



the halter



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THE CALGARY STORY

by Vicki Perkins

[Ms. Perkins is secretary on the executive of the HALT Calgary chapter.]

November 28, 1979 was a big day for HALT-Calgary -- the day that 51% of voters said No in a plebiscite which asked, "Are you in favor of City Council passing Bylaw 67B79 which authorizes the borrowing of \$201,960,000 needed to build the Calgary Civic Centre?" HALT-Calgary had initiated the petition which resulted in the plebiscite, and had led the campaign to defeat the bylaw.

Although the City hasn't given up on its plan to build a grandiose \$250 million office building, complete with overhead walkways, parks and art galleries, a wrench definitely has been thrown into the spokes.

How did we do it? To a large extent, we were plain lucky.* We just happened to hold our first public meeting a day or so after Council had approved the civic centre plan. Bob Boileau, who had been following the civic centre discussions from the beginning and was incensed over the price tag, happened to attend that meeting. Another member, a lawyer, mentioned that the Municipal Government Act allows for 5% of the voters to demand a plebiscite on a borrowing bylaw by signing a petition.

We decided that as our first project, we would speak out against the civic centre.

We were lucky to be starting out in summer, when there wasn't much news, and when lots of people were outside on the Eighth Avenue Mall, where we collected a high percentage of our signatures. The media, except for the CBC, largely had ignored our first two meetings. But from the time Wayne Kollinger casually mentioned to a CBC reporter that Bob Boileau was researching the civic centre, the press acted like we were a gold mine. It didn't matter whether they agreed with us or not; they all gave us coverage. Apparently they sensed better than we did how much the issue would mean to the mayor and council, and they moved in for the kill.

Luck was on our side in that feelings were high at that time against the mayor and council. They had recently voted themselves a huge salary increase. A petition circulated by a CUPE member, asking that the salaries be reduced, had been declared invalid in court. So public sympathy was with our petition effort.

As previous HALTERS have reported, we collected over 27,000 signatures in five weeks -10,000 more than we needed to force a plebiscite.

After the petitions were handed in on September 4th, most of us except Wayne Kollinger relaxed. We felt justified in doing virtually nothing in the way of campaigning, for two reasons. Firstly, we had no money with which to campaign. Second, we thought that nothing either side said would have much effect. Most people made up their minds during the petition drive.

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Editorial

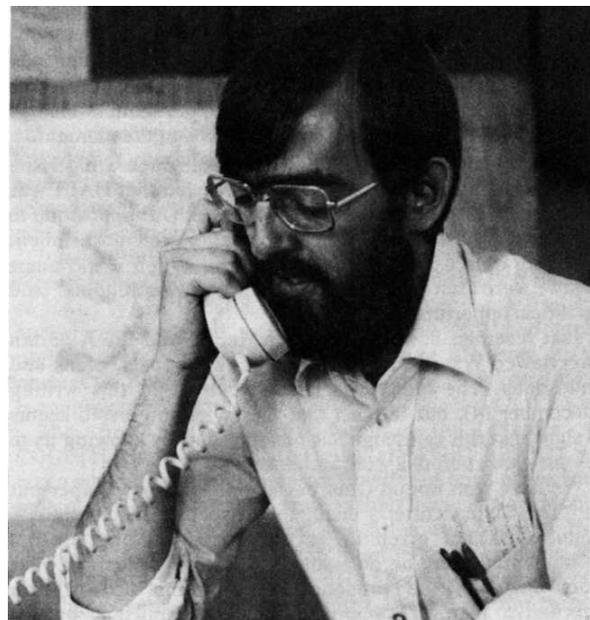
A SALUTE TO CALGARY

The David and Goliath story repeats itself in Calgary. HALT Calgary, brand new, bristling with enthusiasm but lacking funds and experience took on the political establishment with its \$100,000 campaign and won. From the start, the odds were overwhelmingly against us. A handful of people had to collect 17,000 signatures in just over three weeks. They collected 27,000. At taxpayers' expense the mayor distributed a colorful brochure to every household, while GO Calgary spent thousands promoting the Centre. HALT spent virtually nothing, conducting instead a one man campaign explaining why the Civic Centre was a bad buy.

