I put that down initially to his being too busy with settling into Ottawa with an important position, Minister of Transport, in a young and unseasoned government team. Still, I thought, at least some aide could have acknowledged my correspondence. I became more concerned when friends and acquaintances, who had experience in the political world, sometime senators, party people, etc., would say to me "David, what do you hear from Ottawa?" I would say "nothing" and I could sense that was either not the right answer or that there was more to the question than I realized.

One day, receiving the same question from another of the experienced types, a friend with whom I was playing golf, I said: "André, what do you mean by that? It is not the first time I have been asked it." His reply was that when a first time candidate has done as well as I did, the party wants to be sure to keep the person warm for next time. They do not want to have to start again with a new name. "For someone like you they would find some position. They know that one cannot maintain a political profile between elections without manna". I called Senator Angus. He phoned me back a few days later and said, with words which I read to be diplomatic, certainly from a wish to help but without being able to be as forthright as he might have wished: "David it's up to you. If you want it, continue to sell memberships. Make yourself indispensable to the party but don't count on anything from it."

I thought of bowing out many times but I kept on coming back to the following considerations. I had decided to do this thing for reasons which I had expressed to myself, my supporters and others in my essay. I could not say that any of those reasons had been resolved. Firstly, on the corruption front I was almost physically sick when, shortly after the election, Mr. Harper persuaded David Emerson, who was voted in as a Liberal from a riding in Vancouver, to cross the floor of the House so that he could continue the work he had been doing in the previous government. This floor crossing was already out of hand and it was not always clear that a principle was involved in such decisions. I didn't care one whit about Mr. Emerson. Surely there were other people in the country who could pick up where he left off. This was a flagrant act of disrespect by Mr. Harper for the voters of that Vancouver riding. I felt deceived and foolish that I might have so blindly suggested that Mr. Harper would bring dignity to the democratic process. I suppose that was simply wishful thinking.

The second reason was the issue of the respect by Canada for Quebec's constitutional rights and prerogatives, a central theme in my essay and indeed of Mr. Harper's campaign message. But he had yet to say or do anything about that (and has done nothing substantive since). In fact, he had not even mentioned it. What he had done initially was to refuse to recognize Quebec as a nation when asked, while he was in the Beauce on Quebec's National Holiday, if he would do so. True, he subsequently declared the people of Quebec to be a nation within a nation but did not then or subsequently tell us what this was

supposed to do for us or even what it was supposed to mean. Was it just a political platitude or is there some intended substance to the declaration. Or was it just the type of clever, off the cuff so to speak, Harperism throw-out, with which we were becoming all too accustomed?

In discussion during the campaign with Christian Ouellet, ultimately the winner, I had said, "why don't you give Mr. Harper a chance? If he does what he has said he will, Quebec will have what it wants. With that Quebec will have no reason to secede". He replied "David, you are right except for one thing. Harper won't do it. Even if he means what he says, the rest of Canada won't let him do it. It's too late. We have been offered this time and time again ever since 1774". At the time of writing, Mr. Ouellet appears to have been proven correct. Nothing has changed and we do not hear from Mr. Harper about it anymore.

The third and most important reason were the many people of Brome-Missisquoi and elsewhere who continued to express their support for my candidacy. To remain true to them and to myself, I needed to carry on so as to bring their concerns and voices, including mine, to be heard in the place where our democratic tradition holds them to be important, namely Canada's Parliament.

An opportunity to discuss some of these issues seemed to present itself when I received an invitation from the party, addressed to the unsuccessful Quebec candidates, to meet with the Prime Minister and the Quebec caucus in Ottawa on June 8, 2006. I estimated that with a total of seventy-five Quebec candidates, less the ten who had been elected, less those who would be unable or no longer had the interest to attend, this could be an intimate and useful occasion. The invitation itself, issued over the name of one of the ten, and written with no apparent knowledge of grammar, syntax or basic protocol, and going so far as to misspell the name of one of the senators who would be in attendance, no longer shocked me. I was becoming used to the incompetence of the party's organization.

Nonetheless, nothing ventured-nothing gained. So I sent in my written acceptance, plus the requested \$15 attendance fee. How crass and petty can one be? We were already used to the Conservative Party's hunger for money, although reputedly it had lots of it. \$15 from fifty people would make \$750. Imagine the difference that would make.

In making my arrangements I realized that the meeting with Mr. Harper and the Quebec caucus was scheduled at an hour which would make me miss the last train from Ottawa to Montreal, so I reserved a room in the Lord Elgin Hotel. The other specific activities mentioned in the invitation were a visit to the House of Commons, to coincide with Question Period, and a visit to the offices of the ministers.

I arrived in Ottawa just before the appointed kick-off hour of 2 pm when we were to meet at the location indicated on the invitation. There was nobody there, other than a handful of persons milling about. I asked them if they were, by any chance, Quebec candidates of the Conservative Party. They said no but that they were from Quebec and had been told to come to this spot for a reception with the Prime Minister and the Quebec caucus. After inquiring at the closest door and after some delay as a commissioner made telephone inquiries, we were directed to another building. When we got there, there was a line-up of at least two hundred people, the hold up being caused by having only one security guard with one scanning machine. I had discovered, to my dismay that we were all going to the same reception.

The two or three hundred people, if they included any of the unsuccessful candidates at all, and I did not recognize any, turned out to be the usual “hunt up a crowd” of party supporters for a photo-op, the type that I saw at the Harper receptions during the campaign in Montreal. As my editor pointed out, now the \$15 attendance fee made more sense. It would add up to over \$4,000, enough to pay for the reception and then some. It took about two hours to get everyone through security and we then had to register at the party desk in the corridor, where there were two very harassed receptionists. When that was over we were split into groups with a guide and headed off for Question Period.

The guide, I have come to know the type, young men and women who have landed a job with the party because they “know” someone or helped in a campaign, did not know the way. Luckily one of our group did, so she guided the guide. She kept on telling him that Question Period would be over by the time we got there and sure enough that turned out to be the case. It was now about 4:30 pm and the next and only other engagement, apart from the reception which was to start at 6:00 pm, was the visit to the offices of the ministers. When we got there, no ministers were present. I had misread this part of the invitation. So had everyone else. We thought that we would actually get to see some of these exalted individuals. Such was not to be the case. All we saw were very large empty offices with very large clean desks. So we had to kill an hour or so. I went off to try and find my M.P., Christian Ouellet, but he was not in his office. The following week I received a nice card from him saying he was sorry that he had missed me.

Back to the Main Block for the reception. The crowd had now swelled. There were no less than four hundred people (oops, now we are up to \$6,000 or more) milling around. We were jammed into a room. There was a table with finger food and libations but one couldn't get near it. It was frightfully hot. No one took over at the podium. We were just milling about. This was Sherbrooke magnified by twenty but with no rainy plaza to escape to. We were trapped. I contemplated leaving. To hell with it. But I thought that I had better stick it out to see what happened. When everyone was just about out of patience, the chant commenced “HARPER, HARPER, HARPER, HARPER, HARPER” and in he

came, the big boys with plugs in their ears forcing a passage to the podium. We were treated to a classic Harper set speech, slamming the Bloc, deriding the corrupt Liberals, etc. etc. Hands reached up to touch their messiah and then he was gone. Nobody thanked us for coming. E finita la comedia.

I knew that I could pick up with one group or another as they all headed for the bars but I did not want to. I retired to the Lord Elgin and watched television mindlessly, taking the train the next morning, to pick up my car at the station, a few hundred dollars wasted, two days of lawyer time lost. I re-resolved that it was the citizens of Brome-Missisquoi who would send me to Ottawa and that they would, the party notwithstanding.

## Chapter X - Continuing To Carry The Flag

I have discussed, in the previous chapter, the disconnect between the party in Ottawa and the candidate in Brome-Missisquoi. I do not know how it was in other ridings but that sort of inquiry rarely proves useful because every situation is different. However, in Brome-Missisquoi the enthusiasm was high.

On the local Association front, suddenly people wanted to play a part. At the Annual General Meeting, a number of people I had never seen or heard of before showed up and there was almost a competition to get onto the Board of Directors and its Executive Committee. Long-time Conservatives and others who thought they could smell a winner were emerging from the weeds. Peter White's attitude altered dramatically. No longer was he the laissez-faire, largely invisible and inactive president of the Association. Now, in the spring of 2006 and seeing the resuscitation of Conservative fortunes nationally and a promise of the same in Brome-Missisquoi, he held regular meetings of the Executive, the main thrust of which was to stage during that spring, summer and fall, three "meet the party, meet the candidate" cocktails. The idea was to move from east to west, a natural progression, with the spring affair in Magog, the summer one in Cowansville and the third in Farnham. We would attempt to arrange for the presence of a cabinet minister at each.

The Magog Cocktail Party Committee, capably and enthusiastically chaired by Gilles Émond, would have had everything in place except for complications caused by the Montreal office of the party. In the first instance, Nelson Bouffard, the operative for our region, insisted that the entrance fee be \$5,000 per person. We told him that the purpose was not to raise gobs of money but to attract new members to the party. He said we must ask for \$5,000 because, as everyone knew, Mr. Harper was going to limit donations to \$1,000 per annum and so we should take advantage of \$5,000 donations while the legal window was still open. It was also not clear to us where the money would go even if we enticed people to part with \$5,000 each for the privilege. We ignored him and went ahead with our \$100 per person figure.

The next problem was that any date that we suggested was not one on which, according to Mr. Bouffard, any minister was available. Finally, and in exasperation, Peter White went to his contacts inside the party and received a commitment that, barring unforeseen circumstances, Lawrence Cannon would be our guest of honour for Friday, May 26. The Committee went to work: space in a delightful inn overlooking Lake Memphremagog was reserved, canapés, local wine, order of speeches: Peter introducing, Mr. Cannon speaking, me thanking, presentation to Mr. Cannon by local party member and artist, Marie-Line Fontaine, of one of her local landscapes, all designed to attract press coverage, as it did, and so heighten the profile of the party and its candidate in the riding.

As those who had been in the political game longer than I remarked, it is interesting how a change in the political wind brings enthusiasm to people who have apparently paid little interest for a number of years. May 26 was a warm and sunny afternoon. The setting, as I have said, was stunning and people started to arrive. We had hoped for maybe one hundred people. It looked like we were going to surpass that easily. As I was milling about meeting the early arrivals, Gilles Émond summoned me to go outside. He said "Your mother is here." It is marvellous what politics can sometimes do, but my mother, God rest her beautiful soul, had passed on some ten years previously.

The woman who was announcing that she was "David's mother" was referring to the only David that mattered to her, namely Senator David Angus. He arrived shortly thereafter and took me by the arm introducing me to the Ottawa contingent who had arrived in advance of and with Lawrence Cannon. Local mayors, some reputedly long time separatists, graced the occasion with their presence. Business men, Chamber of Commerce directors, in a word, the community, was present. Peter White enjoyed re-meeting after many years, political cronies from the Mulroney era. The affair was exceedingly upbeat and positive. The speeches were perfect for the occasion. Everyone went home happy and satisfied with our first "cocktail".

After the reception as Jeanne and I were about to leave, Nelson Bouffard came over to see me. He asked me if I intended to run in the next election. I said that I had not finally decided. He told me that as far as he was aware I was not on "the list". I asked what list? He answered, "the approved candidate list". I asked him what that was and he said that if one wanted to be a candidate, one had to apply to get one's name on the list. I asked him how to apply and he said "just write to me, but you had better be quick because I think the decision has already been made". I said that I thought that it was the members of the local Association who made the choice. He said "no", it was a committee of the party in Ottawa upon the advice of the Quebec sub-committee. I said that it didn't work that way last time. He said that the rules had changed. I asked if he could send me an up-to-date copy of the rules. He said that they had not been printed. Months later I received a copy of the new rules. There was no mention of Nelson's list or the committees. But that does not mean that he was wrong.

My other summer activities, besides the Association cocktails, were the weekly "get to know everyone in the riding" events organized and managed by Richard Staples. He has spent his life serving the community of Brome-Missisquoi as an educator, school principal and volunteer. As a result, he is known to generations of previous and current students and can instruct them on who they are related to in the community better than they can themselves. Now I was no longer introducing myself but being chaperoned by someone who knew everyone, and he did it beautifully. Each week, commencing in June and terminating in September, he would give me an itinerary of the events, their dates, times and places. Generally I would drive with Richard. He would pick

me up and I would ask “where are we going today”. On the way he would rehearse whom we would meet and who was who.

