



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Can the tail wag the dragon?

Hong Kong will change, despite everyone's best intentions.

The former British colony will either lead China into the 21st century or slip into the maw of the Red Chinese monolith. Unfortunately history, economics, culture and social policy do not favour Hong Kong leading China but rather being sucked into a communist vortex, first with screams, second with international concern and finally with hardly a whimper as other Asian Tiger economies simply fill the void.

Economically and technologically China is still a country stuck somewhere between the years 1500 and 1930. It is ideologically bereft and diametrically opposed to everything that Hong Kong stands for: Cultural, economic and political freedom.

Hong Kong, a city that has benefited economically by not having to carry a hinterland on its back, has now acquired the biggest hinterland in the world.

Look at what happened to Montreal when separatists gained political control of Quebec.

They imposed language laws removing everyday freedoms from citizens, and companies began to leave for more hospitable business climates. People soon followed and now Montreal, once the premier city in Canada, is simply an empty shell, a provincial backwater.

The communist Chinese have examples all around them. Shanghai, once an economic powerhouse, is now merely another urban area. Taipei, Taiwan is a giant economic boom town on a piece of property that was largely uninhabited 50 years ago.

The Chinese might see these things, just as the Soviets saw them in Europe. However the



*Reaume
with a
View*

with BRAD REAUME

Soviets avoided reality for almost 75 years. Communism in China is not yet 50 years old.

More than 1.2 billion people live in China. That's 40 people for every single Canadian. One city, no matter what its wealth, would have a monumental task carrying that weight. In 1850 there was nothing in Hong Kong. Given the freedoms of British rule, and the cultural mix of east and west, Hong Kong grew into arguably the most dynamic economy in the world.

Many people in the region seem pleased that Hong Kong is back in the Chinese fold. Perhaps it makes sense, historically, given that the British bullied their way into region in the first place and were too shortsighted to settle the colony's legal position.

One cannot help but hope that Hong Kong will become a case of the tail wagging the dragon. One must hope freedoms enjoyed by those in Hong Kong make their way into the rest of China.

However, I am skeptical about that happening. I remember the bloodshed when China gunned down its own protesting students just a few short years ago.

Come July, you finally work for yourself

This year's tax freedom day — the day you start working for yourself — fell on July 2 in Ontario.

From January 1 until then, your family income went to cover the expenses of all levels of government. Last year's tax freedom day came on July 5. The improved 'tax freedom' is partly the result of provincial income tax cuts, which returned \$504 to the average Ontario family wallet. Ontarians eager to celebrate should note that July 2 is still over a month later than 1985's date of May 26.

The Fraser Institute estimates that the average Ontario family will earn \$59,846 this year (this includes government transfers, pension earnings, etc.). Of this total, \$29,826 (or 49.8 per cent) will go to government coffers.

Not surprisingly, income taxes take the largest bite, making up more than \$11,501 (39 per cent) of your tax bill. Social security taxes (including CPP and EI premiums) come second at \$5,352 or 18 per cent, followed closely by sales taxes at \$4,715 or 16 per cent of your tax bill. What about the other 27 per cent?

Here's where the tax collector employs cloaking devices. Half of every dollar you pay for gas goes to governments. If you chose to buy beer

*Let's
Talk
Taxes*



with PAUL PAGNUELO

and spirits, 70 per cent of the bill will end up in government hands through taxes. Ontarians also pay more to municipal governments than any other Canadians, at an average of \$2,776 per family.

And don't forget business taxes that are passed on to consumers. Add licence fees, levies, service charges, contributions and tolls, and soon you find yourself working half the year for yourself and your family.

And if you're worried that the rich are not paying their share, think again. Statistics show that the top 30 per cent of income earners earn 54.6 per cent of national income but provide 62.4 per cent of national tax revenue. Isolated tales of wealthy tax evaders can't hide the fact

Looking Back ...



These girls were winners at the Halton County 4-H achievement day in May, 1972. Cathy Van der Eyken, Janet Schreiber, Kim Mauro, Helen Van den Boom, Anne Opsteen, and Lorraine Cooper all received county honours. Absent were Connie Course, who earned the same and Gail Douglas, who earned provincial honours.

Coming clean on housework

I knew it was too good to last. I am up to three now, the number of houses that I have to clean. It is not enough to have a house in town to keep in some varying semblance of order, and I can appreciate that someone has to be in charge of the cottage too, but what I hadn't counted on was having the rental cottage foisted on me.

It all worked wonderfully the past few years. When guests checked out Saturday morning, we shooed our eldest out the back door of our cottage with cleaning gear in hand. The kid couldn't argue; after all, he did get paid for his efforts, although it certainly wasn't his first choice of activity for a summer weekend.

That system changed this year when that same young man decided to spend the summer in town, permanently plugged into computers, CDs and MuchMusic.

Following in his footsteps is the 14-year-old, who was to have undertaken the task of cleaning the rental cottage. She had one go at it. That may or may not work out as her heart isn't in it, even if she is rewarded with extra spending money. And already she has escaped for a week, leaving her responsibilities to yours truly.

I won't ever admit it to these kids, but I sure wouldn't do that job for the paltry \$10 that we



*On the
Homefront*

with ESTHER CALDWELL

pay them. I was hard pressed this past Saturday to get it done in the three hours between guests. Maybe I have lost my touch; I haven't been a chambermaid since my stint 30 years ago at Banff Springs Hotel.

I might add, at this point, that I had to face a couple of domestic challenges. For starters, the vacuum cleaner, our latest one at that, kept quitting on me; at least the power head did. Twice, I disconnected that horrid appliance and carried it to the workshop for hubby to fix. If I have to drag and push a noisy monster about a house, why can't I end up with one that actually does the job? One of these days I am going to get exasperated enough to buy an industrial-strength cleaner that can suck up a rug.

Added to that irritation was a surprise thanks to my brand-new, razzle-dazzle mop, which fell apart while I was squeezing it out. I purchased it thinking that just because I had a useless vacuum cleaner, I didn't also have to put up with an equally ineffectual mop. I was reduced to finishing up the floors with an old-fashioned string mop while hubby reconstructed the new one, which he reassembled backwards on his first try.

If technical difficulties weren't enough, nature's finest descended upon me. Initially, I made the mistake of leaving the front door open; the mosquitoes figured I had laid out the welcome mat and an entire squadron attacked. And then from below, the ants marched militantly across the floor and throughout the kitchen drawers. I am surprised a dock spider didn't crawl up from the waterfront to join the party.

There is one advantage to cleaning the rental cottage. There is no accumulation of junk to shift around, just furniture. If only our cottage and house were so clutter-free.

I took one last look around. The sink was shining, the counter clear, firewood was stacked neatly beside the stove, and fresh wildflowers sat on the table. The place looked good.

I stepped out of the cottage, mop in one hand and pail in the other, the mosquitoes following in my wake. Our cottage would be staying as is for the time being.