

Comment

A political lifeboat

The delivery of a federal budget that pleased his strongest foe speaks volumes about how fearful Prime Minister Paul Martin was about losing his position in Ottawa.

Wednesday's carefully-crafted budget left the Liberal's most vocal critics with little ammunition in which to take aim at toppling Martin's minority leadership.

Even Stephen Harper admitted, "There's nothing in this budget that would justify an election at this time," upon reviewing Finance Minister Ralph Goodale's loosening of Ottawa's purse strings.

NDP leader Jack Layton characterized the budget as better than what Martin delivered as finance minister under Jean Chrétien majority governments, but still not great.

It's no coincidence that under Chrétien's leadership, much stronger

Liberal governments lacked the same political pressure to deliver such broad-based budgets. So they didn't.

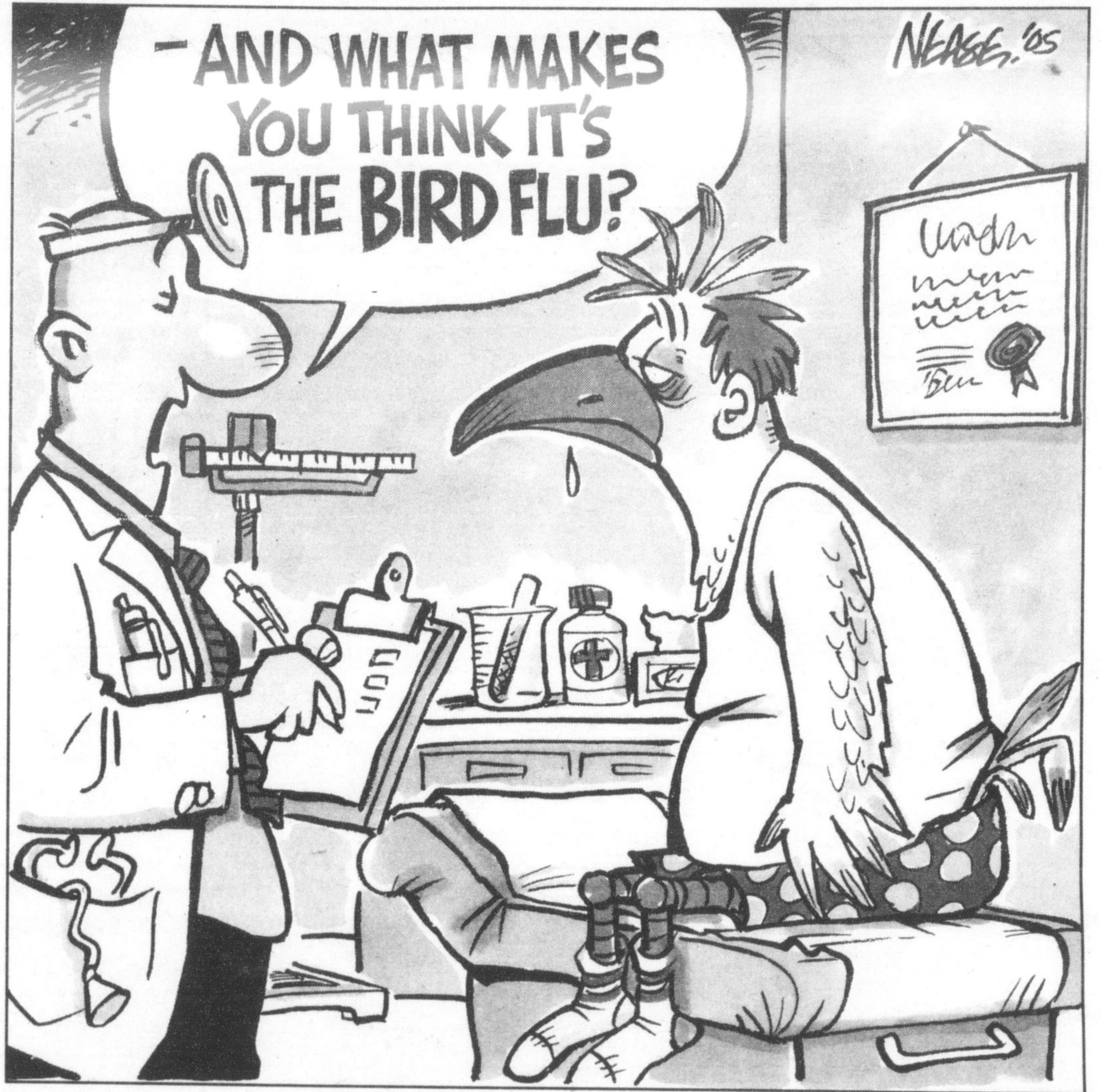
Wednesday's budget was unquestionably self-serving.

