

OPINION

Conscription: the next step

A peacetime draft is on the way. Yesterday's House passage of President Carter's registration proposal means that the draft mechanism will be ready when Carter is. And he will be ready soon — about the middle of November. What? The draft will only be used in a national emergency? Right. The lead time for inducting and training mere line infantry means that conscript troops could not possibly be in

the field sooner than 6 months after a decision to reinstate the draft was made. The time would be greater for technicians and other specialists. And how many national emergencies announce themselves 6 months in advance? Prepare yourselves now for Carter's "preparedness draft" or some similar euphemism. See you in the trenches.

Random observations

Under current tax laws, a husband and wife who both work pay higher taxes than two single wage-earners filing separate returns.

Emil M. Sunley, deputy assistant Treasury secretary for tax policy, told a House panel married couples can also get a tax break under current law — if there is a large disparity of income or when only one spouse works.

Thus, he points out, for 1979 income, 15.9 million couples are paying \$8.3 billion in an extra "marriage tax," averaging \$524 each, while 23.8 million couples are saving a total of \$19.2 billion, an average "marriage bonus" of \$804 each.

Either way, this is wrong.

This country is supposed to have equal and fair taxation. Congress should change the law so that taxpayers pay the same effective rate, whatever their marital status. Should Congress balk, maybe it's time the Boston Tea Party was remembered and some better representation sent to Congress.

The Quincy, Mass., Patriot Ledger

You thought you had a hard time coming up with Uncle Sam's share of your income for 1979?

It's going to be more painful a year hence and the year after that.

Higher Social Security taxes, inflation-induced tax "bracket creep", oil import fees that will be passed on to consumers, tax withholding on interest and dividends (if Congress approves) — all will be taking their toll over the next couple of years.

Rep. Barber Conable Jr., a New York Republican who keeps track of such things as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, says taxpayers will get nicked for some \$50 billion more in fiscal 1981 (which starts Oct. 1) than for fiscal 1980.

Howard Jarvis, where are you when we need you? Scripps-Howard Newspapers

The Iranian mess is an international problem that affects all countries. Our allies can ill afford to stand aside and let this country, whose awesome military and economic power remains their first, best hedge against aggression, either be cast in the role of pitiful helpless giant or goaded out of frustration into actions the end results of which cannot be foreseen.

Without allied cooperation, this country may be driven to impose a naval blockade against Iran. While such action would not be out of line with the provocation, its dangers are obvious. Not least of these would be a clash with the Soviet Union in the Persian Gulf. If this is a disagreeable thought, it is one that our friends should keep very much in mind as they shrink from supporting a far less risky course.

Providence, R.I., Journal-Bulletin

the small society by Brickman



THE BATTALION

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VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 23, 1980

Wealth in western territories Upsets Canada's political balance

By LES WHITTINGTON
International Writers Service

OTTAWA — Until now, the main threat of Canada's cohesion has come from Quebec, its French-speaking area. But lately the spectre of separatism has been looming in the country's four western provinces, and it could prove to be disruptive.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, which represent the oil-rich western half of Canada, have become increasingly hostile toward the populous eastern provinces of Ontario and Quebec as well as the Maritime region.

This hostility has spiraled since the elections in February, when Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau defeated Joe Clark, the Progressive Conservative who had governed for nine months. Trudeau's victory was viewed as a setback for the west's aspirations.

One of the clearest warnings was voiced recently by Premier Peter Lougheed of Alberta, who heads the country's principal oil-producing province. An ardent champion of provincial rights, he had nonetheless always upheld the need for Canadian unity. Thus his secessionist talk sounded all the more ominous. "There are very strong feelings in west-

ern Canada," he told a reporter, adding: "I don't think the people... want to join the United States, but on the other hand, the people of western Canada aren't prepared to be dominated by Ottawa either."

Throughout much of Canada's 113-year history, the agricultural west has criticized Ottawa, claiming that the national government there has promoted tariff and freight-rate policies designed to benefit the manufacturing industries of Ontario and Quebec.

Within recent years, however, the west has taken on new importance. Its abundant natural resources have contributed to booming economies, and its population has grown steadily.

No area has been so successful as Alberta, the source of 85 percent of the crude oil produced in Canada and now the country's richest province. Revenues from petroleum and natural gas are pouring into its treasury at the astounding rate of \$6000 per minute.

This bonanza has prompted Albertans and other westerners to challenge the traditional programs of the central government, under which wealth has been transferred from affluent regions to poorer provinces like Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince

Edward Island and Newfoundland, on the eastern seaboard.

Former Prime Minister Clark, himself an Albertan, had pledged an "urgent reexamination" of the situation, and his election in May 1979 spurred hopes in the west.

