

Fiery head-on collision kills nine near Quesnel

by JAN-UDO WENZEL
Citizen Staff Reporter

QUESNEL — Nine persons, including five teenagers, died early Saturday in a fiery head-on collision between a car and a pickup truck about 48 km south of here.

RCMP said a car carrying six persons collided with a northbound pickup truck on Highway 97 near Alexandria. There were three persons in the truck.

Killed in the car were: Kenneth Alexander, 18, Marion Gentry, 17, both of Hope, Susan Reiersen, 17, Leslie Enns, 16, Bruce McMillan, 18 and Danny McCall, all of Quesnel.

Frank Morelli, 26, of Alexandria, Robert Bent, 20, of Kersley and Al Zehner, 24 of Mission, died in the pickup truck.

"We are still investigating where the occupants of the car had been and where they were going," a police spokesman in Quesnel said today.

The first call to RCMP did not mention a fire, but said that there had been an accident and that two bodies were on the road.

"When our nearest car raced to the scene, the officer suddenly could see the sky light up," the spokesman said.

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The fire left some of the bodies beyond recognition. A Quesnel fire truck was sent to the scene.

The occupants of the pickup are believed to have come off shift from the Gibraltar mine south of here.

Coroner James Girvin, after talking with investigating officers, said there will be an inquest. Girvin said he had been told what caused the crash, but police did not elaborate.

The nine dead were among 18 persons killed in traffic accidents in B.C. during the weekend.

There were no fatalities in the Prince George area, which logged 18 accidents, of which only four resulted in injuries. The most serious one took place about 2:30 a.m. Sunday on Highway 97 near the BCR Industrial site.

George Kenneth Topping, 18 was the driver of a car which collided with one driven by Kevin Gran Warkenton, 19.

Topping's car smashed into a power pole and it took the fire department two hours to extract him from the vehicle, police said. He suffered fractures to legs and hip.

The accident is still under investigation. The other nine fatalities in B.C. took place in Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Osoyoos, Ruby Creek and Burnaby.

B.C. registered the highest death toll in Canada this weekend. A safety survey said that 61 persons died accidentally in Canada, 52 in traffic accidents. One man was crushed when a car fell on him while he carried out repairs, a young girl was struck by a train and four persons drowned.

Three persons died in fires. Sgt. Ken Craig, in charge of the RCMP Prince George traffic section, said the accidents during the past weekend prove that every vehicle on the road is a potential fatality.

"We have to rely on drivers to observe the rules to assure safe driving," he said.

He also pointed out that a long weekend is coming up.

"Long weekends are potentially more dangerous because more people take to the roads and they are usually in a hurry to get where they are going," Craig said.

He said while he is not acquainted with the reasons for the multiple fatalities near Quesnel, it is always a shock when lives are lost on the highways.



Citizen photo by Doug Weller

Clear the track . . .

World championship-class chuckwagon driver Ralph Vigen coaxes his team around the Exhibition Park track during the May Day events Saturday. The Calgary Stampede chuckwagon races were one of the high-

lights of the four day celebrations which included a parade, midway, and a Mother's Day pancake breakfast, all sponsored by the Elks Club. More photographs on Page 10.

Atlin riding vote count error found

STEWART, B.C. (CP) — The discovery of a mistake in the reporting of the vote count in Cassiar, B.C., has cut the New Democratic Party's winning margin in Atlin riding in the May 10th provincial election to nine votes.

Alan Passarell was reported on election night to have upset Frank Calder of Social Credit, the Nishga Indian chief who has represented the riding for all but three years since 1949, by 124 votes.

Atlin returning officer Norman Hamilton said today that the results reported from Cassiar showed Passarell outpolled Calder 263 to 99 but a check showed that the margin was actually 148 to 99.

"That changes the situation radically," said Hamilton. "He (Passarell) did have a lead of 124 and now he's down to a lead of nine."

The unofficial count now is 703 to 694 for the NDP candidate with the official count, which will include the counting of absentee and special ballots, to begin May 23.

An application for a recount could be filed after the official count, said Hamilton, "and I'm sure either one of the two parties will be filing for a recount, depending on who wins."

Calder, 63, was originally an NDP MLA but joined the Social Credit party before the 1975 election after being dropped from former premier Dave Barrett's cabinet. Passarell, 31, is a school teacher.

