

# Comment

A6 — Tuesday, July 26, 1983

## Medicare battle based on money

Despite all the noise in the background, there is really only one issue in the battle over Canada's medicare system: money.

Money makes medicare work. The bulk of it comes from a cost-sharing arrangement between provincial and federal government tax contributions. A lesser amount is paid in some provinces by individual users to their physician in the form of extra-billing, medicare premiums or, as of this fall, by users to hospitals in the form of user-fees.

The provinces claim the federal government's share of the agreement will have been cut back by \$4 billion by 1987, leaving them to pick up the bills. The Canadian Medical Association concurs, adding that the biggest problem with the failing, universal medicare system is a lack of sufficient funding from Ottawa.

But federal Health Minister Monique Begin says there is no reduction in federal support for health care. In a statement in the Canadian Medical Association journal this spring, she said "In fact, the opposite is true. Cash payments and tax points for health programs will continue to be increased, on a per-capita basis, in accordance with the three-year moving average in the growth in the gross national product."

The provinces claim they must make up the short-fall in funding in user fees of one kind or another. It has not been explained why they cannot rely more heavily on general taxation. The Canadian Medical Association says Begin is preoccupied with con-

trol doctors at the expense of the system itself. If Begin wins, Canadians will end up with a two-tiered health system: one for the poor and poorly-informed in Canada and one for the wealthier and more knowledgeable in the U.S., it says.

Begin says unless the user fees are controlled and universality re-instituted, Canadians will end up with a two tier system: one for those who can afford extra-billing and none for those who cannot. She does not believe there is a short-fall in funding.

All sides in the argument claim their only concern is an efficient medicare system. The CMA wonders how Begin will provide a quality system with less money when costs are rising. The provinces are worried medicare is being taken for granted by Canadians who make unrealistic demands which will lead to soaring tax rates to pay for medicare. Begin's major concern is that medicare remain universally accessible, at no immediate cost to the user.

Canadians stand to lose a great addition to their comfort and peace of mind if the provincial and federal governments do not sit down and negotiate a way out of the impasse. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was quoted as saying that perhaps the best alternative to the end of medicare is the Alberta system of limited extra-billing and the soon-to-be imposed hospital user fees with exemptions for the poor, for children and for the chronically ill. It is high time he had a talk with Begin along that line.



## Prime ministers can't be pudgy

### Turner puts on the beef

By RICHARD GWYN  
Toronto Star Commentator

OTTAWA — Some informants in Toronto have just passed along a scoop that just may turn out to be the most important bit of political news of 1983.

They say that former Finance Minister John Turner has gone a bit pudgy. They say he is showing the effects of too many, too long lunches at Winston's Restaurant.

For the benefit of any reader who may have spent the last 10 years aboard a drilling rig off Newfoundland, it is widely assumed by political pundits, a) that Turner will be the next Liberal leader if he goes after the job, and b) that Turner alone could give Conservative Leader Brian Mulroney a real run in the next election.

Pudgy people seldom win elections. Except by a crash diet, Turner would lose the vital TV image battle to Mulroney. The obvious response of a slimming course, may not be enough, though.

As a seeker after the prime minister-ship, Mulroney possesses certain handicaps (no record) and certain aspects (no record, therefore no one has any reason to vote against him).

He, does, though, have one outstanding asset. He's hungry for the job. Mulroney is indeed aching, ravenously, passionately, hungry to become prime minister — to become prime minister that is, for its own sake, rather than to become prime minister to

implement this or that policy. So he's, at least on the evidence of his public utterances, prepared to work very, very hard to become prime minister.

It isn't necessary to believe in their entirety the stories being assiduously passed around by his aides of how Mulroney leaps out of bed at 6:30 a.m., gulps down coffee and nine newspapers, charges into his office at 8 a.m. and then strides purposefully about for 14 hours, ending around midnight with a telephone call to someone in Whitehorse.