Clark sympathized with Alberta's demands for higher petroleum revenues, to be used to build an industrial base in the province before its oil reserves ran out. As a result, he favored scuttling subsidies and allowing domestic oil and natural gas prices to rise to world levels.

But earlier this year, the Liberal and New Democrat opposition wielded the energy price issue against Clark, forcing him to elections. And Trudeau, campaigning to protect the populous eastern provinces against higher oil costs, returned to the office he had held for 11 years.

The election, however, dramatized the split in the country. The western provinces gave his Liberals only two out of the 146 seats they hold in the House of Commons.

The meaning of the vote eluded few Canadians. The day after election, a newspaper in British Columbia editorialized: "Ontario has teamed up with Quebec in an assertion of central Canadian interests against those of the west."

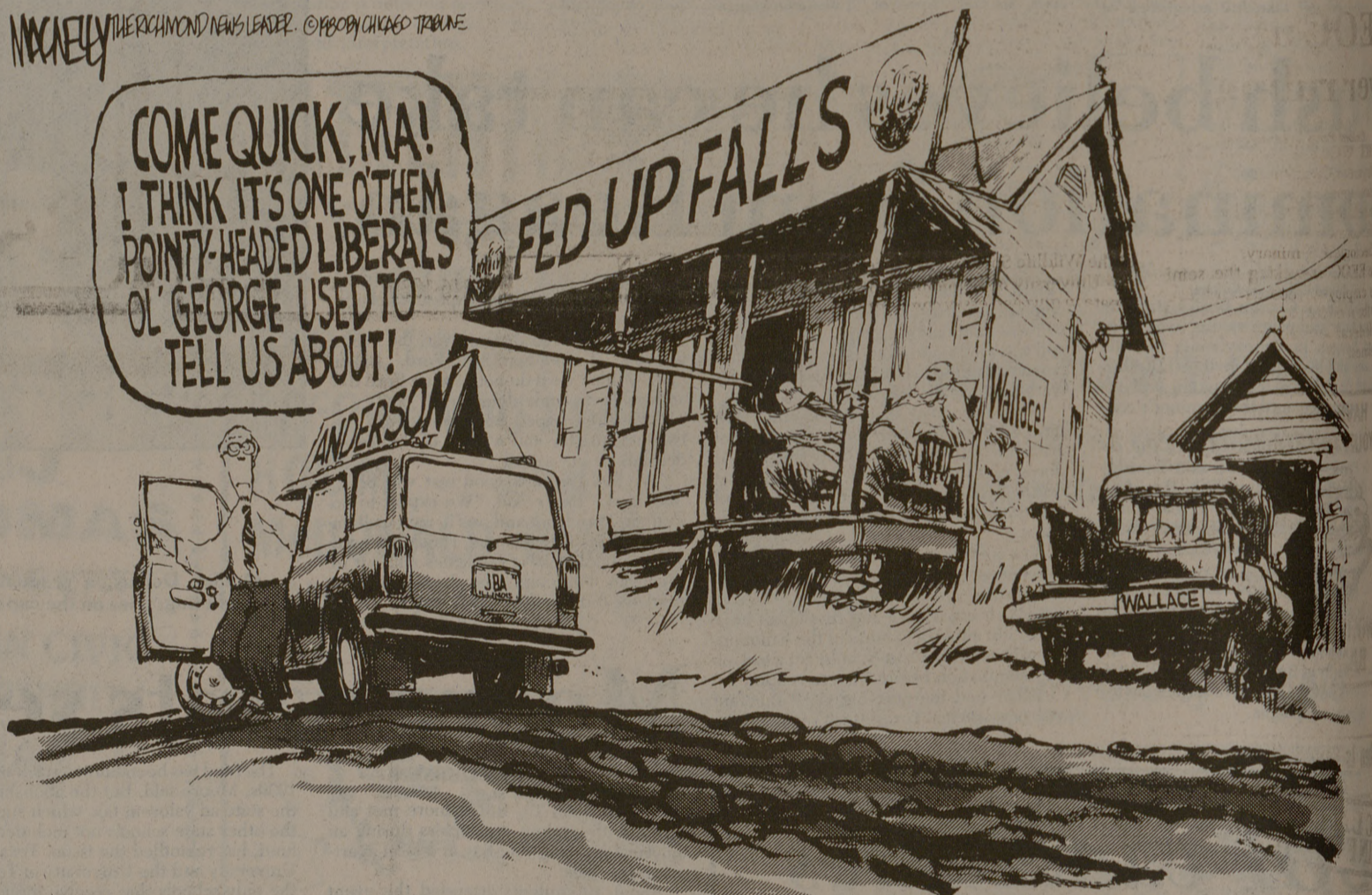
During his campaign, Trudeau... higher energy prices a "windfall" for rest of us, and he promised to extract a better deal from Alberta. Since then, though, Alberta has rejected his proposal, and a confrontation is currently building up.

