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Question the governments actions, don't just accept them blindly

There's a running joke around university that goes like this: One friend says to the other, "I heard that the two main problems facing society today are ignorance and apathy. What do you think?"; to which the friend snaps, "I don't know, and I don't care."

Alright, it might not be that funny, but it does seem to amuse university students.

The point that the students are trying to make is that people have to question life. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Comedian Lenny Bruce took it one step further, stating that blind obedience to government was truly obscene. Bruce questioned why people would follow orders without questioning their merit. For his questions, Bruce faced constant harrassment until his death. He died unrepentant.

Nowadays, Canadians seem to be perfecting the "look the other way" policy of social and governmental questioning.

When the government in Britain attempted to impose a poll tax, they were faced with organized protest rallies, unorganized rallies, and eventually riots.

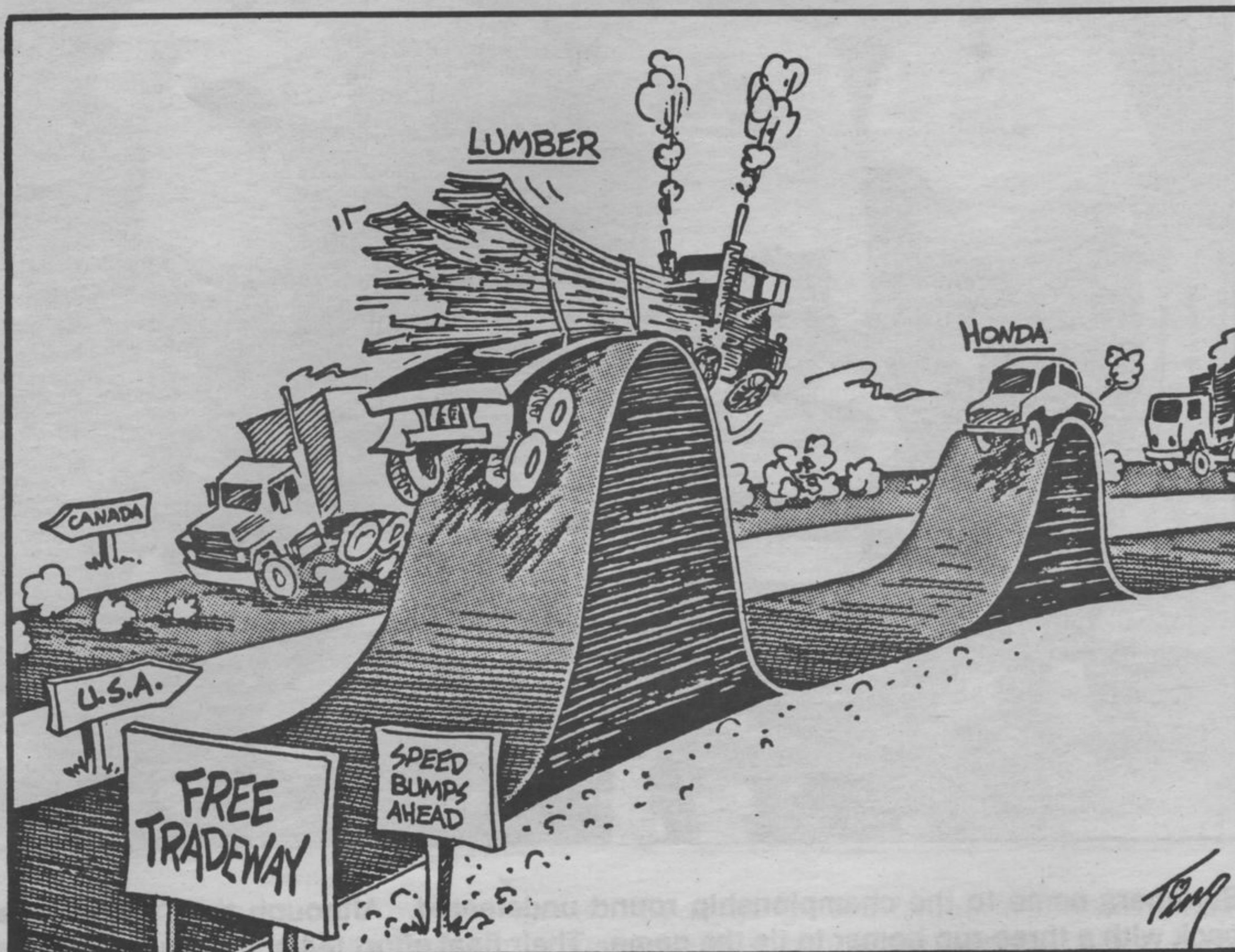
When the Canadian government implimented a similar piece of legislation, the Goods and Service Tax, there was a lot of whining to family and friends, but very little in the way of protest.