## Chapter XI - Financials And Filing For The Refund

No doubt and I can see it clearly as I look back at my financials, the income side of my life was taking a hit from my diminished attention to my law practice. While everyone else was saying “we don’t want an election, the country can’t afford one”, I was thinking that I would be bankrupt if there wasn’t one soon. However, I never had to spend a cent of my own money on expenditures relating to my political activities and I was also able to cover Richard’s expenses. In 2005, up to the election call, I raised \$6,070 from eleven donors; during the election campaign \$52,985 from one hundred and two, with loans of \$16,000 from four, for a total of \$68,985. The loans were eventually repaid from the 60% refund from Elections Canada, which left a hefty surplus for the Association.

In the summer of 2006 I raised sufficient funds to cover all of my and Richard Staples’ expenses and did so again in 2007 but, as we shall see, under somewhat different circumstances. Then, in the fall of 2007, I raised sufficient money to cover a considerable outlay for what Jacques Dubuc, who had by then become my organizer, and I thought was an election campaign in the run-up to the Speech from the Throne in October. He and the pundits were convinced that the Opposition would bring the Government down on or shortly after that occasion. However, I am getting ahead of myself. My objective, in this financial discussion, is to show not only how expensive the exercise is if one does it effectively, both from an outlay and loss of income point of view, but also the amount of support which can be obtained when the circumstances are right.

This story would be incomplete if I were not to insert a section on a candidate’s inevitable encounter with the rules and regulations that flow from the Canada Elections Act. The Act itself runs to hundreds of sections with hundreds of subsections and seeks to govern every conceivable aspect of operations relating to elections generally and the rules that relate to parties and candidates. However, when legislation becomes as cumbersome and all encompassing as this Act, there is inevitable confusion and lacunae which are only discovered by accident. Elections Canada, the body that oversees elections, recognizes the complexity of the Act and its related regulations and, as a result, considers it necessary, which it very much is, to issue manuals of instructions to candidates. These manuals themselves run to several sections and sub-sections but continually advise one that it is the Act itself, not the guides, that ultimately applies. Both the Act and the guides end ominously with reference to the penalties, some of them not pleasant to contemplate, that will be applied to transgressors.

The inevitable encounter with the Canada Elections Act is something of which a person who is considering running for federal politics will not be particularly conscious. The average citizen may be aware that there is an annual limit imposed by the Act on donations to political parties and another for candidates

but that is about as far as the knowledge goes. Upon deciding to run for office, one will be entirely unsuspecting of the nightmare of confusing regulations to be encountered. That is why the Act requires every candidate to appoint an Official Agent. However, any experienced accountant, because that is who you really need to be able to handle the task, will not touch the job. Firstly, there is a ridiculously low permitted honorarium. Secondly, the applicable rules and regulations are not ones which anyone other than a specialist in the field would contemplate tackling unless unsuspecting. Thirdly, there are strict time delays applicable to the accomplishment of the frightening amount of reports and detail required by Elections Canada at every step of the proceedings.

Why, one might ask must everything be so complicated? I have these tentative answers. In recent years new governments like to paint the picture of the ousted government as having been corrupt to the point of conducting its operations in some respects outside of the law. Thus to convince or, perhaps, hoodwink the electorate to thinking that the new government will be different, it tightens up on the electoral law. Paul Martin did it and, once the Liberals were ousted, Stephen Harper did it. So the folks over at Elections Canada know through experience that every time there is a change of government which also is a change of party, they will be told to amend the Act and its related regulations.

Now, the people at Elections Canada are very competent and justifiably proud civil servants who are quite capable of proposing to governments when and in what respect the Act and its regulations might need amendment. They are indeed far more competent in this regard than the politicians. Thus I suspect that the Elections Canada people see this continual amendment process as one which is solely designed to further the political fortunes of the new government. Hence, it is my suspicion that Elections Canada takes its revenge by making the Act so complicated that it will drive the politicians and candidates to distraction. If that is the motivation then I can assure you that it is exceedingly successful. If there is one reason why one should think very carefully before one decides to run for office, and there are, of course, plenty of reasons not to do it, it is the unsuspecting encounter which one will have with the Canada Elections Act.

Geoffrey Webber, a highly competent fiscalist with an established local firm of accountants, agreed, unsuspecting, to be my Official Agent. He was and is not even a Conservative but agreed to act, I think, out of a sense of compassion for his foolish friend. So embarrassed was I by what he was put through that I resolved that if I ever were to run again I would not even consider asking Geoff to perform the role that he played for me in 2005/2006. We both agreed, once the filing of the reports was over, the whole exercise taking a year and a half, that had we been able to charge even fifty percent of our professional fee rates to the file, we would now have the option of retiring with significant balances in our bank accounts. And recognize that we were not even doing this work for ourselves. The refund was to the local riding Association.

Something which apparently does not occur to governments as they constantly amend and come up with new accountability statutes is that there are already very adequate laws in existence designed to catch cheaters. They are to be found in the Criminal Code and are the sections which deal with such things as theft and fraud. The effect of piling ethical rule upon ethical rule in statutes about particular fields of endeavour is to have those affected study the rules and not the morality of any issue. Laws forbid people from doing things, such that people become conditioned to thinking that if there is no law against it then it isn't wrong to do it.

In response to the in-and-out allegations, the Conservative Party firstly said that they had done nothing illegal, which was a statement equivalent to saying "show me the specific section of the specific law which specifically forbids me from doing what I did." What the statement impliedly acknowledges is that the activity may have been designed to circumvent the law and thereby achieve an objective which, if done directly, would have been specifically illegal. As a secondary fallback position, the party said "well, all the other parties do it." Whether that is true or not, it is hardly an answer to aberrant behaviour. As a final fallback position it said "but if we are proven guilty, we won't do it again." It apparently did not occur to it that there is a more normal approach to these things: 'fess up, apologize and fire those responsible. Wouldn't that be refreshingly simple.

The rules pertaining to political donations would be much simpler were the law to simply restrict political donations to personal, tax credited contributions of, say, \$5,000 per annum. The current level of \$1,000 makes it very difficult for a candidate to fund a proper campaign and surely a contribution \$5,000 will not buy undue influence. I also suspect that the reduction by the Conservative government in 2006 from the previous level of \$5,000 set by the Paul Martin government was designed, at least in part, to make it exceedingly difficult for the Liberals to repay their 2006 election expenses. It is this sort of political gamesmanship that has no place in an adult and respectful parliament.

It was often overwhelming for me to realize how committed people were to the cause. Some of that commitment was from die-hard Conservatives who, after a decade in the wilderness, saw a chance of reprieve. Some came from people refreshed by the efficiency of Mr. Harper's government. Some, irrespective of any party affiliation, came from those who saw in me the type of person who they thought should be in Ottawa. I tried to spread the load as much as possible, knowing that when the election was called it would be another \$75,000 that I would need. Even when the shine was coming off Mr. Harper's government, starting in mid 2007, my donors did not give up or fade away. Right up to and including the nomination convention announced in January 2008, my support in terms of numbers of donors continued to increase.

## Chapter XII - Enter Madame Perle Bouchard

Richard Staples took on the task of organizing the summer cocktail in Cowansville, his hometown. Again, we encountered problems with the party organization in securing a minister. Again, our personal Ottawa contacts saved the day with a promise of Maxime Bernier. But a glitch had entered upon the scene.

All had been go and sunshine until a couple of weeks before the cocktail when the local newspapers announced, unbeknownst to anyone on the Executive, not even to Peter White, the potential candidacy for nomination as the Conservative Party candidate for Brome-Missisquoi of Madame Perle Bouchard of Magog, significantly the “conjointe” of Marc Poulin, as aforesaid, the Mayor of that town. She had talked to me about her aspirations in May. However, when I told her that I intended, at least for the time being, to run again, she graciously offered to be my lieutenant for Magog. I undertook to tell her immediately if I should change my mind.

I asked Peter to invite her onto the Executive Committee and she was a regular attendee at our meetings. Thus when the newspapers announced her intention to contest the nomination, it came as a surprise, to put it mildly. She apologized to Peter and me for the announcement, saying that its release had been an error by one of her organizers but that she felt compelled to run because of the degree of her support in Magog. Surprise became shock, tinged, I must add, with a certain sense of disbelief. What support? What organizers? And neither then nor after was it ever made clear what her motives might have been.

Nonetheless the Cowansville event was a great success. The number of people attending was double that of Magog. The county, indeed the province, was high on the Conservative government. It was efficient, revealing with clarity, if somewhat coldly, its agenda and getting on with it. We were at the height of the popularity of the new government, a momentum which was to last for another nine months or so. We were enjoying ourselves and our prospects. Inasmuch as there were alleged separatists at the Magog meeting, so were there Liberals at the Cowansville meeting. Of course, there is a certain built-in flexibility in both camps. Quebec consists of thinking voters who will vote in the direction that contemporary circumstances require. The Quebec vote must never be taken for granted.

Maxime Bernier was a great success. He was humble, witty, personal and gracious. He talked mostly of his community, the Beauce, in relationship to his local political initiatives. He, refreshingly, stayed away from a stump political speech. In concluding my thank-you speech to him for having taken his valuable time to visit, I said that if a person with a Christian name that resembles a

restaurant in Paris can be elected in the Beauce, then a person with the name David or one that means a pearl could certainly be elected in Brome-Missisquoi.

But Madame Perle Bouchard's entry torpedoed the Farnham event. Denis Riel had undertaken to organize it, and when he organizes something you may be sure that it will be an event, saw no purpose in promoting a party that did not know who its candidate would be. To him, in fact to all of us and the voters, a party is nothing locally without a confirmed candidate. Richard Staples wanted to quit. He did not think that it was fair that I should have accomplished what I had for the party and then have to fight an insurgency in my own back yard. I persuaded him to stay on. I will not deny having had the same sentiments but I had known from what David Angus had told me that the party was not going to protect me.

So in that respect I was under no illusions and what did it matter if another or more wished to run for the position. As Jacques Dubuc, who had handled many candidates' campaigns, including, out of loyalty, Heward Grafftey's of 2005/2006, pointed out, this was a good thing. It would heighten my profile and that of the party because the newspapers like a contest. He also said that he had done his homework and had determined that Madame Bouchard was not a threat, that Magog would pretend to support her because of her relationship to the Mayor but that, in the eventual privacy of the nomination polling booth, Magog would vote for me. "What is important" he said "is that you now sell memberships, because it all comes down to numbers and you must take nothing for granted." So here we were, back to April 2005, except with bigger numbers, more at stake, and Perle instead of Jacques (Dalton).

As it turned out, we did have a fall event upon the invitation of Jay Gurandiano who lives in Stanbridge East. It was a frightful day with pouring rain and mini-tornados here and there. I arrived late because of a large pine down across our driveway which I had to clear with my chain saw before I could get out. Peter White and Mark Quinlan had filled in with talks about the party and were obviously relieved, as was everyone else, when I showed up. They wanted to meet the person they thought was the candidate. No one was paying much attention to the fact that there was another potential candidate. In any event, Madame Bouchard didn't show up, which somewhat surprised me. The event, notwithstanding the weather, was a great success and this not only because of the numbers of people who were there but the welcome they gave me. My enthusiasm, somewhat setback by the entry of Madame Bouchard into the race, was restored.

I knew that Richard would be heading off for Florida for the winter. I asked him if he would object to my asking Jacques Dubuc to become my chief organizer. He said that that was exactly what I now must do. He said that he had done his part in helping me become known and that he was not, as we both knew, an experienced political campaign organizer. He said "Now is the time to go with a

pro. See if you can get Jacques. Let me know as soon as the nomination campaign is opened and I will come back from Florida immediately.” I approached Jacques. He said yes and so I then became a slave to him. Just a change of masters and style. Onwards and upwards.

## Chapter XIII - 2007, The Wind In Our Sails

And did I sell memberships! You may remember my distaste of the whole notion that we choose our politicians in a charm and numbers contest. Maybe that was something I could address once in Ottawa. In the meantime I needed to get there. What a difference a year had made. In 2005 I had been very hesitant to ask anyone to become a member of the Conservative Party. Most Brome-Missisquoians were not then ready to declare their support for this new edition of the Conservatives. But by the fall of 2006 that had changed. Despite Quebec's classically pacifist response to the war in Afghanistan, many were delighted with the freshness and efficiency of the new government. French Quebecers like a winner and when I asked if they would consider becoming a member of the party, the response was gratifying. I would select a day a week and go out and sign up thirty new members.

I became a weekly studier of the party's central membership list, CIMS. If I saw a new name on the list that I did not recognize, I assumed that it was a Bouchard sign-up. I came to learn that all her sign-ups were restricted to Magog. Not surprising. Magog is her home ground. Additionally, she is a unilingual francophone and any sallying forth to the west of Lake Memphremagog would undoubtedly cause her linguistic embarrassment. If I saw what I thought was a Bouchard sign-up I would go out and sign up thirty more. The number of party members started to grow dramatically, my margin increasing exponentially.