In retaliation against Alberta, for example, Trudeau has already revoked an agreement under which the province would be permitted to charge world prices for petroleum derived from two oil sands and similar future projects. That concession is considered necessary for the development of the projects.

Should the present negotiations... energy prices break down, Alberta could go so far as to threaten to stop supplying to central and western Canada. The national government could try to gain control over the province's oil under special institutional authority, but that would lead to court battles and further regional tensions.

There is still room for compromise... rhetoric in the dispute, however, is becoming more and more heated. Unless coming down, the fate of Canada could be increasingly uncertain.

(Whittington, an editor of the *Financial Times* of London, writes on current events in Canada.)



Britain's universities threatened by changing national priorities

By GODFREY HODGSON
International Writers Service

LONDON — Advanced education in Britain, once the prerogative of the privileged classes, has been made available to everyone since the end of World War II. As a result, universities, colleges and other institutions of higher learning here have expanded dramatically over the past three decades.

But now they are facing the new policies of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, which is seeking to curb public spending. And this is raising basic questions about the practices and purposes of the British educational system.

How many students ought to go beyond secondary school? What subjects should they study? Above all, what is the real aim of higher learning?

These and similar questions have been provoked by the fact that the government, which provides grants for advanced education, recently ordered the universities and colleges to cut enrollment next year by 6 percent. Taking into account the annual increase in applications, this means a 10 percent reduction in the number of 18-year-olds trying to further their education.

Since the government is slashing overall expenditures by 7.5 percent, the universities and colleges are not being unfairly penalized. Even so, the economy drive is ex-

pected to reverse the educational trend.

Forty years ago, there were only a couple of dozen British universities with a total student body of some 50,000. Today, there are more than a half-million students, three-fifths of them in 44 universities and the rest in so-called "polytechnics," locally-funded institutions that somewhat resemble community colleges in the United States.

The proportion of college-age youths in British universities is lower than it is in the United States — but not as low as is generally supposed. In contrast to American, where almost every kind of subject can figure in a university curriculum, courses like law, nursing, dentistry and teacher training are offered in special schools here.

British universities place more emphasis than do their U.S. counterparts on traditional academic fields such as history, literature and pure science. Engineering, business administration and other practical subjects, on the other hand, are accorded lesser status.

This tendency has aroused controversy within recent years, however. For it has been argued that the traditional ivory tower approach, especially exemplified in the great institutions like Oxford and Cambridge, has failed to provide Britain with the industrial managers it has needed to make its economy competitive.

Before its defeat last spring, the Labor

government had accepted this argument, and it feebly encouraged the universities to relate more closely to industry. The Conservatives, now in office, passionately believe that higher education should be more practical, and they are exerting pressure on the system.

The most dynamic partisan of change is Rhodes Boyson, the government minister responsible for higher education, a Ph.D. who grew up in a poor Lancashire mill town and once ran a high school in working-class London district.

Boyson, reflecting the Conservative party's outlook, holds that 20 years of enlarged educational opportunities has produced an army of liberal arts graduates who are unqualified either to earn a living or contribute to the economy. Besides, he contends, they are infected with unrealistic leftist attitudes.

His assessment is shared by industrialists, who complain that the shortage of skilled technicians in Britain is due to university curricula that put a premium on the classics and other abstract fields. Boyson hopes, consequently, that he can spur students toward more practical subjects by cuts in educational expenditures that will eliminate the traditional academic courses.

His methods will not be dictatorial. He assumes that students will be attracted to studies that serve the "national interest." He will be in for a surprise. For surveys

show that students, given the freedom they will continue to have, gravitate away from technological subjects to traditional categories known as social studies. Between 1966 and 1976, for example, candidates for degrees in sociology rose from 12 percent to 22 percent, while interest in engineering declined.

One reason for this trend is that jobs have been open in the social sciences in industry over the past decade. In addition, low wages and lock of promotion have made British industry unattractive to many bright students here.

Boyson and his Conservative colleagues may also find their policies backed by another way. For by reducing the university population, they are likely to divert students into polytechnics, which receive subsidies on local authorities and include central government controls. At polytechnics, moreover, students are apt to concentrate on social studies and, if anything, the radical flavor of courses will be more pronounced than at the universities.

It may be that higher education in Britain ought to be drastically reformed to meet the needs of the society. The nature of the society itself is a key educational system, and it cannot be altered by budget cuts and other such devices.