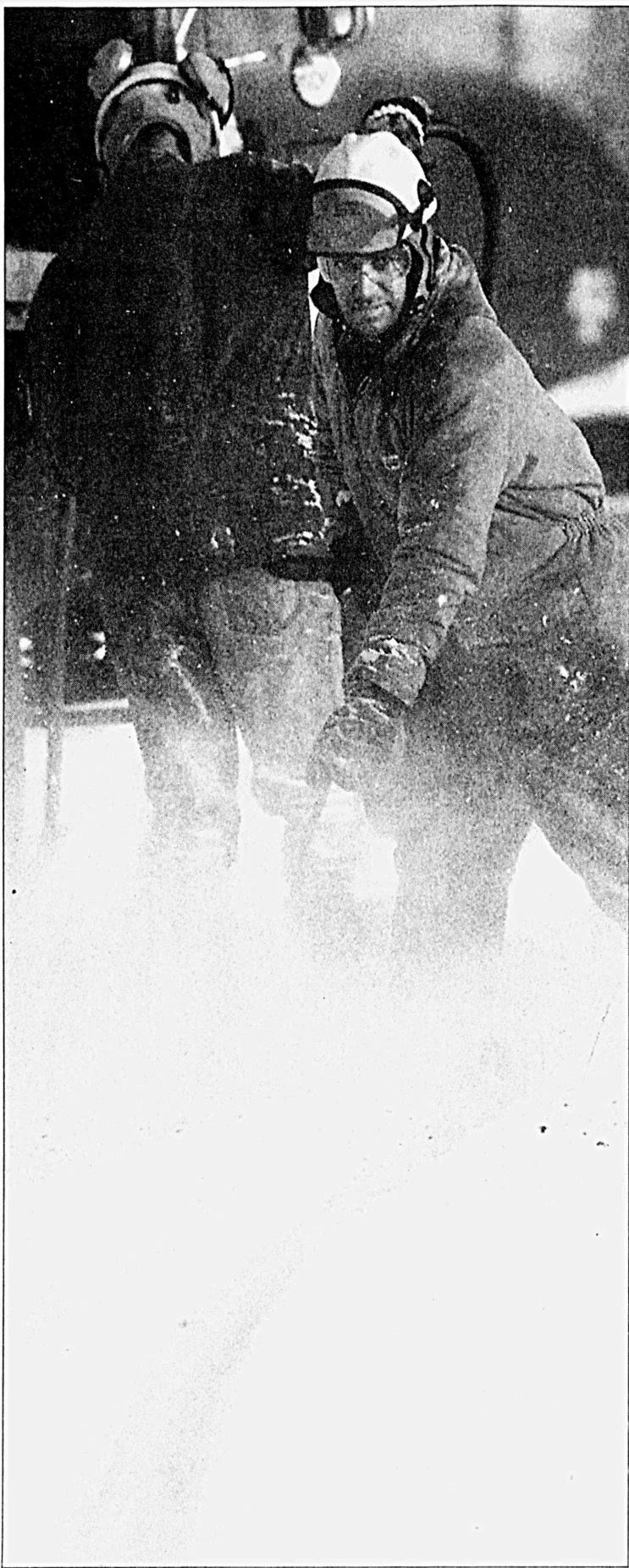


CITY/PROVINCE



Trains must keep running

Citizen photo by Chuck Nisbett

Manjit Gill, facing forward, and Bruce Taylor use compressed air to clear a switch at the CN Rail yard Thursday. They follow a machine known as the Roller Skate, which uses a large fan to blow the snow clear. Crews were hard at work Thursday clearing snow to get the yard fully operational after the past two days snowfall.

RAMSEY POINTS TO PHARMACARE SAVINGS

VANCOUVER (CP) — Two new Pharmacare programs are saving B.C. taxpayers \$1.5 million a month, Health Minister Paul Ramsey said today.

Ramsey said reference-based drug pricing saved \$2.8 million between

Oct. 1 and Nov. 25.

Under the scheme, the government pays only for what it calls the cheapest and most effective drug treatments.

The minister also told a news conference that PharmaNet is helping detect

potentially dangerous drug interactions while deterring fraud and abuse.

He said the new computer prescription network is within seconds of meeting its target response for each transaction.

