

Province agrees to pay for Baby Diego's operation

Merry Christmas, Baby Diego!

The provincial government has finally come through for the little Prince George boy who desperately needs a kidney transplant. Health Minister Paul Ramsey says the government will pay for 20-month-old Diego Carpino's operation which is to be done at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis. The operation is expected to cost \$200,000-plus Canadian dollars but the government says it'll cover it up to a half million dollars.

Diego's mother and father appealed to the residents of Prince George to help them pay for the operation when the province said it wouldn't. Medical authorities in this case suggested Diego ought to weigh at least 10 kilograms before an operation of this kind could take place, but Diego weighed only about six kilograms. What made matters worse is that Diego's condition makes it very difficult for

him to put on weight and, in fact, he hasn't put on any in recent months.

Prince George responded and by last week had raised between \$105,000 and \$110,000. That money will now go to the Carpinos to compensate them for the fact Diego's father, Frank, will not be working; he is donating a kidney for the operation. The rest of the money will go into a Baby Diego Fund to help other babies who are in similar situations in the future.

Mrs. Carpino says this is the best Christmas gift she's ever had. "I couldn't have expected anything better for Christmas. This is it. Now I can start worrying like a normal mom."

Mr. Carpino was equally grateful. "There's no words that...This is saving our boy's life. It's just incredible. We knew the community would come through in the end."

Mr. Ramsey was beaming with pride at the announcement,

which was made in his office, and he was also relieved his ministry had come through. He denies his ministry gave a flat 'no' to the Carpinos in the beginning. He says they just weren't sure which way to go in this case. "What we did not have was a clear medical recommendation. Further examination has led to consensus as to what the treatment for Baby Diego should be."

Mr. Ramsey says, at first, some experts thought Baby Diego should gain weight first, some thought he would only need to be in the States for a short time and he could get the rest in Canada, and some thought it could be done entirely in Toronto. It was only very recently that it became clear it all had to be done in Minnesota, said Mr. Ramsey.

Mr. Ramsey praised Mr. and Mrs. Carpino for their "incredible coolness" through what he admitted was a slow process. He also praised the community for coming to Baby Diego's aid.

Long way up/For a short trip



Tobaganning is hard work for a very quick return, as tobagan enthusiasts at Rainbow Park have discovered during the Christmas break. ROB BIRON/FREE PRESS

Rev. Rayner was a priest for 49 years

Reverend Francis Rayner, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, died at Prince George Regional Hospital on December 23, 1994. He was 77.

Born in Vancouver, BC on December 3, 1917, son of the late George Rayner and Margaret Irene Gillespie, Reverend Rayner is survived by two sisters, Mary (Michael) Haddon and Pat (Joseph) of Toronto, and two brothers, George (Phyllis) of Brantford, Ontario and Angus of North York, Ontario.

Educated at the University of San Francisco, St. Patrick's College and Holy Rosary Scholasticate, Ottawa, Reverend Rayner was ordained to the priesthood on May 26, 1945 by Archbishop Vachon, he served the Diocese of Prince George for 46 years in Prince George (Sacred Heart), Prince Rupert, Smithers, Burns Lake, Vanderhoof, Kitimat and

Prince George (St. Mary's).

A Vigil Service was held on December 28th at 7 p.m. and Mass is scheduled for December 29 at 10:30 a.m. in St. Mary's Church, Prince George. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Peter's Church, New Westminster on December 30th at 10 a.m.

Interment at O.M.I. Cemetery, Mission.

Classifieds that work

• 564-0005 •

Attention Property Owners!

Plowing of Snow onto Public Roadways

A reminder to property owners adjacent to public access roads, from your Ministry of Transportation and Highways:

It is both hazardous and illegal to plow snow from private property onto or across a public roadway. Snow plowed onto a public road can create a potential hazard for passing motorists. Vehicles traveling at highway speed can be jarred off the road if steering is suddenly hampered by a windrow or a section of compact snow. In some cases, snow plowing equipment can also be damaged under such circumstances.

According to Section 17 of the Highway Act, persons responsible for plowing snow onto a public roadway are liable for a fine of up to \$300. Should your actions cause an accident, your personal liability could be considerably higher!

When removing snow from your driveway, please remember to keep the plowed snow on your own property!



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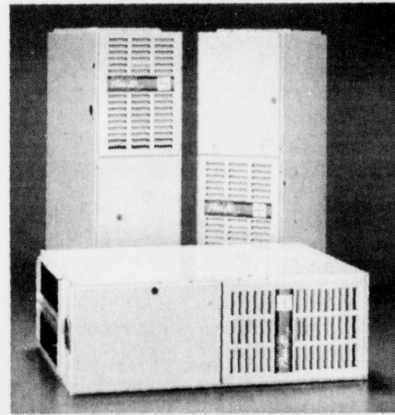
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