

Editorial Page

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Planes, Busses and Automobiles

You may have heard of the saying, "Take it easy, take the train...VIA."

Well, no longer, at least in these here parts. Gone, dare I say forever - I hope not - is passenger train service for many Canadians.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Finance Minister Michael Wilson, in their infinite wisdom, have plotted the demise of VIA Rail in order to save some bucks. You see, just shortly after the last federal election, they discovered Canada has a national debt.

They decided by cutting back on VIA Rail's annual subsidy to the tune of \$300 million, that would help do the trick.

"And what of the people who take the train who will no longer be able to because of these cuts?" many people asked.

"No problem," replied the feds. "Bus service will take up the slack."

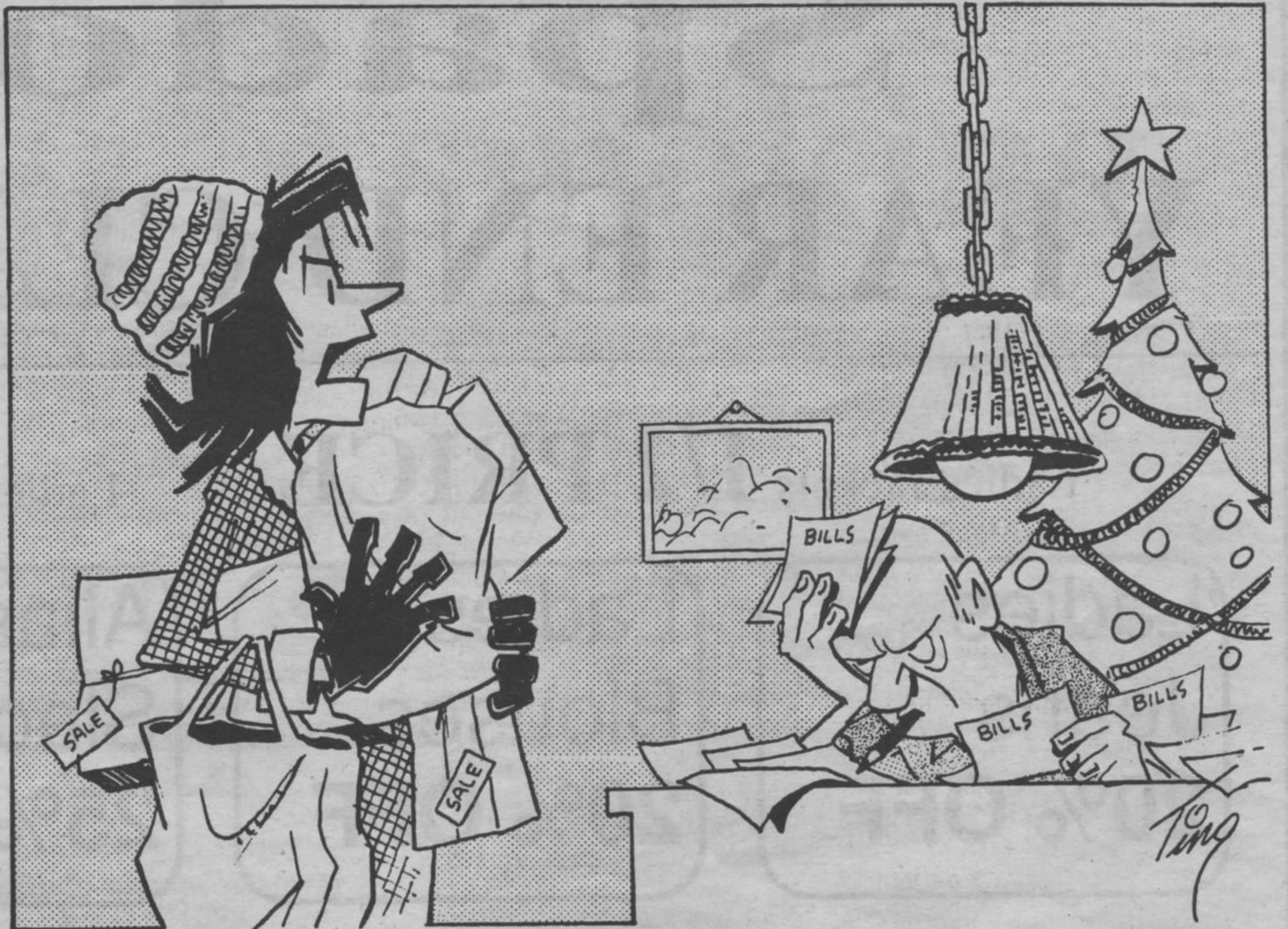
But here's the crux of the situation. The bus companies don't have the busses to take up this slack. Nor do they have the funds to purchase the extra equipment.

