

OPINION

Federal budget good for next 2 years only

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's first Conservative budget in more than 13 years — delivered Tuesday — was as much a political statement as it was a financial one.

Supported by a staggering surplus in Ottawa's coffers, Flaherty was able to accomplish two things:

1. Deliver on two of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's election pledges (a one per cent cut in the GST rate and a \$1,200 parents' allowance for every child under the age of six).

2. Give Canadians a taste of what to expect from a Conservative government.

Flaherty's budget, unlike previous Liberal ones, deals more with the immediate or near future instead of promising cash for items years down the road.

Of course, with a shaky minority government under their feet, the Conservatives really had little choice but to table a budget that only has a lifespan of two years when another federal election is anticipated.

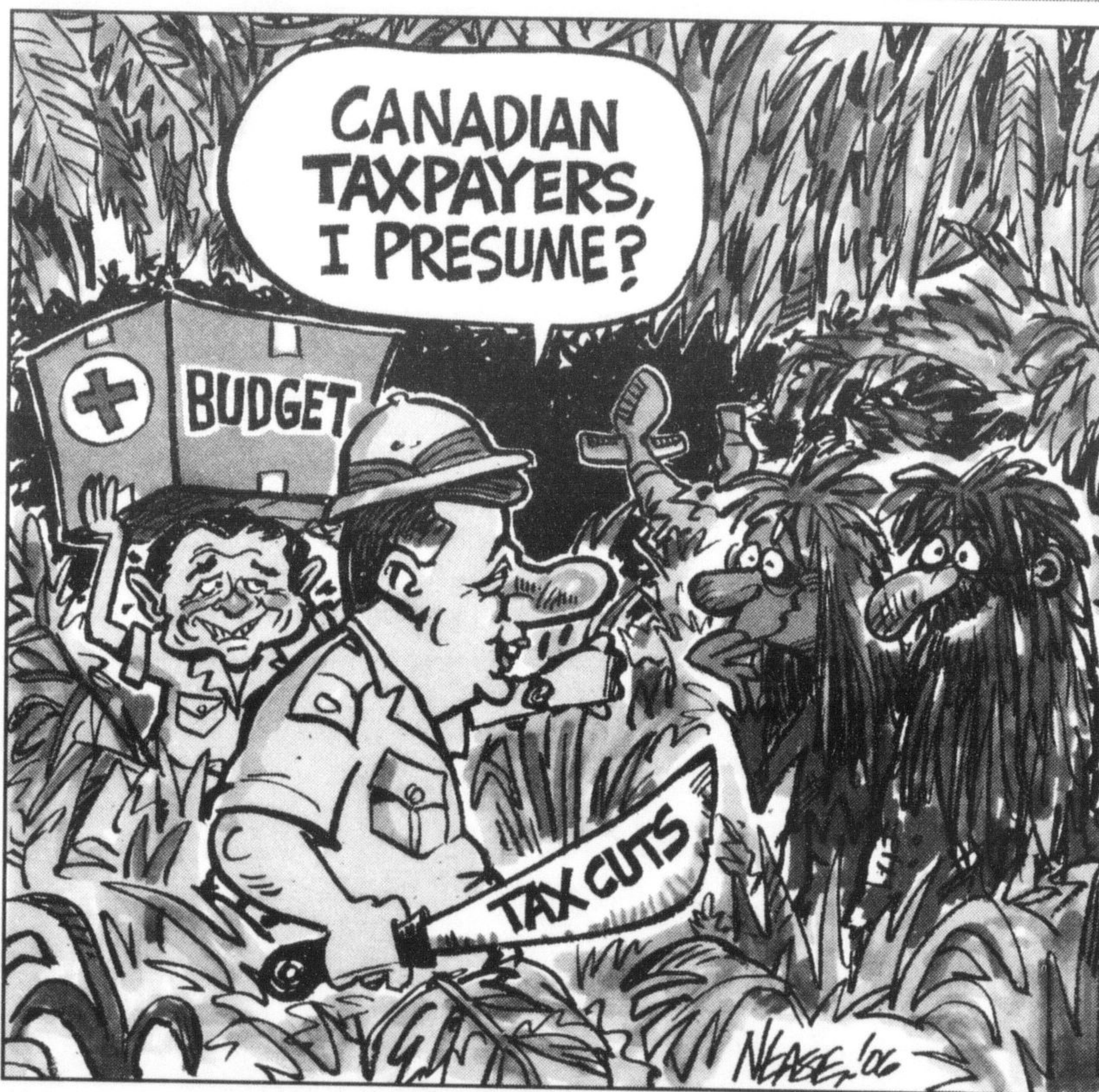
Saying Canadians pay far too much in taxes, Flaherty took steps to let taxpayers keep more cash in their wallets.