Yet in the end, the taxpayers of Calgary took the opportunity to vote NO to the unnecessary expense. Thanks to the efforts of less than a dozen dedicated HALTERS, every man, woman and child in Calgary saved almost \$500, money that can now be spent on food, clothes, gasoline, entertainment or any other item of personal choice.

Wayne Kollinger deserves special mention. He was tireless in his campaign which grew in its demands as November 28th drew nearer. He faced ridicule bravely from an often hostile press which painted him as a troublemaker from the East up to no good. He never lost his spirit and was optimistically predicting a victory on plebiscite eve.

To you, Wayne, and to all of your workers, we offer our congratulations on a job well done.



Calgary President Wayne Kollinger

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Our lack of money worked to our advantage in the end because the media played up the David-Goliath aspect. The City spent \$25,000 printing a slick brochure to sell their plan. A group called GO Calgary, composed of downtown businessmen, spent \$70,000 on advertising. We spent no money at all. One concerned citizen, not even a member of HALT, printed up a couple of hundred copies of a chain letter Wayne had written, and distributed them at public meetings. That's the only advertising we did.

Wayne worked tirelessly, speaking at meetings and giving interviews. During the last three weeks he was speaking almost daily and sandwiching interviews inbetween speeches. Some of the other members were invited to speak occasionally, and many of us attended public forums and called phone-in talk shows.

By this time, people were tired of hearing about the project. In fact, if the media hadn't been starved for news, the whole thing would have been a dead issue. Most public meetings were very poorly attended. We had two meetings during this time. Because we still hadn't had time to organize an effective executive committee that would take care of things like planning meetings, our first postpetition meeting was rather sloppy. Because we were unhappy about this meeting, we didn't advertise the October meeting, and only five people showed up, two of them from the press. Meetings held by GO Calgary and a group called the Federation of Calgary Communities were just as sparsely attended.

As it turned out, almost as many people voted Yes (59,553) as voted No (61,696). Talk shows and Letters to the Editor colums indicated that there were almost as many reasons for voting NO as there were voters. When the vast majority of citizens think the issue is, "How much should the government spend on this project?" as opposed to, "Should the government be involved in this project at all?", the job of education HALT must do is still enormous.

We experienced the same "jump on the bandwagon" effect that Howard Jarvis did after Proposition 13. The mayor and aldermen all said they thought it was wonderful that the people had a chance to express their opinions in the plebiscite, implying they had given us this chance. This tendency of politicians to blow with the wind can and should be used to our advantage. After all, we are trying to get them to change their policies on taxation: we don't care why at the moment.

One problem we had with having chosen such a big issue was that the media often gave the impression that HALT was formed expressly to oppose the civic centre. Our opposition to high taxes and our goal to put a "halter" on government spending didn't come out often enough. When it did come out, we were attacked as a bunch of "right-wing hippies" and "political opportunists."

Just recently, however, both the Herald and the Albertan interviewed Wayne extensively on HALT's goals, plans and philosophy. The interviews haven't run as of this writing (December 14), but the fact that they were interested seems to show that this campaign has benefitted us by allowing us to get our views before a wide audience.

We have won Round One, but as one local newspaper put it, "The Civic Centre is dead, long live the Civic Centre." Council has not given up its dream of building itself a monument. It may be an issue in the next election (a year from now), or the

proponents may come up with an alternative plan. They proposed 1980 municipal budget released last week still includes appropriations for the civic centre; however, it was undoubtedly prepared before the vote.

One thing our success does show is that the way to get members is to oppose specific spending projects or taxes, rather than talking in generalities about high taxes. Our first public meeting got us six new members, for a total of 45, but during the petition drive, our membership almost doubled. The new people had all worked with us in gathering signatures; they're people who have always wanted to do something, but couldn't find an outlet for their frustration with government spending. Everyone knows taxes are too high, but only when people can see someone willing to do something concrete will they join HALT in large numbers.

We have already put the campaign behind us and are girding up to fight a proposed property mill rate increase of 9.5%. Coupled with increased assessed valuations to go into effect this spring, the total tax will go up by about 20%. School taxes are to increase 24.9% as well. As soon as we have studied the two-volume proposed budget, we plan to speak out against specific expenditures and let it be known that we oppose any increase in the mill rate. For us, it's vital now to establish our credibility by doing what our name says - limiting taxes.

