

# Editorial

## Municipal concerns

A provincially-commissioned study looking into financial links between municipalities and the provincial government, released its findings and recommendations last week and of the 39 suggestions, one in particular - if adopted - would relieve municipalities of a major financial burden.

The commission, headed by London, Ont. councillor Grant Hopcroft, and the report issued to Municipal Affairs Minister, David Cooke, was basically attempting to untangle the wondrous web of confusion that has been woven, involving municipal and provincial financial obligations.

The report noted: "The current system is confusing and relies too heavily on property taxes."

The main thrust of the report centres on the welfare system and recommends that as early as 1992, the province accept complete responsibility for welfare costs.

The committee also recommends the province and municipalities redefine which service each government provides and then assume its cost, relative to responsibility.

Common sense should have dictated that a commission, such as this, should have been convened years ago to ascertain and identify specific municipal and provincial responsibilities and the cost factors involved to allow for discussion and - if necessary - a realignment of fiscal and moral responsibilities.

Common sense also dictates that even now, there should be some sort of similar ongoing commission dealing solely with municipal and provincial concerns vis-a-vis responsibility in certain public sectors.

Common sense, however, as we are all aware, does not always prevail when politicians and appointed bureaucrats get together to discuss items pertaining to the 'common good.'

Some other recommendations from the committee included:

- that municipalities tax the gross receipts of public utilities and impose a telecommunications tax on cable companies and a special levy on hotels.
- that municipalities should be allowed to levy special charges against developers to help pay for schools and public transit.
- that full market-value reassessment be put in place in Ontario with four-year updates.
- that the province develop a tax system for the elderly that would put taxes off until a property is sold. This would provide a substantial benefit to seniors who are property rich, but money poor.
- that each level of government have clear fields of taxation and that also, municipalities would have no access to income, poll or sales taxes and that the province would not tax property.
- that the province return revenue from the commercial concentration tax on municipalities. For example, provincial tax on pay for parking lots in the Greater Toronto Area.
- that the province help low-income people with an enriched and more sensitive tax credit system based solely on need.
- that municipalities be given power to implement user fees for municipal services such as garbage collection and roads.

The committee's recommendations will be put before school boards and municipal councils for input.

Also, some of the recommendations will be put to the Fair Tax Commission set up by the new NDP provincial government.

This commission, as the NDP claims, was created to look into ways of implementing a minimum tax on corporate income and as well, to set up criteria for a wealth tax.

Some of the recommendations might be considered radical in some quarters.

Such should not be the case.

At a grass-roots level, municipal governments are more aware and more concerned about issues directly affecting citizens because those involved in municipal government face the people in more one-on-one confrontations than do provincial or federal elected representatives.

In that sense, this report represents the voice of the people and their concerns must be addressed.

## 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 by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario 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.

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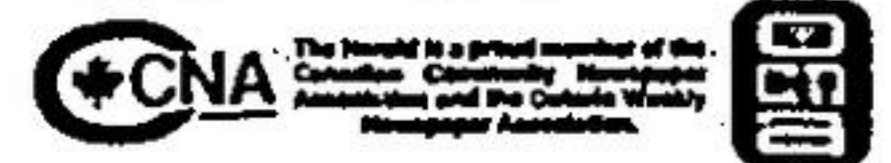
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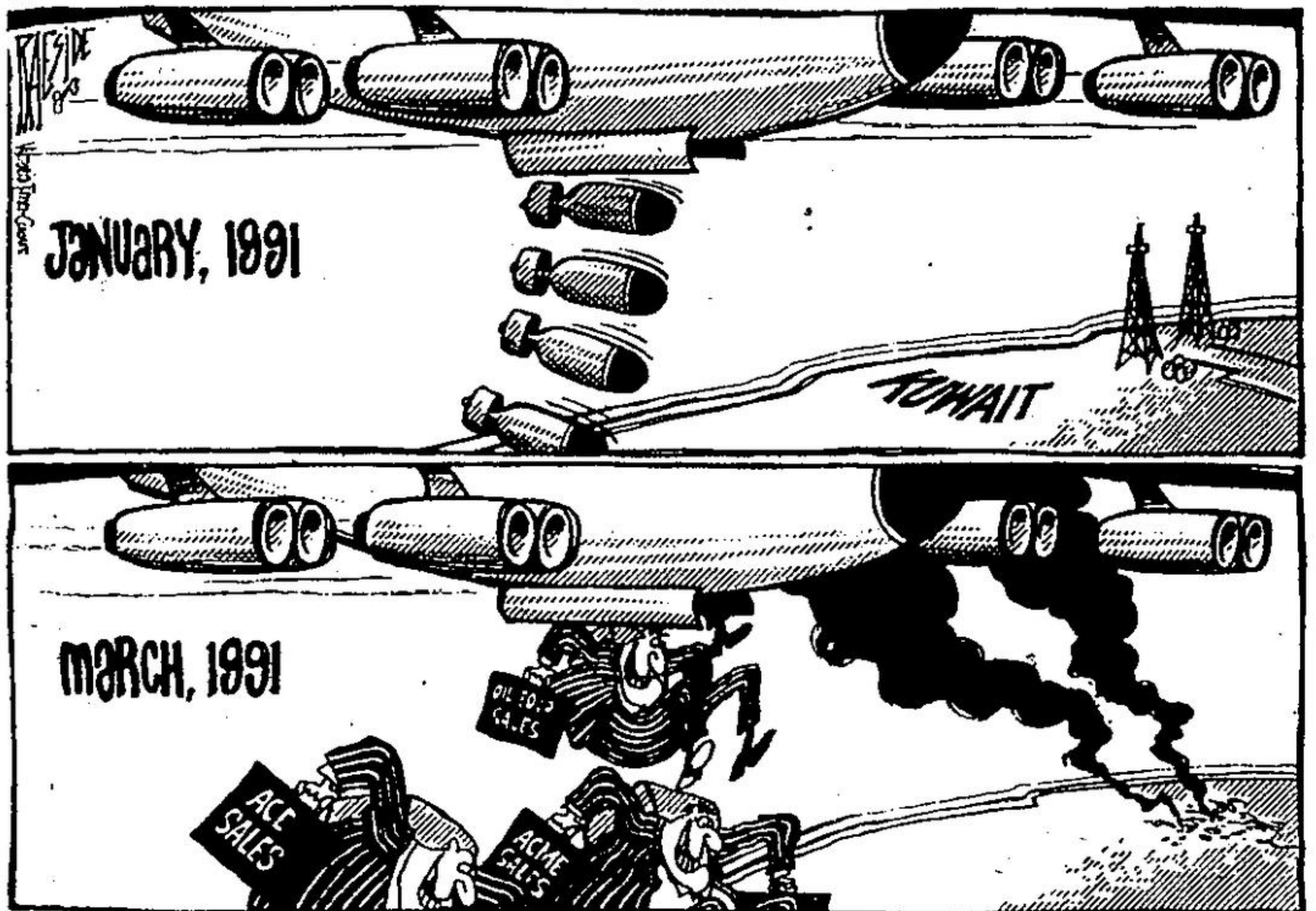
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## People's Forum

