

## WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



### Anyone for a democratic government?

The recent constitutional brouhaha taught us an important lesson — that our so-called democratic system has severe limitations; the very fact that “the group of 11” (the PM and the 10 premiers) could put our entire economy at risk while they played their own version of the Fathers of Confederation game surely drummed the message home — that *there have to be changes and they have to come soon.*

With a federal election somewhere “just over the horizon” we might be smart to look for ways to make the system more democratic and more truly representative of the will of the people. With that lofty goal in mind how about considering the 40/10 plan? The approach is based on the notion that the only way to guarantee something approaching genuine representation in government is going to be by establishing quotas. The 40/10 plan consists of two simple benchmarks which could take us a long way. Explanations are in order.

1. The 40 Rule: Any party running a slate of candidates for election would have to nominate a minimum of 40 per cent of any one sex. That would mean that a party which was running candidates in all ridings would field a minimum of 40 men or women out of every 100 hopefuls. Thus, if Parliament consisted of say 400 seats then at least 160 of them would have to be of one sex. The immediate effect would be to ensure something much closer to true representation of the general population in government by limiting the stranglehold held, to this point in time, by the male population.

2. The 10 Rule: Any party running a slate of candidates may nominate a maximum of just 10 per cent of any one profession to run. Thus, a Parliament of 400 would then have a maximum of 40 lawyers, or farmers, or doctors, or whatever. In effect, this 10 per cent maximum would get us away from the current overwhelming influence (which might also be described as being close to a stranglehold) which lawyers hold in our governing institutions. As well, we would be ensuring a much broader spectrum of living experiences and perspectives in government and that's not such a bad idea either.

In rejecting the constitutional deal, Canadians taught their political leaders a critical lesson — that the public will no longer be treated as a shipload of fools. What is essential now is for ordinary folk to ensure that the political hegemony, which has all but torn our great country apart, also be dismantled and the only way to accomplish this is to change the rules by which the game is played; 40/10 might be one way of starting. Should we settle for anything less?

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Herewith, one more example of the beaucroatic system in chaos. I recently received (from Revenue Canada) a remittance form telling me that I now owed back taxes of nothing — zilch. Together with this remarkable intelligence (reported to me on form T7D) I also received a self-addressed envelope for my reply. Scrooge said it best: “I'll retire to bedlam.”

## Wit & Wisdom

Among the many invaluable qualities which bring healing and health into our lives gentleness must surely rank high. How could it be otherwise?

Speak gently — it is better far to rule by love than fear.

Speak gently — let no harsh words mar the good we might do here.

As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all.

I have wept in the night for the shortness of sight  
That to somebody's need made me blind;  
But I never have yet felt a twinge of regret  
For being a little too kind.

To belittle is to be little.

Man's inhumanity to man makes  
countless thousands mourn.



## LETTERS

### Try again Bob!

To the Editor,

The Rae government's response to their Treasurer's forecast that their expenditure will overrun the 1992-1993 budget by as much as 50 per cent is truly amazing. I refer to the decision, announced in today's Toronto Star, to create three new Crown Corporations, for roads and bridges, water and wastewater, and real estate.

I can hardly wait to hear how many extra billions it will cost to set up, house, and operate, these additional bureaucracies; not to mention the additional cost of reorganizing present government department operations to integrate these new corporations into their operating systems.

Setting up Crown Corporations is just a more labour intensive and elaborate way of not accomplish-

ing what is not being accomplished now.

Why does it need a Crown Corporation with letters patent, a new head office and an array of officials, and accountants, to collect road and bridge tolls? Or another such to ensure that the responsible Provincial Ministry properly manages our water supplies, and that the Municipalities construct, operate, and maintain, proper waste treatment plants? Or yet another to take over ownership of Provincial lands?

Why are we now to be charged tolls to use roads and bridges already amply financed by gasoline taxes, car licenses? And charged extra for water which already costs about 30 per cent on top of property tax?

These tax grabs will bear very heavily on the working poor who are just getting by, and will at the same be used to create and pay for more new well paid jobs for bureaucrats.

Try again Bob, this scheme won't do, and ought to be ditched.

*Jim Stock, Leader,  
Ontario Libertarian Party.*

### Retire and feel good

To the Editor,

Just retired? You've got the greatest gift of all!

Retirement initiates a process of changing lifestyle. Because time commitments change, you must make decisions on how, when and where to spend your time. As you start your new adventures, we ask you to consider your time as a gift. It is most meaningful when given.

Acton Social Services and Information Centre is in need of your gifts now and all year round. One of the greatest needs is taking people to medical and other important

appointments. We need drivers to go to Toronto, Hamilton, Guelph and Georgetown. We also need drivers to assist people within Acton. Remember that this is a gift and you give as much as you wish — that means that you choose how often, and to where you wish to drive. You are reimbursed for your expenses.

Your gift is time and the companionship you offer during the drive. Please call 853-3310 or come and see us at 19 Willow Street, North, Acton.

*Sincerely  
ASSIC*

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