But he is undoubtedly a hard worker. He's lucky enough to be able to get by with six hours or less of sleep. He has no aptitude for solitary leisure, and so seldom takes a holiday. He has quit drinking, stone-cold.

In any race against either Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau — just possible, but most improbable — or against Turner, Mulroney would have the edge in age. He's 44. Turner is 54. Trudeau is 63.

He would also have the edge in hunger. Trudeau now has sat around the dining table at 24 Sussex for 15 years. If he ran again he'd hate to lose, for sure, but defeat wouldn't devastate Trudeau in the way, for instance, Mulroney's loss to Joe Clark at the 1976 leadership convention threw him into a long and deep depression.

Turner, like Mulroney, certainly has wanted to be prime minister from about the time he put on his first pair of long trousers. But he has dined often at 24

Sussex, if not at the head of the table. He's been almost to the top, as finance minister and as heir apparent. As a Bay Street lawyer since 1975, he's come to enjoy afternoons off for tennis, while waiting for the top job to be gently lobbed to him.

Thus Turner's appetite, while certainly not satiated, may be at least semi-satisfied. It's a truism in human affairs that in any contest between two evenly-matched opponents, the hungrier usually wins.

Here, two random thoughts occur to me.

Among the handicaps that Mulroney does have to contend with is that he too, much like Turner, only wanted the job on his own terms. Despite his protestations about having to earn bread for his mother, wife and children by beavering away for Iron Ore of Canada, Mulroney in fact could easily have quit and have contested a parliamentary seat. In this way, Mulroney has shown that he's less interested in serving the public as prime minister than in serving himself by becoming prime minister.

The other thought is that among the possible Liberal candidates, one at least is both decidedly lean and is very plainly hungry, having wanted to become prime minister from the time that he too put on his first pair of long trousers, and who, much to Trudeau's annoyance, is still showing his hunger. He is Energy Minister Jean Chretien. He's 44, by the way.

Chretien's manifest handicap is that he is a Quebecer. But so is Mulroney. To protest Chretien's being a Quebecer, Canadians would have to vote for another Quebecer — if you follow. Anyway, it's a thought.

## Canada bound to test cruise

By John D. Hartson  
Foreign Affairs Analyst  
Thomson News Service

Most of us can no longer believe that Prime Minister Trudeau, long-in-the-tooth as our political leader, has sleepless nights, wondering what has happened to his severely-lapsed idealism.

The thought that he might have had then over the decision to let the Americans test unarmed cruise missiles in the Canadian West — has been put to us — and to him — by the New Democrats and the many anti-cruise protesters.

The New Democrats led by their strong-minded defence critic Dr. Pauline Jewett, have gone a step further to re-read into the record Trudeau's so-called "weapons suffocation" proposal which he put to the 1978 United Nations Special Session on Disarmament.

Part of Trudeau's original proposal included a moratorium on more nuclear weapons production which could be assisted by an end to weapons-testing of the kind he has just approved for the cruise in Canada.

Indeed during a brief and impromptu meeting with a small anti-cruise protest group in Yellowknife, Trudeau did admit to soul-searching in agreeing to the U.S. testing request.

It may have been less than an application of hard politics of the kind which inevitable result in this country when we are under great pressure from the United States.

These pressures have been coming during the Reagan years by president and administration who still do not understand Canadian institutions. But nevertheless they have demanded that Ottawa tone down such state activities as FIRA and the National Economic Policy as they negatively affect U.S.-owned branch plants here.

Along with this arm-squeezing about our domestic economic policies, went a good deal more to test the cruise here.

We are not told immediately in what way this was done to accept proposals from Washington, or face reprisals elsewhere in the large catalogue of U.S.-Canadian relations.

From this intensely-protectionist Washington administration could come pressures to close U.S. markets to Canadian goods and services, refuse to negotiate on such critical issues as acid rain, disputed offshore fisheries regions and bi-lateral air agreements.

These kinds of pressures have been applied many times before. And though we do not always give in, the record of heavy Canadian resistance to them over the years is slim indeed.

