

In any case, this particular doctor decided it was better to treat the hospital like a health post. The paramedical workers screen the patients, referring to him only those who need it. This means that instead of each patient seeing the doctor for only a minute or two, the patient now sees whoever treats them — doctor or paramedical worker — for a longer period of time. The patient can fully explain what is wrong, which leads to a better diagnosis. There is time for a bit of health education and to discuss social factors — poor sanitation, nutrition, or working conditions, for example. And, most important, there is time to make sure the patient actually understands the treatment and his or her role in it.

Furthermore, the doctor now has time to make weekly visits to the health post, where the same system operates. Most patients he can treat on the spot. But each time, he brings a few back to the hospital for tests or treatment. He refers some to the regional hospital or even to the Central Hospital in Maputo for specialist care. Thus, more people in the district are receiving appropriate care, and the doctor has a more satisfying, less tiring job.

Coming back to England, I found the same problem. Doctors are so busy seeing minor ailments that they have no time to do anything but pass out tranquillisers or antibiotics. No wonder the medic, after a day on his own mini-production line, doesn't feel like going out to see people at night. Yet any experienced nurse could treat most of the people who come into a GP's surgery — and would probably do a better job because the nurse could take time to talk with the person.

The problem seems to be our doctor-centred health system, in which both patients and health workers expect the doctor to look at the patient and to take action, no matter how brief the glance. We have already created health centres and group practices. Why not expand the role of health workers within these organisations, using the skills of paramedics that exist already, and training new paramedical workers to fill the gaps? Indeed, we might actually be able to provide a few of the ancillary and preventive services not now available which would reduce illness, and thus demands on GP and hospital time.

There is no reason to expect the GP to work more than 40 hours a week. But rather than hire private deputising services to fill the gap at night, why not rearrange what happens during the day so that the doctor, or the appropriate paramedical worker, actually has the time and energy to come out at night when needed. □

WASHINGTON VIEW

Carter on the rocks

Dan Greenberg



The dominant political fact in this capital is the rapid unravelling of the Carter presidency.

Through his two and a half years in office, Mr Carter has been through a lot of ups and downs, but the last up — his successful Middle East shuttle diplomacy — is virtually forgotten now in the near-hysteria that has arisen over the persistence of inflation and this summer's looming gasoline crunch. Both are tough problems

that were well rooted in American economics and politics long before Mr Carter became President. But it's almost universally believed in this capital — even by some of Mr Carter's admirers — that he simply doesn't know how to run the US government, that he has had an ample learning period to make up for his lack of pre-presidential Washington experience, and that he just hasn't caught on.

The kindest things now being said about the President are that his values and intentions are good, he is sincere and honest, extremely intelligent, and so forth. But — and inevitably there's a but when the subject comes up — Washington works in its own peculiar way, and he has failed to learn those ways.

The energy problem may be politically intractable, given this country's ravenous thirst for gasoline and its unwillingness to conserve. But granting that, it must be observed that Mr Carter has

made the worst of a difficult situation. His Energy Secretary, James Schlesinger, is cast in a role that makes him the bearer of bad news. Nonetheless, it is not only the message but also the manners of the messenger that have created enormous distrust between the Congress and the Department of Energy. Schlesinger defenders often take pride in asserting that the Secretary does not suffer fools gladly. But his incapacity in this regard ill suits him to deal with the US Congress, where he is generally loathed. On a flock of major energy issues, the Congress, or the democratic majority acting in caucus, has recently treated the President with contempt, denying him standby authority to ration gasoline, and also signalling strong opposition to the decontrol of oil prices.

Meanwhile, poll after poll shows Senator Kennedy to be overwhelmingly more popular than Mr Carter, and, as the primary season approaches, it is plain that — regardless of the Senator's repeated disavowals of 1980 presidential aspirations — his many fervent supporters around the country are going to be beating the Kennedy drums. On top of all this, Mr Carter is confronted by the criminal indictments recently returned against Bert Lance, the former budget director, who the President often described as his best friend. And then too, a bright young speechwriter who served in the White House has gone off and written several magazine articles that have many kind things to say about Mr Carter, but also many unkind things; the latter tend to get the most press notice, particularly the claim that Mr Carter's staff is mediocre or worse.

The bureaucracy over which the White House presides is vast and stable, and there is a lot of momentum to the innumerable programmes that are run by the US government, so little or nothing is going to fall apart in this period of malaise — which, incidentally, is far from being as awful as the last year or so of the Nixon administration. But, for one reason or another, there is a growing drain of high-level government appointees who want to return to academe or business. At this late stage of the Carter administration, it is difficult to obtain highly qualified replacements. Things go on, but without much spirit and, sometimes it seems, in a sort of bureaucratic robot-like fashion.

