

EDITORIAL

Total story hidden

Over the next few weeks, the most important question in civic politics will be: Who is responsible for the convention center fiasco?

City Councillors Ed Ewasiuk and Ed Leger both are blaming Mayor Cec Purves and the business-booster members of City Council.

One hopes they and others will be sharp enough to realize the fault lies elsewhere as well.

The strongest convention center supporters are to be found in the city administration, specifically the convention center authority and the city commissioners, the senior administrators. And if there was misinformation during the campaign before the convention center plebiscite, clearly these are the people responsible.

Faced with an exceedingly strong anti-center campaign, these people and the consultants working for them might have been encouraged to be somewhat optimistic in their cost estimates. This may have been intentional, it may have been organized, or it may have just resulted from individual engineers and architects wanting to do their bit to help pass the plebiscite.

But it almost certainly happened. And the people responsible — not just city councillors, but administration officials — should be held answerable.

Of course, the more immediate question is what to do with the massive hole that's already been dug at a cost of \$20 million (two thirds of the originally estimated total cost of the center).

The alternatives range from filling it in and rebuilding Jasper Avenue over it at a cost of \$16 million (for a total of \$36 million) to finishing the project at an estimated total cost of \$82 million. Of course, the actual cost will almost certainly be more than this, if only because of the inevitable inflation.

The commissioners, the center's most loyal supporters, will naturally support the latter alternative. Not only will they look foolish if they advocate halting or modifying their project, but each stands to gain considerable prestige from building this 'jewel of the river valley.' They are suggesting the extra cost be made up by raising the business surtax, which was originally imposed to pay for the center, from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. Of course, consumers eventually pay this surtax through prices, so the commissioners are really advocating a further surtax on the citizens to pay for the center.

If councillors are smart, they will reject the plan. It will place an added tax on citizens, but more important, it will betray the trust of voters, who approved the center costing only \$32 million.

Before another cent is spent, Edmonton voters should be asked, in another plebiscite, to decide the center's fate. Even if it is scrapped, they will have paid \$4 million more than they originally agreed to pay for the center itself. And if it is finished, they will be paying 2½ to 3 times what they originally approved. They should decide which they prefer.

Further, a new plebiscite will force the people responsible for the mess, who would no doubt rather remain nameless and faceless, to defend themselves in public. Edmonton's citizens deserve a full explanation of the convention center situation, and they deserve it in public.

Mike Walker

the Gateway

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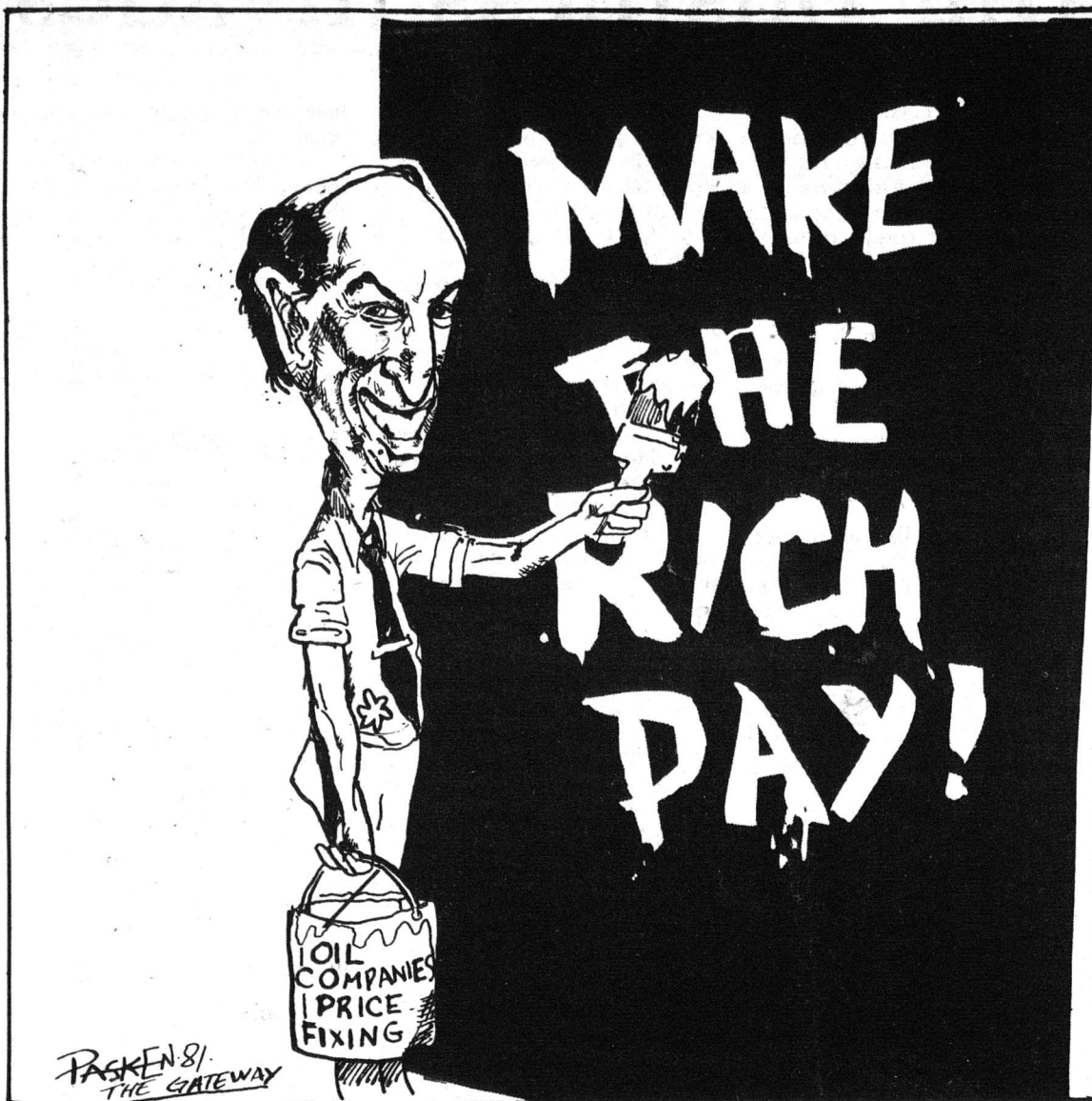
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Twitter, twitter, tweet, tweet! And you thought it was only March! Taking advantage of the balmy spring weather were the bright-eyed and bushy-tailed staffers: Greg Harris, Elda Hople, Gabor Simonyi, Alison Thomson and Peter Ernest were out bike-riding; Murray Whitby, Garnet DuGray, and Brent (pave the river valley) Jeffery were tuning up their lawn-mowers; David Orrell, Cathy Emberley, Mary Ruth Olson, Maureen Laviolette and Wes Oginski lay soaking up the sun; Pat Just and Gerard Kennedy just sighed dreamily as they watched the grass turn green. When suddenly.....this is where the story usually has a bitter ironic twist, but I'm tired of being the Black Humor Man.....When suddenly the weather got even nicer and (sigh) they lived happily ever after. So there!

