

# Protestors skewer Michael Wilson's GST proposal

The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, May 30, 1990

The controversy over the proposed Goods and Services Tax that marches in lockstep with federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson followed him to a partisan barbecue in Georgetown Thursday.

Mr. Wilson preached largely to the converted inside Gordon Alcott Arena, addressing 600 people who had paid \$15 a head to attend what Halton Peel MP Garth Turner billed as the "Deficit Reduction Barbecue." The event was organized by the Burlington and Halton Hills Chambers of Commerce.

In a parking lot across the street from the arena, approximately 300 protesters said to represent area labour movements attacked the government for its fiscal policies — particularly the GST.

"There is so much opposition to the GST, this is a good time for people to show it," said Ken Ouellette, a protest organizer. "It gives people a chance to vent their frustrations."

Protesters happily munched 'Lyn' Brian Burgers — with proceeds from the hamburger sales going to a food bank hoping to "reduce the hunger deficit" — as an effigy of Mr. Wilson was skewered on a spit and roasted.

Inside the arena, Mr. Wilson stuck to his by now familiar defence of the

controversial tax, saying the GST will be "replacing our antiquated and destructive manufacturer's sales tax... a tax that is a drag on our economy."

He said the Progressive Conservatives are the first government "to get up the nerve to get rid of" a system that studies have recommended changing as far back as the 1940s.

## Penman worried...

Group, said the committee "shared the same concerns," but now "we feel confident it is the direction to go."

Councillor Brian Penman said he had been involved with a fundraising campaign kicked off just prior to the recession of the early 1980s.

"Our timing was abysmal." The current "economic climate is poor," the councillor continued. "I'm wondering what your case for optimism is?"

Mr. McClory said the goal of fundraising with corporations, which he expects to tap for \$300,000, is "to demonstrate clearly the benefits that will accrue to them" through financing the project.

Such benefits are usually viewed in terms of economic spinoffs, but he also made it clear that council should consider the option of having corporations pay for publicity; the example he used

The GST will be "a more democratic tax" and future governments will be "more accountable for this tax than any other."

Mr. Wilson also stressed the importance of slashing the federal deficit in tandem with taxation policy reform. Cuts in federal spending and the privatization of Crown corporations are measures which will reduce the

deficit, he added.

The federal agenda will slash annual growth of Canada's estimated \$400 billion national debt to \$14 billion in three years, the Finance Minister said. That is half the current heated pace of deficit accumulation. The country is expected to go into hock for another \$28.5 billion in 1990.

By 1994 Mr. Wilson expects the nation to be able to attack the principle on the debt, rather than merely service interest payments.

"We want to be in a position to start paying back the bonds and treasury bills on the debt by 1994. Once the debt starts to be paid off, we must never, ever, ever, get into this position as a country again."

## ... 'Our timing is abysmal'

# Rec centre to get professional fundraiser

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was naming the building itself after a corporate donor for a fee.

The professional fundraiser also said people do not become financially exhausted from previous community fundraising efforts, such as Milton's relatively recent hospital campaign. On the contrary, he maintained, it has "made it easier" by leaving people "in a philanthropic mood."

Although he hopes to raise a further \$500,000 from builders and developers, Mr. McClory said "it's not a signal" that preferential treatment will follow when the construction industry pushes for building permits.

The only councillor who did not support hiring The Martin Group was Brad Clements, who said of the \$99,000 fee, "my perception is the public is not necessarily ready for that, especially in the Town of Milton."

However, his remarks were swallowed in a

chorus of support for the expenditure from other councillors. "I'm going to have to go with somebody who said he's batting 1,000," said councillor Bruce Attenborough.

Mayor Krantz said the last time the Town ran a fundraising campaign (\$60,000 for Brookville Hall) it "flopped." Should the Town fail with the far more expensive leisure services centre, "the only other route is the property tax base and I do not want to have to do that."

Mr. Main said that if the Town had opted to raise the money through property taxes next year's increase would be "double digits."

Fundraising is to begin in June, with the following goals: \$300,000 from local businesses and corporations; \$500,000 from builders and developers; \$250,000 from personal gifts; \$250,000 from community donations and \$200,000 through special events.

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