One of my characteristics, not always the best but sometimes very helpful is my competitiveness. The only person with whom I will not compete is my wife, Jeanne. She beats me at everything, including the things that I have taught her. Spurred on by Jacques and Richard, I said: "I'm going to blow Perle out of the water. I'm going to sign up so many members that even the whole town of Magog will not be sufficient to put her over the top." It was not an Obama-Hillary Democrat Primary style contest in any way but from a delegate contest point of view I treated it as if it were.

But Peter White could not get the party to let us have the all-important nomination. Other ridings, not all but most, were having theirs. Ours, to use Nelson Bouffard's oft-repeated phrase, was "on hold". He could not or would not give us a reason for the postponement other than that was the order from Ottawa. Madame Bouchard and I became allies in demanding that either the party open a nomination or the Association should call it, the party notwithstanding. At the 2007 Annual General Meeting, Peter White announced, in the presence of Nelson Bouffard, that unless we were given permission to have our nomination by mid-September, the local Association would call it of its own volition. Peter did not follow through on his ultimatum. But why would the party not open our nomination?

Initially the speculation was that it wanted to ease Madame Bouchard out of the way because of the fear that her predicted loss to me would lose the crucial support of Magog for the party in the next election. However, later the speculation was that it might be me who was the cause of the problem. I had previously given some thought to this and wondered if it might have to do with what I had written in "Where I Stand and Why" where I discuss the concentration of executive power in the PMO, thus destroying the role of the elected representative as a thinking, decision-making member of the legislative arm of government. What I had written was:

*"We have witnessed over the last number of decades an astonishing series of scandals emanating from the political culture of Ottawa. It seems that we just get over one when another emerges. The Liberals and Conservatives take delight in exposing the nefarious activities of the other and each seeks to gain political mileage thereby. However, the reality is simply the pot calling the kettle black. The truth is that there is something rotten in the state. Why is this so and what can be done about it?"*

*The "why is this so" results, in my view, not from an inherent dishonesty in the individual Canadian person nor in those who aspire to be our politicians. Certainly, there are individuals in the country who are prone to seeking their objectives by less than ethical means. However, the vast majority of Canadians and politicians are decent and honourable people. The problem is that when they get to Ottawa as members of either of the two established parties, they find, unless they wish to climb the slippery slope of political opportunism, they are merely the foot soldiers of forces run from behind closed doors, in back rooms and by people who were not elected to office, the very existence of whom is largely unknown. These are the people who operate in the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) or the OLO (Office of the Leader of the Opposition). Surely such a system is in contradiction to what is intended. Surely what is intended is that each district in the country sends to Ottawa its brightest and its best so that they might deliberate with intellectual integrity on what is in the interests of Canada as a whole."*

However, "Where I Stand and Why" had been written before the Harper Conservatives took power and was submitted, as was required, to the party's utterance control police. I had received no prohibition to its dissemination. Then again, it must be remembered that Mr. Harper does not read very much which is

why the celebrated author, Yann Martel, sends him a book a month. Anyway, it did not seem that the essay was the problem otherwise, surely, they would have said something about it.

However, by now we knew that nothing was said for or on behalf of the Harper government without it having been approved and pre-scripted by the PMO, if not Mr. Harper himself. One could be sympathetic to the need for the muzzle. Many of the elected Conservatives, including some of the ministers, had no prior parliamentary experience, some no apparent experience in much of anything. Remembering the horrifically non-politically correct utterances of some of the Reform and Alliance members, Mr. Harper lived and lives in constant fear of catastrophic announcements from his elected crew. We had seen the muzzle effect on Rona Ambrose, the party's first Minister of the Environment, who was restricted to the point of embarrassment.

The press encountered the muzzle daily with "no comment" responses from the PMO or any Conservative they met in the halls to almost anything they asked. Talk show hosts could not get Conservative spokespeople on air. In time, the silence of our elected Conservative members became so deafening that they were embarrassed into participating. However, their stick to the pre-scripted texts made their utterances more embarrassing than their previous unavailability. The muzzle for some reason did not extend to the young colt, Maxime Bernier, who became Minister of Foreign Affairs with a knowledge of geography, foreign political leaders and diplomacy which would not have challenged an averagely intelligent first year political science student. And that, according to some of the pundits, would be to put it generously.

Subsequently the speculation on our nomination issue centered on a letter which I had written to Mr. Harper in February 2007 in which I suggested that the Party's negative attack ads, featuring a bumbling Stéphane Dion, were not much appreciated in Quebec where we respect Mr. Dion as a person, if not as a politician. Maybe that was it. Then again, maybe I had nothing to do with it. Perhaps, they were holding the riding available for parachuting in a star candidate.

In March 2007, Peter White asked Madame Bouchard and me to fill out the application forms required from potential nomination candidates. It was the same form, for all material purposes, which I had filled out in April 2005. By now we knew how keen the Conservative Government is on security. Perhaps I had become a security risk in the interim. We were then both interviewed by the Association's Candidate Committee, a farce given that the Committee members were co-Executive Committee members and the Executive had been meeting at least once a month since April 2006, with Madame Bouchard and me nearly always in attendance. So the Committee members knew as much about us as they needed. Yet, accomplishing this formality still did not lead to the opening of our nomination.

The summer of 2007 arrived. Jacques said “David, you’ve done the golf circuit, the art exhibits, and the private cocktail routine, now we go to the people”. However, fatigue, perhaps aided by frustration, had set in and I told Jacques that I needed some time off. The membership was around four hundred, of which I accounted for at least three hundred. Jacques and I had personal assurances that a minimum of two hundred of those would attend the nomination meeting whenever it might be held. “David, rest easy, Perle is no threat.” Maybe yes, maybe no, but Jacques is a good manager of his protégés. He’s seen us come and go. He can read us. He knows when to crack the whip, when to allow days off and vacations. He gave me time off which Jeanne and I spent up north for a week by a lake and on two trips to Thunder Bay to visit our daughter Stephanie and her family.

## Chapter XIV - The Speech From The Throne

The second trip to Thunder Bay was in late September. We drove through the de la Vérendrye Park, resplendent in its fall colours, then through remote, mid-northern Ontario where the rivers run north, returning via the north shore of Lake Superior to Toronto to celebrate Colin McAlpine's (Jeanne's brother) sixtieth, and attend Dale Skinner's inaugural service at his new church in Port Credit.

As we approached Toronto my cell phone rang. It was Jacques Dubuc. "Where are you" he asked evidencing some frustration. He went on to say that the Government was going to be brought down on the Speech from the Throne in three weeks time. "The party is not going to have time for a nomination in Brome-Missisquoi. It will have to declare you the candidate." I said that I would be back after the weekend.

I checked in with Jacques by phone on the Sunday evening of our return. He told me to open my computer where I would find my itinerary and a contract outlining the terms of his engagement for those three weeks. On Monday I went to see him and the first thing we did was to discuss the contract. He could see that I was concerned by the amount of his fee, expressed on a weekly basis, plus anticipated expenses. As we discussed, he asked me how much I was budgeting for the election campaign. I told him about \$75,000. He asked me if I thought I would have any trouble raising that. I said no. He asked me what I expected to have to pay for an experienced organizer. I told him. He pointed out that that was more than he was asking. I replied that the next three weeks were not an election campaign. He said they were. "The Government is going to fall in three or four weeks and then we will be into it." "What if it doesn't fall", I asked. "Then you will have had a dress rehearsal for the cost of only three weeks and at a reduced rate." I accepted his price. He, as I was to realize, was worth every penny of it.

Jacques' plan was for us to concentrate on the western end of the riding where I was largely unknown on a face-to-face campaigning basis. I had not got there, except for a couple of largely unproductive street walks in the 2005/2006 campaign, and the already mentioned occasion when Seana and I had stumbled into the dancers at the bar in Clarenceville.

The timing for our three-week campaign was perfect. It was fall community supper time. Scheduled were community suppers in Bedford, Saint Sébastien, Henryville, Stanbridge East and Farnham, breakfast in various eateries and daytime visits to particular people who Jacques said I should meet. I would drive to Farnham every morning leaving at 6:30 pick up Jacques at 7:00 and we would have breakfast in one place or another. Jacques would select the most strategically available table from which he could watch the room. After a few minutes and having eaten whatever we had ordered, he would nod, which was

the signal for me to go around the room and introduce myself to everyone, table by table. If Jacques saw me getting stuck he would come over and move me on with one excuse or another. Generally, he knew at least half the people in the room but he never sat with them. He kept his concentration entirely on me.

He was measuring reactions and keeping score. He made estimates of whether the room would have chosen me had the exercise been an election. He did not tell me this immediately. He had to get me comfortable doing what he was asking me to do. He already knew, having managed Heward Grafftey over the years, that we English have a built in reserve and that we are taught not to speak to people until properly introduced. He kept repeating in those first few outings that my reserve might work in anglo Knowlton but not in French country, where it was perceived to be standoffish. "Act like us", he told me. I got better and better at it as I realized that I was welcome.

The people wanted to meet me, irrespective of their political inclinations. It is an expected part of the game. I learned to smile and say "bonjour" to everyone I passed on the street. I might have forgotten that I had met them before but they would not have forgotten. I came to realize that people recognized me even though they had never met me, because of my signs on the telephone polls and maybe because of my picture in the local newspapers in the 2005/2006 election. Jacques started to tell me that I was doing well. I was winning the election exercises by ever-increasing margins. The day came in the middle of the second week of this routine when he said, one morning, soon after we had arrived at our breakfast destination, "David, you don't need me. I'm going home. Pick me up at 5:30 for the supper in....." "Oui boss" I replied. I had earned my wings. We were flying.

During this mini-campaign people would say to me "do you know Heward Grafftey?" When I said yes and that he was my example I was partially there. I said to Jacques, "we have to get Heward to formally endorse me as his successor." He said he would talk to Heward and sound him out, which he did and which I will relate in due course.

While event piled on event, Jacques was preparing us for an imminent election. He approved the election brochure designed by my wife, Jeanne, and Rhett Lawson. Rhett also designed campaign cards and posters, all in readiness for printing on a moment's notice. Jacques reserved office space and staff for Magog, Cowansville, Farnham and Bedford as well as a campaign SUV, to be emblazoned with my campaign picture, website and office telephone numbers all over the vehicle. Twelve cell phones were also reserved, as were the telephone numbers from Bell for the offices. Lieutenants were identified in seven districts in the riding: Magog: Yves Gaudreau; Lac-Brome: Jeanne Marler; Cowansville: Pierre Leclerc; Bromont: Robert Beauregard; Farnham: Gérard Mady; Bedford: Robert Jalbert; Pike River & Notre Dame to Stanbridge: Réal Côté. The only

thing we did not have were the big signs that go on the telephone poles. That is a party affair.

Candidates from other ridings were having their official campaign pictures taken by the party, but not mine or Perle's. Brome-Missisquoi was still "on hold". I made sure to keep Peter White and Lawrence Cannon fully informed of what we were doing. They received weekly progress reports, listing the events attended, and the number of people met as well as copies of our ready to go election flyers, brochures, posters, buttons, a picture of the SUV with mock-up appliqués, the location of the campaign offices. I was proud to tell them at the end of the three weeks and on the eve of the Speech from the Throne that Brome-Missisquoi was ready. However, I continued to receive no encouragement, response or even acknowledgement of receipt. And still no nomination for Brome-Missisquoi.

## Chapter XV - The Liberals

The Liberals were quiet during the first year of Mr. Harper's government because they had no leader. Paul Martin had resigned immediately after the election and the Liberals decided to take almost a full twelve months before holding a leadership convention. That occurred in Montreal in January 2007 and was a quite extraordinary event, with an astonishing and what appears to have been, a disastrous result. Neither of the two front runners, Michael Ignatieff and Bob Rae, both men of vigour, intelligence and immensely capable on their feet, could break the magic number required to be elected because the supporters of neither camp would cross over to the other. Eventually, the refusal of the junior camps to switch to either of the two front-runners led to leakage to the candidate who was initially running a distant fourth. In the end he, Stéphane Dion, won the day with the delegates failing to foresee the consequences.

Stéphane Dion had spent his career as a professor until he successfully ran on the Liberal ticket in 1996 for the riding of St-Laurent-Cartierville in Montreal, serving in due course in various ministerial capacities in the governments of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. He was never a very public politician but had more federal parliamentary experience than any other contender for the leadership. However, soon after assuming the role of leader of the Liberal Party, it was realized that he did not have what it takes to communicate publicly in either language or stand up to the quick witted and very effective Mr. Harper in the House of Commons.

