

Opinion

No wonder we're concerned

If provincial politicians wonder why taxes were such a high profile issue in the recent election campaign they need consult only The Fraser Institute whose studies show the tax bill of the average family has increased 1,367 per cent since 1961.

In 1976 the Fraser Institute began compiling an index of taxation called the Consumer Tax Index. This index monitors the tax bill faced by the average Canadian family over the years. In 1961, for example, the average family had an income of \$5,000 and faced a total tax bill of \$1,675. By the end of 1990 it is estimated that the average family will earn \$49,500 but of that \$24,568 will go to the tax collectors at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels in the form of hidden and direct taxes.

The Institute's tax index shows that the tax bill of the average family has increased by 1,367 per cent since 1961. Including deferred taxation, the Balanced Budget Tax Index has increased by 1,565 per cent.

In comparing the tax index to other items on which consumers spend their income, the Institute notes that the tax index has risen more sharply than an index of any other economic burdens the family faces - including the much discussed Consumer Price Index. Total outlays on taxes now account for a more significant chunk of the consumer's budget than shelter, food, and clothing combined - a complete reversal of the situation in 1961 as the following tables and figures show.

One of the most revealing calculations provided by the Institute's study is the relationship between income taxes and other taxes. While most Canadians consider income taxes the most significant taxes they pay, the fact is that other taxes account for a larger fraction of the total tax bill. In 1990, for example, the average family will pay income taxes of \$9,131. Other taxes, ranging from oil and motor vehicle taxes to amusement and property taxes, will amount to a total of \$15,437. In other words, taxes other than those levied on income account for nearly 63 per cent of the total tax bill of the average Canadian family.

The Institute's "Balanced Budget Tax Rate" is calculated on the basis of all levels of government paying as they go - operating on a balanced budget. The results are interesting. They show that in 1990, the average Canadian family would have to pay 6.7 per cent more of their income than they actually paid to wipe out the deficits incurred by the various levels of government.

The Institute has also calculated that if the GST were fully implemented in 1990 the average Canadian family would pay \$406 more in sales tax to the federal government.

The figures show convincingly why we are concerned about taxation levels without considering the benefits received, of course.

Statscan facts

In the fiscal year ended March 31, 1989, there were 2,536 million litres of alcoholic beverages sold (down 19 million litres from the previous year), Statistics Canada figures show. Volume decreases were recorded for all three types of alcoholic beverage—spirits, wine and beer. The dollar value of sales rose, however, to \$9,583 million from \$9,207 million the previous year.

Imported alcoholic beverages improved their sales in 1988-89 compared to 1987-88, Statistics Canada figures show. The volume of Canadian alcoholic beverages went down 33 million litres while the volume of imported beverages rose by 14 million litres. This was mainly due to increased purchases of imported beer.



With an endless summer of headlines on the Indian crisis in Quebec and elsewhere around the country, many people were intrigued by the Six

Nations Indians invited to perform at Crawford Lake Indian Village recently.

KEVIN POWELL/Halton Hills WeekEnd

Homeless teens, nowhere to turn

Do you have any idea how many homeless teenagers there are in Toronto alone? 100, 500, maybe 1,000? Try 12,000. That's right. It's estimated there are 12,000 of our young people living on the streets today.

You may be thinking to yourself, "Well, I don't know anyone who is actually homeless." This may be true because most potential runaways return home after just two days. But what about those teenagers who don't go home? What kind of life will they lead in order to survive?

Most runaways will turn to petty theft, prostitution, and dealing drugs. These crimes are the only way that they will get a warm place to sleep and something to eat.

Another question that this issue brings up is, "Why would anyone want to sleep in stairwells or on school roofs when they can be in a bed at home?" These options don't sound very logical to us, but some kids are from foster homes, dysfunctional families, and abusive environments. When faced with these circumstances, many teenagers opt for life on the streets and taking their chances.

Another problem homeless teenagers face involves financial support through welfare. Most hotels require a deposit before letting someone move in. Teenagers very rarely have that kind of money, so they apply for welfare. But then, they don't have an address where a social worker can do a home case study to decide if welfare will be granted. Also, if runaways are under the age of 18,

then they have to assure the welfare department that there is no way that their parents will support them. This generally means a face-to-face meeting with the parents, the very people that the teen is trying to get away from.

Hostels and youth shelters offer warmth and food. However, there aren't enough of these places for teens to go. Kids start lining up outside of shelters two or three hours before the doors are to be opened, hoping that they will get in. Even so, they may still end up spending the night on the street, hoping to survive until morning.

So what can you do to help homeless teenagers? Here are just a few possible things:

1) Allow a friend to stay with you if they are having trouble with their parents. This is especially true if there is any form of abuse going on in your friend's house.

2) Volunteer a bit of your time at hostels, food banks, and youth shelters. Your very presence is helpful.

3) If you know of someone who is thinking about running away, make sure that they see a counsellor. They must be told that the streets are not the best option for their problems.

By becoming more aware of the problem, you are showing that you care. You realize that the streets are not a beginning to a new life, but a dead-end. So whether you bring a friend into your home, or do some volunteer work, you keep one more kid off the street.

You could save a life.

THE GEORGETOWN INDEPENDENT /
THE ACTON FREE PRESS

Week End

KEN BELLAMY
Publisher

211 ARMSTRONG AVE., L7G 4X5
GEORGETOWN, ONT. (416) 873-0301

The Georgetown Independent /The Acton Free Press Week End, published every Saturday at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: The Acton Free Press, Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, The Aurora Banner, Barrie Banner Advance, The Brampton Guardian, The Burlington Post, The Erin-Hillsburgh Echo, The Etobicoke Advertiser/Guardian, The Georgetown Independent, Markham Economist & Sun, The Milton Champion, The Mississauga News, The Newmarket Era, The Oakville Beaver, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, The Rockwood-Eramosa Review, The Scarborough Mirror, The Stouffville Tribune, The Willowdale Mirror, Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing is a division of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate.

In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at the wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

Editorial and advertising content to Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press Week End is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50¢ each; subscription \$19 per year by carrier; \$52 per year by mail in Canada; \$75 per year in all other countries.

EDITORIAL - 1-800-268-8719
Managing Editor: Hartley Coles
Staff Writers: Cynthia Gamble, Robin Inscow, Paul Dorsey, Dan Ralph, Stuart Johnston, Janet Baine, Scott Kline. Photography: Ted Brown

BUSINESS OFFICE - 1-800-268-8719
Manager: Jean Shewell
Accounting: Pat Kentner, Sherry Mitchell, Bev Nelissen

ADVERTISING - 1-800-268-8719
Director of Advertising: Lorne Beechener
Advertising Manager: Beth Snelgrove
Display Sales: Charmaine Letts, Doug Sawyer, Tammy Salt
Telemarketing: Jeanette Cox
Real Estate Sales: Kathy Toth
National Representative: Dal Browne 493-1300

CLASSIFIED - 1-800-268-8719
Manager: Carol Hall
Staff: Barb Izzio, Arlene Bellamy

DISTRIBUTION/CIRCULATION/SUBSCRIPTIONS - 1-800-268-8719
TORONTO LINE - 451-9024
Manager: Nancy Geissler
Staff: Mark Prevost, Jean Brander, Mark Esposito

COMPOSING MANAGER: Steve Foreman