

The Raging Grannies Sing for Medicare

On April 15, 2000, an unprecedented 3,000 people rallied in Calgary in support of medicare and in opposition to the Tories' Bill 11, widely perceived as a threat to the Canadian health care system. Given the stereotypical right-wing dominance of this city's life, such numbers suggest that Calgarians are not entirely comfortable with the new measure (the number in attendance was doubled the following day in Edmonton, where the petroleum and ranching industries have less presence although the government is seated there). Of course, the Raging

Grannies were at both rallies. Here are a group of their songs for the new crisis. (I was given song sheets by Betty M., who gave me her name and address, but wrote hurriedly in the excitement, so I was unable to decipher her last name. She's one of the major Edmonton songwriters and deserves credit for several of these items. An email has been sent to the Grannies, and if response does not come in before we go to press, credit will be given in a later issue.) —GWL

Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump

(tune: Adbul the Bulbul Amir)

The privatization guys think that we're dumb
A bit like those cattle with humps
But we don't fool easy, not like it was once
At Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump.

They're selling our hospitals, airlines and parks
Our railways, our highways, our dumps
They' sell their own mothers
Pretending it was the only way out of the slump.

Someone voted them in—but it sure wasn't us
We are not gullible chumps
And the next time they try to stampede us we'll say,
"Take a Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump!"

When I'm Sixty-Four

(tune: what else?)

When I get older, losing my health, a couple of years from now,
Will I still be counting on some medicare
Or a two-tier system, patient beware!

If I'm in need of emergency care, will they lock the door?
Will they still heed me, will they still treat me,
When I'm sixty-four?

Send them a postcard, drop them a line, stating point of view.
Indicate precisely what you mean to say,
Else you'll find you're wasting away.
Ask for an answer, not just a form—a citizen's just due.
Will they still heed me, will they still treat me,
When I'm eighty-two?

I could be clever, stock up on pills, vitamins galore,
Jog a mile or so, a hundred pushups, too,
Eat some bran and plenty tofu.

If I forget and distort the truth, and even tell some fibs,
Will they still heed me, will they still treat me,
If I break some ribs—Remember Ralphie?
If I break some ribs.*

We Live in Alberta, Mr. Klein

(tune: You're in the Army, Mr. Jones)

We live in Alberta, Mr. Klein,
We don't think everything is fine,
We have sent you postcards and letters galore,
Don't you get to see your mail any more?

If you do, why don't you pay us any heed,
Could it be that you refused to read?
If that is the case, we'll suspend belief
And present our protest now in the BIG BRIEF!!!

(At the final line, a large pair of men's briefs are held up, reading on one side, KEEP MEDICARE PUBLIC, and on the other, NO PRIVATE PARTS!!!!)

What We Want From Health Care

(tune: Don't Fence Me In)

We'll tell you what we want from Health Care,
If you'll lend an ear—UNIVERSALITY.
We want everything covered,
So we don't have to fear—COMPREHENSIVE CARE.
We need to have services fairly close to home,
ACCESSIBLE when needed without taking a loan,
Have our health care PORTABLE across the nation
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION!!

We don't want user fees, profit making,
Added costs by any other name....
We don't want two tiers of medicine,
We want all people treated just the same.

We want a system that's fair and reflects our caring,
We don't want bottom lines to reduce the sharing,
Care for the old and the young not sparing,
That's the Canadian way!!

It's the Canada Health Act—Right, Ralph?
It's the Canada Health Act—Right, Jane?
That's the Canadian way, yes,
That's the Canadian way!!!

*The aside in the last chorus of "Sixty-Four" refers to a hospital visit by the premier, who some months back apparently slipped in the shower while stone cold sober.