

COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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NDP has to get down to business

It was interesting to see the NDP provincial government cosy up, at least by its own standards, to business in the Ontario Throne Speech delivered Monday. The document, though vague-sounding on cursory examination (as is the case with most Throne Speeches), at least demonstrated a certain newfound flexibility.

Ontario's salvation, if it is to have one that will lead anywhere near the same fiscal neighbourhood we inhabited until the late 1980s, will be centred on business activity. It will not be centred on government activity, regulation, or funding.

Perhaps the NDP government is nudging toward a revelation regarding proper political stewardship in this province. The illuminating concept the government should be striving to grasp is the following; in Ontario you can go slightly left of centre, or slightly right of centre. But, as in the national sport, you can't go offside.

There are elements to be applauded in the Throne Speech, and others which renew the wary uncertainty with which many view the NDP. On the plus side, a recognition that the provincial government must be streamlined through staff cuts is laudable. A move to bolster job training in the welfare system is also commendable.

More worrisome is a plan to give municipal governments additional leeway to finance capital projects through borrowing. It appears to be merely offering the municipalities a blank cheque, and we have strong reservations about that.

Premier Rae's rationale for this, as put forward in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, offers little comfort; he justifies it by saying municipalities in Ontario only owe about \$3 billion at present, while in Quebec, for example, local government resides in a collective \$18 billion debt hole. The explanation appears to hinge on the premise that things could be worse.

Stubbornly, the NDP gave every indication of sticking to its proposed labour law reforms, the ones business leaders have been warning and whining about for months. The complex question of labour law reform deserves serious attention, we will grant the government that. We will also yield the point that there will never be a good time to introduce any such controversial laws. But there will certainly be a better time than now, and there are certainly more productive plans than the one afoot.

The provincial economy is at its most fragile. It does not need another controversy of this nature at present. We currently have controversy aplenty. In a fight between labour and management over the near term we will not be so much dividing up the spoils of successful competitive efforts as arguing over the remaining scraps of half-forgotten feasts.

The timing of this adventure aside, it strikes us as remarkably confrontational. There are interim steps the government could have taken which would have involved forcing the parties into a more co-operative spirit.

As Queen's Park sees the true depth of its economic problems and the long road ahead in climbing out of them, it appears to be dawning on the NDP that one can no more forsake business for labour than vice-versa. The question that remains to be answered then is just how middle-of-the-road can this government become? And what does that mean to its vaunted agenda of democratic socialism?

LOOKING BACK



Where were we in '53? Donna Clements and Elra Koski were in front of Milton Dairy sipping a shake after school. The school they attended was Bruce Street and former staff and students are getting together May 9 for a reunion. Donna Coulter (nee Clements) has tickets at North End Nissan.

PAGES OF THE PAST

One Year Ago

From the April 10, 1991 issue

□ The Milton OPP, while participating in an international speed and drug enforcement program, handed out 81 traffic tickets last Friday. Most drivers were ticketed for speeding, while others were charged with seatbelt and commercial vehicle violations. About 50 drivers were given warnings.

□ A few thousand ducks were scheduled to float through Milton, only these waterfowl were made of rubber. To raise money for the new leisure centre currently under construction on Main Street East, the Lions Club of Milton was organizing an event which would put the rubber ducks on a water race through town. The 30 minute duck race was scheduled to start at the Mill Pond, travel south along the waterway, and eventually finish at the Laurier Avenue bridge. The Lions club of Milton, one of the first clubs in town, made a commitment to donate \$30,000 over the next three years to the Town's recreation centre fundraising campaign — A Fitting Beginning.

□ A Cub pack from Quebec recently paid a visit to the 3rd Milton Cubs. The St. Joseph's Centennial Cubs of Brossard, Quebec spent the Easter weekend at Woodland Tails in Milton. The 6th Line campground was the meeting place for the two Club packs, which visited area conservation areas and worked on earning badgers over the three-day weekend. Milton Mayor Gord Krantz stopped by Woodland Tails to welcome the visiting Cubs to Milton. Milton Cub leader Pierre Martin, originally from Brossard, said the 3rd Milton Cubs have been invited to travel to Quebec next spring.

20 Years Ago

From the April 12, 1972 issue

□ Local news sources received a birth notice on Tuesday morning, but the report didn't come from Milton District Hospital. It came from Frank Timmermans, manager of the Halton Region Conservation Authority's Mountsberg Game Preserve. The "baby" is a dark

colored, close to 100 pounds, female "cattalo." A cattalo is a cross between a cow and a buffalo. The conservation's cattalo is the result of almost three years of experimentation by Dr. P. K. Basur and the Animal Science Division of the University of Guelph.

□ At a recent executive meeting of the Milton Chamber of Commerce the directors: agreed to handle publicity for the Milton Community Service Club June 10 with a maximum budget of \$300. The service clubs have engaged Tommy Hunter of TV fame for the event; agreed to send letters of welcome to Bonin's Esso, St. Clair Wallpaper, Royal Bank and Barber-Greene, new businesses in town; discussed a request by Dave Lewis of Milton Bus Lines from the Chamber to appear on his behalf before the Department of Transport and Communications. Mr. Lewis is interested in providing charter bus service to the Town of Milton.

□ "Tall tale" fish stores will probably revive in Milton when the fishing season officially opens in April. On the day before the opening, the Halton Sportsmen's Association will stock the Mill Pond with about 100 rainbow trout, reports the Association's fishing director Jim Smith. According to Mr. Smith, the Department of Lands and Forests intends to deposit about 3,000 speckles and 2,000 rainbow in the lake over the course of the spring and summer.

50 Years Ago

From the April 9, 1942 issue

□ James Caie has resigned his position at the local Bank of Nova Scotia and gone to Toronto. His place is filled by Ken Randall of Milton.

□ Mr. Jay, Toronto, visited Milton for the purpose of showing that a small town's place in the scheme of things is very important.

□ "I am not going to set a precedent for soldiers who have been convicted", Magistrate F.C. MacDonald told Pte. Wallace Hurst, 17, when he sent him to prison for one month. Hurst had entered a plea of guilty to car theft a week ago. He was charged with theft of a car owned by E. Pullen, Oakville on March 17.

PUD



BY STEVE NEASE