

# Avanti Canadienses — they're after the baby bonus!

That was quite a pang of alarm that lurched through the country recently when Finance Minister Lalonde had the temerity to suggest that one of our great Canadian institutions, the baby bonus, was not untouchable, that he might siphon it off from those who don't need it.

Finance ministers in the Liberal government like to rattle our chain once in a while. Maybe it's just for the pleasure of hearing the great, grumbling roar that ensues. Much like a small boy teasing a big bear securely attached to a stout post, or in a cage. He can always jump back, pretending he was brave, but actually scared out of his wits at his own temerity.

Lalonde might just as well have sounded an air-raid siren; then, when the whole nation, Liberals and all, turned on him, pretended he was only kidding. Just a substitute warden who had pressed the wrong button.

MacEachen did it a year ago, in little grunts and squeaks that hinted income tax might not, possibly, at some time in the future, if the event arose, after due consideration, and with malice toward none, be indexed to inflation. That would have given the government millions and millions of funny money to play its own brand of monopoly.

He was howled at, his ancestry invoked, his personal life scarified, and his political neck put on the block before cooler heads intervened and said

by  
**Bill  
Smiley**



he should merely be boiled in oil (cod liver, as befits his origins.) "Me for the Bahamas." (where there is no income tax), was the cry.

But trial balloons have a habit of becoming lead balloons, securely fastened around your neck and mine, so keep an eye on those serpents. I don't know how you can do both, but I always liked mixed metaphors. Many a serpent has sent up a trial balloon. How about the cobra, which puffs up his neck, and then hits you when you're admiring his lack of jowls?

Anyway, a howl of rage went up from everyone, including his Liberal members, when Lalonde dared to hint that the baby Bonus was not sacrosanct. He withdrew his heavy hand like a scorched infant.

Doesn't he know that the entire Liberal party owes its life to the Baby Bonus? Old Mac King, the most unpopular leader this long-suffering country ever suffered, saved his neck, and his party, by introducing it.

Never mind that Ann Murray, Pierre Trudeau, E.P. Taylor and Conrad

Black, among other millionaires, have collected it. The Baby Bonus is one of the great bulwarks of Canadian life, and any politician who trifles with it is risking his own political life.

Ever since its inception (conception?) the Baby Bonus has been more important in this country than a national flag, a national anthem, or a new constitution. And you don't have to be bilingual to get it.

For years, the average Canadian family has used it for something sensible, like a case of beer or a carton of fags.

Some weirdos, who didn't need the cash, actually invested it for their children's education. At five per cent. Might as well have bought some beer or donated it to the Sally Ann. Inflation swept it away. I'd hate for my children to be trying to go to university on the proceeds of their Baby Bonus. They might finish first term, first year.

Point is, that the Baby Bonus, or whatever they call it now, has always been right up there with The Long Weekend, The Five-Day Week, Only on Saturday Nights, and The First of July, in the hearts of true-blue Canadians.

Now, how long are we going to put up with this chipping away at our national institutions? At one end they're after the Baby Bonus. At the other, they've already cut off The First of July and, by

some benighted process, turned it into Canada Day.

Now there's a name to send a shiver of pride down the bowed spine of every red-blooded Canadian. Canada Day.

Just roll it around on your tongue a few times. No puking allowed. Canada Day? Try it again. Canada Day! Maybe it doesn't quite come up to Guy Fawkes' Day or Bastille Day or Washington's Birthday. But it does have a ring to it. It rings like tapping a doughnut.

You'll have noticed that France celebrates France Day, Germany, Germany Day, England, England Day, and Hayfork Centre, Hayfork Centre Day. It's only logical that our parliament, 80 per cent absent, ten per cent drunk, should pass a bill to name our only national holiday, and be supported by a supine Senate, with such a striking title.

I must admit, the new name gives me a real gut feeling for my homeland. Same kind of gut feeling that an overdose of milk of magnesia gives me.

By gad, sirs, I've fought the new flag, the metric system, the bollocks of a constitution, the national anthem, and the insolence of the women's lib movement. Am I to fight on alone? Will nobody rally to old standards?

Next thing you know they'll be after the Old Age Pension, our last bastion of universal poverty. Wake up, before it's too late. Avanti Canadienses!

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