

## What happened?

Are our ears deceiving us?

Did we hear right when we heard last week that Halton Region is putting energy from waste on the back burner until there's more public support?

What happened to all those promises about incinerating 50 per cent of Halton's waste after recycling by 1996?

What happened to the commitment made to the Consolidated Hearings Board by Halton to energy from waste as a part of the overall waste management plan during Halton's landfill hearings last year?

What happened to all those politicians' vows to look for energy from waste sites and customers?

What happened to all those "gung-ho" attitudes on what was supposed to be a highly advanced and safe way to burn our garbage?

What happened to all those dollars spent analyzing energy from waste over the years?

What happens when we run into another garbage crisis just a few years down the road because Halton refused to attempt to educate the public about energy from waste?

What happened to the commitment to educate the public in the knowledge there would be public backlash against it?

What happened?

## Small charges



### Editor's Notebook

Brian MacLeod  
Herald Editor

When Global television reporter Doug Small goes to court reporters around the nation will be watching anxiously. Mr. Small and four others involved in the April 26 federal budget leak is being charged with possession of stolen property. The charges are expected to deflect some of the criticism the government has been taking over the budget leak. Conservatives hope the charges back their claim that the budget leak was an act of sabotage, and that Finance Minister Michael Wilson should not resign over an act of sabotage. While the RCMP's charges must have Conservatives rubbing their hands with glee in the back rooms, there are some very dangerous underlying precedents being set here all in the name of saving one man's behind.

The first, and most important, is that a reporter has been charged with doing his job - reporting a document that was handed to him. Budgets are like everything else politicians like to keep secret. They are fair game if the word gets out. The charges seem ludicrous in the light of the whole affair in which Michael Wilson was handing out the documents the night he presented the budget to the press - before parliament got a look at it. Do reporters have to ask politicians for permission to publish information that politicians don't want you to know until they're good and ready now on? If that's the case, the so-called watchdog of government role the media is supposed to play, will be more like that of a pussy cat.

Let's think for a moment what would have happened if Doug Small hadn't done his job. No revelation of the second, and more potentially damaging budget leak to Mutual Life insurance company

because there would be no RCMP investigation. That would leave future budgets even more susceptible to fall into the hands of private companies.

Doug Small did Canadians a favor.

Then there's the constant calls for Michael Wilson's resignation. At first, I tended to believe he should lean on his reputation for integrity, weather the storm and let the voters decide in three years. Now, with evidence that there was a second budget leak, and that Mr. Wilson never told Canadians about it, it's clear that the reputation for integrity is no longer a foundation to lean on. Mr. Wilson has destroyed a tradition. That being, if the budget leaks before it's presented to the nation, the finance minister accepts responsibility and resigns. Fine for him, I suppose. But what about future budgets. Any budget which leaks to reporters from now on can be explained away as an act of sabotage for which the finance minister of the day should not have to be responsible.

That's the reason for the tradition behind the finance minister's resignation in case of a budget leak. The Conservatives have seen fit to sweep the tradition away for their own expedience.

Oh yes, and then there's those pathetic excuses that Michael Wilson shouldn't resign because the stock market will be nervous. Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner reiterated that line briefly during his appearance on the CBC news program The Journal last week.

That line is hogwash. If a few big investors feel nervous because their man has to resign following a scandal - tough! We've survived for 122 years without Michael Wilson, thank you, and we'll survive another 122 years.

The first four years of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government was plagued by scandals. Remember those promises of a clean slate when the Conservatives buried the Liberals in 1984?

It's obvious one Canadian judge was right on when he ruled a few years back that such promises are "mere puffery."

## Smith has lost all credibility



### Queen's Park

Derek Nelson  
Thomson News Service

TORONTO-As minister responsible for the police, Solicitor General Joan Smith has lost all credibility.

Every time she explains further about her nighttime visit to the Lucan Ontario Provincial Police detachment in April, it makes less sense.

She has said she went to check on the well-being of a friend's son at the behest of the man's sister, who alleged police brutality.

NDP Leader Bob Rae made the point to her in the legislature: "I wonder if the minister does not understand that simply by being there, simply by stating what she was there for, and why she was there, and by making a further phone call two hours later - does she not realize that in doing each of those things, in fact, she was involving herself in the case, so that the (OPP) made a report to that effect?"

"Does she not therefore realize that her conduct as solicitor general for this province, in involving herself in a private matter, was completely and utterly inappropriate?"

