

# Credit cards, Canada Post on committee agenda

OTTAWA - The first week back in Parliament was, I guess, about typical. The government guys pursued their agenda - cuts in federal spending (like VIA Rail), preparation of abortion legislation and refining of the GST proposal. The Opposition members opposed - and every day Question Period started as a result.

Behind this, the real work started again. I met with the Liberal and NDP leaders on the House of Commons committee I

a year - \$105 billion on running various programs, and the rest paying interest on the national debt. This year we will be about \$30 billion short in terms of taxes, so the government will borrow the amount - adding even further to the debt.

Raising taxes to help balance the books is one solution, but taxes are already too high. So the alternative is finding ways to slash the dollars that the government spends. My committee has almost 30 federal agencies and departments reporting to it, and collectively they spend tens of billions. So, the 13 MPs who work closely with me will spend time scouring the books, identifying areas where a few billion can be eliminated. Our report will go to Parliament - and hopefully be used by Finance Minister Mike Wilson when he comes to write the next budget.

Over the summer, time and time again, people told me they think Ottawa spends too much. Many people who wrote, or came to the Town Hall meetings, left me with some concrete examples of things they could do without.

Some seniors, for example, told me they agree with the government's recent move to tax back pension benefits for those earning \$50,000 a year or more. But other seniors raked me over the coals for the same move.

They see it as an attack on universality - the idea that every person, regardless of whether they

need the money or not, should get government benefits. Personally, I don't see how we can afford universality at a time when the feds are running \$30 billion a year in the red. I don't see why we're in the business of giving people money who don't need it. If you've got any comments for me on that issue, then please drop me a line.

Last week, in Bolton and Georgetown, the Halton-Peel Tax Committee held two more public meetings on the GST. Thanks to Colin MacKinnon and the other committee members for their work, and thanks as well to those who found the time to attend. Now Colin and his colleagues will be finishing their report on GST, and submitting it to Ottawa as the House of Commons Finance Committee holds its noisy and exhaustive hearings on the tax.

A number of people have asked me if Wilson will consider changes - including the ones I've suggested (fewer exemptions, lower rate, tough watchdog agency). I think he will - or else the hearings would be a waste of time. Every day more people mail me responses from the GST guide I sent to every home. Right now we're tabulating those, and when complete, I'll personally had them to the Finance Minister.

Nothing's carved in stone. If it is, a lot of us are wasting our time.

Finally - if anybody is looking for a different kind of summer job next year, then you might want to consider being a Parliamentary

Guide. Right now there are 37 openings for young people who want to work on the Hill, giving visitors guided tours of our wonderful Parliament Buildings.

## Which way's the centre?

By BETTY SOJKA  
Ballinacorney Correspondent

Gerry Andrews has very kindly donated his time, and created a most attractive sign to point the way to the community centre. Approval from Wellington County is all that is waiting, for the sign to be erected at the cemetery corner. It is an artistic two-sided sign, that will be seen by both directions on Trafalgar Road. The community centre is presently unmarked, with no sign at the intersection and no sign on the building. This causes great difficulties for people not familiar with the area to actually

find the community centre.

Special thoughts go out to Kathy Taylor for a swift recovery period. Kathy is now home from the hospital after undergoing an operation.

The Women's Institute will be holding their October meeting this week on Oct. 6.

Ticket sales for the Ballinacorney Business People's Dance are going briskly. The dance is to be held on Oct. 14 and will feature Marion's Country Band. Residents are also reminded that the Hall Board is putting on a Halloween Dance on Oct. 28.

Garth Turner MP  
Halton-Peel



chair and together we're setting a few goals for the coming months. First, we have to report to write on credit cards - oh whether consumers get enough information on the true costs, and also whether the banks unduly complicate the way interest is calculated, or charge too much.

After that, it's on the Canada Post. The cabinet minister responsible - Harvie Andre - made a few noises over the summer about selling the post office, which is a pretty radical idea. So, because Canada Post reports to our committee, we've decided to hold hearings into what privatization might mean. Would service to rural Canada be cut as a result? Who would keep the lid on postal costs? How could the feds ensure levels of service remained high? And what's been the experience of other countries who have turned posties over to the private sector?

The other major thrust of my committee work will be something that I promised at Town Hall meetings across our riding - a serious review of government spending.

