

Jam in the sandwich

Ever get the feeling you're just the jam in the economic sandwich concocted by the financial chefs at Ottawa and Toronto? Not long ago, for instance, there were cries to cut unemployment, reduce income tax and increase spending all directed to the chefs at Ottawa. Then with the economy reportedly picking up and unemployment reducing, the province gets its finger in the cooking and slams on another two per cent sales tax.

But, we're told, the sales tax is to provide more funds for the municipality. Each municipality is then given a helping of grants to reduce property taxes.

In Milton, for instance the transfer payment could reduce the mill rate by about four mills. On a house assessed at \$5,000 the saving to the taxpayer there is about \$20 a year.

But of course that \$20 reduction required the imposition of a new two per cent sales tax plus a seven per cent increase on such things as gas, fuel, oil and electricity.

Your \$20 saving will be eaten up by purchases of \$1,000 at 2 per cent over a

year. Since purchases of most families exceed the \$1,000 it won't take long to be in a position of paying more for the saving on municipal taxes.

There's much more in the budget, of course, but it indicates again the continuing folly of governments taking money with one hand and dispensing it with the other, in shorter measure. A little has to be skimmed off the top every time there's a payment that comes in and goes out at government level. Someone has to pay those administrators.

Every time one of the governments introduce a budget with new economic measures, we get the feeling we're just the jam in the sandwich, getting squeezed from both sides. It seems abundantly clear the two governments have different economic advisers too, one yelling for cuts while the other slaps on increases.

But we're a curious lot, still asking "government!" to do more and more for us as if it didn't cost anything and was financed from a pot at the end of the Utopian rainbow.

Commenting briefly

A Nassagaweya resident, noting the great influx of horses into the rural township, wonders if the Indians returned to the township they named they would want to remove the "N" from "Nassagaweya."

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Two of the current adult education courses being offered by Sheridan College appear timely. One is entitled "Nutrition—Spending Your Food Dollar Wisely" and it teaches homeowners how to buy and prepare meats, among other things. The other course is on "How to Campaign for Local and Regional Elections." Course instructor Desmond Morton, a history professor at University of Toronto, claims that "in the new regional setup, candidates without wealthy backing are likely to be shut out of elections if they don't manage to develop a real organization."

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Bicycle season has arrived and the popularity of cycling doesn't appear to have waned any in Milton. Here's hoping we get through another summer without a bike fatality. Some of the riders (and it's not just the younger ones) don't seem to know or respect the rules of safe cycling. The local and provincial rules are outlined in today's "Safety Corner" column—it would be worthwhile reading for all cyclists and parents of young riders.

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An engineering report on the Bruce St. School noted there had been a fire in the building which had damaged some of the wood. It hadn't recalled hearing about such a fire but Charlie Johnson recalls there was a fire in the school about 1915 or 1916 and Russell Easley and Harold Gilean put it out with about six pails of water before the fire brigade arrived. We can't locate any mention of it in newspaper files of those years but perhaps someone else's memory can pin it down. How is your memory?

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Attend a Milton council meeting some Monday night. It's a worthwhile experience and very few citizens ever take advantage of the opportunity. Sometimes councillors get the feeling they're operating in a vacuum without any public interest and the attendance of the public wouldn't do anything to alter that view. Most citizens who appear do so because they've got a complaint. Citizens who are "just interested" are becoming pretty rare. If you're going, check ahead to be sure the Monday you've picked is an open meeting. Open meetings are usually the first and third of a month.

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Geography students at Milton District High School will be polling Milton residents on a wide variety of topics that should provide some revealing answers. In the past the class has polled the town's residents on several topics and one of the features of each has been the high return ratio of questionnaires. That's because they carefully distribute them and several days later call back to collect them. With a growing town they're

particularly anxious to continue this high return rate. When they leave you a questionnaire, take a few minutes and register your opinions. The sum total of those opinions can have far reaching effects. People do look for the results.

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It's no heroic achievement to obtain a driver's license in this country. About 70 per cent of all driver test applicants pass each year—some of whom think their \$3 a year license is a deed to the highways. Ontario Safety League comments "it may very well turn out to be their pass for that big parking lot in the sky."