The delegates probably thought that an advantage would be gained in Quebec by choosing Mr. Dion and, no doubt, certain Quebec delegates would have had a bias towards one of their own. However, the ordinary voting Quebecer with any feel for federal politics would have told them that quite the reverse would occur for the reason that Quebecers, who have become prominent in Liberal governments, such as Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chrétien, generally alienate the voters of the province because of the Liberal Party's centralist approach to government.

Further, Stéphane Dion was the author of the Clarity Act which most Quebecers took as an insult, believing that the Act tells them under what circumstances it would be permitted for them to declare independence, a decision which Quebecers consider only theirs to make. In fact, all that the Act demands is that the question put in any future independence referendum be clearly stated. One of Mr. Dion's problems was his difficulty in explaining to the general public what he means. He would, I think, have done much better in the pre-television days when political programs were dealt with in the newspapers. He just does not come across on television. In French we say, "le Kodak ne l'aime pas".

The subsequent inability of the Liberals to sort out the problem caused by their choice of leader led to yet another abysmal period in the history of Canada's House of Commons, where the Official Opposition shrilly denounced the government at every turn but did not have the will to combine with the NDP and Bloc to bring it down. Every day which passed without the Liberals resolving their leadership problem further weakened their credibility. Although Mr. Harper, according to the polls, was unable to crack minority status, the nation was not prepared, for the reasons just given, to endorse Mr. Dion.

Suffice it to say that our three-week, Speech-from-the-Throne campaign turned out to be a dress rehearsal after all but what an excellent one it had been. I was now a more experienced campaigner and knew that winning the riding was within my grasp. The team could be activated at a moment's notice. Jacques would have us out of the starting box well before any other party's candidate, with the possible exception of the incumbent Bloc representative. Denis Paradis had not been visibly active in the field. Heward Grafftey, according to Jacques Dubuc would not be running again and the NDP were nowhere to be seen or heard.

My support had reached a critical mass and was not based on party. The Bloc would experience serious slippage to the Conservatives. I am known to some as the green Conservative and the Greens, once again, had no serious presence in the riding. A substantial portion of the English vote was now prepared to vote Conservative or, at least, for me. In Magog I knew that I could surpass the 2006 numbers and the rest of the riding was now ready to see me as its representative. I was looking forward to revisiting the monks. They would be very proud of me and of themselves for their perspicacity. "Bring it on", Jacques and I said to each other. But that depended upon the Liberals and they were not ready. Another year drew to a close with Brome-Missisquoi's nomination still, for reasons unknown, remaining "on hold" but with the other ridings having all, pretty much, chosen their candidates.

Jacques and I concluded the year's activities by inviting Heward Grafftey to lunch at the University Club of Montreal. It was fascinating to watch Heward, eighty years old, canvassing everyone who entered the dining room with the eye of a veteran politician as he sized up the individual in terms of a vote. Heward was still not prepared to take out a membership in the Conservative Party and indicated that he never would. His distrust of Mr. Harper had, if anything, been heightened by an ever increasing number of incidents, including the Chuck Cadman affair and the firing of the Chairman of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Linda Keen, for doing her job but not what Mr. Harper wanted her to agree to.

These and other similar matters were of equal concern to me but I had already determined to gain my election on my own merits and not as a result of dependency upon Mr. Harper and the party. This is what persuaded Heward to endorse my quest. He expressed his pleasure and satisfaction in seeing

someone who would try to represent his riding and his citizens as he had himself. He not only agreed to publicly endorse my campaign but to campaign for me when the time came. The delightful occasion terminated with a photo session of Heward bequeathing to me his Brome-Missisquoi political legacy. Our political year thus ended on an upbeat chord and it was difficult to imagine what more we could have done or how we could have done it better.

And so Jacques and I went on our separate Christmas ways to our respective families, knowing that we had done all we could to prepare for the next election, whenever it might be held.

## Chapter XVI - Nomination Convention At Last

The first days of January were occupied with the renewal of the memberships that expired on December 31. Another organizational aspect of the Conservative Party that needs redress is the problem of having all memberships based on the calendar year irrespective of the actual date of entry. On December 31, 2007 we were pushing five hundred members, thanks largely to the sign-ups that Jacques and I had obtained during our dress rehearsal campaign in October. However, on January 1, 2008, because of the annual expiry of memberships, the membership had shrunk to around two hundred. So between Madame Bouchard and me, we had over three hundred to renew, the bulk being “mine”.

Fortunately for the political side of my life, a three-week trial scheduled to commence in mid-January had just been settled out of court. Although I had been counting on the trial to shore up my lagging professional revenue, politics had long since taken over as my primary preoccupation. The case was in my old maritime law specialty, involving a marine casualty, damage to the ship, loss of cargo, discharge at an alternate port, conflicting laws requiring the application of the rules of private international law and their interpretation by Dutch, Italian, Canadian and American lawyers, replete with conflicting insurance claims. A lawyer’s feast, one might say.

The settlement freed me up to go renewing. In ten days I had all my renewals done and new members signed up coincidentally to more than off-set the slight slippage. I was watching Madame Bouchard’s renewal performance by close scrutiny of CIMS and it was not impressive. By January 11 the membership was approaching six hundred of which I estimated conservatively that four hundred and fifty were mine, all but guaranteeing that the nomination would be no contest.

I pick January 11 because on that day, a Friday, Nelson Bouffard by email to Peter White, announced that the Brome-Missisquoi nomination campaign was to be opened effective that coming Monday, January 14, with three weeks left for further sign-ups and a nomination meeting scheduled for the first week of March. At last. We could now resolve who the candidate would be. Jacques and I were no longer concerned about numbers. There was no way that Madame Bouchard could close the gap.

What we still needed to do was to get our brochure printed and mailed and then have our team phone everyone of “my” members to ensure, to the extent possible, that they would come out to the meeting and to offer them such assistance as they might need to get there. Funds were again required. Jacques and I budgeted \$15,000 and by Sunday evening I had just over \$8,000 pledged, cheques in hand or in the mail. We were going to be just fine but we were not going to ease up. To lose the nomination would be to nullify everything

we had done and all that we stood for. Losing was not to be considered and, therefore, not to be allowed to occur.

On the Monday, Nelson Bouffard phoned. He said he would be in the area the next day and perhaps we could have lunch. I would normally have said yes. It never hurts to keep relations cordial, but I really did not want to be distracted by political chit chat at that time. It then seemed that Nelson had something specific he needed to see me about and so the next day we met at Super Mario's in Bromont.

## Chapter XVII - Rejected

After the usual pleasantries, Nelson broached his subject by telling me that the party could not run the risk of Madame Bouchard winning the nomination and that, to insure that she did not, the party wanted me to withdraw and put my organization and influence behind Mark Quinlan. You will remember that he was the young party organizer who started the chant at my 2005 nomination and who subsequently had gone on to work with the party in Ottawa. I responded that the party need have no fear, that I would beat Madame Bouchard handily. I explained to him the numbers and all of the prevailing considerations so as to put his mind at ease. But it turned out that he had been dissembling.

He then switched his approach by saying that actually the party preferred Mark Quinlan to both Perle and me and wanted me to withdraw irrespective of Madame Bouchard. I told him that Mark and I had discussed back in 2006 the possibility of his replacing me at some point but that he had said he was not available because of his job in Ottawa. I went on to say that even if that could be resolved, the problem, at this late stage of the game, would be how to explain this to the voters. It would look, I suggested, like the parachuting of a party employee and this would not sit well in Brome-Missisquoi which is used to the personal approach, care and attention of people like Heward Grafftey or Pierre Paradis or, if I may say so, even myself based upon all the work that Richard Staples, Jacques Dubuc and I had done over a period of almost three years. Mark Quinlan had not been seen or heard of in Brome-Missisquoi since my nomination in 2005. His name had no resonance in the riding.

I told him that Mark, under such an arrangement, might defeat Madame Bouchard at the nomination but what about the election? As to the nomination I informed Mr. Bouffard that Madame Bouchard's support was soft and that her inability to speak English with any degree of competence would work against her. However, and particularly in respect of the eventual election, was Mark prepared to move to Brome-Missisquoi or was the plan that I should be his surrogate campaigner? If the latter, it would not work. The party would almost certainly not win the riding and Mark would gain no points for a future try by commencing in the way suggested. I concluded by saying that I was not dismissing the idea outright, it having always been my contemplation that Mark might, at the appropriate time, take over from me, but it needed to be better thought out before it was implemented.

Frankly though, I thought the idea to be hair-brained, whatever way one looked at it. After lunch I vented my frustration by going out and selling thirty more memberships.

The next day I sent Mark the following email.

*Hi Mark,*

*In the spirit of our keeping each other informed as to the political goings on in the riding, I wish to report that Nelson Bouffard invited me to lunch yesterday to discuss the investiture situation in B-M.*

*To cut to the chase and as a synopsis, he said that he had a scheme by which Perle could be defeated at the investiture and that would be for me to withdraw and throw my full influence and organization behind you.*

*I responded by saying that such a scheme was quite unnecessary as I was confident that I would have no trouble in carrying the day. The numbers speak for themselves and we have the organization to get out our vote to the meeting.*

*Nelson then said that the Party would prefer you to me as the candidate and so I should cooperate and throw my support as previously mentioned in respect to his Perle scenario. But, I responded, how would that be explained to the members? Brome-Missisquoi does not vote for unknown candidates who have not paid their dues with their own shoe leather. If we were to try such a thing, I fear that the riding would be lost to the Bloc (once again) but for no good reason. I fear also that your future career would be tarnished. One never wants to be seen as somebody else's choice, irrespective of one's pedigree. (Mark's mother is the well respected Mayor of Bromont, a municipality in the riding). If you are truly intent on running this time, the only way that you can do so with dignity and lasting success is to run with your own organization and on your own merits.*

*Give me a call if you wish to discuss.*

*Written in the spirit of our past and future relationship.*

*David Marler.*

It seemed initially that the party was going to rethink its idea, for the next day, much to the astonishment of Brome-Missisquoi and the local press, Mr. Bouffard issued a statement that the nomination process had been suspended. The press phoned me and Madame Bouchard to find out what was going on. We both said that we had no idea but that we were disappointed that the nomination, having

finally been opened, should be shut down without any reason being given. If the Conservative Party had looked foolish in the riding before, its image was certainly not improved by this flip-flop.

Nothing happened insofar as I am aware until February 8 when Peter White phoned me to say that he had been asked by the party to relay to me their wish that I withdraw so as to allow Mark Quinlan to present his candidacy. I suggested that Mark simply file nomination papers and join the race. Peter pointed out that would not serve the party's purpose because I would win the nomination anyway. One thing became crystal clear and that is that the party did not want me and that is where the matter lay until February 26 when Peter came to see me and said that if I did not withdraw, the party would simply reject me as a candidate. It had done it to others.

Subsequently, I researched who those "others" might have been. It was an interesting study (see Appendix II) for it seems to demonstrate that the party is actively involved in cookie-cutting its candidates, thereby eliminating anyone who might have a mind of his own and who might bring fresh thinking to the process. What I discovered was that the rejected candidates are the very sort of people that you and I would want to consider as being potential good parliamentarians. Prior to conducting this study, I had viewed my non-acceptance by the party from a personal perspective. In talking to each of the other rejected candidates, I found, similarly, that they could not understand why this should have happened to them. I am now of a mind, irrespective of any particular differences between one case and any other, that the party's policy is deliberately intended to recruit only mute followers so that Mr. Harper can reign supreme and untroubled by the thoughts, experiences and opinions of others.

Returning to my meeting with Peter White, I realized that I was now directly confronted by the power of the party. It was over. There was no option but to accept the rejection. Although many would be disappointed, to continue either for them or myself would be futile. The party, under its rules, had the right to axe its candidates, indeed the right to unilaterally choose them. I could be bitter about the manner in which it was done. I could be bitter about the time wasted and the financial cost, which I had figured was not less than \$150,000.00, a sum that I could ill afford to lose at my stage of life and especially with nothing to show for it. Further, the party did not even have the decency to give me an explanation why I and my supporters, after all the time and expense, should be treated in this fashion.

However clever Mr. Harper may be and notwithstanding the satisfaction the nation has had in having, after many years of Liberal meandering and inactivity, a planned and coherent government, a non-communicatory and autocratic approach to government by one person is not what the nation is accustomed to nor wants. It was ridiculous for me to think that I might have found a role to play in such a party. I could foresee the last useful years of my life being wasted.

And, anyway, no amount of protesting and going public would cure the problem. The party had not been forthright with me from the beginning. Who was I or, indeed, any of us in its scheme of things?

