

Editorial

Self-interest group

The use of the cliched phrase, 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' aptly captures the predicament Canadian taxpayers find themselves in during this time of economic hardship.

The first shoe dropped Feb. 26 when federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson revealed the details of his "get tough" budget - a document purporting to help ease Canada's recession woes - and the second shoe will undoubtedly drop when provincial NDP Finance Minister Floyd Laughtren brings down his first budget, expected sometime in April.

If anything, local frustration at the system in general and the taxation system in particular, could provoke a groundswell of opposition to any decisions made at the municipal or regional level and this would serve no purpose whatsoever.

Such is the situation, which is occurring in a number of Southwestern Ontario communities.

As has been recorded in the Herald previously, a tax revolt which originated in Blenheim, saw Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner dispatched from Ottawa to the area in question and in his report to Finance Minister Wilson on the situation, Mr. Turner pointed out quite succinctly, "They are a symbol - it may be a small tax revolt - but all governments should take these guys seriously."

In Blenheim, a group of businessmen banded together and refused to pay a tax increase last year forcing the local government into freezing 1990 taxes at 1989 levels and subsequently forcing the cancellation of a number of proposed town projects.

The 'Blenheim incident' caught attention throughout Ontario and thus was born the Ontario Taxpayers Coalition - a rag-tag group of supposedly concerned citizens from a number of Ontario municipalities, attempting to lead a tax revolt.

According to Coalition founder, George Lansens, his organization has brought together 25 anti-tax groups and claims 15,000 members in 12 chapters.

All well and good - up to a point - as is the case with the majority of social protest groups.

According to published reports, the Coalition now plans to draft a taxpayer's bill of rights that would demand the various government infrastructures keep tax increases below the inflation rate or be forced to hold a plebiscite on tax increases.

As reported, the Coalition has six main goals including: annual votes on municipal tax increases; representation on all municipal boards and commissions; recorded votes on all money matters; a limit of two terms for municipal councillors and school trustees; an end to duplication of government services and a halt to the starting of new programs by senior levels of government unless the funding is supplied.

We beg to differ with this kind of so-called 'enlightened' way of dealing with taxation and in turn, a slowing economy.

There is already a system in place to deal with these issues - the elected representative process - and it does work quite well. It fails only because self-interest groups choose to work outside the system rather than from within - to the detriment of everybody.

As for the Coalition's main aims - it supposedly is fighting for the taxpayer - who will pay for what basically is duplication of things that are already in place? You got it, the lowly taxpayer, the one the Coalition supposedly represents.

Annual municipal votes on tax increases would cost municipalities more to administer than the result would justify. If a person wants to represent constituents on boards or commissions, he or she can run for office. A record of who voted which way on money matters is usually noted in local newspapers or can be obtained from that particular government. Regarding two terms for councillors and trustees, these people are duly elected by the voters and the voters choice should be respected. Duplication in government services is a bureaucratic nightmare that will end as the money wasted on these services dries up.

The Coalition also wants money from senior levels of government before new programs are initiated - all well and good. But the taxpayer still ends up paying for the programs anyway.

If these people are so concerned, let them put up or shut up.

Run for elected office. Attend every municipal or regional council meeting. Attend school board meetings and let your voice be heard. These meetings are open to the public.

Question your elected and appointed officials on issues you disagree with and voice your dissatisfaction either through the power of the vote through letters to local newspapers making your dissatisfaction public.

The Ontario Taxpayer's Coalition is a 'pig in a poke.' A self-interest group trying to grab headlines and people's money.

It should be viewed as such.

The Halton Hills HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills - Established 1866

A Division of Canadian Newspaper Company Limited
45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6

K. ROBERT MALCOLMSON
Publisher and General Manager

877-2201

EDITORIAL — COLIN GIBSON
Managing Editor
ROB RISK
Sports Editor
Staff Writers: Ben Dummelt, Lisa Boonstoppel-Pot

ADVERTISING — DAN TAYLOR, MANAGER
Jeannine Valois, Stacie Roberts, Craig Teeter, Kim Maryott

PRODUCTION — DAVE HASTINGS, MANAGER
Myles Gillson, Susanne Wilson, Stu Robertson

CLASSIFIED — Joan Mannell, Shirley Jessop

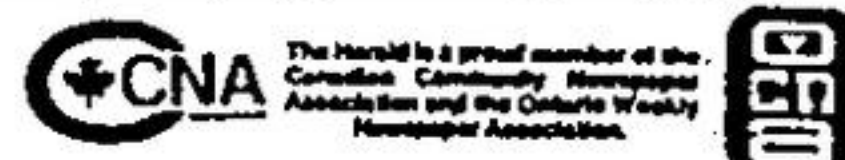
CIRCULATION — Marie Shadbol

ACCOUNTING — Jennie Hapichuk, Accountant and Inge Shier

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Single Copy (In Stores) 25¢
Halton... \$54.00 year
\$28.00 six months
\$18.00 three months
Canada... \$90.00 year
\$48.00 six months
\$27.00 three months
Foreign... \$170.00 year
\$90.00 six months
\$50.00 three months

GST and Provincial Sales Tax
where applicable are extra

Second Class Mail
Registered No. 0934



The Herald is a proud member of the Canadian Community Newspaper Association and the Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association.

The Herald claims copyright on all original news and advertising material created by its employees and published in this newspaper. National Advertising offices: 65 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5H 2M6, 864-1710 or 640 Cathcart St., Montreal, Quebec.

The advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the amount paid for the space actually occupied by that portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred, whether such error is due to the negligence of its servants or otherwise, and there shall be no liability for non insertion of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement.

"Humpty Dummy"



People's Forum Sincere thanks expressed

Dear Sir:
My wife and I wish to express our very sincere and heartfelt thanks for the many messages of support and goodwill for our sons, Christopher and David, serving Canada in the Persian Gulf.

It has been an anxious and stressful time for us, but we have been truly heartened and uplifted by the many friends, neighbors, and indeed, folks from all over the country who have taken the time to let us know that they shared our concern.

One of the factors contributing to the very high morale of our forces in the Gulf is the knowledge that they enjoy the overwhelming support of Canadians back home.

As an example of this, David has received nearly 200 letters, many of them from school children. He hopes to answer them all in due course.

Christopher has a slightly less glamorous but no less important role. He is serving as second-in-

command of a minesweeper engaged in the clearing of mines in the waters off Kuwait.

We are just proud of our sons, their comrades, and the Canadian Armed Forces in which they have the honor of serving.

Yours very sincerely,
Wyndham Deere,
Georgetown.

Friendship rally

Dear Editor:
Organizers hope to attract seniors from across the Province to a Friendship Rally in September.

Seniors in the City of Elliot Lake are planning a Super Rally for September 10, 11, 12, 1991, which is part of the week proclaimed Seniors Week in the community.

This is a spin-off of a smaller senior rally held in the past which was a great success.

A committee has been struck to start planning what events will take place and how to attract people from outside the community.

Our greatest assets are the friendly people, the beautiful

lakes, fishing, clean air and a relaxed way of life.

The City of Elliot Lake has been aggressively pursuing the Retirement Living concept for the community. This will be one more opportunity to showcase what they have to offer.

For further information contact: John Caskie, Secretary, Seniors' Friendship Rally Committee 1991, 29-31 Elizabeth Square, P.O. Box 541, Elliot Lake, Ontario P5A 2J9 (705) 848-9721.

More Letters
on Page 12