

# Duignan gets new job with NDP

Continued from page 1

"I know this riding has one of the highest income ratios in the province, but there's still a tremendous amount of people with low incomes living below the poverty line," he said. The recent opening of a food bank in Acton is evidence of this, he said. People here will benefit from policies set forward in the throne speech to help the working class.

One of the promises is that over the next five years the minimum wage will gradually increase from \$5.40 an hour to 60 per cent of the average wage earned by laborers, or about \$7.60/hr.

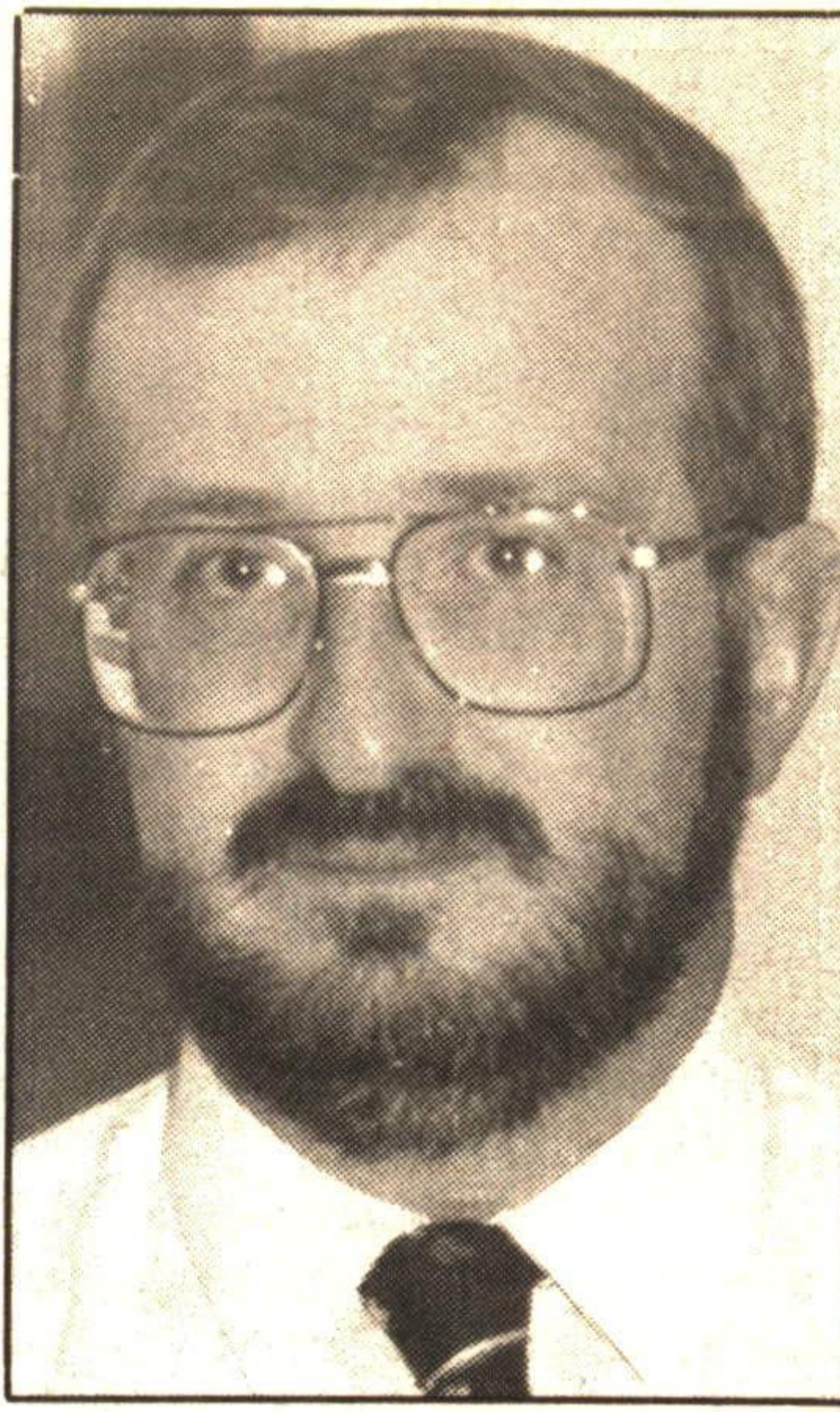
Unionization will become easier, pensions will be reformed, stronger measures requiring layoff notices and severance pay and a wage protection fund for workers of bankrupt companies are some of the things which will improve life for the working class in Ontario.

Nothing was mentioned about the future of the GTA, which POWER hopes will be disbanded. Environment Minister Ruth Grier was expected to make a major announcement in the house Wednesday, and Duignan said the announcement could be about the

press time, it was learned, the announcement was about the Ministry's rejection of landfill proposals in Brampton and Pickering.)

Duignan said his workload has increased recently. He found out last week he will be chairman of the legislative assembly committee, which looks at procedures and advises the speaker of the house.

He'll also be on two other committees, but he doesn't know yet which they'll be.



NOEL DUIGNAN

GTA, which is trying to solve the garbage problems in areas around Toronto, including Halton. (At

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## Throne speech a good sign for Acton's hungry: Waldie

Acton Food Share Co-ordinator Joan Waldie hopes the fledgling NDP government will help the people she sees each week.

"I thought it was a good speech. They were sincere in their approach," she said in an interview Wednesday.

Increasing the minimum wage would help, as long as small businesses, which make up about a quarter of the economy, can cope.

"I was a small business person for 16 years, and small business is hurting a lot," she said. "It's great for workers to get more money, as long as it can be done without hurting that part of the economy".

Many food bank clients are the working poor, while others are on welfare and run short between cheques. Waldie expects to see an increasing number of seniors needing assistance.

The NDP government has said it will increase minimum wage from \$5.40/hr to 60 per cent of the average industrial wage. With the average wage at \$11.50/hr, minimum wage in Ontario could increase to \$7.60/hr.

"Over its five year mandate," Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln Alexander read in Tuesday's throne speech, "my government will...introduce pension reforms; revise rent review legislation; help to expand the supply of affordable housing, particularly non-profit housing, and extend child care."

Increasing affordable housing would very much help food bank clients, Waldie noted. Some families are cut down to a single income due to lay-offs, and simply can't pay high rents or mortgages, she said.

"There's a big change in the job market in the '90s and a lot of people have obsolete training," she said. "We have people that come that have managed to get training and they feel better about themselves." While they still have to make trips to the food bank, the training gives them more self-esteem, and makes them "ready to do something for society".

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