

## Hidden inflation . . .

Inflation is ordinarily measured by the climb in the consumer price index but there is a more subtle barometer that scarcely commands any attention from shoppers.

That is the shrinkage of packages and containers that isn't accompanied by a companion reduction in price.

Spokesmen for the federal government's consumer affairs department calculate that this "quiet" shrinkage has produced a further inflation of about 10% in less than five years.

For instance, a box of pancake mix in 1965 contained 13 1/2 ounces;

this year it contains 12 ounces. But the price hasn't gone down.

Other examples of this hidden inflation:

Pork and beans.....27 oz.	22 oz.
Chili.....16	15
Baking Powder.....8	7
Mustard.....6	5
Frosting mix.....13	14
Hand Lotion.....12 1/2	10 1/2
After shave lotion..... 5	4

These are just a few of what is probably many examples of hidden inflation which, of course, adds up to more squeeze on the consumer.

## Free Press Editorial Page

### Tested — found efficient . . .

Canada's post office has been the butt of some very unflattering comments during the past year but there is evidence now to suggest that Mr. Kierans and his Department have responded to the challenge of increased efficiency by producing it.

We can remember asking M.P. Rud Whiting in February what was going to happen in the post office after they survived a strike and an across-the-board raise in mail rates. He suggested that anything Eric Kierans was in charge of could not long remain inefficient.

"Give him six months," he said, "and you won't recognize the post office."

Although there are still complaints and cases which seem to be indicative of carelessness and disinterest in the post office, the mail does seem to be reaching destinations quicker now than ever before. These observations were borne out in a recent survey conducted by The Toronto Daily Star.

The Star tested the postal service from coast to coast to find out if mail was getting to its destination as fast as it should. The post office not only passed the test, it won an A+ for effort and at least one citation.

Eight Star correspondents from Whitehorse and Vancouver in the

west to St. John's Nfld. and Nathwaaksis, N.B., in the east sent 99 pre-addressed envelopes, 31 of them to The Star's downtown offices and the rest to three Star editors (one who lived in Don Mills, another in the west end and a third in midtown Toronto).

Because of a clerical error 21 of them carried an address that was 1,000 numbers out and had an incorrect street name but all but two found the editor just the same.

Letters were mailed out in three batches from correspondents in Calgary, Winnipeg, St. John's, Regina, Nashwaaksis, N.B., Whitehorse, Vancouver and New York City. Each correspondent sent a single letter to The Star offices when he received the instructions for the project as well.

The longest any letter took from mailbox to letter-slot was four days, (and that was because we have no Saturday delivery).

Mail from New York was the slowest. No letters made the trip in less than three days.

And mail from faraway Whitehorse arrived as quickly as it did from anywhere. Four letters mailed from the Yukon on Aug. 25 arrived Aug. 27.

Mail to an address in downtown Toronto tends to arrive sooner than if it is addressed to the suburbs.

### Curbing pinching . . .

The days of Rome's bottom-pinching Romeos may be numbered, says The Financial Post about a police drive in the eternal city against the papagalli (youths who pester foreign women).

A police circular describes the familiar Roman practice as a threat to tourism because of adverse publicity in other lands from those who don't think highly of the practice.

The newspaper thinks the police are poor judges of what drives the tourists away. Does anyone suggest that tourism in France suffers because Paris has an exaggerated reputation for being wildly wicked, it asks?

Chesterton's maxim that travelling narrows some minds still holds good.

The ultra-righteous go to Paris or Rome, says The Financial Post full of expectant prejudice and are only too gratified if they find their worst suspicions of "foreigners" confirmed.

### Off the cuff . . .

The best way to forget your troubles is to wear tight shoes.

Conference: A gathering of important people who, singly, can do nothing, but, together, can decide that nothing can be done.

Pessimist: One whose glass is half empty.



PROVINCIAL MINISTER of Energy and Resources, George Kerr (left) directs his personal energy and resources toward solving a federal problem at the fair—M.P. Rud Whiting wasn't facing the camera. M.P.P. Jim Snow didn't need ministerial persuading.—(Staff Photo)



## Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

They got away just in time. My nerves, stretched like a rubber band, were about to snap. Tonight, as I sit alone with the cat, in blessed peace, I feel as though I might last for a bit yet.

The last of my Rotten Kids has gone off to college, and her mother, reluctant as ever to raise her wing and let the chick go, went with her.

The latter will be back in a few days, and the former will probably be back in a few weeks, but it's a wonderful respite. Even the cat looks more relaxed. But maybe that's because she's pregnant. She's eating like one of those dogs in the TV commercials, so it looks suspicious.

Getting a girl ready for college is something like outfitting an entire expedition to Outer Mongolia, as I've discovered in the last few weeks.

First, you have to talk about it for an average of seven hours a day. Then they spend hours making up lists of "indispensables", like a razor and shaving cream. The lists are lost and new ones begin. Then there are hours of talking about clothes, turning up hems, lowering necklines, raising waists, what goes with what, what clashes with what.

