

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Budget promises

Pardon us if we remain cynical about the latest budget from Queen's Park. We've been deluged with information, both pro and con, and it is about as clear to the average person on the street as terra cotta mud.

First impressions about the budget seemed to be positive. But given time to reflect and hear opposing views and questions, it is difficult to give it an A Plus. Indeed, it is hard to give it a B.

Mike Harris and his Tories rode to power on a promise to cut the fat out of government and its services and reward Ontarians by reducing the province's income tax by 30 per cent. They have delivered. By July 1st the provincial income tax will be cut by 30 per cent. Much of the fat and other services have been cut, including welfare, but the government has also blundered with cutbacks on hospital beds and nurses, and now they are trying to play catch-up.

It's also easy to balance your budget by downloading services onto municipalities such as Halton and Halton Hills, which in turn must play Simon Legree—or raise taxes. In Halton Hills' case, although no one seems sure, it looks like the average home with an assessment of \$185,000 (seems high for Acton) can expect a tax increase of almost 7 per cent. That translates into about \$154 more in Canadian shekels. So how much does that cut into your income tax break?

Although no one again seems quite sure how much and where, it is likely user fees will also be rising.

The Province, in its wisdom, has also taken over a major part of the cost of education. Although no one seems quite sure in what direction we are going the latest news from the Halton Board of Education is that the new funding model will result in the layoff of 273 instructional assistants as well as 135 secondary teachers. It also looks like the new formula has forced the board to cancel programs which teachers deem necessary, such as guidance counsellors.

Maybe that's progress, but pardon us again for being cynical.

Hospitals? Anyone who has an elderly relative or friend who has been unable to secure a retirement home or hospital bed, knows there has been a problem of accessibility for years. The government is moving on this finally, promising millions for new construction, opening new beds, etc., etc., beds which they could have kept open and avoided the crunch. And then again we have to question whether they will act on their promise.

According to one source the promise of an extra \$260 million of new money for hospitals is in reality only the money they promised, but never spent, over the last three years. Is it a bit of sleight of hand, or are we being taken for dummies?

Senior citizens, who prior to the Harris regime, were receiving free drug benefits, now must pay \$100 up front for drugs as well as \$6.11 per prescription if they have an income of over \$25,000 and change per family. Those below the figure must ante up \$2 per prescription. Tack the total of these figures onto your tax break and see how much you are ahead.

One wonders whether all the disruption, civil strife and cutbacks have achieved the hoped for results. Some of them have seemed unnecessarily harsh.

Few people would argue that bloated government, education and health services, needed some correction. Someone had to set things right again. Mr. Harris and his government promised to do the job. Have they, or are we simply robbing Peter to pay Paul?

Ah, a spring holiday!

Monday is the Victoria Day holiday. School children used to chant this rhyme:

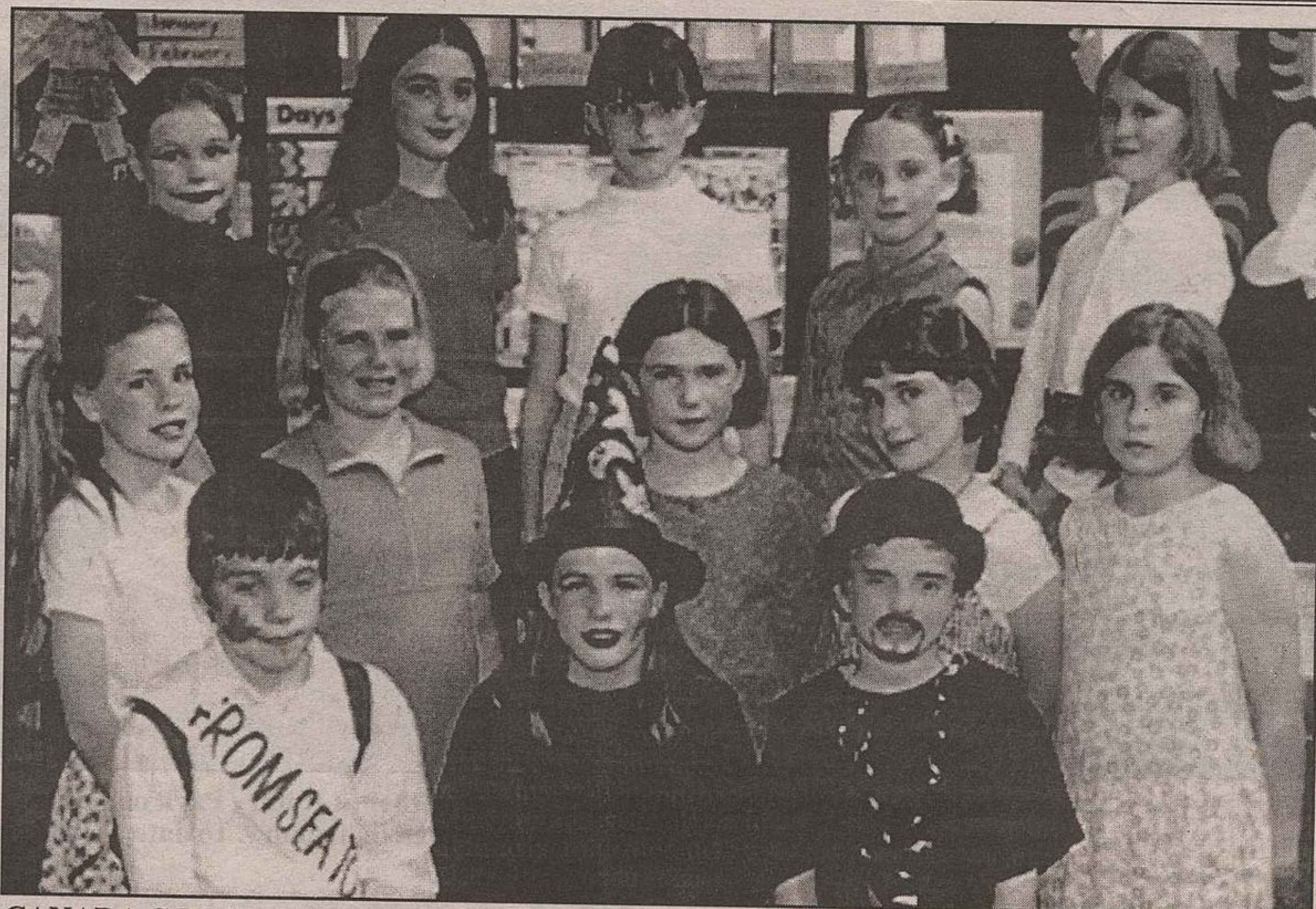
"The 24th of May, 24th of May,
If we don't get a holiday,
We'll all run away!"

Well, don't worry kids, you'll get the holiday but it is unlikely most of you and many of us will remember why.

Victoria Day, of course, was established as a national holiday in 1845 to celebrate the birthday of Queen Victoria (May 24) who reigned as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India from 1837 to 1901. Her reign has been characterized as one which brought out such qualities as prudishness, smugness, bigotry in people and a style of architecture, décor, furniture, etc. usually ornate and massive, in the latter part of Victoria's reign.

If that isn't reason enough to have a holiday then the fact we haven't had one to enjoy the lovely spring weather is reason enough.

Have a good one.



CANADA GOOSE: Robert Little school celebrated Education Week by staging two performances of *The Canada Goose*, an operetta about taking pride in being Canadian. Members of the Tuesday night cast include, front, left to right: Matthew Tunney, Amanda Gabrielson and Jordan LaRose. Middle: Kyra Malcolm, Amanda Anderson, Blair Adams, Breanna Campbell and Diana Drechsel. Back: Melissa Brownlee, Samantha Stoton, Ashley Fendley, Angela Schrenpf and Laura McIntyre. - Frances Niblock photo

Editor's Notebook

We had some technical problems with some photos in last week's *New Tanner*. They appeared too dark for our liking and yours, too, especially the collage of photos from the Beardmore Quarter Century Club. Hopefully, we have solved the problem and *New Tanner* photos will be clearer and sharper in future issues. The original photos were fine but they lost their luster in the scanning process where they are prepared for the printing press.