*Sorry, Vicki, but "lucky" is a word that is inapplicable to your efforts. Lucky means "occurring by chance", and every event described in this article was the result of conscious action on the parts of the people involved. Let's leave lucky to the patrons of Las Vegas. We will continue to rely on sound planning and diligent implementation for our success.

- Editor

Economic Sophisms

EVER SINCE the advent of representative government placed the ultimate power to direct the administration of public affairs in the hands of the people, the primary instrument by which the few have managed to plunder the many has been the sophistry that persuades the victims that they are being robbed for their own benefit. The public has been despoiled of a great part of its wealth and has been induced to give up more and more of its freedom of choice because it is unable to detect the error in the delusive sophisms by which protectionist demagogues, national socialists and proponents of government planning exploit its gullibility and its ignorance of economics.

WITH APPRECIATION

Special thanks to Albert Vanderheide of the Windmill Herald and to Peter Kersbergen of Rosewood Printers for contributing typesetting and printing services in the last two editions of The Halter.

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	-	Bill Buckler
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HALT MOVES EAST

by Nick Moldovanyi

During the four week period from November 15 to December 14, 1979, I accompanied HALT President, Mike Little on an extensive tour of central Canada designed to stimulate interest in HALT and to encourage its growth. Travelling throughout Ontario, we gained numerous allies in the public and media.

MEDIA COVERAGE: Advance press kits and notice of Mike's arrival were delivered to all major media services and followed up with phone calls to arrange for interviews. This proved extremely successful and yielded 30 items about HALT, including 10 news stories, 5 radio phone-in programs and 15 feature interviews. A sign of HALT'S growing credibility is the fact that many of the major programs were anxious to arrange interviews. These were highlighted by Mike's appearance on Canada AM, Toronto Tonight, the John Gilbert Show, the Betty Kennedy Show, Tom Cherrington's Hot Line Program, and by a feature news clip carried throughout southern Ontario by C.B.C. T.V. affiliates. Coverage was generally very favourable, with many requests that HALT make return appearances to report on its growth.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: For November 23, Hanno Pflueger had organized a public meeting for the Toronto area. Although we did not get notice of the meeting to the press until the day of the event, 25 taxpayers arrived to hear Mike Little discuss some of the problems that plague our country. He cited as a special concern the lobbying groups that prey on politicians whose fear of losing elections make them grant favours with abandon. Mike also stressed the importance of defending our property rights, and how taxation is an obvious violation of those rights. I then addressed the group on the nature of HALT: what it is, how it works and how our success has been demonstrated in Calgary. After the speeches people stayed to discuss our ideas further and new members, contributors and local organizers were signed up.

Our next stop saw Mike and I travel to Temiscaming, Quebec, (on the Ontario border) for a meeting which Andre Ferlatte had planned well in advance. Although the area has a population of only 2,000 HALT drew 24 people, including the town Mayor, to a lively discussion of alternatives to government giveaway programs. If the interest and excitement of that gathering is any indication, then northern Quebec and Ontario will be fertile grounds for tax reform.

On December 4th HALT arrived in Peterborough, Ontario, where we drew a good crowd and received extensive media coverage of our meeting. Preparations had been made by Lori Powers with help from John and Sally Hayes (of Operation HUMBUG fame). Once again new members, contacts and supporters resulted from a well organized meeting.

The final stop of the Ontario trip was in London, where a general meeting was preceded by two days of media interviews and coverage. On December 13, while the government was being defeated in Ottawa, thirty-five London residents, as well as one newspaper, one radio, and two local television reporters, crowded into Y.M.C.A. meeting room to hear about the HALT movement. Various people volunteered to work with local organizer Seig Pedde.

We left Ontario on December 14, having gained both widespread exposure to the goals and objects of HALT and a framework of people to carry our message to reluctant taxpayers throughout central Canada.

Special thanks to Paul Miniato, Ontario coordinator, for his advance work in making the trip a success. Thanks also to Hanno Pflueger and Earl Martel, who will be replacing Paul as

Ontario contacts, since Paul's work will be taking him to the west coast in the new year.