That's why I've been hiding in the bathroom and the back yard for a couple of weeks, during these altercations (that's not alterations).

This, of course, produces heated accusations that, "You don't even care! Why can't you show some interest?"

This, in turn, makes me join them for a modelling show, at which I mutter, "That's pretty. Yeah, I like that one. That looks pretty good on you." Again, this brings forth heated accusations.

The fact is, I have about as much interest in women's clothes as I have in choosing wall-paper. If the plaster is OK, whack it on. Same with women. If it looks OK, I say so. If it doesn't, I have enough sense to keep my mouth shut.

During this preparatory period, I have felt like The Invisible Man. I have had two dinners cooked for me in two weeks. I have done all the shopping. I have broken up unnumbered feminine squabbles. (Kim's taste and her mother's, in clothes, are as far apart as the R.C.'s and the Communist's philosophies). And I have stripped my every bank account to the barest of bones.

If that kid drops out, as so many bright youngsters do, I'm going to take all her effects, piano, those records that drive me out of my skull, the lot, and burn them in the back yard.

Invited to this soiree will be a number of parents I know. We have recently formed an organization called PORK. It stands for Parents of Rotten Kids. And it's spreading like wildfire. Within a year it will be bigger than the Rotary Club.

By the way, anyone who wants to join the organization is welcome. There are no fees. All you have to do is drop me a line, explaining briefly why you think you qualify. Anonymity is guaranteed.

Charter members are: a couple with a son of 150-plus I.Q., who is making toilet seat lids in a factory; a woman whose 14-year-old daughter ran away; a minister whose daughter smokes pot; and me.

There is only one proviso. You have to swear a solemn oath that, if your kid is over 16, you have given him, or her, no more than two "last chances", and have then kicked him, or her, out into the world. We will have no truck with parents who want to sit on the egg until all that emerges is hydrogen sulphide, when it finally breaks.

But I digress. My baby, whom I have taught and fought for 18 years, has left me. We've trotted off to high school together for the past five years. I snarling because she was late, she snarling because I was snarling. I telling her to be in early, she, indignantly, finding me pacing the floor, "What you you mean? It's only one o'clock." I certain she's been killed in an accident, or raped by a motor-cycle gang. She laughing hilariously at my lurid imagination.

The only thing worse than missing her is the thought that she might come home, permanently. Young eagles, of either sex, have to fly or they become cripples. I'd rather she flew.

## Free Press back issues

### 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 22, 1949.

A brief address was given Thursday by Mr. Cliff Sutton, new Y secretary, to the students and teachers of Acton high school.

Once again Halton takes the lead, by the establishment of a mobile dental clinic under the supervision of the Halton Health Unit.

A beautiful stained glass window was dedicated by Rev. E. A. Brooks of Grimsby at St. Alban's church. The window was erected by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Doby in memory of their son Tommy.

Force Electric Products is adding another store to the building erected last year and the walls are almost completed. The basement social room at the Y.M.C.A. is being redecorated and the walls finished in plywood.

We'll stay on Daylight Saving Time longer this year to help the hydro shortage. Don't change your clocks till Nov. 27.

Two dahlias from the farm of Walter Fryer are over ten inches in diameter.

As a result of a 5-4 victory over Ridgeway last night Acton Ints will occupy a berth in the provincial semi-finals. The clubs left are Picton, Shallow Lake and Strathroy.

### 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 25, 1919.

Notes of the Fair: For once the trials of speed gave genuine pleasure. The contestants were not confined to two or three worn-out nags devoid of merit. There were half a dozen very good horses.

The merry-go-round didn't go after all. Some of the parts got lost between here and Oakville.

The handsomest married lady on the grounds was judged Mrs. J. A. Willoughby, Georgetown and the handsomest single lady Miss Florence Murray, Acton. Next year it is hoped prizes will be offered for the handsomest man, with ladies as judges.

Two or three blacklegs with gambling devices should have been run off the grounds.

President Lindsay and secretary Hynds were busy men and Murray McDonald kept pace in his duties.

The piano exhibit of Kelly and Son, Guelph, was an attractive place. Symon's Hardware did a big stroke of business in

distributing yard sticks. Electrician Wilson showed an attractive variety of electric fixtures.

Standing room was at a premium at the concert.

With heartrending suddenness death came to William Wiles, Church St. He had called Dr. Gray to see Mrs. Wiles, felt unwell and lay down a few minutes. When Dr. Gray came over he found Mrs. Wiles in bed and Mr. Wiles' lifeless body on the couch. For 32 years Mr. Wiles was a faithful employee of Beardmore and Co. and he enjoyed universal esteem. The sincere sympathy of all our citizens is felt for Mrs. Wiles and Harold and Laws.