The second and perhaps more compelling reason why we are bound to agree to cruise testing, is that such activities are part of our wider NATO commitments to defend the North Atlantic region against any kind of military threat from the U.S.S.R.

Moreover the NATO involvement permits us to do so within the requirements of Canadian defence policy which calls for no nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, nor none to be manufactured for our armed forces.

Therefore the tests which will begin next winter are of an unarmed vehicle, not a weapon at all in the true sense of the word.

This NATO requirement has to be the more compelling of the reasons why we should test the cruise.

The traditional Washington pressures on us can only diminish our sense of national identity if we continue to give in to them.

## ART BUCHWALD

### Where are they now?

My wife and I were sitting on the porch of the summer house the other evening and started to reminisce about people we had gotten to know from previous summers.

"Whatever happened to that nice man who sold us the television set and said he'd be back the next day to install the aerial on the roof?" I asked. "Was it in 1975 or '76?"

"I think it was 1975, the same year the roofer promised to repair the gutters. I hear he moved to Florida," she replied.

"The TV man?"

"No the roofer. He says he's coming over any day now to install the aerial for the set," my wife said.

"Did you tell him we bought a new TV since then?"

"I didn't dare. If I did, he might never come back to install the aerial on the set he sold us."

"You know who I think about a lot when I sit in this chair?" I said.

"Who is that?" my wife asked.

"The decorator who talked us into ordering it. Remember, it came from Grand Rapids missing a cushion support. And he said as soon as he got the piece he'd bring it over and install it. Now every time I sit in it and the chair collapses I wonder how the decorator is doing."

"I called him a couple of years back to ask him where the shower curtains were that we had paid for three years ago, and he told me they would be in at any time. He sounded very harassed."

"I'd love to see him again just to talk about this chair."

My wife said, "Do you know who I ran into in Oak Bluffs the other day?"

"The guy who sold us the refrigerator in 1973 and still owes us an ice-cube

making machine?"

"No, it was Mr. Godsend, who came by four years ago and gave us an estimate on painting the house. When we told him to go ahead he painted half the house and then we never saw him again."

"Did he say when he was coming back?"

"That was the funny thing. He thought he completed the job, and gave me his card in case we wanted any more work done," she said.

"Did you tell him his paints and brushes and ladder are still in our garage?"

"Yes, I did, and he was very grateful. He said he'd stop by and pick them up if he ever gets a job in the area."

"It will be good to see him again. I wonder what happened to the fellow who dug up our driveway in 1980, and never returned to repave it?"

"Someone at Leslie's Drugstore told me he went bankrupt."

"That's a pity. What was the story?"

"Apparently he was great at digging up driveways, but he never had the time to repave them. People refused to pay him until he got the WHOLE job done."

"That doesn't seem to be fair," I said.

"Guess who is coming to see us this week?"

"I'm too tired to guess."

"The baby-sitter who advertised in the Vineyard Gazette in 1972 and said she'd be right over when we called her."

"Did you tell her the children had all grown up?"

"I didn't have the heart to. She said we promised her the job."

## Remember When

### One Year Ago

July 26, 1982  
A hailstorm hit the Coaldale area, wrecking crops and causing flooding. The storm is also reported to have killed birds and knocked over trees.

Between 8,000 and 10,000 athletes, officials and spectators filled the Town of Vulcan over the past four days as the town hosted the Southern Alberta Summer Games.

### Five Years Ago

July 26, 1978  
A Coaldale petition, sponsored by the Coaldale Ministerial Association, asking for a plebiscite on the new Hideaway Motel's liquor license is being checked by the attorney general's department.

About 200 people have sought to be immunized for polio since the Lethbridge Health Unit issue an advisory that the polio virus may have been unknowingly brought into Southern Alberta by visitors from Holland.

### 10 Years Ago

July 26, 1973  
Vauxhall Foods Ltd of Vauxhall has sold one million pounds of potato granules to the Canadian government as part of Canada's contribution to the World Aid program.

