

Citizen Sadrack



Sunny
Low tonight: -8
High Thursday: 2
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The Prince George Citizen

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1988

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Hart Highway is strewn with wreckage after tragic accident about 9:40 a.m. today.

Citizen photo by Dave Milne

DAWSON CREEK BASKETBALL TEAM

Six killed in fiery collision

The coach and five members of the Bethel Christian School senior boys' basketball team from Dawson Creek died in an accident at Endrick Road and Highway 97 north of Salmon Valley this morning.

The six were the only occupants of a van that collided with a flatbed truck carrying hydro poles on a straight stretch of the highway at about 9:40 a.m.

The road was dry at the time.

One person, believed to be the truck driver, was

taken to Prince George Regional Hospital by helicopter and later was flown to Vancouver for treatment.

On collision the van, which had propane aboard, burst into flames.

The boys' team, ranked number one in its enrollment category, was travelling to Lillooet for the provincial championship tournament which starts Thursday.

Ray Good, whose son is a member of the team

and was unhurt in the accident, said school principal Ron Pettigrew died in the accident.

"The one driver was killed, who was the principal. He was also the coach. That much is for sure. The rest is a state of chaos," Good said.

The van was the third of a trio of vehicles carrying students and supporters south to the tournament.

Good, who was reached at the Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle, said the community found out about the accident when his son called. He said the

school, which has about 90 students, has been closed and will remain closed for two days.

The driver of the vehicle in front told the Citizen: "I didn't see the impact, but everything was all over the road and I saw the van burst into flames. I can't believe it."

Police, ambulance, highway rescue society personnel and coroners were still on the scene at noon.

The Hart Highway was expected to be closed until about 3 p.m.

PAWLEY STEPS DOWN

Manitoba election called

WINNIPEG (CP) — Premier Howard Pawley announced today he is stepping down from the leadership of the New Democratic Party and a new leader will take the party into a provincial general election on April 26.

Pawley, sitting at the head of a polished oak table in a committee room of the legislature, was flanked by his wife Adele and their two children as he announced the end of his career in provincial politics.

"This would not have been a time of my choosing," Pawley said, referring to his government's defeat Tuesday evening on a vote of non-confidence.

Canada's lone NDP premier said he has asked the party executive to call a leadership convention as soon as possible and promised he will campaign hard for the party he has headed since 1979.

Maverick NDP backbencher Jim Walding shocked everyone by voting Tuesday with the opposition on Progressive Conservative Leader Gary Filmon's non-confidence motion on the provincial budget.

Such a vote is considered in parliamentary tradition to be the most important a government faces.

Pawley, whose government's popularity has been hurt by recent

premium hikes levied by the publicly owned automobile insurance company, huddled with senior cabinet ministers and party officials.

NDP members sat in bitter silence after Walding stood to vote in favor of Filmon's motion condemning the budget, while the Tories thumped their desks and whooped with glee.

The Conservatives needed the help of both Walding and Liberal

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Leader Sharon Carstairs in the 57-seat legislature to defeat the government.

Walding, a 50-year-old former Speaker of the house, said he was tired of carrying the responsibility for the government's survival since former health minister Larry Desjardins resigned his seat, leaving the NDP with a one-vote majority. Speaker Myrna Phillips, the NDP member for Wolseley, can only vote to break ties.

"It is time for the people of Manitoba to decide whether the government still has a mandate to govern or not," said the grey-haired optician, who quickly left Winnipeg after the vote for an undisclosed lo-

cation. "It's too much of a strain for one man."

He became disgruntled with the government when NDP officials tried to oust him from his St. Vital riding before the last election in March 1986, in which Pawley's government was elected to its second term.

Walding was then passed over for a cabinet post and he has been a thorn in Pawley's side ever since.

He was critical of the government's spending record during the session-opening throne-speech debate. However, he assured reporters Monday he was content with Finance Minister Eugene Kostyra's budget and he would support it when it came to a vote.

BC Rail picks new directors

BC Rail has appointed five new members to its board of directors, replacing five who were dismissed last week.

Two of the additions bring Prince George representation on the board to three out of seven members.

Lawyer Ed John, chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council, and Vic Bowman, manager of Ocean Cement and former director of the Prince George Region Development Corporation, join Ted Moffat who continues on the board.

