# LOCAL

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MARK ALLAN,
City editor

## PRINCE GEORGE-PEACE RIVER FORUMS

# Reformer grilled on health, education

by BILL SEYMOUR
Citizen Staff

FORT ST. JOHN — Cuts to medicare and education were the focus of questions to the Reform Party candidate here in two Prince George-Peace River all-candidate forums Wednesday.

Reform's Jay Hill took the brunt of questions from hometown crowds at a pair of forums sponsored by local groups. Students at North Peace Secondary School asked Hill about both issues.

Reform would slash education funding for French immersion programs in Canadian schools as part of its deficit-cutting plan, Hill said.

"We would cut funding for French immersion programs," Hill told an afternoon assembly in the gym at NPSS. "The provinces would have to decide and the funding should come from there."

Reform's policy of scrapping official bilingualism and the Official Languages Act came up again later in the day at another forum downtown. Hill repeated his earlier comments to an energetic crowd of over 200.

John Van der Woude, Christian Heritage Party candidate, said his party also opposes official bilingualism.

"French language has been enforced on us by the Liberal government," Van der Woude said Wednesday. "It is a waste of money to force it on us."

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Their comments contrasted sharply with Progressive Conservative candidate Ted Sandhu and Jacques Monlezun of the Liberals. Both said they support the Act.

Hill tried to deflect questions on Reform's plans for medicare by saying there weren't any plans to tinker with federal funding. Asked by another student what Reform would do to health care, Hill took the floor.

"Medicare is the No. 1 thing Canadians hold dear to our hearts," Hill told the students. "We want to preserve funding for health care."

However, Hill added a Reform government would amend the Canada Health Act and put more responsibility for health into the provinces' hands.

Hill, who graduated from NPSS in 1970, was dressed casually in jeans with cowboy boots at the school. With polls showing Reform continuing to lead B.C.'s decided voters, he continues to appear relaxed and comfortable at meetings.

Even Alan Timberlake of the NDP couldn't draw fire from Hill.

Timberlake opened his remarks here Wednesday evening with a continued assault on Reform policies.

Questions about Reform's ideas are growing as the campaign winds down to its final days. The party's populist-sounding ideas and deficit-cutting plans are arousing more than curiosity.

Ian Forsythe of Fort St. John asked Hill what his party would do to support cultural industries. Remote communities risk losing most of their cultural opportunities if federal funding dries up, he said.

"They are vital," said Hill. "But the Reform Party's view on cultural institutions, including the CBC, is that they have to face the same realities we all face and therefore they will have to face cuts."

Queries about details on how recall and referendum would work with Reform were also pushed at Hill. The candidate was pressed to explain the fine details of how recall would work.

"They sound good and feel good," said Sandhu. "But when you put them together they don't work."

The riding's final all-candidates forum of the campaign goes tonight in Dawson Creek.

## CAMPAIGN TRAIL

**P.G.-BULKLEY VALLEY TODAY**

After campaigning downtown, Liberal candidate Dave Wilbur will be at campaign headquarters, 1677 15th Ave., from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. to see anyone who may wish to drop by, then does door-to-door campaigning in the evening. Noon — Reform Party candidate Dick Harris campaigns at the College of New Caledonia until 1:30. At 2 he visits Alward Place senior citizen's home. At 3:30 he goes mainstreeting.

8 p.m. — NDP candidate Brian Gardiner speaks to Communications, Energy and Paperworker's Union.

**FRIDAY**

6 a.m. — Gardiner greets workers as they begin their shift at Northwood Pulp and Timber's Prince George sawmill, then spends the rest of the day door-knocking and mainstreeting.

7:30 a.m. — Conservative candidate Colin Kinsley greets Northwood Pulp workers at shift change. At 2:30 he visits the Rainbow Lodge senior citizen's home, and at 7 p.m. goes mainstreeting in Prince George.