The Blood Indian Tribe was presented with \$5,000 from the Alberta RCMP Celebrations committee.

### 25 Years Ago

July 26, 1958  
The Lethbridge Exhibition daily attendance record set eight years ago was shattered when nearly 14,000 flooded to the fairgrounds.

Miss Joanne Sharples of Claresholm has been named Miss Rodeo Canada and will now compete in the Miss Rodeo America finals in Las Vegas in December.

### 50 Years Ago

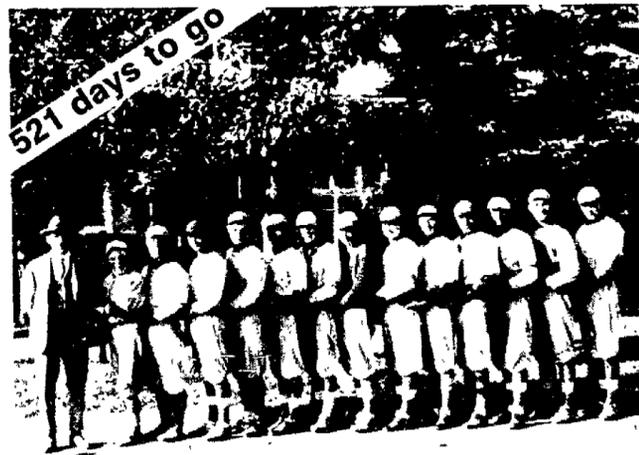
July 26, 1933  
Southern Alberta wins again — C. Sorenson of Scandia wins the alfalfa title at the Regina World's Grain Exhibition. The Hadlington brothers of Lethbridge are second in the 10-bushel wheat class.

Lethbridge saw the mercury climb near to the all-time heat record on Tuesday when during the early afternoon it mounted to 98. But Medicine Hat beat that Tuesday with a temperature of 104. Swift Current ran a close second with a temperature reaching 103.

### 75 Years Ago

July 26, 1908  
"Say, Mr. Herald, will you please explain to the people that the reason the square is not being watered is that there is not enough water to do that." Such were in substance the words of Mayor Henderson. It was further explained that during this period of hot weather, the consumption of water has reached about eight hundred thousand gallons per day.

## Anniversary countdown



LETHBRIDGE ELKS baseball team, 1924 Manager Tommy Evens; Mascot, Toughy Whitney; Harvey Schweitzer, Denny Edge, Ralph Greenaway, Art Geen, Charlie Lang, Gordon Greenaway, Gordie Morrison, Joe Gillis, Vic

Gillis, Mike Cosgrove, Hector Cyr, Norm Geoghan. The picture belongs to Mike Cosgrove, one of the players still living in the city. Art Green is also still in the city.

## WE ASKED

What do you think about our wet summer?



LILLIAN PLOMP, Nohleford: I think it's bunk. We needed the rain earlier. But I've been here 77 years, and really seen wet summers. And I remember black blizzards in spring, too.



JIM URQUHART, Lethbridge: I'm new to this area from Cold Lake, and I know there's been lots of rain there. But I think the weather has been much colder up there.



SUSAN KARKUS, Lethbridge: Last summer, we had a really big storm. Wet weather isn't unusual. I was at home when we had the storm (Tuesday night) and we lost our cablevision, but that was all it affected us.



FRED ELASCHUK, Lethbridge: This is good, but it came a little too late. I farmed, and I think the rain is fine as long as we get no (hail)stones.



KEVIN WATT, Lethbridge: I'm working on a farm this summer, and we've had no hail there (southeast of the city). I helped with seeding and I go out changing the irrigation pipes, but we haven't got caught in the rain yet.



JIM MYRING, Lethbridge: I think it's great. But you should move out to the Coast if you want to see it really rain. I'm studying watershed management at the college, so I don't mind the rain.

## The Lethbridge Herald

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— Adlai E. Stevenson

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