NEWS BRIEFS

HALT VICTORIA: On December 10th our Victoria chapter hosted a public meeting attended by about 45 people. President Don Braden chaired the meeting. Brief reports were given by treasurer Denis Seguin and by Ron Douglas who had prepared HALT literature with a Victoria address and phone number. Director Rick Bolstler was the featured speaker, giving a talk titled "You Can Fight City Hall". In it he highlighted methods of fighting back, reasons why we don't, and how HALT will be the necessary alternative to costly government. He supported his position with the Calgary victory.

The meeting brought out about 15 interested newcomers, many of whom joined HALT that night. Monthly meetings will become a part of Victoria's plans to change their tax regulation.

* * *

MORE FROM VICTORIA: On January 5th and 7th, Director Richard Bolstler and HALT Victoria president Don Braden were guests on Gerry Connor's Cable 10 TV Show "Money Talk". Taped just before Christmas, the half hour show covered the reasons for the formation of HALT, -present taxation patterns, HALT objectives and Victoria action. Host Connor became very involved in the taping and suggested a follow-up hot line show aired for the purpose of attracting new members.

The show is yet another indication of the vast reservoir of untapped support for HALT that exists. It can be discovered by merely talking about HALT and passing some literature on to a friend or likely supporter. Don Braden is doing it all the time. Are you?

* * *

HALT LOCAL CHAPTERS: Begun by our Organizer's Meeting on November 13th at the Rembrandt Hotel, work has been going on to set up local chapters in Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities. The result so far:

The first organizational meeting of HALT RICHMOND took place on November 22nd at the home of Mr. and Mrs. T.L. Jones. Chaired by Lance Bracken, our head office contact, the meeting was attended by eleven people, representing one third of the total Richmond membership of 33. With so many activists to draw from, the selection of officers and the filling out of the "50" sheets was quickly accomplished. The officers are now in the process of gathering the materials required in the chapter checklist and are looking for issues in which they can get involved. A second meeting is scheduled for the second week in January. We look forward to an active and efficient Richmond chapter.

Hats off to Dietram Zell, who divided the entire Vancouver membership (250 people) into 50's and held the first meeting of HALT VANCOUVER at his home. At the meeting half bucks were assigned to head up the five 50's and future projects were discussed. The half bucks are now in the process of phoning the members of their "50" to fill the remaining officer positions.

The first step towards forming the chapter for COQUITLAM, PORT COQUITLAM, and PORT MOODY was taken when Bill Buckler and Rick Bolstler of head office had a meeting with Vic and Nora Main at their home in Port Moody. The "50" chart for the area was filled and Vic and Nora volunteered to head up the "50" and to act as contacts with head office. Vic is now visiting HALT members in the area who have expressed interest in getting active, for the purpose of recruiting the remaining officers for the chapter.

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WHITHER PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by Robert W. Poole, Jr.

Sheila Johnson has just five minutes before she has to catch her bus. Her shopping done, she dashes from the drugstore to the adjacent outlet and heads straight for the science fiction rack. Selecting three new paperbacks, she sprints for the checkout counter, thrusting her plastic card at the attendant. In moments she is checked out and off to the bus stop.

This little episode is repeated hundreds of times a day in the Jacksonville, Maryland shopping mall. But it takes place not in a bookstore but in a "mini-library" opened three years ago by the Baltimore County library system. The mini is one of three such new branches featuring mostly popular paperbacks in a bookstore-like setting.

And the mini-libraries are just one of the innovations introduced by maverick library director Charles Robinson. Fed up with hallowed library traditions, he sees a new role for public libraries as "demand-oriented public bookstores." "We aren't preserving knowledge for the ages," he told Publishers Weekly recently. "That function is supported by the public through state universities. Why should we duplicate their effort?"

So saying, Robinson has set out to revolutionize the Baltimore County system. He has eliminated the time-consuming task of book selection from the 18 branch libraries, centralizing it in a three-person headquarters staff. Large branches as well as minis go in heavily for best-sellers and other popular fare. The acid test is circulation, as monitored by computer: if a book doesn't circulate, out it goes.

Always looking for ways to cut costs, Robinson has shifted toward paperbacks, so that despite recent budget cuts, the system actually purchased more volumes in 1978 than 1977. To sell the mini-library concept to county officials, he agreed to staff them with volunteers. And to enable less-skilled persons to volunteer, Robinson arranged to have the minis' information and reference service provided over the phone from one of the main branches.

