

Editorial

Catch-22 tax bind

Halton Hills Town Councillors and Mayor Russ Miller are finding themselves trapped in a Catch-22 situation concerning the 1991 budget tax rate.

To put it bluntly, they will be damned if they do increase the local tax rate to continue providing residents with services they have gotten used to and damned if they don't increase the tax rate, by cutting some services in order to bring the 1991 budget in line with the inflation rate.

Last week, Town Treasurer, Ray King, submitted a town budget direction report to council that in effect would have increased rural residents' tax rates by a whopping 60.7 per cent.

"Unacceptable" responded a chorus of councillors and their rejection of the proposed hike was echoed by Mayor Miller.

Led by Coun. Ann Currie and Coun. Al Cook who stated, "The people are saying enough is enough," the general feeling was that tax hikes in 1991 should reflect the inflation rate or at least not jump more than 10 per cent over the previous year.

All well and good, and the sentiments are honorable, but when services to residents are cut in order to hold down the tax rate increase, residents will question just where the money from their tax dollars is going.

Halton Hills isn't the only community (large, small or medium-sized) faced with the same dilemma.

Metropolitan Toronto residents might be asked to pay an unheard-of second property tax this year unless major cuts are made to their budget.

Metro Council's management committee has suggested that a contingency fund be dipped into to help alleviate the taxpayer's burden but that would be akin to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The contingency fund, estimated at \$22 million, represents money set aside for emergency situations and should Metro Council avail itself of these funds, it would still be faced with a projected \$9.8 million deficit and no money set aside should an emergency situation arise.

Metro Chairman Alan Tonks was quoted as saying, "It's a remarkable situation. This is not a scene that I hope will be repeated in any fiscal year in the future."

Metro Council is also predicting a double-digit property tax hike for 1991.

Halton Hills staff will be preparing a preliminary 1991 budget forecast for a tax range increase of between six and 10 per cent, reflecting how this will affect town services.

Final budget approval is not expected until sometime in the spring of 1991 but clearly, town council will hear from disgruntled taxpayers regardless of which route is taken.

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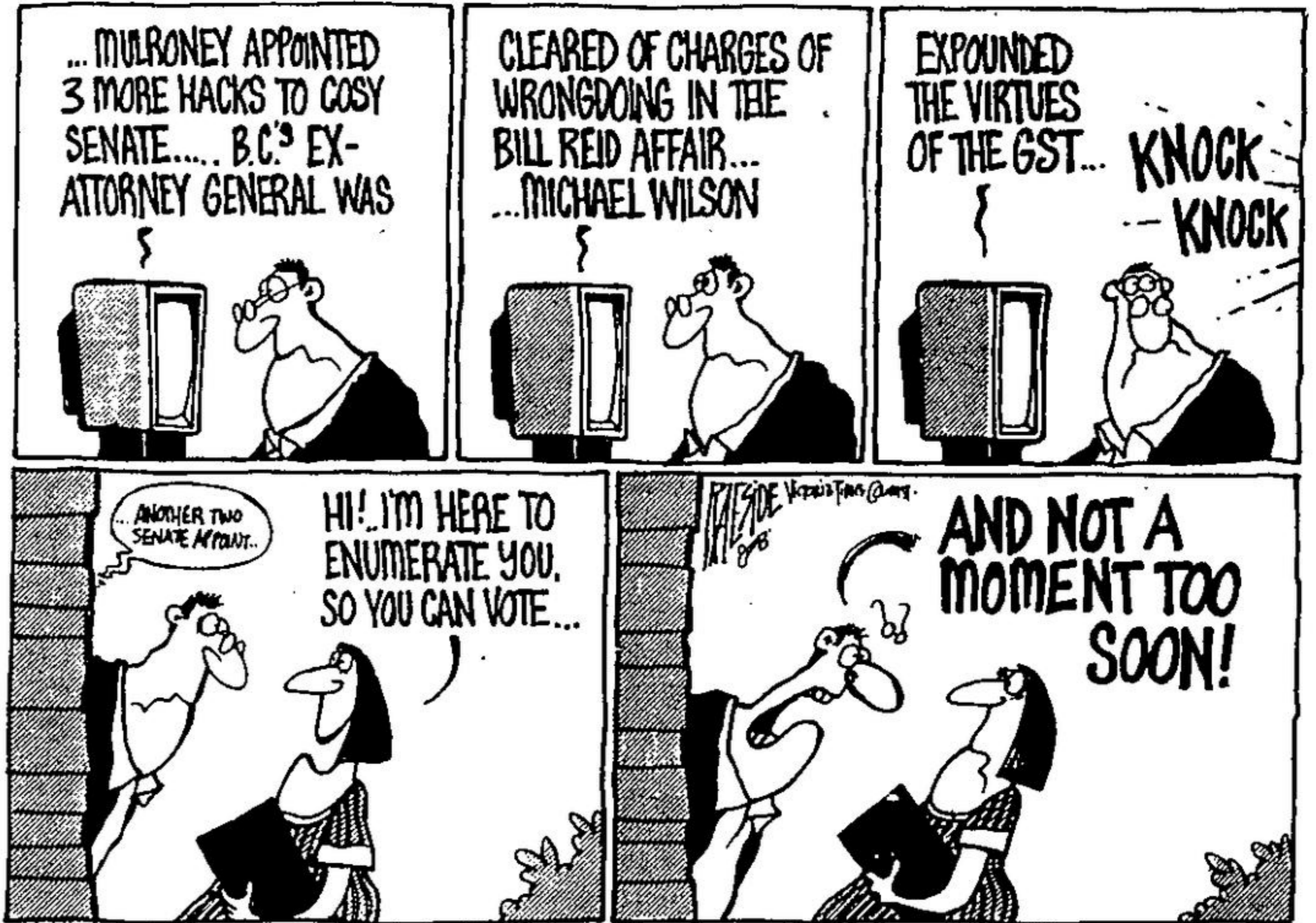
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Letters

Property owners respond

Dear Editor:
Re: Beechbrooke Proposal Galls Writer.

