

# Commentary

## Your opinion

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### For the record

Re: April 21, 'Short end of the stick'.

It would be helpful to the general reading public if opinions printed in your paper came from an informed and educated position.

To Mr. Cretney, maybe you perceive the abuse perpetrated by men against women overblown and at a hysterical level. The fact remains that two Canadian women are killed every week in this country at the hands of their spouses. The fact remains that women have been and continue to be oppressed and exploited in all areas that you have so ignorantly claimed that we have made gains in.

One very clear and simple example of that is the fact that women still earn only 60 cents for every dollar you as a man earn. The jails are not clogged with offenders of abuse, we have more success convicting criminals who have committed crimes against properties than women, maybe because as a society we value property more than women's lives.

The system is on your side because men make up our systems and men are the power holders and decision makers in this society still. So not to waste too much energy on attitudes such as yours, because that is a waste, the message I have to women and sisters reading this is that we have not achieved all we can and that we will continue to work to improve the quality of lives for ourselves and our children despite the overwhelmingly ignorant attitudes that so many men still subscribe to.

In sisterhood.

— Debra Critchley

### Get on with it

From the tenor of your editorial of April 15 (re: the Clayoquot Sound issue) it would seem that you would be perfectly happy to let the Coleen McQuarries and the Paul Watsons of the world set the agenda for resource management in British Columbia.

The choices for Clayoquot Sound have been studied and debated ad nauseam. For the past decade, countless days and dollars have been spent in gathering information, public involvement, debating, and preparing option reports. The Core process would do little more than to maintain the soapbox for extremists on both sides.

Given the radical position that has been staked out by one faction, it is evident that nothing short of preservation of the entire sound would have satisfied its members. They have made it very clear that they will go to any lengths to have their way. Trashing the Legislature, spiking trees, or sabotaging our image abroad is fair game in their eyes.

Given extreme views such as theirs, it is more than likely



Ontarians for Responsible Government say NDP Premier Bob Rae's policies are ruining the provincial economy.

### On the outs

One of your most prolific correspondents, Alan Timberlake, seems very reluctant to address issues of importance nearer to home. I am referring to the latest tax grab known as the revolting Glen Clark budget. Mr. Timberlake will probably cite the fact that he is a civil servant in the employ of the provincial government and that it would be unseemly of him to bite the hand that feeds.

However, that would be a flimsy excuse to hide behind because what we are really talking about is this NDP obsession of increasing taxes at every turn as practised by his provincial brothers and sisters in Victoria, Regina and Toronto and that Audrey, Alan, Svend

and company would dearly love to practice in Ottawa.

Luckily with the steadily declining popularity, and hence significance of the NDP, both federally and provincially, this is a most unlikely scenario.

But the question must be put to Mr. Timberlake nevertheless. Which course does he favor? The current Rae proposal of firing a whole bunch of redundant civil servants, rolling back public sector wages and other stern measures to try to retrieve a situation that he made disastrously worse for the taxpayers of Ontario, or the Glen Clark approach of raising taxes, hiring a lot more civil servants including some expensive help from out of

province and generally poisoning the climate for small business in British Columbia.

Bob Rae was once nominated for Buffalo, New York's Man of the Year award because of the number of small business operations he chased out of the province to set up shop in Buffalo.

If NDP brothers and sisters don't talk to each other and learn from sad experience, Glen Clark could soon end up as a booster for Seattle and be in the running for a similar award.

Alan, stop mouthing platitudes and get down to specifics — what is your preferred course of action?

— Jim Gibb

Steven Owen heaved a sigh of relief when this one did not land on his plate. No amount of debate would have gained consensus and would simply have served to prolong the agony.

The government has made a decision on this issue. For this it is to be commended. Now, let's get on with it.

— Russ Trenaman

### Not amused

I wish to protest your encouragement of vandalism. The picture of president Terry Wenering of CNC taking a sledge hammer to a car is very disturbing to me. It suggests that at CNC they are teaching students

that if they are "stressed" by poor service in a store they are justified in throwing a rock through the offending store's window.

