

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



Time to take the tax off books

The irony that a tax was placed on books and magazines during International Literacy Year (1991) was lost on federal politicians. Seems that the folk-who-live-on-the-hill couldn't make any connection between literacy and the need to make books and magazines readily accessible to the public at reasonable prices.

As well, Canadian identity did not benefit from Ottawa's ham-fisted attempt to gather in money by taxing reading materials. Culture and identity go hand-in-hand, and literacy is one powerful means by which we come to understand who we are.

When you live cheek-by-jowl with the the planet's most powerful nation you are going to have identity problems; we need every advantage we can muster in order to create and sustain what is essential to our way of life.

Accordingly, it is good to hear that our Provincial Government will petition Ottawa to remove that pernicious tax — the GST, from printed materials. We should let Queen's Park know that, on this issue, they have our fervent support.

Consider how difficult it is for our children to know who they are:

The National Hockey league includes just five Canadian teams together with eleven American.

Baseball is more extreme — just two Canadian entries out of 25.

Youngsters love comic books and there are enormous numbers of them around; most feature Superman and the rest of the great American heroes.

Every time youngsters turn TV on there is every probability that they will tune in to another American sitcom, not to mention Wheel of Fortune and Candid Camera.

The list goes on but the point is already clear — how do children tell who they are?

Despite such overpowering, "alien" influences we have witnessed the growth of cultural elements which continue to exemplify a unique, Canadian identity and amongst them, we have world-class writers like Margaret Atwood, Earle Birney, Pierre Berton, Robert Munsch, Timothy Findley and O.G. Mitchell.

The continued development of this genuine Canadian quality is threatened by the current seven per cent GST; the "Don't Tax Reading Coalition" claims that the tax could lead to a 20 per cent drop in the sales of Canadian publications. The immediate, direct consequence will likely be a smaller selection of Canadian books and magazines available across the country.

Canada is a relatively literate nation but there are still thousands of folk who cannot read or write at a basic level of competence. In fact, the federal government is spending millions of dollars to help these folk to upgrade their skills. Extra taxes on reading materials will not encourage such readers to buy print materials in order to practise their new skills.

Taxing a resource which enhances literacy and which is essential to the development of our Canadian identity boggles the mind; it is a political lunacy.

Wit & Wisdom

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

— Addison

"Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest."

— Book of Common Prayer

"My early and invincible love of reading, I would not exchange for the treasures of India."

— Gibbon

"Poetry is truth dwelling in beauty."

— Gilfillan

"When I am reading a book, whether wise or silly, it seems to me to be alive and talking to me."

