

# Halton Hills Outlook

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## Their Outlook

### Progress on acid rain

My work as Chairman of the Select Committee on the Environment, which I mentioned in the last report is underway, and I believe everyone concerned is most pleased with the progress of the hearings on acid rain.



#### M.P.P. Report

by Don Knight

Premier David Peterson recently pointed out that Ontario's education system must be improved to meet the needs of young people to provide them with new skills to compete in the modern world. Speaking at the annual Ontario Liberal Heritage Dinner in Toronto, Premier Peterson noted that there is a 40 per cent drop out rate from high schools in the province. That rate is one of the highest in the world - three times as high as in Sweden and West Germany and twice that of Japan and Great Britain. As one of several initiatives to help reduce the drop-out rate, the Ministry of Education will begin a special study on school drop-outs. The objective of the study will be to recommend ways of ensuring that Ontario's education system is relevant to the needs of young people and to the realities of the labor market they are preparing to enter.

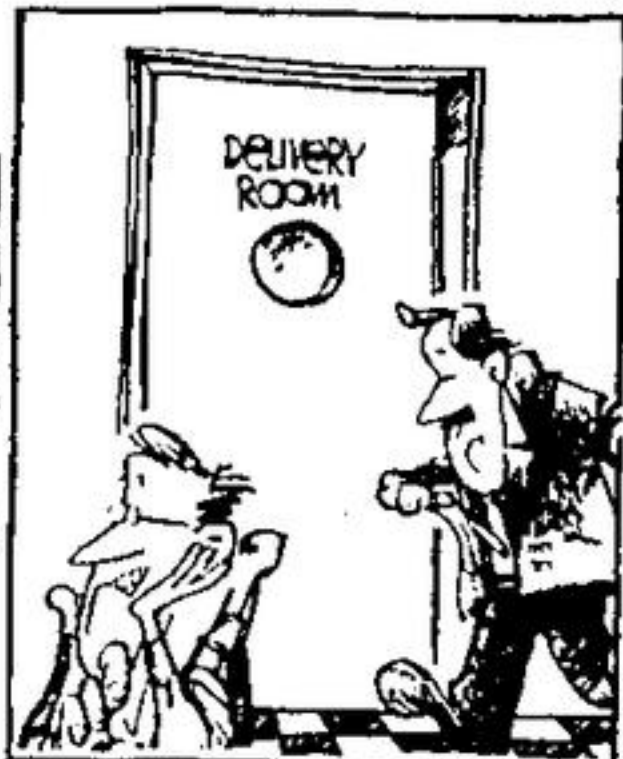
Ontario's drinking laws should be changed to reflect the attitudes and expectations expressed by both the public and the industry according to a recently released government report. The report emphasizes the promotion of responsible service of alcohol in licensed establishments, as well as individual responsibility and moderation in the consumption of beverage alcohol.

The Ontario Student Assistance Program (O.S.A.P.) budget will be increased by 17 per cent for 1987-88. Specific improvements to O.S.A.P. include a sharp reduction in the financial contribution from parents of students from low income families. As well, sole support parents will now be eligible for grant assistance to cover child care costs.

O.S.A.P. will provide more assistance to students from farm families because farm assets will now be considered at half their net value. The decision to increase assistance to students from farm families resulted from a review of declining farm prices and the resulting impact on farm incomes. In addition, O.S.A.P. will extend grant assistance to students attending degree granting religious schools and approved art schools. Until now, students attending institutions such as the Ontario Bible College and the National Theatre School in Montreal, to cite just two examples, have been eligible only for loan assistance.

Much of the new funding will be directed to increasing the grant assistance provided to students. These changes to O.S.A.P. are consistent with the Ontario government's policy of increasing accessibility to post secondary institutions. This is the second substantial increase in the Ontario Student Assistance Program in as many years.

I was pleased recently to host a question and answer forum which was taped for cable television. Guests on the show were the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of the Environment and Mayors Gord Krantz of Milton and Russ Miller of Halton Hills. The exchange of views was most informative for all concerned, and I will be hosting more of these programs in the future. The show will be aired on the local cable channel in the near future.



### Grits can't gloat over recent polls

Despite being comfortably ahead of the Tories, and less comfortably ahead of the New Democrats, the Liberals really have little cause for jubilation over the opinion polls.

Given the sorry position of the governing Conservatives, and the fact the Grits are the official Opposition - or government-in-waiting - they should be standing much higher in public popularity. With the Tories languishing in the low 20s on the percentage scale of popularity, one would expect the Grits to be well over 50 per cent, perhaps even nudging 60.

Instead, the latest Gallup survey found the Liberals at 41 per cent, actually a three-point drop from a month earlier. Both the Tories and NDP rose two points - the former to 24 per cent, the latter to 34. The highest recorded by John Turner's Liberals since the Tory slide began was 45 per cent last December - the survey was taken immediately after the party's well-publicized national convention. That was when Mr. Turner's leadership was confirmed by 76.3 per cent of delegates. Apart from that, for the last year the percentage has been consistently in the low-40s.