Ottawa spends about \$140 billion

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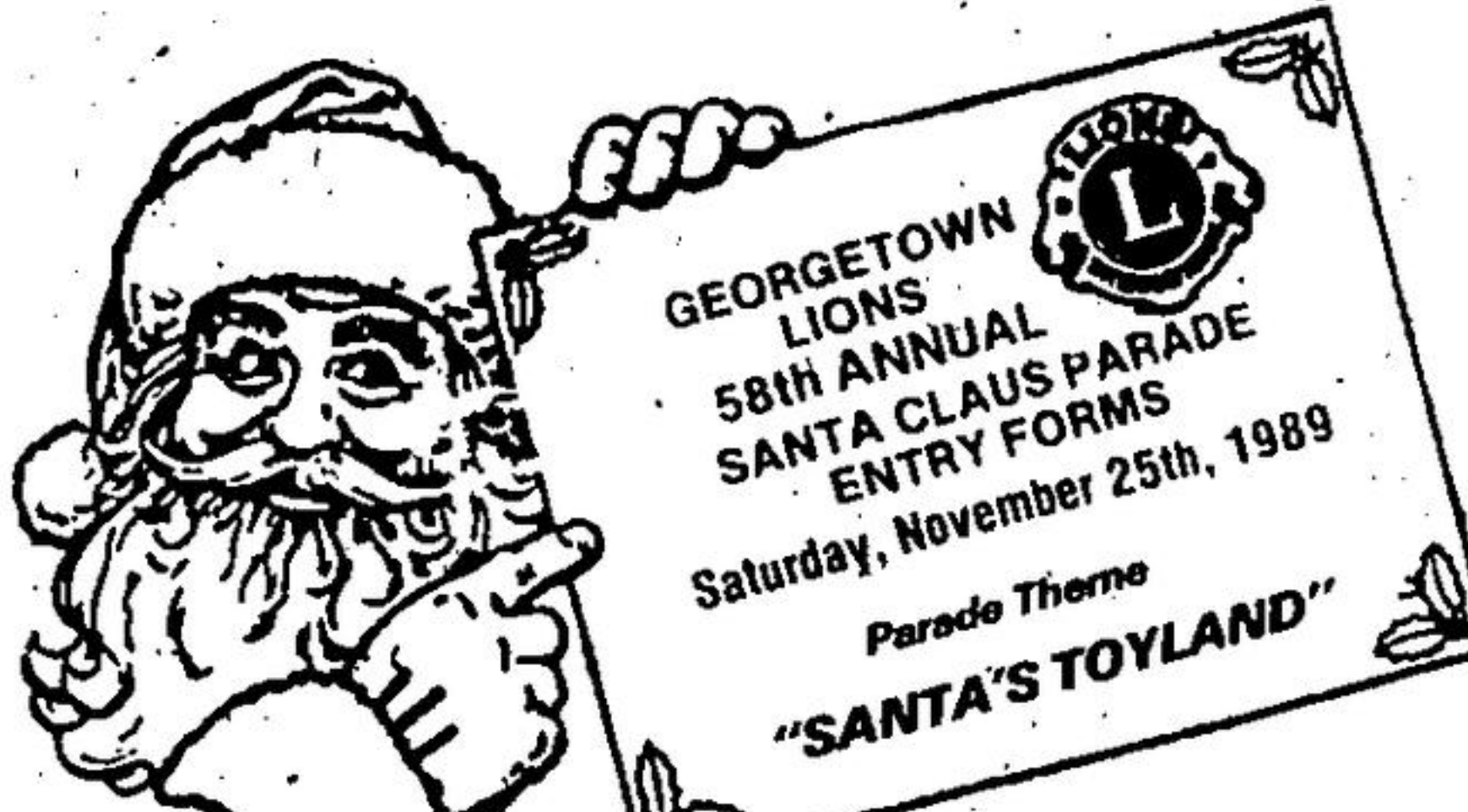
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