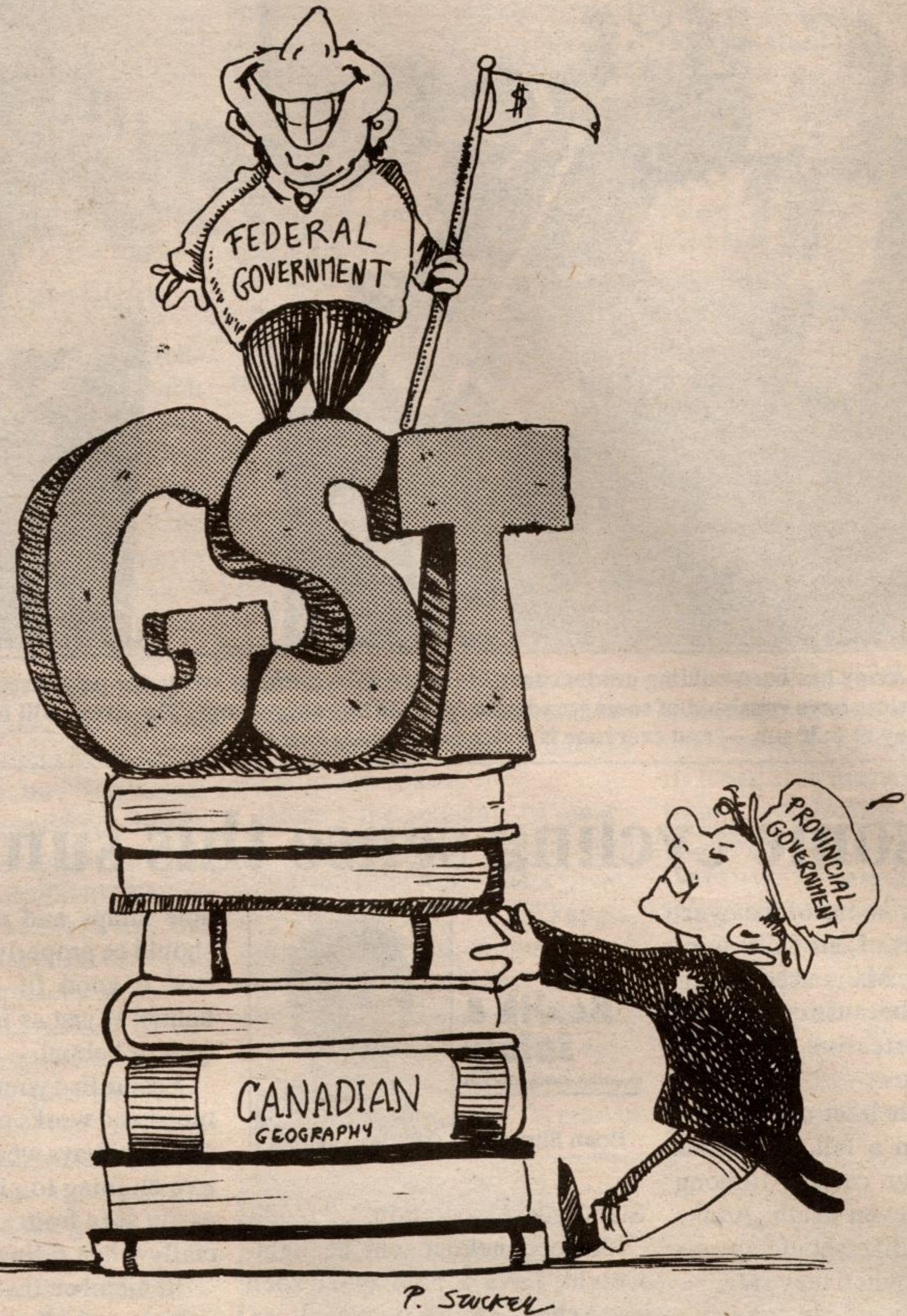
— Swift

"Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all."

— Thoreau

"One merit of poetry few persons will deny: it says more and in fewer words than prose."

— Voltaire



LETTERS

Misleading coverage

I was appalled to see incorrect press reports in other media that POWER had been involved in an attack on Ruth Grier and her car when she visited Wastewise on June 27. These reports ranged from total inaccuracy to leaving out enough of the facts so that readers might think that POWER was involved. Some of these reports went out on the Canadian Press wire services and I was even sent a clipping from Ottawa.

POWER has never advocated action! This sort of behaviour does not lead to the solution of any problem. In fact POWER has tried to be pro-active and has encouraged waste reduction. Some members of POWER founded

Wastewise and we are very proud of their success. Ruth Grier came to Georgetown to recognize the excellent efforts of Wastewise.

With so many away on vacation and possibly reading papers from other areas I feel it is important to set the record straight. POWER is always ready to demonstrate whenever it is appropriate, but we would never take the route followed by some of the groups from other regions who descended on Ruth Grier.

If the people from the 57 sites want to save their communities they should clone Wastewise and put pressure on the provincial government and Metro Toronto for massive waste reduction now! A pilot study in Oakville showed reduction of over 55 per cent. Toronto could do the same by 1993. NO GARBAGE = NO LANDFILLS. What if we all got together and made a change?

Sincerely, Barbara Halsall
President of POWER

Bannockburn meeting

The June meeting of Bannockburn Women's Institute was held at the home of Anne Hollis, with six members and one guest attending.

Anne opened the meeting with a lovely poem entitled "Nature's Pleasures." She then gave a good report of the District Annual held at Campbellville on May 23.

A delicious dessert was served by Anne, and Isabel McDonald gave thanks to her on behalf of all of us.

We then travelled to Churchill Community Church to attend the meeting of the Historical Society.

Vern Denny gave a good account of the first settlers in the

Churchill and district community. Many photos were on display as well as our Tweesmuir Book. It was very informative and enjoyable.

A successful euchre of 11 tables was held by our ladies at Limehouse. Prizes were as follows. Ladies: 1. Margaret Davidson, 2. Pearl Burt, Lone Hand: Eileen McEmry. Mens: 1. Elmer Pembleton, 2. Christine Robertson, Lone Hand: Harry Beasley.

Have a good summer, as we will not meet again until Sept. 1 at Isabel McDonald's home — see you then!

Edith Medland
Bannockburn Women's Institute

THE ACTON Tanner

Publisher & Editor
Paul Nolan

Associate Publisher
Dianne Preston

News Editor
Frances Niblock

Production Manager
Alanna Bowen

Office Assistant
Carole Wennington

Business Editor
Michael Coté

Distribution
Sandy Williams

Regular Contributors
Devon Ambrose
Eric Balkind
Esther Taylor
Debbie Tilson

THE ACTON TANNER is published weekly on Tuesdays by Wicklow Hills Publishing Co. Inc. at 7 Mill Street, East, Acton, Ontario. L7J 1G8. Mailing address: P.O. Box 150, Acton, Ont., L7J 2M3. Telephone: 519-853-5100. Facsimile: 519-853-5040. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Ideas expressed herein are those of the author only.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Subscriptions rates are: \$22 for one year (52 issues for the price of 44) and \$2 for one month (four issues). First Class Mail subscription rate: \$74 in Canada.

ADVERTISING SALES: Ratecard available on request. Publisher responsible for errors in ads to extent of cost of that portion of the space occupied by erroneous item.

Phone: 519-853-5100
Fax: 519-853-5040