If you get a parking ticket, break the offending meter, after all you are "stressed out". Isn't there enough damage to public property as it is. That a president of a college or any organization would condone it is very abhorrent.

"Hitting" anything is not a way to handle so called "stress". Is this an example of what is being taught at CNC?

After seeing this picture I am even more concerned about our education system than I was

before. The stress of final exams should be avoided by studying hard and being prepared for them.

— Lillian Coulling

### What's the fuss?

What's all this hysteria about logging Clayoquot Sound?

Mother Nature has done worse things in the past to our forests.

Away back in 1934 the Highways Department wanted to cut the trees on either side of the "Green Timbers" section of the Trans Canada Highway to forestall any blockage of the highway by falling trees. There was an immediate outcry from incipient environmentalists about the desecration of this scenic wonder. A few

weeks later a 90-mile-an-hour wind toppled the forest giants and decided in favor of the Highways Department.

In 1939, the Black Creek fire destroyed 75,000 acres of prime forest on Vancouver Island. A magnificent forest of Douglas fir now replaces this natural clearcut.

In 1962 Hurricane Freda bowled over 5,000 giants in Stanley Park. Most of this wood was salvaged but there was still an outcry from the public when the parks board took the precaution of topping the remaining trees. It was claimed this would destroy their natural silhouettes.

In 1968, a hurricane roared through the Tongas National For-

est of southeastern Alaska and knocked over 800 million board feet of prized Sitka Spruce, enough wood to keep two large pulp/sawmills going for a year.

Most of this timber could never be salvaged and was left to rot on the ground.

In 1980 there was a great fuss made by environmentalists about proposed logging on the lower slopes of Mount St. Helens.

Dixie Lee, the governor of Washington State, was in favor of a compromise but the environmentalists would have nothing to do with a compromise. We all know the volcano blew and made a mockery of the protests.

My point is that logging operations need not be destructive.

The Tahsis logging operation on northern Vancouver Island sets a good example. They do not export round logs but sell their lumber in the Japanese market. They clear cut 100 acres, then skip a hundred and move on to the next 100.

They stay well back from salmon streams and leave corridors for wildlife migrations.

Provided logging companies are given clear instructions from trained foresters free of political bias there is no reason Clayoquot Sound cannot be partially logged successfully.

— Ralph Buckley

### Grave concern

I have a grave concern over the results of the new non smoking policy at Prince George Regional Hospital.

On April 13 I had occasion to attend the out-patient department of PGRH to have a cast removed from my ankle. As I approached the main doors on crutches I was shocked to find that I could not use the automatic doors as the way was blocked by a group of patients, some in wheelchairs some on regular chairs, some standing — all smoking. I had to wait for my husband to open the regular doors for me.

As I waited outside X-ray, I observed both staff and patients trooping by, out yet another exit to stand and puff away.

As we left the hospital by the main doors we noticed that the sidewalk outside was littered with cigarette butts. If this is going to be the result of the new policy please give them back their smelly little closed off rooms so the rest of us are not both inconvenienced by their actions nor disgusted by the results.

Having our regional hospital circled by smokers certainly does absolutely nothing for its image as a health care facility.

— Judy A. Hunter

## CIGARETTE SMUGGLERS TAP A \$1.3-BILLION MARKET

# The straw that broke the camel's back

by SARAH SCOTT  
Southam News

OTTAWA — In the name of health and higher taxes, Canadian governments have created a monster of a problem — a wave of smuggling from coast to coast.

The new cigarette smugglers — who include Mafia-style criminals and drug barons, Asian street gangs, truckers, an ex-wrestler and ordinary middle-class Canadians — are all cashing in on a \$1.3-billion market in illegal cigarettes smuggled across the border by land, sea and air.

And while Ottawa and the provinces helped create the crime wave by jacking up taxes by over 400 per cent in the last 10 years, they now feel powerless to stop it.

So politicians can only grind their teeth while smugglers rob federal and provincial treasuries of \$1.6 billion in unpaid taxes in 1992.