Ideas like these-hard-headed, cost-cutting, businesslike-are a breath of fresh air in the stagnant halls of our nation's public libraries. More than that, they could spell the difference between life and death for them in this time of growing tax revolt. Nationwide, local governments pay 82% of the costs of public libraries out of property taxes-the same property taxes being slashed by the tax revolt and stretched thin to pay for services like police and fire protection. Thus, it's essential that libraries be put on a businesslike basis.

One important way to do this is to charge for various library services, letting specific users pay some of the costs, rather than hitting up the taxpayers for all of them. In many libraries fees are already being charged for reserving books,

interlibrary loans, and checking out best-sellers. A survey by the Public Library Association found that 27% of the 553 libraries lending out films charge for this service. And 20% of the 85 libraries offering computerized reference services charge for them. Twelve even charge for ordinary reference service.

One of the most accomplished at providing fee services is the Minneapolis Library. It prepares an index of the local newspapers for sale to local and national subscribers. Use of its computer data bank is without charge only for the first eight minutes; after that the user pays. The library's expert staff does in-depth research for corporate clients at \$25 an hour, earning \$35,000 that way last year.

Traditional librarians oppose user fees as conflicting with the old idea of "free public libraries," but others see fees as the wave of the future. One who does is Marilyn Killebrew Gell, director of the White House Conference on Library Information Service. "Judicious use of public pricing for selected library services is an immediate short-term solution available to library administrators who are faced with major budgetary problems," she wrote recently in Library Journal. "It is unrealistic to expect that library budgets will miraculously explode into anything approaching adequacy in terms librarians envision in the near future."

But fees are not the only alternate revenue source. The New York Public Library, third-busiest in the country, gets only \$2.5 million of its 20 million a year budget from local taxpayers. A good share of the remaining 80% comes from private bequests and donations from the public. Many cities have "friends of the library" groups, people who believe in libraries as a community resource and help them to raise funds. It is quite appropriate for such groups to donate their own time and money and seek to persuade others of the merits of "free public libraries"; that's a far cry from seeking the money of unwilling citizens in the form of taxes.

Still another source of revenue is book selling. While most libraries sell off books they no longer want, a few are beginning to sell new books, too. The San Francisco Public Library is currently taking orders for California Water Atlas, a \$37.50 volume of relatively limited appeal. Rather than seek space in a bookstore, the publisher is marketing the book in the library's lobby. Library personnel take orders, which the publisher fulfills, giving 25% commission to the library. Publisher William Kaufman sees libraries as providing "a multitude of new book outlets" in the years ahead.

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Meetings on the NORTH SHORE and in BURNABY are scheduled for January.

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HALT SASKATOON: HALT's youngest chapter is in the process of being established in Saskatoon, under the enthusiastic guidance of Halter Bernard Janzen. Bernard predicts that the steadily increasing interference by the Saskatchewan government, and the corresponding increase in taxes, have produced a polarization of the people into interventionists and free enterprisers, thus providing a good market for HALT activity. We wish HALT Saskatoon every success as it begins to organize.

* * *

MYERS' MAIL-OUT: Mr. C. V. Myers' book UNBRIDLED BUREAUCRACY IN CANADA (see the November 1979 HALTER) has been sent to every Federal M.P. and to all members of the Alberta Legislature (Alberta being the Province where Mr. Myers' tax case was tried). Mr Myers provided the books (some 320 in all) at his own expense and they were mailed out from HALT Head Office accompanied by a covering letter written by Vice President Walter Boytinch, on November 17th. In the month since then we have received eight replies, all from Federal M.P.s, and do not expect any more since the Government has been defeated and everyone on Parliament hill is preoccupied with scrambling for re-election.

Mr. Myers' case is graphic demonstration of the arrogance and dictatorial power possessed by Revenue Canada. There seems to be very little if any intention on the part of our elected representatives to curb this power. Remember this the next time you hear a candidate talk about lowering taxes and cutting Government spending, as you are sure to do in the coming weeks.

