

Fiscal surgery needed

This year the federal government will spend a little over \$120 billion of our money on our behalf.

The single largest expenditure — \$29 billion — won't be going to education, or Medicare, or pensions, or economic development, or anything else useful.

\$35 billion is needed to pay the interest on the national debt.

If Mike Wilson's crystal ball is working, Canada will borrow another \$29 billion this year to tack on to the \$350 billion national debt we already owe.

This assumes an optimistic scenario in which we don't have a recession, a market crash, a Third World debt default, a war in the Persian Gulf, or a protectionist US Congress.

The extra \$29 billion we borrow this year will cost Canada another \$3 billion a year in interest charges.

So next year our government will have to shell out \$32 billion to pay the interest on the national debt.

And the following year we borrow another \$30 billion, so our interest charges rise to \$35 billion...

You don't need a Ph.D. to figure out that we're in big trouble.

The Fraser Institute estimates that by the year 2007 every single penny of federal government revenue will be needed to pay the interest on the national debt, unless major fiscal surgery is performed on Canada.

But wait, it gets worse.

There is something called the Canada Pension Plan.

When you contribute to the CPP there is no savings account with your name on it. All the CPP contributions go into "general revenues," and all the pensions are paid out of "general revenues." The problem is that the total CPP contributions don't even come close to paying the pensions promised the millions of Canadians approaching 65.

The Government of Canada, through the CPP, has promised to pay living Canadians a total of \$800 billion in pensions (according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada) more than the current CPP contributions will raise. The Government calls this an "unfunded liability." Some people call it a time bomb.

On top of this let's throw in free medicare for everybody — with the bills sure to mount as technology makes medicine more expensive, and an aging population dramatically increases demand.

To top it all off, let's add the \$15 billion a year that provincial governments borrow...

Next time some politician tells you that he can't find the money for some project, he will likely justify it saying "We can't mortgage the future." That politician is lying.

Our future is already mortgaged — to the hilt.

I think I'll move to Switzerland.

Ken Bosman

The Gateway

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The Gateway welcomes letters to the Editor.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. Letters must be signed. Addresses and phone numbers are required but will not be printed.

Letters may be edited for length.

Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU Information booth.

The Gateway is the newspaper of the University of Alberta students. Contents are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. All opinions are signed by the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway. Copy deadlines are 11 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Newsroom: Rm. 282 (ph. 432-5168). All photographs printed in the Gateway are for sale. Call the photodirector at 432-5168 or come to room 236 SUB. Advertising: Rm. 256D (ph. 432-4241). Students' Union Building, U. of A., Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Readership is 25,000.

NEWS ITEM— JIM + TAMMY TO LAUNCH NEW TV MINISTRY FOCUSING ON THE DOWNTRODDEN...



LETTERS

Campus may be unsafe

I had assumed our campus was generally a safe place. However, an experience I had at the U of A this past September made me question that belief.

Last fall I met a man whose easy charm and handsome features made him easy to like. He told me he was a mature student and was carrying a couple of textbooks; I had no reason to doubt him. However, it wasn't long before I learned he was neither charming nor a student. I learned that he merely pretended to be a student to gain people's trust and secure for himself a place to spend the night and obtain free meals. He was a homeless person, carrying his meagre belongings in his bag beneath his textbooks. Until University buildings closed for the night, he found no shortage of places to stay in warmth and relative comfort. Like any student, he seldom sat anywhere without a textbook open in front of him. All this in itself was little cause for concern were it not for the fact that this man had serious psychological problems. Is this man still on campus? I don't know. I hope not.

My purpose in writing this letter is to warn people, especially young women who are his favorite "targets," not to take anyone they know little about into their homes. I firmly believe that this man who I met is not the only person who takes advantage of the kindness our students extend to those people whom they believe to be their peers. Sadly, it is precisely this generosity that has, on other campuses, had tragic consequences.

P. Gabriel

South Africa as it is

Re: "A pro-apartheid article" letter by Sam Ditshego and Kiome Irungu, Gateway Thursday Feb. 11.