This was, for all intents and purposes, an "election budget" with something for almost everyone from students to small business to the military to seniors to the provinces.

Unquestionably, Canadians will see tax relief with this budget, and likely a little more than they would have enjoyed under the Liberals' proposed budget six months ago.

Critics will argue that in order for the Conservatives to pay for their largesse in this budget, service cuts will be coming down the road à la former Ontario Premier Mike Harris — Flaherty's former boss.

With a booming economy, Harper and company have two years to figure how to improve on this budget.



ReadersWrite

Send us your letters to miltone@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Response letter simply shameful

DEAR EDITOR:

I just read Jan Hapanowicz's letter to the editor entitled 'Region has done its fair share to make recycling convenient'.

How dare she attack Catherine McKinnon for her opinion on what she sees as an important environment issue? McKinnon didn't say that she wasn't upset about the young man who had been beaten in a Milton park or that our troops are fighting in Afghanistan, or that she needed someone to remind her of her birthday.

On that particular day she just

decided to write a letter to The Champion about recycling. And I agree, there should be weekly recycling pick-up.

The letters section of The Champion is one I quite like. I enjoy reading about what other Miltonians have to say.

However, it shouldn't become a ground of opportunity for unconstructive opinion and ridicule. I'm disappointed with The Champion for publishing such a negative letter.

SUSAN NAISMITH
MILTON

Aroundtown

Let's put the brakes on drivers who still don't wear their belts

It's uncomfortable, I forget, the car has airbags, I'm a careful driver.

These are just a few of the excuses people sometimes give for not wearing their seatbelts. Fortunately, as the results of a recent seatbelt campaign show, there are fewer people than ever before needlessly risking their lives.

But there are still some of you out there.

Halton Regional Police conducted its Spring Seatbelt Campaign from April 16 to 24. In Milton, 1,652 cars were checked and 20 charges were laid for adults not wearing their seatbelts. Fortunately, only one charge was laid for a child not being strapped in — although that's still one too many.

Doing very crude calculations, that means approximately one in every 83 cars in Milton are carrying adults who don't wear their seatbelts. If Milton has a driving-age population

of, say, 20,000, that means I'm speaking to about 241 of you.

What are you thinking??

About five years ago, I was turning left at an intersection and was hit almost head on by a pick-up truck that ran a red light.

The car was totaled, but I was all right. I was confused, though, about why I had difficulty breathing after the collision.

It wasn't until the next day that I realized, after looking at a seatbelt-shaped bruise running across my body, just how forcefully I had been thrown against the seatbelt — hence the difficulty breathing. Were it not for the belt, there's no doubt in my mind I would've been thrown through the windshield.

Under the condition of anonymity, I



Stephanie Thiessen

spoke with a certain male party in our office who admitted he usually doesn't wear the potentially life-saving device.

It's not a question of comfort, he just doesn't, he said, admitting it's a bad habit.

"It's too bad we need a law to protect us from our own stupidity, but we do," he said.

Unfortunately, even the fact it's illegal not to does little to convince some people to wear their seatbelts.

As a reporter, I've written about way too many fatalities that could easily have been prevented.

Let's hope public awareness continues and that all drivers learn to value their lives — and their families' — enough to buckle up.

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