

Drug bills success and failure

Toronto—Did you know pharmacists can substitute a cheaper drug for the one named on your prescription — and not have to tell you?

That was just one of the interesting tidbits that became public during the dispute over Bills 54 and 55.

Those bills were Health Minister Murray Elston's attempt to bring drug prices under control.

It should result in, if not lower drug costs for government, at least a slower rate of growth.

Politically, the bills were both a success and a failure for the Liberals.

They were a success in that the Grits proved willing to tackle a topic — drug price-spreading — where the former Conservative government couldn't find a solution.

On the failure side was the gutting of Bill 55 by the combined Conservative-NDP opposition in order to move the onus for preventing price-spreading off pharmacists and on to drug manufacturers and wholesalers.

The Liberals, judging from some of the negative material leaked from

the ministry, appeared to be singling out pharmacists as the villains of the piece.

There are 6,000 pharmacies and fewer than 100 drug manufacturers and wholesalers in Ontario.

The bills are actually fairly technical, but at the risk of oversimplifying, they might be described in the following way.

Bill 54 outlaws price-spreading, the technique whereby drug companies sold their drugs to pharmacists at a rate less than the official price they gave the government.

The official price was used by the province to pay for the drug benefits of senior citizens and welfare recipients.

The pharmacies and manufacturers would pocket the difference.

Bill 55, on the other hand, insists that certain drugs be considered interchangeable and that the cheapest always be used.

This is the famous debate between "brand name" drugs (meaning usually a more expensive drug from the company that developed the product) and "generic" drugs (usually



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

meaning a cheap copy of the active ingredients in the brand name drug).

At the provincial level, it comes down to the government's sometimes deciding what medicine people will have.

And that means, of course, ordering the cheapest drugs, which happen to be the generics. (The prices will be posted.)

For example, doctors used to be able to print or rubber-stamp their prescription forms with the phrase "no substitution" on it. The pharmacists could give only what the doctor ordered.

Bill 55 makes that illegal. The doctor must write "no substitution" in long hand now, something the Ontario Medical Association responded to by recommending doctors do so

for people undergoing prolonged drug therapy.

Too many "no substitutions," however, can get a doctor investigated.

None of this would matter, of course, except there doesn't appear to be a consensus on how "safe" generic drugs are relative to name brands.

The generics don't get the same testing, nor are the 60 per cent non-active ingredients in any particular drug the same in a generic as opposed to a brand name.

PC critic Dr. Bette Stephenson wanted all generics tested for toxicity before they could be used. Her amendment was beaten.

In contrast, the ministry view is why re-invent the wheel? The drugs have been tested for quality.

An outsider can only shrug and hope the bureaucrats know what they're doing.

And ask his druggist not to substitute...

Don't be fooled

Don't be fooled when town council sets a budget of nearly \$4 million for a municipal complex.

Just like all major construction projects, there will be delays and cost overruns. On paper, it looks as if it might be possible to build a new town hall for the stated \$3,920,000.

The discussion of cost for the proposed complex makes an interesting debate.

First of all, the public doesn't know exactly how much will be debentured in 1987. That's because the town needs to do an appraisal on excess properties owned by the municipality.

When these properties are listed as excess, sometime before Dec. 31, they will be appraised.

The lands just might not be sold. One thing appraisers don't do is guarantee that you will find a buyer willing to pay your price within a certain period of time.

Although supporting the project, Coun. Joe Hewitt wondered out loud last week if a \$75 per square foot cost is realistic. He was told by consultants that architects will redesign the building to maintain the town's budget.

The problem, again, is that the town will first need to find someone willing to build their new town hall at the \$75 per square foot price. There might not be any takers.

Nevertheless, we feel council is doing a fairly good job to make sure costs are kept down and that taxpayers won't be overly burdened.

We agree with Coun. Pam Johnston's suggestion of renting space in the new complex to help defray costs while at the same time leaving some rooms vacant for expansion.

Leaving too much space, however, could prove to be burdensome, and will increase construction costs. What if our town staff demand does not grow at the expected rate? We'll be left with a white elephant. Councillors should be conservative about decisions on unused space. At the same time, it makes good sense to plan for the future.

Keeping the costs down won't be impossible. But we're not expecting miracles. We hope you're not.

Acton tannery

More to be done

It was a sad day for Acton, for all of Halton Hills and for Halton Region. The gates at the Beardmore tannery were closed Friday and the plant will not re-open for 329 workers who lost their jobs.

