



# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## The campaign sleeper issue

It's that time again — election fever is in the air. Well, maybe not a fever. Actually, most voters seems to be exhibiting symptoms of political mononucleosis — they're tired and worn out from listening to an endless barrage of political rhetoric, and can't seem to generate enough energy to get interested in the issues.

Jobs, balancing the budget, reducing the federal debt, and cutting taxes are at the top of the list for most Canadians. While these are of paramount importance there is another issue. It's almost completely ignored and is even more pressing. It is Canada Pension Plan tax hikes.

Years of neglect, failure to predict aging trends, declining wages, skyrocketing disability payouts and a flawed 'pay-as-you-go' system have brought the CPP to its knees.

In order to rectify the problem, the Liberal Party is campaigning on a platform to raise CPP taxes on individual workers by as much as \$1,380 a year. They claim that the tax hike is necessary to ensure the long-term survival of the plan. They also claim that there is no alternative to the increase.

The Progressive Conservative Party agrees that the CPP should be maintained, but proposes to offset the CPP rate hike with personal tax cuts. They would further invest CPP funds to be managed by an independent trust.

The New Democrats would also retain the plan, increasing disability and survivor benefits and lowering the premiums of the 'poorest workers', presumably, therefore, increasing taxes on the 'wealthiest workers'. Who the NDP considers wealthy is not exactly clear.

The Reform Party has taken a more radical position. They would scrap the CPP altogether in favour of 'Super RRSPs', while ensuring those already vested in the plan receive their

*Progressive Conservative Party*  
*elections-Canada*

### Let's Talk Taxes

with PAUL PAGNUELO

benefits. Pension contributions would be mandatory but would be deposited into individual accounts (rather than the current pool of funds), that are privately managed and fully funded.

Since Quebec already has a pension plan independent of the CPP, the Bloc couldn't care less what the rest of the country does with the current fiscal mess.

On the issue of CPP reform, then, choosing a party appears to rest on your answers to two questions. First, do you think you'll get a worthwhile return on your investment through a substantial CPP tax increase? And second, do you think the CPP is worth trying to save in the first place, or should another pension system replace it?

These are significant questions. They could have a dramatic impact on your disposable income now or on your retirement income.

Voters need to take a long hard look at the details of the CPP issue — their financial health depends on it.

Tax Fact: As of April 24, 1997, Canada's federal net debt stood at \$594.4 billion, or \$78,988 per family of four.

"Let's talk taxes" is a commentary provided by the Ontario Taxpayers Federation.

## May 2-4 weekend; notorious for risk plus fun

The Victoria Day weekend is a time to relax and have fun — a time to be with friends and family.

It's the perfect respite for high school students who think there is way too long between March break and the end of June.

Unfortunately, it is often a weekend for tragedy and mourning. Drinking and driving is an all too common occurrence, but the "May 2-4" weekend is notorious for drinking and driving related collisions and deaths.

Much progress has been made over the last several years, as most of us seem to have gotten the message. Yet, there are still many, who for no appreciable reason, don't seem to understand that drinking and driving kill.

In just over the time it takes you to read this column, one alcohol-related collision will have occurred in Canada. In fact, the odds are that everyone of us will be involved in an alcohol related collision or will know someone who has been.

Alcohol is involved in 50 per cent of all vehicle crashes, and is thus responsible for more than 2,500 deaths in this country each year.

But even more disturbing is that as you drive



### Youth Perspective

with DAVE COUPE

up to the cottage this weekend, one out of every eight drivers you pass will be legally impaired.

The facts are that one can be legally impaired without blowing over the magic .08. But one doesn't have to be legally impaired to be dangerous.

Alcohol affects everyone in different ways. This of course partially depends on things such as sex, height and weight, but what is true for everyone is that after only one drink, judgment is impaired, reaction times are slowed and inhibitions begin to dissolve.

Even the best of drinkers could easily be impaired enough after only one drink to hit the brake a second too late, drive a little too fast, fol-

## Looking Back ...



Milton District Hospital celebrated the opening of the upstairs wing and the completion of extensive alterations in May, 1967. Health Minister Dr. M. B. Dymond snipped the ribbon adorned in hospital colours of blue and white before a crowd of more than 200, as Halton MPP George Kerr assisted.

## The legacy of home violence

We know that exposure to violence in the home puts a child at risk — the child will be much more likely to be a victim or a perpetrator of violence later in life. Yet the more we study the problem of family violence, the bigger the problem seems to get.

A new study by the American Psychological Association, entitled "Violence and the Family", summarizes the current state of knowledge in the area. It's important reading, in part because it changes the very definition of violence and it strongly suggests that kids can be exposed to it even if they never see or hear it.

Family violence involves a pattern of physical, sexual or emotional abuse towards any family member. Emotional abuse includes domination, control, put-downs and manipulation. The effects of this kind of emotional abuse turns out to be no less harmful and traumatic than that found when a man beats his wife or child.

A parent can truly love his wife and children and still abuse them. Whether he is physically or emotionally violent, he probably doesn't think he is abusive, he may rationalize that he is doing



### Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

it in the name of love or 'for their own good', and most of all, he may say that his father treated him (or his wife) a lot tougher than he is doing.

Parents often think that if they don't fight in front of the children then the kids won't be hurt by it. It's not true. The only way to protect the children from it is if the children don't know about the violence. This is virtually impossible if the fighting is occurring almost every day.

Some factors have been identified which increase the likelihood of family violence. Families who have four or more children show much higher rates of abuse and neglect than families with fewer children. Families making less than \$20,000 (Canadian) per year report maltreatment seven times as often as families with higher incomes. A higher income is no protection, however, as incest is more prevalent in affluent families.

The reporting of violence is crucial if one is to help the children. It is important to realize, however, that it must be caught early if one is to truly help these children. The authors report, "Once they were in high school, it was too late".

Some of the policy changes recommended in this report would seem to merit a closer look. They want to mandate an assessment of the abuser as well as treatment for the victim before a person convicted of family violence is sentenced. They want a screening for victimization to be routine in standard medical and psychological examinations. They recommend that treatment programs be run in schools, so kids can see others who have gone through it, feel less abnormal, and to provide more cost-effective group treatments where possible.

It makes a lot of sense. It will pay off in a huge savings in future mental health, police, hospital, welfare, court and other costs. Most important, it will help us to break the cycle of violence and abuse that is handed down to the next generation.