

Opinion

Gas prices too high

Are gasoline prices too high? Of course they are, compared to prices in the United States where motorists and truckers only pay half the price Canadians do for their favorite brand.

The executive director of The Fraser Institute, Dr. Michael Walker, recently compiled an economic report card on the performance of the present Conservative government. In it he examines the attitudes of the government towards gasoline and other petroleum products. He writes:

"Gasoline and other automotive fuels bear two forms of federal tax: an excise tax and the manufacturers' sales tax. The excise tax portion of this total accounts for revenue equal to about half of one cent of every dollar of GDP. That is more than double the amount of revenue produced by the federal taxes on alcohol and tobacco.

"Since 1985, the yield of the automotive fuels tax has increased five times. In a country as large as Canada where transportation is a disproportionately large factor in everyday life, it does not seem sensible to levy a disproportionate amount of tax on automotive fuels.

"While it is true that gasoline prices in Canada are below those typically experienced in Europe, for example, it is also the case that gasoline and transportation are less effective in determining the conditions of production and the standard of living in the relatively tiny countries of Europe.

"Canada is a country fortunate to be self-sufficient in energy. Consumers of gasoline are, nevertheless, confronted by an energy price which is far above the competitive world level and far above the level persisting in the economy of our largest trading partner, the United States. For permitting this to persist, the government deserves a down grading of its standing on energy policy to a B from an A."

The Fraser Institute has been labelled a conservative think tank so it is hard to attribute Dr. Walker's comments to political bias. He recognizes we are paying too much for gasoline, an opinion every motorist recognizes when he fills up at the pump.

Families feel the pinch

A young mother with three children dropped in recently with a letter. Discussion turned to the difficulties young families face these days trying to raise children with the endless cycle of tax increases.

She said they bought a home they felt they could afford about four years ago when taxes were about \$1,200 a year. This year their tax bill on their modest home was \$2,400, double what it had been four years ago.

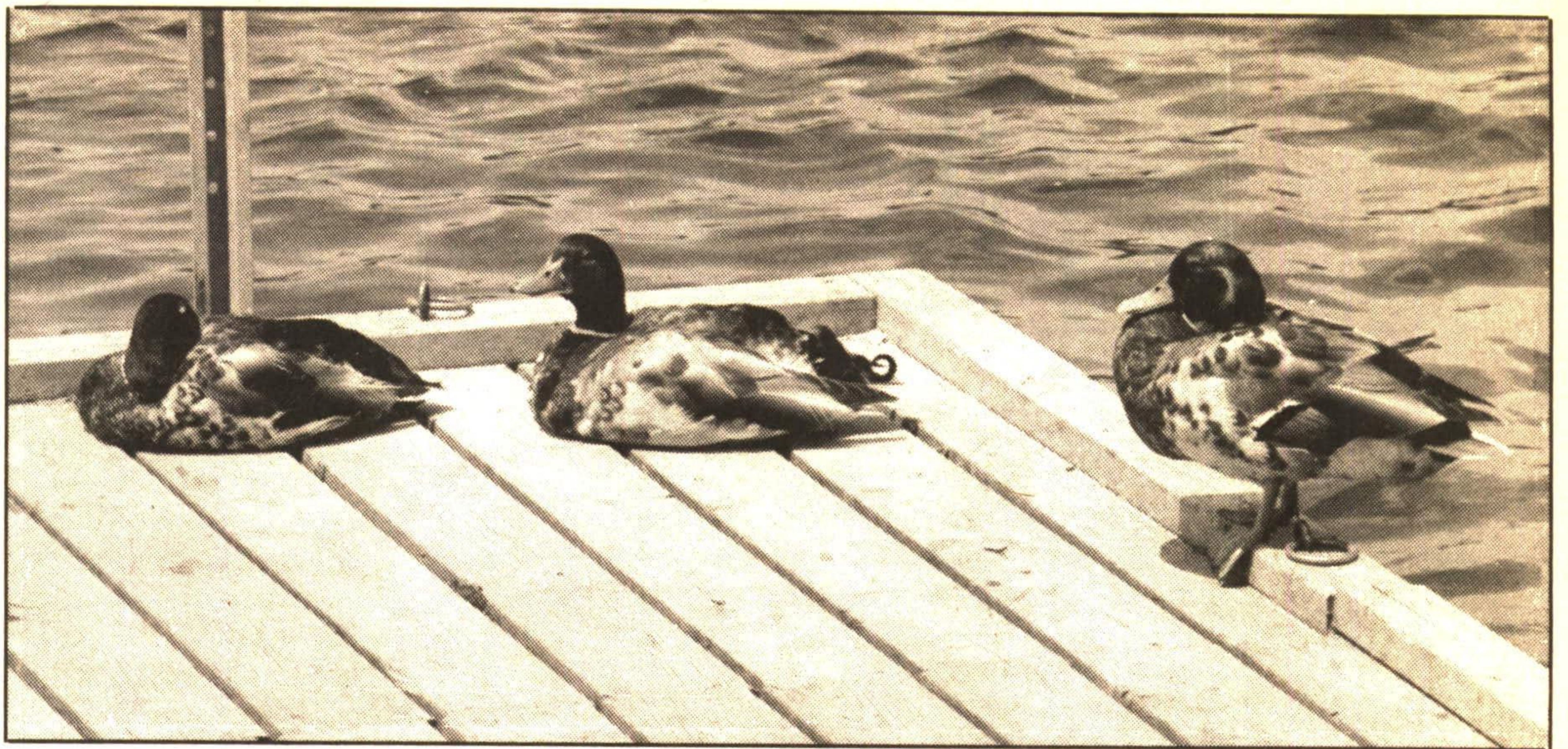
Every year the increase was well over the rate of inflation, she noted, but her husband's salary increases only ranged from 2 to 5 per cent over the same period.