The Middle East provided the President with an opportunity to look like a miracle worker, but inflation and energy offer no such opportunity. The summer gasoline pinch is being eased by risking the supply of heating oil for next winter; one way or another, the public will find reason to be outraged and to doubt the competence of its government. The Lance trial will take place this fall; it is not expected to accrue benefits to Jimmy Carter, the financing of whose presidential campaign is itself the object of official investigations. □

ZINJANTHROPUS

Taking the rhino by the horns

Andrew Hill

Things look a bit better for the African rhinoceros, if only because people have started to realise how bad things look. In Kenya this concern culminated recently in a decree issued by President Moi according the animal special protection. There used to be a lot of rhinos around. European explorers at the end of the 19th century talk of seeing ten a day on their walks through the Kenya countryside. In 1902 Blayney Percival recorded 150 before he lost count, in the course of a stroll from Nairobi to Kilimanjaro, some 200 km to the south, and he saw as many on his way back by a different route. Some of these great numbers were depleted by such sportsmen as Captain Willoughby, who in 1887 shot 43 of the beasts in a couple of weeks, and Count Teleki, who bagged 99 during his expedition to Lake Turkana. But such sport as this is now under control, and hunting of all animals in Kenya has been completely banned for the last two years. Now the main trouble is commercial poaching.

By the early 1960s Noel Simon — once deputy director of Kenya's Parks — was forced to write that the decline of rhinos was more marked than any other species except lions. Even so it is thought that only ten years ago there were still between 16 000 and 20 000 of the black rhinoceros — *Diceros bicornis* — in Kenya: now the situation is so serious that there could be none next year. Information collected by

Forum

continued

Kes Hillman, who is chairman of the African rhino group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources/Survival Service Commission, and by the Kenya Rhino Action Group, has shown that there are less than 1500 of the animals now in the country. In 1969 there were at least 6000, possibly 9000, in the Tsavo area alone. No so long ago there was a spectacular population in Amboseli National Park of about 60 rhinos with exceptionally long horns. The once famous, and now perhaps forgotten, Gertie was one of them. But now there are ten. Meru National Park has probably lost 90 per cent of its rhinos in the past five years.

These are very depressing figures, as are the complementary ones on trade compiled by Esmond Bradley Martin, which explains where all these animals are going. The motive for poaching is all too clear, as rhino horn is worth wholesale from \$500 to \$750 a kilogram. People in the East find a use for it. Now we can probably all agree that in some sense at least the rhino is a magical creature, but unfortunately this picturesque notion is often taken all too literally. Since before 400BC rhinoceros horn has been thought to be just the thing for detecting poisons, and it has numerous other applications in supposedly curing illnesses of all kinds. More significantly there is the Chinese belief that it is the perfect aphrodisiac, a belief which, as palaeontologist Dick Hooijer coyly wrote, makes rhino horn much harder to come by. This ensures a ready market amongst the impotent rich. Of course all these applications have long been shown to be complete nonsense.

North Yemen accounts for most of the Kenyan trade, and there it is made into dagger handles. Dr Bradley Martin shows that during the year 1975/76, 8310 kg of rhino horn was imported into North Yemen. He points out that this represents over 2000 rhinoceros individuals a year; more than their total present numbers in the whole of Kenya. It seems especially ridiculous that such a splendid beast should be doomed simply for a few grams of keratin sitting on its nose, which is used in unnecessary and totally useless ways.

Other countries and other rhinos are affected by the same problems. It is suggested that there are about 70 per cent fewer rhinos in Ngorongoro, Tanzania, than in 1973, and other areas of the country have lost between 80 and 85 per cent. In Southern Africa the white rhino — *Ceratotherium simum* — was saved from extinction by dramatic conservation efforts at Umfolozi, but the northern race is in a delicate position, with only about 1000 left in isolated relict populations. The situation of the three Asiatic species is even worse, with some 55 of the Javan rhino, less than 300 of the Sumatran, and even the Indian species is down to about 1200.

It is very gratifying that President Moi has taken the lead in alerting attention to the rhino's precarious status. He asked that a conservation plan be put together immediately, and suggested it might incorporate more intensive anti-poaching measures, translocation, and the establishment of breeding herds. He also asked for support from other governments and international agencies, particularly in eliminating the trade in horn. Preventing poaching over the vast areas involved is no easy task, and it may prove impossible unless demand can be reduced rapidly. Hong Kong, previously a major market, has already banned imports.