To put Rae's comments another way, it is a cardinal principle of our justice system that the political masters responsible for

justice (the attorney general and solicitor general) remain divorced from its day-to-day workings.

Otherwise, how does one avoid impressions of favoritism and special access?

Smith - seems oblivious to the ramifications. She continues to deny any error in judgement - although she doesn't explain why Premier David Peterson had to "agonize" (his word) over whether to ask her to resign if no mistake was made.

Now, she's made it infinitely worse.

In the legislature, Rae wanted to know what happened to all those people in trouble with the police who do not know the solicitor general?

"I very much question whether I would have done much different if it had been someone else's child in the same distress," she replied, noting her number is in the phone book.

That, as both opposition New Democrats and Tories said, is unbelievable.

### HUMAN BEING

Initially, when it was thought she did this for a friend's children, Peterson shrugged it away with the comment that "she's the solicitor general, but she's also a human being."

Yet, now she's suggesting it wasn't even anguish for a family friend's child that triggered her nocturnal wandering.

She would have done it for anybody. Her visit wasn't a once-in-a-lifetime slip-up, but deliberate policy.

It shows she doesn't have the faintest clue about the need for an arm's-length relationship between a minister and the OPP.

This compounds by several magnitudes her initial two wrongs of visiting and failing to apologize.

There is a cliché the Liberals used to spout a lot when in opposition that applies quite clearly to Smith's actions: the administration of justice must not only be pure, but be seen to be pure.

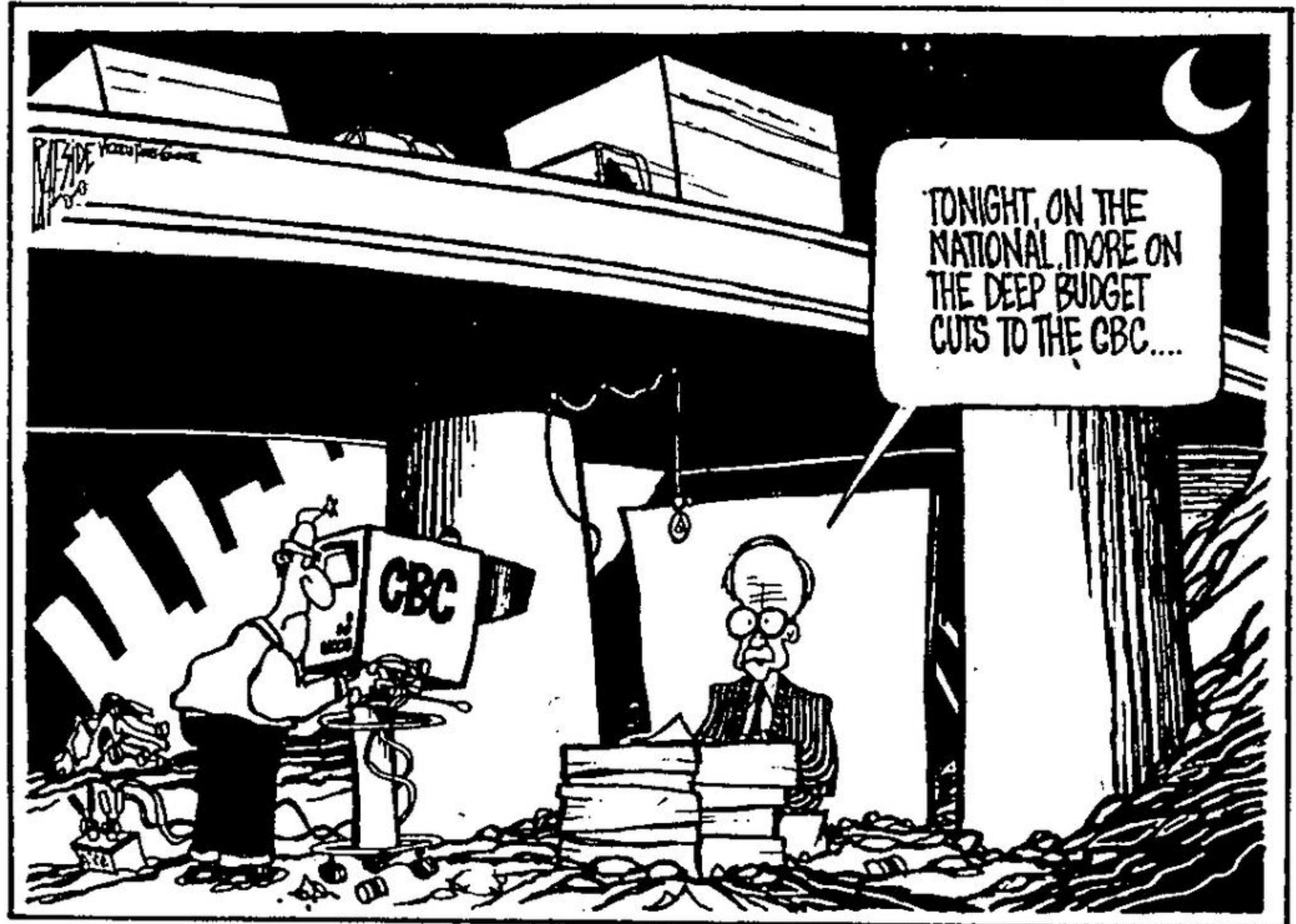
But then, unlike what the Grits view as sanctimonious New Democrats and sleazy Tories, Liberals know they are pure. They don't have to prove it or display it.