Harris will be in Burns Lake on a radio talk show before mainstreeting from noon until 1 p.m. At 1:30 he'll be in Fraser Lake and from 3 p.m. on he'll visit Endako and Vanderhoof.

Wilbur campaigns downtown then is at his headquarters from 3 p.m. until 5, before going campaigning door-to-door.

**P.G.-PEACE RIVER TODAY**

7 p.m. — All-candidates forum in Dawson Creek.

# Gitksan want action on claims

by MARILYN STORIE
Citizen Staff

The Gitksan people want the provincial government to stop talking and start acting on their claim to a 57,000-square-kilometre area in northwest B.C.

The Gitksan are also adamant that the government must accept an interim agreement for the co-management of resources in the area.

The Gitksan announced a blockade was to be erected Tuesday afternoon at the B.C. Rail right-of-way at Minaret Creek, about 650 kilometres northwest of Prince George, 100 kilometres northeast of Hazelton. The isolated area is accessible by the Sustat-Takla rail extension running past Takla Lake.

But a rail employee who travelled by speeder car to the right-of-way Tuesday afternoon to check things out discovered only a no-tresspassing sign that noted the area was an Indian reserve.

"It has had no impact on our operation," Barrie Wall, B.C. Rail manager of corporate communications, said Wednesday from North Vancouver.

Wall said the line was put in to accommodate logging traffic. But he added that no traffic is scheduled on the line for the next few days. No regular traffic is scheduled until late November or early December when winter logging operations begin, he said.

The forest block is 100 to 120 kilometres past the Indian village of Takla, with the last 30 kilometres accessible only by rail. Gordon Sebastian, speaker for the Gitksan chiefs, announced this week that Gitksan residents of Takla would travel to Minaret Creek and set up a blockade at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

Sebastian said the Gitksan chiefs decided the move was necessary to prevent Rustad Brothers and Company Ltd., a division of Northwood Pulp and Timber Ltd., from logging an untouched wilderness area they say falls within their traditional territory. The area is also traditional territory for the Carrier people of the Takla Lake Band.

"We're currently reviewing it," Northwood spokesman Bill Theessen said Wednesday when asked what Northwood was doing to deal with the situation. But Theessen said Northwood had little information about what, if anything, was happening.

Sebastian said Tuesday from Smithers that band members got wind that a 20-man work team was to begin preparing a 84-man camp there. A road is being built to the area by the Takla Development Corporation, owned by the Takla Lake band, before Rustad begins winter logging in the area.

Sebastian, however, claimed the general population in Takla is opposed to resource extraction in the area.

"They are misusing the poor people," Sebastian said. "They're supplying a few jobs for the Takla natives to build roads and then they will take the resources."

Sebastian said it is not acceptable for the province to allow forest companies to plunder resources before the Gitksan Wet'suwet'en land claim is ironed out.

## Break-ins include vandalism

Prince George RCMP are investigating a series of similar break-ins into homes in the Prince George area in the past two weeks.

The unknown culprits are deliberately and maliciously vandalizing these residences during the break-ins. Damage to date is estimated at more than $150,000.

Three of these break-and-enters occurred in one night, police said. The senseless damage goes well beyond what is required to get into the home and detach desired appliances, and includes such tactics as plugging toilets, turning on water to flood the house, throwing things, and damaging walls.

★ ★ ★

The owner of a German shepherd will have the animal destroyed after it bit a Citizen carrier this week, Prince George RCMP said today.

The nine-year-old was attacked by the dog at a customer's residence on Snowdrop Drive around 4 p.m. Tuesday.

The boy needed stitches in his face.

## GRACE McCARTHY VISITS

# Socred growth claimed

by KEN BERNSOHN
Citizen Staff

After two years away from politics, Grace McCarthy's back, running for the leadership of the Social Credit Party, even though she says being out of politics is a lot more fun.

"When you're in public life you can't have people over for dinner when you want, spontaneously decide to go out for dinner or go away for a weekend," said McCarthy, who was a member of the provincial legislature for more than 30 years.