Minister of health under fire

VANCOUVER (CP) — Dr. Alex Mandeville, president-elect of the British Columbia Medical Association, criticized Health Minister Bob McClelland Saturday for interfering in vote by the province's 3,500 doctors on a new fee structure.

McClelland told delegates attending the association's annual convention that the provincial government will not allow doctors to bill patients directly in order to gain higher payments than those offered under medicare.

He said the Social Credit government is committed to the medicare program in B.C. and will not allow doctors to threaten it.

Mandeville said McClelland's speech amounted to intimidation, in an effort to get B.C. doctors to approve the fee structure, which the association's current executive has recommended they accept. It provides for a 17.4 per cent increase over two years.

"What he is saying is that you either accept medicare or opt out completely," Mandeville said. "And my point is that if he forces a doctor to opt out, then he's forcing that doctor to charge the patient the entire bill."

"And if the patient can't afford to, the implication is that he (McClelland) has taken medical care away from that patient."

Mandeville said he thinks the fee increase is not enough. In his speech, McClelland said the government respects and values the role played by doctors and the help they give in developing a health-care program, but "we cannot and will not allow groups to dictate the allocation of tax funds and to endanger a vital part of the health-care machinery in this province."

Fee structures negotiated between his department and the medical profession should preclude the need for extra direct billing, he said.

'Take back the family allowance'

OTTAWA (CP) — The Canadian Council on Social Development says governments should take back in taxes family allowance and social security payments made to families with annual incomes above \$21,000. The revenues gained would be distributed to Canada's 4.5 million poor.

Pierre Bourdon, executive-director of the council, told a news conference Monday that full employment still is the best way of fighting the battle against poverty.

"But if governments are not prepared to pursue this objective, they must place equal importance on implementing more effective income-redistribution programs."

For example, an estimated \$750 million could be recovered each year by taxing back all family allowance payments to those above the average family income — currently \$21,000.

"This could then be used for an improved child tax credit or in taking the first step toward an income-supplementation program for the working poor."

The statement coincides with the release of two council studies on poverty and government social spending policies.

GOOSE BLUDGEONED

Shot at a birdie?

WASHINGTON (Reuter) — The case of a physician who bludgeoned a goose to death on the 17th hole has been put off until the next monthly board meeting of the Congressional Country Club.

The physician told club officials Friday his ball hit the goose as he was driving for the green and that when he killed the injured bird with his putter it was a mercy killing.

But witnesses told the board the goose honked as the doctor was about to take his shot and the man became so enraged that he rushed over and beat it to death.

The board's choices are to expel the doctor, suspend his membership or, perhaps worst of all, take away his golf privileges.

Winner of debate matter of opinion

OTTAWA (CP) — The national party leaders' debate Sunday drew a wide range of reviews from the public with many saying New Democratic Leader Ed Broadbent scored the most by dealing with issues. Charles Templeton, a former Ontario Liberal leader who moderated a leaders' debate in 1968, said, "There is no question Broadbent won the debate — and no question Clark lost . . ."

Undecided voter Bob Brown of Gander, Nfld. said he was most impressed with the NDP leader. "Clark talked twaddle, Trudeau talked history and Broadbent issues."

But Dr. Walter Young, chairman of the University of Vic-

toria's political science faculty, said Progressive Conservative Leader Joe Clark generally appeared to gain the most. "He seemed to be more confident, more polished than I anticipated."

And Paul-Emile Richard, chief editorial writer for Montreal, N.B., L'Evangeline, said: "Trudeau was No. 1, Broadbent was second and poor old Clark was third."

A poll by the CTV television network after the debate found 32 per cent of viewers thought Trudeau won while Clark and Broadbent were ranked first by 18 per cent each. The rest were undecided.

ISLAMIC JUSTICE DEFENDED

'Shah under sentence of death'

TEHRAN (CP) — The head of Tehran's Islamic revolutionary courts said Sunday that Iranians consider the exiled shah to be under sentence of death and that anyone who assassinates him will be carrying out the verdict of the people.

Defending the more than 200 executions known to have taken place in Iran since the February revolution which toppled the shah, Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali told a news conference that Western ideas of justice have no place in Islamic courts.

Replying to Western critics of the wave of political execu-

tions, he said: "To pity a sharptoothed tiger is to oppress the sheep."

Khalkhali said that among exiled Iranians already considered under sentence of death by the people are the shah, his wife, Empress Farah, his brother Prince Gholam Reza and former prime minister Shapur Bakhtiar.