### P.C.'s policies are questioned

**Editor's Note:** The following letter was released to The Halton Hills Herald for publication.

Dear Mr. Turner,  
So, Michael Wilson says, amongst other things, "what we're trying to do is break a cycle of wage and salary settlements that are 2 per cent, 3 per cent - sometimes more - higher than inflation... we simply can't afford that as Government or as a country."

I am not in your constituency but a neighboring one, and I read your columns in local newspapers. From the, I believe that you have the ear of our Minister of Finance, and you do indeed appear to understand and care about the many frustrations and resentments felt by the public.

Perhaps knowing the man as you do, you can explain to me how Mr. Wilson can reconcile the above quoted idea with the 11 per cent raise in pay and benefits to Federal M.P.s just a few short weeks before the budget was brought down. He must already have come to the conclusion that restraint was imperative, or did it come to him in a flash just before the budget?

Perhaps you can explain the thumping increase to Mr. Crow and his staff. I thought he was in the know. No? He didn't yet know that restraint was the order of the day.

This is Leadership? Mr. Wilson and Mr. Crow showing us the way out of our financial morass? "Follow us and all will be well"?

And perhaps you can clear my mind on one more point. I keep reading that the dollar must not be allowed to fall because should it do so, imports would become more costly causing more infla-

tion.  
If imports were more costly, is it not possible that we Canadians might be encouraged to seek out local products, thus boosting Canadian industry?

I hope you can reassure me

that I am quite wrong to be amongst the 80 per cent of people thoroughly dissatisfied with the way your government is taking us.

Yours truly,  
Gillian Baker  
Erin, Ont.

### Jews for Jesus a cause for concern

Dear Sir;  
In your paper early in March, you carried an article on the visit to a local church of representatives of an organization called, "Jews for Jesus".

"Jews for Jesus" is an organization which causes concern for many Jews and Christians, most notably, The Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Jewish Congress. "Jews for Jesus" is an aggressive group which tries to convert Jews to Christianity. Yet one of the fundamental tenets of Jewish-Christian dialogue in our time is the renunciation of proselytism in any form by Christians of Jews.

The journal "Ecumenical Review, Volume 1, 1971, page 11, contains the following statement on proselytism: "Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters." In a World Council of Churches document entitled, "Ecumenical Considerations on Jewish-Christian dialogue", Geneva 1983, Sections 4.2 and 4.3, it is stated that Christians have often distorted their

witness for coercive proselytism; Christians should advocate respect for the integrity and identity of all persons and all communities of faith, particularly Jewish people.

Furthermore, if a Jew converts to Christianity, the person is then, no longer a Jew but a Christian. Dennis Prager writes in the Miami Jewish Tribune, March 2-8, 1990, that, "Jews for Jesus" are probably the only people in the world who take on the beliefs of another religion yet deny that they have converted to that religion."

It is commendable that Christians learn about their Jewish roots and recognize the values and traditions they hold in common with Jewish people, for example, the Ten Commandments. It is imperative that Christians respect the integrity of the Jewish faith. Christian-Jewish relationships in the present and future must be based on mutual understanding and respect and must be different from the tragic past.

Yours truly,  
Thomas M.S. Kingston,  
Rector, St. George's  
Anglican Church  
Georgetown.