Three months ago Canada Packers Inc. announced its intentions to sell the tannery. No news has been forthcoming about a potential buyer. Certainly no one expects the building to re-open as another tannery.

While the news has been encouraging about workers finding alternate employment, there are still a number of hardship cases. Those who are middle-aged can't apply for a special stipend provided by the government unless they are over 54 years. Young employees with children to support and a home to pay off are under special pressure to find work without interruption.

In the meantime, there has been no name-calling, bitterness or panic. Workers have been praising their company for doing their utmost to relocate the unemployed. Many have singled out Mayor Russ Miller for what he has done to help the workers.

There still remains a need to help find new jobs for workers no longer on the company payroll. In addition, Acton requires another industry to take the place of the tannery. If the business core is expected to grow in this part of Halton Hills, there needs to be a base of people who do not have to commute to Oakville or Milton.

Almost in an uneventful way, a part of the town's history slipped by — without notice or with little grief.

Weekend athletes



Staff Comment

By SANDY CAMPBELL
Herald Staff

There are more great athletes in the world than most people realize. What makes a great athlete is dedication to sport and a playful enthusiasm.

During my two weeks at St. Michael's Hockey School in Toronto our wise instructor understood this idea of greatness. "Everyone has the chance to be great. Those who achieve greatness are those who do the most with the talent they have," he said.

As a mediocre hockey player of 13 years I gladly embraced that wisdom and believed in my chance to be great. I have combined that instructor's definition with that corny adage, "You must have fun to succeed at sport," and have come up with my own definition of the great athlete.

This definition places many weekend athletes among the greatest. They are the kind of men and women who aren't playing for money, a scholarship or the praise from a parent. They make their way to arenas and sports fields on their own steam and return with less steam than younger competitors.

The weekend athlete is the kind of guy who avoids full length mirrors, but would rather view himself in the medicine cabinet mirror. There, without distractions of lower parts, he can view his most noble features — a regal jaw and a powerful neck. The rest of his body is irrelevant at times like these. All that matters is that "don't mess with me glare" and that majestic profile.

The weekend athlete is a competitive guy. He looks at old world

records and wishes he was alive 20 years sooner. Even if that meant only taking a gold medal in the breast stroke.

There is a sport the weekend athlete believes he could set world standards in, but he hasn't found it. Perhaps he should have taken fencing lessons offered at the Y. He wonders.