Peter White and I have always had a good relationship. He has entrusted me with certain local legal matters and I have enjoyed our association in the choir of the Creek United Church in West Bolton. As to our relationship in the political sphere, he was doing what he considered to be his job as the agent of the party. I had been troubled, as you already know, at the beginning when he told me that the Association was distinct from the candidate, something with which, by the way, most associations would not agree. However, Peter's approach makes a candidate go out and do what has to be done.

Having any expectation of assistance from an association would make a candidate less effective. How much better, also, to identify one's own team than to rely on another's. The candidate is the personification of the party in the riding. The Association, as Peter had explained three years earlier, is simply the manager of the party's local administration and, as it turned out, the purveyor of its will. My three years as an aspiring politician were an education and education, wherever it comes from is the foundation of all moral life. Peter White had contributed to the learning curve and I thank him for that.

So, it can be seen that associations, such as the one in Brome-Missisquoi, take no responsibility for the candidate or for the citizens of the riding. They do not concern themselves with the larger perspective. They report to the party, not to the people, not even to their own members. This took time for me to learn and I had come to accept it for to do otherwise would be to compromise the principles of a candidate whose primary duty must be to the citizens of the riding, the province and the country. I chose to run for the Conservative Party for reasons which I have already mentioned, but not to be a blind supporter of partisan politics.

One of the other similarly ousted candidates, Phil Green, puts it this way:

*"When party members don't have the ability to pick their own candidate, what is the value of party membership? More important, when candidates are selected either directly or through backroom machinations of the party's apparatus, you create a situation where elected MPs know they owe their position to the party's backroom more than to their own constituents. If that's the case you've lost the ability to assure your own freedom."*

I would add that if the parties are allowed, as they are, to auto-select their candidates, then democracy is cut at its umbilical cord.

So Peter did not receive the resistance which he might have anticipated. I accepted the ultimatum gracefully. He received it gratefully. We needed to discuss the manner of announcing my withdrawal. I had just received and spent \$8,000+ in nomination donations for a project I was now forced to abandon. Peter told me without hesitation that would be looked after and it was. My nomination donors have all been repaid. After all, the Association was not poor. It was sitting on the net proceeds of my 60% election-expense refund and it used this to allow me to repay my nomination donors. I was sorry that I could not offer to repay all those who had contributed from the beginning.

I decided that I would publicly announce that I was withdrawing for personal reasons, which I knew, in some senses, would be unsatisfactory, particularly as I could not, fortunately, explain it by ill health, a death in the family or some such personal thing. However, I realized, as part of my education in party politics, that many of the people who supported me were and are true-blue Conservatives. I had agreed to run for the party. Who was I to turn on it or on its died-in-the-wool supporters. I resolved, however, to have nothing to do with the nomination process. That was a party matter and for the party members to figure out. I was no longer involved and I was not going to attempt to influence its outcome or be seen to prefer one candidate to the other.

One thankless duty was left and that was to inform Jacques Dubuc of my decision. Jacques is an honourable, ethical and deeply religious man. His sense of honour and ethics has often come into conflict with the world of politics which he has served so professionally and for so long. He has seen it all before but this time he had seen the possibility, which he believed to be a probability, of assisting in electing someone with the principles and objectives of his previous client, Heward Grafftey, someone who was running for the right reasons. He was very deeply disappointed. He declined, when asked, to assist Mark Quinlan in his nomination campaign. He was dejected for a number of weeks but in due course dropped by our home with his wife Jeannine to tell us that his soul was at peace. He said that he had retired from politics. Understandable but too bad. He is one of the best.

## Chapter XVIII - The Revelation

The nomination process proceeded with me trying to keep my head down as best I could. I was courted by Madame Bouchard and by Mark Quinlan not, of course, for my one vote, but as the presumed influencer of the vast majority of the party members. I left them to their own devices and told them that I would not be attending the nomination meeting. Mark, it was reported to me, received a rough ride from many of the people he called but managed to sign up, with the considerable assistance of his mother, some two hundred additional members. Joel Bonn, now supporting Madame Bouchard, told me that the whole of the town of Magog was rallying behind her and that a convoy of buses would convey them on the appointed day to the meeting. By the time new member sign ups were no longer allowed, the membership stood at just short of 800. I was told that somewhat less than half showed up and something like 225 voted for Mark and 110 for Madame Bouchard. Mark was nominated on Sunday, April 6.

Eleven days later, as previously related in Chapter I, the RCMP raid on the Conservative Party headquarters in Ottawa occurred revealing many details of the alleged and suspected spending irregularities of the party during the 2006 election. You will recall that the raid revealed that only one of the candidates who had been approached refused to participate, he having been the candidate for Brome-Missisquoi. He was front-page news nationally and in the local press until Maxime Bernier, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Julie Couillard, his voluptuous paramour of shady liaisons, took over to fascinate and titillate the nation and, indeed, the world.

The Press, particularly the local papers, proclaimed that we now knew why "Marler" had been rejected by the party. *La Voix de l'Est* stated that I had paid dearly for my rectitude in having refused to play the in-and-out game. The *Montreal Gazette* headlined "Knowlton Lawyer Dropped By Party. Marler wouldn't accept funding scheme". The *Sherbrooke Record* came to the same conclusion.

Which brings me to the end of my story as a candidate for the Conservative Party and, or so I thought at the time, my political aspirations. It was left for me to try to understand why sixty-six said yes and to probe solutions to the corruption which exists in Canada's federal politics.

## Chapter XIX - Why Did The Sixty-Six Say Yes?

The question is surely not why one person said no but rather what induced everyone else to say yes. Whichever one of the multiple possible answers one might select none will give confidence in the type of person who runs for politics. The answer could be personal monetary gain for the reason that 60% of the candidate's expenses would be refunded if 10% of the votes were obtained. Not all ridings have the clear distinction between the Association and the candidate as does Brome-Missisquoi. In many ridings the candidate is the Association or at least the only effective operative. Receiving 60% of someone else's money would certainly tempt some. Maybe it was greed or maybe it was lack of intelligence or something in between the two. However, I put it down to the strength of the party and its ability to create a cult that can cause its followers to do virtually anything that might be asked of them.

Perhaps the best answer I received was in the form of a question from a member of the Executive Committee of the Brome-Missisquoi Conservative Riding Association. He asked me to explain what was illegal about the in-and-out. Once I had walked him through the various potential offences, he said "but it was the party that was asking you to participate, surely you should have agreed to go along with it". I asked him if he was familiar with the principles that came out of the Nuremberg Trials. He was not. I explained that the Trials, which took place after World War II, were of a number of the Nazi leaders for acts which we would now call war crimes or crimes against humanity. The defences were that the accused were following orders.

The principle enunciated by the judgments was that a defence of following orders is not acceptable where, however personally difficult it might be, the moral answer would be to refuse the order. Not that I am suggesting that the perpetrators of in-and-out were guilty of the nature of offences with which the Nazis were charged. However, the question which it raises is the same irrespective of the character of the activity. Should we, as an inviolable principle, base our decisions on what we believe to be morally right or are there exceptions when we may compromise those principles for other reasons, whatever they may be? The answer to that question is not easy, but it needs to be answered by everyone with a conscience who wishes to live free of self-inflicted guilt and certainly by those who presume or wish to play a role in the governance of our nation.

## Chapter XX - Power And Democracy

Politics always has been, and always will be, a question of gaining and keeping power. Without it one cannot rule. In the words of Lord Acton, from his letter to Mary Gladstone in 1891, "Power tends to corrupt", the degree of corruption being enhanced or diminished by the nature of the people who seek or hold the power at any given time. The relationship of power to democracy is difficult because the former seeks its objective irrespective of principle, whilst the latter has only to do with a principle, namely itself, democracy. Tracing this relationship in Canada's democratic heritage is, perhaps, illuminating.

If one selects the Magna Carta, 1215, as the starting point, an arbitrary selection but one must start somewhere, one finds that the first approximate six centuries of the development of British democracy (the form of democracy inherited by Canada) had to do with wresting absolute power from the monarchy. By the Magna Carta the barons of the land imposed, by threat of force upon King John (they had him under their control on an island in the River Thames) a limitation of his powers. Fifty years later, the barons, led by Simon de Montfort, went so far as to seize Henry III and his son, the future Edward I, by armed insurrection and impose upon them the first Parliament of Great Britain. Thus the people, through their representatives, gained for the first time a voice and an influence upon the government of the country. Admittedly, times still being feudal, the representatives came from a relatively, in today's terms, restricted group and were not elected by the form of universal suffrage we know today. However, the principle was established that the people, however indirect their participation, had a voice and certain powers over the government of the nation.

In the seventeenth century things went dramatically further. Parliament assumed all the power of the monarchy by the simple expedient of cutting off the head of the monarch, Charles I. However, the leader of the Parliamentarians, Oliver Cromwell, became tired of the fractious nature of Parliament (yes, parliaments have always been fractious) and, with the army to back him up, assumed absolute power, permanently dismissing Parliament.

So stunned was the traditional ruling class of Britain by what had happened to them in the mid-seventeenth century, the sudden loss of all of the democratic freedoms that had been nurtured over the previous five hundred years, that not long after Oliver Cromwell died, they invited Charles II, the son of the decapitated king, to come back from exile and assume the monarchy so as to re-establish Britain's traditional system of government. However, and as at the time of Simon de Montfort, the power gained by Parliament, although temporarily curtailed to some degree, soon became as entrenched as it had been during the Cromwell parliamentary period.

Over the next three centuries democracy continued to evolve with universal suffrage, as we know it today, gradually being legislated in the nineteenth century and completed when women finally received the vote in the first half of the twentieth century. During the same period the monarchy gradually lost the last of its prerogatives to Parliament but it remains as a conscience and consciousness of what was, where we have come from and how we got to where we are supposed to be.

However, once Parliament again held all of the power, do not think for a moment that the thirst of the political power seekers was sated. They now had to seize the power from Parliament and transfer it to themselves, which they have effectively done by exalting the role of the Office of the Prime Minister, thus vesting absolute power in one person, the Prime Minister. We have lost, without most of us realizing it, the democratic protections of our civil liberties developed over the previous eight hundred years. The only protection left to us is based upon the tenuous assumption that a Prime Minister will not, one of these days, again take the ultimate step of permanently dismissing Parliament and of assuming all power unto himself.

The pattern emerging from the Harper Conservatives' control of the selection of the candidates makes one wonder if Mr. Harper would not prefer to be the top guy in a presidential republic. However, his republic would have no congress. So where would that take us? Precisely to where we may be headed. If the Conservatives were to wind up with a majority government, then Mr. Harper would be an absolute ruler so long as his party were in power and without any constraint from the members of his party who would have been carefully selected to mutely follow him wherever he might lead. After all, to complete Lord Acton's quote, "absolute power corrupts absolutely".

## Chapter XXI - What Can We Do?

### Remedy 1. Throw the bums out.

The traditional approach is to do what we have always done when we get tired of one gang. That is, in the time-honoured words, “throw the bums out” and replace them with the other gang. This approach suffers from often simply being a gamble. We may find that nothing changes except that more and more people become disaffected by the process. Let us remember that Mr. Harper was not the originator of the all dominant PMO. That was Pierre Trudeau, a Liberal, and the phenomenon has become progressively worse ever since, whether under Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien or Paul Martin. It is simply the style that changes. And, both parties interfere in the selection of their candidates.

In addition to the major evil of the practice, the denial of democracy at its grass roots, it serves as a discouragement for people to run for parliament. As the first part of this book will have revealed, one has to be slightly tinged, perhaps unhinged, to contemplate the quest. Why would anyone do it if one has no certainty that the party will follow the procedures set down in its rules and regulations? The process and result is uncertain enough without running the risk of being rejected at the whim of a party’s inside, invisible and non-accountable mandarins.

### Remedy 2. Vote for the candidate.

Until we start to make the candidate the primary focus of our voting decisions, we doom ourselves to the autocratic control of the leaders of the political parties. Running for office is the only job that I know of where the employers, being you and me, do not ask for a C.V. and references from the applicant. We do not because we have traditionally decided to vote for a party leader thus rendering, as Peter White so correctly puts it, the candidate irrelevant. I plead with you to change this approach and examine the qualifications of every candidate, irrespective of party affiliation. This is the only way in which we will return to the House of Commons persons with the intellectual capacity, education, integrity and courage of their convictions required for the preservation of our parliamentary and democratic traditions.

As I discussed in “Where I Stand and Why”, any party, once elected, will need to govern from the centre, for if it does not it will be replaced at the next election. Certainly, there are nuances and differences between the underlying theoretical beliefs and policy priorities of the parties and these do, to a degree, define their legislative initiatives but not, in the final analysis, by very much. I do not see the parties representing opposing positions so much as different approaches to the same problems. All of these approaches have validity and should play a part in the policy making process.

