



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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A hand up, not a handout

Youth unemployment is a topic that is seldom addressed in the halls of power. That's probably because there are no kids in those halls, and because the nation's youth generally don't vote.

Our so-called representatives tend to ignore the plight of the young and jobless because that constituency is irrelevant in the quest for re-election.

But hope springs eternal. Last month the federal government released a report entitled "Take on the Future" which proposed several recommendations to curb youth unemployment. What is encouraging about the report is not what it says, but what it doesn't say.

Unlike typical youth job creation schemes of the past, the report shies away from recommending massive infusions of taxpayer dollars into make-work projects for short-term jobs. Instead, the feds are toying with the idea of private sector job creation over state-sponsored handouts.

Finally, someone in Ottawa has tumbled to the fact that governments don't create jobs.

While the report is only an advisory document to be used for the development of a youth strategy expected to be announced this fall, it represents a substantial change in the thinking of federal politicians and bureaucrats.

One of the recommendations, for example, proposes tax incentives for business to hire young people. An excellent idea, as long as those incentives don't mean higher taxes for everyone else to make up for corporate tax breaks.

The picture, however, is not entirely rosy.

The feds have already committed to spend \$1 billion on programs for youth over the next three years with no real measurement for success. And many of the report's recommendations are pure political fluff — like telling banks that they

Let's
Talk
Taxes



with PAUL PAGNUELO

should give more loans to young entrepreneurs.

So while Ottawa may be steering away from its spending orgies of the past, Canada's youth shouldn't hold their collective breath waiting for a job. As any first year economics student in the unemployment line will tell you, future job creation will depend on tax relief.

Employers are being hammered so hard by income taxes, property taxes, payroll taxes, and other fees and regulations that they can't afford to hire more people. Constant tax increases are eating up more and more business income, leaving less and less for employee wages.

Deferred taxes in the form of federal and provincial government debts are also contributing to the nation's youth unemployment rate of 16.6 per cent.

As interest payments on these debts continue to mount, Canadians are left with less after-tax income to buy consumer goods. And if there isn't any money for goods and services, there surely won't be any for jobs.

The only sure way to get young Canadians into the workforce is to lower taxes and lower the debt. Putting people to work means returning tax dollars to consumers and employers to enable them to prime the pump.

The gold in parallel parking goes to...

It finally dawned on Olympic organizers that solo synchronized swimming is an oxymoron. This year, competition in the 'sport' was limited to teams. Solo synchronized swimming is not merely ridiculous because the competitor isn't, strictly speaking, synchronized with anyone. It is also ridiculous because winners are entirely dependent upon the will of the judges. A victory that is judged rather than earned is flawed and stands open to controversy.

Of course, synchronized swimming isn't the only embarrassing pseudo-sport which allows the Olympics to make a spectacle of itself. All gymnastic events, especially rhythmic gymnastics, diving, boxing, and all other events in which the winners are determined by judges should be banished.

Rhythmic gymnastics is the equivalent of dancing with a ball, or ribbon. I guess when the ball begins to lead you know it's time to retire.

Any event which has a gala performance, where athletes perform routines in a show after the medals have been awarded, is obviously lacking real credibility as a competition. When this gala is more enjoyable than the competition



Reaume
with a
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with BRAD REAUME

then the truth is out, the 'sport' is really an exhibition of skill and only marginally above the circus. Atlanta featured a gymnastics gala, something which figure skating has done for years.

If we continue along the same path the Olympics will soon have mime, contortionists, plate spinners, and husband and wife knife throwing teams. I can see it now.

"Over to Bob for ventriloquism."

"Thank you Bryant. Bryant, his lip moved on that 'B' but he'll likely not get a deduction as the judges were laughing too loud. Now back to reality."



Serious questions on parenting

He couldn't stand the baby's crying. He wanted peace and quiet at home, and it drove him into a rage. Mom was so afraid of her husband's anger that she started putting something into the baby's formula "to help quiet her down". The baby is now dead. The mother is in prison for poisoning her infant.

Her story is part of a recent comprehensive report on fatal child abuse compiled in the United States. It's called *A Nation's Shame: Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect* (available by calling 703-385-7565). The statistics and conclusions from this new study are so staggering, the stories so gut-wrenching, reading it leads you to question the basic right of some parents to have children.

You should derive no comfort whatsoever from the fact that this is a study out of the United States. The same stories are heard every day all across Canada.

The report documents the following:

- More than 2,000 children per year die at the hands of their parents.
- More children are killed by their parents than die from falls, accidents, choking, suffocation,



Psychology
in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

drowning, or by fires.

- An incredible 18,000 children are permanently disabled each year, and another 142,000 are seriously injured, from abuse.

- Stressed or enraged fathers are the cause of most child abuse fatalities and injuries.

- Mothers are most often responsible when child fatalities are due to bathtub drowning, fires started by unsupervised children, starvation and dehydration.

- A history of family violence is strongly related to child abuse fatalities.

- Child abuse occurs in about half of all homes where adult violence occurs.

More than 400 children are injured or killed each day (in the United States alone), and this is only the tip of the iceberg. These statistics are only for the known, proven cases. How many teenage suicides are caused by parenting practices? How many sexually abused children hide their scars and their torment? How many abused children have survived to live unhappy, unstable lives?

Numerous recommendations are made in this report. Some are preventive in nature. For example, we should identify families who are at risk, before a child is injured or killed. This means that any family violence must be brought to the attention of social service agencies.

It should be required by law that any time violence is suspected it must be reported, investigated and treated. Treatment should be required by law whenever violence is found to be present.

The age-old notion that a child is better off with his biological parents is being questioned. Should it really be the right of any adult to have a child?

Can we reliably identify those parents who would abuse children despite all treatment efforts? The notions of probation for parents, licensing parents and coordinating child protection agencies with foster care agencies, are being seriously discussed in many quarters.