"I think it's quite an honor to be named to the board," said Bowman.

"I want to stay in Prince George, and do what I can to help it grow. This is one way to do it, and learn some new things at the same time."

Other new directors are Gerry Strongman, chairman, lawyer Winton Derby, Q.C. and chartered accountant Beverly Ellis.

The new members replace Norman Hyland, Bruce Rome and Valerie Kordyban.

SOCRED DEFEAT PREDICTED

by Canadian Press
QUESNEL — Former highways minister Alex Fraser, under a cloud because of huge cost overruns on the Coquihalla Highway, forecast Tuesday that the Social Credit government is headed for defeat over its policies.

Fraser, who was dropped from the cabinet in 1986 but still sits as a Socred backbencher, lashed out at Premier Bill Vander Zalm, whose policies he said will mean the party won't be re-elected.

In a telephone interview from Victoria with the Cariboo Observer newspaper, Fraser said privatization of the Highways Ministry's maintenance division could alone cost the Socreds 15 Interior seats in the next election, and that Vander Zalm should have kept his "big mouth shut" on abortion.

Fraser, 71 and battling throat cancer, was scheduled to speak in the legislature today on a motion that a committee of privilege should investigate whether he misled the legislature on the cost of the Coquihalla highway.

The road from Vancouver through the southern British Columbia interior cost about \$1 billion, almost \$500 million over original estimates.

"I feel honored to be singled out," said Fraser, who speaks using an electronic voicebox after losing his larynx to cancer.

"At least I will go down in history as the highways minister that built some of the best highways through some of the toughest mountains in North America," he said. "I was not a minister that did a lot of talking. I was a minister that did a lot of building, and I'm proud of my accomplishments."

Fraser raked the Vander Zalm government over several of its policies.

He said privatization of highways Continued page 2

ABORTIONS HERE

Directive awaited

by BERNICE TRICK
Staff reporter

While the B.C. government fights a B.C. Supreme Court ruling which struck down its month-old policy rejecting abortions on demand, it's business as usual at Prince George Regional Hospital.

"Nothing is changing here," said PGRH executive director Allan Husband, referring to Monday's court decision that the province cannot withhold medical services from women by paying for abortions only in life-threatening circumstances.

Physicians at PGRH continue to submit bookings at the hospital for abortion procedures and "unless it's life threatening, the hospital is submitting bills to patients."

Billing patients for hospital stays began Feb. 22 — the cut-off date when the provincial government's medical services plan ceased to pay for abortions which were not

considered life-threatening. "We're just awaiting the government's next official move," Husband said today, noting no official directive or policy has been received about Monday's turn of events.

"Once official word is received, the board (of directors) will have to consider any changes to current practices," Husband explained.

Health Minister Peter Dueck said in the provincial legislature Tuesday the government is instructing hospitals that abortions will once again be paid for by medicare.

The number of abortions being performed at PGRH is about the same today as it was in January when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the federal abortion law on the grounds it was unconstitutional.

During 1987, statistics show 206 Continued page 2

SUPER TUESDAY

Bush leaps ahead

by Canadian Press
George Bush virtually blew his rivals for the Republican presidential nomination off the political map in crucial U.S. voting contests Tuesday that left three Democrats in a tug of war for their party's nomination.

The vice-president chalked up a possible sweep of Super Tuesday victories across the South and elsewhere, delivering major blows to the presidential hopes of his chief rivals — Kansas Senator Bob Dole and former television evangelist Pat Robertson.

His stunning victories in at least 16 of the 17 Republican state contests, most in the South, were expected to give Bush about half the delegates needed to nail down the nomination at the party's national convention in New Orleans in August.

Echoing predictions that whoever won Super Tuesday would win the presidency next November, Bush

declared confidently to jubilant supporters: "I'm going to be the next president of the United States."

Super Tuesday results across 21 states and territories were not as definitive for the Democrats.

The previously untested Tennessee Senator Albert Gore surfaced as a contender for the first time, winning a handful of states along with Massachusetts Gov. Michael

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Dukakis and black activist Jesse Jackson.

Dukakis appeared closest to claiming frontrunner status after winning the twin "jewels" of Texas and Florida, the states with the largest number of nominating delegates at stake, and at least four others.

"I feel good about the South," a smiling Dukakis said, adding that Continued page 2

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