And there is small comfort in the news that the NDP, which has never elected an MP in Quebec - although it acquired one by conversion - is in a dead heat with the Liberals in that province. Before the 1984 election, the Liberals held 74 of the province's 75 seats.

**NOT NOTICED**  
The fact that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney scored so low in surveys about leadership performance grabbed headlines recently. And when only 24 per cent of Canadians approve of a prime minister's performance, it is legitimate news.

But what received less attention in that same survey was the fact that Mr. Turner's performance was approved by only 44 per cent of respondents. And while this might look impressive compared with Mr. Mulroney, it's really remarkably low for an opposition leader. What I mean is, opposition leaders don't have to make unpopular decisions as prime ministers do. Their job is tailor-made for popularity.

The approval rating for NDP Leader Ed Broadbent was 64 per cent, which, by comparison, seems unusually high. But, when you stop and think about it, why shouldn't a



#### Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

party leader, who happens to be facing an apparently unpopular government, get approval from two of three Canadians?

What's more striking, it seems to me, is that fewer than half of the respondents judged Mr. Turner's performance to be satisfactory. Thirty-six per cent of those polled said they disapproved and 20 per cent couldn't make up their minds.

**NOT GOOD**  
Again, these figures actually seem rather impressive when compared with the prime minister's 66-per-cent disapproval - another 10 per cent couldn't decide - but only 19 per cent disapproved of the way Mr. Broadbent was doing his job, while 17 per cent were undecided.

That particular survey was taken by Angus Reid Associates last month - and it was carried out before the Commons vote on cruise-missile testing which embarrassed the 40-member Liberal caucus. Four MPs broke ranks and, in opposing further tests, voted against their colleagues.

Delegates to the party's national convention in November voted overwhelmingly against the tests, and Mr. Turner has been criticized by many Liberals for not accepting this high-level advice. The embarrassing Commons vote was bound to raise new questions about leadership.

And although the Liberals avoided a split on the recent free-trade vote, it was achieved by way of an amendment that merely added confusion to the party's own position on this basic subject. Once again, this debate did little to enhance Mr. Turner's profile.

There are also many who feel the Liberal caucus is not performing to its full potential in the Commons and that some front benchers are not displaying a consistent zest. "It's not easy to make the adjustment when you've had a taste of government," said one. "It's not fair to blame the leader."

Fair or not, it's the reality of politics. And if the NDP continues to gain ground on the Grits - regardless of how the Tories fare - you will be hearing a lot more of it.

### Peace beat

In recent years we have been inspired by a series of "cross-country" athletes. Strong-willed men like Terry Fox, Steve Ponyo, and Rick Hansen have created the largest following; but there are other worthwhile causes and other dedicated, determined athletes. Doug Mohr is such a man.

In these days of multimedia advertising many people complain about ads. We are bombarded with them every day. Some have been called "trivial", or "moronic", and much worse. Most of us wall and complain and let it go at that; but there are individuals, who have the inner strength to take the bull by the horns and develop worthwhile intelligent ads. Doug Mohr is such a man.

A feeling of being powerless and impotent cripples many fine people, especially when they think about nuclear weapons and the super-power arms race. The task of opposing such massive weakness and fear is too big, and so the familiar cry is heard "What can I, one small, insignificant person do?" Fortunately some people are stirred by such opposition to organize the many individual responses, until together they could stand in the path of a landslide and deflect it from its course. Doug Mohr is such a man.

Who is this Doug Mohr? He is a key figure in the Canadian peace scene. He has ridden a bicycle across Canada raising awareness and money for peace. He founded the Canadian peace letter writing network, and he is the chair of Peace Productions in Kitchener-Waterloo which produces the Ads for Peace. You can be inspired and empowered with his latest ideas and his analysis of the peace scene in Canada and around the world by attending "An Evening of Peace" on April 6, at 7:30, in Georgetown High School.

Ray Piery, for Halton Hills Action for Nuclear Disarmament

#### Poor service for VIA trains

Recent news reports indicate that VIA Rail is planning further cuts in passenger train services in Southern Ontario. It is no wonder that VIA is losing passengers when its trains have frequent breakdowns, run late, and when VIA fails to provide enough cars for passengers at Windsor, London, Kitchener, Guelph, Brantford and elsewhere forcing passengers to cancel trips, travel by other means, or wait hours for the next train.

Passengers were treated especially badly when, on March 1st, train 857 leaving Toronto at 8:35 p.m. was not held for five minutes so that 70 passengers on a late train from Montreal could make their connection for Brampton, Guelph, Kitchener, Stratford and St. Mary's.

Transport 2000 Ontario is a non-profit organization promoting better public transportation. We would appreciate passengers on VIA trains writing to us at P.O. Box 6418, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1X3, about their experiences with VIA and their ideas about how to improve rail services. As a consumer group, we believe the public's voice needs to be heard now to stop VIA's continuing decline.

A. H. Turillitin, President, Transport 2000 Ontario

### Berry's World



Jim Berry  
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"... And, comrade, what if this new openness turns us all into YUPPIES?"