★ ★ ★

Readers often bring or send in articles asking if we can include them in *The New Tanner*. We're glad to receive them. Sometimes we can use them, sometimes not because they have a copyright. In any event, here's one from Councillor Rick Bonnette. Which we felt was well worth printing. It came by E-mail from his sister Diane who corresponds frequently. It's called:

A GREAT LESSON FOR ALL

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day.

What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Well, everyone has such a bank. It's name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as a loss, whatever of this you have ailed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back.

There is no drawing against "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in

health, happiness and success!

The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who has failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE DAY, ask a daily wage labourer who has kids to feed.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who has missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE MILLI-SECOND, ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

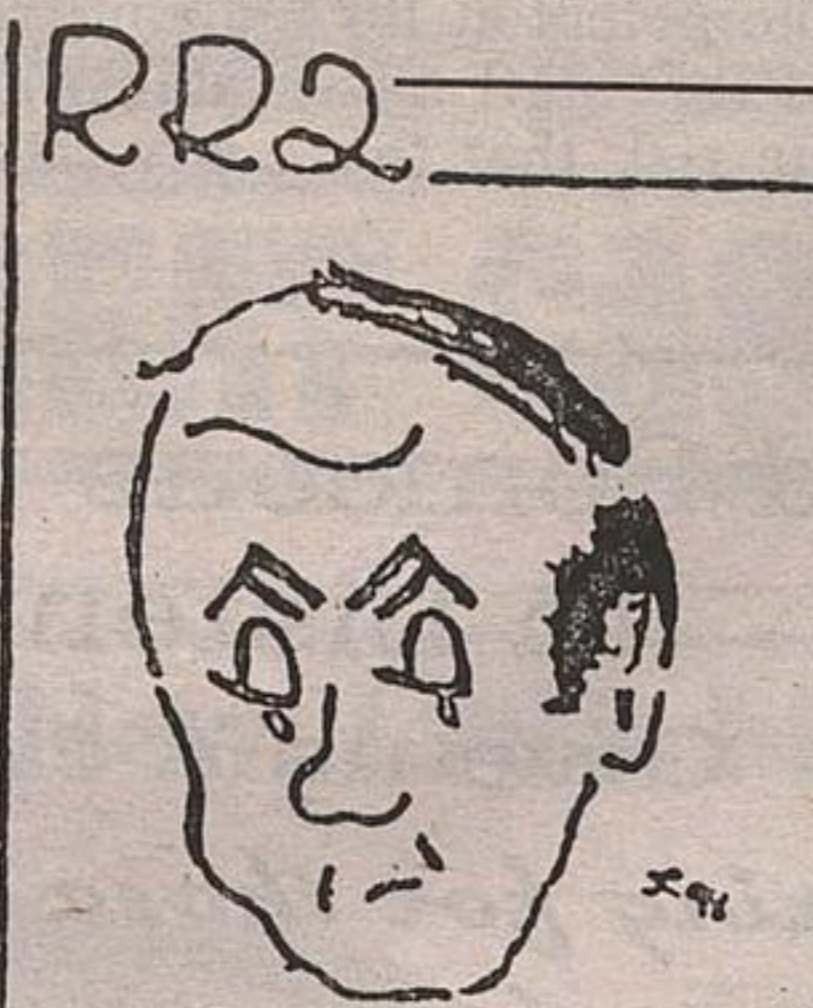
Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you share it with someone special; special enough to spend your time... and remember that time waits for no one ...

Yesterday is history.

Tomorrow a mystery.

Today is a gift.

That's why it's called the 'present'!



The PC's asked me to run for leader. I told them I already had a part time job.

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