As the owners of the Beechbrooke property, we would like an opportunity to respond to three issues raised in the letter to the Editor entitled, "Beechbrooke Proposal Galls Writer."

First, while it must have been disappointing for Ms. Woode to be denied permission to speak in General Committee, it is important to follow proper rules of procedure. Delegations were given an opportunity to speak and following that, the Councillors debated the issues. When Ms. Woode asked to speak during their debate, she was invited to appear as a delegation the following week prior to the Council vote.

Second, the letter implies that the Beechbrooke site is on Class 1 agricultural land. This is not the case. No Class 1 or Class 2 soils (the most productive) are present. Less than 1/3 of the land is Class 3 and 4. The majority is Class 5 and Organic. This was established by a detailed soil analysis and confirmed (after an on-site inspection) by the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (H.A.A.C.) and by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (O.M.A.F.).

Third, the President of the Halton Federation of Agriculture is quoted as saying: "in their experience O.M.A.F. is not interested in farms with small acreages..." However, even though the Beechbrooke lands have only about 25 acres workable (Class 3-5) and about 30 acres of rough pasture (Class 5-6), O.M.A.F.

played an active part in evaluating its agricultural capability. A land use specialist from O.M.A.F. did an on-site inspection of the property, examined the land uses in the area and evaluated the agricultural report which included a detailed soil analysis. The Ministry then wrote a report stating that it had no objection to the proposed development.

When the Niagara Escarpment Commission (N.E.C.) reversed its position and decided to oppose the Beechbrooke proposal, one of the reasons given was that it wanted to encourage and protect agriculture. The Commissioners voting against the Beechbrooke proposal did not do an on-site inspection or review

the reports by O.M.A.F. and H.A.A.C. They relied solely on the presentations and letters of opposing neighbours. O.M.A.F. then wrote a second letter confirming that it had no objection to the proposed development.

Fortunately, the Halton Hills planning process does not rely on either a developers' opinion or a special interest group's opinion to determine a site's agricultural capability. This evaluation is made using objective rating criteria from the Canada Land Inventory, the Ontario Foodland Guidelines, and reports written by qualified specialists.

Yours truly,
Kent and Lois McClure,
Halton Hills.

Election signs create problems

Dear Editor:

The signs that were put by the roadsides in the last election were either a wonder to behold, or an abomination, depending on one's point of view.

The Libertarians put up a total of one hundred signs. We don't know how many the other parties put up, but we did get complaints about the signs located so as to obstruct motorists view of oncoming traffic, creating a hazard. Complaints were also made about the quantities of signs in certain locations.

One has to assume the old parties feel they can win elections by

the number of signs. We were also assured this would not create garbage since they would be used again. It would be interesting to find out how many signs were put up, and if they are now available, or if they went into the garbage.

Libertarians believe the Mayor is correct in wanting to have some sort of reason in the placing and quantity of signs.

John Shadbolt,
Libertarian Candidate,
Halton Hills.

P.S. - Our 100 signs were either taken by someone or were put in the garbage.

Letter of the week

Government sinks to all-time low

Editor's note: The following letter was submitted to the Halton Hills Herald for publication.

To: The editor of The Herald.
Please find enclosed a copy of a letter that I mailed to Otto Jelinek, Minister of National Revenue on Sept. 28/90.

I received a letter from Revenue Canada Taxation on Sept. 27/90 that I would get \$63.06 in December 1990 from the proposed Goods and Services Tax Credit.

I have never written to the Government before but I strongly feel that this tax is not a fair taxation for the Canadian people, 85% of the people are against it from the latest polls.

I hereby authorize you to print this letter, if you so desire.

Yours truly,
Melvin McCallum.

To: Mr. Otto Jelinek,
Never in the history of Canada, has one Government, or it's leader, ever reached the all time low of the Canadian people, as the current Government has.

It is time now, not tomorrow, to take action and get this country back on the right track.

When over 85% of the Canadian people are opposed to the Goods and Services Tax, does this not tell the Government that something is wrong?

This rebate on the G.S.T. I consider an insult to my intelligent's. The few cents that you are offering back to me, as the same is giving a few crumbs off a loaf of bread, this may ease your conscious to justify this tax but it does not justify the means to the end.

Why don't you just tell the Canadian people to bend over, grab your ankles, because your Government (not ours, 85% of the people), is going to give us the shaft.

I personally authorize you and your Government to keep these few cents (\$63.06) and send me a jar of vasoline instead to help ease being shafted by this Goods and Services Tax.

Yours truly,
Melvin McCallum.

Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop it in the office. Our address is 45 Guelph St., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations or libel.