### 75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 27, 1894.

The rain vs. the fair! Despite the weather visitors turned out in good number and entries poured in. A finer display of butter and cheese is seldom seen anywhere. Judges acknowledge the display of fruit was the finest seen this year. One of the mangolds brought down the scales at 23 pounds.

Kelly's Music Emporium of Guelph had four or five Bell pianos on exhibition and well-trained players discoursed excellent music throughout the fair. Mr. C. W. Kelly has this section of the country pretty much to himself now and does a good business here.

Mr. John Charles had a neat display of groceries and chinaware, and boomed Salada Tea by serving all comers a dainty cup of tea.

A fine exhibit of silverware, jewellery, fancy goods and window shades was made by Mr. George Hynds.

Acton Comet Band, enlivened the proceedings. The hall when illuminated was most attractive.

Some of the articles in the fancy-work display had attached a ticket "Bring a fresh one next year." As we go to press the concert is in progress.

A well-known lawyer gives the following as the rights on the public highways: The streets belong to teams and vehicles and pedestrians have no more business upon them than the teams would have upon the walks. The crossings at the street corners belong to pedestrians who have the right of way there. Many drivers ignore the law and dash over the crossings endangering the lives and limbs of the pedestrians. No vehicle or horse can be driven rapidly over the crossing nor can the driver obstruct the crossing.

## Pepper



by hartley coles

Sometimes in the heat of the battle to publish this family journal each week we can let some pretty big slips go by but apparently the memo-writing trade can be just as hazardous.

The Business Press News has published several of the better memos which the editor of Canadian Printer and Publisher has collected and here are some of the front runners:

How would you like to get this memo on a blue Monday morning? "Don't worry unduly about this, but how much seniority do you have, not counting tomorrow? See me regarding this today." Have some strong coffee.

Here's a goody from the head of the maintenance staff in a hospital. "The new elevator at the west end of the building will be placed in service starting Jan. 31. This unit is complete and operable except for the car floor." Going do-w-n-n.

Syntax, or lack of it, gives some memos their punch, consider this: "Please furnish this office with a list of all employees over 50 years of age, broken down by sex."

"Attached is the compensation cheque from the XYZ insurance Co. for our employee Mr. Blank, who was injured per your instructions in your letter of July 8." said another rebellious concoction.

Brings to mind a memo once posted in a large publishing house: "Salesmen who do not have their own secretaries may take advantage of the girls in the steno pool."

And here's a final one from what has to be the world's most security-minded junior executive:

"Please let this serve as a final reminder of my retirement on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2011. Please forward any forms to me so that I may complete them and finish cleaning out my desk and files."

Make you feel better? Even the top executive-type can pull some real boners when they write their thoughts down on paper. It usually happens when they are under pressure of some sort, which is an occupational hazard for most of us these days.

With this in mind someone has come up with a new gadget to pacify the tense businessman.

It is called an executive sand box, of all things. It retails for a mere \$456 (plus shipping) which, of course, puts it within the reach of almost everyone but 95% of the population.

The sand box, made from a variety of woods, is 42 inches square and has fluorescent lighting concealed under a black sitting ledge where the execs can sit and just as hazardous.

For those who have exotic tastes and another C note the manufacturer will supply sand from such far-away places as Burma, Chile, Morocco, Italy or Australia, to name a few. Of course for all we know it could be from Wataga Beach.

The idea has already found favor with satisfied customers who now can hardly wait to get home from the office to play in the sand box.

But why pay that kind of loot to play in the sand? Why not just ask Junior to move over?

You may have noticed that Air Canada has gone into competition with Jackie Gleason and is accepting advance reservations for visiting the moon.

Over 3,000 names and addresses are in the lunar log, including 1,850 from Ontario-ari-o, most of whom come from Toronto. Obviously 3,000 people on this old scarred planet are sick of existing here and they want to join the man in the moon.

Well, I may get sick of all that's going on down here but a trip to the moon isn't my idea of enjoyment. I'll take a good old auto trip any day over that even if the static in the back seat is bad and the co-pilot is feeling under the weather....

Yes, we usually leave the family dog at home for these outings but I see where a recent BBC broadcaster says old Fido can thoroughly enjoy travelling. "Not many differ from travel sickness, but if your dog is one of the unlucky few, a pinch of bicarbonate of soda on his tongue should settle him," says a broadcaster.

And if you are wondering what in the devil this column is all about, join the crowd. It has gone from memos, sand boxes, moon trips, and travelling dogs with scarcely a space for breath.

Speaking of breath I'm all out of it and next week comes around again in seven days.



VIEW OF ACTON "taken from an aeroplane" in 1919, was used by Fred L. Wright in his real estate business. He has lent us four pictures for this series. This photograph looks west down Church St. (far left), Mill St. and Bowler Ave. (centre), to Henderson's Pond and Fairy Lake. Note the steam engine, bottom left, puffing toward the station.