

# Opinion

## Big business benefits most from tax reform

By ANN M. SMITH

At first blush, the prospect of a highly publicized and emotionally-charged debate over reform of sales tax may not seem all that exciting. If you agree, it will probably be a very long summer.

But for many observers, the all-important debate has already begun. During the long and tedious process of pre-budget discussions, Finance Minister Wilson will no doubt hear umpteen different solutions on how he should go about making repairs to the decaying systems of sales tax in this country. (Few disagree that, yes, the reforms are long overdue; the problem is more a matter of which course of action Wilson should take.)

According to a recent pre-budget submission prepared by the 80,000 member Canadian Federation of Independent Business, there is a very real danger that consumers and small business will not be given a strong enough voice in the ensuing process of public debate. CFIB President John Bulloch says the issue of sales tax reform, however, is just too important to the country's overall economic stability.

"Big business is the promoter and major beneficiary of sales tax reform," says Bulloch, "as this will have the effect of shifting sales tax away from exporters and on to consumers and small business."

It would be political suicide for the government, he adds, to ignore the interests of consumers and small business in order to appease the corporate elite.

"The benefits of a new sales tax system—designed to help Canadian exporters—will be wiped out if the government places a nightmarish paperburden on small business. Mr. Wilson must remember where the vast majority of all the jobs in Canada are coming from.

"According to Statistics Canada, firms employing fewer than 50 people accounted for 93 per cent of all private sector job creation between 1978 and 1986. Firms employing more than 500 people, on the other hand, generated a net loss equivalent of 50,000 jobs."

During a pre-budget meeting, Bulloch told Wilson that sales tax reform presents problems for the small business community in the following areas:

- That an increased sales tax on consumer services will drive economic activity underground to the detriment of all legitimate, taxpaying businesses.
- That an increased sales tax on consumer goods and services will reduce demand, which in turn will result in a diminished contribution by small firms to job creation and economic growth.
- That the costs of administering the new sales tax system for smaller firms and government will be greater than the revenue collected.
- That auditing of small firms in the future by Revenue Canada will be a continuous source of fear and harassment.

Sales tax reform will fail unless consumers and small business are treated fairly. Our economy cannot afford a warped system of sales tax that favors big business at the expense of the average Canadian.

(Ann M. Smith is with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.)

### Letters

## Ignore prayer ruling

Dear editor,

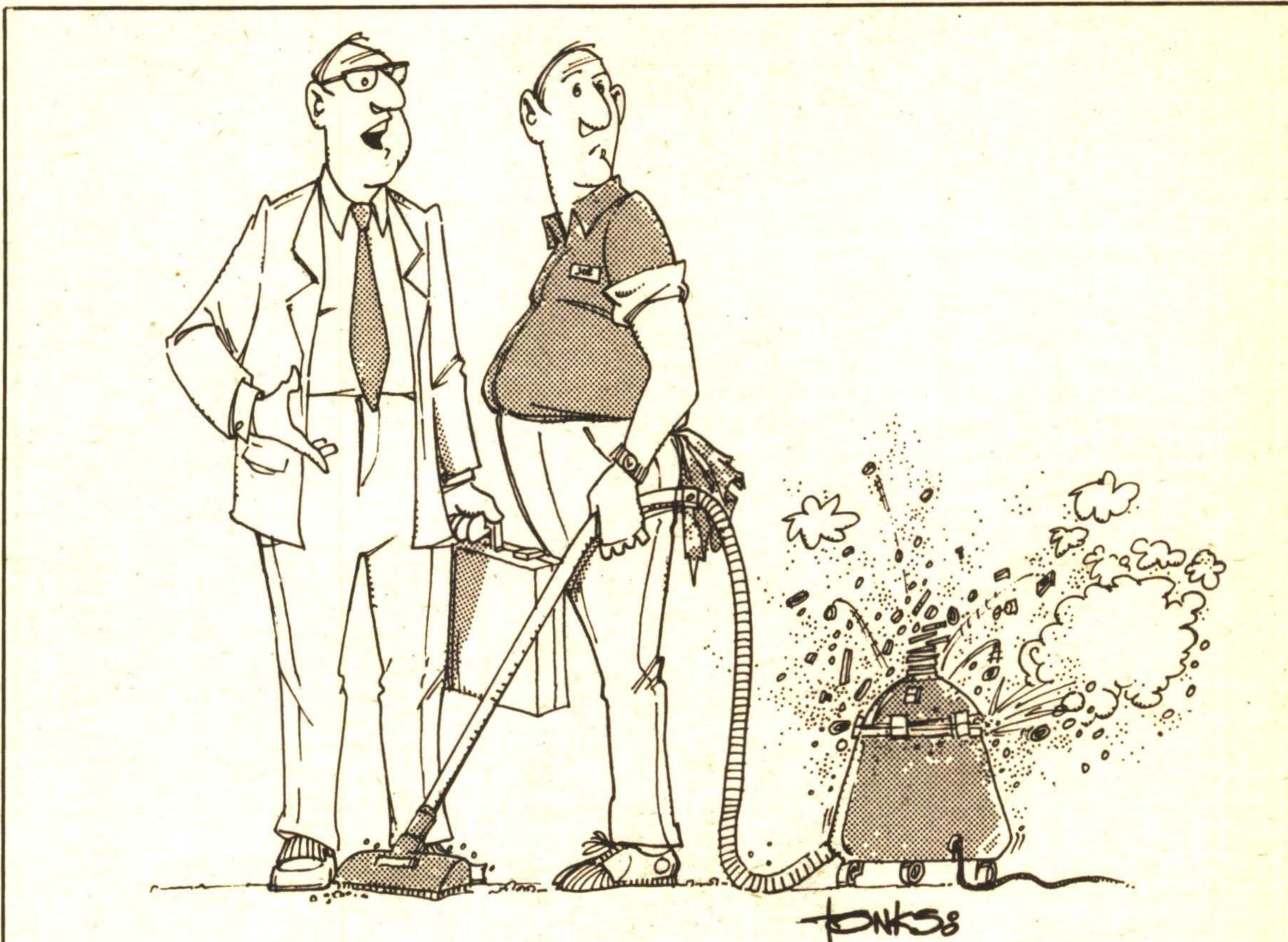
For a hundred years Ontario has been ruled by the majority of votes cast by electors. Ontario has also been a Christian society. As a part of that Christian culture we have had our schools open the day with an appeal to God by morning prayer.