* * *

BOARD OF TRADE: On Thursday, December 6th, HALT speaker Bill Buckler addressed a luncheon meeting of the Commerce and Industry committee of the Vancouver Board of Trade. Before his turn came to speak, he had the misfortune of having to sit through a lengthy presentation advocating the banning of Sunday shopping given by Joan Wallace, General Manager of the Retail Merchants Association of Canada. He had the further misfortune of listening to the members of the Board of Trade give serious credence to this impediment to the free market, during an extensive question and answer period. The spectacle of a prestigious body calling itself a Board of Trade discussing a measure whose sole purpose is the stifling of trade is not a pleasant one.

* * *

QUEBEC CONVENTION: On December 29, 1979, HALT Representative, Marco den Ouden, addressed a convention of the Libertarian Party of Quebec at the Holiday Inn Richelieu in Montreal. In his talk he questioned the old cliches that "nothing is certain but death and taxes" and that "you can't fight city hall". All the great movements towards liberty in our history have been tax revolts, he noted, in particular the revolt of the barons that resulted in the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 and the American Revolution.

Den Ouden then went on to describe a series of experiments conducted in the early sixties by psychologist Stanley Milgram. Milgram devised a dramatic experiment that showed that a great number of people are easily persuaded to inflict pain on fellow human beings at the behest of a respected authority

figure. While these subjects may have questioned the procedures and even protested vigorously, nevertheless, they followed orders. Den Ouden compared this to the great many people who complain about high taxes and government interference in their lives, but when it comes down to the crunch, nevertheless go along with the system. The time has come, he said, for the grumblers to stop grumbling and to take constructive action by joining and getting actively involved with groups such as HALT.

The speech was well received and generated some new interest in the tax revolution.

* * *

FREE TO CHOOSE: Watch for what should prove to be a remarkable upcoming TV series hosted by Nobel Laureate free-market economist Milton Friedman. Built around the premise that "Big government is the problem - it's not the solution", the show is a 10-part series on the merits of free enterprise. It is designed to make economics palatable and interesting to the average viewer, and those who have seen Friedman in action (perhaps some of you caught him as a guest on the Phil Donahue show in early December, where his easy charm and ability to reduce complex economic theory to practical everyday language warmed an initially skeptical audience) will predict that palatable and interesting is exactly what the series will be.

The hour long shows are broken up into two parts. In the first half hour Friedman ad libs a lecture on location, shot in places such as India, Hong Kong and New York where free enterprise either thrives or is almost submerged in government regulation. In the second part of each show, Friedman exchanges views with someone from the opposite camp on such topics as trade, inflation, education and welfare.

Called "FREE TO CHOOSE", the program begins January 11, 1980. It is being carried on most PBS stations in the United States, and also on some Canadian stations. Watch your TV Guide for details.

For additional information on the program, write:

FREE TO CHOOSE
8425 Peach Street,
Erie, PA 16509

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Indeed, 25 to 30 years from now the public library as we know it may well have become obsolete. It will have been displaced by a multitude of private enterprises-stores renting videodisks and videocassettes, specialized and general-purpose information-retrieval services, and the descendants of today's bookstore chains. What about the "great storehouses of knowledge"? Some will remain, at our colleges and universities, but not as municipal functions. For the poor there will probably be charity reading rooms stocked with paperbacks, much like Baltimore County's mini-libraries.

By abandoning the idea of the public library as everything to everybody, we will achieve two benefits: a great increase in diversity and choice in information services, and relief for local taxpayers from yet another burden.

Robert W. Poole, Jr. is chairman of the Local Government Center, a nonprofit research organization specializing in cost-cutting ideas for local government.

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BOOKS

TAX FACTS: THE CANADIAN CONSUMER TAX INDEX AND YOU by **The Fraser Institute**

This is an update of HOW MUCH TAX DO YOU REALLY PAY (see THE HALTER, May 1979) which enables you to calculate your total tax bill, including all the hidden (indirect) taxes. Statistics Canada's figures on taxes as a percentage of income (1976 - 18%) do not include these indirect taxes which, in the case of some Canadians, constitute 60% of their total tax bill.

THE POLITICS OF OBEDIENCE by Etienne de la Boetie "The fundamental political question is why do people obey a government? The answer is that they tend to enslave themselves, to let themselves be governed by tyrants. Freedom from servitude comes not from violent action, but from the refusal to serve. Tyrants fall when the people withdraw their support." (from the introduction to part 1) Written in 1550, this book represents one of the first expositions of the idea of civil disobedience, a modern example of which was the recent NO vote on the Calgary Civic Center. With an introduction by the noted free market economist, Murray N. Rothbard.