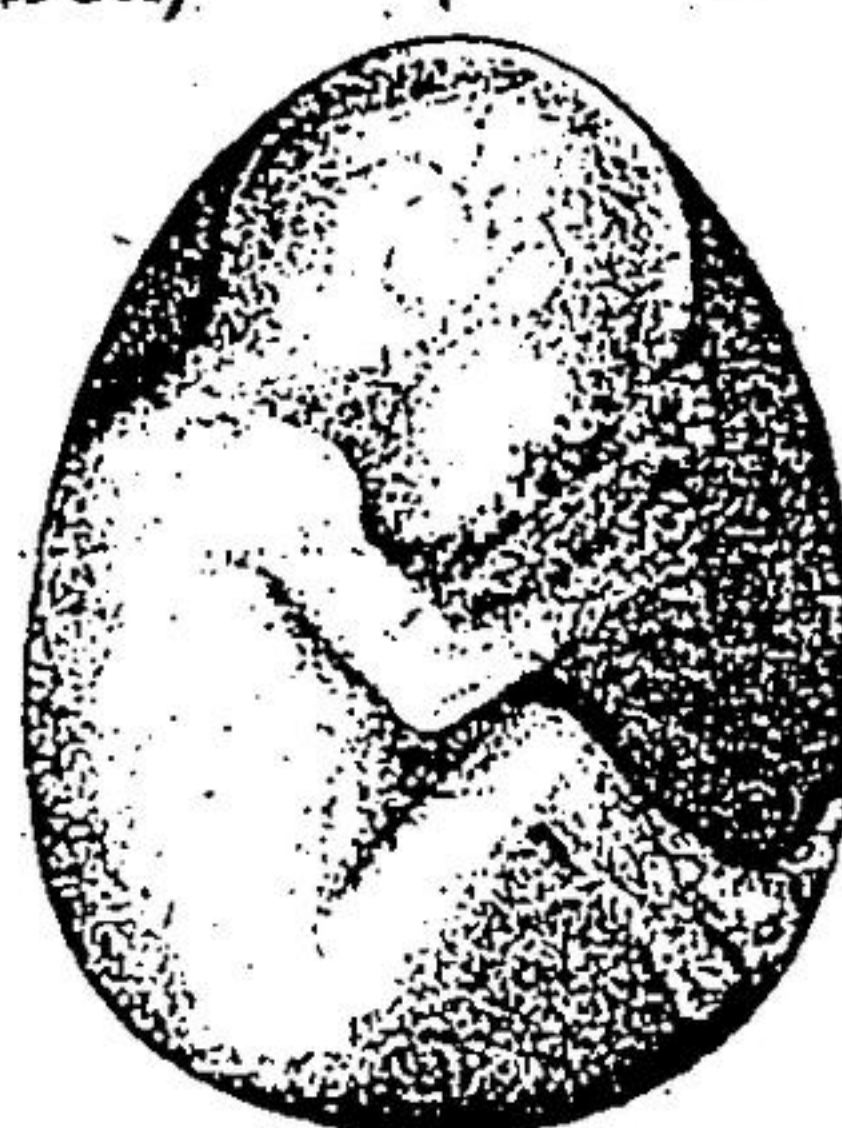
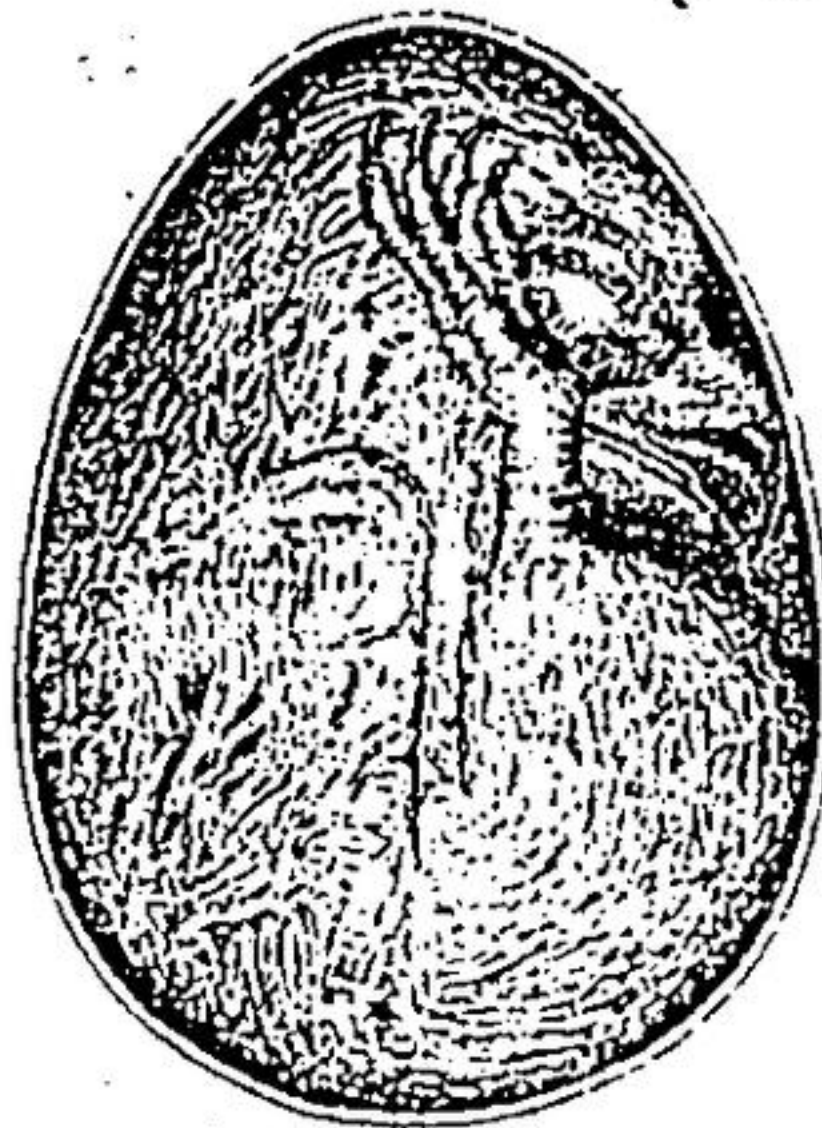
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