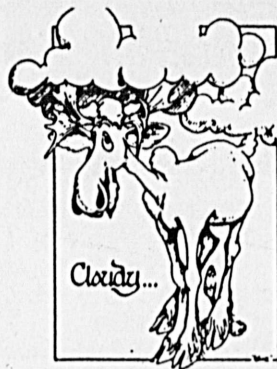


The Prince George Citizen

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1992

70 CENTS
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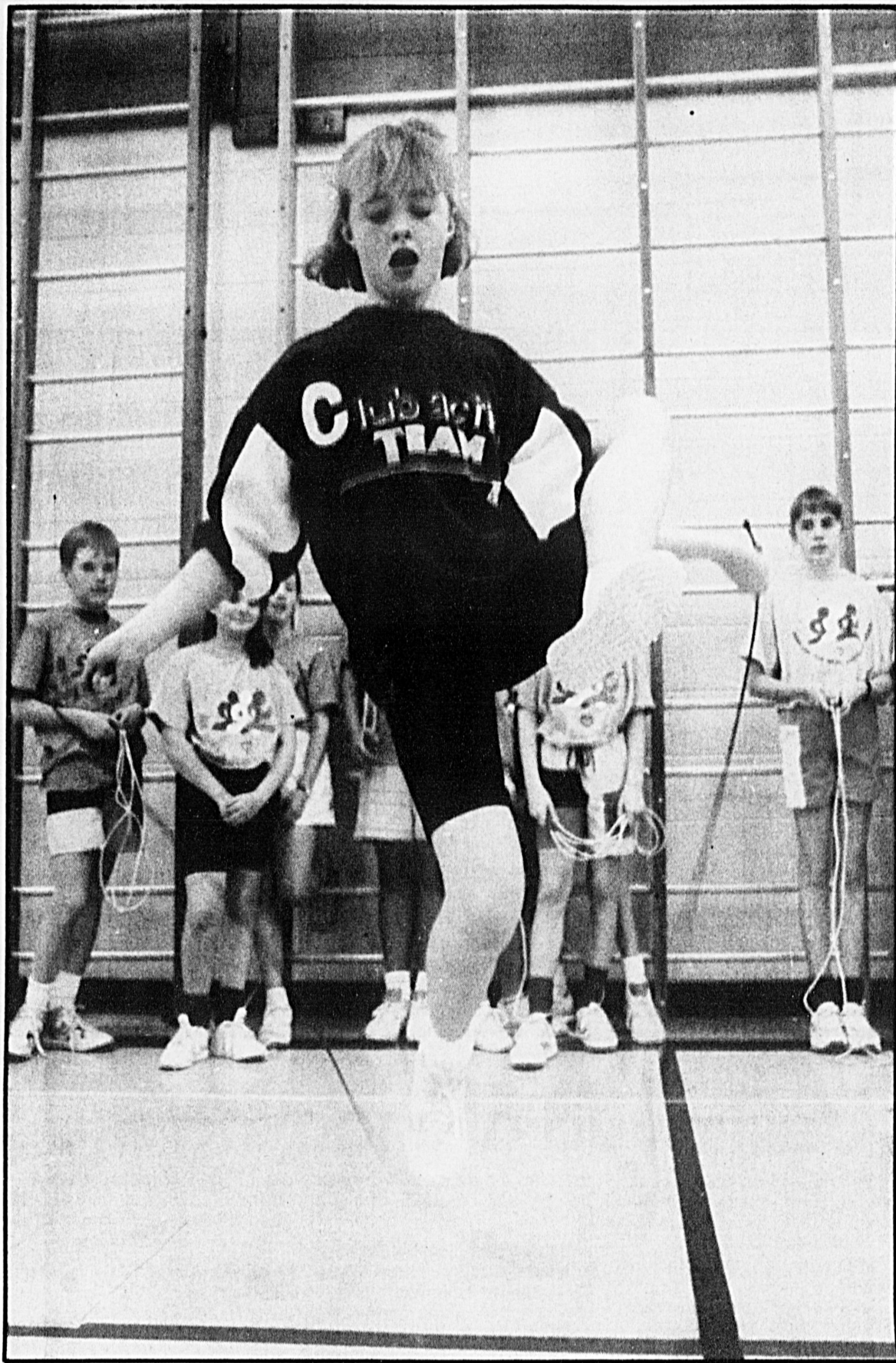


Low tonight: -4
High tomorrow: 0

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Phone: 562-2441 Classified: 562-6666 Circulation: 562-3301