One in almost every six packages of cigarettes sold in Canada is illegal, according to one study, and RCMP across Canada say smuggling is growing fast.

"Five years ago, 95 per cent of our time was chasing after smuggled cars, boats, and jewelry," says Const. Francois Mouton in Toronto. "Now, 95 per cent

of our time is chasing after smuggled cigarettes and alcohol.

"Everybody's doing it, from Joe Blow, to organized crime, to ethnic groups. Money has no color you know."

In Quebec and Ontario, native smugglers have been making millions by transporting cigarettes through reserves that straddle the Canada-U.S. border. One shipment was transported from a reserve into Montreal by ambulance.

But it's no longer a purely native problem, RCMP say.

Organized crime and ordinary Canadians are being lured into cigarette smuggling by the potential for huge profits with minimal fines.

It works like this: Canadian-made cigarettes are shipped tax-free to the United States at about \$7 per carton. Then smugglers sneak the cigarettes across the border, and they're sold in Canada for anywhere from \$20 to \$30 per carton, a cut below the average legal price of about \$50.

Smugglers and various other middlemen pocket the difference. Governments get nothing. Existing fines cut only a fraction out of the big-time smugglers' profits, RCMP say.

Given the grand scale of cigarette smuggling, especially in Ontario and

Quebec, one might expect government to take decisive action.

But that's not happening. Revenue Minister Otto Jelinek is steering a bill through Parliament to hike fines for cigarette smuggling to a maximum of to \$500,000 from \$25,000.

Increased fines won't solve the problem, but politicians feel they can do little else, because they're in the middle of a lobbying whirlwind spinning around two issues that Canadians care deeply about — taxes and health.

The tobacco lobby says that the only way to stop smuggling is to cut taxes. Manufacturers have pressed government to roll back taxes to U.S. levels but now say they want taxes cut to 1987 levels. The tax on cigarettes in Quebec is about \$3 higher than it is in New York.

Either way, governments would lose a lot of money. Rolling back taxes to U.S. levels would cost Ottawa and the provinces \$5 billion in taxes, according to the Non-Smokers Rights Association. To make up for the loss, governments would have to cut services or hike other taxes, hardly a popular move.

But governments might lose those tax revenues anyway, says Rob Parker, president of the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council.

He points to Quebec as an example of what's to come. Smuggling has cost the provincial treasury so much money that Quebec is collecting less tobacco tax today than in 1988 even though tobacco taxes have doubled. Little wonder that Quebec cabinet ministers are talking about cutting the tobacco tax.

In Ottawa, though, Jelinek says cutting tobacco taxes is a non-starter: It would be "contrary to our anti-smoking efforts."

The federal government is under intense pressure from anti-smoking groups to keep up the tax for health and financial reasons.

"It makes an awful lot of sense," says David Sweanor, legal counsel for the non-smokers' rights association. "It has a tremendous impact on public health. It raises a lot of money. And it's popular (compared with other ways of raising tax dollars). Government doesn't have a lot of taxes like that."

The non-smokers' association claims that one million Canadians would start smoking if taxes were rolled back to U.S. levels.

That claim is a matter of intense dispute.

The anti-smoking lobby says high

taxes are the prime reason Canada's per-capita consumption has dropped by nearly 40 per cent in the past 10 years. In the U.S., the non-smokers' group says, the decline was only 25.7 per cent.

But the tobacco lobby says the non-smokers are having fun with figures. Parker sees no proof that smoking has declined faster in Canada than south of the border.

Smoking is declining in both countries, but not because of the price, says Parker. He thinks the main reason for the decline is that baby boomers are getting older and are smoking less.

The non-smokers say the tobacco lobby is lying and muddying the waters to confuse politicians.

If anything, the intense lobbying campaign is paralyzing the politicians.

They want to stop smuggling but don't want to do it by cutting taxes because they need the money.

A year ago, the federal government added a \$1-per-pack export tax on cigarettes in February, only to repeal it seven weeks later after heavy lobbying by the tobacco industry.

It was an embarrassing fiasco that most ministers would rather forget.