

## Use caution when dealing with the dragon

Premier Dalton McGuinty is busy promoting Ontario as a great place for the Chinese to manufacture automobiles for the North American market.

This is the rough equivalent of trying to convince Soviet-era Russians to build Ladas in Ontario.

Has our Premier lost his mind?

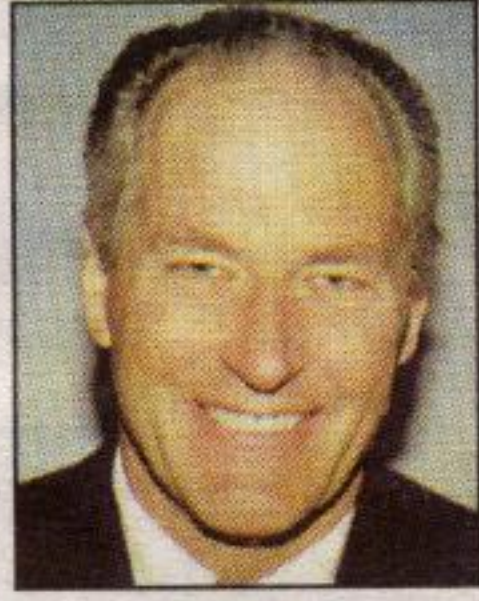
Imagine 20 years ago asking the nascent Korean auto industry to give up its only advantage—that being cheap labour costs—and become a chewy toy in the dog-eat-dog world of North American auto sales. Built in China, Chinese cars may be significantly cheaper if sold in North America. Built in China they are likely not as technologically advanced nor able to pass North American emission standards. Try taking a Chinese-built car for your Drive Clean test and see what happens.

And yet, Premier McGuinty wants the Chinese to build cars in Ontario despite our higher labour costs which would eliminate the Chinese advantage by increasing the price. Surely he can't want the Chinese to import cars and undercut those Ontarians who owe their livelihood to our North American auto sector. Either way Mr. McGuinty must have underachieved—as Education Minister Gerrard Kennedy would say—at Economics 101.

Mr. McGuinty has taken 125 Ontarians attracted to the growth in the Chinese economy on a tour of the Middle Kingdom.

Yet as the Chinese discover capitalism, the McGuinty Liberals seem to have forgotten its lessons. Seduced by China's huge potential, too many of our business people have forgotten that it was difficult to sell our finished goods to the Taiwanese and the Koreans when those economies were in their develop-

### QUEEN'S PARK REPORT



Ted Chudleigh

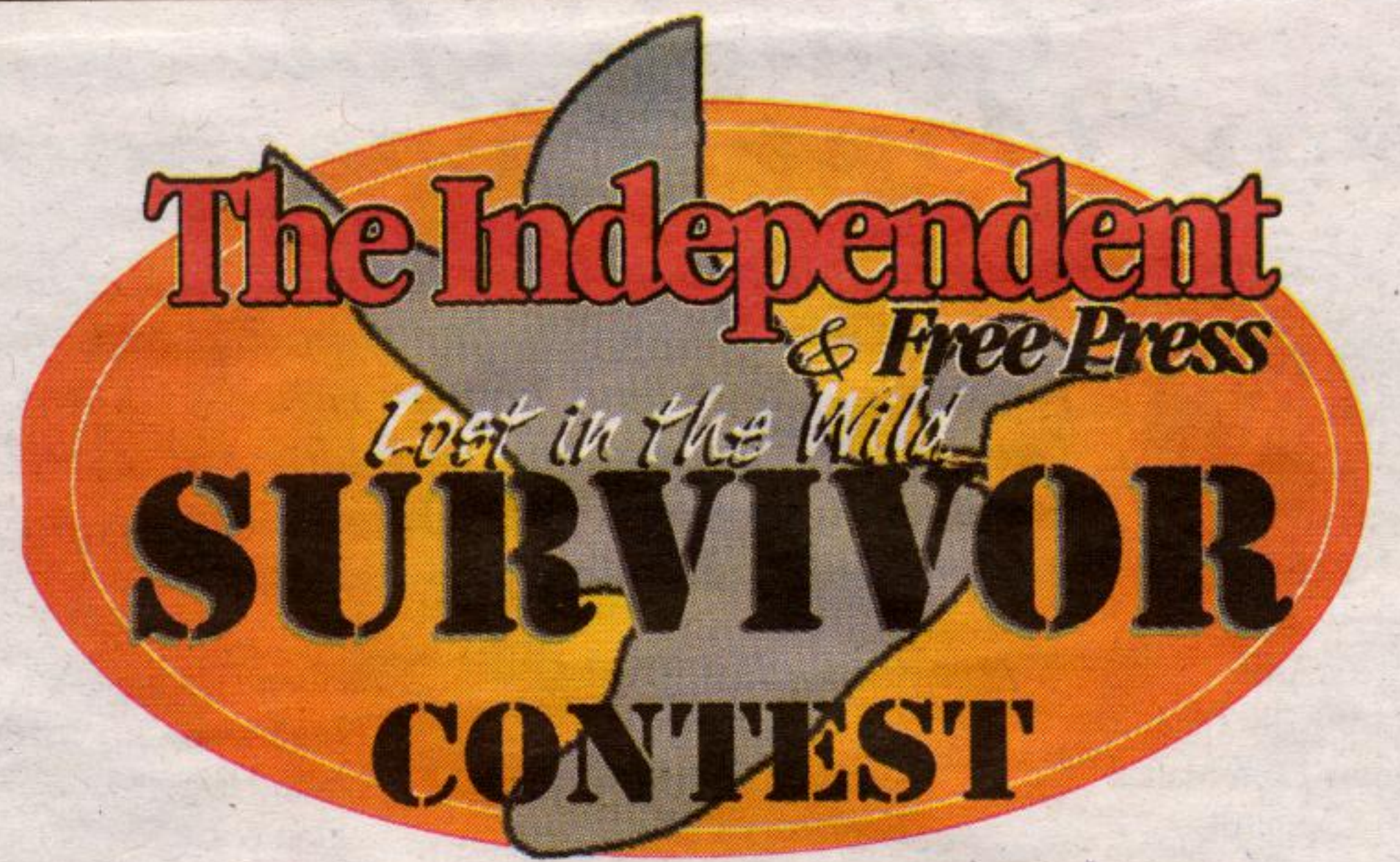
ment stages. In those cases labour was cheap and demand for useful manufactured goods was filled at home while a demand for high-end manufactured goods hadn't yet evolved.

Yes, the Chinese are interested in our raw materials. Yes, the Chinese are interested in shipping their inexpensive finished products to be consumed in Canada and anywhere else anyone will buy them. Yes, the Chinese are interested in our technological ideas, especially as they share some of the same climate challenges as we have.

However, the Chinese are not terribly interested in our manufactured goods. They are too expensive. They are not interested in opening their trade. They want to develop home-grown industries. They are not interested in buying our technology only reproducing it, and as any entrepreneur will tell you, ideas alone don't make money.

Premier McGuinty needs to tread very carefully if he is going to engage the Chinese dragon. We've always been wary of being squashed by the American elephant. Dragons too, are large. They breathe fire. They are also mythical, as are some of the alleged opportunities for trade with China.

—Ted Chudleigh is the MPP for Halton



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