Citizen photo by Dave Milne

Manoeuvres like the pretzel, demonstrated by Jennifer Allan, 11, are part of the Jump Rope for Heart program. She's part of the Gladstone Elementary School demonstration team. As part of Heart Month events, Jump Rope teams of Gladstone and Meadow elementary students will hold skip-a-thons on Valentines Day next Friday to raise money for heart and stroke research. Jump Rope for Heart is a cardiovascular health program for students run by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. and Yukon.

Heartening

INFLATION FIGHT HURT B.C. - STUDY

VICTORIA (CP) — The federal government's policy of making the fight on inflation its top economic goal cost B.C. \$500 million last year and 15,000 jobs over the past three years, says a study commissioned by the B.C. government.

The federal government should abandon its fight against inflation in favor of lowering the gap between interest rates and the inflation rate, the study says.

In the process, this would jumpstart the economy, it says.

The study, conducted by Ottawa-based Infor-metrica — a leading economic consulting firm

— says the federal government's tight monetary policy had a severe negative impact on the B.C. economy.

The "federal government's view is a rigid ideological view that is doing great harm to B.C. and to its regions," Finance Minister Glen Clark told a news conference in releasing the study Thursday.

The study says the tight monetary policy has reduced B.C.'s economic output by almost three per cent, increased the unemployment rate by 1.1 per cent and substantially reduced investment in the province.

Cassiar residents hang tough

CASSIAR (CP) — Hundreds of asbestos mine employees and their families listened glumly Thursday night as B.C. government officials explained how their northeastern B.C. company town will be dead by summer.

But some of the 450 employees of the financially stricken Princeton Mining Corp. and local business people are seeking ways to reopen the mine, including buying it themselves.

"It's one of the options we are considering," said Linda McGill, a member of the group. "We would prefer someone to come in and take it over but we're considering an employee-run mine as well."

The mother of 15 children said she has been on the phone for weeks talking to possible investors as well as several employee-run companies to see how to get started.

"I know it would take a lot of money," she said, estimating employees will receive only about \$10,000 each in severance pay.

"We're trying to somehow work out a plan to acquire the assets and be free of the debt load."

A decision was made in January to close the asbestos mine in this isolated community 1,200 kilometres northwest of Vancouver after the B.C. government refused to loan an additional \$13 million to Princeton to buy a revised debt-restructuring plan.

Forests Minister Dan Miller, legislative member responsible for the mine, said the NDP government could not meet the company's demand for an immediate cash infusion to meet the current debts.

11.4% LAST MONTH

Jobless rate up in region

Citizen news services
The official unemployment rate for the Central Interior including Prince George jumped from 10.3 per cent in December to 11.4 per cent last month, Statistics Canada announced today.

One reason for the increase in unemployment here is that construction work lasted longer into the winter than usual due to warm weather, but slowed in January, says Diane Sketchley, labor market analyst for Employment Canada here.

The number of people working in logging and forestry applying for unemployment benefits dropped slightly in January despite warm temperatures which made logging difficult in many areas, she added today.

Officially, Victoria has taken over from Vancouver as the part of the province with the lowest unemployment rate, 8.8 per cent compared to Vancouver's 9.1 per cent.

And the highest unemployment rate in B.C. is 16.9 per cent in the Thompson, Nicola, Squamish, and Lillooet regional districts.

According to Statistics Canada, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for British Columbia as a whole went up 0.2 to 10.2 per cent.

However, the government agency warned that its estimate is based on a small sample, so may not be exact.

The national unemployment rate edged up to 10.4 per cent in January from 10.3 per cent in December.