For example, do we not all wish to see solutions to our environmental problems? These concerns are not the exclusive property of the Greens. Are we not all concerned with fairness in the employment market? This is not the exclusive concern of the NDP. Are we not all concerned with a humanistic approach to societal problems? Humanism is not the exclusive preserve of the Liberals. Are we not all concerned with having sound fiscal management and only as much government as necessary? These are not exclusive to the Conservatives. Are we Quebecers not all concerned with the preservation of Quebec's cultural heritage and the respect of its constitutional rights? These are not the exclusive preserve of the Bloc.

If a candidate is a composite of these concerns, as any informed person should normally be, then is that not the type of person we should want as our representative? Heward Grafftey and Pierre Paradis are such and consider their primary duty to be to us, even if it conflicts, as it has famously done in both cases, at certain times with a particular position of their party. Such are the type of people we must identify and persuade to represent us; people who have the interests of their constituents and the better good of the country in mind.

Until the rise of the party system in the late nineteenth century, the parliamentarians were free of rigid top-down controls. Certainly they formed alliances but the government benches were distinct from the mass of the representatives, hence the then separation of the executive arm (government benches, consisting of the Prime Minister and his chosen cabinet) and the legislative arm comprised of the rest of the representatives. To succeed in advancing its agenda, a government needed to obtain the consent of a majority of the representatives.

No one party could dictate the vote to any one group of parliamentarians and no one party could dictate the legislative course of the nation. The elected representatives were, until the emergence of the political parties in the nineteenth century, all independents. They approved or disapproved of the government's legislative initiatives, thus remaining faithful to their constituents, their country and their principles. Of course there was influence but at least their votes were not predetermined along rigid party lines.

The ever-increasing domination of the political parties has disinclined people from offering themselves as independents. Some do get elected from time to time but find, although they may be able to render service within their ridings, that they have no say in respect of the broader issues facing the nation at any time. However, in this they are not peculiar. The modern prime ministers do not even consult their cabinet colleagues, let alone the backbench members of their party. They consult only their own chosen clique, a group which the eminent Canadian political scientist, Dr. Donald J. Savoie (inter alia, "Court Government and the Collapse of Accountability in Canada and the United Kingdom") refers to as the

prime minister's "court". So, we have come full circle. King John is, of course, long dead but King Stephen II (yes there was a King Stephen I) is alive, well and dictating to the country.

It will take time, whatever we do, to re-establish true representative democracy in Canada's parliament. Parliamentary reform, something promised by successive governments but without subsequent action, is certainly required. However, we must not wait for our elected leaders to change the law to allow the situation to be rectified. They have the power and they are not going to relinquish it or diminish it by introducing democratic reform.

So we come back to where I began in the Preface to this story. It is up to us and only us. We must, as previously stated, try to identify candidates who will represent us and we must hold them accountable if they do not. We must be very wary of voting for a candidate where the party has interfered in the candidate selection process. We must demand that our candidates represent us even if it means that they must sit as independents, as does Bill Casey and as did Chuck Cadman, both refugees from the Conservative Party. If your candidate, once elected, becomes a party clone, make it clear that his/her political days are numbered.

## Chapter XXII - The Ethics Committee

Some few weeks after completing the above and when in the midst of the editing, proof-reading and publishing process, I did get to Ottawa to play a part in Canada's Parliament, although not in the capacity originally planned as the Member for Brome-Missisquoi.

In July and August 2008, the Ethics Committee of the House of Commons was inquiring into the legality of the Conservative Party's conduct in respect of the in-and-out. The appointed day for me was August 12 when Geoffrey Webber, my Official Agent, and I, along with the Official Agent of another Conservative candidate, presented ourselves as requested. The press had been reporting that partisan sniping was plaguing the Committee's work, that the Liberal Chair of the Committee was constantly under attack from the Conservative members and that many witnesses were failing to attend the hearings.

The day preceding our appearances had been particularly noxious due to the unscheduled appearance of Mr. Doug Finley with a lawyer in tow. Doug Finley is one of those largely invisible persons who inhabit the PMO. I do not know if he has a particular title but he is, reputedly, the head honcho of the Conservative Party in all respects having to do with election strategy, at least in so far as the candidates are concerned. It is also the popular belief that it is Mr. Finley who signs off on anything to do with candidate selection or candidate rejection. Mr. Finley's request to be heard in advance of his scheduled date was refused and after an apparently intolerable display by him, supported by his Conservative cohorts, the Chair had the security staff escort Mr. Finley out of the room so that the Committee could get on with its business.

The Finley episode was all over the newspapers on the morning of our scheduled appearance and helped Geoff and me to pass the time of the train ride from Montreal to Ottawa. Upon arriving at the appointed room in the Centre Block Building, we were informed that the morning session had not occurred for the reason that none of the witnesses had shown up. The scheduled witnesses were the Official Agents of four of the Quebec candidates who had been in-and-outers and who had been elected in 2006. So what with all of that, we did not anticipate the Committee Members to be in a particularly good mood.

Of course, I had no first hand experience of what is a good mood or a bad mood in Ottawa's political passages and chambers. All that most of us have ever seen on television or read about in the press is seemingly constant and disrespectful confrontation and that is exactly what we encountered at 2:00 pm when the Chair called the meeting to order. I am not going to name the individual Committee members because I see no purpose in doing so. The facts speak for themselves irrespective of personal identities. The Committee comprised twelve members: five Conservatives, four Liberals, including the Chair, two Bloc Québécois and

one NDP. The tables were arranged in a rectangle with the Chair in the centre of one table, flanked by the Committee's administrative and secretarial staff. The three witnesses sat facing him at the opposing table. The five Conservatives were on one side of the rectangle with the six members of the three other parties at the table opposite the Conservatives.

As soon as the Chair had called the meeting to order and as he was about to welcome the witnesses, one of the Conservatives raised a point of order. He embarked on a general and particular attack on the Chair for his manner of conducting the meetings. His tone was aggressive and rude. That took five minutes. (I was taking notes). The Chair replied in a calm voice explaining why he had proceeded in the fashion that he had in respect of each point raised and then again attempted to welcome the witnesses. He was immediately interrupted by another Conservative on another point of order, delivered in a patronizing manner and complaining about all manner of things. This lasted another eight minutes. The Chair calmly responded and again attempted to introduce the witnesses, only to be interrupted by a third Conservative on another so-called point of order. He belligerently attacked the Chair for two more minutes. The Chair replied in his usual manner, only for the Conservative who had just spoken to request a "supplemental" which, when granted, took another minute. The Chair then responded for another two minutes and then, mercifully, the witnesses were introduced. During the whole of this, the three Liberals said nothing and indicated no emotion, the Bloc members sat stolidly through the performance evidencing occasional impatience and frustration. The NDP member traded insults and challenges across the room with the Conservatives. He, at one point, challenged the Conservatives to settle the matter "outside" which, I thought, was somewhat foolhardy given that the odds were 5:1 with one of the five being a very big fellow. That whole charade took up the first thirty-five minutes of the hearing.

The three "point of order" Conservatives acted as an orchestrated tag team. Their interventions were all scripted. The two who did not intervene acted as cheerleaders, one of whom, throughout the hearing, variously picked his teeth with a tooth-pick, chatted to the people around and behind him and generally acted liked a spoiled ten year old, taking no constructive part or any apparent interest in the proceedings.

Nothing, insofar as I am concerned, could possibly justify the deportment of the five Conservatives. Their performance was a disgrace, an indignity to the institution of which they are members, a rudeness to the witnesses, personally insulting to the Chair and disrespectful to the Canadian public at large. And that was not the end of it. Any intervention by a Conservative member during the questioning of witnesses was preceded and generally concluded by self-serving speeches and irrelevant, time-consuming anecdotes. Arriving at the truth was not part of their objective.

Yes, one can find reasons to explain their behaviour but not to excuse it. Certainly, the inquiry itself was, at least as I saw it, a farce if only because it could not possibly succeed. The issue could not be decided in this forum because it asks a legal question which this Committee is not competent to answer. Even if it were competent, it is inherently, at least one must assume, biased in accordance with party representation. Presumably the result would be six-five (Chair abstaining) against the Conservatives. In any event the matter is already before the courts by reason of the action instituted against Elections Canada by the disgruntled thirty-four in-and-outers (see Chapter 1). So whose idea it was to submit this to a parliamentary committee, I cannot imagine. It is a humungous and disgraceful waste of everybody's time and money.

Some of those watching on CPAC (the parliamentary television channel) remarked to me the next day that they thought that the Chair was weak and appeared nervous of demanding and enforcing order. I tend to think that he did the right thing in letting the Conservatives shoot their bolts if only for the reason that they would eventually run out of script and thereafter not have had the permission of their masters to act on their own discretion. Had the Chair been more forceful it would only have lengthened and aggravated the situation to the point that the business of the hearing might never have been accomplished.

The question and answers ranged from the entirely uninteresting (myself and Geoff Webber) to the lengthy observations and explanations of the other witness, Douglas Lowry.

In so far as concerns myself, the questioning was commenced by a Member of the Bloc who, as a preliminary to where the questioning was heading, elicited from me the basic information of which all were already aware (the telephone calls from the party organizers and my dissatisfaction with the degree of information provided, thus causing me to decline to accept to be involved, my rejection by the party as a candidate). I was then asked why I had been rejected and I answered that I did not know because I had not been told. I was asked if I had protested and I answered that I had not because there was clearly, under the circumstances, no purpose in doing so. I was then asked whether I thought it was because I had not agreed to go along with the in-and-out. I repeated that I did not know the reason, had not been informed of it and that I was not going to speculate.

That last answer effectively rendered me of no interest to anyone. The Conservatives were certainly not going to re-open my dossier, so to speak, by directly questioning me, and were visibly relieved when it became apparent that I was not going to be sucked into a recriminatory attack upon my erstwhile chosen political party. The others could see that this fish wasn't biting.

The Bloc then turned to Geoff but it became apparent that he had had no involvement with the in-and-out. So Geoff proved also to be an unproductive

fishing ground. The NDPer did, however, take a stab at Geoff and asked him if he agreed with Mr. Marler, "that the in-and-out request did not pass the smell test"? I immediately intervened, before Geoff could reply, to say very firmly that I had testified to no such effect. I requested the Chair to advise the questioner that statements attributed to me in press reports needed verification from me before being used as a basis for questioning another witness. That took the wind out of the NDPer's sails and that was that for Geoff.

Douglas Lowry's answers received much press but neither he nor his story are part of this story. (If interested, check *Le Devoir* or the *Globe and Mail* for August 13, 2008 and the *Ottawa Citizen* for August 14).

The session ended with the witnesses being given an opportunity to each provide a personal summary. Mr. Lowry was brief. He had certainly said much during his questioning and stated that he had nothing to add other than to say that as far as he was concerned he had followed the rules. Geoff Webber made the observation that better training sessions should be offered to official candidates than was the case in his experience (forty-five minutes in a group session with a party organizer) and that perhaps Elections Canada should give the courses rather than the parties. I said that I did not think it was my role to do anything other than to answer questions posed to me about things of which I had personal knowledge, which I had attempted to do the best of my ability.

A motion was then made to adjourn the hearing but a Conservative member had another point of order which kept us in our chairs for another couple of minutes and then that was mercifully that with the Chairman thanking us for attending.

I have said, ever since my decision to run in 2005, that my plan in respect to the prevailing lack of dignity in Parliament, was to get to Ottawa and find like-minded people who would join me in trying to restore decorum to the process. Although I will not get there to carry out my plan, it is gratifying to know that like-minded people are still there and I am going to refer to one of the Committee members by name in relating what will be to me the most memorable moment of the proceedings.

One of the Liberal Committee members was the Hon. Charles Hubbard, whose age and bearing indicate a man of experience. He said, as I recall, nothing for the first two hours of the session but did have a question to pose to one of the witnesses towards the end of the proceedings. Just as he commenced he was interrupted by one of the Conservatives, in fact the one who seemed to be the leader of their gang and the one who had made the most procedural and other interventions.

Mr. Hubbard replied to the interruption by quietly noting that he had not interrupted the Conservative member during his interventions and that he (Hubbard) would appreciate being extended the same courtesy. His request was

delivered without any trace of rancour. Astonishingly, the up until then vituperative Conservative member immediately apologized, even somewhat profusely. It was as if the class bully had just been gently admonished by the kindly, beloved and respected teacher. Calm and dignity entered the proceedings.

Mr. Hubbard, by this simple act, restored my faith and optimism that all is not lost and that civility does exist in parliament and can be restored if we cooperate by choosing the right sort of candidates to represent us.