HUMAN ACTION by Ludwig von Mises

Written by the dean of the free market, Austrian school, this is the most comprehensive "treatise on economics" available today. Starting from the axiom that human action is purposeful behaviour designed to alleviate uneasiness, Mises builds an unassailable argument for the free market. The free enterpriser's Bible

"This is the most important book on economics ever written. The person who has read and understood HUMAN ACTION commands the ammunition to blow his intellectual opponents away" Mike Little

A companion volume: **MISES MADE EASIER** by Percy L. Greaves which greatly enhances one's understanding and enjoyment of **HUMAN ACTION** is also available.

- TAX FACTS** - The Fraser Institute **\$ 3.95**
- THE POLITICS OF OBEDIENCE** - Etienne de la Boetie **\$ 2.95**
- UNBRIDLED BUREAUCRACY IN CANADA** C.V.Myers..... **\$ 2.50**
- HUMAN ACTION** hb. - Ludwig von Mises **\$30.00**
- MISES MADE EASIER** hb. - Percy Greaves **\$12.00**
- THE ROAD TO SERFDOM** - Friedrich A. Hayek **\$ 4.75**
- ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON** hb - Henry Hazlitt..... **\$12.00**
- MAN vs THE WELFARE STATE** hb. Henry Hazlitt **\$5.00**
- A TIME FOR TRUTH** - William Simon **\$ 2.75**
- THE LAW** - Frederic Bastiat **\$ 1.25**
- A LEGACY OF SPENDING** - Ed Murphy **\$ 3.00**

Please enclose \$0.75 to cover postage and handling.

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Please send me your complete book list (over 100 titles). I enclose \$0.50

CALGARY'S HIDDEN ALLY

by **Richard Bolstler**

In reading between the lines of the publicity over the Calgary Civic Centre it becomes obvious that HALT's hidden asset was the incredible incompetence of its opposition. With 38% of the voters turning out, the nays won by a slim 1.5% or 1840 votes out of 121,000 cast. Yet on the eve of the plebiscite, Mayor Alger was predicting a 2 to 1 victory for the Civic Centre. Therein lies the first clue: a mayor and his council totally out of touch with their electorate.

In his television debate with president Kollinger, Count Alger candidly exposed his true motivation for building the centre: to save himself from future embarrassment such as he experienced when he had to entertain Prince Philip at the shoddy old city hall. Calgarians preferred to save themselves some money, prompting Alger to label them as "negative, backward, introverted and myopic". Forgetting that his divine right to rule ends next November, Alger pounded the wooden stake into his political career as he pouted over his defeat.

But Alger was not alone in alienating the taxpayers. His ally in the campaign was a hastily thrown together group of "businessmen" who imaginatively called themselves "GO Calgary". The tactics used by "GO Calgary" explains why these "businessmen" were so eager to see the Civic Centre built: it is doubtful that they could survive in the free market. "GO" produced brochures claiming the centre would cost only \$8 per year per taxpayer, then withdrew the literature as "misleading", since the real cost was \$38. Thousands of buttons and posters went undistributed as no organization existed to do the distributing.

Or how about the missing taxi drivers? "GO" held a press conference to publicize a scheme to have cab drivers distribute Civic Centre literature. The press showed up but no cabbies did. And of course there was the "dirty trick". A "GO" television crew filmed a derelict rooting around in a garbage can behind one of the restaurants being expropriated for the Centre. This would show how this eyesore and pest hole was a blot on the city's image. Trouble was, the derelict was really a paid actor and the film was to be used as "simulated truth" (sic) in a \$45,000 advertising campaign.

Alger and his gang should have heeded the old maxim, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt." HALT gave the citizens of Calgary a chance to save \$250,000,000, and the opposition repeatedly pressed its self-destruct button with its poorly planned campaign.

There is a lesson from Calgary for all HALT chapters. Yes, you can fight city hall and win, but do not rely on the incompetence of your opposition as your means to victory. Politicians are adaptable and will take HALT seriously from now on. Future victories will come about only because we are better organized, better prepared, and better funded than they are. HALT must be professional in its approach to fighting for a just tax system. If we are not, then Calgary will be not only our first victory, but our last.

the halter

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