He compared the revolutionary tribunals to the Nuremberg trials, where Nazi war criminals were tried after the Second World War. In both cases, he said, the accused included persons who allegedly sanctioned murder,

not just those who committed murder.

Khalkhali said ultimate responsibility for the Islamic revolutionary courts was conferred on him by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's unofficial head of state.

"He has told me not to listen to anybody, not even himself (when passing judgment)," Khalkhali said.

He said former prime minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda had offered the court \$1 million to have his trial deferred but this was turned down. He was executed later.

Khalkhali said the courts have acted according to the

dictates of the Koran and Western forms of justice have no role in the trials.

He accused foreign news media of trying to disrupt the Iranian revolution and accused it of being inspired by Zionism and imperialism. "Iran has no place for zionism, communism or imperialism, and we will destroy their plans," Khalkhali said.

The local news media also has come under fire from Iran's hard-line Moslem leadership. The left-leaning daily Ayandegan has halted publication.

In a broadcast by state-run radio and television, the newspaper was attacked as Zionist-controlled the anti-revolutionary. Islamic mobs subsequently attacked a number of the daily's provincial offices, and newsstands where it was on sale.

Meanwhile, the official Pars news agency announced that former foreign minister Ali Ardalan, 78, has been released from prison following a recent heart attack. Ardalan was arrested by revolutionary militiamen shortly after the revolution.

And the state radio reported that another Moslem religious leader has congratulated local revolutionary guardsmen who arrested his children, saying the captors are "taking care of the revolution."

The radio did not say how many children were arrested or on what charges.

University enrolment dips

OTTAWA (CP) — Less than one in five Canadians aged 18 to 21 were at university last year and the percentage was dropping, says a government study.

A statistical review of the education system released Friday showed 18.2 per cent of the 18-to-21-year-old population was enrolled in undergraduate programs last year compared with 18.6 per cent the previous year.

Statistics Canada said enrolment last year increased in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Quebec, but dropped in the other seven provinces. The review also provided new statistics to

document declining enrolment in elementary and secondary schools.

The decrease varied between six per cent in Quebec and .3 per cent in Prince Edward Island. The national average was 2.4 per cent.

The survey showed 3.5 per cent of elementary students attended private schools last year, a slight increase from the 3.4 per cent reported in 1977.

Private school enrolment varied from 6.5 per cent in Quebec to none in Prince Edward Island.

The figures also showed the extent of lay-offs and resignations in reducing the number

of teachers in the country. Between 1977 and 1978 there was a drop of 3,000 in the number of elementary and secondary school teachers.

More than half the country's teachers were women, 95 per cent were employed in public schools and the average age at the elementary level was 36, at the secondary level 38.

There was a noticeable increase in educational attainment of teachers. Among elementary teachers, the number with university degrees increased by nine per cent to 61 per cent. At the secondary level, teachers with degrees increased to 88 per cent from 84 per cent.

TODAY

Bon Wicks



"I'll give it to you straight. I've got an eleven year itch."

FEATURED INSIDE

Rangers show their stuff

The surprising New York Rangers continued their string of playoff upsets Sunday by whipping the Montreal Canadiens in the first game of the Stanley Cup final series. Page 7.

School children killed

About 100 school children between the ages of 8 and 16 have been killed by soldier's of Emperor Bokassa I of the Central African Empire following protests against rules requiring them to buy and wear uniforms. Page 5.

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THE WEATHER

The forecast for tonight for clear skies. Tuesday should be sunny with a few cloudy periods in the afternoon.

The expected high today is 15, the low tonight -1. Tuesday's forecast high is 15. The high Sunday was 13, the low -2. On this date last year the high was 14, the low 5.

Details page 2



NOW HEAR THIS

● Callers trying to get through to the Prince George Regional Hospital had better not be in a hurry. The hospital switchboard cannot handle the volume of callers, and phones ring sometimes 20 times before being answered. The hospital hopes to have a new phone system in operation within a few months, but until then, avoid any emergency that might require phoning the hospital.

● A visitor who just arrived in town phoned a friend to announce his arrival. Asked where he was calling from the man replied, "You won't believe this, but I'm calling from the stomach of a wooden man." The resident knew right away the visitor was at the Chamber of Commerce information centre downtown where the pay phone is located in a replica of Mr. Pee Gee.

Got a news tip? Call The Citizen's 24-hour news line at 562-2441.