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The Champion is gaining new readers almost weekly and the latest circulation statement indicates an average net paid circulation, over a six month period at 4,855. Average total circulation in that period is 5,229. These figures are certainly the highest in the paper's history and we welcome all those who are reading with us each week.

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If Milton firefighters value their weekends at home as much as the rest of us, they must have been disgusted with careless fire-setters on this past weekend. The boys in the brigade were called out 10 times Saturday and Sunday to extinguish grass and bush blazes touched off by careless humans. One of the fires took four hours to bring under control and two of the fires broke out in the same place. Volunteer firefighters like most of Milton's brigade members don't mind fighting legitimate fires, but these senseless grass and bush blazes could all have been prevented with a little more care on the part of the people responsible. Give the boys a break this Easter weekend, folks—don't drop your cigarettes in the open, don't set any rubbish fires and above all, don't try burning off any dead grass. The firefighters' wives and children will thank you for being a little more careful, and letting their husbands and fathers have a quiet weekend at home.

Budget deliberations

Interesting sidelights

Budget discussions are an education in local government, revealing the nuts and bolts operational aspects of the administration.

Milton Council had two major budget meetings, one Monday of last week in which committee budgets were presented, then a six hour session Wednesday in which discussions revolved around the advantages of certain pieces of equipment, inspection services, the effects of debentures, the application of capital levies, the wisdom of purchasing an arena site and a host of other policy areas.

The discussions also revealed some of the facts, accepted but usually evident only at budget times. They're interesting sidelights on how the local government operates.

For instance:

Pay for plant

If the second phase of construction in the northeast quadrant of the town can proceed this year (depending on channelization progress) the lot levies that would be



THIS WINDING TRAIL through a forest tract led eventually to a maple syrup demonstration and pancake feast for hundreds on a recent Sunday afternoon at Rattlesnake Park. Bright fresh weather made the walk almost as enjoyable as the pancake feast.

(Photo by B. Burt)

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Second Section



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

English is going down the drain, going to the dogs, or going up in smoke these days. Maybe that first sentence is what's wrong with the language. There are so many idioms in it that nobody can speak or write the real thing any more.

University professors have expressed their indignation publicly. A couple of them recently announced that students who expect to graduate in one of the professions can't write one sentence without falling all over their syntax. I agree with them.

But if they think they have troubles, they should try teaching English in high school. There has been such a marked and rapid decrease in the standards of written and spoken English that teachers of the subject can be found almost any day in the staff john, weeping into the washbasin.

This winter, a teacher in a city school decided to prove something she already knew. She drew up a list of 40 words, most of them of one syllable, and tested several classes. Nobody could spell all forty. Many of the kids couldn't spell 10 of the words.

Her experiment and her subsequent indignation were airily dismissed by a public school principal, who said something

like, "Oh we don't worry much about spelling any more. They'll learn to spell when they need to." Hogwash.

What employer of anything but brute strength wants a semi-literate lout fouling up his invoices, orders forms and everything he can get his hands on?

What printer, for example, will hire a kid who can't even spell "etaoin shrdlu" and doesn't even know what it means?

I do a fair bit of gnashing and wailing myself when I'm marking upper school papers and have to sort out something like, "The women nu were she was going, as she when they're everyday." The thought is there, but there is something lacking when it comes to felicity of spelling.

Everybody blames everybody else for the sad state of English, but, as usual, you have to read it in this column to get at the truth.

Let us establish the a priori fact that the high school English teacher is faultless. And, some would add, that a fortiori, the high school English teacher is useless. So be it.

Now for the real culprits. They are not the elementary school teachers, much as we would love to blame them. They are victims, too.

First, English had been derogated and eroded for the past couple of decades until it is now down somewhere in the area of brushing your teeth and saying your prayers.

Remember, you older and wiser people who went to school longer ago than you care to proclaim? You had spelling and grammar and composition and reading and writing and orals. This was English.

Maybe you didn't learn much about sex or conversational French or how to copy a "project" out of the encyclopedia, but you sure as hell had English belted into you.

Maybe you weren't given much chance to "express yourself", but by the time you were, you had some tools with which to do it.

Nowadays English is practically crowded off the curriculum by such esoteric subjects as social behaviour, getting along with the group, finding your place in society, and the ubiquitous and often useless "project."