"No problem," replied the feds. "We'll lend you, well, lets say \$1.5 billion. That should do the trick."

So now I find myself asking the question, "are these feds as infinitely wise as I thought?"

I guess the answer is obvious. Just think about it. The \$1.5 billion the bus companies will receive to purchase additional vehicles could subsidize VIA for another five, six or seven years. If operated properly, VIA could be self-sufficient, or at least operating with less of a deficit by that time.

But, the government just doesn't see it that way.



"THE COUNTRY'S BILLIONS IN DEBT AND YOU GO APE OVER AN' \$82 OVERDRAFT?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The News welcomes your letter to the editor. Use this space as your forum to comment on any issue of common interest.

Please address letters to:

The Terrace Bay/Schreiber News
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Please sign your letter and include your phone number

Abe didn't reckon with these "wool-pullers"

"You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

Abraham Lincoln

Well, maybe things were different in your time, Abe. I live in an age where people line up each week to spend millions of dollars buying lottery tickets--even though their chances of winning are worse than their chances of being struck by lightning.

I live in an age when people voted for a Prime Minister who promised to save passenger trains and cut government spending.

Government spending has never been higher. Passenger trains are all but dead.

We have a cleverer class of over-the-eyes wool-pullers these days, Abe. Maybe in your day you just didn't have enough George Bushes and Brian Mulroneys around to fool all your people.

Bet you didn't have any Michael Watsons or David Tomlinsons either.

Who are they? Well, Mister Waterson is director of research for the Advertising Association of England. David Tomlinson is president of the National Firearms Association of Canada.