Now a group of three people from other cultures and religions have had the arrogance to demand that the six million Christians in Ontario shall be restricted and not be allowed to open the school day for our children in the manner we have followed for a hundred years.

Never before in history have three people from another culture been able to dictate to six million people how, or how not, they may, or may not, conduct their worship of God. Never before in history have the rulers of six million people been so insipid as to allow three people to dictate the laws for the six million people. And never before has any judiciary been so insipid that they would inflict the dictates of three people on the six million majority. Never before in any country have 50,000 Christian teachers been ruled by the dictates of three people of other religions.

What are we going to do about it? I suggest that we simply ignore the ruling and that every one of the 50,000 teachers open the school day by prayer, preferably the Lord's Prayer, as we have done for a hundred years. There are thousands of laws on the books which are out of date, or for some other reason are not applicable any more and are simply ignored. This ruling is one that should be ignored right from the start.

Yours respectfully,  
Frank Southern  
Sudbury, Ontario



"LOOKS LIKE YOUR VACUUM CLEANER HAS 'BIT THE DUST'...!!!"

## Our readers write

### Cyclists not the only hazard on Halton Hills roads, reader says

To the editor,

After reading the editorial 'Cyclists beware' I felt I had to write. I am aware the article is directed to the cyclists who do not follow basic traffic rules, but as an avid cyclist in the Halton area I would like to say my piece.

I am 35 years of age and I ride my bicycle for pleasure and also for transportation to and from work. When I am on the road I wear a red reflective vest, helmet with reflectors, safety glasses, front and rear reflectors attached to the bike and lights for night riding. I am very conscious of the traffic around me and I obey all the traffic regulations.

Before residing in Georgetown I lived in Toronto where I rode 20 km to work and another 20 km return every day. I never had problems and these were some of the busiest streets in Canada.

Since I have been riding in Georgetown I have been involved in two accidents, both of which the police have reports on.

The first was on September 22, 1988 in which I was riding from Milton to Georgetown on the Eighth Line. Just as I passed a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction, the driver opened his window and threw a paper cup of water out at me, using me for target practice. The force at which I was hit knocked me off the bike. The cup had hit me square in the face leaving my face swollen and a permanent scar below my eye. If I had not been wearing my safety glasses I would be blind in the eye today.

The second incident happened on October 17, 1988 on Mountainview Rd. A van cut me off while pulling out of a driveway. The collision knocked me off the bike

causing \$100 damage to my bike. As I lay in the road the driver looked at me in his mirror and then drove off. Another vehicle drove around me and kept driving away.

The driver of the van was caught and charged with failing to remain. I wish the other two boys in the small gray compact car who threw the cup at me had also been caught as this act was done deliberately.

In response to your editorial, some of us cyclists know the risk of riding on the streets of Halton Hills and I feel the drivers of motor vehicles should be more aware of the danger they create to the cyclist. Even though some of us do obey the laws there are drivers out there who drive too closely and honk their horns to scare the cyclist as it is funny to watch them fall off.

It is a very deadly game out there on the streets if both parties do not co-operate and share the roadways. I know all too well the feeling of lying in the middle of a busy street after being knocked down with traffic coming towards me. It is not what you would like your children to hear.

I welcome the laws to make cycling safer but the motor vehicle operator must show consideration for cyclists, too. It would make me feel more at ease knowing that my son or your daughter could go to the corner store and return alive.

Happy cycling  
Doug Morrison  
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P.S. Your paper did mention the second incident in your police beat columns.

# HALTON HILLS Week End

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