

With a little hope we'll get through the tough times

Halton Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy predicted during a recent address that the next six to eight months will be the most difficult period that all levels of Canadian government will face since the depression.

Part of the reason for this dire prediction is based on Federal government cutbacks, the effects of which are trickling down to the Regional Municipality of Halton, as well as to municipalities across the country.

The trickle down effect unfolds as follows: the Federal government cuts transfer payments to the provinces who in turn trim their funding aimed at municipalities.

Not surprisingly Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner was questioned during his recent phone-in show

about the trickle down effect and the resulting difficulties municipalities encounter in providing necessary services.

Mr. Turner responded by saying if the Federal government is expected to cutback why shouldn't the other levels of government?

The response makes sense since people want lower taxes. The lower government expenditures, the lower people's taxes.

However another way of looking at the situation is to consider that the more people spend, the more revenue the Federal and provincial governments collect.

In turn, the more grant money available for municipalities.

This logic implies the greater amount of money people spend the more revenue all levels of govern-



Ben's Banter
by Ben Dummett

ment have access to without being forced to increase taxes.

However there is only one catch to this idea and it's a big catch; everything hinges on increased spending. And that's something people aren't doing now.

As a result, governments are forced to cut back, thus Mr. Pomeroy's prediction.

But the experts say only when consumer confidence returns and people start spending again will the economy climb out of the recession.

Therefore the question is, should the Halton Regional Chairman be comparing the next eight months to the 30s'?

In doing so he certainly isn't doing anything to restore people's confidence to spend more money and thereby kick-start the economy.

Granted many people have been hurt by the recession so they couldn't start spending money even if they wanted too.

But there are also many others who still have money despite the

hard economic times.

These people may be willing to put more money into the economy, but then again they may not upon hearing predictions similar to that of Mr. Pomeroy.

By the same token, the Chairman is obligated to be truthful with the public.

Where does that leave us then? With nothing more than hope.

Hope that all three levels of government won't cutback expenditures so much that people in desperate need of help because of the recession don't receive it; and hope that government predictions of tough times ahead based on the current economic reality don't discourage those with money to spend it.

People must strive for the best to achieve results

With the Premiers meeting out of the way, we should all feel a huge sense of relief...

It is unfortunately easy to get cynical about the doings of our political leaders. So much is done for the name of 'Politics', (giving a bad name to a word which after all means dealing with the public) and so little is done for the Nation's well being!

But cynicism is not terribly productive and indeed many politicians are still trying to put in an honest day of work. And anyhow, we do not have any valid alternative to our way of doing things.

We must also remember that, even with recession and a very high level of unemployment, we Canadians are still better off than most. Something worth remembering particularly at this

time of festivity.

But soon will come New Year, and with it the need to make some good plans for 1992. According to the forecast of the OECD, (the club of the industrialized nations), we should see a 3.1 per cent economic growth in 1992. Which, with an inflation of close to two per cent, should make for rather good year. The danger here is not cynicism, but undue optimism. A three per cent economic growth is not bad at all, but with a population growth of 250,000 souls (th level of this year), it means little in personal terms. We are hardly in a position to roll over and let the leaders get on with the job.

Our major weaknesses have not been tackled: our education system still fails to produce the kind of people we need. At the



Another View
by Carlo Testa

university level we have reached and passed the point of saturation. We need more, and better teachers; more and better institutions. Our welfare networks cope with the stress of unemployment but do little to bring people back to a meaningful, productive life. Even our physical infrastructures are aging and need expansion. Sure we are better off

than most, but we cannot be complacent.

Is there something we, the average 'Joe Citizen', can do to help ourselves and Canada?

There is and it is not glamorous, and it goes a lot against our nature. We are probably too good natured and too willing to accept what is given.

My favorite suggestions go in two directions. First let us recognize that government(s) cannot solve our problems. The solution comes from us, and from us only. Government, on our age, can at best provide a positive environment for our efforts. We have seen many companies prosper, even here in Halton Hills, during this recession. They were not just lucky, they had some good plans and the guts to go with them. And...damn

the government!

On the other hand let us keep our politicians under constant scrutiny and pressure. We want an honest day of work out of them; we want some leadership and initiative. Sure we like to be consulted, we even want the right to make decisions, (see the referendum on a new constitution), but we also want some action and leadership. Just to hire somebody to be a conduit to Ottawa, Queen's Park, or Town Council, is not very productive. After all if all that our representatives can do is to carry our messages, we could even use Canada Post.

So, let us not rely on Government, but let us demand the most.

It does pay to strive for the best.

Sappy best describes Christmas ditty about Rudolph

I sometimes fear I have a certain Attitude Problem.

This thought occurred the other day, when I read about the shocking Christmas display in a Victoria store window. It seems the owner has put up a large caricature of Santa Claus holding a gun to the head of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Underneath is the warning: "Shop here or Rudolph gets it."

Just imagine. Here at the height of the Christmas Season, some store owner shows Santa himself menacing the life of beloved 'Lightbulb Beezer. I love it.

Obviously, this reaction places me among the minority. Because apparently there has already been a considerable public outcry.