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/page 4 Tuesday, March 17, 1981



Public fed lies about Soviets

Nicolas Dimic (March 10) confuses cause and effect by considering the "U.S.'s more assertive foreign policy" simply as a response to the USSR: the U S A since WW2 has consistently been the initiator of the arms race.

The U S A, whose economy was boosted enormously by the war, kept later military spending at war-time levels and carried out only a limited demobilization. The U S S R, on the other hand, which had lost 20 million people and over half of its industrial capacity, rapidly demobilized, only increasing its troop numbers after Truman's threats of invasion in 1947. Every act of nuclear escalation; the development and deployment of the A-bomb, the introduction of the H-bomb, the formation of military alliances and the introduction of the neutron bomb, has been initiated by the U S and only later, if at all, matched by the U S S R.

Furthermore, the public has been consistently fed with distortions concerning Soviet military strength. The classic example is, of course, the "Missile Gap" crisis of 1960. J.F. Kennedy maintained his election promise and announced huge increases in military expenditure to counteract the USSR's "4:1" advantage in missiles. Figures released at the beginning of 1962, however, showed the Soviets to have 50 ICBMs and 150 strategic bombers compared to 100 and 1700 for the U S A!

More recently, Ursel Lorentzen, a NATO employee in Brussels until 1979, held a press conference in East Berlin and released several classified NATO documents. At its 1978 Washington meeting, the NATO Council apparently concluded that Soviet foreign policy was defensive and that its chief aim was to develop friendly relations with the U S A. Other documents showed that NATO had already decided to maintain military superiority rather than a balance

of forces. These revelations caused a minor storm in West Germany. (I wonder why they were largely ignored in North America?) when NATO brass, confronted by the allegations at a news conference, admitted that the decision to add 574 Cruise and Pershing II missiles to Western Europe was made in 1977, two years before the replacement Soviet SS20 missile appeared.

It should be noted here that the West German government was split over the decision to accept these missiles while the Dutch government refused outright.

In short, CIA facts and figures on Soviet arms expenditure and intentions, which most newspapers use, are notoriously unreliable. The International

Institute for Strategic Studies is an independent organization which publishes more objective material from a large number of researchers in a magazine called *Survival*. They show that NATO outspends the Warsaw Pact on defence by \$180 billion to \$160 billion, one quarter of the Soviet defence effort being directed toward China.

In light of the above, the Reagan-Haig sabre-rattling may keep their business associates happy but is disastrous in the long run; therefore, it is essential for us to be well-informed.

So, remember Nicolas, the world is too precious and beautiful for it be misinformed by the *Edmonton Sun*.

Steve Goff
Grad Studies

Quiz kids respond

Sir: in response to Ms. Thomson's delightful quiz, permit us to pose some literary conundrums of our own. The accuracy of them we checked in the *Concise Bedford Dictionary of Quips*; there is but one copy in existence.

1. The dog barked.
2. An honest brew makes its own friends.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F.
4. Let them eat cake. (This will separate the wheat from the chaff, ha, ha.)
5. You have deliberately tasted two worms, and you can leave Oxford by the town drain.
6. PV=nRT
7. That question has atmospheric implications and tonal irrespectitudes which preclude simplistic interpretational potentialities.
8. Sisters, this is bullshit.

Answers:
1. Tolstoy, *War and Peace*
2. John Milton, 1786
3. Betty Johnson, *Fun with Clams*
4. Winston Churchill, BBC Broadcast, 1940
5. Rev. Spooner. The gentleman's proclivity, etc. blah blah etc.
6. Schmeidmeister, *Introductory Physics*
7. Secretary Al Haig, some press conference, somewhere, sometime
8. Ms. A. Thomson, Vol. LXXI, No. 29

Garth Loughead
Science I
Lewis Mahon
Medicine I