There has been no clear trend in the movement of the rate one way or another for the last 12 months and Statistics Canada said that pattern is continuing.

The agency said the economy lost 40,000 full-time jobs, largely among men. But that drop was partially offset by a rise of 27,000 part-time jobs.

Some 14,000 jobs disappeared in construction and 22,000 were in community, business and personal services. In contrast, government employment rose by 15,000 jobs during January, Statistics Canada said.

Unless otherwise stated, all figures are seasonally adjusted.

There were 1.429 million Canadians without jobs last month, compared with 1.420 million in December.

Among the provinces, Manitoba lost 10,000 jobs, while there was little change in the employment totals elsewhere.

LUMBER FIRM WINS INJUNCTION

Band defies blockade order

KITWANGA (CP) — A northwestern B.C. native band is defying a court order to end a two-week blockade of a logging road.

Between six and two dozen members of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Eagle band have manned a log blockade in an effort to force Kitwanga Lumber to consult them before clearcutting forestry the band claims.

Bud and Lorne Hobenshield, owners of Kitwanga Lumber, had a court injunction served Wednesday on Chief Calvin Hyziems Simideeks and band spokesman Art Loring Jr.

In response, the band Thursday fortified its barricade blocking log-

gers' access to the clearcut area, about 350 kilometres northwest of Prince George.

An eagle flag flies defiantly from a blockade pole.

"We are going to have to defy them," Loring said, "because we feel the judge's decision was unfair."

"He overlooked our arguments."

If government has a responsibility to look after the best interests of native people, the Ministry of Forests should require timber licence holders to consult with hereditary chiefs before developing land use plans, Loring said.

"They have breached their own law system by avoiding all questions. We want to know where their responsibility lies."

RCMP Sgt Reg Kilden of nearby Hazelton said the police won't get involved unless the Hobenshields get an enforcement order from the courts.

"If they choose to get the police after us, then I guess we'll go to jail," said Loring.

Meanwhile the logging company is using another access route to the site to remove equipment caught behind the blockade.

INSIDE TODAY

Our annual Money Matters package is in today's Citizen.

Advice about RRSPs, tips from well-known financial adviser Mike Grenby and more are offered in a special 16-page supplement.

We also feature a special 12-page Mardi Gras section in TV Times. Look for the things you need to know about Prince George's zany annual festival of madcap antics.

Quaw gets apology from minister

by BEV CHRISTENSEN
Citizen Staff

Native Affairs Minister Andrew Petter has agreed to apologize to Peter Quaw of Prince George for what the chief of the 200-member Lheit-Lit'en Nations band says was a rude reception during a recent visit to Victoria.

"I am puzzled and regret this is the impression he came away with," Petter said today from Victoria. "I realize my role is to represent them in government and, if he came away with that impression, I am not doing my job."

He said he planned to phone Quaw today to apologize.

The misunderstanding arose last month when Quaw led a four-member delegation to Victoria to present Petter with documents prepared by the band outlining its proposals dealing with

self-government, social services, forestry and other topics.

Quaw says it cost the band more than \$20,000 to prepare the documents and travel to Victoria for what he thought would be a one-hour meeting with Petter and Attorney General Colin Gabelmann. He says Petter arrived at the meeting late, spent 15 minutes with them and appeared disinterested in what he had to say.

Quaw says that by Petter's actions, he insulted the elders of the band who instructed him to travel to Victoria to pay a courtesy visit and to outline the band's plans for self-government, getting rid of the Indian Act and their future relationship with the province.

Petter said he apologized to Quaw at the time for not being able to spend as much time with him as he had requested.

"The fact we set aside time to meet with him during budget and legislation preparations is indicative of our interest," Petter said.

He said he understood the purpose of the meeting was to establish a first contact with the band to receive the proposals which are now under active consideration within the ministry.

"I am optimistic we will move ahead with some of his proposals," he said.

Quaw also demanded Petter reimburse the band for the cost of preparing the documents.

But Petter says the more than \$20,000 spent preparing the extensive documents outlining the proposals was well-spent and will result in further meetings between his ministry and the band.

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