McCARTHY

In her two years out of politics, McCarthy has taken golf lessons, raised $2.5 million for vision research, been on the advisory board of the Salvation Army, and worked with the paraplegic association.

"I loved being away from it," she said in an interview in Prince George today.

The Social Credit Party is alive and growing, with 49,500 members, up fom 46,000 three weeks ago, she said.

The provincial Liberal Party has about 14,000 members, although they have 16 MLAs, compared to six Socred MLAs.

McCarthy says the Socred members have been the real opposition to the NDP government — credible, steady and firm.

"I think Jack Weisgerber has done a tremendous job in two years. He's quieted down the party.

"The party had problems. You know that. I know that.

"Jack Weisgerber had a monumental job to take on. He's quieted down the problems there were. There's not all the personality problems there were."

She says she's running out of a sense of duty. "I'm concerned about the future of the province and there seems to be an opportunity to do something about it."

Disenchanted NDP members, people who are voting Reform in the federal election, and federal Conservatives, are more likely to be able to support Social Credit than a Liberal party, she feels.

"People are saying 'Until all you free enterprisers get together, we're not going to help you.' They want everyone to get together to get rid of the NDP.

"Surprisingly in the midst of an election campaign federally we're getting really good turnouts at meetings. I thought we'd be getting sparse crowds.

"In Trail we got two-thirds as many people as they got two blocks away for a (federal) all-canadidates meeting with television and everything.

"And we're just talking to Social Credit members; they're not general meetings, yet we got 115 to 120 people out in a place like Trail. That's a good turnout."

In addition, she said, people who aren't party members have been enthusiastic about her return to politics.

The party will hold its annual convention in Kamloops Oct. 28 and 29, when the candidates for party leader — McCarthy, Graham Bruce, Claude Richmond and Jim Turner — will speak. Voting will take place Nov. 6 in each constituency when every party member will have a chance to vote.

# Logging angers residents

Property owners in the Valleyview Subdivision in Prince George are aggravated by private logging on property below their neighborhood.

The petition, signed by 66 of 77 property owners, to Canba Holdings Ltd. of Edmonton, protests the logging of a green-belt area, and in particular, slopes abutting properties. Canba was granted a selective logging permit in the southeast and southwest portions of District Lot 4028.

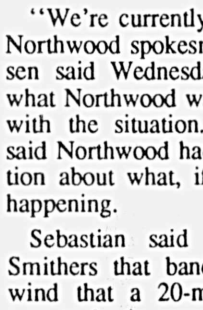
Resident Joseph Gagne said Wednesday the slope behind his home has not been touched yet, but others say embankments behind their homes have been clear-cut or damaged.

Residents believe Canba Holdings intends to develop a portion of the property as urban residential lots and give a portion to the city.

The City of Prince George has no authority to regulate tree-cutting on private property. But last July the B.C. legislature amended the Municipal Act to give local government authority to prohibit or regulate tree-cutting on private property.

The city is developing a tree-cutting bylaw which will complement the tree protection bylaw.

Like Gagne, most residents writing letters of protest say they purchased property in the subdivision for the serenity and beauty of the forest and wildlife.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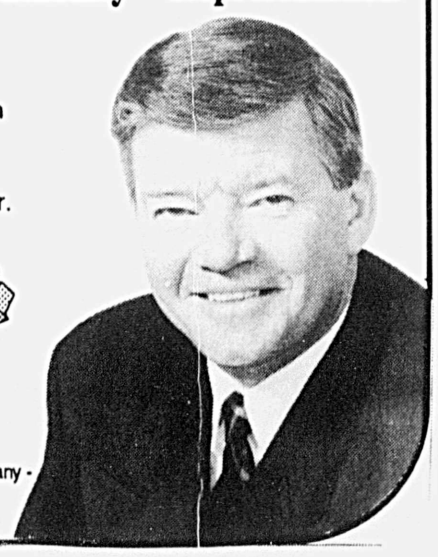
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