One angry mother is quoted as saying this display flies in the face of efforts to teach children to be kind to animals. This is fair enough.

However, the mother also charges that the display contradicts efforts to teach children they mustn't use guns as toys. And this really isn't true.

I mean, this particular Santa is not using his gun as a toy. He's using it to off Rudolph. There's a difference.

In any case, I've been trying to figure out why I like this display so much.

At first, I wondered if this is because it makes a blackly ironic

point about the commercialism of Christmas. But I don't mind the commercialism so much anyway.

Sure, it can be depressing, particularly so when the kids get caught up in it, and start believing that the True Spirit of Christmas means receiving all those wretched toys that are advertised during cartoons.

On the bright side, however, this leaves you with kids who can be effectively threatened. There's a certain satisfaction in being able to cry: "If you don't clean up your room this instant, you will never receive Baby Incontinent, the revolting doll who wets her nappies."

Neither does my reaction arise out of any animosity toward Santa. In fact, I've been trying hard to convince the kids he really exists, now that they're both old enough to have grave doubts.

Forget about putting out cookies and milk this Christmas Eve, I've been telling them. Let's make Santa really happy. Just give me a \$3.50 apiece, and I'll buy him a half-dozen beer.

I've added that I virtually guarantee the beer will have disappeared by Christmas morning, thus proving beyond all doubt that he was here.

Anyway, I've decided that my reaction to that window display boils down, in the end, to something quite simple.

I never could stand Rudolph. I don't have anything against the other reindeer, really. In fact, a while ago the kids and I spent a pleasant hour remembering their names.

The kids, bright sparks that they are, came up with Prancer, Dancer, Comet, Donner and Blitzen. And, happily, I was able to recall that the remaining three are Dopey, Grumpy and Sleazy.

But I've never been able to forgive Rudolph for that sappy little ballad that was written about him.

Naturally, the ghastly little ditty is one of precisely two Christmas songs that today's kids know by heart-the other one being the carol that goes "We three kings of Orient are. Smoking on a rubber cigar."

And granted, that ghastly little ditty says something heartening to kids. Rudolph, after all, is the reindeer geek who is picked on until his shiny nose lights Santa's way through the fog.

Kids thus learn that they too can be accepted by their peers even if they have a big red nose.

Although they're still toast if they're wearing the wrong kind of running shoes.

Anyway, let me just go on record as saying I'm firmly on-side with the great Peter Gzowski himself, who recently observed on national radio that Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is the Yuletide equivalent of Feelings.

So have yourself a happy Christmas. Let's all bask in the warmth of this season of peace on earth and good will toward men.

But to hck with ol' Lightbulb Beezer.

People's Forum

Provincial process not followed

Dear Sir,
The official Review required by the Environmental Assessment Act has now been completed and published. Documents may be viewed at the Library. Any interested party must make a submission regarding this review by Jan. 17, 1992 to: The Honorable Ruth Grier, Minister of the Environment, 15th Floor, 135 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, Ont. M4V 1P5.

If the Dump goes ahead we will have 200,000 tons of garbage sitting on our water aquifer several hundred feet above the level of Georgetown. One fracture could cause uncorrectable damage to our drinking water supply. There are other severe consequences. Thus all citizens should write the Minister to oppose the dump. Some key points follow:

1. The proper process has not been followed. The Environmental Assessment (EA) Act requires the dump proponent to examine "alternatives to the undertaking". This has not been done; the proponent has only examined a very, limited number of commercially attractive quarry sites.

Based on this alone the Minister should declare the EA incomplete and reject the proposition.

2. On page 45 of the Executive Summary of the review the Ministers staff states that not all components necessary for the EA are present. The Minister should be especially vigilant since the proponent is a private-for-profit company and not a municipality as preferred by the Ministry. Moreover, the garbage could come from anywhere in Ontario thus policing for illegal garbage will be much more difficult. Based on this alone the Minister should declare the EA incomplete.

3. The Ministry of the Environment concludes that the dump is technically acceptable from the groundwater perspective but admits the possibility of ruptures in the quarry floor and "lacks the expertise", (p37), to evaluate all the consequences. This is insufficient protection for the Georgetown drinking water.

4. The Niagara Escarpment, including rare vegetation and wildlife, deserves to be protected. In presence of the inevitable seagulls, (which will spillover to

Fairy Lake in Acton) and vermin is incompatible with the natural beauty of the Escarpment.

5. The EA report states that the water of Black Creek does not currently meet the Provincial Water Quality Objectives. It is not credible that the treated leachate to be discharged into Black Creek (which runs into the Credit River) will not worsen the situation.

6. The additional disruption to the lives of those living nearby from traffic, noise, and other effects will be severe.

7. The hearing requested by the proponent should be denied. A hearing is not a substitute for a substantially deficient proposal.

The reason for criticizing the process as the first priority is to try to avoid a costly hearing, or worse still, Ministerial approval without a hearing. Georgetown, indeed all Halton Hills, residents, are urged to register their strong objections right now, to the proposed Acton Dump. Letters may preferably be left at a P.O.W.E.R. pick up point, or mailed direct to the Minister.

Yours sincerely,
John B. Crispin