While it is true that the Progressive Conservative party under Brian Mulroney did win the last federal election under a free trade banner, more people voted against him than for. It's all in what ridings you get, not how many votes.

Free Trade with the United States was implimented by the government. Now people are complaining, but not protesting, all on the eve of Federal Trade Minister Michael Wilson's announcement that a North America Free Trade accord could be struck by the week's end.

Ontario has just entered a beer war with the States, Ontario built cars were slapped with a duty, as well as lumber products. Mexico pays its workers an atrocious wage by Canadian standards. One country uses the accord for their gain, and ignore it when they choose, the other is sure to become the new home for large companies looking for cheap labour. If you are in agreement with creating the world's largest trading block, fine, that's your decision. If not, what are you going to do about it?

While there's certainly no need for rioting, people opposed to such an accord should voice their opinion. Write a letter to the editor, your MP, or even the Prime Minister. Make phone calls, organize a rally, just don't say "Oh well", and then whine for the next few years. Question your governments actions, on all levels, and if you fail, at least you can say you tried, and then you can rightfully whine.



Tycoons slip on banana peels

God shows his contempt for wealth by the type of person he selects to receive it.

Austin O'Malley

My nomination for quote of the month goes to Donald "Busted Flush" Trump, the New York ex-tycoon who is desperately trying to resurrect his torpedoed financial empire. Trump has spent the past year or so panhandling on Wall Street, cozying up to anyone with a bulge in their hip pocket. Especially bankers. Earlier this month, Trump told a reporter he'd be back on his feet in no time. "The banks have worked with me, and I'm really proud of that."

Brilliant, Don. Of course the banks have worked with him - Trump owes them enough money to bail out the national debt of most Third World countries. Surely he's heard the old Wall Street saying - "If you owe the bank ten thousand dollars, you've got a problem. If you owe the bank a million dollars, the banks got a problem."

At last report, Trump was shopping for a \$2 billion, as they say, "debt restructuring."

Not that the banks are likely to throw open their vaults and see if Trump can lose it all again. In a typical Bankerese understatement, a spokesman said that many in the financial community "are not comfortable" about the prospect of bankrolling Mister Trump.

Ho hum. Another high roller goes off the rails.

It hasn't been a good decade for tycoons. Robert Maxwell stepped off his yacht one night last year in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean - barely ahead, it turns out, of the crash of his mighty empire. He was once one of the richest men alive - on paper anyway. Now, his capitalist kingdom lies in shambles and his two sons have been charged with fraud and theft.

Canadian plutocrats haven't had a much easier ride. Robert Campeau, the one-time boy won-

der from Sudbury, Ontario, continues to hide out in his Austrian mountain chateau - the last bauble remaining from his crumbled commercial empire. In Edmonton, Peter Pocklington stick-handles his way gingerly through the encroaching fiscal forest. I wonder if he's still got any of the cash he got for Gretzky?

And Nelson Skalbania - whatever became of Nelson? It wasn't so long ago that he was Canada's version of Diamond Jim Brady - fast cars, silk suits, Lear-jetting his way to one Glitz Gala after another. Then Nelson took a short, sharp and exceedingly chilly bath on the Stock Market and I haven't heard of him since.