B.C. LIBERAL PARTY

Shadow cabinet shuffled

by Canadian Press

VICTORIA (CP) — B.C. Liberal Leader Gordon Campbell shuffled his shadow cabinet Thursday, announcing new critic responsibilities for members of the official Opposition caucus.

The new critic lineup is:

Municipal Affairs, Multiculturalism: Val Anderson.

Labor, Consumer Services and Housing: Jeremy Dalton.

Health, Aboriginal Affairs: Mike de Jong.

Social Services: Gary Farrell-Collins.

Finance, Forestry: Fred Gingell.

Education: Wilf Hurd.

Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources: Dan Jarvis.

Government Services, Sport and Recreation: Ken Jones.

Attorney General, Science and Technology: Linda Reid.

Small Business, Tourism, Culture, Women's Equality: Lynn Stephens.

Transportation and Highways: Doug Symons.

Seniors: Clive Tanner.

Environment, Agriculture,

Fisheries and Food: John van Dongen.

Employment and Investment: Allan Warnke.

Ex-gambler hits new Keno game

by Canadian Press

KELOWNA — A new lottery that draws numbers every five minutes is just another example of the government's ignorance regarding gambling addiction, says the founder of Kelowna Gamblers' Anonymous.

"This (legalized gambling) is the biggest travesty to society the government has knowingly entered into," said Mark, a gambler who had his troubles in the casinos.

But Wally Reid of Plaza 33 Tickets has a different opinion of Club Keno.

"What a great game," said Reid. "I have a bench right here and people sit there for a while and play."

"The odds on it are awesome."

The Club Keno game has its origins in the gambling halls of Nevada. A player picks 1-10 numbers and a B.C. Lottery Corp. computer randomly selects 20 numbers out of the 1-80 pool. If all or some of the numbers match the ones drawn, it's a winner.

For example, if you spend one dollar and the two numbers you pick are drawn as part of the 20 picked by the computer, you win \$10. The odds of winning in this example are one in 17. In the old Keno game, the same circumstances had a payout of \$20 and the odds of winning were one in 55.

"More people are going to win but they are going to win smaller amounts," said Carolyn Thomas, a B.C. Lottery Corp. spokeswoman.

Thomas said the new game appeals to people who like the instant results and enjoy picking their own numbers like the national Lotto 6-49 game.

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Gift of Hope campaign needs donations here

Citizen staff

The local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association is launching its annual Gift of Hope campaign today and is asking for donations of new gifts and/or money from the public.

According to Lee Perkins local CMHA representative, the campaign is about remembering those who suffer from psychiatric disabilities.

"Mental illness and mental health problems can be very isolating, and the campaign is a way of letting these people know that the community does care, that they are valued people and that we want them to be part of the community."

Gifts that are dropped off will be matched by CMHA to either a consumer of service from the local CMHA office, the Mental Health Centre or people who are in hospital during the Christmas season. The donations will then be gift-wrapped and distributed at their annual Christmas dinner dance.

The response in previous years to the campaign has been great, said Perkins.

"We have been very reliant on people from Prince George and it's just incredible how responsive the citizens of Prince George have been in the past. We're very fortunate."

The campaign runs until Dec. 22 and gifts can be dropped off at drop-boxes at the CMHA office at 555 George St., the Northern Interior Health Unit, the Family YMCA on Massey Dr., the Toronto Dominion Bank branch in College Heights, Zellers, Sears and Shoppers Drug Mart at Pine Centre Mall and Shoppers Drug Mart at Spruce-land Mall.

Tax-deductible cash donations, preferably in cheque form, can be dropped off at the CMHA office.

Flood threat subsides

VANCOUVER (CP) — People in the Fraser Valley were finally able to breathe easy Thursday after holding their breath for more than a day watching bloated rivers rise.

The rain stopped and raging rivers receded, allowing people who had fled to return home — in some cases to view the damage.

"Things seem to be stabilizing fairly well through the Fraser Valley," said Nancy Argyle, an emergency program spokeswoman.

"Princeton is still a problem but things seem to be looking better and I think we're through the worst of it."

About 180 people were evacuated from an area near Princeton, 280 kilometres east of Vancouver, because of high water in the Similkameen and Tulameen rivers.

Flood levels there peaked at levels higher than during a damaging 1990 flood.

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