Over the past few years we have placed an increasingly heavy burden on the police, both in terms of how they must interact with the accused and their expectations regarding due process once charges are laid. I wonder if Mr. Justice John Sopinka has ever heard the term “FIDO” currently popular in at least one police force in Ontario. It stands for: “F-k it. Drive on.”

Honest, hard-working policemen and policewomen are incredibly frustrated in certain situations because their efforts to serve and protect the majority of law-abiding Canadian citizens are increasingly undermined by an out-of-touch judiciary. Understandably, there needs to be a balance between how the police deal with the accused and the expectations of the accused; however, in Canada today, the balance is weighted far too heavily in favour of the presumptive.

Dale Armstrong, Alliston, Ont.

Hockey frills

I must be one of the few males in this country who doesn’t care about hockey. So I can only applaud when various governments find themselves unwilling or unable to ante up the cash to keep these sports welfare bums in Canadian cities.

It is interesting to note that supporters of government funding point to the fact that hockey is Canada’s national sport to justify wasting tax dollars on keeping these teams in Canada. This is merely a smoke-screen. Hockey as purveyed by the NHL has become a business and if a business loses money, it needs to change its market or change its product.

If hockey really is our national pastime, we should encourage more amateur and semi-professional teams. Local TV and radio should support them by broadcasting local games. If most Canadian cities can’t support major-league hockey teams, then it is not up to the taxpayers, faced with social-service cuts and joblessness as we are, to foot the bill for what is essentially an entertainment frill.

Jed Sutherland, Saskatoon

Employment equity

You claim employment equity is “wrong” because it sets legal quotas and effectively forces discrimination against white males (Abella’s Lament—editorial, May 24).

Actually, employment equity speaks of goals and timetables, not quotas. Indeed, the reason it is called employment equity is to distance it from affirmative action in the United States, which is perceived as quota-based. In employment equity, there is not an inflexible number of designated male, through employment equity, he is not at a disadvantage, but he is no longer at so much of an advantage.

Ravi Jain, Hamilton

One step ahead

I am deeply concerned about the recent controversy concerning the public’s access to non-prescription medications in food stores and pharmacies. The entire matter of a shift of products from food stores to the pharmacy has virtually nothing to do with British Columbia.

Although the federal government has the authority to evaluate and approve medications for consumption, the provinces retain the authority to decide where those medications can be sold. Up until recently, that has been a very confusing issue because the provinces have used different grading systems and categories for medications. A recent change, generally referred to as “schedule harmonization,” will finally create a unified system across the country.

Ironically, the changes proposed nationally are almost identical to those restrictions already in place in British Columbia. It is not likely that B.C. consumers will notice any difference, as we are already ahead of the rest of the country in ensuring public safety when taking medications.

Robert J. Kucheran, Executive Director British Columbia Pharmacy Association

Inadequate home care

I would like to support Dr. Michael Gordon’s observations as well as adding some additional information as to the impact of the restructuring of the health-care system on the elderly in all communities across Canada (letter—May 10).

I would suggest that everyone read the report Implications for Seniors of Hospital Restructuring in Metropolitan Toronto. It was prepared by the Older Women’s Network in Toronto, and it contains a series of case reports on the effect of early, premature discharge from hospitals of sick, elderly persons who are forced out of hospital (in order to minimize the length of stay in hospitals and to help promote a rapid turnover of patients).

These policies are having a disastrous effect on the elderly sick persons and the prospects are that the effects of the restructuring exercise are going to get even worse as more acute-care hospital beds are closed.

It is unfortunate that the health-care system is being restructured by health-care economists and health-policy analysts. If they were forced to take personal responsi-

remnant excludes all private land and as much leased land as possible, native people will be left with “mountaintops and swamp land.” As for taxation, one could justly argue the reverse of the B.C. proposal. Shouldn’t the federal and provincial governments be paying taxes to First Nations for using and exploiting their traditional lands?

No wonder our governments have difficulty proclaiming human rights abroad, when Canada’s indigenous people remain dispossessed and impoverished.

Gail Manning, Don Mills, Ont.

Trees in the city

Toronto City Council could not have thought up a surer way to destroy the urban forest than to pass a bylaw forbidding property owners to fell trees without the city’s permission (Columnist Breaks Law, Kills Tree—May 19).

With a stroke of a pen, council has turned big trees—once valuable assets—into liabilities. It has given property owners an incentive to immediately cut down trees under 30 centimetres in diameter, just in case they might someday want to build an addition, grow flowers or vegetables, or sell their home. It has given amateurs reason to poison larger trees, with untold environmental harm. Likewise, it has discouraged even avid tree lovers from planting maples, oaks or other large shade trees in favour of safer alternatives.

Property rights have long served to protect our forests, urban and rural alike. Private owners have demonstrated that, on the whole, they value their trees and don’t cut them down lightly. Depriving citizens of their property rights by turning their backyards into a city-run commons creates perverse incentives and can only lead to tragic consequences for those concerned about the quality of urban life.

Elizabeth Brubaker, Executive Director Environment Probe, Toronto

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