

## Editorial

### Smoking blues

Smokers of the world, you're going to have to unite. You're a dying breed.

That may not be news but it's quickly becoming reality.

The province has pushed us all into huddling smokers in some isolated corner of our buildings with new legislation taking effect in January.

Any time after that date businesses all over Ontario can be investigated by the smoking police. Businesses will have to make sure that 75 per cent of their office space is smoke-free.

But we agree with Halton Hills bylaw enforcement officer Bob Ustrzycki, when he says smoking policies should be left to businesses. It makes it easier to police - and more effective - when smokers bring on the wrath of their peers, rather than some floundering smoking inspector issuing tickets.

And it costs taxpayers less.

The town has taken a sensible approach to the attack on smoking in the '80s. The new Civic Centre will have smoking areas and less than 25 per cent of the building has been designated for smoking. Although municipalities do have the power to enact legislation on smoking if it is stronger than the province's law, we would be over-extending ourselves if town workers suddenly had to enforce a bylaw on smoke plumes.

A tip of the hat to those businesses which have already taken the smoking issue into their own hands; and to those who will be pressed into action by Jan. 1, a democratic vote by workers is the easiest way to snuff out the issue.

### Victory crow



Brian MacLeod  
Editor's Notebook

We have to congratulate Georgetown resident Gord Hamilton and his rooster Vern for not crowing over his victory at the Canadian National Exhibition this week.

Mr. Hamilton and Vern won first place in the rooster crowing contest. Vern crowed a remarkable 26 times in 15 minutes.

Mr. Hamilton has 200 birds and pheasants and about 40 of them are entered in various categories at the CNE.

Oh yes, remember that nine per cent tax on goods and services Michael Wilson wants us to pay? It will apply to that little movement you make with your finger when you hit the light switch. Your electricity will be taxed starting in 1991, if the new national sales tax is put in place, Ontario Hydro says.

Doesn't sound much like there's going to be too many loopholes in this one, does it?

Speaking of taxes, everyone seems to be on the "tax the big spender" bandwagon these days. Smiles show that the higher income earners spend X more

amount of dollars in restaurants and Y amount more on services, business writers say. So the tax will hit them the most, they say.

Well, how about those low income earners who were trying to get out of the house for a meal a bit more often? It simply puts it further out of reach for them so they'll continue to spend less of their income on meals and services.

Either way, the now vague idea of "getting ahead" is being cast farther and farther adrift.

The Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) is looking for the province's junior citizen of the year.

Says the OCNA, "The sponsors not only want to recognize the dozen or so outstanding young people who will be the recipients of awards, but want to give a pat on the back to hundreds of others who represent the good kids we all know."

Everyone nominated receives a certificate of congratulations, the OCNA says.

The award is supported by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

To be eligible for the award you must be between the ages of six and 18 and a resident of Ontario. Groups or individuals may be nominated.

"Nominees may be involved in worthwhile community service, have overcome disabling physical or psychological limitations, or have performed acts of heroism perhaps endangering their own lives," the OCNA says.

Know anyone? Let us know. Nomination forms are available here at the Herald.

## Immigration policy gone awry

Derek Nelson

Queen's Park  
Thomson News Service



TORONTO - It's tough understanding the immigration policies of Canadian governments.

They are so illogical as to make one think there must be deeper motives underlying their stupidity.

Or perhaps it is just that the governments are so completely inept, they have no idea what they are doing.

Under the constitution, provinces have had a shared responsibility with the federal government for immigration. In practice, Ontario ducks any connection whenever possible.

But every once in a while, it pokes its head into the immigration maze. Its viewpoint is instructive.

There have been three major examples over the past year.

One was the instant reaction of the province when the York Region board of education tried to keep out the children of illegal immigrants (the media call them "refugees") because it couldn't find room for kids who were legally here.

This board action was illegal, then-education minister Chris

Ward harrumphed from his high horse.

So the York board backed down and put up with the overcrowding.

But one has to wonder why it should be the responsibility of any school board to take care of the children of illegal immigrants?

Canadian citizens and landed immigrants should obviously have priority. And students from other lands who come here legally simply to study should be next on the list.