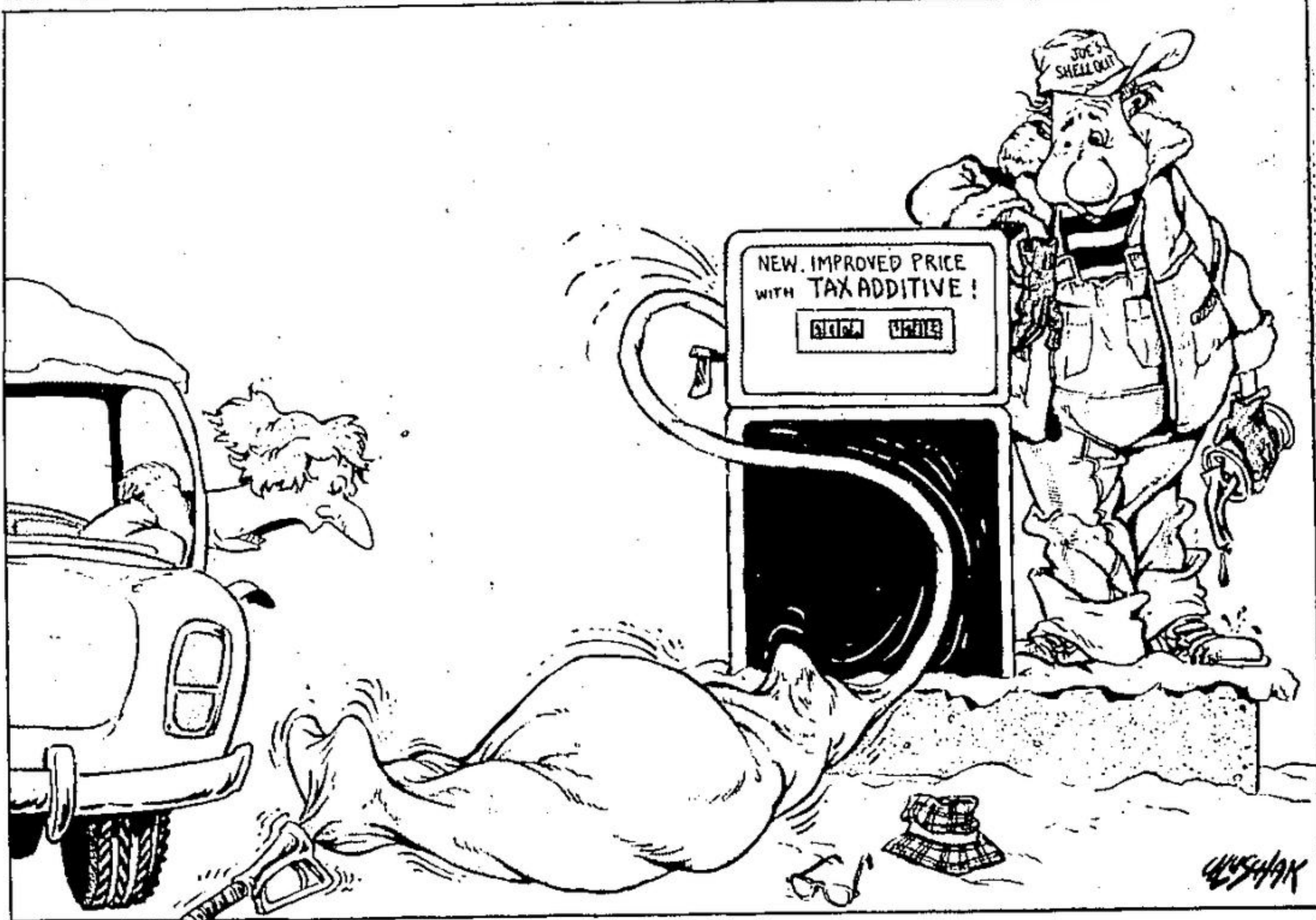
This fella loves sport. Without question, without him there would be no professional sports. He has an idea where he rates next to the pros. Without him fewer people would care about the arc and swish of a Larry Bird last-second, three-pointer or an over-the-shoulder finger tip Super Bowl-winning catch by Lynn Swan. He is contagious.

The weekend athlete is the kind of guy who knows enough about professional sports to manage or coach a team, but he would rather own it. He speaks in RBIs, ERAs, Pets and even furlongs. It is a skill that is nurtured in school. Even the worst math student could recite the number of every Toronto Maple Leaf player and something of their statistics for the year.

This guy wouldn't be afraid to tell the pros how to win a few more games. He is the captain video, eye in the sky and man in the booth who has the answers to the questions about a struggling team.

And when winter comes you will see this guy throwing strikes with snowballs when he thinks nobody is looking. In the winter he becomes the arm chair athlete, finds a winter sport or both.

The cold months are also a time to remember the plays of summer. He remembers his best catches, throws, kicks and hits. These plays are irrefutably amazing and make him equal with the best, the greatest in the world.



"First it sucked up his credit card, then his wallet, and finally..."

Citizens' forum

UW getting support

Dear Sir,
Sept. 5 a new service for Halton Hills opened its doors to the public. The United Way of Halton Hills has moved into its new offices at 10 Mountainview South, Suite 206 and the volunteers and staff will be quite busy as they are in the midst of preparing for its inaugural campaign.

Since its inauguration in the spring of this year, the United Way had been using the space generously donated by The Acton Social Services and Information Centre while the volunteers looked for a permanent location.

There were several people who helped out to make our opening day

memorable. We received flowers from both Frank Van Owegan in Norval, Pine Valley Farms; coffee and donuts from Jim Walker of Tim Horton Donuts and a variety of supplies from Lynn Ferguson of Mac's Milk on Mountainview Road.

There has already been a tremendous demonstration of community support, both in volunteer time and financial contributions for the United Way and this is seen as acknowledgment of the overall support for the United Way of Halton Hills.

Yours truly,
Jim Kinnear
President

Make government pay

Dear Sir,
The ink is barely dry on Bill 94 and as a Family Physician I already find myself caught in a dilemma. There is now available a new vaccine to prevent a serious form of Spinal Meningitis in all children over two years of age. The government is stalling and refuses to pay for this vaccine. It is so expensive that I must charge \$15 - \$20 per shot to break even. Of course I now must ask my patients whether or not they can afford this vaccine for their child. I thought the Liberals promised this would never happen again in Ontario.

