

Packaging program introduced at national level

It's there every time we go shopping: Waste. It's hard buying something we need without also buying a bunch of stuff to just throw out.

You know — it's there in the supermarket, all those cucumbers and cabbages shrink-wrapped in plastic. "Environmentally-friendly" products which come in very unfriendly packaging.

The other day I bought two new light fixtures for the kitchen. After installing them I realized I had a whole garbage bag full of — garbage. Boxes and bubble packaging, cardboard tubes, paper wrappings and plastic bags.

As we all know, we have a garbage crisis now. Landfills are filling up, recycling programs are getting very expensive and municipalities have spent millions of taxpayer bucks suing each other over where to put all this crud.

One obvious solution is to not generate so much waste in the first place. That's so simple and obvious even the politicians should get it right.

Well, finally, they have — sort of. A while back the feds set up a National Task Force on Packaging, so that people would stop talking about the problem and start doing something. Of course, first they had to talk — and now that's over.

The result is a National Packaging Protocol, which is the fancy political way of saying, we think we have a plan.

And that plan has the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of waste we generate by the year 2000. Reducing packaging can sure go a long way in achieving that goal.

For example, every year, every family in Canada is estimated to consume about a ton of packaging. Yes, a ton — that's 2,000 pounds of plastic bags and cardboard stiffeners in new shirt collars and dog food containers and those styrofoam forms they put around telephones and computer bits and anything that needs batteries.

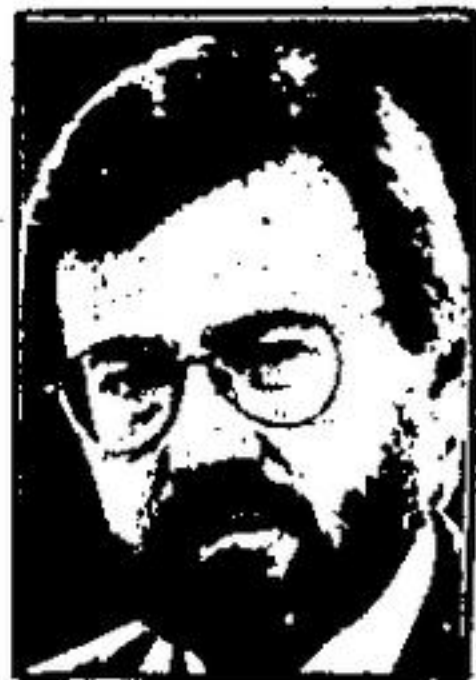
Worse, of that 2,000 pounds of packaging your family buys (just consider the gas wasted driving it all home), more than 80 per cent of it ends up being incinerated (air pollution) or buried (groundwater pollution).

Clearly, this has got to stop. Like yesterday.

So the task force, composed of consumers and government and

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environmentalists, came up with the protocol, and these specific policies:

- All packaging shall have minimal effects on the environ-

ment.

- Priority will be given to the management of packaging through source reduction, reuse and recycling.

- A continuing campaign of information and education will be undertaken to make all Canadians aware of the function and environmental impacts of packaging.

- These policies will apply to all packaging used in Canada, including imports.

- Regulations will be implemented as necessary to achieve compliance with these policies.

- All government policies and practices, affecting packaging will be consistent with these national policies.

Well, that's pretty direct stuff, and should — I believe — be backed up with tough government legislation. This is something I will be promoting when the House of Commons resumes sitting.

Meanwhile some targets have been established: By the end of this year all provinces must have in place the mechanism to monitor the disposal of packaging. By the end of 1992, packaging for disposal must be no more than 80 per cent of what it was in 1988. By the end of 1996, that's down to 65 per cent, and then a 50 per cent reduction by 2000.

Of course, we can all start earlier. If consumers did not buy unnecessary packaging in the first

place, we wouldn't need to throw it away. Think about it the next time you're shopping.

And never stop reminding the politicians of their duty — at all levels of government. A national packaging program won't work if it does not have the backing of other leaders.

That's why I was so pleased the other day to see Halton Region wholeheartedly endorse the plan, passing a resolution to that effect. Halton has also forwarded that resolution to municipal associations and all Canadian cities with more than 50,000 people.

Good on you. Now let's get everybody else behind this. Death to over-packaging!

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VON holds foot clinic

The Halton Victorian Order of Nurses will be holding a foot clinic to access and provide consultations about common foot problems. The consultations, which cost \$15, will be held at Harmony Court on Aug. 4, Milton Community Information Centre on Aug. 9 and 23 and Bruce Street on Aug. 21. For further information contact Carolyn Keyworth, Nursing Supervisor at 827-8800.

Barn blaze

Milton Fire Department were unable to bring a barn fire under control until the barn burned down completely doing \$50,000 damage Sunday.

Police say no livestock was in the barn when the 5 a.m. fire went out of control at the Steeles Avenue and First Line North barn. No injuries were sustained.

Milton Fire Department and the Halton Regional Police are investigating the cause of the fire.



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