It provided a political lifeboat for the minority Liberals at a time when it appeared the budget might be rejected, forcing an election.

The budget also spread out much of its spending over five years — meaning much of it is tied to the Liberals remaining in power.

Martin seems to have accomplished what Joe Clark couldn't 25 years ago — he has satisfied enough of his political enemies to live to fight another day.

However, the question remains how long the prime minister will be able to buy his way out of challenges to his precarious leadership.



Our Readers Write

Carr has made the right decision on bill

Dear Editor:

Congratulations to our Liberal MP Gary Carr for voting with the wishes of the majority of his constituents and against the "anti-marriage" bill.

It's terrific to know that there are top-notch politicians who believe in truly

representing the majority and in doing what is morally right. Marriage is a sacred covenant between one man and one woman, and must remain as such.

Gary — keep up the good work!

G. Hopkins
Milton

Carr's decision to vote against same-sex marriage a shameful one for the country

Dear Editor:

Gary Carr was in the news for two reasons recently.

At the same time he announced he will be voting against same-sex marriage, Big Brothers of Halton presented Mr. Carr with an award for his "commitment to mentoring in the community."

I think it must be a sad state of affairs at Big Brothers if its most noteworthy mentor is Mr. Carr.

Although he may be extremely dedicated to helping kids, I sincerely hope that there are other volunteers influencing young people in Halton. I know that I wouldn't want my children mentored by someone you appears to me to be so narrow-minded and unaccepting as Mr. Carr.

I imagine that many children in need of a mentor are those who are

struggling with their sexuality and their place in our community. It would be quite discouraging to talk about such a problem with someone like Mr. Carr, who with the power to make decisions that affect the country, plans to vote against same-sex marriage.

Local figures like Mr. Carr have a responsibility to set an example for young people in Halton, especially if they're mentors. They have the power to instill values and the ability to teach acceptance. What kind of message is Mr. Carr sending by voting against same-sex marriage?

Mr. Carr said that he made his decision to vote against the bill based on the response he received from his constituents.

I took the time to write to him about the issue, but clearly that wasn't enough.

The hate propaganda, as I think so accurately deemed in past letters to the editor, obviously had a greater impact on Mr. Carr than my words of genuine concern.

Gays and lesbians deserve no fewer opportunities in life than Mr. Carr, myself, or anyone else. By voting against same-sex marriage, Mr. Carr is denying equal rights.

I am disappointed that our MP is so easily influenced by intolerance. By preserving the traditional definition of marriage, all we're preserving is prejudice.

I hope everyone who encouraged Mr. Carr to vote against same-sex marriage is satisfied that he will be reflecting their archaic views of what's right and what's wrong.

Personally, I'm ashamed.

Adrienne Robertson
Joyce Boulevard

Milton is a good town with good leadership

Dear Editor:

My name is Harry Barnes and I have recently retired from the Town of Milton.

This is to those employees who signed my retirement card and attended my retirement get-together.

God bless the people of Milton.

You have a good town and a mayor who's a leader that I would follow anywhere.

Harry Barnes
Milton

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by Steve Nease