## Chapter XXIII - The Illegal and unnecessary \$350 million election

My intention had been to write and publish this book as a swan song to any notion of becoming a parliamentarian. My literary advisors had hoped that we would have time to have the book published prior to an election, one which we did not anticipate would be called until, at the earliest, later in the fall once parliament had resumed in mid-September. We had looked diligently for a publisher during the summer.

In late August we received an expression of interest from a potential publisher but almost simultaneously Mr. Harper indicated that he would be visiting the Governor General to ask that a general election be called. The indicated date was September 8 and that would not give the publisher time to produce the book within the anticipated five-six week election campaign period which would have been the optimum time for its publication. We decided to set the book aside until after the election and then re-assess.

The very suggestion that Mr. Harper would seek to plunge the country into an election without having suffered a defeat in the House of Commons was further evidence of Mr. Harper's lack of respect not only for the conventions of parliament but also of the law. He himself had promoted and succeeded in obtaining the passage of Bill C-16 in 2007, which set fixed dates every four years for the holding of general elections, subject only to the necessity of there being an election if a government were defeated on a matter of confidence. The reason given by Mr. Harper for having fixed terms was to prevent a prime minister from having the partisan advantage of determining when it would be advantageous for a ruling party to have a general election.

Yet it was precisely and only for such a reason that Mr. Harper wished that the Governor-General acquiesce to his request. There was no pressing need for an election and no issue that required determination by the extreme step of asking the populace to decide its outcome. The *Stanstead Journal* suggested that Mr. Harper's timing in calling the election was for the sole purpose of scuttling the Ethics Committee's inquiry into the in-and-out. Whatever specifics may have motivated Mr. Harper, the election call was for solely for partisan purposes.

His excuse was that the democratic process of parliament was paralyzed. However that was not the case and to the degree that Mr. Harper might have argued that it was, any paralysis resulted from the behaviour of the government not from that of the opposition. Mr. Dion's leadership of the official opposition was as desultory as it had been since he accidentally became its leader and the last thing that he was likely to do was to cause the government to fall. He could have done so at any time, because of the eagerness of the N.D.P. and the Bloc Québécois to go along with a motion to defeat, but he had not and all evidence led to the conclusion that he would not. The Liberals had no money. The party

owed on the 2006 election. Mr. Dion owed on his leadership campaign. Neither had any realistic prospect of quickly rectifying their financial predicament.

There was some speculation that the Governor-General might refuse Mr. Harper's request, although the more prevalent view seemed to be that our Governor-Generals would not, irrespective of their power to do so, even in the face of governmental abuse. It was a sad day for parliamentary integrity when, on September 7, Mr. Harper needed only to be driven to Rideau Hall to receive the Queen's permission.

I had become increasingly beset by the thought that having written this book, people would say "David, you've talked the talk; how can you not walk the walk?" To answer that I had written this book did not seem to be a sufficient answer, particularly since I had not completed what I had set out to do three and a half years previously. In addition, I was concerned that a party could get away with the manner in which the Conservative Party had engineered the selection of its local candidates in so many ridings, including my own.

On Friday September 5, I received a call from John Richardson, a Torontonian whom I had met briefly in the summer of 2007. He said that he was setting up a website to encourage people to run as Independents. He proceeded to start to give me all the reasons why it was important that those able and capable should stand up and be counted. I realized quickly that he was expressing all the reasons that one side of my brain was telling me were the reasons why I needed to run. I stopped him short and told him that I needed no persuasion and that I would.

That the Conservatives would be returned to office was a given. Canada was not going to vote for the leaderless, platform-less Liberals or make a massive protest by risking the election of the N.D.P. Further, there was a general acceptance across the land that Mr. Harper had proven himself to be a good administrator. It was Mr. Harper's style and manner of government which concerned the nation. He had ruled by decree, never airing his own thinking or the direction of his government, to the extent that there might have been any difference between the two. He rarely spoke to the press and virtually never to the people. His close-to-the-vest methodology made the nation fearful of having him head a majority government. And so, with no effective opposition and no issues to be resolved, Canada was taken up in September and early October of 2008 with a 350 million dollar exercise designed by Mr. Harper only to allow him untrammelled rule. The electorate, or such part thereof which still votes, was faced with no alternative but to return Mr. Harper but somehow without letting him receive a majority. If ever there was to be an election where the voting would be strategic, this was to be it.

## Chapter XXIV - Campaigning Again

I had no illusions about winning but nor was I going to deny to myself the possibility. I realized that my campaign must be credible and for it to be that I needed a professional organizer and, with no time to spare, it was crucial that I find Jacques Dubuc ready and willing to act in that capacity. My phone call that Friday was just in time. He had been and was continuously being courted by Mark Quinlan's campaign team. Mark had disappeared from sight immediately after his party engineered anointment in April, only to reappear on the eve of the election.

Jacques asked me if I was sure that I wanted to do this. He told me that I could not win; that the vast majority of the voters would vote in accordance with their old allegiances notwithstanding what I had to offer. He added, however, that I would be able to run in the full awareness that my involvement would be widely appreciated except, perhaps, by died-in-the-wool Conservatives who would see me as a potential spoiler of their party's chances. He told me, also, that he needed to ask me to confirm my intentions immediately because the Quinlan team was coming back and back with ever sweeter offers designed to persuade him to be their man. I confirmed. We met to plan a clean, simple, no-frills campaign.

Jacques said we would be able to get by on \$20,000. We would not be putting up signs, irrespective of the cost, because it was part of my belief that voters should not make their choice upon the basis of a mug-shot and a slogan on a plastic board, but rather upon the identity and individual capacities of the candidates. Certainly having no signs was not designed to help one win the contest, but the important element of the campaign was to be true to the principles discussed in "Where I Stand and Why" and in this book.

My campaign, Jacques assured me, would not be ignored by the local media. He said that they had nothing to write about because the election was about nothing and the candidates meant nothing and that the candidates of the three main parties would simply be promoting their parties' platforms. "You will be the only candidate seeking election for positive reasons. The press will love you." Jacques turned out, once again, to be right in every respect.

A full page article in the Montreal Gazette, based on the in-and-out scandal and my refusal to participate, lent national credence to my campaign. It was followed up with a delightful op-ed by Norman Webster. Locally, Michel Laliberté of La Voix de l'Est discussed the reason for the continued existence of the Bloc Québécois, ascribing that phenomenon to the lack of any good reason for a Quebecer to vote for any one of the federal parties because of their desultory performances over the past many years. In the article he implied that I was a candidate who might make all the difference. The Townships Outlet gave me prominent coverage, again based on my in-and-out notoriety. An editorial in the

Stanstead Journal summed it all up by saying that I had less than a snowball's chance in Hades of being elected but that the county would be the loser were I not to be.

From a fund raising standpoint, I decided to commence by taking the bull by the horns and going immediately to the old line, well-heeled Conservatives who had so amply supported my 2005-2006 campaign and continued to support my efforts in the between election years. I was not surprised to find that this was arid ground. It became abundantly clear that with them it never was about me and such capacities as I might have. As I was not running on their traditional ticket, I would not receive their support. This was far from being a personal rejection. The exercise merely confirmed, albeit in a rather direct fashion, the Peter White rule that the qualifications of a candidate are of no importance. It was as always the party and only the party.

That put paid to raising any money from the balance of the community. The anglophones would not be voting for an Independent. They would be voting to keep out the Bloc and that meant they would be voting Liberal. The French community would be voting, as usual, mostly Bloc, some Conservative.

The problem was, as I had only partially learned in the 2005-2006 experience, that most of the eligible electors pay no real attention to what is going on in the political life of the country. We can start with the almost forty percent who do not vote at all. Of the remaining approximate sixty percent, most vote by rote for one party or another without much consideration, if any, of the issues and with virtually no consideration of the respective merits of the local candidates. Under these circumstances, from where would an Independent expect to receive financial support and votes?

The eventual answer was that he would not, except from the few politically attuned who were even more jaded with federal politics than they had been in 2004 and 2006 but who were not yet completely disaffected. They understood that a change was required, that it would not be achieved if we continued to vote along pre-established party lines and that we had to start somewhere. It was such people who funded my campaign and they came from far and wide, including an Alberta Liberal candidate, a political consultant to the United Nations, a Parti Québécois *militante* and many others who were prepared to vote for renewal. The interest outside of the riding, it must be admitted, was far greater than within. "Hits" on my blog, the only blog in the riding, proved the point. Hits from within were rare. Hits from without seemed to coincide with national press coverage of my campaign or nationally aired radio interviews. Interestingly, Ottawa scored the highest number of hits.

I could give you another narrative of a campaign but that would not add to my thesis except, perhaps, to amuse. The bottom line is that nothing which happened in the riding and nothing which any candidate did or did not do had

any effect. It was simply irrelevant. The entire focus, to the extent that there was a focus, was on the national campaign.

Of course, Mr. Harper was the focal point. No one else counted. Mr. Dion was simply an accident waiting for this very moment which everyone, except apparently he, knew was to be his denouement. Mr. Layton, the leader of the N.D.P., tried unsuccessfully to suggest that it was time for his party to be the predominant party on the left. Elizabeth May, the energetic and appealing leader of the Greens, was unable to distinguish her party from any other that espoused environmental action.

Mr. Harper did not have to demonstrate that he was the only effective operative in the field. That was a given. What Mr. Harper had to do to achieve his sought for majority was to persuade the electorate that he would amend his untrustworthy, arrogant, non-communicative style of leadership. If he could not do that, his term in office would be coincident with the time it would take for the Liberals to come up with a credible leader.

To cut to the chase, Mr. Harper blew it. How long can one run on fumes and no substance? He had nothing to offer and apologized for nothing. Worse, he simply seemed to be counting off the days, purveying the attitude that the whole exercise was a bore; for who in their right minds would vote for anyone but him, and if they did and he lost, he, or so his body language gave out, would simply walk away from it all. Give me what I want or I'm gone and the devil take the hindmost. That had been his parliamentary attitude and that was his campaign attitude.

Mr. Harper's biggest mistake was, in a nutshell, his demeanour. He was a distant, self-confident, to the point of appearing disinterested, campaigner. Nonetheless, he might still have gotten away with it if he had not made two policy announcements which were entirely unnecessary, at least for the purposes of the campaign. The first involved cuts to grants in the field of the performing arts. The second one was that fourteen year-olds would be tried and sentenced for certain offences as adults. The two came out at virtually the same time and may have washed in neo-conservative circles but not in Quebec.

In that province, where Mr. Harper was planning to find the additional seats to give him his majority, the word "culture" means anything or everything depending on the circumstances. It is the mantra which must not be offended. Our culture and our children became Quebec's rallying cry and that was that for the crucial Quebec vote and for Mr. Harper's majority. Some degree of sensitivity and explanation of these announcements could well have caused things to turn out differently but, of course, sensitivity and explanation are not part of Mr. Harper's vocabulary.

Irrespective of the national campaign, the result in Brome-Missisquoi had also been predictable from the outset. It reproduced the poll published in the first week of the campaign. The French would vote impressively for the Bloc, the English for the Liberals. The Bloc would win. The Conservatives were always a distant third if for no other reason than because Mr. Quinlan was generally unknown and had done nothing to deserve the privilege of representing the riding. The other two parties were also-rans, with the Independent in undisputed possession of last place.

However, the real loser was and will be Mr. Harper. He failed to achieve the majority that he did not need and to which he was not entitled. He uttered not a word of apology for putting the nation through the charade and, unchastened, returned to the opening of Parliament in November to challenge the nation with an ultimatum, which has defined him indelibly as a neo-conservative ideologue and certifiably unacceptable leader to the vast majority of all Canadians. He has also proven that he has no sense for politics other than self-serving ideological strategy and that, as I believe time will shortly tell, is suicidal to a political career. Mr. Harper has written and published the script to his own political funeral. He has, more importantly, rendered a tremendous disservice to those who believe in a role for balanced and progressive conservative politics in the Canadian democracy.

The story is so well known that it would be redundant for me to comment at length. Suffice it to say that a political soap opera, orchestrated by Mr. Harper, riveted the attention of the nation daily, sometimes hourly, for a short period of two weeks in late November and early December 2008, the highlights of which were the following.

Under the guise of a “financial update”, Mr. Harper, using his Minister of Finance as his spokesman, threatened, and without any warning, the removal, at least on a temporary basis, of any advances in female pay-equity legislation, the right to strike of federal public civil servants, and the permanent repealing of the legislation that allows for the public funding of political parties. The “update” in addition, failed to address the economy in any meaningful manner.