The Kenya National Parks has the rhinoceros as its emblem. If this interest and conservation effort can be maintained it looks much less likely that they will suffer the embarrassment of being symbolised by an extinct beast. □

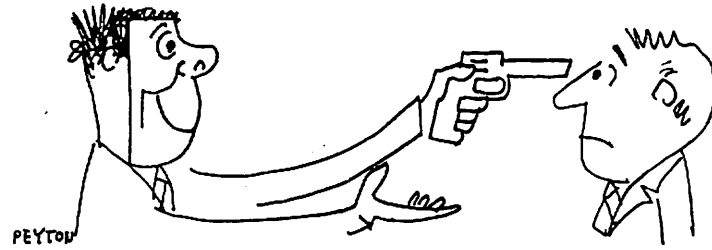
MOOSE JAW

Taxing times

Ronald Jeffels

Some say he is nothing more than an imagined creature born in a remote ancestral dream: man's first terror given flesh, blood, and bone. Half-god, half-demon, he emerges from the amber smoke of old dying fires, up from the steaming marshes, out of the primordial ooze. But I say he exists, exists in reality.

Oral legend, folklore, ancient chronicles, classical mythologies all attest to his real and universal presence. But don't take my word for it. Look him up in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. The Demon-God prowls out of a black and brooding North, down the long corridors of Time, seeking tributes and sacrifices for his insatiable appetites: the first-born sons of warrior kings; nubile young women of the tribe;



ornaments of purest gold; the rich, autumnal bounty of cornfield, vineyard, and pasture. He has many faces and many names — Inca, Norse, Bolivian, Inuit, Egyptian, Roman. Here in Canada he looks very much like a politician, and we call him the Minister of National Revenue.

The Minister of National Revenue sends his personal compliments and first call for tribute just as Canadians are about to buy Christmas. Now, we don't make final tax settlements for the previous year until 30 April of the next. But round about 15 December a postman drops a puffy-cheeked envelope through the mail slot of six million celebrants. We have no recognisable, stereotyped figure representing celebrants Canada: no Uncle Sam with sharpened index calling youth to Old Glory; no chuckling, big-bellied John Bull; no sturdy Marianne in Frisian bonnet at the barricades. But if we did, our national allegorical representative would suffer heart flutter, a draining of the blood from the vital organs. As a nation, collectively, we undergo momentary cardiac arrest. We are saved only by the digitalis of radio and television ads soothing us into economic amnesia through even greater profligacies during the Very Special Season.

My envelope holds rich presents from the minister: two copies of a densely-packed, four-page tax return for recording general lies in 85 simple steps, supplemented by eight sheets called schedules for noting specific lies; a grey-and-purple return envelope destined ultimately for the Data Processing Centre in Ottawa; and a book — slightly shorter than *War and Peace* — which is my friendly government's guide to filling in my *mea culpa* forms.

I treasure that book, especially its illustrated cover. Year after following year I add it to my library holdings. It has a place of honour next to Pope, Swift, Rabelais, Voltaire, Twain, Leacock, and other masters of bright satire and dark humour. If I survive to the age of statutory senility, I plan to have the lot bound in vellum, with just a threat of gold leaf on the edges to add distinction. I want to will them to my grandson instead of the hard cash he might reasonably expect to receive from the estate.

Two or three years ago there was a cover showing a deliriously happy, middle of the road, two and a quarter children, monolingual, slant-six-Ford-in-the-garage, average income Canadian. He is seated at the family table, under a soft pool of yellow light, Paper Mate armed, filling out his return. He is discharging his duties and obligations as a citizen, and he is content. Bent over him, wisely devoted and plumply cooperative, is his equally contented wife. She is in the act of placing a cup of thin, grey fluid in front of him. Brazilian coffee came in that year at just over five dollars a pound. Her hand rests gently and reassuringly on his shoulder. Her face bears the tender knowing smile of a woman about to be canonised. Think of a Canadian Joan of Arc attending the Dauphin and you have the picture. The family is strong in Canada: the Prime Minister says so. We work, in nuclear knots, for the greater national good. We know our taxes are spent with measured wisdom and lean efficiency; and we're sorry for spendthrift nations like Lichtenstein, Bulgaria and Britain.

This year's cover is even more persuasive and inspiring. A long column of technicoloured Canadians, lemming-like, march towards me, joyously bent on paying their fair share for refurbishing Second World War Corvettes or sponsoring fact-finding missions to rural China for dedicated ministers of agriculture. The heart leaps like a pheasant flushed from October grass at this display of unselfish patriotism; and I cannot help but share their infectious pride. It's the same spirit that drove ribbons of steel through our dark mountain passes, splashed the Prairies with the endless gold of wheat for the world's belly, and trapped beaver for the top hats of 19th century British statesmen.

The ordinary Canadian trained in writing glosses on mediaeval Latin texts, annotating the Dead Sea scrolls, or drawing time-tables for Air Canada's international flights encounters little difficulty in