You have assumed completely, and wrongly, that because my article was apolitical, therefore it must be pro-apartheid. The entire point of contrast between neighborhoods, and the descriptions of Crossroads and Soweto was to graphically show the inexcusable, unjustifiable divisions in South Africa — those that I saw every day that I was there.

You are quite right that "the smell he [I] claims was sickening is probably not worse than that in white ramshackles in

London and elsewhere."

You assume, again wrongly, that "99.9 percent of the Indians in South Africa consider themselves black." I would venture to guess that Indians consider themselves to be Indians. The man I quoted, whom I actually met and is not a product of "wishful thinking", illustrates that racial tensions exist not only between blacks and whites, but with Indians as well. Even the whites find themselves divided between Afrikaners and those of English descent.

Both of you also claim that the AWB, the extreme right wing party in South Africa was written of "protectively." I believe the associations between the AWB and their insignia, a swastika (which I mention), are self evident, and not in any way protective of them.

Rhetoric and propaganda are blinding to anyone; what I offered was the scenery of injustice and poverty and despair that is forced on the non-white people of South Africa. Without implicitly giving the historical, political, economic, and racial reasons why, I've shown the horror of it.

Your letter has not attacked an enemy, it has wounded a friend.

Daniel Aarons

HUMOUR

Being currently single, I was more or less amused at work on Saturday afternoon, as the mall I work in was hopping with sweethearts and swains all clutching flowers and parcels to their palpitating bosoms in anticipation of the day. When I got home from work that day, the only reason my heart was racing and pounding was due merely to the Herculean task of shovelling all the snow that had descended from the heavens. While thus engaged in making my walks safe for weary travellers, my neighbour came out of her house, waving her arms and calling to me. Imagining some dire emergency, I flung my shovel down in the nearest drift, and ran to her doorstep. As my neighbour's first language is not English, but Hungarian, a few minutes of questions, descriptions, and wild gestures ensued before I finally realized what her message was all about: flowers. Some unknown person had left the delivery at her house, which made sense as I'd been at work all day. So, I collected my package, thanked my neighbour, and

just plunked the frail blooms inside until I'd finished my shovelling. Why didn't I immediately rip the cellophane off that sucker, you ask? Two reasons: I didn't think the flowers would actually be for me, and if they were, they were probably from either my father or my brother, so I let them wait.

After forty minutes of truly arduous work, my walks were cleared and my muscles were strained. I finally went indoors to check out my delivery, where, wonder of wonders, the flowers were actually addressed to me, and to my further amazement, they were from neither my father nor my brother. Was my secret admirer rearing his unknown, ugly head again? Phone calls at 3:00 a.m. make any secret admirer ugly, trust me. After fighting with four layers of demonic plastic wrap, I finally found the little card that florists feel duty-bound to include with all deliveries, and it read "Love Bill". Bill who?

Most people probably won't sympathize with my "embarrassment of riches", but I know at least three men named Bill who could conceivably send me flowers. All of the prospects seemed a bit unusual, but possible, so my dilemma

was apparent: whom should I call to thank? An error made in thanking the wrong person for a gift received, especially on Valentine's Day, is not covered by Miss Manners, so in desperation I called my best friend for advice. Her answer did not help much, as she added even more possibilities to my list that was growing heads like the Hydra. Could it be the guy I met at a nightclub four months ago? Someone in one of my classes? Someone in the mall?

Envisioning the horrors of thanking the wrong person, and worse, neglecting the right one, I let the matter sit until Monday. Like any well-trained detective, I did the obvious, and called the florist who delivered the bouquet. Sounding much amused at my tale of woe, the florist refused to divulge the identity of the guilty party, but she did tell me whence the order originated from, which at least narrowed the field down to two candidates. All I have to do now is pray that I call the correct gentleman to thank him for his gift, and just hope that the situation does not become more complicated than it already is.

Cara Koropchuk