This is especially true since even an admirer of illegal immigration such as New Democrat Richard Johnston (he calls them "refugees") admits "thousands and thousands" of such children are causing "incredible extra expense" both in schools and for various social support services.

This brings us to the second incomprehensible decision of the Ontario government.

It decided that illegal immigrants (read "refugees") should be exempt from foreign student fees in Ontario colleges and universities.

It means a foreign student who is here legally can pay up \$5,000 for his education, but if he comes illegally he can enter for \$1,500.

MOST CURIOUS

Then there is the third case, perhaps the most curious of the three.

It concerns the 8,000 Portuguese who came to Canada as illegal immigrants, many claiming refugee status for persecution because of being Jehovah's Witnesses (which they weren't).

About 3,000 people demonstrated at Queen's Park this week to de-

mand they be allowed to stay.

And egging them on was Ontario's new citizenship minister, Bob Wong. "These people have made a contribution. I would hope the government would be a little flexible."

Interestingly, the Portuguese are the only group that federal Immigration Minister Barbarea McDougall has appeared before to talk tough about there being no amnesty.

Might that be because the Portuguese don't vote Progressive Conservative? Or is it perhaps that they are white Europeans, who can always be kicked with impunity?

One point might be made here in passing: it is constantly said the reason immigration now is so overwhelmingly non-European is that Europeans don't want to come to Canada anymore. The Portuguese, as well as the number of Irish, Poles, Greeks and others who can't get in would seem to indicate that the reason being cited is an out-and-out federal government fabrication.

It is quite clear a double standard exists for immigration to Canada.

Anyone who can somehow make it across the border and who isn't either a white European or from a socially stable Third World country (Trinidad, Hong Kong) is almost an automatic "refugee." The rejection rate by the new review board with its lax criteria is about 10 per cent. It used to be 70 per cent.



### LETTERS

#### VIA was never on track

Dear Sir,

As the campaign to save VIA Rail rolls into high gear, perhaps your readers may wish to view the issue in its full political context - and the real reason VIA is so vulnerable to the cuts about to be made by the Conservative government.

VIA was created by a Liberal government as a means of bailing out Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways, thereby allowing CN and CP to concentrate on more profitable freight services.

The first spike contributing to VIA's death was due to the Liberals forcing VIA to pay between \$70 and \$80 million to CN and CP for their dilapidated rolling stock. No company could survive on its own with that degree of debt.

The second Liberal spike was their refusal to introduce legislation giving VIA the power to control its own destiny. They remain captive to the scheduling and costing decisions of CN and CP.

The third Liberal spike was their refusal to provide VIA the

necessary funds to re-equip its passenger fleet in order to properly serve the Canadian traveller.

The fourth Liberal spike was the 1981 unilateral decision by then-Minister of Transport, Jean Luc Pepin to cut 19 per cent of VIA's services - without holding public hearings. As a result of these cuts, VIA's deficit increased \$27 million since rail costs are relatively fixed while revenue will change according to ridership.

This is now where the VIA story takes a bizarre twist.

After the 1981 Liberal cuts the Opposition Conservatives conducted a cross-Canada tour to save VIA Rail. In 1981 they campaigned on a platform to replace the routes cut by the Liberals, to purchase new rolling stock and to enhance VIA's operation.

Once elected the Tories did re-establish the routes eliminated by the Liberals but that's where it stopped.

In spite of ongoing insistence by the NDP Transport critics, the PCs reneged on their promise to provide new passenger cars and failed to follow through with VIA Rail

legislation.

Now, the most bizarre twist of all. In the name of deficit reduction VIA is to be dismantled, leaving only a few un-connected routes in place.

In 1981 the PCs were outraged by the Liberal tactics of using Cabinet decree to make their cuts. Now, in 1989, the Conservatives are going to make their decisions in secret and not allow any public hearings either.

Mr. Editor, it is clear that the Conservatives are in an ideal position of attempting to dismantle VIA. Past neglect and deliberate policies of the former Liberal government have ensured this.

As the Opposition Liberals hold VIA hearings in a few major cities in this country your readers should ask themselves if the Liberals can really be trusted to save our passenger rail system any more than the Conservatives could.

I personally don't think so.

Yours truly,  
Iain Angus, MP  
Thunder Bay - Atikokan