She was upset because governments and boards which spend public money constantly put more financial pressures on the family unit while endlessly preaching that the family is the best thing we have going for us. This young mother says the constant spending has to stop or it is going to destroy the family life it purports to be so concerned about.

She noted this year municipal taxes went up over \$200, electricity jumped 7 per cent, grocery and other goods escalated but wage increases barely made 5 per cent. Now with the Goods and Services Tax looming we can expect another 7 per cent on top of everything else but groceries to add to family woes. Hydro, for instance, has been advised their rates should increase 12.5 per cent. Add 7 per cent to that figure and you've got a 20 per cent increase.

Indeed it's a bleak outlook for young families who can afford a home. For those who can't the picture is worse.

We've got to stop the thoughtless spending, the crazy cycle which erodes incomes and destroy family life. The young mother is right. - H.C.



Just ducked in here for a minute

The dock at the boat house in Fairy Lake, Acton, provides a convenient place to bask for these Mallard ducks, a few of the hundreds of waterfowl that make the lake their home. - Ted Brown Photo

Our Readers Write

Requests mandatory soil testing

Following is a letter to Mayor Russ Miller filed with this newspaper for publication:

Dear Mayor Miller,

I am writing to request that extensive soil testing be made a mandatory part of any building application for ravine properties in Halton Hills. I would further request that resulting consultants' recommendations be followed strictly by the builder under the close supervision of appropriate town staff.

Approximately 18 years ago when Georgetown East was being developed, soil testing was carried out by Arthur Trow Consultants. The town council of the time acknowledged receipt of the resulting report and forwarded it to the Engineering Department. However, the recommendations in the report were never implemented and the developer proceeded as he saw fit.

As a result 33 Georgetown residents now suffer intermittent problems with their properties. The cost of repairs is in the area of \$797,000. We are today paying for an error made by a town council or staff almost 20 years ago. This must not happen again.

Consider the proposed 15 storey twin towers on sensitive ravine property where only three homes

stood on Maple Avenue. You require a 25 foot setback from the ravine edge for individual homes. Is this sufficient for 15 storey towers? How much will soil erosion increase with the removal of a considerable number of trees and ground cover? How stable will the land be with extensive excavation for underground parking and other amenities? Can the ravine edge be made stable enough to cantilever a swimming pool from, considering the pool that fell into the ravine on one of the aforementioned properties in east Georgetown?

Is town staff prepared and numerous enough now to see that all safety and other requirements are carried out? Having had to personally supervise the construction of my own home on Gardiner Drive five years ago, because of the lack of expected support from town inspectors, we are aware of the shortcuts builders may try to get away with without scrupulous supervision.

Safety must be made a priority. Please make developers, who stand to make excellent profit, pay now for soil testing so that we the taxpayers do not have to pay later.

Yours truly,
Gail Rutherford

Feel betrayed by abortion bill

Following is a letter to MP Garth Turner filed with the newspaper for publication:

Dear Mr. Turner:

Further to your letter of May 30 explaining why you voted for the pro-abortion bill C-43 in the house of Commons, the following is our response.

We feel sad and betrayed. We understand your reasons for your vote, but unfortunately in the final analysis when it came down to choosing between politics or principles you and the other members of your party who voted for this bill chose politics and in the process Parliament has undermined its own law-making nature.

First, it makes acts of violence legal—acts which destroys human life. It endorses the false principle that the end justifies the means.

Second, the legislation is absurd. It places the killing of unborn children in the Criminal Code, yet assures perpetrators of the crime that they have nothing to fear: the crime may be committed for any reason whatsoever. This law saves no lives!

In Canada abortions are now legal for any reason; they are no longer restricted to hospitals but may be

done anywhere, including doctors' offices; and may be done at any time of the pregnancy right up until birth. In addition to being legal, abortions are also fully funded by provincial health insurance, despite the fact that abortions have very little to do with the question of health.

May 29, the day the Commons passed Bill C-43 will be a black day in our history books. Canada now stands with China as having the most wide-open abortion law in the world. Unlike China, of course, it does not yet force women to get abortions through it was revealed last December that in the Canadian Army women soldiers are virtually ordered to have them, or face being dismissed.

The Progressive Conservatives no longer represent our family and life values and for that reason, we will not be renewing our party memberships. In addition, we will be supporting and working on behalf of the Family Coalition Party which shares and also acts out our values.

Sincerely,
Victor and Elza Estevan

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