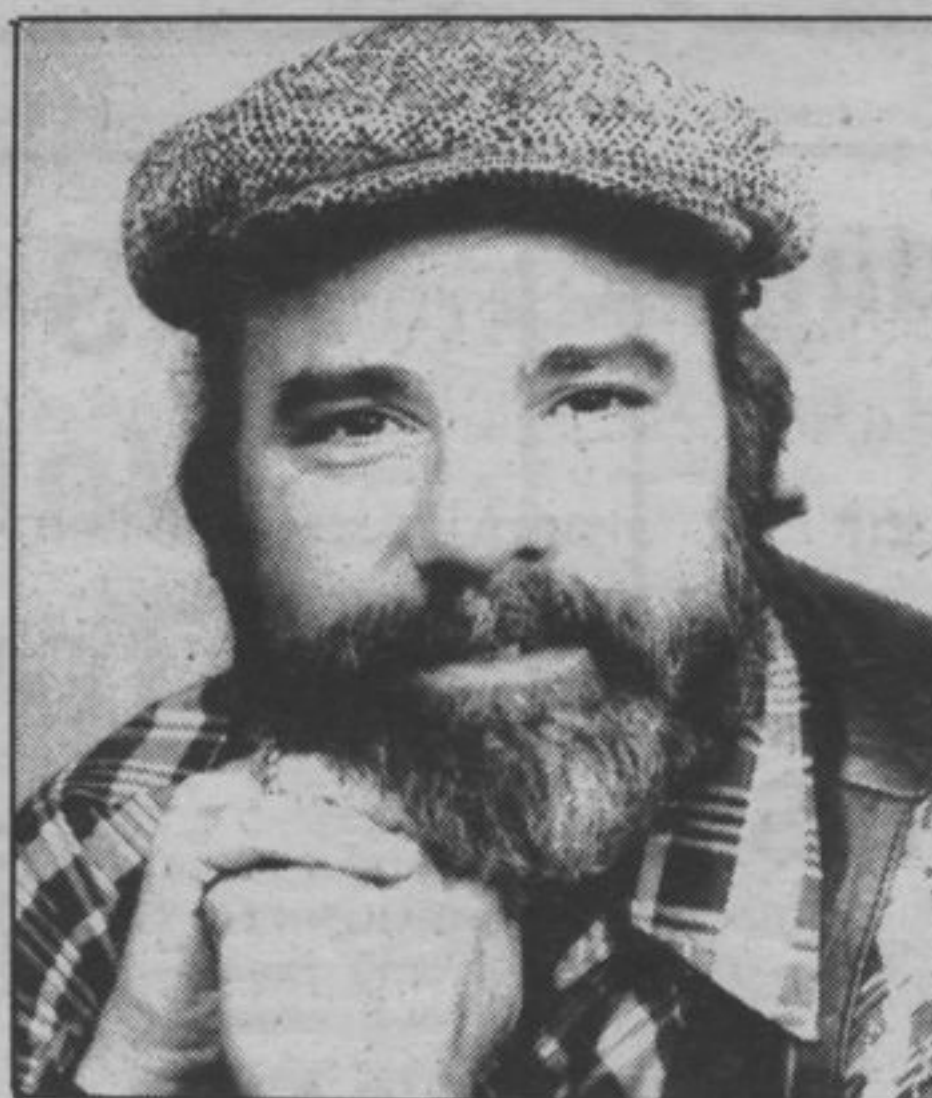
And I plan to make them my 1989 nominees to the Hoodwinkers Hall of Fame.

Mister Waterson gets my nod for his impressive courtroom performance in a case before the Quebec Superior Court last month.

The case is being pressed by two large Canadian tobacco companies--RJR Macdonald and Imperial. They want to overturn the federal ban on cigarette advertising. Which is where Michael Waterson comes in. He assured the court that advertising cigarettes is harmless because it doesn't really work. Mister Waterson testified that in the United Kingdom, consumption of beer, cigarettes and even milk have all declined over the past few years, even though adver-

tising of those products has increased.

"You don't turn on the advertising tap and expect consumers to respond like Pavlov's dogs," explained Waterson.



Arthur Black

David Tomlinson's philosophy, albeit in a completely different field, is no less breathtaking. The president of the National Firearms Association of Canada was recently lamenting in public

over our government's myopic decision to ban the importation of assault rifles--automatic and semi-automatic weapons designed for soldiers to kill other soldiers--into Canada. "Sucked in again" was Tomlinson's rueful assessment of the Justice Department decision.

"The more firearms control you bring in," opined the NFA prez "the more violent crime occurs." Why? Because, he says, the average Canadian is "helpless and defenseless" at home.

Oh yeah, right. That's why there's so much murder and carnage in places like Regina and Moncton, while bucolic dens of democracy such as Belfast and Beirut are havens of peaceful domesticity.

Just pause for a moment and ponder the fur-brained philosophy these two jokers are attempting to peddle. Michael Waterson would have us believe that cigarette advertising is innocuous because it doesn't work.

Which begs the question: if it doesn't work, why in hell do corporations waste hundreds of millions of dollars a year on advertising campaigns?

Tomlinson's contention is even more outlandish. He's arguing that an absence of murderous weapons--the only purpose of which is to wreak violence on human bodies--will lead to more violence to human bodies.

How dumb do these guys think we are?

Gentlemen, please.

Go ahead and flog your cancer sticks Mister Waterson. It's not against the law. Keep plugging to make Canada as friendly and pacific as downtown Detroit on a Saturday night, Mister Tomlinson--that's your democratic right.

But if you expect to make converts from anyone but the terminally brain dead, you'll have to be just a wee bit more subtle about it.