The opposition went ballistic, formed a coalition of the three opposition parties for the purpose of bringing the government down on an immediate non-confidence motion. Mr. Harper responded by persuading the Governor General to prorogue Parliament until the end of January. The consequential effects of this charade were the following

Mr. Dion’s rush to associate himself with strange political bedfellows, the NDP and the Bloc, aided and abetted by his own inability to achieve anything political in a planned and coherent manner, so further damaged his credibility that the Liberal Party decided that he must be immediately removed as its leader. The defining moment was an address to the nation by Mr. Dion by way of a pre-

recorded video. The video visually resembled those early, grainy, reel to reel, porno flicks of the exploits of the Fuller Brush salesman on his salacious house calls to the horny housewives of the period. The words of Mr. Dion, to the extent that they could be understood, the audio having been as amateurish as the visuals, did not inspire confidence, quite the reverse.

However, in replacing Mr. Dion, the Liberal Party did not adhere to its own constitutional formulae but rather, and in undue haste, engineered the crowning of Mr. Michael Ignatieff who, you will remember, was the initial front runner in the Liberal's leadership convention in January 2007, thereby squeezing out the other prominent contender for the position, the political veteran, Mr. Bob Rae. This manoeuvre may come back to haunt the party.

But at the time, it seemed that Mr. Harper had single-handedly turned the tables upon himself and his party. He returned to Ottawa on January 26, 2009 as a discredited leader to face the calm and coherent Mr. Ignatieff as the leader of the Official Opposition. Mr. Ignatieff, however, as the months passed, has not distinguished himself to any material advantage from his predecessor. Certainly he is more dignified and less nationally embarrassing but he has fallen into Mr. Dion's habit of continually threatening the parliamentary defeat of the Conservative government but without having the national support to ensure a victory at the polls. The polls consistently show a level of support for the Liberals not dissimilar to those prevailing in the days of Mr. Dion's leadership, such that if an election were to have been called or is called within any foreseeable future, the result would likely be the same as that of January 2006 and October 2008, namely a Conservative minority government.

Mr. Ignatieff's greatest failing has been a reluctance to enunciate any political vision for the country and my sources inform me that any plans to develop a political platform are on hold.

So what, the nation asks, is Mr. Ignatieff all about and what would he do if he became the Prime Minister? The answer is that we do not know because he will not tell us or, perhaps, he does not know and is relying upon the old Liberal assumption that the party has some sort of pre-ordained right to form the government of Canada. Conrad Black famously said "the Conservatives are like the mumps. We all get them but only once in our lifetimes" (or words to that effect). That old saw may not hold true so long as the Liberals refuse to respond to the people of the country with any coherent plan or vision.

What Mr. Ignatieff has done is to have republished a number of his books, particularly those that concern human and political rights and "The Russian Album", the story of his Russian ancestry. A reading of these books gives us an insight into the man's pedigree, intellect and political thinking. Fascinating and rewarding reading. Highly recommended whatever the quest of the reader might be.

Then, this year, 2009, he published a new book, "True Patriot Love", which traces his Canadian ancestry on his mother's side, the Grants. This is Bertonesque, as in Pierre, stuff. We thrill to the story of his great-grandfather, George Monro Grant, traversing the country with Sanford Fleming in 1872, completing his life as Principal of Queen's University. We learn of the accomplishments of his grandfather, William Lawrence Grant, veteran of WW1, Principal of Upper Canada College, historian; and then of his mother's brother, George Parkin Grant, the conservative philosopher who I studied in preparation for my leap with the Conservative Party and to whom I refer on page 14 of this book.

However, is "True Patriot Love" helpful to Mr. Ignatieff's political ambitions? Firstly, it, as "The Russian Album", emphasizes that Mr. Ignatieff is a patrician and immensely proud of his ancestry, as he should be. But politically one must mute this because of the all too common Canadian sentiment that if one has such a pedigree one cannot be "one of us". Secondly, the reader is conscious that the writer is the new leader of the Liberal Party and one cannot help but suspect that the book is being written for political advantage. Thirdly, he concludes the book with a stirring call for us to emulate men like the Grants in formulating with passion a vision for the future of Canada but without telling us, except in the vaguest of terms, what that vision might be. Had he followed "True Patriot Love" with his own vision for Canada within the context of his being leader of the Liberal Party, we would have something on which to chew. Without that and with no apparent prospect of receiving it, we are left with the notion that he lacks, perhaps, what it takes to guide and run the country.

#### POSTSCRIPT

So where does that leave us, the politically beleaguered citizens of Canada? And, if I may speak personally, where does that leave me after an intense period of public, political involvement? Am I just one of the great mass of the politically disabused or do I/should I have a further role to play?

Entering upon my political adventure in my sixty-fourth year was not too late but late enough. Now in my sixty-eighth year it is too late to consider running again for public office. Is this book sufficient for me to say to myself that I have done what I could and it is now time for me to retire my energies from any consideration as to the political good of this country? If I were to decide upon such a course, I would consider myself a traitor to everything which I have expressed that I stand for and therefore a traitor to myself.

The past six months or so have been an interesting period of personal reflection. I have enjoyed getting fully back to my law practice but I have not found it, any more than I ever did, all consuming. I have enjoyed spending more time with

Jeanne and seeing more of our children, their spouses and their children but have not found that to be sufficient to be able to say I am now at peace with myself in so far as community service and responsibility is concerned.

This book, as some readers will know and which is, in part, apparent from itself, has been written in stages. The first stage was a prelude, "Where I Stand and Why", my essay explaining why I was running for public office in 2005/6. Stage two was this book up to and including the refusal of the Conservative Party to allow me to stand as one of its candidates for the 2008 election. The third was in respect of my decision to run as an Independent. The reception of the book, by those who have read it, has been exceptional but has it lead to anything or is it just a sorry tale?

On an evening in July 2009, I had occasion to sit down with one of Canada's most experienced, publicly minded, individuals. He, having read the book, wanted to organize with me a session for the discussion of it. What came out of our meeting, ably assisted by our wives, his because of her own active interest, Jeanne because of her ever-abiding support for me, was that I must remain involved in my quest to see radical improvement in the quality of the conduct and product of our politicians.

He said that I had made a sufficient impact for me to be far more widely known and appreciated than I conceived might be the case and that it was incumbent upon me to coalesce that interest. Policy, he said, is set not just by those who publicly pronounce it or who hold public office. True policy arises from the dissemination of thought from those who have had relevant experiences. A grouping of such creates a coalition of thoughtful and publicly spirited persons. That, he said, is ultimately what informs and forms public opinion.

He mentioned three or four, including himself, who, he suggested, should be invited to participate. My mind immediately ran to others all of whom it would be a privilege for me to associate myself for the potential benefit of the common cause of our country.

And so I find myself with a renewed passion for what drove me to become involved in the first place. I am enthused and excited. The experience which I have related is not just a story. Rather, it is part of the continuance of a journey.

Knowlton, August, 2009.

APPENDIX I -

Insert separate document appendix1.doc – 3 pages

## APPENDIX II

The Conservative Party dumps its candidates in a surprisingly cavalier fashion, generally with no explanation. Two rules of the Party seemed to be in play. The first was that all 2004 candidates were, apparently, protected from nomination opposition for a try in 2006 if they wanted it. However, following the 2006 election and if not successful, they would be subject to a “two strikes and you’re out” rule, thus ineligible for another try, unless party dispensation was applied for and received. I say “seemed” and “apparently” because it is difficult to know with the Conservative Party when a rule is a rule. I think that the most accurate way of putting it is that the rules are the rules except when the Party decides not to follow them.

Of the following list numbers 1 and 2 were dumped while they were elected Conservative Members of Parliament. Numbers 3 and 4 were felled by the two strikes and you’re out rule. #5 and #6 had run in 2006 and whilst open to opposition had the right to assume that they could stand against any comer for the candidacy. #7 was acclaimed the candidate in his riding and then dumped. #8 and #9 were running for the first time, therefore supposedly free to do so, but against seated Conservative MPs who turned out to be protected after all. #9 and #10 were running for the nomination in their ridings for the first time.

1. Garth Turner a veteran Conservative, first elected in 1988 for the Ontario riding of Halton, was dumped in October 2006. No reason was publicly given. The reason is certainly because he kept his constituents informed on the issues and his views in respect thereof. That some of it might have rattled the Conservative party inner clique goes without saying and the muzzle was permanently applied. Unfortunately, at least from my point of view, Mr. Turner did not remain long as an independent but crossed over to the Liberals. Why, I am not sure. It was never satisfactorily explained and seemed contrary to his own enunciated principles on the issue of floor crossing.

2. Bill Casey, also first elected in 1988 as a progressive Conservative for the riding of Cumberland-Colchester in Nova Scotia, lost his seat, as did pretty much every other PC, in 1993 but regained it in 1997 and has held it ever since. He was dumped by the Conservative Party in 2007 for having voted against its budget. Under party rules, voting against a fiscal bill and certainly the budget is a no-no. However, these were very special circumstances. The budget in question contained, without a shadow of a doubt, a direct breach of the Atlantic Accord, a negotiated arrangement between a previous federal government and the provinces of Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. No Member of Parliament, if representation of constituents is of any importance, should be disciplined for standing up for what he and his constituents see as being a breach of a negotiated agreement. Mr. Harper, knowing how Mr. Casey felt, should have specifically excused Mr. Casey from the rule. Bill Casey now sits as an Independent and I trust that his constituency will return him as such in the

next election. He is the type of veteran politician that the House of Commons desperately needs to retain.

3. Phil Green ran for the riding of Mississauga South in both the 2004 and 2006 elections. He came second in 2004 trailing the Liberal by 8601 votes. He came second again in 2006 but had closed the gap to 2130 votes, the closest race in all Toronto and Mississauga ridings. One would have thought that this guy was a keeper but the Conservatives invoked their “two strikes and your out” rule (although how any Conservative was expected to win in most of these ridings in 2004 or 2006 is anybody’s guess) and dumped him without explanation.

4. Gary Caldwell a teacher by profession, agriculturalist by vocation and long time community supporter, ran in the riding of Stanstead coming third in 2004 with 10.48% of the votes and second in 2006 with 24.3%, a remarkably good showing in a district which, like Brome-Missisquoi, inevitably faced a split federalist vote. He was dumped on the call of the same “two strikes rule” and without further explanation. In Quebec, more so than anywhere else, succeeding as a Conservative prior to 2006 was a proven impossibility. Rather than reward his loyalty through the bleak years with another chance to succeed, the Conservative brass knifed him.

5. Brent Barr, a Guelph businessman, ran for “Guelph” in 2006 placing second but with less than 10% of the vote separating him from the Liberal winner. Continuing to campaign thereafter for his second try, he was, without warning or reason being given, shoved aside in October 2007. Another one bites the dust.

6. David Marler. Well you know about him.

7. Mark Warner, an international trade lawyer with a distinguished professional career, (didn't I read somewhere that Mr. Harper was a little short on politicians with knowledge of international affairs), was acclaimed the Conservative Party candidate in Toronto Centre to run in the by-election against Bob Rae, a formidable undertaking. He never got the chance. The Party dumped him without explanation but probably, again, because Mr. Warner had exhibited an empathy with the constituents of the riding and an ability to articulate their needs.

8. Walter Wakula never actually got into a nomination race but that, again, was because of the party’s machinations. Long time President of the riding association of Calgary West, he and many of the association’s members had had enough of their notorious sitting MP, Rob Anders who, amongst other things, proclaimed Nelson Mandela to be a “terrorist” at the time when Parliament was to confer upon Mandela an honorary Canadian citizenship. Wakula decided in 2006 to stand against Anders for nomination as the candidate. The party disqualified him, no reasons given, even before the nomination campaign was opened. An application to court was made to obtain a judgment against the party declaring the disqualification to be irregular as being contrary to the party’s own

regulations. The application was successful. The party re-opened the nomination giving only one month's lead time, declaring that only those who had held memberships in the party for at least ten months were eligible to vote, denying to Wakula access to the membership list, all under the caveat that the "National Council reserves the right to cancel this process and declare another person to be the Party's candidate as it sees fit". Mr. Wakula is obviously no fool. He quit the race, if it can be called that. Anders was acclaimed by the party for the second time in less than twelve months.

9. Doug Campbell, with an impressive background in agriculture, including having been an advisor to Tory cabinet ministers, decided to seek the nomination for the Wild Rose riding in Alberta. The unexplained rejection by the Conservative Party of his application falls into the same general category as that of Walter Wakula. The restrictive rules applied to Wakula were also applied to Campbell.

10. Paul Lalli, another long time Conservative and party activist, applied for the nomination in the Fleetwood-Port Kells riding in British Columbia but was refused. No explanation.

Go figure.