

Letters cont.

sure "Spec" was just trying to inject some fresh air into a sometimes dank editorial space.

Helga Bratworst
Poultry Science VII

Macho crutch

Re: Editorial of Oct. 8, "Feminist Crutch"
I am very disappointed in those individuals who hide behind the one comment ("rude to three men a day") as an excuse to ignore the many legitimate arguments made during Dr. Spender's two hour session.

In order to take this comment in context, men should realize that normally polite women are only rude when provoked. Men who treat women with respect need not worry, but may instead relax and acknowledge the issues involved.

Dr. Spender has achieved her goal — she has promoted the recognition and discussion of a very pressing subject. Ironically, a flippant, defensive editorial only serves to prove Dr. Spender's point.

R. Saddy

Letters cont. on p 6

Second Wind

Leadership race?

This holiday weekend is an important one for turkeys and Tories: while the former are in for the chop, the latter will be flocking to Edmonton to choose a new leader.

The campaign for the Tory leadership has been considerably more interesting than I had expected it to be. Not that the outcome has ever been in doubt. As the choice of the party establishment, and with huge sums of corporate money behind him, Don Getty has been assured of succeeding Peter Lougheed since the beginning. (In fairness to Mr. Getty, though, one must not overlook the fact that he has won many hundreds of supporters — I am sure they are the most honest and upstanding that money can buy.) Yet although the leadership campaign, as a political horse-race, has been a crashing bore, it has been interesting in terms of what it has revealed about the nature of the Alberta Tory party. To me, the campaign has revealed a party that is even more rigidly anti-democratic than I had imagined.

Consider what happened following Lougheed's announcement of retirement. Don Getty, Lougheed's heir apparent, announced his candidacy, and a large section of the Tory caucus, as if on cue, immediately lined up to pledge fealty to him. In the days that followed, cabinet ministers, such as Neil Crawford and Dave King, surprised everyone by counting themselves out of the leadership race and climbing onto the Getty bandwagon. As the number of these announcements grew by the day, the leadership "race" quickly turned into a farce. For the first time ever, senior party officials began to see dangers inherent in the Tory instinct to stampede blindly in one direction.

Even in retrospect, it seems incredible that so many ministers should have passed up the opportunity of seeking a prize as valuable as the leadership of the Alberta PC party. After all, despite its many failings in government, the party is bound to win the next election, giving the new leader at least four years in which to chart a new and distinctive course for the province. Why, then, this mass retreat to the sidelines?

The explanation offered by the ministers themselves, almost without exception, was that they had decided not to run because they did not believe they could win. This excuse is perhaps unsurprising, coming from a group of politicians who have coasted effortlessly to power through three general elections and are thus long since accustomed to taking victory for granted. The most obvious implication is that they chickened out at the prospect of a real political fight, choosing instead to ingratiate themselves to the front-runner by supporting his candidacy.

However, the more interesting impression left by

these Tories as they busily dropped out of the race is that they see no purpose in running for office beyond that of winning. Such a view denies the essence of the democratic process by suggesting that the public airing of contending ideas that occurs during an election campaign is irrelevant — all that matters is who wins the election. This, of course, is nonsense. The very act of raising matters in public that have not been raised before is seldom without at least some political effect. Politicians, however powerful they may appear to be, are always conscious of the risk of being outflanked by an opponent armed with an idea whose time has come. Can there be any doubt, for example, that Don Getty would have paid more attention to the problems of farmers if a rural candidate, such as Marvin Moore or Leroy Fjordbotten, had been competing with him for votes in rural Alberta? It was certainly no mere coincidence that Lougheed's mortgage interest subsidy plan was announced at a time when the NDP and WCC were gaining ground with their call for low-interest loans.

Yet in spite of its importance to democratic political practice, the value of dissent has long been lost on the Tories. Indeed, under Lougheed's authoritarian leadership, it became synonymous with high treason. Anyone who stepped out of line ran the risk of being excommunicated from the party, which in Alberta invariably meant a one-way ticket to political oblivion. (Remember Tom Sindlinger? Remember Bill Yurko?) Nevertheless, with Lougheed on the way out, one might have expected the leadership campaign to have encouraged the Tories to drop their inhibitions and engage in a lively debate on the future course of the party. Instead of this, the leadership candidates have had remarkably little of substance to say. It is as if years of "consensus" within the party had stunted their critical faculties.

But this does not appear to bother rank-and-file party members. On the contrary, they seem to be quite happy to remain untroubled by the need to consider new ideas. This mood of complacency among Tories is underscored by the surprising strength of Julian Koziak, whose campaign has emphasized his unquestioning obeisance to Lougheed. Indeed, Koziak has so closely identified himself with the policies of his former political master that he has sought to make a virtue out of not having any ideas of his own.

That such a pitch could be taken seriously by many Tories suggests that the PC party is about as receptive to original thinking as the Soviet Politburo (perhaps less so).

This is a dangerous state of affairs as Alberta Tories prepare to bid Lougheed goodbye. One wonders what they will do without him.

Stephen Phillips

Thomside Marsyas

Mike Evans

Born: September 4, 1985
Died: October 10, 1985

Thomside Marsyas, an ambitious shit-disturber, died early this morning of complications resulting from loneliness, neglect and boredom. He leaves behind a legacy destined to be forgotten as soon as you turn this page.

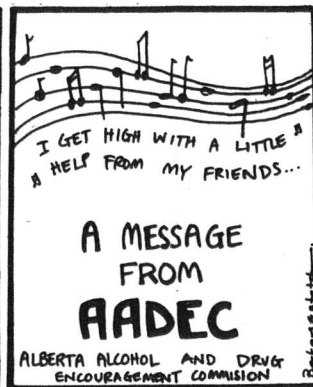
Mr. Marsyas is survived by one brother, Harry, and

a sister, Candy.

His last assignment, investigation of bookstore mark-ups, has been turned over to the news department of *The Gateway*.

Donations, in the form of hot news tips about ignoble and immoral people and practices, can be made to *The Gateway*, room 282, SUB. Flowers can be sent to your boyfriend/girlfriend instead.

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