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COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Looking Back



'Gimme a Little Kiss' was performed by Dale Merkley, Nancy Bickers, Louise Dais, Sonya Agnew, Sheila Furness, Vicky Brown and Joanne Varley in May, 1963. The pupils of the Joan Waters School for Dancing held a recital at Milton District High School.

Thoughts on workfare

On Tuesday the Halton Anti-Poverty Coalition sent this newspaper a fax indicating the group has some profound reservations about workfare. That, readers will remember, is the provincial program that will force many people to exchange some toil for state money.

Halton Region is one of the jurisdictions on the leading edge of workfare. It will be implemented here, and in approximately 20 other jurisdictions, prior to being introduced across Ontario.

Workfare is sweeping across North America in one form or another, and it's about time it took hold locally. That is anathema to the Halton Anti-Poverty Coalition. The group is, through the aforementioned fax, lobbying non-profit organizations and social services agencies to resist workfare.

Now, the Halton Anti-Poverty Coalition probably does some good work, as the name suggests. But profoundly muddled thinking has shaped its latest communique.

Listed below are the so-called "philosophical concerns" the coalition has about workfare, with a few rejoinders from the often equally muddled, yet hopefully more practical, editor of this newspaper.

The coalitions concerns are in boldface.

1) Workfare takes away a welfare claimant's right to a basic income when in need

No it doesn't. It just makes them work a little bit for it.

2) Workfare may displace or pre-empt real paying jobs

Not for long, since this government isn't in the business of state-funded job creation programs. Most job creation will be in the private sector for the foreseeable future, whether the private sector likes it or not.

3) Workfare may not provide real skills for real jobs, for real money

And of course giving people welfare does. Workfare has a better shot at it than welfare ever did.

4) Workfare reduces people's time to search for real jobs

Workfare is aimed at people who are having a tough time mastering that skill.

5) Workfare reduces the quality and productivity of work by being mandatory in nature

Just about everybody who has a paying job in the private sector considers their work mandatory in nature. Here's a quick way of telling whether yours is, too. Don't show up for a few days. Then go back in, with no excuse for the absence. If you get fired, your work was mandatory in nature.

Now that you know your work is mandatory, see if it decreases your productivity or work quality. It had better not, or you won't be enjoying mandatory work for very long.

6) Past and current programs have failed to get people permanently off the welfare system

If they're going to be on the welfare system, they might as well be on workfare. The people who are paying for both like it better that way.

7) Experience has shown that workfare programs are very costly
 And experience has also shown that giving people money for doing nothing, and then just expecting them to keep on doing nothing, is pretty costly too.

8) Community service means just that - community service for everyone, not just welfare recipients

Community service is a good thing, and those who are not inclined to do much have to pay for some of it anyway, through their taxes. A portion of those taxes will be used to fund the workfare program. Therefore, paying for workfare is something of a community service.

- Rob Kelly

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the June 28, 1995 issue

- Milton councillors rejected the proposed relocation of the Halton Region Museum from Kelso Conservation Area to Martin House at the general committee meeting. Town councillors voted against a recommendation by the Halton Region Museum Feasibility Study Steering Committee to move ahead with the next stage of the proposal — hiring consultants to further evaluate the project.

- The Halton Regional Police Service was making changes to meet new social and economic realities. The Organizational Review Project, a major re-examination of the force, involved the input of more than 100 staff members. The project resulted in 170 recommendations. It was reported that once in place, the changes would save \$1.5 million.

- Targeting bad drivers, the police Aggressive Driving Campaign got underway. The campaign, which was to run until July 3, aimed to curb tailgaters, speeders and those who failed to signal.

20 Years Ago

From the June 30, 1976 issue

- Milton Council was moving as quickly as possible to restore Milton's status as a two-arena town. Council learned that the Fred Armstrong Arena would have to

remain closed until repairs were done. Council passed a number of resolutions indicating its desire to twin Memorial Arena and to offer the old rink for sale. Council's decision to move quickly was based on a staff report.

- Budget cuts forced on the Milton Public Library Board by town council sounded the closing of two rural library services. The branch library at Campbellville and bookmobile service at Drumquin were to be terminated. The closing of these two services was expected to save the library board \$3,000.

- Inmates were breaking out of Maplehurst Correctional Centre at an alarming rate. This was brought into sharper focus when two more prisoners escaped. It was the second escape within a week.

50 Years Ago

From the June 27, 1946 issue

- All parts of Halton county were represented at the first annual Field Day arranged by the Federation of Agriculture. Many farmers and their friends enjoyed the event, which was held in Milton Park.

- A special meeting of Halton County council was held at the courthouse. The meeting was called for the purpose of passing a by-law to establish new high school districts for Oakville and Burlington.

- The Milton Junior Farmers and Junior Institute met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Biggar. There was good attendance and an interesting program.

Pud

by Steve Nease