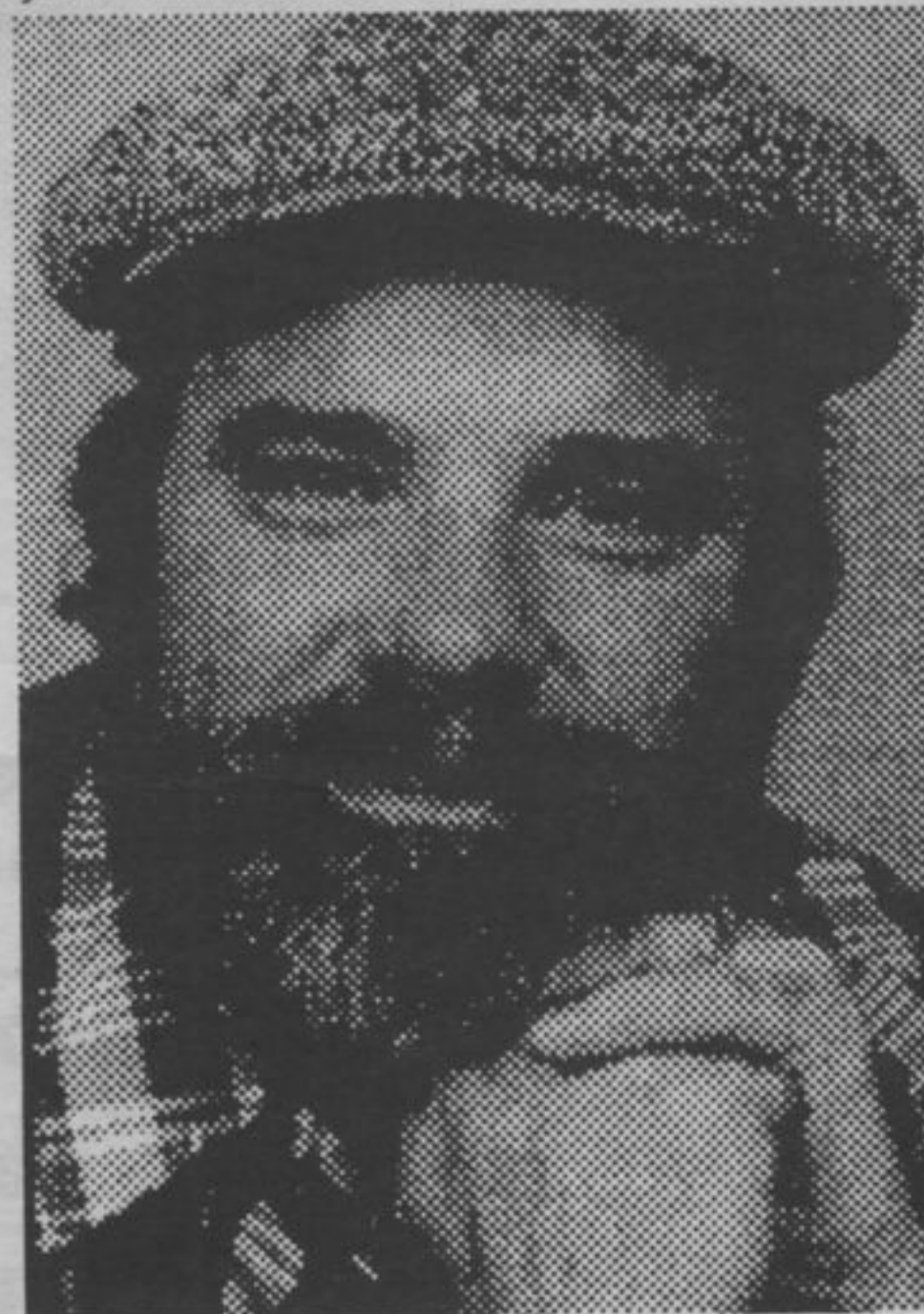
Then there's the Reichman Brothers. One hesitates to say anything about the Reichman boys. They have a tendency to unleash platoons of lawyers bearing multi-million dollar lawsuits everytime their famous surname appears in print. So let's just say that the Reichman Brothers... appear to be having some difficulty renting all the office space they've thrown up over there

on Canary Wharf in downtown London, England. Like Mister Trump, the Messrs. Reichman have been spotted chatting with bankers about "debt restructuring."

Speaking as a chap who's never likely to get a banker to buy him lunch, much less float him a credit line, I can only say that I find the prospect of tycoons in turmoil a pleasant one. It's bracing to realize that the Big Guys can slip on banana peels too. Makes them appear to be "just folks."

Ernest Hemingway said it best. He was having drinks with F. Scott Fitzgerald one day. The topic rolled around to wealth. "Of course," said F. Scott, "the rich are different from you and me."

"Yes," said Heminway, draining off the last of his beer, "They have more money."



Arthur Black

Letters to the Editor

The Terrace Bay Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject.

Letters must be signed and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false libelous or anonymous comments.

Letters to the Editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this very important forum is used responsibly.

Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, P0T 2W0, or dropped off at the News office, 13 Simcoe Plaza in Terrace Bay.