Now that I have lost my right to be at arms length from government control I must fear the consequences of standing up on behalf of

my patients to try to force the government to do what is necessary. Now that government totally controls my working conditions how will they respond at the next negotiating session if I make them look bad on this or any important patient issue?

What will government decide not to pay for next? Who is left independent to speak up? You will have an opportunity in the next election to send a loud message to all politicians who would interfere with the quality of your health care.

Sincerely yours,
Elliot Halparin, M.D. F.C.C.F.P.
cc. Larry Grosman

Few students not immunized

Only 3.4 per cent of Halton Region's pupils haven't been fully immunized, says Halton's medical officer of health.

That translates into 2,493 students who aren't fully immunized according to the current school records. Of these, 633 are exempted for medical reasons, religious belief or conscience.

As for the rest of the 1,860 pupils, most of them are new to the Halton system and it's merely a matter of the nurses getting immunization information from the parents, and feeding the data into the computer system.

In comparison to the provincial rate of 7.9 per cent unimmunized, Halton is in "an envious" position with only 3.4 per cent of its pupils not fully immunized, says Dr. Graham Pollett.

In January 1982, the Immunization of School Pupils Act as passed requiring Ontario students up to 18 years old be fully immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and poliomyelitis in order to attend school.

The purpose of the legislation is to control the development and spread of the diseases. It also requires the medical officer of health to keep a record of immunization for pupils in private or public school.

In Halton, 51,617, or 95.4 per cent of pupils are fully immunized.



Question: Why do you support the Terry Fox run?

In your opinion

Why support Terry's Run



Jamie Mitchell:
"I shook Terry's hand when he was here. I figured if he can do it with one leg, then I can do it with two."



Chuck Franklin:
"Because it's a good cause."



George Williams:
"I think it's a very good cause. My wife had cancer and they (cancer society) need the money."



Bella-Maye Rostell:
"Because I believe in Terry Fox's dream and I hope someday they find a cure for cancer."



Harvey Lott:
"To earn some money for the cancer society."

Halton's History from our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO - A Legion dart team from Branch 120 won the Canadian championship at the Canadian National Exhibition. The team of Joe Stamp, Earl Hornby, Gord Jamieson, Alex Korzaek, Ed McDermott, Rocco Lorusso and Harry Bottoms was captained by Ken DeRose.

Betty Zillo, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Zillo of Terra Cotta, married Max Stafford at Glen Williams United Church. Rev. W.E. Gill married the couple.

Nerrata Zillo of Terra Cotta and Anne Chalker, daughter of Mrs. Albert Chalker and the late Mr. Chalker of Victoria Avenue, graduated from the Guelph General Hospital Nursing School.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO - Joseph F. Hutton officially opened Georgetown's newest school, St. Francis of Assisi School at Sinclair Avenue and Duncan Drive. It is Mr. Hutton's first principal position.

An American drag race driver died at the Toronto International Dragway on the Esqueping Township Fourth Line. Richard Harrell, 38, of Kansas died when his vehicle crashed into a bank.

Ken McNabb led over 200 entries competing for the Simco award. He was second in livestock, second in farm machinery and safety, and fifth in field crops. John Nurse placed third overall and Mary Anderson was eighth.

TEN YEARS AGO - The Siberian Husky of Mary and Steve Mills, shamus, won Best in breed at a Canadian Championship in New Brunswick. Shamus also claimed fourth in the working group in the competition of 90 dogs.

Joan Harris, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Harris of Georgetown, was called to the British Columbian Bar. She is a graduate of the University of Windsor law program and lives with her husband, Denis Archambault, who is also a lawyer. Mabel Sanderson, Lou Hunter, Peggy Corman and Mary-Jo Plouf were the four local ladies who did well at a nine-hole tournament in Oakville.

FIVE YEARS AGO - Five local artists presented their work for a group show at the Gallery House Sol on Charles Street in Georgetown. Featured in the show is work by Frank Black, Jo Walterson, Reg Finlayson, Gretchen Day and Marjorie Nazer.

Rev. Tom Bandy is the new minister of St. Andrew's United Church. He is also the minister at the united church in Ballinafad.