That explains why the Liberals thought the principle of distance between a minister and the justice system important enough to demand the resignation of George Kerr (then Conservative solicitor general) when he breached this principle in 1978.

Kerr phoned an assistant Crown attorney about a constituent in his riding who was due for sentencing (not, as I said here recently, up on charges. He'd already been convicted and the Crown was weighing recommendations to make to the judge for sentencing.)

This makes the Smith/Peterson reaction even more odious by comparison, since Kerr (unlike Smith) didn't talk to his own employees or contact the authorities (the judge in Kerr's case, versus the police in Smith's) who were actually making the decisions on the people involved.

The opposition parties are right. Smith should go.



## Bill will breathe new life into rates

By RENNIE MacKENZIE  
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OTTAWA-Coming to a theatre near you... it's the 10th-race exacta, with Cocktail Belle and all her stablemates.

It's the legendary sport of kings running a length ahead of century-old inhibitions and gaining quickly on space-age technology.

Within a year, many Canadians will likely be indulging in the latest gambling trend - parimutuel-betting theatres where horse races will be beamed in on television screens live via satellite.

Legislation amending the Criminal Code to allow betting theatres to operate as extensions of race tracks has been passed by the House of Commons and awaits Senate approval.

The bill is expected to breathe new life into a troubled business that was once the most refined form of legalized gambling but which has suffered from a glut of government-sponsored lotteries and the introduction of casinos in several provinces.

Sometime next year, the first theatre will open, likely in Northern Ontario, where the only track, Sudbury Downs, and the local horsemen have been anxiously waiting for Parliament to ap-

prove the bill. Like many tracks, Sudbury Downs had closed because of limited attendance and betting. But track owner Pat McIsaac assured MPs he will reopen with the expanded market that betting theatres will provide.

Sudbury Downs, and other tracks across the country, will be opening the theatres in smaller towns and cities that do not have tracks. The theatres will be allowed to serve liquor and food to racing enthusiasts. About 20 per cent of the bets will be shared by the federal and provincial governments, the horsemen and breeders, and the track. The remainder goes to the bettors who pick the winning horses.

There has been very little opposition to the betting theatre concept, which was introduced in the United States. Charles Lalonde, director of the Agriculture Department's race track division, said the general acceptance is due to a change in public attitudes. Lalonde also said all provinces are committed to the project and should soon be ready to license the theatres.

### MINIMUMS

When he presented the Criminal Code amendments in the Commons, Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski promised that the theatres would not be permitted to

evolve into "on-street" betting shops. There will be minimum seating, food and beverage requirements, and betting activity will be restrained. The theatres will be operated as extensions, not replacements, of the tracks, he added.

Mazankowski also promised benefits from the operation of the theatres. New jobs will be created in the service and support sectors and fresh income will be available to the tracks and breeders who have seen betting revenues shrink by more than 40 per cent.

It also means more money for the federal and provincial governments. The minister said the government cut of the parimutuel take is at its "probable upper limit" and the percentage will not be increased.

However, the greatly expanded market is certain to boost the betting volumes. The U.S. experience shows that theatres attract a great many infrequent track patrons and draw a substantial number of first-time bettors.

Lalonde said Ontario, with its many tracks, could see a hike of five to 10 per cent in its share of parimutuel revenues. Quebec, where the tracks are farther apart, could see a 30-to-40-per-cent increase, he said.