Kids, one teacher told me, shouldn't have to learn to spell words that are not in their own vocabulary. Now I ask you. How else do they acquire a vocabulary?

But, I repeat, it's not the teachers of our little treasures who are at fault. It's the tinkers, the dabblers in education. They are rarely found in a classroom.

They are more often haring after some "new approach" in education that has been tried and found wanting by the Americans or the Armenians or the Aztecs.

Thus, out went grammar and spelling drill. The kids are supposed to learn these basic skills, not through their eyes and ears, but in some mysterious way: possibly through their skin.

Daily drill is deadening to the spirit, so off with its head. Let the kids be creative, write poetry:

"I saw the moon ovary the clouded it was sooper."

Doesn't that give you a unique experience? The freedom of spirit, the originality, the creativity?

Fortunately, I am able to shake this off, along with war and famine, death and taxes. It has its moments.

The other day, I threw this old chestnut at a class, and asked them to correct the grammar: "Forty cows were seen, sitting on the verandah."

There was total silence. It seemed OK to them. Then a pretty Grade 11 girl flung up her hand and flashed all her teeth. "I got it, Mr. Smiley!"

"Yes, Bonny," I winced. Carefully she enunciated: "I seen 40 cows sitting on the verandah."

Continued on Page C6

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion April 16, 1953.

Work got underway last week on the Rotary Club park-playground on the site of Martin's Flats. President Bob Reed was present while the land staked for the ball diamond was levelled off.

A 1953 Plymouth owned by Tom Dear Jr. was struck by a train at the C.P.R. crossing on Ontario St. last night. The car had stalled on the track although the driver was not in the car at the time of the collision. Damage to the car is estimated at \$400.

A delegation of 20 ratepayers presented a petition to Halton county council on Tuesday. The petition requested a board of arbitration to hear their appeals in withdrawing from the Nelson school area. They are trying to re-establish the former Zimmerman and Bell school sections.

On April 8, the regular meeting of the Young Women's Auxiliary took the form of a pot luck supper in the Sunday School room with 31 members present. At the conclusion of the meal, Jean Neil, president, was presented with a cup and saucer as she is moving to Brantford.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion April 19, 1923.

Premier Drury spoke at the annual meeting of the People's Political Association of Halton County. The Premier told the crowded theatre that he expected to be returned to office in June with an even greater strength. He said however, that if he was returned with a minority government he would consider forming a government with members of all parties whose intentions were honest.

At the town council meeting on Tuesday evening the resignation of Councillor Charles McGregor was accepted due to his plans to move to Vancouver. Council also passed a motion to send \$262 to the Mountain Sanatorium in Hamilton for the maintenance of three Milton ladies.

At a meeting in the Creditvale Inn last Thursday, the Halton-Peel Soccer League was organized. Elected president was Dr. Reed of Milton. The season will open May 19 with Creditvale at Milton and Cooksville at Streetsville.

The semi-final debate for the Drury cup was held in Milton on Saturday. The subject was "Steam versus Electricity". Mrs. D. Wilson and John Wilson representing Brookville defeated Mrs. J. Bird and M. McNabb of the Ashgrove club. The Brookville club spoke favoring steam while their opponents took the opposite view. They will meet the Milton team for the championship to be held May 1.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of The Canadian Champion, April 17, 1873.

At a meeting of the town council Monday evening, the Board of Public School Trustees were granted \$2,400 for the purpose of building an addition to the Public School House. The money is to come from the surplus fund of the Upper Canada Municipalities fund. Council also decided to defer a decision on the purchase of a new fire engine.

Despatches from Rome announce the illness of Pope Pius IX. He is nearly twenty-six years since he was elected to the Papal throne, a longer reign than any previous Pope.

Henry I—appeared before the Mayor's court on Monday charged with being drunk and disorderly. He pleaded guilty, was sentenced to a one dollar fine or 10 days in jail, paid the fine and one hour later he was found drunk again and thereupon thrown in jail.

The city of New York has been threatened with darkness as the gas employees are on strike.

The entire revenue of the country last month was one and a half million dollars against an expenditure of 1.3 million dollars.

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