

Letters

Looks forward to year ahead

Dear Editor:

No one would call 1981 a good year for Ontario farmers. Increased capital and operating costs, coupled with crippling interest rates, made it one of the worst years farmers have had to undergo in decades.

But as bad as it was, there have been worse years. And farmers, fortunately, tend to take the long view of life. Farmers are familiar with the various seasons of life: not just seasons for planting and seasons for harvesting, but the seasons of plenty and the seasons of need.

We in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food are also familiar with seasons and cycles. We too take the long view of life.

That is why we have launched a year-long, \$60 million assistance program for 1982 to help qualified farmers who need refinancing; "bridging" or adjustment financing.

Although this could be called a short-term program, its aim is long-term: to ensure that those producers who receive this aid will be running full-time, fully productive, viable operations in the future.

This, however, is just our most recent program. There were also many programs launched last year.

For example, 1981 was a very bad year for beef producers. That is why we introduced the \$30

million Slaughter Cattle Assistance Program, the recently expanded \$9 million Stocker Cattle Assistance Program, and the \$20 million Cow-Calf Program to help protect our important beef-breeding industry.

In addition, the sow-weaner stabilization plan was triggered by low prices and paid out \$7 million to producers.

History has taught us how dangerous it is to rely on other countries for the necessities of life. The oil crisis instigated by the OPEC nations is just the most recent example.

We cannot afford to be as reliant on others for food as we were on the OPEC nations for oil.

Many of our programs are designed to help Ontario become more self-sufficient in terms of food supplies. They are investments in the future.

This should be a national goal.

There are also numerous agricultural programs under BILD - the Board of Industrial Leadership and Development: the \$20 million capital assistance for food processing program; \$1.5 million for asparagus production; \$1.5 million for the cream assistance program; \$2 million for the expansion of the Farmers' Market at the Ontario Food Terminal; \$1.75 million for the equipment fund for agricultural colleges and the \$15 million whey incentive program.

And there have been some successes in 1981.

This has been a record year for exporting corn from our record 200 million bushel harvest, a harvest with a farm gate value of more than half a billion dollars. Our numerous trade missions to other countries have increased Ontario's share of the world food market, and our Foodland Ontario Program has increased our share of the market here at home.

It is worth noting that the Foodland Ontario Program is playing an especially important role in making Ontario more self-sufficient by replacing more and more imported foods with Ontario-grown foods.

But what will 1982 be like? Right now it's not easy to predict. The economists and other "experts" don't offer much hope. But there is one ray of sunshine. They predict that the interest rates will come down.

Like most farmers I am an optimist. All of us believe in Canada as a nation. We have experienced tough years before. Co-operation between governments, industry, farmers and consumers have turned the wheel to better times in the past and will again. I look forward to 1982 with a cautious degree of optimism.

Respectfully,

—The Hon. Lorne C. Henderson
Minister of
Agriculture and Food

Snowmobile Act basis of 13 charges

In the week ending last Monday, 93 general occurrences, four break and enter cases and four thefts among them, were investigated by Midland OPP officers.

Thirteen charges were laid under the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act. Three persons were charged with violation of the Liquor Licence Act. Two drivers were charged with driving while their licence was suspended.

Two charges were laid under the Compulsory Auto Insurance Act. One charge of impaired driving was laid.

Writer angry over postal service, rates

Dear Editor:

Please bear with me for a few minutes of your time to protest the current rates of postage now enforced by our postal service and I use the word "service" in a very lighthearted manner.

I acknowledge the fact that delivering mail can be a very trying job due to weather conditions, heavy mail bags, nasty dogs, etc...but how can a "postie" in all good conscience go on strike for wages of \$12 plus per hour when all the education he needs is the ability to read addresses and numbers?

The same applies to the sorters in the depots who earn exorbitant amounts of money.

Many of us in other fields with far more education and constant upgrading of our knowledge in order to keep our wages at poverty level or slightly above earn a much lower hourly rate and I might add work much harder using brainpower to do so.

It seems to me that with the economy in such a mess that a government agency should set a better precedent and restrain themselves in some way in order to grind the wheels of inflation to a halt.

Is the reason for no price of 30 cents being marked on the new stamp because they were ashamed to see it in red and white or because the postal service was afraid of causing a revolt! And

would have to change it?

You may be assured that any government mail sent by myself will be sent "postage-due".

Maybe a taste of this nonsense at the other end will spark a bit of eye opening when a chubby envelope containing my income tax return is received this way in Ottawa.

Thank you for acting as a sounding board for a frustration that I am sure is felt by many Canadians.

Yours Truly

—Gail Brock
310 First St.
Midland

G-g-g-good m-m-m- morning!

If you thought it was brisk yesterday morning when you got up for work, it was!

The mercury dipped to -25C which was about -10F on the old scale and that was cold in anyone's language.

Only one alarm on the weekend

Both of Tay Township's firefighting brigades, all of Tiny's and Penetanguishene Fire Department enjoyed a quiet weekend.

That wasn't the case though for firefighters on duty early Sunday evening at the Midland firehall.

They responded to one call and that was to extinguish a car fire.

...razor's edge

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careening corners on a roller coaster, to walk a tightrope over Niagara Falls where, one slip and it's "Goodby, Mama, give my best to the family"?

Why do I who am afraid to climb a 20-foot maple, climb aboard my motorcycle (a chrome coffin, some suggest) protected only by some leather and plastic, and offer my body as a sacrifice to every car driver on the highway?

Why do I play goal in ice and ball hockey, using the only ribs and teeth I've got to stop 100 mile per hour projectiles?

The answer is simple: it's a near deathwish that we have. It isn't that we want to die;

rather that we wish to come as close as possible to Worm City without actually crossing the town limits. We wish to enter the mouth of the dragon and feel his hot breath, but return to tell the tale.

In a way, we're bargain hunters for excitement, in search of the Ultimate Thrill, but unwilling to pay the full price for it.

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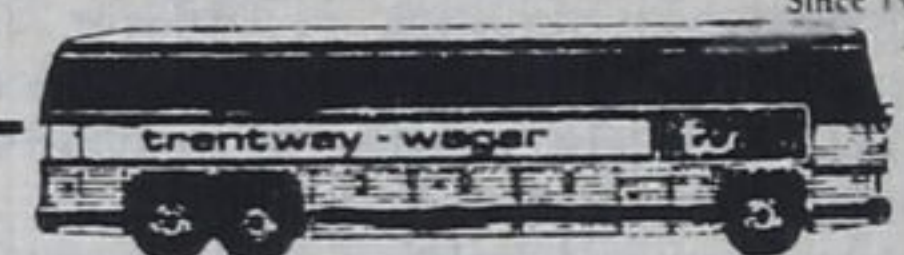
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